

# SATIRES AND PROFANITIES

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# SATIRES AND PROFANITIES

*By*

**James Thomson**

WITH A PREFACE BY G. W. FOOTE

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# PREFACE

**B**ELIEVING as I do that James Thomson is, since Shelley, the most brilliant genius who has wielded a pen in the service of Freethought, I take a natural pride and pleasure in rescuing the following articles from burial in the great mausoleum of the periodical press. There will doubtless be a diversity of opinion as to their value. One critic, for instance, has called "The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm" a witless squib; but, on the other hand, the late Professor Clifford considered it a piece of exquisite mordant satire worthy of Swift. Such differences are inevitable from the very nature of the subject. Satire, more than any other form of composition, rouses antipathy where it does not command applause; and the greater the satire, the more intense are the feelings it excites.

But which side, it may be inquired, is likely to be the best judge? Surely the friendly one. Sympathy is requisite to insight, as Carlyle says; while hostility blinds us to a thousand virtues and beauties. I am aware that many will take objection to the employment of satire at all, whether good or bad, on religious topics; but this seems to me preposterous, and I should readily answer it, if Thomson had not done so himself in the most vigorous and triumphant manner.

Nearly all the pieces in this volume appeared originally in the *National Reformer* or the *Secularist*. I have attempted no arrangement of them, not even a chronological one; the compositor has shuffled them at his own sweet will. All I have done, besides collecting them and carefully reading the proofs, is to indicate in each case the year of first publication; and I think the reader will approve this plan as both modest and sensible.

I am much mistaken if this volume does not become a well-prized treasure to many Freethinkers; that it will ever be valued by the general public I dare not hope. Yet the number of its admirers will increase with the growth of a healthy scepticism. It will not fall like a bombshell among ordinary readers, who serenely ignore the most terrible mental explosives, and render them comparatively innocuous by mere

force of neglect; but it will startle and stimulate some minds, and in time its influence will extend to many more.

What value Thomson placed on these pieces it is difficult to decide. "Working off the talent," he once remarked when I mentioned them. But the fact remains that he allowed one or two of them to be reprinted as pamphlets before any of his poems were collected in a volume. He naturally cared more for his poems than for his prose. What poet ever did the contrary? But even for these he cared little, except "The City of Dreadful Night" and a few others, which expressed his profoundest convictions.

There were several articles in his "Essays and Phantasies" that proved Thomson to be a born satirist as well as a born poet; notably "Proposals for the Speedy Extinction of Evil and Misery," a tremendous display of sustained irony, to my mind unsurpassed even by Swift at his greatest, and with a poetic grandeur quite beyond him. The contents of this volume show marks of the same strong hand. There is never, perhaps, so continuous an exertion of power; but there is more versatility, more freedom, and often more abandon. I fancy, too, there is more rapidity and suppleness, and I am sure there is more mirth.

Thomson's satire was always bitterest, or at any rate most trenchant, when it dealt with Religion, which he considered a disease of the mind, engendered by folly and fostered by ignorance and vanity. He saw that spiritual superstition not only diverts men from Truth, but induces a slavish stupidity of mind, and prepares the way for every form of political and social injustice. He was an Atheist first and a Republican afterwards. He derided the idea of making a true Republic of a population besotted with religion, paralysed by creeds cringing to the agents of their servitude, and clinging to the chains that enthral them.

A few words only as to Thomson's life. Outwardly it was singularly uneventful, although inwardly it was intense and exciting. He was born at Port Glasgow, on the 23rd of November, 1834; and he died in London, on the 1st of June 1882. His father was a merchant captain, and his mother a zealous Irvingite. Left parentless in his infancy, he was educated at the Caledonian Orphan Asylum. For some years he served as a schoolmaster in the army, during which time he contracted an intimate friendship with Mr. Bradlaugh, with whom he subsequently worked and lived in London. Soon after leaving Mr. Bradlaugh he devoted himself to journalism, to which he brought a well-practised pen; contributing to the *National Reformer*, the *Secularist*, the *Liberal*, *Cope's Tobacco Plant*, and other periodicals. Shortly before his death he gained access to the *Weekly Dispatch* and the *Fortnightly Review*. His poems and essays were mostly written before he tried to live by his pen. Four volumes of these have been published by Reeves and Turner, under the generous editorship of

Mr. Bertram Dobell, who has prefixed a memoir to the last, entitled "A Voice from the Nile and Other Poems." Besides the five volumes of Thomson's writings now before the public, there are many essays and articles and a few poems still uncollected, some of them of high value; and many poems in manuscript, unknown to all but a few privileged friends. Mr. Dobell hopes to publish them all in time. Thomson's poetical reputation is, however, already established. The best judges give him the highest praise. My own judgment assigns him the next place to Robert Browning. Of course it is no blasphemy to dispute my estimate; but what prospect is there of reversing the common verdict of George Eliot, George Meredith, Swinburne, and Rossetti?

Mr. Dobell refers to the charm of Thomson's manner in social intercourse. His personal appearance told in his favor. He was of the medium height, well-built, and active. He possessed that striking characteristic sometimes found in mixed races—black hair and beard, and grey-blue eyes. The eyes were fine and wonderfully expressive. They were full of shifting light, soft grey in some moods and deep blue in others. They contained depth within depth; and when he was moved by strong passion they widened and flashed with magnetic power. When not suffering from depression he was the life of the company. He was the most brilliant talker I ever met, and at home in all societies; a fine companion in a day's walk, and a shining figure at the festive table or in the social drawing-room. But you enjoyed his conversation most when you sat with him alone, taking occasional draughts of our national beverage, and constantly burning "the divine weed."

Thomson's sympathy with radical and revolutionary causes is not much noticed by Mr. Dobell, but it was very strong. He was secretary for some time to the Polish Committee in London, and his glorious lines on "A Polish Insurgent" which I for one can never read without tears, proves that he might have written the noble songs that George Eliot hoped he would compose. He sympathised with all self-sacrifice, all lofty aspiration, and in particular with all suffering. This last emotion was often betrayed by a look rather than expressed in words. I vividly remember being with him once on a popular holiday at the Alexandra Palace. We were seated on the grass, watching the shifting groups of happy forms, and exchanging appreciative or satirical remarks. Suddenly I observed my companion's gaze fixed on a youth who limped by with a pleasant smile on his face, but too obviously beyond hope of ever sharing in the full enjoyment of life. Thomson's eyes followed him until he passed out of sight, and the next moment our eyes met. I shall never forget the gentle sadness of that look, its beautiful sympathy that transcended speech, and made all words poor.

Thomson's life was a long tragedy. He inherited from his father a fatal curse,

and in his youth he lost the beautiful girl to whom he was engaged. She was the object of his passionate adoration, and allusions to her often occur in his poems. Her image mingled with all the sombre panoramas of Love and Death and Grief that passed before the eyes of his imagination. Yet I do not agree with Mr. Dobell in regarding this bereavement as the *cause* of his life-long misery. She was, I hold, merely the peg on which he hung his raiment of sorrow; without her, another object might have served the same purpose. He carried within him his proper curse, constitutional melancholia. From long and careful observation I formed this conclusion, and it explains Thomson's life and philosophy. I would not dogmatise, however; for the profundities and subtleties of the human heart baffle all calculation. Certitude is now impossible. The seal of eternal silence is set on Thomson's lips—"after life's fitful fever he sleeps well." He is buried at Highgate, and his darling lies, I suspect, in an unknown grave. Death has at last united them, but their love survives in the glory of immortal song.



# THE DEVIL IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

(1876.)

THE Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has delivered judgment in the case of *Jenkins v. Cook*. Many of the highest personages in the realm, including the Archbishop of Canterbury and the great law-lords, were present to give weight and solemnity to the decision, which was read by the Lord Chancellor. It was reported at full length in the *Times* of the following day, Feb. 17, 1876, the length being two columns of small print.

I must try to indicate briefly the main facts of the case, before hazarding any comments on it. Mr. Jenkins, of Christ Church, Clifton, brought an action against his vicar, the Rev. Flavel S. Cook, for refusing him the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. Mr. Cook justified the refusal on the ground that Mr. Jenkins did not believe in the Devil, all passages relating to the Devil and evil spirits having been excluded from a bulky volume published by Mr. Jenkins, entitled "Selections from the Old and New Testaments." By the evidence of Mrs. Jenkins, who attempted an amicable arrangement, it appears that Mr. Cook said to her: "Let Mr. Jenkins write me a calm letter, and say he believes in the Devil, and I will give him the Sacrament." Whereupon Mr. Jenkins wrote on July 20, 1874: "With regard to my book, 'Selections from the Old and New Testaments,' the parts I have omitted, and which has enabled me [meaning, doubtless, and the omission of which has enabled me] to use the book morning and evening in my family are, in their present generally received sense, quite incompatible with religion or decency (in my opinion). How such ideas have become connected with a book containing everything that is necessary for a man to know, I really cannot say; I can only sincerely regret it." Mr. Cook replied in effect: "Then you cannot be received at the Lord's table in my church." Mr. Jenkins, a regular communicant, and admittedly a man of exemplary and devout life,

answered: "Thinking as you do, I do not see what other course you could consistently have taken. I shall, nevertheless, come to the Lord's table as usual at 'your' church, which is also mine." Accordingly he presented himself, and was repelled, whereupon he brought an action against Mr. Cook.

The case was first tried in the Court of Arches, and the dean dismissed the suit and condemned Mr. Jenkins in costs, saying, "I am of opinion that the avowed and persistent denial of the existence and personality of the Devil did, according to the law of the Church, as expressed in her canons and rubrics, constitute the promoter [Mr. Jenkins] 'an evil liver,' and 'a depraver of the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments,' in such sense as to warrant the defendant in refusing to administer the Holy Communion to him until he disavowed or withdrew his avowal of the heretical opinion, and that the same consideration applies to the absolute denial by the promoter of the doctrine of the eternity of punishment, and, of course, still more to the denial of all punishment for sin in a future state, which is the legitimate consequence of his deliberate exclusion of the passages of scripture referring to such punishment."

So far, so well; the Church of England was assured of the Devil and the eternal punishment it has always held so dear. But Mr. Jenkins appealed to the highest court, and this has reversed the decision of the lower, admonished Mr. Cook for his conduct in the past, monished him to refrain from the like offence in future, and condemned him in the costs of both suits. Do you think, then, that the Church of England is authoritatively deprived of her dear Devil and her beloved eternal punishment? Not at all; the really important problem is evaded with consummate lawyerlike wariness; the points in dispute are most shiftily shifted like slides of a magic lantern; we have a new decision essentially unrelated to that which it cancels; we have a judgment which concerns not the Devil—except that he would chuckle over the too clever unwisdom which fancies it can extinguish "burning questions" with legal wigs.

Their most learned lordships in the first place observe that the learned judge of the Court of Arches appears to have considered that the canon and the rubric severally warrant the repulsion from the Lord's table of "an evil liver," and "a depraver of the Book of Common Prayer," whereas the terms are "an open and notorious evil liver," and "common and notorious depravers." This is a most pregnant distinction, teaching us that an evil liver and a depraver of the said book, as long as he is not notoriously such, is fully entitled to the Holy Communion, fully entitled to the privilege of "eating and drinking damnation to himself?" a privilege from which the notorious evil liver and depraver is righteously debarred.

Now, their most learned lordships find that there is absolutely no evidence

that the appellant was an evil liver, much less an open and notorious evil liver. The Question follows, Was he a common and notorious depraver of the Book of Common Prayer? It was contended that the Selections, coupled with the letter of July 20, proved him to be this. But the letter was not written spontaneously. He was invited by the respondent, Mr. Cook, to write it. It was a friendly and private, as well as a solicited, communication. Therefore, whatever be the construction of the letter, and even if there be in it a deprivation of the Book of Common Prayer, still it would be impossible to hold that the writing of such a letter in such circumstances could make the appellant “a common and notorious depraver.” Whence it is clear that a man may deprave the Book of Common Prayer as much as he pleases in private conversation and letters, yet retain the precious privilege of “eating and drinking damnation to himself” in the Holy Communion; he can only forfeit this by common and notorious deprivation of that blessed book—for instance, by a deprivation repeatedly published in a newspaper, or persistently proclaimed by the town-crier.

So far the law seems most clear, and the judgment quite incontestible. But leaving the strait limits of the law, and looking at the facts in evidence, there is one part of the judgment which to the common lay mind is simply astonishing. Their most learned lordships “*desire to state in the most emphatic manner that there is not before them any evidence that the appellant entertains the doctrines attributed to him by the Dean of Arches;*” wherefore their most learned and subtle lordships “do not mean to decide that those doctrines are otherwise than inconsistent with the formularies of the Church of England.” Nor, of course, do they mean to decide that those doctrines *are* inconsistent with, those formularies. No, “This is not the subject for their lordships’ present consideration.” Indeed, “If they were [had been] called upon to decide that [whether] those opinions, or any of them, could be entertained or expressed by a member of the Church, whether layman or clergyman, consistently with the law and with his remaining in communion with the Church, they would have looked upon this case with much greater anxiety than they now feel in its decision.”

Mr. Jenkins compiles and publishes a book of “Selections from the Bible,” carefully excluding all passages relating to the Devil and evil spirits. The book is bulky; and, in fact, though this is not expressly stated, seems to contain pretty well all the Bible except such passages. He further exhibits in the case a book of selections from the liturgy of the Church of England, apparently compiled on the same principle of exclusion.. Mr. Cook sends through Mrs. J. a message: “Let Mr. J. write me a calm letter, and say he believes in the Devil, and I will give him the Sacrament.” Mr. J. replies, as we have seen, that the parts he has omitted are, in his opinion, quite

incompatible with religion or decency, *in their generally received sense*; such generally received sense being evidently (to all of us save their most learned and subtle lordships) that in which the Church of England receives them. Mr. C. replies, "Then I must refuse you the Communion." Mr. J. answers, "Thinking as you do, I do not see what other course you could consistently have taken;" and resolves to test the question of legality. With these facts staring them in the face, their most learned and most subtle lordships can, with the utmost solemnity, and in the most emphatic manner, declare that there is not any evidence before them that Mr. Jenkins does not believe in the Devil in the common Church of England sense! What the eyes of laymen, however purblind, cannot help seeing clearly, their far-sighted lordships, putting on legal spectacles, dim with the dust of many ages, manage not to discern at all.

The question cannot be left thus undecided. As matters stand, the poor Church does not know whether, legally, it has a Devil or not. Its Devil, its dear and precious old Devil, is in a state of suspended animation, neither dead nor alive; a most inefficient and burdensome Devil. He must either be restored to full health and vigor, or buried away decently for ever; decently and solemnly, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the presence of all their lordships of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, reading the appropriate Church service over his grave. That would be touching and impressive!—"Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God (with the sanction and authority of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council) of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ." At present it appears that every clergyman and layman in the Church has the legal right to sing as a solo in private, especially if solicited, Beranger's refrain, "*The Devil is dead! The Devil is dead!*" while it is doubtful whether he is at liberty to chant it publicly and in chorus—a state of things anomalous beyond even the normal anomalism of all things in this our happy England. It is urgent that some one, lay or cleric, should compel the decision which the suit of Mr. Jenkins has failed to obtain.

In considering the question whether disbelief in the Devil would "deprave" the Prayer Book, we must refer to this book itself. It contains three creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene, and that called of Athanasius. Of these the Nicene (the creed in the Communion Service, by the way) mentions neither the Devil nor Hell; the Apostles' and the so-called Athanasian mention hell but not the Devil. In No. III. of the Thirty-nine Articles hell is solidly established, but again there is no mention of the Devil. It may be argued that hell implies the Devil, as a fox-hole implies a fox; but his existence is not authoritatively averred. Strangely enough, the only

personage who, according to the creeds and articles, has certainly been in hell, is Jesus Christ himself: "He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven." What took *him* to hell? The Prayer Book does not inform us. But we learn from the Epistle called 1 Peter, chap. iii., 19, 20, and chap. iv., 6: "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.... For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Whence it appears that the spirits in prison were not the Devil and his angels, but the spirits of those who were drowned in the Flood for disobedience; and it furthermore appears that these spirits were saved by the preaching of Christ; so that in this famous harrying of hell, he seems to have left it as empty as the mosstroopers in their forays left farmsteads. It is true that No. VI. of the Articles settles the canon of the Old and New Testaments, and that anyone daring to exclude from belief anything in this canon might be convicted of depraving the Prayer Book. But in that case all the best scholars and divines of the Church are guilty of this dreadful sin; and not only guilty, but openly, commonly and notoriously guilty: and therefore all merit repulsion from the Lord's table. Let the truly faithful clergy, those who believe all without question or distinction, do their duty to the Articles of religion of their Church (the Creeds, as I have pointed out, are neutral), and they will shut out from their Communion nearly all the intelligent piety and learning which lend it whatever dignity it still retains. Granted the canon in its integrity, and the existence of a personal Devil, and the doctrine of eternal punishment cannot be fairly disputed. Without multiplying texts, I may refer to Revelation, chap. xx., as decisive on these points.

From these considerations it follows that if the Church of England is bound by her own articles she will hold fast to the Devil and hell, and deny the privilege of her Communion to any one who depraves the Prayer-Book by common and notorious disbelief in them. And for my own part, I do not see how the Church could get on at all without a Devil and hell, especially in competition with the other Christian sects, which make unlimited use of both. The Devil is in fact as essential to the Christian schemes as a leader of the opposition to that great political blessing, government by party. If he were to die, or be deposed, it would be necessary to elect another to the vacant dignity. You cannot put the leadership in commission as the unfortunate Liberals were taunted with doing, in their demoralisation after their disasters of the General Election and Mr. Gladstone's sudden retirement. Just as Mr. Disraeli lamented the withdrawal of Mr. Gladstone, complaining of the em-

barrassment caused to the Government by having no responsible leader opposed to it, so we can imagine dear God lamenting the absence of a Devil, and declaring that the Christian scheme could not work well without one. His utter loss would make the government of the world retrograde from an admirably balanced constitutional monarchy to a mere Oriental absolute despotism. You must choose some one to lead, if only in name and for the time, as the Whigs chose Lord Hartington. But though Lord Hartington is still tolerated by us English, a Lord Hartington of a Devil, be it said with all respect to both his lordship and his Devil-ship, would scarcely be tolerated by either the celestial or the infernal benches.

In Beranger's authentic record, already alluded to, of "The Death of the Devil"—which, however, relates only to the Church of Rome—we read how, on learning the catastrophe:—

"The conclave shook with mortal fear;  
Power and cash-box, adieu! they said;  
We have lost our father dear,  
The Devil is dead! the Devil is dead!"

But while they they were in this passion of grief and despair, St. Ignatius offered to take the place of the dead Devil; and none could doubt that he with his Jesuits for imps would prove a most efficient substitute. Wherefore the Church threw off its sorrow and welcomed his offer with most holy rapture:—

"Noble fellow! cried all the court,  
We bless thee for thy malice and hate.  
And at once his Order, Rome's support,  
Saw its robe flutter Heaven's gate.  
From the angel's tears of pity fell:  
Poor man will have cause to rue, they said;  
St. Ignatius inherits Hell.  
The Devil is dead! the Devil is dead!"

Thus matters continued well for the Church of Rome, and, in fact, became even better than before. But if the Devil should die in the Church of England, whom has she that could efficiently take his place? She has no saints except the disciples and apostles of the New Testament, and these have long since gone to glory. Would Mr. Gladstone undertake the office? or Mr. Beresford Hope, with the *Saturday Review* for his infernal gazette? or the editor of the *Rock*? or he of the *Church Times*? or the man who does religion for the *Daily Telegraph*? Each of these distinguished gentlemen might well eagerly accept the candidature or a post so lofty: but I fear that

none of them could be considered equal to its functions. Perhaps Mr. Disraeli has the requisite genius, and probably he would be very glad to exchange the Premiership of little England for that of large hell: but unfortunately he has already committed himself to the side of the angels, meaning by angels the humdrum Tory angels of heaven—for, as Dr. Johnson said, the Devil was the first Whig. On the whole, the Church of England had better keep loyal to its ancient and venerable Devil, being too impoverished in intellect and character to supply a worthy successor.

I have ventured to compare the government of the world in the Christian scheme, by a God and a Devil, with our own felicitous government by party. There is, however, or rather there appears to be, a striking difference between the two. In our government, when the Prime Minister finds himself decidedly in a minority, he goes out of office, and the Leader of the Opposition goes in; in the Government of the World the Leader of the Opposition seems to have always had an immense majority (and his majority in these days is probably larger than ever before, seeing that sceptics and infidels have multiplied exceedingly), yet the other side is supposed to retain permanent possession of office. I say “supposed,” because the Bible itself suggests that this popular opinion is a mistake, the Devil (if there be a Devil) being entitled by it the prince of this world, which surely implies his accession to power.

Although the Godhead or governing power of the world, according to the Christian scheme, is usually spoken and written of as a trinity, it is, in fact, quarterary or fourfold for Protestants, and quinary or fivefold for Roman Catholics. The former have God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and God the Devil; the latter supplement these with Goddess the Virgin Mary. Both formally acknowledge the first three as collectively and severally almighty, but Protestants implicitly acknowledge the fourth, and Roman Catholics the fifth, as more almighty still (these solecisms of dogma cannot be expressed without solecisms of language). With the Roman Catholics I am not concerned here. With regard to the Protestants, and those especially professing the Protestantism of the Church of England, I may safely affirm that the Devil is not less essential to their theology than is any person of the Trinity, or, in fact, than are the three persons together. Indeed, the Father and the Holy Ghost have been practically dispensed with, leaving Christ and Satan to fight the battle out between themselves.

As this is a gloriously scientific age, nobly enamored of the exact sciences, I will endeavor to expound this sublime subject of the divinity of the Church of England mathematically, even after the manner of the divine Plato in Book VIII. of “*The Republic*,” treating of divine and human generation; and in the “*Timæus*,” treating of the creation of the universal soul. His demonstrations, indeed, are so divinely obscure as to confound all the scholiasts; my demonstration, however, shall be so

translucent that even the most learned and subtle lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, with their legal spectacles on, shall not be able to help seeing through it. And whereas the figures, which are shapes, are more intelligible to most people than the figures which are numbers, let the exposition be geometrical. We will say, then, that the Church of old conceived the divinity in the form of an equilateral triangle, whereof the base was Christ as the whole system was founded on belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father and the Holy Ghost were the two sides, leaning each on the other; and the Devil was the apex, as opposed to, and farthest from, our blessed Savior. But in course of time the theologians (perhaps merely wanting some occupation for their vigorous talents, perhaps deeming it undignified to have two persons of the godhead supporting each other obliquely like a couple of tipsy men, perhaps simply in order to make matters square) set to work, and pushed up the two sides, so that each might stand firm and perpendicular by itself. This process had two unforeseen results; it expanded the apex, which was a very elastic point, so that it became the crowning side of the square, and it so unhinged the sides that after a brief upright existence they lost their balance, and were carried to Limbo by the first wind of strange doctrine which blew that way; and the Devil and Christ, or Christ and the Devil (arrange the precedence as you please), were left alone confronting each other. These two are of course equal and parallel, the main distinction between them being that Christ is below, and the Devil above, or, in other words, that the Devil is superior and Christ inferior (the Devil seems entitled to the precedence). Thus matters have continued even to the present time, the divinity showing itself, as we may say, without form and void; and we are free to speculate on the momentous questions: Will the crown (which is the Devil) fall into the base (which is Christ)? Will the base float up into the crown? Will the two coalesce half way? Will they both, unknit from their sides, be carried away to Limbo by some blast of strange doctrine? One thing is certain, they cannot long remain as they are. Rare Ben Jonson chanted the Trinity, or Equilateral Triangle; rare Walt Whitman has chanted the Square Deific (with Satan for the fourth side); no poet can care to chant the two straight lines which, in the language of Euclid, and in the region of intelligence, cannot enclose a space, but are as a magnified symbol of equal—to nothing.

P. S.—It may be appropriately added that the books of Euclid are really symbolic and prophetic expositions of most sublime and sacrosanct mysteries, though in these days few persons seem aware of the fact. Thus the very first definition, “A point is position without magnitude,” exactly defines every point of difference between the theologians. So a line, which is as the prolongation of a point, or length without breadth, represents in one sense (for each symbol has manifold meanings)



the history of any theological system. An acute angle is, say, Professor Clifford; an obtuse angle, Mr. Whalley; a right angle, the present writer: *non angeli sed Angli*. The first proposition, "To erect an equilateral triangle upon a given finite straight line," indicates the problem solved by Christianity, when it erected the Trinity on the basis of the man we call Jesus. This pregnant subject should be worked out in detail through the whole eight books.

# RELIGION IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

Top of Pike's Peak, March 4th, 1873.

HONORED with your special commission, I at once hurried across to Denver, and thence still westward until I found myself among the big vertebrae of this longish backbone of America. I have wandered to and fro among the new cities, the advanced camps of civilisation, always carefully reticent as to my mission, always carefully inquiring into the state of religion both in doctrine and practice. You were so hopeful that high Freethought would be found revelling triumphant in these high free regions, that I fear you will be acutely pained by this my true report. Churches and chapels of all kinds abound—Episcopalian, Methodist Episcopal (for the Methodists here have bishops), Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational, Roman Catholic, etc. Zeal inflaming my courage, three and even four times have I ventured into a church, each time enduring the whole service; and if I have not ventured oftener, certainly I had more than sufficient cause to abstain. For as I suffered in my few visits to churches in your England, so I suffered here; and such sufferings are too dreadful to be frequently encountered, even by the bravest of the brave. Whether my sensations in church are similar to those of others, or are peculiar to myself, I cannot be sure; but I am quite sure that they are excruciating. On first entering I may feel calm, wakeful, sane, and not uncomfortable, except that here I rather regret being shut in from the pure air and splendid sky, and in England rather regret having come out through the raw, damp murk, and in both regret that civilisation has not yet established smoking-pews; but the Church is always behind the age. It is pleasant for awhile to note the well-dressed people seated or entering; the men with unctuous hair and somewhat wooden decorum; the women floating more at ease, suavely conscious of their fine inward and outward adornments. It is pleasant to keep a hopeful look-out for some one of more than common beauty or grace, and

to watch such a one if discovered. As the service begins, and the old, old words and phrases come floating around me, I am lulled into quaint dream-memories of childhood; the long unthought-of school-mates, the surreptitious sweetstuff, the manifold tricks and smothered laughter, by whose aid (together with total inattention to the service, except to mark and learn the text) one managed to survive the ordeal. The singing also is pleasant, and lulls me into vaguer dreams. Gradually, as the service proceeds, I become more drowsy; my small faculties are drugged into quiet slumber, they feel themselves off duty, there is nothing for which they need keep awake. But, with the commencement of the sermon, new and alarming symptoms arise within me, growing ever worse and worse until the close. Pleasure departs with tranquility, the irritation of revolt and passive helplessness is acute. I cannot find relief in toffy, or in fun with my neighbors, as when I was a happy child. The old stereotyped phrases, the immemorial platitudes, the often-killed sophistries that never die, come buzzing and droning about me like a sluggish swarm of wasps, whose slow deliberate stinging is more hard to bear than the quick keen stinging of anger. Then the wasps, penetrating through my ears, swarm inside me; there is a horrid buzzing in my brain, a portentous humming in my breast; my small faculties are speedily routed, and disperse in blind anguish, the implacable wasps droning out and away after them, and I am left void, void; with hollow skull, empty heart, and a mortal sinking of stomach; my whole being is but a thin shell charged with vacuity and desperate craving; I expect every instant to collapse or explode. It is but too certain that if anyone should then come to lead me off to an asylum for idiots, or a Young Men's Christian Association, or any similar institution, I could not utter a single rational word to save myself. And though all my faculties have left me, I cannot attempt to leave the church; decorum, rigid and frigid, freezes me to my seat; I stare stonily in unimaginable torture, feebly wondering whether the sermon will outlast my sanity, or my sanity outlast the sermon. When at length released, I am so utterly demoralised that I can but smoke furiously, pour much beer and cram much dinner into my hollowness, and so with swinish dozing hope to feel better by tea-time. Now, though in order to fulfil the great duties you entrust to me, I have cheerfully dared the Atlantic, and spent long days and perilous nights in railroad cars, and would of course (were it indeed necessary) face unappalled mere physical death and destruction, I really could not go on risking, with the certainty of ere long losing, my whole small stock of brains; especially as the loss of these would probably rather hinder than further the performance of the said duties. For suppose me reduced to permanent idiocy by church-going, become a mere brazen hollowness with a riotous tongue like Cowper's church-going bell; is it not most likely that I would then turn true believer, renouncing and denouncing your noble commission,

even as you would renounce and denounce your imbecile commissioner?

Finding that I could not pursue my inquiries in the churches and chapels, I was much grieved and perplexed, until one of those thoughts occurred to me which are always welcome and persuasive, because in exact agreement with our own desires or necessities. I thought of what I had remarked when visiting your England: how the churches and chapels and lecture-halls, each sect thundering more or less terribly against all the others, made one guess that the people were more disputatious than pious; how one became convinced, in spite of his infidel reluctance, that the people were indeed, as a rule, thoroughly and genuinely religious, by mingling freely with them in their common daily and nightly life. I asked myself, What really proved to me the pervading Christianity of England? the sermons, the tracts, the clerical lectures, the missionary meetings? the cathedrals and other theatres and music-halls crowded with worshippers on Sunday, while the museums and other public-houses were empty and shut? No, scarcely these things; but the grand princeliness of the princes, the true nobleness of the nobles, the lowliness of the bishops, the sanctity of the clergy, the honesty of the merchants, the veracity of the shopkeepers, the sobriety and thrift of the artisans, the independence and intelligence of the rustics; the general faith and hope and love which brightened the sunless days, the general temperance and chastity which made beautiful the sombre nights; the almost universal abhorrence of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; the almost universal devotion to heaven, the spirit, and God.

I thereupon determined to study the religion out here, even as I had studied it in England, in the ordinary public and private life of the people; and you will doubtless be sorely afflicted to learn that I have found everywhere much the same signs of genuine, practical Christianity as are so common and patent in the old country. The ranchmen have sown the good seed, and shall reap the harvest of heavenly felicity; the stockmen will surely be corralled with the sheep, and not among the goats, at the last day; not to gain the whole world would the storekeepers lose their own souls; the pioneers have found the narrow way which leadeth unto life; the fishermen are true disciples, the trappers catch Satan in his own snares, the hunters are mighty before the Lord; bright are the celestial prospects of the prospectors, and the miners are all stopping-out that hidden treasure which is richer than silver and much fine gold. As compared with the English, these Western men are perchance inferior in two important points of Christian sentiment: they probably do not fear God, being little given to fear anyone; they certainly do not honor the king, perhaps because they unfortunately have none to honor. On the other hand, as I have been assured by many persons from the States and the old country, they are even superior to the English in one important point of Christian conduct. Christ has promised that in

discharging the damned to hell at the day of judgment, he will fling at them this among other reproaches, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in," and this particular rebuke seems to have wrought a peculiarly deep impression in these men, perhaps because they have much more to do with strangers than have people in old settled countries, so much, indeed, that the word "stranger" is continually in their mouths. The result is (as the said persons from England and the States have often solemnly assured me) that any and every stranger arriving in these regions is most thoroughly, most beautifully, most religiously taken in. So that should any of these fine fellows by evil hap be among the accursed multitude whom Christ thus addresses, they will undoubtedly retort in their frank fashion of speech: "Wall, boss, it may be right to give us hell on other counts, but you say you was a stranger and we didn't take you in. What we want to know is, Did you ever come to our parts to trade in mines or stock or sich? If you *didn't*, how the Devil *could* we take you in? if you *did*, it's a darned lie, and an insult to our understanding to say we *didn't*."

But though the practical life out here is so veritably Christian, you still hope that at any rate the creeds and doctrines are considerably heterodox. I am sincerely sorry to be obliged to destroy this hope. In the ordinary talk of the men continually recur the same or almost the same expressions and implications of orthodox belief, as are so common in your England, and throughout Christendom. Why such formulas are generally used by men only, I have often been puzzled to explain: it may be that the women, who in all lands attend divine service much more than do the men, find ample expression of their faith in the set times and places of public worship and private prayer; while the men, less methodical, and demanding liberal scope, give it robust utterance whenever and wherever they choose. These formulas, as you must have often remarked, are most weighty and energetic; they avouch and avow the supreme personages and mysteries and dogmas of their religion; they are usually but brief ejaculations, in strong contrast to those long prayers of the Pharisees which Jesus laughed to scorn; and they are often so superfluous as regards the mere worldly meaning of the sentences in which they appear, that it is evident they have been interjected simply to satisfy the pious ardor of the speaker, burning to proclaim in season and out of season the cardinal principles of his faith. I say speaker, and not writer, because writing, being comparatively cold and deliberate, seldom flames out in these sharp swift flashes, that leap from living lips touched with coals of fire from the altar.<sup>(1)</sup>

1. Is it not time that we wrote such words as this damn at full length, as did Emily Brontë, the Titaness, whom Charlotte justly indicates in this as in other respects; instead of putting only initial and final letters, with a hypocritical fig-leaf dash in the middle, drawing particular attention

to what it affects to conceal? These words are in all men's mouths, and many of them are emphatically the leading words of the Bible.

I am aware that these fervid ejaculations are apt to be regarded by the light-minded as trivial, by the cold-hearted as indecorous, by the sanctimonious as even profane; but to the true philosopher, whether he be religious or not, they are pregnant with grave significance. For do not these irrepressible utterances burst forth from the very depths of the profound heart of the people? Are they not just as spontaneous and universal as is the belief in God itself? Are they not among the most genuine and impassioned words of mankind? Have they not a primordial vigor and vitality? Are they not supremely of that voice of the people which has been well called the voice of God? Thus when your Englishman instead of "Strange!" says "The Devil!" instead of "Wonderful!" cries "Good Heavens!" instead of "How startling!" exclaims "O Christ!" he does more than merely express his emotions, his surprise, his wonder, his amaze; he hallows it to the assertion of his belief in Satan, in the good kingdom of God, in Jesus; and, moreover, by the emotional gradation ranks with perfect accuracy the Devil lowest in the scale, the heavens higher, Christ the loftiest. When another shouts "God damn you!"<sup>(1)</sup> he not only condemns the evil of the person addressed; he also takes occasion to avow his own strong faith in God and God's judgment of sinners. Similarly "God bless you!" implies that there is a God, and that from him all blessings flow. How vividly does the vulgar hyperbole "Infernally hot," prove the general belief in hell-fire! And the phrase "God knows!" not merely declares that the subject is beyond human knowledge, but also that an all-wise God exists. Here in the West, as before stated, such brief expressions of faith, which are so much more sincere than long formularies repeated by rote in church, are quite as common as in your England. When one has sharply rebuked or punished another, he says "I gave him hell." And that this belief in future punishment pervades all classes is proved by the fact that even a profane editor speaks of it as a matter of course. For the thermometer having been stolen from his sanctum, the said worthy editor announced that the mean cuss who took it might as well bring or send it back (no questions asked) for it could not be of any use to him in the place he was going to, as it only registered up to 212 degrees. The old notion that hell or Hades is located in the middle of the earth (which may have a scientific solution in the Plutonic theory that we dwell on the crust of a baked dumpling full of fusion and confusion) is obviously tallied by the miner's assertion that his vein was true-fissure, reaching from the grass-roots down to hell. The frequent phrase "A God-damned liar," "A God-damned thief," recognise God as the punisher of the wicked. I have heard a man complain of an ungodly headache, implying first, the existence of God, and secondly, the fact that the Godhead does not ache, or in other words is perfect.

Countless other phrases of this kind might be alleged, a few of them astonishingly vigorous and racy, for new countries breed lusty new forms of speech; but the few already given suffice for my present purpose. One remarkable comparison, however, I cannot pass over without a word: it is common to say of a man who has too much self-esteem, He thinks himself a little tin Jesus on wheels. It is clear that some profound suggestion, some sacrosanct mystery, must underlie this bold locution; but what I have been hitherto unable to find out. The connexion between Jesus and tin may seem obvious to such as know anything of bishops and pluralists, pious bankers and traders. But what about the wheels? Have they any relation to the opening chapter of Ezekiel? It is much to be wished that Max Müller, and all other such great scholars, who (as I am informed, for it's not I that would presume to study them myself) manage to extract whatever noble mythological meanings they want, from unintelligible Oriental metaphors and broken phrases many thousand years old, would give a few years of their superfluous time to the interpretation of this holy riddle. Do not, gentleman, do not by all that is mysterious, leave it to the scholars of millenniums to come; proceed to probe and analyse and turn it inside out at once, while it is still young and flourishing, while the genius who invented it is still probably alive, if he deceased not in his boots, as deceased so many gallant pioneers.

And here, before afflicting you further, O much-enduring editor, let me soothe you a little by stating that some particles of heresy, some few heretics, are to be found even here. I have learned that into a very good and respectable bookstore in a city of these regions, certain copies of Taylor's "Diegesis" have penetrated, who can say how? and that some of these have been sold. A living judge has been heard to declare that he couldn't believe at all in the Holy Ghost outfit. It has also been told me of a man who must have held strange opinions as to the offspring of God the Father, though certainly this man was not a representative pioneer, being but a German miner, fresh from the States. This Dutchman (all Germans here are Dutch, doubtless from *Deutsche*, the special claims of the Hollanders being ignored) was asked solemnly by a clergyman, "Who died to save sinners?" and answered "Gott." "What," said the pained and pious pastor, "don't you know that it was Jesus the Son of God?" "Ah," returned placidly the Dutchman, "it vass one of te boys, vass it? I always dought it vass te olt man himselben." This good German may have been misled by the mention of the sons of God early in Genesis, yet it is strange that he knew not that Jesus is the only son of God, and our savior. A story is moreover told of two persons, of whom the one boasted rather too often that he was a self-made man, and the other at length quietly remarked that he was quite glad to hear it, as it cleared God from the responsibility of a darned mean bit of work. Whence some

have inferred the heresy that God is the creator of only a part of the universe; but I frankly confess that in my own opinion the reply was merely a playful sarcasm.

The most decided heresy which has come under my own observation was developed in the course of a chat between two miners in a lager-beer saloon and billiard-hall; into the which, it need scarcely be remarked, I was myself solely driven by the fierce determination to carry out my inquiries thoroughly. Bill was smoking, Dick was chewing; and they stood up together, at rather rapidly decreasing intervals, for drinks of such "fine old Bourbon" rye whiskey as bears the honorable popular title of rot-gut. The frequency with which the drinking of alcoholic liquors leads to impassioned and elevated discussion of great problems in politics, history, dog-breeding, horse-racing, moral philosophy, religion, and kindred important subjects, seems to furnish a strong and hitherto neglected argument against tee-totalism. There are countless men who can only be stimulated to a lively and outspoken interest in intellectual questions by a series of convivial glasses and meditative whiffs. If such men really take any interest in such questions at other times, it remains deplorably latent, not exercising its legitimate influence on the public opinion of the world. Our two boys were discussing theology; and having had many drinks, grappled with the doctrine of the triune God. "Wall," said Bill, "I can't make out that trinity consam, that three's one and one's three outfit." Whereto Dick: "Is that so? Then you wam't rigged out for a philosopher, Bill. Look here," pulling forth his revolver, an action which caused a slight stir in the saloon, till the other boys saw that he didn't mean business; "look here, I'll soon fix it up for you. Here's six chambers, but it's only one pistol, with one heft and one barrel; the heft for us to catch hold of, the barrel to kill our enemy. Wall, God a'mighty's jest made hisself a three-shooter, while he remains one God; but the Devil, he's only a single-shot deringer: so God can have three fires at the Devil for one the Devil can have at him. Now can't you figure it out?" "Wall," said Bill, evidently staggered by the revolver, and feeling, if possible, increased respect for that instrument on finding it could be brought to bear toward settlement of even such a difficulty as the present; "Wall, that pans out better than I thought it could: but to come down to the bedrock, either God's a poor mean shot or his piece carries darned light; for I reckon the Devil makes better play with his one chamber than God with his three." "Maybe," replied Dick, with calm candor, strangely indifferent to the appalling prospects this theory held out for our universe; "some of them pesky little things jest shoot peas that rile the other fellow without much hurting him, and then, by thunder, he lets daylight through you with one good ball. Besides, it's likely enough the Devil's the best shot, for he's been consarned in a devilish heap of shooting more than God has; at any rate"—perchance vaguely remembering to have heard of such things as "religious



wars"—“of late years, between here and 'Frisco. Wall, I guess I don't run the creation. Let's liquor;” manifestly deriving much comfort from the consciousness that he had no hand in conducting this world. Bill acquiesced with a brief “Ja,” and they stood up for another drink. I am bound to attest that, in spite or because of the drinks, they had argued throughout with the utmost deliberation and gravity, with a dignified demeanour which Bishops and D.Ds. might envy, and ought to emulate.

Having thus comforted you with what little of heresy and infidelity I have been able to gather, it is now my painful duty to advance another class of proofs of the general religiousness here; a class of which you have very few current specimens in England, unless it be among the Roman Catholics. All comparative mythologists—indeed, all students of history—are said to agree that the popular legends and myths of any race at any time are of the utmost value, as showing what the race then believed, and thus determining its moral and intellectual condition at that period; this value being quite irrespective of the truth or untruth to fact of the said legends. Hence in modern times collections of old traditions and fairy tales have been excellently well received, whether from the infantile literature of ancient peoples, as the Oriental and Norse, or from the senile and anile lips of secluded members of tribes whose nationality is fast dying out, as the Gaelic and Welsh. And truly such collections commend themselves alike to the grave and the frivolous for the scientific scholar finds in them rich materials for serious study, and the mere novel-reader can flatter himself that he is studying while simply enjoying strange stories become new by extreme old age. All primitive peoples, who read and write little, have their most popular beliefs fluidly embodied in oral legends and myths; and in this respect the settlers of a new region, though they may come from the oldest countries, resemble the primitive peoples. They are too busy with the tough work of subduing the earth to give much time to writing or reading anything beyond their local newspapers; they love to chat together when not working, and chat, much more than writing, runs into stories. Thus religious legends in great numbers circulate out here, all charged and surcharged with faith in the mythology of the Bible. Of these it has been my sad privilege to listen to not a few. As this letter is already too long for your paper, though very brief for the importance of its theme, I will subjoin but a couple of them, which I doubt not will be quite enough to indicate what measureless superstition prevails in these youngest territories of the free and enlightened Republic.

It is told—on what authority no one asks, the legend being universally accepted on its intrinsic merits, as Protestants would have us accept the Bible, and Papists their copious hagiology—that St. Joseph, the putative father of our Lord, fell into bad habits, slipping almost daily out of Heaven into evil society, coming home

very late at night and always more or less intoxicated. It is suggested that he may have been driven into these courses by unhappiness in his connubial and parental relations, his wife and her child being ranked so much above himself by the Christian world, and the latter being quite openly attributed to another father. Peter, though very irascible, put up with his misconduct for a long time, not liking to be harsh to one of the Royal Family; and it is believed that God the Father sympathised with this poor old Joseph, and protected him, being himself jealous of the vastly superior popularity of Mary and Jesus. But at length, after catching a violent cold through getting out of bed at a preposterous hour to let the staggering Joseph in, Peter told him roundly that if he didn't come home sober and in good time, he must just stay out all night. Joseph, feeling sick and having lost his pile, promised amendment, and for a time kept his word. Then he relapsed; the heavenly life proved too slow for him, the continual howling of "all the menagerie of the Apocalypse" shattered his nerves, he was disgusted at his own insignificance, the memory of the *liaison* between his betrothed and the Holy Ghost filled him with gall and wormwood, and perhaps he suspected that it was still kept up. So, late one night or early one morning Peter was roused from sleep by an irregular knocking and fumbling at the gate, as if some stupid dumb animal were seeking admittance. "Who's there?" growled Peter. "It's me—Joseph," hiccoughed the unfortunate. "You're drunk," said Peter, savagely.

"You're on the tear again; you're having another bender." "Yes," answered Joseph, meekly. "Wall," said Peter, "you jest go back to where you come from, and spend the night there; get." "I can't," said Joseph. "They're all shut up; they've turned me out." "Then sleep outside in the open air; it's wholesome, and will bring you round," said Peter. After much vain coaxing and supplicating, old Joe got quite mad, and roared out, "If you don't get up and let me in at once, by God I'll take my son out of the outfit and bust up the whole consarn!" Peter, terrified by this threat, which, if carried out, would ruin his prospects in eternal life by abolishing his office of celestial porter, caved in, getting up and admitting Joseph, who ever since has had a latch-key that he may go and come when he pleases. It is to be hoped that he will never when tight let this latch-key be stolen by one of the little devils who are always lurking about the haunts of dissipation he frequents; for in that case the consequences might be awful, as can be readily imagined.

Again it is told that a certain miner, a tough cuss, who could whip his weight in wild cats and give points to a grizzle, seemed uncommonly moody and low-spirited one morning, and on being questioned by his chum, at length confessed that he was bothered by a very queer dream. "I dreamt that I was dead," he explained; "and a smart spry pretty little angel took me up to heaven." "Dreams go by contraries,"

suggested the chum, by way of comfort. "Let that slide," answered the dreamer; "the point isn't there. Wall, St. Peter wasn't at the gate, and the angel critter led me on to pay my respects to the boss, and after travelling considerable we found him as thus. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost and Peter, all as large as life, were playing a high-toned game of poker, and there was four heavy piles on the table—gold, not shinplasters, you bet. I was kinder glad to see that they played poker up in heaven, so as to make life there not on-bearable; for it would be but poor fun singing psalms all day; I was never much of a hand at singing, more particularly when the songs is psalms. Wall, we waited, not liking to disturb their game, and I watched the play. I soon found that Jesus Christ was going through the rest, cheating worse than the heathen Chinee at euchre; but of course I didn't say nothing, not being in the game. After a while Peter showed that he began to guess it too, if he wasn't quite sure; or p'r'aps he was skeared at up and telling Christ to his face. At last, however, what does Christ do, after a bully bluff which ran Pete almost to his bottom dollar, but up and show five aces to Pete's call; and 'What's that for high?' says he, quite cool. 'Now look you, Christ,' shouts Pete, jumping up as mad as thunder, and not caring a cent or a continental what he said to anybody; 'look you, Christ, that's too thin; we don't want any of your darned miracles here!' and with that he grabbed up his pile and all his stakes, and went off in a mighty huff. Christ looked pretty mean, I tell you, and the game was up. Now you see," said the dreamer, sadly and thoughtfully, "it's a hard rock to drill and darned poor pay at that, if when you have a quiet hand at poker up there, the bosses are allowed to cheat and a man can't use his deringer or put a head on 'em; I don't know but I'd rather go to the other place on those terms." Not yet to be read in books, as I have intimated, but circulating orally, and in versions that vary with the various rhapsodists, such are the legends you may hear when a ring is formed round the hotel-office stove at night, in shanties and shebangs of ranchmen and miners, in the shingled offices of judge and doctor, in railroad cars and steamboats, or when bumming around the stores; whenever and wherever, in short, men are gathered with nothing particular to do. The very *naïveté* of such stories surely testifies to the child-like sincerity of the faith they express and nourish. It is the simple unbounded faith of the Middle Ages, such as we find in the old European legends and poems and mysteries, such as your poetess Mrs. Browning well marks in Chaucer.

Many of the so-called liberal clergy complain of the gulf which yawns in this age of materialistic science between religion and every-day life, in this world and the things are treated as mere thin abstractions, they say; and only the lower things are recognised as real. These pious pioneers, in the freshness and wonderfulness of their new life, overleap this gulf without an effort, realising heaven as thoroughly

as earth. How could the communion and the human nature of saints be better exhibited than in St. Joseph falling into dissipation and St. Peter playing poker? How could the manhood as well as the Godhead of Jesus Christ be more familiarly brought home to us than by his taking a hand at this game and then miraculously cheating? When generations have passed away, if not earlier, such next, heaven

“the infantine Familiar clasp of things divine.”

The higher legends as these will assuredly be gathered by earnest and reverent students as quite invaluable historical relics. They must fill the Christian soul with delight; they must harrow the heart of him who hath said in his heart, There is no God.

In conclusion, I must again express my deep regret at being forced by the spirit of truth to give you so favorable an account of the state of religion out here, both in creed and practice. I trust that you will lose no time and spare no exertion in attacking and, if possible, routing out the Christianity now entrenched in these great natural fortresses. Be your war-cry that of the first pioneers, “Pike’s Peak or bust”; and be not like unto him found teamless half-way across the plains, with the confession on his waggon-tilt, “Busted, by thunder.” For you can come right out here by railroad now. As for myself, I climbed wearily and with mortal pantings unto the top of this great mountain, thinking it one of the best coigns of vantage whence to command a comprehensive view of the sphere of my inquiries, and also a spot where one might write without being interrupted or overlooked by loafers. Unfortunately I have not been able to discover any special religious or irreligious phænomena; for, though the prospect is indeed ample where not intercepted by clouds or mist, very few of the people and still fewer of their characteristics can be made out distinctly even with a good glass. How I am to get down and post this letter puzzles me. The descent will be difficult, dangerous, perhaps deadly. Would that I had not come up. After all there is some truth in the Gospel narrative of the Temptation: for by studying the general course of ecclesiastical promotion and the characters of the most eminent churchmen, I was long since led to recognise that it is indeed Satan who sets people on pinnacles of the temple; and I am now moreover thoroughly convinced that it is the Devil and the Devil only that takes any one to the top of an exceeding high mountain.

# THE STORY OF A FAMOUS OLD JEWISH FIRM

(1866.)

MANY thousand years ago, when the Jews first started in business, the chief of their merchants was a venerable and irascible old gentleman named Jah. The Jews have always been excellent traders, keen to scent wealth, subtle to track it, unwearied to pursue it, strong to seize it, tenacious to hold it; and the most keen, subtle, untiring, strong, tenacious of them all, was this Jah. The patriarchs of his people paid him full measure of the homage which Jews have always eagerly paid to wealth and power, and all their most important transactions were carried out through him. In those antique times people lived to a very great age, and Jah is supposed to have lived so many thousands of years that one may as well not try to count them. Perhaps it was not one Jah that existed all this while, but the house of Jah: the family, both for pride and profit, preserving through successive generations the name of its founder. Certain books have been treasured by the Jews as containing exact records of the dealings of this lordly merchant (or house) both with the Jews themselves and with strangers. Many people in our times, however, have ventured to doubt the accuracy of these records, arguing that some of the transactions therein recorded it would have been impossible to transact, that others must have totally ruined the richest of merchants, that the accounts often contradict each other, and that the system of book-keeping generally is quite unworthy of a dealer so truthful and clear-headed as Jah is affirmed to have been. The records are so ancient in themselves, and they treat of matters so much more ancient still, that it is not easy to find other records of any sort with which to check their accounts. Strangely enough the most recent researches have impugned the accuracy of the most ancient of these records; certain leaves of a volume called the "Great Stone Book," having been brought forward to contradict the very first folio of the ledger in which the

dealings of Jah have been posted up according to the Jews. It may be that the first few folios, like the early pages of most annals, are somewhat mythical; and the present humble compiler (who is not deep in the affairs of the primaeval world, and who, like the late lamented Captain Cuttle with his large volume, is utterly knocked up at any time by four or five lines of the "Great Stone Book") will prudently not begin at the beginning, but skip it with great comfort and pleasure, especially as many and learned men are now earnest students of this beginning. We will, therefore, if you please, take for granted the facts that at some time, in some manner, Jah created his wonderful business, and that early in his career he met with a great misfortune, being compelled, by the villainy of all those with whom he had dealings to resort to a wholesale liquidation, which left him so poor, that for some time he had not a house in the world, and his establishment was reduced to four male and as many female servants.

He must have pretty well recovered from this severe shock when he entered into the famous covenant or contract with Abraham and his heirs, by which he bound himself to deliver over to them at a certain, then distant, period, the whole of the valuable landed property called Canaan, on condition that they should appoint him the sole agent for the management of their affairs. In pursuance of this contract, he conducted that little business of the flocks and herds for Jacob against one Laban; and afterwards, when the children of Abraham were grown very numerous, he managed for them that other little affair, by which they spoiled the Egyptians of jewels of silver and jewels of gold; and it is even asserted that he fed and clothed the family for no less than forty years in a country where the commissariat was a service of extreme difficulty.

At length the time came when he was to make over to them the Land of Canaan, for this purpose evicting the several families then in possession thereof. The whole of the covenanted estate he never did make over to them, but the Jews freely admit that this was through their own fault. They held this land as mortgaged to him, he pledging himself not to foreclose while they dealt with him faithfully and fulfilled all the conditions of the covenant. They were to pay him ten per cent, per annum interest, with sundry other charges, to put all their affairs into his hands, to have no dealings whatsoever with any rival merchants, etc., etc. Under this covenant the Jews continued in possession of the fine little property of Canaan for several hundred years, and they assert that this same Jah lived and conducted his business throughout the whole period. But, as I have ventured to suggest, the long existence of the house of Jah may have been the sum total of the lives of a series of individual Jahs. The Jews could not have distinguished the one from the other; for it is a strange fact that Jah himself, they admit, was never seen. Perhaps he did not af-

fect close contact with Jews. Perhaps he calculated that his power over them would be increased by mystery; this is certain, that he kept himself wholly apart from them in his private office, so that no one was admitted even on business. It is indeed related that one Moses (the witness to the execution of the covenant) caught a glimpse of him from behind, but this glimpse could scarcely have sufficed for identification; and it is said, also, that at certain periods the chief of the priesthood was admitted to consultation with him; but although his voice was then heard, he did not appear in person—only the shadow of him was seen, and everyone will allow that a shadow is not the best means of identification. And in further support of my humble suggestion it may be noted that in many and important respects the later proceedings attributed to Jah differ extremely in character from the earlier; and this difference cannot be explained as the common difference between the youth and maturity and senility of one and the same man, for we are expressly assured that Jah was without change—by which we are not to understand that either through thoughtlessness or parsimony he never had small cash in his pocket for the minor occasions of life; but that he was stubborn in his will, unalterable in his ideas, persistent in his projects and plans.

The records of his dealings at home with the Jews, and abroad with the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Philistines, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Edomites, and other nations, as kept by the Jews themselves, are among the strangest accounts of a large general business which have ever been put down in black on white. And in nothing are they more strange than in the unsullied candor with which the Jews always admit and proclaim that it was their fault, and by no means the fault of Jah, whenever the joint business went badly, and narrate against themselves the most astonishing series of frauds and falsehoods, showing how they broke the covenant, and attempted to cheat the other party in every imaginable way, and, in order to ruin his credit, conspired with foreign adventurers of the worst character—such as MM. Baal, Ashtaroth, and Moloch. Jah, who gave many proofs of a violent and jealous temper, and who was wont to sell up other debtors in the most heartless way, appears to have been very patient and lenient with these flagitious Jews. Yet with all his kindness and long-suffering he was again and again forced to put executions into their houses, and throw themselves into prison; and at length, before our year One, having, as it would seem, given up all hope of making them deal honestly with him, he had put certain strict Romans in possession of the property to enforce his mortgage and other rights.

And now comes a sudden and wonderful change in the history of this mysterious Jah. Whether it was the original Jah, who felt himself too old to conduct the immense business alone, or whether it was some successor of his, who had not the

same self-reliance and imperious will, one cannot venture to decide; but we all know that it was publicly announced, and soon came to be extensively believed, that Jah had taken unto himself two partners, and that the business was thenceforth to be carried on by a firm, under the style of Father, Son, and Co. It is commonly thought that history has more of certainty as it becomes more recent; but unfortunately in the life of Jah, uncertainty grows ten times more uncertain when we attain the period of this alleged partnership, for the Jews deny it altogether; and of those who believe in it not one is able to define its character, or even to state its possibility in intelligible language. The Jews assert roundly that the alleged partners are a couple of vile impostors, that Jah still conducts his world-wide business alone, that he has good reasons (known only to himself) for delaying the exposure of these pretenders; and that, however sternly he has been dealing with the Jews for a long time past, and however little they may seem to have improved so as to deserve better treatment, he will yet be reconciled to them, and restore them to possession of their old land, and exalt them above all their rivals and enemies, and of his own free will and absolute pleasure burn and destroy every bond of their indebtedness now in his hands. And in support of these modest expectations they can produce a bundle of documents which they assert to be his promissory notes, undoubtedly for very large amounts; but which, being carefully examined, turn out to be all framed on this model: "I, the above-mentioned A. B." (an obscure or utterly unknown Jew, supposed to have lived about three thousand years ago), "hereby promise in the name of Jah, that the said Jah shall in some future year unknown, pay unto the house of Israel the following amount, that is to say, etc." If we ask, Where is the power of attorney authorising this dubious A. B. to promise this amount in the name of Jah? the Jews retort: "If you believe in the partnership, you must believe in such power, for you have accepted all the obligations of the old house, and have never refused to discount its paper: if you believe neither in Jah nor in the partnership, you are a wretch utterly without faith, a commercial outlaw." In addition, however, to these remarkable promissory notes, the Jews rely upon the fact that Jah, in the midst of his terrible anger, has still preserved some kindness for them. He threatened many pains and penalties upon them for breach of the covenant, and many of these threats he has carried out; but the most cruel and horrific of all he has not had the heart to fulfil: they have been oppressed and crushed, strangers have come into their landed property, they have been scattered among all peoples, a proverb and a by-word of scorn among the nations, their religion has been accursed, their holy places are defiled, but the crowning woe has been spared them (Deut. xxviii., 44); never yet has it come to pass that the stranger should lend to them, and they should not lend to the stranger. There is yet balm in Gilead, a rose of beauty in Sharon, and a cedar of



majesty on Lebanon; the Jew still lends to the stranger, and does not borrow from him, except as he “borrowed” from the Egyptian—and the interest on money lent is still capable, with judicious treatment, of surpassing the noble standard of “shent per shent.”

And even among the Gentiles there are some who believe that Jah is still the sole head of the house, and that the pair who are commonly accounted junior partners are in fact only superior servants, the one a sort of manager, the other general superintendent and agent, though Jah may allow them a liberal commission on the profits, as well as a fixed salary.

—But the commercial world of Europe, in general, professes to believe that there is a *bona fide* partnership, and that the three partners have exactly equal authority and interest in the concern; that, in fact, there is such thorough identity in every respect that the three may, and ought to be, for all purposes of business, considered as one. The second partner, they say, is really the son of Jah; though Jah, with that eccentricity which has ever abundantly characterised his proceedings, had this son brought up as a poor Jewish youth, apparently the child of a carpenter called Joseph, and his wife Mary. Joseph has little or no influence with the firm, and we scarcely hear of a transaction done through him, but Mary has made the most profitable use of her old *liaison* with Jah, and the majority of those who do business with the firm seek her good offices, and pay her very liberal commissions. Those who do not think so highly of her influence, deal with the house chiefly through the son, and thus it has come to pass that poor Jah is virtually ousted from his own business. He and the third partner are little more than sleeping partners, while his mistress and her son manage every affair of importance.

This state of things seems somewhat unfair to Jah; yet one must own that there are good reasons for it. Jah was a most haughty and humorous gentleman, extremely difficult to deal with, liable to sudden fits of rage, wherein he maltreated friends and foes alike, implacable when once offended, a desperately sharp shaver in the bargain, a terrible fellow for going to law. The son was a much more kindly personage, very affable and pleasant in conversation, willing and eager to do a favor to any one, liberal in promises even beyond his powers of performance, fond of strangers, and good to the poor; and his mother, with or without reason, is credited with a similar character. Moreover, Jah always kept himself invisible, while the son and mother were possibly seen, during some years, by a large number of persons; and among those who have never seen them their portraits are almost as popular as photographs of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

With the real or pretended establishment of the Firm, a great change took place in the business of Jah. This business had been chiefly with the Jews, and even when

it extended to foreign transactions, these were all subordinate to the Jewish trade. But the Firm lost no time in proclaiming that it would deal with the whole world on equal terms: no wonder the Jews abhor the alleged partners! And the nature of the contracts, the principal articles of trade, the mode of keeping the accounts, the commission and interest charged and allowed, the salaries of the agents and clerks, the advantages offered to clients, were all changed too. The head establishment was removed from Jerusalem to Rome, and branch establishments were gradually opened in nearly all the towns and villages of Europe, besides many in Asia and Africa, and afterwards in America and Australia. It is worth noting that in Asia and Africa (although the firm arose in the former) the business has never been carried on very successfully; Messrs. Brahma, Vishnu, Seeva, and Co., the great houses of Buddha and Mumbo Jumbo, various Parsee firms, and other opposition houses, having among them almost monopolised the trade.

The novel, distinctive, and most useful article which the Firm engaged to supply was a bread called *par excellence* the Bread of Life. The Prospectus (which was first drafted, apparently in perfect good faith, by the Son; but which has since been so altered and expanded by successive agents that we cannot learn what the original, no longer extant, exactly stated) sets forth that the House of Jah, Son and Co. has sole possession of the districts yielding the corn whereof this bread is made, the sole patents of the mills for grinding and ovens for baking, and that it alone has the secret of the proper process for kneading. The Firm admits that many other houses have pretended to supply this invaluable bread, but accuses them all of imposture or poisonous adulteration. For itself, it commands the genuine supply in such quantities that it can under take to feed the whole world, and at so cheap a rate that the poorest will be able to purchase as much as he needs; and, moreover, as the firm differs essentially from all other firms in having no object in view save the benefit of its customers, the partners being already so rich that no profits could add to their wealth, it will supply the bread for mere love to those who have not money!

This fair and beautiful prospectus, you will easily believe, brought vast multitudes eager to deal with the firm, and especially large multitudes of the poor, ravished with the announcement that love should be henceforth current coin of the realm; and the business spread amazingly. But at the very outset a sad mischance occurred. The Son, by far the best of the partners, was suddenly seized and murdered and buried by certain agents of the old Jewish business (furious at the prospect of losing all their rich trade), with the connivance of the Roman installed as inspector. At least, these wretches thought they had murdered the poor man, and it is admitted on every side that they buried him: but the dependants of the Firm have a strange story that he was not really killed, but arose out of his tomb after lying there

for three days, and slipped away to keep company with his father, the invisible Jah, in his exceedingly private office; and they assert that he is still alive along with Jah, mollifying the old man when he gets into one of his furious passions, pleading for insolvent debtors, and in all things by act and counsel doing good for all the clients of the house. They, moreover, assert that the third partner, who as the consoling substitute for the absent Son is commonly called the Comforter, and who is very energetic, though mysteriously invisible in his operations, superintends all the details of the business in every one of the establishments. But this third partner is so difficult to catch, that, as stated before, the majority of the customers deal with the venerable mother, as the most accessible and humane personage belonging to the house.

Despite the death or disappearance of the Son, the firm prospered for a considerable time. After severe competition, in which neither side showed itself very scrupulous, the great firm of Jupiter and Co., the old Greek house, which had been strengthened by the amalgamation of the wealthiest Roman firms, was utterly beaten from the field, sold up and extinguished. In the sale of the effects many of the properties in most demand were bought in by the new firm, which also took many of the clerks and agents into its employment, and it is even said adopted in several important respects the mode of carrying on business and the system of book-keeping. But while the firm was thus conquering its most formidable competitor, innumerable dissensions were arising between its own branch establishments; every one accusing every other of dealing on principles quite hostile to the regulations instituted by the head of the house, of falsifying the accounts, and of selling an article which was anything but the genuine unadulterated bread. There were also interminable quarrels among them as to relative rank and importance.

And whether the wheat, as delivered to the various establishments, was or was not the genuine article which the firm had contracted to supply, it was soon discovered that it issued from the licensed shops adulterated in the most audacious manner. And, although the prospectus had stated most positively that the bread should be delivered to the poor customers of the firm without money and without price (and such seems really to have been the good Son's intention), it was found, in fact, that the loaves, when they reached the consumer, were at least as costly as ever loaves of any kind of bread had been. It mattered little that the wheat was not reckoned in the price, when agents', commissioners', messengers' fees, bakers' charges, and a hundred items, made the price total so enormous. When, at length, the business was flourishing all over Europe, it was the most bewildering confusion of contradictions that, perhaps, was ever known in the commercial world. For in all the establishments the agents professed and very solemnly swore that they dealt

on principles opposed and infinitely superior to the old principles of trade; yet their proceedings (save that they christened old things with new names) were identical with those which had brought to shameful ruin the most villainous old firms. The sub-managers, who were specially ordered to remain poor while in the business, and for obedience were promised the most splendid pensions when superannuated, all became rich as princes by their exactions from the clients of the house; the agents, who were especially commanded to keep the peace, were ever stirring up quarrels and fighting ferociously, not only with opposition agents but with one another. The accounts, which were to be regulated by the most honest and simple rules, were complicated in a lawless system, which no man could understand, and falsified to incredible amounts, to the loss of the customers, without being to the gain of the firm. In brief, each establishment was like one of those Chinese shops where the most beautiful and noble maxims of justice and generosity are painted in gilt letters outside, while the most unblushing fraud and extortion are practised inside. When poor customers complained of these things, they were told that the system was perfect, that the evils were all from the evil men who conducted the business! but the good people did not further explain how the perfection of the system could ever be realised, since it must always be worked by imperfect men. Complainants thus mildly and vaguely answered were very fortunate; others, in places where the firm was very powerful, were answered by imprisonment or false accusations, or by being pelted and even murdered by mobs. Many who thought the bread badly baked were themselves thrust into the fire.

Yet so intense is the need of poor men for some bread of life, so willing are simple men to believe fair promises, that, in spite of the monstrous injustice and falsehood and cruelty and licentiousness of the managers and submanagers and agents of the firm, the business continued to flourish, and all the wealth of Europe flowed into its coffers. And generations passed ere some persons bethought them to think seriously of the original Deed of Partnership and the fundamental principles of the Firm. These documents, which had been carefully confined in certain old dead languages which few of the customers could read, were translated into vulgar tongues, which all could read or understand when read, and everyone began studying them for himself. This thinking of essentials, which is so rare a thought among mankind, has already produced remarkable effects, and promises to produce effects yet more remarkable in a short time.

Behold a few of the questions which this study of the first documents has raised.—The Father, whom no one has seen, is there indeed such a personage? The Son, whom certainly no one has seen for eighteen hundred years, did he really come to life again after being brutally murdered? The junior partner, whom no

one has ever seen, the Comforter, is he a comforter made of the wool of a sheep that never was fleeced? The business, as we see it, merely uses the names, and would be precisely the same business if these names covered no personages. Do the managers and submanagers really carry it on for their own profit, using these high names to give dignity to their rascality, and to make poor people believe that they have unbounded capital at their back? One is punished for defamation of character if he denies the existence of the partners, yet not the very chief of all the managers pretends to have seen any of the three!

And the vaunted Bread of Life, wherein does it differ from the old corn-of-Ceres bread, from the baking of the wheat of Mother Hertha? Chiefly in this, that it creates much more wind on the stomach. It is not more wholesome, nor more nourishing, and certainly not more cheap: and it does us little good to be told that it would be if the accredited agents were honest and supplied it pure, when we are told, at the same time, that we must get it through these agents. It is indeed affirmed that, in an utterly unknown region beyond the Black Sea, the genuine wheat may be seen growing by any one who discovers the place; but, as no one who ever crossed the sea on a voyage of discovery ever returned, the assertion rests on the bare word of people who have never seen the corn-land any more than they have seen the partners of the firm; and their word is bare indeed, for it has been stripped to shame in a thousand affairs wherein it could be brought to the test. They tell us also that we shall all in time cross the Black Sea, and if we have been good customers shall dwell evermore in that delightful land, with unlimited supplies of the bread gratis. This may be true, but how do they know? It may be true that in the sea we shall all get drowned for ever.

These and similar doubts which, in many minds, have hardened into positive disbelief, are beginning to affect seriously the trade of the firm. But its interests are now so inextricably bound up with the interests of thousands and millions of well-to-do and respectable people, and on its solvency or apparent solvency depends that of so large a number of esteemed merchants, that we may expect the most desperate struggles to postpone its final bankruptcy. In the great Roman establishment the manager has been supported for many years by charitable contributions from every one whom he could persuade to give or lend, and now he wants to borrow much more. The superintendent of the shops in London is in these days begging for ten hundred thousand pounds to assist the poor firm in its difficulties.

It seems a good sum of money; but, bless you, it is but a drop in the sea compared with what the business has already absorbed, and is still absorbing. Scattered shops in the most distant countries have only been sustained for many years by alms from customers here. The barbarians won't eat the bread, but the bakers sent

out must have their salaries. A million of pounds are being begged here; and people (who would prosecute a mendicant of halfpence) will give it no doubt! Yet, O worthy manager of the London Shops, one proved loaf of the real Bread would be infinitely more valuable, and would infinitely more benefit your firm! The villainy of the agents was monstrous, generation after generation, the cost of that which was promised without money and without price was ruinous for centuries; but not all the villainy and extortion multiplied a hundredfold could drive away the poor hungry customers while they had faith in the genuineness of the bread. It was the emptiness and the wind on the stomach after much eating, which raised the fatal doubts as to the *bona fides* of the whole concern. The great English managers had better ponder this; for at present they grope in the dark delusion that more and better bakers salaried with alms, and new shops opened with eleemosynary funds will bring customers to buy their bran cakes as wheaten loaves. A very dark delusion, indeed! If the pure promised bread cannot be supplied, no amount of money will keep the business going very long. Consider what millions on millions of pounds have been subscribed already, what royal revenues are pouring in still; all meant for investment in wholesome and nourishing food, but nearly all realised in hunger and emptiness, heartburn and flatulence. The old Roman shrewdly calculated that the House of Olympus would prove miserably insolvent if its affairs were wound up, if it tried honestly to pay back all the deposits of its customers. As for this more modern firm, one suspects that, in like case, it would prove so insolvent that it could not pay a farthing in the pound. For Olympus was a house that dealt largely in common worldly goods, and of these things really did give a considerable quantity to its clients for their money; but the new firm professed to sell things infinitely more valuable, and of these it cannot prove the delivery of a single parcel during the eighteen hundred years it has been receiving purchase-money unlimited.

The humble compiler of this rapid and imperfect summary ought, perhaps, to give his own opinion of the firm and the partners, although he suffers under the disadvantage of caring very little for the business, and thinks that far too much time is wasted by both the friends and the enemies of the house in investigation of every line and figure in its books. He believes that Jah, the grand Jewish dealer, was a succession of several distinct personages; and will probably continue to believe thus until he learns that there was but one Pharaoh King of Egypt, but one Bourbon King of France, and that the House of Rothschild has always been one and the same man. He believes that the Son was by no means the child of the Father, that he was a much better character than the Father, that he was really and truly murdered, that his prospectus and business plans were very much more wise and honest and good than the prospectus as we have it now, and the system as it has actually been

worked. He believes that the Comforter has really had a share in this as in every other business not wholly bad in the world, that he has never identified his interests with those of any firm, that specially he never committed himself to a partnership of unlimited liability with the Hebrew Jah, that he undoubtedly had extensive dealings with the Son, and placed implicit confidence in him while a living man, and that he will continue to deal profitably and bountifully with men long after the firm has become bankrupt and extinct. He believes that the corn of the true bread of life is sown and grown, reaped, ground, kneaded, baked and eaten on this side of the Black Sea. He believes that no firm or company whatever, with limited or unlimited liability, has the monopoly for the purveyance of this bread, that no charters can confer such monopoly, that the bread is only to be got pure by each individual for himself, and that no two individuals of judgment really like it prepared in exactly the same fashion, but that unfortunately (as his experience compels him to believe) the bulk of mankind will always in the future no less than in the past persist in endeavoring to procure it through great chartered companies, finally, he believes that the worthy chief baker in London with his million of money is extremely like the worthy Mrs. Partington with her mop against the Atlantic.

# CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE UPPER CIRCLES

(1866.)

POOR dear God sat alone in his private chamber, moody, melancholy, miserable, sulky, sullen, weary, dejected, supenally hipped. It was the evening of Sunday, the 24th of December, 1865. Waters continually dripping wear away the hardest stone; year falling after year will at length overcome the strongest god: an oak-tree outlasts many generations of men; a mountain or a river outlasts many celestial dynasties. A cold like a thick fog in his head, rheum in his eyes, and rheumatism in his limbs and shoulders, his back bent, his chin peaked, his poll bald, his teeth decayed, his body all shivering, his brain all muddle, his heart all black care; no wonder the old gentleman looked poorly as he cowered there, dolefully sipping his Lachryma Christi. "I wish the other party would lend me some of his fire," he muttered, "for it is horribly frigid up here." The table was crowded and the floor littered with books and documents, all most unreadable reading: missionary reports, controversial divinity, bishops' charges, religious periodicals, papal allocutions and encyclical letters, minutes of Exeter Hall meetings, ponderous blue books from the angelic bureaux—dreary as the humor of *Punch*, silly as the critiques of the *Times*, idiotic as the poetry of *All the Year Round*. When now and then he eyed them askance he shuddered more shockingly, and looked at his desk with loathing despair. For he had gone through a hard day's work, with extra services appropriate to the sacred season; and for the ten-thousandth time he had been utterly knocked up and bewildered by the Athanasian Creed.

While he sat thus, came a formal tap at the door, and his son entered, looking sublimely good and respectable, pensive with a pensiveness on which one grows comfortably fat. "Ah, my boy," said the old gentleman, "you seem to get on well enough in these sad times: come to ask my blessing for your birthday *fête*?" "I fear



that you are not well, my dear father; do not give way to dejection, there was once a man—

“O, dash your parables! keep them for your disciples; they are not too amusing. Alack for the good old times!” “The wicked old times you mean, my father; the times when we were poor, and scorned, and oppressed; the times when heathenism and vain philosophy ruled everywhere in the world. Now, all civilised realms are subject to us, and worship us.” “And disobey us. You are very wise, much wiser than your old worn-out father; yet perchance a truth or two comes to me in solitude, when it can’t reach you through the press of your saints, and the noise of your everlasting preaching and singing and glorification. You know how I began life, the petty chief of a villainous tribe. But I was passionate and ambitious, subtle and strong-willed, and, in spite of itself, I made my tribe a nation; and I fought desperately against all the surrounding chiefs, and with pith of arm and wile of brain I managed to keep my head above water. But I lived all alone, a stern and solitary existence. None other of the gods was so friendless as I; and it is hard to live alone when memory is a sea of blood. I hated and despised the Greek Zeus and his shameless court; yet I could not but envy him, for a joyous life the rogue led. So I, like an old fool, must have my amour; and a pretty intrigue I got into with the prim damsel Mary! Then a great thought arose in me: men cannot be loyal to utter aliens; their gods must be human on one side, divine on the other; my own people were always deserting me to pay homage to bastard deities. I would adopt you as my own son (between ourselves, I have never been sure of the paternity), and admit you to a share in the government. Those infernal Jews killed you, but the son of a God could not die; you came up hither to dwell with me; I the old absolute king, you the modern tribune of the people. Here you have been ever since; and I don’t mind telling you that you were a much more loveable character below there as the man Jesus than you have proved above here as the Lord Christ. As some one was needed on earth to superintend the executive, we created the Comforter, prince royal and plenipotentiary; and behold us a divine triumvirate! The new blood was, I must own, beneficial. We lost Jerusalem, but we won Rome; Jove, Neptune, Apollo, Bacchus, and the rest, were conquered and slain; our leader of the opposition ejected Pluto and Pan. Only I did not bargain that my mistress should more than succeed to Juno, who was, at any rate, a lawful wife. You announced that our empire was peace; you announced likewise that it was war; both have served us. Our power extended, our glory rose; the chief of a miserable tribe has become emperor of Europe. But our empire was to be the whole world; yet instead of signs of more dominion, I see signs that what we have is falling to pieces. From my youth up I have been a man of war; and now that I am old and weary and wealthy, and want peace,

peace flies from me. Have we not shed enough blood? Have we not caused enough tears? Have we not kindled enough fires? And in my empire what am I? Yourself and my mistress share all the power between you; I am but a name at the head of our proclamations. I have been a man of war, I am setting old and worn out, evil days are at hand, and I have never enjoyed life; therefore is my soul vexed within me. And my own subjects are as strangers. Your darling saints I cannot bear. The whimpering, simpering, canting, chanting blockheads! You were always happy in a pious miserableness, and you do not foresee the end. Do you know that in spite of our vast possessions we are as near bankruptcy as Spain or Austria? Do you know that our innumerable armies are a Chinese rabble of cowards and traitors? Do you know that our legitimacy (even if yours were certain) will soon avail us as little as that of the Bourbons has availed them? Of these things you are ignorant: you are so deafened with shouts and songs in your own praise that you never catch a whisper of doom. I would not quail if I had youth to cope with circumstance; none can say honestly that I ever feared a foe; but I am so weak that often I could not walk without leaning on you. Why did I draw out my life to this ignominious end? Why did I not fall fighting like the enemies I overcame? Why the devil did you get born at all, and then murdered by those rascally Jews, that I who was a warrior should turn into a snivelling saint? The heroes of Asgard have sunk into a deeper twilight than they foresaw; but their sunset, fervent and crimson with blood and with wine, made splendid that dawnless gloaming. The joyous Olympians have perished, but they all had lived and loved. For me, I have subsisted and hated. What of time is left to me I will spend in another fashion. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And he swallowed hastily a bumper of the wine, which threw him into convulsions of coughing.

Serene and superior the son had let the old man run on. "Do not, I entreat you, take to drink in your old age, dear father. You say that our enemies lived and loved; but think how unworthy of divine rulers was their mode of life, how immoral, how imprudent, how disreputable, how savage, how lustful, how un-Christ-ian! What a bad example for poor human souls!" "Human souls be blessed! Are they so much improved now?... Would that at least I had conserved Jove's barmaid; the prettiest, pleasantest girl they say (we know you are a Joseph, though you always had three or four women dangling about you); fair-ankled was the wench, bright-limbed; she might be unto me even as was Abishag, the Shunammite, unto my old friend David." "Let us speak seriously, my father, of the great celebration to-morrow." "And suppose I *am* speaking very seriously, you solemn prig; not a drop of my blood is there in you."

Here came a hurried knocking at the door, and the angelic ministers of state

crawled in, with super-elaborate oriental cringings, to deliver their daily reports. "Messages from Brahma, Ormuzd, etc., to congratulate on the son's birthday." "The infidels! the mockers!" muttered the son. "Good words," said the father; "they belong to older families than ours, my lad, and were once much more powerful. You are always trying to win over the parvenus." "A riot in the holy city. The black angels organised to look after the souls of converted negroes having a free fight with some of the white ones. My poor lambs!" sighed the son. "Black sheep," growled the father; "what is the row?" "They have plumed themselves brighter than peacocks, and scream louder than parrots; claim precedence over the angels of the mean whites; insist on having some of their own hymns and tunes in the programme of to-morrow's concert." "Lock 'em all up, white and black, especially the black, till Tuesday morning; they can fight it out then—it's Boxing Day. Well have quite enough noise to-morrow without 'em. Never understood the nigger question, for my part: was a slave-holder myself, and cursed Ham as much as pork." "New saints grumbling about lack of civilised accommodation: want underground railways, steamers for the crystal sea, telegraph wires to every mansion, morning and evening newspapers, etc., etc.; have had a public meeting with a Yankee saint in the chair, and resolved that heaven is altogether behind the age." "Confound it, my son, have I not charged you again and again to get some saints of ability up here? For years past every batch has been full of good-for-nothing noodles. Have we no engineers, no editors at all." "One or two engineers, we believe, sire, but we can't find a single editor." "Give one of the *Record* fellows the measles, and an old *l'Univers* hand the cholera, and bring them up into glory at once, and we'll have two daily papers. And while you are about it, see whether you can discover three or four pious engineers—not muffs, mind—and blow them up hither with their own boilers, or in any other handy way. Haste, haste, post haste!" "Deplorable catastrophe in the temple of the New Jerusalem: a large part of the foundation given way, main wall fallen, several hundred workmen bruised." "Stop that fellow who just left; countermand the measles, the cholera will be enough; we will only have one journal, and that must be strictly official. If we have two, one will be opposition. Hush up the accident. It is strange that Pandemonium was built so much better and more quickly than our New Jerusalem!" "All our best architects and other artists have deserted into Elysium, my lord; so fond of the company of the old Greeks."

When these and many other sad reports had been heard, and the various ministers and secretaries savagely dismissed, the father turned to the son and said: "Did I not tell you of the evil state we are in?" "By hope and faith and charity, and the sublime doctrine of self-renunciation, all will yet come right, my father." "Humph! let hope fill my treasury, and faith finish the New Jerusalem, and charity give us

peace and quietness, and self-renunciation lead three-quarters of your new-fangled saints out of heaven; and then I shall look to have a little comfort.” “Will you settle tomorrow’s programme, sire? or shall I do my best to spare you the trouble?” “You do your best to spare me the trouble of reigning altogether, I think. What programme can there be but the old rehearsal for the eternal life (I wish you may get it)? O, that horrible slippery sea of glass, that bedevilled throne vomiting thunders and lightning, those stupid senile elders in white nightgowns, those four hideous beasts full of eyes, that impossible lamb with seven horns and one eye to each horn! O, the terrific shoutings and harpings and stifling incense! A pretty set-out for my time of life I And to think that you hope some time or other to begin this sort of thing as a daily amusement, and to carry it on for ever and ever! Not much appearance of its beginning soon, thank goodness—that is to say,, thank badness. Why can’t you have a play of Aristophanes, or Shakespeare, or Molière? Why should I meddle with the programme? I had nothing to do with first framing it. Besides, it is all in your honor, not in mine. You like playing the part of the Lamb; I’m much more like an old wolf. You are ravished when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks; as for me, I am utterly sick of them. Behold what I will do; I must countenance the affair, but I can do so without disturbing myself. I’ll not go thundering and roaring in my state-carriage of the whirlwind; I’ll slip there in a quiet cloud. You can’t do without my glory, but it really is too heavy for my aged shoulders; you may lay it upon the throne; it will look just as well. As for my speech, here it is all ready written out; let Mercury, I mean Raphael or Uriel, read it; I can’t speak plainly since I lost so many teeth. And now I consider the matter, what need is there for my actual presence at all? Have me there in effigy; a noble and handsome dummy can wear the glory with grace\* Mind you have a handsome one; I wish all the artists had not deserted us. Your pious fellows make sad work of us, my son. But then their usual models are so ugly; your saints have good reason to speak of their vile bodies. How is it that all the pretty girls slip away to the other place, poor darlings? By the bye, who are going on this occasion to represent the twelve times twelve thousand of the tribes of Israel? Is the boy Mortara dead yet? He will make one real Jew.” “We are converting them, sire.” “Not the whole gross of thousands yet, I trust? Faugh! what a greasy stench there would be—what a blazing of Jew jewelry!

“Hand me the latest bluebook, with the reports....

“Ah, I see; great success! Power of the Lord Christ! (always you, of course). Society flourishing. Eighty-two thousand pounds four shillings and twopence three-farthings last year from Christians aroused to the claims of the lost sheep of the House of Israel. (Very good.) Five conversions!! Three others have already been persuaded to eat pork sausages. (Better and better.) One, who drank most fervently

of the communion wine suffered himself to be treated to an oyster supper. Another, being greatly moved, was heard to ejaculate, 'O, Christ!'... Hum, who are the five? Moses Isaacs: wasn't he a Christian ten years ago in Italy, and afterwards a Mahommedan in Salonica, and afterwards a Jew in Marseilles? This Mussulman is your oyster-man, I presume? You will soon get the one hundred and forty-four thousand at this rate, my son! and cheap too!"

He chuckled, and poured out another glass of *Lachryma Christi*; drank it, made a wry face, and then began coughing furiously. "Poor drink this for a god in his old age. Odin and Jupiter fared better. Though decent for a human tittle, for a divinity it is but *ambrosie stygiale*, as my dear old favorite chaplain would call it. I have his devotional works under lock and key there in my desk. *Apropos*, where is he? Left us again for a scurry through the more jovial regions? I have not seen him for a long time." "My father! really, the words he used, the life he led; so corrupting for the young saints! We were forced to invite him to travel a little for the benefit of his health. The court *must* be kept pure, you know." "Send for him instantly, sir. He is out of favor because he likes the old man and laughs at your saints, because he can't cant and loves to humbug the humbugs. Many a fit of the blues has he cured for me, while you only make them bluer. Have him fetched at once. O, I know you never liked him; you always thought him laughing at your sweet pale face and weebegone airs, laughing '*en horrible sarcasm et sanglante derision*' (what a style the rogue has! what makes that of your favorite parsons and holy ones so flaccid and flabby and hectic?) 'Physician, heal thyself!' So, in plain words, you have banished him; the only jolly soul left amongst us, my pearl and diamond and red ruby of Chaplains, abstracter of the quintessence of pantagruelism! The words he used! I musn't speak freely myself now, and the old books I wrote are a great deal too coarse for you Michael and Gabriel told me the other day that they had just been severely lectured on the earnestness of life by one of your new *protégés*; they had to kick him howling into limbo. A fine set of solemn prigs we are getting!" "My father, the holiness of sorrow, the infiniteness of suffering!" "Yes, yes, I know all about it. That long-winded poet of yours (he does an ode for you to-morrow?) began to sermonise me thereon. By Jupiter, he wanted to arouse me to a sense of my inner being and responsibilities and so forth. I very soon packed him off to the infant school where he teaches the alphabet and catechism to the babies and sucklings. Have you sent for my jovial, joyous, jolly Curé of Meudon?" "I have; but I deeply regret that your Majesty thinks it fitting to be intimate with such a free-liver, such a glutton and wine-bibber and mocker and buffoon." "Bah! you patronised the publicans and sinners yourself in your younger and better days. The strict ones blamed you for going about eating and drinking so much. I hear that some of your newest favorites object to the wine

in your last supper, and are going to insist on vinegar-and-water in future.”

Whereupon entered a man of a noble and courtly presence, lively-eyed and golden bearded, ruddy complexioned, clear-browed, thoughtful, yet joyous, serene and unabashed. “Welcome, thrice welcome, my beloved Alcofribas!” cried the old monarch; “very long is it since last I saw you.” “I have been exiled since then, your Majesty.” “And I knew nothing of it!” “And thought nothing of it or of me until you wanted me. No one expects the King to have knowledge of what is passing under his eyes.” “And how did you manage to exist in exile, my poor chaplain?” “Much better than here at court, sire. If your Majesty wants a little pleasure, I advise you to get banished yourself. Your parasites and sycophants and courtiers are a most morose, miserable, ugly, detestable, intolerable swarm of blind beetles and wasps; the devils are beyond comparison better company.” “What! you have been mixing with traitors?” “Oh, I spent a few years in Elysium, but didn’t this time go into the lower circles. But while I sojourned as a country gentleman on the heavenly borders, I met a few contrabandists. I need not tell you that large, yea, enormous quantities of beatitude are smuggled out of your dominions.” “But what is smuggled in?” “Sire, I am not an informer; I never received anything out of the secret-service money. The poor angels are glad to run a venture at odd times, to relieve the tedium of everlasting Te Deum. By the bye, I saw *the* Devil himself.” “The Devil in my kingdom! What is Uriel about? he’ll have to be superannuated.” “Bah! your Majesty knows very well that Satan comes in and returns as and when he likes. The passport system never stops the really dangerous fellows. When he honored me with a call he looked the demurest young saint, and I laughed till I got the lockjaw at his earnest and spiritual discourse. He would have taken yourself in, much more Uriel. You really ought to get him on the list of court chaplains. He and I were always good friends, so if anything happens.... It may be well for you if you can disguise yourself as cleverly as he. A revolution is not quite impossible, you know.” The Son threw up his hands in pious horror; the old King, in one of his spasms of rage, hurled the blue-book at the speaker’s head, which it missed, but knocked down and broke his favorite crucifix. “Jewcy fiction *versus* crucifixion, sire; *magna est veritas et prevalebit!* Thank Heaven, all that folly is *out\*side my brains; it is not the first book full of cant and lies and stupidity that has been flung at me. Why did you not let me finish? The Devil is no fonder than your sacred self of the new opinions; in spite of the proverb, he loves and dotes upon holy water. If you cease to be head of the ministry, he ceases to be head of the opposition; he wouldn’t mind a change, an innings for him and an outings for you; but these latest radicals want to crush both Whigs and Tories. He was on his way to confer with some of your Privy Council, to organise joint action for the suppression of new ideas. You had better be frank and*

*friendly with him. Public opposition and private amity are perfectly consistent and praiseworthy. He has done you good service before now; and you and your Son have always been of the greatest assistance to him.” “By the temptation of Job! I must see to it. And now no more business. I am hipped, my Rabelais; we must have a spree. The cestus of Venus, the lute of Apollo, we never could find; but there was sweeter loot in the sack of Olympus, and our cellars are not yet quite empty. We will have a \*petit souper of ambrosia and nectar.” “My father! my father! did you not sign the pledge to abstain from these heathen stimulants?” “My beloved Son, with whom I am not at all well pleased, go and swill water till you get the dropsy, and permit me to do as I like. No wonder people think that I am failing when my child and my mistress rule for me!”*

The Son went out, shaking his head, beating his breast, scrubbing his eyes, wringing his hands, sobbing and murmuring piteously. “The poor old God! my dear old father! Ah, how he is breaking! Alack, he will not last long! Verily, his wits are leaving him! Many misfortunes and disasters would be spared us were he to abdicate prudently at once. Or a regency might do. But the evil speakers and slanderers would say that I am ambitious. I must get the matter judiciously insinuated to the Privy Council. Alack! alack!”

“Let him go and try on his suit of lamb’s wool for to-morrow,” said the old monarch. “I have got out of the rehearsal, my friend; I shall be conspicuous by my absence; there will be a dummy in my stead.” “Rather perilous innovation, my Lord; the people may think that the dummy does just as well, that there is no need to support the original.” “Shut up, shut up, O, my Curé; no more politics, confound our politics! It is Sunday, so we must have none but chaplains here. You may fetch Friar John and sweet Dean Swift and the amiable parson Sterne, and any other godly and devout and spiritual ministers you can lay hold of; but don’t bring more than a pleiad.” “With Swift for the lost one; he is cooling his ‘sæva indignatio’ in the Devil’s kitchen-furnace just now, comforting poor Addison, who hasn’t got quit for his death-bed brandy yet.” “A night of devotion will we have, and of inextinguishable laughter; and with the old liquor we will pour out the old libations. Yea, Gargantuan shall be the feast; and this night, and to-morrow, and all next week, and twelve days into the new year the hours shall reel and roar with Pantagruelism. Quick, for the guests, and I will order the banquet!” “With all my heart, sire, will I do this very thing. Parsons and pastors, pious and devout, will I lead back, choice and most elect souls worthy of the old drink delectable. And I will lock and double bolt the door, and first warm the chamber by burning all these devilish books; and will leave word with the angel on guard that we are not to be called for three times seven days, when all these Christmas fooleries and mummeries are long over. Amen. Selah. *Au revoir.*

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Tarry till I come.”



## A WORD ON BLASPHEMY.

(1867.)

This is one of our few and far-between outbursts of Rabelasian laughter, irresistibly provoked by the aggressive absurdities of theology; and as such I consider it thoroughly defensible. In all seriousness I affirm that its mockery is far less “blasphemous” than the solemn outrage on reason, the infernal damnation of all mankind who are sensible and sane or who are even mad otherwise than the author, the cold-blooded dissection of the infinite and eternal God as a superior surgeon may dissect an inferior corpse, perpetrated by its prototype the so-called Athanasian Creed. I do not see in what the statement that an old monkey of the tribe once saw the tail of this great big monkey is more irreverent than that other statement how Moses of the tribe of Levi once saw the back parts of the Lord; whom the Church believes to be a Spirit infinite, without parts, a sort of omnipresent æther or supersubtle gas. Nor do I see that the monkey, who is at least a natural animal, is a more outrageous symbol or emblem than the utterly unnatural Lamb as it had been slain, with seven horns and seven eyes, encompassed by all “the menagerie of the Apocalypse.” It would be easy to produce, I think, mockeries far more insulting, buffooneries far more bitter and malignant, lavished upon Paganism, Socinianism, Atheism, and many another *ism*, in the works of the most saintly divines. The hierarchy of Olympus is more venerable than the triune Lord of the New Jerusalem; yet how is it treated in our most popular burlesques? I go to a theatre and find a Christian audience, very tenderly sensitive as to their own religious feelings rolling with laughter and thundering applause at the representation of a ballet-girl Jupiter ascending in a car like a monstrous coal-scuttle, with a deboshed mechanical eagle nodding its head tipsily to the pit; a male Minerva, spectacles on nose, who takes sly gulps from a gin bottle and dances a fish-fag carmagnole; a Bacchus sprawling about drunken and brutish as Caliban; all uttering idiotic puns and singing idiotic songs. And if other mythologies were equally familiar, they would doubtless be maltreated with equal contempt. You thus deliver over to your dismal comic writers, to your clowns and merry-andrews and bayaderes, the gods of Homer and Æschylus, of Herodotus, Pindar and Phidias, you the sanctimonious and reverent modern Britons; and you cry out aghast against “atrocious blasphemy” touching a Divinity, who was first the anthropomorphic clan-god of a petty Syrian tribe, who grew afterwards into a vague Ormuzd with the devil for Ahriman when this tribe had been captive in Babylonia, whom you have filched from this tribe which you still detest and disdain, with whom you have associated two colleagues declared by this tribe (which surely ought to know best) utterly spurious, whom you worship with rites borrowed from old pagans you decry, and discuss in divinity borrowed from old philosophers

and schoolmen you sneer at; who gave to his tribe some millenniums back laws which you preserve in the filched book of your idolatry, but which not one of you dare read to his wife and children; whose son and colleague gave you laws which are certainly readable enough, but which you are so far from obeying that you would assuredly consign to Bedlam any one seeking to act upon them perfectly.

But mockery of the Olympians hurts no one's feelings, while mockery of the Tri-unity hurts the feelings of nearly all who hear or see it? I know that there are here and there a few pious and tender hearts, with whom habitude has become nature; people who, having less intellectual than cordial energy, more affection and reverence than curiosity and self-reliance, pour their whole melted nature into whatever religious moulds chance to be nearest, and harden to the exact shape and size of the mould, so that any blow struck upon it jars and wounds them; and the feelings of these I should be very loth to hurt. I care not for propagandism in general, and in such cases above all propagandism is certainly useless. Why seek to convert women to a struggling faith? Let the women be always on the victorious side, let the men do the fighting and endure the hardships. When their struggling faith has conquered such triumph as it merits, they will find the women all at once in agreement with them, converted not by ideas (for which women care not an apple-dumpling) but by feminine love and loyalty to manhood. One must always be very loth, I say, to wound the feelings of the pious and tender hearts, of the beautiful feminine souls; and fortunately these love to seclude themselves in tranquillity, avoiding debates and controversies. Whose religious feelings, then, are likely to be wounded by "atrocious blasphemies," by "blasphemous indecencies"? The feelings of "the gentle spirit of our meek Review," the benign and holy *Saturday!* The feelings of tract distributors, scripture-readers, polemical parsons, all those in general who violate every courtesy of life to thrust their narrowminded dogmas upon others, and who preach everlasting damnation against people too sensible to care for their ranting! They outrage our reason, they vilify our human nature, they blaspheme our world, they pollute our flesh, and they wind up by dooming us to eternal torture because we differ from them: these trifles are, of course, not supposed to hurt *our* feelings. We endeavor to enthrone human reason, to ennoble human nature, to restore the human body to its pure dignity, to develop the beauty and glory of the world; and we wind up, not by retorting upon them their fiendish curses, not even by laughing at the idea of an almighty and all-good God, but by laughing at their notions of an almighty and all-good God, who has a Hell ready for the vast majority of us: this horrible laugh lacerates their pious sensibilities, and we hear the venomous whine of "atrocious blasphemy." After condemning us to death they commit us for contempt of court, which surely is an anomalous procedure!

You can mock the Grecian mythology, you can burlesque Shakespeare, without wounding any pious heart? No: Olympus is as sacred to many as Mount Sion is to you; our own Shakespeare is as venerable and dear to us as to you that bundle of dissimilar anonymous treatises which you have made coherent by help of the bookbinder and called the Book of Books. And mark this; the Grecian mythology is dead, is no longer aggressive in its absurdities; the priestcraft and the foul rites have long since perished, the beauty and the grace and the splendor remain. But your composite theology is still alive, is insolently aggressive, its lust for tyrannical dominion is unbounded; therefore we must attack it if we would not be enslaved by it. The cross is a sublime symbol; I would no more think of treating it with disrespect while it held itself aloft in the serene heaven of poetry than of insulting the bow of Phoebus Apollo or the thunderbolts of Zeus; but if coarse hands will insist on pulling it down upon my back as a ponderous wooden reality, what can I do but fling it off as a confounded burden not to be borne?

And now let us consider for a moment the meaning of this word "blasphemy," which is the burden of the *S. R.*'s slanderous song; not the legal meaning, but the philosophic, the sense in which it would be used by enlightened and fair controversialists. The most Christian *S. R.* says to the Atheistic Iconoclast, You blaspheme. Whom? The Christian God! And the *S. R.* does not appear to see that it is assuming the very existence of God which is in dispute between itself and Iconoclast! For the Atheist, God is a figment, nothing; in blaspheming God he therefore blasphemes nothing. A man really blasphemes when he mocks, insults, pollutes, vilifies that which he really believes to be holy and awful. Thus a Christian who really believes in the Christian God (and there *may* be a hundred such Christians in England) can be guilty of blasphemy against that God, whether that God really subsists or not; for such a Christian in mocking or vilifying God would really be violating the most sacred convictions of his own nature. Speaking philosophically, an honest Atheist can no more blaspheme God than an honest Republican can be disloyal to a King, than an unmarried man can be guilty of conjugal infidelity.

[This "Word on Blasphemy," as I have ventured to call it, is from a long article on the *Saturday Review* and the *National Reformer*, the rest of which was of merely temporary interest, and that only to the readers of those two journals. The "outburst of Rabelasian laughter" which so provoked the *Saturday Review*, was a short satire on Christian theology and priestcraft, entitled "The Fanatical Monkeys," ascribed to Charles Southwell, and just then published in the *National Reformer*.—Editor.]

# HEINE ON AN ILLUSTRIOUS EXILE WITH SOMETHING ABOUT WHALES

(From the “De l’Allemagne.”) (1867.)

NEPTUNE is still the monarch of the empire of the seas, and Pluto (although metamorphosed into the Devil) has retained the throne of Tartarus. They have both been more lucky than their brother Jupiter, who had to suffer specially the vicissitudes of fortune. This third son of Saturn, who after the fall of his sire assumed the sovereignty of the heavens, reigned for a long series of years on the summit of Olympus, surrounded by a jovial court of high and of most high gods and demigods, as well as on high and of most high goddesses and nymphs—their celestial ladies of the bedchamber and maids of honor, who all led a joyous life, replete with ambrosia and nectar, despising the clowns attached to the soil down here, and taking no thought of the morrow. Alas, when the reign of the Cross, the empire of suffering, was proclaimed, the supreme Chronide emigrated and disappeared amidst the tumult of the barbarian tribes which invaded the Roman world. All traces of the ex-God were lost, and I have questioned in vain old chronicles and old women; no one has been able to furnish me with any information as to his destiny. I have burrowed in many a library, where I made them bring me the most magnificent *codex* enriched with gold and jewels, veritable odalisques in the harem of science; and as is the custom, I here render my public thanks to the erudite eunuchs who, without too much grumbling and sometimes even with affability, have given me access to these luminous treasures confided to their care. I am now convinced that the middle ages have not bequeathed to us any traditions concerning the fate of Jupiter after the fall of Paganism. All that I have been able to discover in connection with this

subject is the history told me long ago by my friend Niels Andersen.

I have just mentioned Niels Andersen, and this good figure, at once so droll and so lovable, emerges all riant in my memory. I must devote a few lines to him here. For the rest, I like to indicate my authorities and to show their good or bad qualities, in order that the reader may be in a position to judge himself how far these authorities deserve to be trusted.

Niels Andersen, born at Drontheim, in Norway, was one of the most skilful and intrepid whalers I have ever known. It is to him that I am indebted for what knowledge I have of the whale fishery. He taught me all the subtleties of the art; he made me acquainted with all the stratagems and dodges which the intelligent animal employs to baffle these subtle snares and make its escape. It was Niels Andersen who taught me the management of the harpoon; he showed me how you should fix the knee of the right leg against the gun-whale of the boat when launching the harpoon, and how with the left leg you launch a vigorous kick at the imbecile sailor who don't pay out quickly enough the rope attached to the harpoon. To him I owe all, and if I have not become a famous whaler the fault rests neither with Niels Andersen nor with myself, but with my evil star, which has never allowed me in the course of my life to encounter any whale with which I might have engaged in honorable combat. I have only encountered vulgar stockfish and miserable herrings. Of what use is the best harpoon when you have to deal with a herring? Now that my limbs are paralysed I must renounce for ever the hope of pursuing whales. When at Ritzebüttel, near Cuxhaven, I made the acquaintance of Niels Andersen. He was scarcely more nimble himself, for off the coast of Senegal a young shark, which no doubt took his right leg for a stick of barley sugar, had snapped it off with a snap of his teeth. Since then poor Niels Andersen went limping upon an artificial leg manufactured from one of the firs of his country, and which he extolled as a masterpiece of Norwegian carpentry. His greatest pleasure at this period was to perch himself on the top of a large empty barrel, on the belly of which he drummed away with his wooden leg. I often helped him to climb upon this barrel; but sometimes, when he wished to get down again, I would not give him my help except on the condition that he told me one of his curious traditions of the Arctic Sea.

As Mahomet-Ebn-Mansour commences all his poems with a eulogy of the horse, so Niels Andersen prefaced all his narratives with a panegyric enumeration of the qualities of the whale. He of course commenced with such a panegyric the legend we give here.

“The whale,” he said, “is not only the largest, but also the most magnificent of animals; the two jets of water leaping from his nostrils, placed at the top of his head, give him the appearance of a fountain, and produce a magical effect, above

all at night, in the moonshine. Moreover, this beast is sympathetic. He has a good character and much taste for conjugal life. It is a touching sight," he added, "to see a family of whales grouped around its venerable patriarch, and couched upon an enormous mass of ice, basking in the sun. Sometimes the young ones begin to frisk and romp, and at length all plunge into the sea to play at hide-and-seek among the immense ice-blocks. The purity of manners and the chastity of the whales should be attributed less to moral principles than to the iciness of the water wherein they continually sport. Nor can it, unhappily, be denied," went on Niels Anderson, "that they have not any pious sentiment, that they are totally devoid of religion...."

"I believe this is an error," I cried, interrupting my friend. "I have lately read the report of a Dutch missionary, wherein he describes the magnificence of the creation, which, according to him, reveals itself even in the polar regions at the hour of sunrise, and when the teams of day, transfiguring the gigantic rocks of ice, make them resemble those castles of diamonds we read of in fairy tales. All this beauty of the creation, in the judgment of the good *dominie*, is a proof of the power of God which influences every living creature, so that not only man, but likewise a great brute of a fish, ravished by this spectacle, adores the Creator and addresses to him its prayers. The *dominie* assures us that he has seen with his own eyes a whale which held itself erect against the wall of a block of ice, and swayed the upper part of its body as men do in prayer."

Niels Andersen admitted that he had himself seen whales which, propping themselves against a cliff of ice, indulged in movements very similar to those we remark in the oratories of the various religious sects, but he maintained that devotion has nothing to do with this phænomenon. He explained it on physiological grounds; he called my attention to the fact that the whale, this Chimborazo of animals, has beneath its skin strata of fat of a depth so prodigious that a single whale often furnishes a hundred to a hundred and fifty barrels of tallow and oil. These layers of fat are so thick that while the colossus sleeps, stretched at its full length upon an icefield, hundreds of water rats can come and settle in it. These *convives* immensely larger and more voracious than the rats of the mainland, lead joyous life under the skin of the whale, where day and night they gorge themselves with the most delicious fat without being obliged to quit their holes. These banquets of vermin at length trouble their involuntary host and even cause him excessive sufferings. Not having hands as we have, who, God be thanked, can scratch ourselves when we feel an itching, the whale tries to mitigate his pangs by placing himself against the protruding and sharp angles of a rock of ice, and by there rasping his back with a real fervor and with vigorous movements up and down, as we see the dogs rasping their skin against a bed-post when the fleas bite them overmuch. Now in these

movements the good *dominie* thought he saw the edifying act of prayer, and he attributed to devotion the jerkings occasioned by the orgies of the rats. Enormous as is the quantity of oil in the whale, it has not the least religious sentiment. It is only among animals of mediocre stature that we find any religion; the very great, the creatures gigantic like the whale are not endowed with it. What can be the reason? Is it that they cannot find a church sufficiently spacious to afford them entrance into its pale? Nor have the whales any taste for the prophets, and the one which swallowed Jonah was not able to digest that great preacher; seized with nausea, it vomited him after three days. Most certainly that proves the absence of all religious sentiment in these monsters. The whale, therefore, would never choose an ice-block for prayer-cushion, and sway itself in attitudes of devotion. It adores as little the true God who resides above there in heaven, as the false pagan god who dwells near the arctic pole, in the Isle of the Rabbits, where the dear beast goes sometimes to pay him a visit.

“What is this *Isle of Rabbits*?” I asked Niels Andersen. Drumming on the barrel with his wooden leg, he answered, “It is exactly in this isle that the events took place of which I am going to tell you. I am not able to give you its precise geographical position. Since its first discovery no one has been able to visit it again; the enormous mountains of ice accumulated around it bar the approach. Once only has it been visited, by the crew of a Russian whaler driven by-tempests into those northern latitudes, and that was more than a hundred years ago. When these sailors, reached it with their ship they found it deserted and uncultivated. Sickly stalks of broom swayed sadly upon the quicksands; here and there were scattered some dwarf shrubs and stunted firs crouching on the sterile soil. Rabbits ran about everywhere in great numbers; and this is the reason the sailors call the islet the *Isle of Rabbits*. A cabin, the only one they discovered, announced the presence of a human being. When the mariners had entered the hut they saw an old man, arrived at the most extreme decrepitude and miserably muffled in rabbit skins. He was seated upon a stone settle, and warmed his thin hands and trembling knees at the grate where some brushwood was burning. At his right hand stood a monstrously large bird, which seemed to be an eagle; but the moulting of time had so cruelly stripped it that only the great stiff main-plumes of its wings were left, so that the aspect of this naked animal was at once ludicrous and horribly ugly. On the left of the old man was couched upon the ground an aged bald-skinned she-got, yet with a gentle look, and which, in spite of its great age, had the dugs swollen with milk and the teats fresh and rosy.

“Among the sailors who had landed on the Isle of Rabbits there were some Greeks, and one of these, thinking that the man of the hut could not understand

his tongue, said to his comrades in Greek, 'This queer old fellow must be either a ghost or an evil spirit.' At these words the old man trembled and rose suddenly from his seat, and the sailors, to their great astonishment, saw a lofty and imposing figure, which, with imperious and even majestic dignity, held itself erect in spite of the weight of years, so that the head reached the rafters of the roof. His lineaments, though worn and ravaged, conserved traces of beauty; they were noble and perfectly regular. Thin locks of silver hair fell upon the forehead wrinkled by pride and by age; his eyes, though glazed and lustreless, darted keen regards, and his finely-curved lips pronounced in the Greek language, mingled with many archaisms, these words resonant and harmonious:—'You are mistaken, young man, I am neither a spectre nor an evil spirit; I am an unfortunate who has seen better days. But you—what are you.'

"At this demand the seamen acquainted their host with the accident which had driven them out of their course, and they begged him to tell them all about the isle. But the old man could give them but scant information. He told them that from immemorial times he had dwelt in this isle, of which the ramparts of ice offered him a sure refuge against his implacable enemies, who had usurped his legitimate rights; that his main subsistence was derived from the rabbits with which the isle abounded; that every year, at the season when the floating ice-blocks formed a compact mass, troops of savages in sledges visited him, who, in exchange for his rabbit skins, gave him all sorts of articles most necessary to life. The whales, he said, which now and then approached his isle, were his favorite society. Nevertheless, he added that he felt much pleasure at this moment in speaking his native language, being Greek by birth. He begged his compatriots to inform him as to the then state of Greece. He learnt with a malicious joy, badly dissimulated, that the Cross once surmounting the towers of the Hellenic cities had been shattered; he showed less satisfaction when they told him that this Christian symbol had been replaced by the Crescent. The most singular thing was that none of the seamen knew the names of the towns concerning which he questioned them, and which, according to him, had been flourishing cities in his time. On the other hand, the names by which the seamen designated the towns and villages of modern Greece were completely unknown to him; and the old man shook his head often, as if quite overwhelmed, and the sailors looked at each other with wonder. They saw well that he knew perfectly the localities of the country, even to the minutest details; for he described clearly and exactly the gulfs, the peninsulas, the capes, often even, the most insignificant hills and isolated groups of rocks. His ignorance of the commonest typographical names, therefore astonished them all the more.

"The old man asked, with the most lively interest, and even with a certain



anxiety, about an ancient temple, which, he said, had been of old the grandest in all Greece. None of his hearers recognised the name,, which he pronounced with tender emotion. At last,, when he had minutely described the place where this, monument stood, a young seaman suddenly recognised the spot. ‘The village where I was born,’ he exclaimed, ‘is situated precisely there. During my childhood I have long watched there the pigs of my father. On this site there are, in fact, the ruins of very ancient constructions, which must have been incredibly magnificent. Here and there you see some columns still erect; they are isolated or connected by fragments of roofing, whence hang tendrils of honeysuckle and red bind-weeds. Other columns, some of them red marble, lie fractured on the grass. The ivy has invaded their superb capitals, formed of flowers and foliage delicately chiselled. Great slabs of marble, squared fragments of wall and triangular pieces of roofing, are scattered about, half-buried in the earth. I have often, continued the young man, ‘passed hours at a time in examining the combats and the games, the dances and the processions, the beautiful and ludicrous figures which are sculptured there. Unfortunately these sculptures are much injured by time, and are covered with moss and creepers. My father, whom I once asked what these ruins were, told me that they were the remnants of an ancient temple, of old inhabited by a Pagan God, who not only indulged in the most gross debaucheries, but who was, moreover, guilty of incest and other infamous vices; that in their blindness the idolators had, nevertheless, immolated oxen, often by hundreds, at the foot of his altar. My father assured me that we still saw the marble basin wherein they had gathered the blood of the victims, and that it was precisely the trough to which I frequently led my swine to drink the rain-water, and in which I also preserved the refuse which my animals devoured with so much appetite.’

“When the young sailor had thus spoken, the old man gave a deep sigh of the most bitter anguish; he sank nerveless upon the stone seat, and hiding his visage in his hands, wept like a child. The bird at his side emitted terrible cries, spread its enormous wings, and menaced the strangers with talons and beak. The she-goat moaned and licked the hands of her master, whose sorrows she seemed trying to comfort by her humble caresses. At this sight a strange trouble swelled in the hearts of the seamen; they hastily quitted the hut, and did not feel at ease until they could no more hear the sobbings of the old man, the croakings of the hideous bird, and the bleatings of the goat. When they got on board their vessel again they related their adventures. Among the crew there chanced to be a scholar, who declared that it was an event of the highest importance. Applying with a sagacious air his right forefinger to his nose, he assured the seamen that the old man of the Isle of Rabbits was beyond all doubt the ancient god Jupiter, son of Saturn and Rhea, once sovereign lord of the gods; that the bird which they had seen at his side was evidently

the famous eagle which used to bear the thunderbolts in its talons; and that, in all probability, the goat was the old nurse Amalthea, which had of old suckled the god in the isle of Crete, and which now continued to nourish him with its milk in the Isle of Rabbits.”

Such was the history of Niels Andersen, and it made my heart bleed. I will not dissemble; already his revelations concerning the secret sufferings of the whale had profoundly saddened me. Poor animal! against this vile mob of rats, which house themselves in your body and gnaw you incessantly, no remedy avails, and you carry them about with you to the end of your days; rush as you will to the north and to the south, rasp yourself against the ice-rocks of the two poles, you can never get rid of these villainous rats? But pained as I had been by the outrage wreaked upon the poor whales, my soul was infinitely more troubled by the tragical fate of this old man who, according to the mythological theory of the learned Russian, was the heretofore King of the gods, Jupiter the *Chronide*. Yes, he, even he, was subject to the fatality of Destiny, from which not the immortals themselves can escape; and the spectacle of such calamities horrifies us, in filling us with pity and indignation. Be Jupiter, be the sovereign lord of the world, the frown of whose brows made tremble the universe! be chanted by Homer, and sculptured by Phidias in gold and ivory; be adored by a hundred nations during long centuries; be the lover of Semele, of Danae, of Europa, of Alcmena, of Io, of Leda, of Calisto! and after all, nothing will remain at the end but a decrepit old man, who to gain his miserable livelihood has to turn dealer in rabbit skins, like any poor Savoyard. Such a spectacle will no doubt give pleasure to the vile multitude, which insults to-day that which it adored yesterday. Perhaps among these worthy people are to be found some of the descendants of those unlucky bulls which were of old immolated in hecatombs upon the altar of Jupiter; let such rejoice in his fall, and mock him at their ease, in revenge for the blood of their ancestors, victims of idolatry; as for me, my soul is singularly moved, and I am seized with dolorous commiseration at the view of this august misfortune.

# THE DAILY NEWS

(1874.)

:: “**Ich hab’ mein Sach auf Nichts gestellt, Juchhe!** Drum ist’s so wohl mir in der Welt; Juchhe!”—Göthe.

“He got so subtle that to be Nothing was all his glory.” Shelley, “Peter Bell the Third”

IT is now some time since the *Daily News*, which, perhaps with more honor than profit, and not seldom at great risk of its life, had been for many years a really leading Liberal journal, fighting gallantly always in the van, often in forlorn hopes, took to heart a certain very-obvious truth. It awoke fully to the fact that while a captain in the forlorn hope or vanguard is constantly in great peril, and has but few supporters, one with the main body is much less exposed and has many more to help him. Weary and discouraged, it resolved to fall back from the front and join the mass of the army, the myriads of the commonplace and the timorous, the legions of the rich and respectable, the countless hosts of the snobbery of Bumbledom. But in making this “strategic movement,” it is well aware that honor equal to the danger is attached to the forlorn hope and the vanguard, and it clung to the honor while renouncing the danger, and continued to call itself a leading Liberal journal when it had quite given up the lead—nay, continues thus to vaunt itself still. This is how some malicious people explain the altered position of the *Daily News* and its growing number of supporters, or, in the language of periodicals, its increasing circulation. Now, say these impatient and intemperate persons, a paper is free to serve Bumble (as nearly all papers do), or to serve Progress, the enemy of Bumble; but it has no right, while serving the one, to claim the merit of serving the other. This *Daily News*, they go on, which still dares to call itself Liberal, is now just as liberal as the jester’s Garrick, who used to set out with generous intentions, and was scared back at the corner of the street by the ghost of a ha’penny. In its case

it is the ghost of a penny, the ghost of the representative penny of all the pennies ready to buy vapid twaddle, but not earnest thought.

For my own part, however, I find the *Daily News* still really liberal, and, in fact, extremely liberal. It is liberal in long special telegrams and interminable Jenkins letters about the most insignificant movements and actions of royal personages. It is equally liberal in reticence, slightly tempered by sneers, as to all advanced movements, all unpopular principles and their champions. It is liberal in the space it gives to all fashionable frivolities, sports and pastimes, to all the bagatelles of life. If it has not a paragraph to spare for a Radical meeting, it has always columns at the command of boat races, yacht races, horse races, cricket and polo matches, and the like important events, as well as other columns for the gossip of clubs and the babble of society. It is liberal in hopefulness that wrong may be right, falsehood truth, evil good. It is very liberal in soft phrases, and in "passages that lead to nothing." Nothing, indeed, is the great end of its endeavor; for what alteration can be needed by a world in which the circulation of the *Daily News* is continually increasing? Unless, perchance, as the circulation is already "world-wide," the world will have to be extended in order to accommodate it. But this concerns Father God or Mother Nature, not mere mortals. All these liberalities I could amply illustrate did space permit; as it is, I can give but an instance each to the first two. The Prince of Wales being in France, amusing himself like any other man who has money and leisure, "The Prince of Wales in France—Special," heads its placards in the largest letters. On the other hand, I heard one of our three or four greatest writers, Garth Wilkinson, declare at a public meeting that he had written several letters to it on a subject then agitating the public mind, but that he could as easily get a letter into the moon as into the *Daily News*. Yet the subject was medical; and Garth Wilkinson is not only one of our greatest writers and thinkers, but also an M.D. and F.R.S., who has practised for I know not how much more than a quarter of a century. To refuse his letters on that matter was like refusing to hear Carlyle on Cromwell or Darwin on Natural Selection. Why, then, did the *Daily News* reject them? For the simply sufficient reason that they advocated the unpopular side of the question.

Yes, it is still liberal and beyond measure liberal in these and many other respects. It has still great care of the people—to keep aloof from them; it loves them more than ever—at a distance. It still belongs to the Left—in the rear. It is still of the Mountain, only it has descended to provision itself; as the sage rhyme runs,

"The mountain sheep were sweeter,  
But the valley sheep were fatter;  
We therefore deemed it meeter  
To carry off the latter."

It is still Radical, having a rooted love of ease and hatred of disturbance. It is still revolutionary, but has resolved that henceforth revolutions shall be made with rose-water, and omelettes without breaking of....

While thus freely acknowledging that in many things the *Daily News* is now more liberal than ever it was, I must also record my admiration for its strenuous endeavors to assume an air of aristocratic refinement and repose. From its serene indifference to the troubles of vulgar humanity, from the languid lisp and drawl of its voice, from its perpetual allusions to the luxuries and enjoyments of the wealthy and noble, one readily divines that its staff, like the staff of my Lord Chamberlain or other court lackey, can move only in the highest circles; but whether its members are admitted into these as gentlemen or as gentlemen's gentlemen, I must leave for those familiar with such circles to declare. This is certain, that they flit about amidst a lordly festival in the gay and careless fashion of men who have no thought save of enjoying themselves; not like poor devils who have duties which, though better paid, are as onerous and strictly subservient to the gathering as those of the waiters or the footmen. It must surely be by a mere afterthought, and purely for their own amusement, that they throw off a description of the scene and an account of what occurred there. By the bye, it is rumored that the staff has been thoroughly changed of late years. The old members were able enough, but they were too coarse, too loud, too violent, too opiniative, too much given to discussing important questions as if they really cared for the same. Their manners especially could not be endured. One entered the Editor's sanctum (which had then just been refurnished under the supervision of the Count of Monte Cristo) in his wet boots, although embroidered slippers were provided at the foot of the stairs. Another exploded with a "Damned old idiot!" on reading the charge of one of our Right Reverend Fathers in God. Another was caught smoking a clay pipe over a pint of beer, although narghilés and hookahs and the choicest cigarettes, with unlimited supplies of the most costly wines and liqueurs, are always set out for the staff and such visitors as are admitted to the inner offices. The *Daily News* wrote to my Lord Chief Justice demanding that this fellow should be sent without trial to keep company with Arthur Orton, and for all I know the Chief Justice humbly obeyed. Another was seen walking arm-in-arm with the Editor of the *Times*, and was of course instantly dismissed, the *Daily News* writing to warn the man of the other journal.

This, I am assured, is historical fact, to which the Editor of the *Times* will bear witness, if he be not ashamed to avow what may seem to hurt his dignity. For these and the like offences the old members have been all dismissed.

It is said to be a peculiarity of the *Daily News* that all the leading articles are manufactured on the premises, if I may venture on a shop phrase in such a

connection. I have spoken of the luxury of the Editor's sanctum, which is a large and noble apartment. The leader-writers are borne to the office in closed carriages, with double or triple windows and india-rubber tires, lest some rude oath, or nasty smell, or even the loud noise of the streets should shock them into hysterics, or at least so unstring their nerves as to render writing impossible for the day. In the sumptuous boudoir-sanctum, lounging, smoking, and sipping, they receive on silver salvers telegrams from all parts of the rolling globe, with innumerable communications and documents, written and printed; and such of these as they are pleased to look at tin Epicurean gods:

"For they lie beside their nectar,  
and the bolts are hurled  
Far below them in the valleys."

They lie a good deal beside their nectar; but their bolts are anything but thunderbolts. Thunderbolts! The mere word would make these gasp and shudder. They are not thunderbolts, they are not rockets, they are not even squibs; they are bonbons and genuine *confetti*, not your *confetti* of the Carnival.

"\*There\* they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,  
Clanging fights and flaming towns, and sinking ships and praying hands.

But they smile, they find a music centered in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning, tho the words are strong;

Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil."

Naturally these lofty beings smile; for what have they to do with the cares and woes, the hopes and fears of ordinary mortals? Besides, battles and shipwrecks, disasters and convulsions, make the best of copy; and the music centred in the doleful song is a hymn of triumph, with the glorious refrain, "Our circulation is still increasing! Our world-wide circulation continues to increase!" And surely the ill-used race of men that till the soil should be appeased and amply satisfied by the showers of bonbons and sweetmeats the *Daily News* is always flinging down. It has more important duties to attend to than fighting the battles and righting the wrongs of an ignorant, passionate, unreasonable, wretched rabble, considerably addicted to dirt,

drunkenness, and vice. For thirty hours at least in every twenty-four it is in attendance on some Royalty or another, or at the sports and entertainments of "Society, with a capital S." It is said that the "copy" of these superlative writers, who always wear kid gloves while writing, is written with golden pens and tinted and perfumed ink, on perfumed and tinted paper. It is moreover said that the journal itself is soon to be printed on vellum, in the illuminated style, with arabesque borders. It is also rumored that the *Court Journal* and the *Morning Post*, finding themselves quite outdone by the *Daily News*, and their occupation gone, will shortly cease to appear.

I must not omit to mention that I have been told on authority, which I incline to consider good, that in the said gorgeous sanctum is conspicuous a table of commandments, wrought in letters of fine gold, which commandments are these:

- I. Thou shalt never be in earnest about anything, and shalt abhor enthusiasm.
- II. Thou shalt not have a decided opinion on any subject.
- III. Thou shalt never write an unqualified sentence, or risk an unmodified statement.
- IV. Thy style shall be always in the tone of a sweet murmur or soft whisper; a lullaby of peace for drowsy-headed Bumbledom.
- V. Thou shalt write with an air of assured superiority to everybody, and everything.
- VI. Thou shalt ever bear in mind that there is no joy but calm, and that the supreme moral excellence is good taste, which may be quite compatible with meanness, servility, and cowardice, but cannot be compatible with the foolish fervor of zeal.
- VII. Thou shalt always mention and allude to as many persons, places, and luxuries of high life as possible.
- VIII. Thou shalt drag into every article three or four literary citations or allusions, whether relevant or irrelevant, in order to show to the world thy culture.
- IX. Thou shalt carefully avoid mention of all ardent reformers and unpopular thinkers, and their doings, save to lightly banter or coldly rebuke them.
- X. Thou shalt treat with profound respect and tenderness all the powers that be, and all popular opinions, social, political and religious, however thou mayest condemn them in thy heart; for great Bumble is the sole lord of large circulations, and only through his continued grace can our circulation continue to increase.

It is by assiduously conforming themselves to this most wise and holy decalogue, that the members of the staff of the *Daily News* have become such rare flowers of sweetness and light; worthy of that serene Professor of Haughty-culture, Matthew Arnold himself, ere he had perpetrated "Literature and Dogma."

But while, in common with all the other worshippers of the *Daily News*, I exult in its world-wide and ever-increasing circulation, I am haunted by a horrible

fear, which I cannot conceal, but will hint and whisper as gently as possible. When a stone falls into a pond—but no, pond is vulgar—when a stone falls into a still lake, the first small rings are clearly defined, but the circlings as they enlarge grow fainter and fainter, until at length they can no more be perceived. Now, as all the world knows, our beloved and revered Daily News, in its ever-increasing circulation, has hitherto followed precisely the same law; and my dread is that it will continue to do so unto the utmost extremity, becoming ever more and more faint and undefined as the circulation increases, until it shall altogether vanish away. It is getting so refined that I fear it will soon be fined away to nothing; so delicate and dainty, that it is already unfit for this rough world, whose slightest shock may kill it; so ethereal that its complete evaporation seems imminent; so supernal that it must surely soon disappear, absorbed into the Empyrean. May that good God, who we have been told “will think twice before damning a person of quality,” think many, many times before condemning our fashionable world to such an irreparable loss!



# JESUS: AS GOD; AS A MAN

(1866.)

“These hereditary enemies of the Truth... have even had the heart to degrade this first preacher of the Mountain, the purest hero of Liberty; for, unable to deny that he was earth’s greatest man, they have made of him heaven’s smallest god.”—Heine: *Reisébilder*.

THE doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, which, in whatever relation regarded, is full of self-contradictions and absurdities, is, above all, pernicious in its moral and spiritual results. Most myths have a certain justification in their beauty, in their symbolism of high truth. This one distorts the beauty, degrades the sublimity, stultifies the meaning of the facts and the character wherein it has been founded, taking away all true grandeur from Jesus, benumbing our love and reverence.

Jesus, as a man, commands my heart’s best homage. His words, as reported by the Evangelists, are ever-flowing fountains of spiritual refreshments; and I feel that he was in himself even far more wise and good than he appears in the gospel. What disciple could be expected to report perfectly the words of a teacher so mystically sublime? The disciple intends and endeavors to report faithfully; but when he hears words which to him are without sense, because they express some truth whose sphere is beyond the reach of his vision, he makes sense of them by some slight change—slight as to the letter, immense as to the spirit; for the sense is a truth or truism of his own lower sphere. And when the reports are not put into writing until many years after the words were first uttered, the changes will be important even as to the letter; for a narrative from a man’s mouth always alters year after year as much as the man himself alters, for he continues grafting his own sense (which may be deplorable nonsense) upon words which have been spoken. When we find sentences of the purest beauty and wisdom in the records of a man’s conversation, we may safely proportion the whole philosophical character of the speaker to such

sentences. They mark the altitude at which his spirit loved to dwell. We are but completing the circle from the clearest fragment-arc left. Sentences of wisdom less exalted, or of apparent unwisdom, have perhaps been degraded by the reporter, or have been relative to circumstances which we cannot now learn thoroughly.

Jesus as a man, whose words have been recorded by fallible men, is not lowered in my esteem by such contradictions as I find between his various speeches. Every proverb has its antagonist proverb, each being true to a certain extent, or in certain relations. Could we conceive an abstract intellect, we might conceive it dwelling continually in the sphere of abstract and absolute truth; but no man, however wise, dwells continually in this sphere. As a man living in the world, his intellect no less than his body lives in the relative and the conditioned, and naturally reflects the character of this sphere. The wise man finds himself surrounded and obstructed by certain concrete errors, and he attacks these errors with relative truths. Were the errors of another sort, the truths commonly in his mouth would be of another sort too. Many wise men of different ages and countries are pitted against each other as if their doctrines were fundamentally antagonistic, while, in truth, their doctrines are essentially in unison, and either would have spoken or written much the same as the other had he lived in the same circumstances. For a wise man only attacks the errors that are in his way; things which he never meets he can scarcely think of as obstructions. Hannibal, whose business it is to get into Italy from Gaul, sets about blasting the Alps. Stephenson, whose business it is to get from Manchester to Liverpool, sets about filling up Chat Moss. The same man, who muffles himself in as many furs as he can get in Greenland, will strip himself to a linen robe in Jamaica. Luther said that the human mind is like a drunken peasant on horseback: he is rolling off on the right, you push him up, he then rolls over on the left. Exactly so; and because one sage, seeing him roll down to the right, has pushed him up on the right, while another sage, seeing him roll down to the left, has pushed him up on the left, are the two sages to be accounted antagonists? Now as a wise man in the course of his existence meets errors of many sorts, some of a quite opposite tendency to others, and as he proves his wisdom by applying to each error its relative or pertinent truth, the rule is almost rigidly exact: that the wiser the man the more of apparent contradictions can be found in his writings or conversation treating of actual life.

But deity is beyond the sphere of the relative and conditioned. When deity speaks and deity reports the speeches, all should be absolute truth transparently self-consistent, else what advantage or gain have we by the substitution of God for Man? Why bring in God to utter and record what could have been as well uttered and recorded by man?

Everything for which we love and venerate the man Jesus becomes a bitter and absurd mockery when attributed to the Lord Christ. The full heart is praising the man; you turn him into God, a ruinous salvo is added to the praise.

He went about doing good: if God, why did he not do all good at once? He cured many sick: if God, why did he not give the whole world health? He associated with publicans and sinners: if God, why did he make publicans and sinners at all? He preached the kingdom of heaven: if God, why did he not bring the kingdom with him and make all mankind fit for it? He loved the poor, he taught the ignorant: if God, why did he let any remain poor and ignorant? He rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees: if God, why did he not wholly purify them from formalism, hypocrisy, and unbelief? He died for love of mankind: if God, why did he not restore mankind to himself without dying? and what great thing was it to seem to die for three days? He sent apostles to preach salvation to all men: if God, why did he not reveal it at once to all men, and so reveal it that doubt had been impossible? He lived an example of holiness to us all: if God, how can our humanity imitate Deity? And finally, a question trampling down every assertion in his favor: why did he ever let the world get evil?

One is ashamed of repeating these things for the ten-thousandth time, but they will have to be repeated occasionally, so long as a vast ecclesiastical system continues to rest on the foundations of the absurdities they oppugn. And while one is grinding such chaff in the theological mill, he may as well have a turn at the Atonement, which is, in fact, the essence of the dogma of the Incarnation. No wonder this poor Atonement has been attacked on all sides; it invites attack; one may say that in every aspect it piteously implores us to attack it and relieve it from the misery of its spectral existence. It is so full of breaches that one does not know where to storm.

I am content to note one aspect of this unfortunate mystery which, so far as I am aware, has been seldom studied. The whole scheme of the Atonement, as planned by God, is based upon a crime—a crime infinitely atrocious, the crime of murder and deicide, is essential to its success: if Judas had not betrayed, if the Jews had not insisted, if Pilate had not surrendered, if all these turpitudes had not been secured, the Atonement could not have been consummated. Need one say more? Sometimes, when musing upon this doctrine, I have a vision of the God-man getting old upon the earth, horribly anxious and wretched, because no one will murder him. Judas has succeeded to a large property, and would not be tempted to betray him by three hundred pieces of silver; the chief priests and elders think him insane, and, therefore, as Orientals, hold him in a certain reverence; Pilate is henpecked and superstitious, accounts the wife's dreams oracular, and will have nothing to do with

him; even Peter won't deny him, although he has restored Peter's mother-in-law to life. The situation is desperate; he has again and again prayed his Father to despatch a special murderer to despatch him, yet none appears: shall he have to perish by old age or disease? may he be compelled to commit suicide? must he go back to Heaven unsacrificed, foiled for want of an assassin?

Benjamin Disraeli attained the cynical sublime when he suggested a monument of gratitude to Judas. In fact, Christendom ought to have erected hundreds of years ago three grand monuments to the sub-trinity of Christianity, to the three men without whose devoted assistance the heavenly trinity would not have triumphed in the scheme of Salvation by Atonement; Judas, Caiaphas and Pilate; and as these three men could not have done what they did in furtherance of the glorious work without a well-known inspiration, a fourth memorial—the grandest of all—should have been erected to the Devil. But the world, even the religious world, has always been ungrateful to its most generous benefactors.

Is it not the worst of sacrilege, a foul profanation of our human nature, which for us, at least, should be holy and awful, when the heroic and saintly martyrdom of a true Man is thus falsified into the self-schemed sham sacrifice, ineffectual, of a God? The people who profess belief in this are shocked at the outrage offered to our humanity by the Development Theory, while they themselves commit this outrage more flagitious. Little matters whence we sprang; we are what we are. But much matters to what we may attain. If the Development Theory plants our feet in the slime, the Christian Theory bows our head to the dust. It asserts that human nature could not possibly be so good as Jesus, that human genius could not possibly write the books which tell of him; it denies us our noblest prerogatives, and declares us bastards when we claim a crown. It climbs to God by trampling on Man, it builds Heaven in contempt of Earth, its soul is a phosphorescence from the slain and rotting Body; its fervent faith vilifies us worse than the coldest sneer of Mephistopheles. Yet the orthodox shudder and moan, outraged in their pious sensibilities, when one dares to speak with manly plainness of their doctrines, which commence by polluting our common nature, continue by insulting our reason, and conclude by damning the large majority of us!

# THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

(1866.)

WHEN I survey with pious joy the present world of Christendom, finding everywhere that the true believers love their neighbors as themselves and are specially enamored of their enemies; that no one of them takes thought for the morrow, what he shall eat or what he shall drink, or wherewithal he or she shall be clothed; that all the pastors and flocks endeavor to outstrip each other in laying not up for themselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; and all are so intensely eager to quit this earthly tabernacle and become freeholders of mansions in the skies; when I find faith as universal as the air, and charity as common as cold water; I sometimes wonder how it is that any misbelievers and unbelievers are left, and feel astonished that the New Jerusalem has not yet descended, and hope that the next morning's *Times* (rechristened *The Eternities*) will announce the inauguration of the Millennium.

What delayeth the end? Can there indeed be any general hindering sin or imperfection among the pure saints, the holy, unselfish, aspiring, devout, peaceful, loving men and women who make up the population of every Christian land? Can any error infect the teachings of the innumerable divines and theologians, who all agree together in every particular, drawing all the same doctrines from the same texts of the one unvaried Word of God? I would fain believe that no such sin or error exists, not a single inky spot in the universal dazzling whiteness; but then why have we to deplore the continued existence of heathens and infidels? why is the New Jerusalem so long a-building? why is the Millennium so long a-coming? why have we a mere Sardowa instead of Armageddon?

After long and painful thought, after the most serious and reverent study, I think I have found the rock on which the ship of the Church has been wrecked; and I hasten to communicate its extreme latitude and interminable longitude, that all Christian voyagers may evade and circumvent it from this time forward.

The error which I point out, and the correction which I propose, have been to a certain extent, in a vague manner, pointed out and proposed before. A clergyman named Malthus, not in his clerical capacity, but condescending to the menial study of mundane science, is usually considered the first discoverer. But mundane science is conditioned, limited, vague, its precepts are full of hesitation; while celestial science is absolute, unlimited, clear as the noonday sun, and its precepts are imperiously forthright.

It seems to me that the one fatal error which has lurked in our otherwise consummate Christianity, and which demands immediate correction is this, that the propagation of children is reconcileable with the propagation of the faith—an error which while it lasts adjourns *sine die* the day of judgment, and begins the Millennium with the Greek Kalends.

One need not quote the numerous texts throughout the New Testament (let Matthew xix., 12, suffice) proving that Jesus and the epistolary apostles accounted celibacy essential to the *highest* Christian life. One only of the disciples, so far as we know, was married; and he it was who denied his master; and most of the more profound divines consider that Peter was justly punished for marrying, when Christ cured his mother-in-law of that fever which might else have carried her off.

But many modest people may be content with a respectable Christian life which is not of the very highest kind. They may think that as husbands and wives they will make very decent middle-class saints in heaven, after a comfortable existence on earth, leaving the nobler crowns of holiness for more daring spirits. Humility is one of the fairest graces, and we revere it; but there is a consideration, most momentous for the kind Christian heart, which such good people must have overlooked—very naturally, since it is very obvious.

Jesus tells us that many are called but few are chosen; that few enter the strait gate and travel the narrow way, while many take the broad way that leadeth to destruction. In other words, the large majority of mankind, the large majority of even those who have the gospel preached to them must be damned. When a human soul is born into the world, the odds are at least ten to one that the Devil will get it. Can any pious member of the Church who has thought of this take the responsibility of becoming a parent? I thoroughly believe not. I am convinced that we have so many Christian parents only because this very conspicuous aspect of the case has not caught their view. If the parents could have any assurance that the piety of their offspring would be in proportion to their own, they would be justified in wedding in holiness. But alas! we all know that some of the most religious parents have had some of the most wicked children. Dearly beloved brethren and sisters pause and calculate that for every little saint you give to heaven, you beget and bear at least

nine sinners who will eventually go to hell.

The remedy proposed is plain and simple as a gospel precept: let no Christian have any child at all—a rule which, in the grandeur of its absoluteness makes the poor timid and tentative Malthusianism very ridiculous indeed. For this rule is drawn immediately from the New Testament and cannot but be perfect as its source.

Let us think of a few of the advantages which would flow from its practice. The profane have sometimes sneered that Jesus and his disciples manifestly thought that the world would come to an end, the millennium be inaugurated, within a very few years from the public ministry of Jesus. Luckily the profane are always ignorant or shallow, or both. For, as the New Jerusalem is to come down while Christians are alive, and as Christians in the highest sense or Christians without offspring must have come to an end with the first generation, it is plain that the belief which has been sneered at was thoroughly well founded; and that it has been disappointed only because the vast majority of Christians have not been Christians in the highest sense at all, but in their ignorance have continued to propagate like so many heathen proletarians.

Now, supposing the very likely case that all Christians now living reflect upon the truth herein expounded, and see that it is true, and, therefore, always act upon it, it follows that, with the end of our now young generation, the whole of Christendom will be translated into the kingdom of heaven. Either the mere scum of non-Christians left upon the earth will be wholly or in great part converted by an example so splendid and attractive, and thus translate all Christendom in the second edition in a couple of generations more; or else the world, being without any Christianity, will, as a matter of course, be so utterly vile and evil that the promised fire must destroy it at once, and so bring in the New Heavens and New Earth.

Roman Catholic Christians may indeed answer that, although the above argument is irresistible to the Protestants, who have no mean in the next life between Heaven and Hell, yet that it is not so formidable to them, seeing that they believe in the ultimate salvation of nearly every one born and reared in their communion, and only give a temporary purgatory to the worst of their own sinners. And I admit that such reply is very cogent. Yet, strangely enough, the Catholics, even more than the Protestants, recognise and cultivate the supreme beatitude of celibacy; their legions of unwedded priests, and monks, and nuns and saints are so many legions of concessions to the truth of my main (argument).

I am aware that one of the most illustrious dignitaries of our own National Church, the very reverend and reverent Dr. Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, has advocated on various grounds, and with impressive force of reasoning, the general eating of babies: and I anticipate that some prudent Christians may, therefore, argue that

it is better to get babies and eat them than to have none at all, since the souls of the sweet innocents would surely go to heaven, while their bodies would be very nourishing on earth. Unfortunately, however, the doctrine of Original Sin, as expounded and illustrated by many very thoughtful theologians, and specially theologians of the most determined Protestant type, makes it very doubtful whether the souls of infants are not damned. It will surely be better, then, for good Protestants to have no infants at all: Q. E. D.



# THE SWINBURNE CONTROVERSY

(1866.)

NOT having read Mr. Swinburne's "Poems and Ballads," I have nothing to say on the special case in which they are involved. A few of the adverse critiques I have chanced to see, and these almost avail to convince one that Mr. Swinburne is a true poet. The *Saturday Review*, shocked out of the complacency of its stark peevishness, cried, "Pretty verses these to read aloud to young ladies in the drawing-room!" As if there were any great book in existence proper to read aloud to young ladies in drawing-rooms! and as if young ladies in drawing-rooms were the fit and proper judges of any great book! I should like to watch the smuggest and most conceited of Saturday Reviewers attempting to read aloud to young ladies in a drawingroom certain chapters in the Bible, certain scenes of Shakespere, certain of the very best passages in Chaucer, Spenser, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, Burns, Byron, Shelley. When Mr. Swinburne answers that he writes for full-grown men and women, the acute *Fun* affirms that men have read his book and have condemned it. As if our present brood of periodical critics were men! At home in private life, some of them probably are; but in their critical capacity, that is to say incapacity, how many of them have any virility? The *Athenaeum* squashes the detestable book by proclaiming that it contains such and such things in the style of Alfred de Musset, George Sand, Victor Hugo, Ovid, etc.; that is to say, in the style of some of the best Latin and modern French writers! As for *Punch*, he makes a joke worthy of his present lively condition (were it not for Mr. C. H. Bennett, one would say that there was no blood at all left in Mr. Punch when the great Leech dropped off), suggesting that the author should take the appropriate name of Swine-born. But the mass of our present critics are so far beneath contempt that we will waste no more time upon them.

I have just one remark to make, however, before saying a few words on the general issue raised by this particular process. A large number of highly respectable elderly personages in gowns, for the most part belonging to the priesthood of our very dear National Church, and who by themselves and by good Bumbledom in general are accounted the real clerisy of England, have devoted all, or nearly all, the years of their maturity to what is termed the classical instruction of ingenuous youth. The ingenuous youth thus magnificently instructed comprise young men of the highest rank, with the most money and leisure and the reddest blood in the nation. Is it not rather ludicrous to see the said begowned elderly personages all wringing their hands and smiting their breasts, weeping and lamenting in sore astonishment and perplexity and terror, when one of these young men dares to give sign that he has actually in some degree *assimilated* such classical instruction, instead of merely gulping it down hastily and then vomiting it all crude at the examinations?

As to the general questions, I will start by avowing frankly my conviction, that, in the present state of England, every thoughtful man who loves literature should rejoice in the advent of any really able book which outrages propriety and shocks Bumbledom, should rejoice in its advent simply and exactly because it does outrage propriety and shock Bumbledom, even if this book be nauseous to his own taste and bad in his own judgment. For the condition of our literature in these days is disgraceful to a nation of men: Bumble has drugged all its higher powers, and only the rudest shocks can arouse them from their torpor. We have still, indeed, by the inscrutable bounty of nature, three or four great writers, the peers of the greatest in Europe; out they stand like so many forest-trees, antique oaks of Old England, in a boundless flat of kitchen-gardens—cabbage and lettuce, radishes and onions, and all the many-leaved “pot-boilers,” fit only to be soddened and seethed in a pot, and “to pot,” thank goodness, they all quickly go.

Our literature should be the clear and faithful mirror of our whole world of life, but at present there are vast realms of thought and imagination and passion and action, of which it is not allowed to give any reflex at all, or is allowed only to give a reflex so obscure and distorted as to be worse than none. But, it may be objected, suppose Satyrs come leering into your mirror and Bacchantes whirl before it? I answer that the business of a mirror is clear reflection: if it does not faithfully image the Satyr, how can it faithfully image Hyperion? And do you dread that the Satyr will be preferred to Hyperion, when both stand imaged in clear light before us? It is only when the windows are curtained, when the mirror is a black gulph and its portraitures are vague dark shadows, that the beautiful and the noble can pass undistinguished from the hideous and the vile.

If, indeed, the realities not reflected became unrealities, were annihilated, then there would be some sense in veiling those portions of the mirror in front of which certain features of our life are exposed. And if that which sees not could not be seen, it would be very sensible of the hunted ostrich to hide its head in the sand. But we all know that in darkness what is filthy and vile grows ever filthier and viler, what is pure and sweet sickens and decays.

“We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us.”

We have suppressed mention of all facts which Bumble would fain ignore, and utterance of all opinions likely to disturb his sacred peace; we have canted enough to nauseate the angels, and have continually lied for God as for a man to please him; so our popular books are fit for emasculated imbeciles, the *Times* is our leading journal, and the *Daily Telegraph* boasts the largest circulation in the world! And in the meanwhile the police-reports are full of putrid flesh, all the blue-books are crammed with statistical dry bones; flesh from the carcasses and bones from the skeletons in that mass of death and corruption under our imperial whited sepulchre.

I do not complain of the kitchen-garden literature; many of the vegetables are very wholesome and savory in their season, very good for eating to-day and forgetting to-morrow; I complain that in the interest of kitchen-gardens the rearing of all grander and loftier vegetation, the growth of secular forest-kings has become almost impossible in England. The stupidest popular book would not be popular did it not find a large number of people still more stupid than itself, to whom it is really entertaining and instructive. These stupid people one does not blame, one can only pity or envy them according to one's mood. But what shall one say of that large number of educated people who are not stupid, who are familiar with continental literature; who yet, if an English book appears advocating ideas such as they have been delighted with in a French or German dress, feign astonishment and horror, and join with all the poor little curs of Bumbledom in yelping and snarling at it? These men who know well what they are doing are the accomplices of Bumble who does not know what he is doing, who fondly fancies that he is doing something very different, in starving on thin diet and stupifying with narcotic drugs the intellect of our nation once so robust and active; and assuredly if the process goes on much longer we shall come to rank mentally as a third-rate Power in Europe.

No intelligent man in England, without (which is a contradiction in terms) his ideas are exactly coincident with the non-ideas of Bumble, or without he is rich and independent, can afford to devote himself to honest treatment of any great religious or social, moral or philosophical question. If treated in a book, he must himself pay the expense of publication; if treated in an article, not even by payment could he get

the portals of any popular periodical to open unto him. For periodicals—newspapers, magazines, reviews—are the Fools' Paradise of the commonplace, the mediocre, the orthodox, the respectable. As the strength of a chain must be measured by its weakest link, so the thought of a periodical must be measured by the thought of its most imbecile subscribers. A periodical to live must be a commercial success; the faintest thrill of new ideas would affect its circulation by shocking off some of its regular readers; it must suit its articles to the size of its customers—a very little hat for a very little head, a very little thought for a very little brain. Thus, though in thinking of their criticisms I spoke so contemptuously of our critics, I do not doubt that many of them are much wiser than their articles. The most honest of them must live by their pen, so they do not attempt to tell the whole truth though they will not tell a lie; many, however, undoubtedly are as apt for the sin of commission as for the sin of omission.

A noteworthy instance occurs to me as I write. An eminent English author, in some respects even a great author, complained that in our country no one since *Fielding* had dared to attempt the full and faithful portraiture of a man, and he set himself to the task in a work published by instalments. As he entered upon certain phases of common virile life, the circulation of the serial began to decrease. This author was eminent, well-off, much more honest and wise and brave than ninety-nine authors in a hundred: of course, having begun his work he would honestly finish it, he would not only tell the truth and nothing but the truth, he would also tell the whole truth?—he quietly left off painting the features objected to, finished such as were agreeable to the public, and said with a cynical scorn (flavored perhaps with some bitterness of self-scorn), “*So you don't want to see and hear the whole truth? Very well!*” This author was revered by the great and noble-hearted *Charlotte Brontë*; this author was \**Thackeray*, strong with all the prestige of *Vanity Fair*; he could not think of continuing a course injurious to his “circulation,” so “*Pendennis*” is not almost worthy (as it might, else have been) to stand beside “*Un Grande Homme de Province à Paris*” of *Balzac*.

When such is *Thackeray*, what must be *Gigadibs*?

If I write this rather strongly it is because I feel that I am writing in the interest of strength and health and purity and freedom, at a time when the mass of our literature is infected with servile weakness and disease and that “obscenity, which is ever blasphemy against the divine beauty in life.” For all obscene things batten on darkness, and light is fatal to them. But for the Bumble who rules over us, the naked beauty is obscene and the naked truth is blasphemous; he thinks that the *Venus de Medici* came out of Holywell Street, and is inclined to believe that all the fossil records of geology were forged by the Devil to throw discredit upon the

book of Genesis. One cannot without a keen pang of shame and rage think of what we are when one remembers what we were, when one recalls our old and glorious literature, in the wide world unsurpassed; our literature noble and renowned, ever most glorious when most manly and daring.

# GREAT CHRIST IS DEAD

(1875.)

WE have all heard the wonderful story, recounted by Plutarch in his treatise on the Cessation of the Oracles, how, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, a ship sailing from Greece to Italy was becalmed for the night at the islet-rock of Paxus in the Ionian Sea, between the Echinades and Ithaca, when a loud and terrible voice from the land called Thamous the pilot. And he having responded at the third appeal, "I am here; what would you with me?" the voice, grown yet louder and more terrible, commanded him to announce on arriving at Palodes that Pan the Great was dead. Accordingly, when the vessel reached this place, whose site I believe the learned have not yet fixed, Thamous stood on the prow and lifting his voice shoreward cried, "Pan the Great is dead!"—whereon were heard great moanings and lamentations, mysterious and multitudinous. Not having Plutarch at hand, I have refreshed my memory from Rabelais, who repeats this well-authenticated story by the mouth of Pantagruel, in the twenty-eighth chapter of the fourth book of his inestimable work, following soon on that tempest of all tempests wherein Friar John and Panurge so variously distinguished themselves. The good Pantagruel goes on to expound the story after his own manner, thinking that it referred not to the heathen god Pan, but to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, "ignominiously put to death by the envy and iniquity of the pontiffs, doctors, presbyters, and monks of the Mosaic dispensation...."

For with good right may he in the Greek tongue be called Pan, seeing that he is our All; all we are, all we live, all we have, all we hope, is him, in him, of him, by him. He is the good Pan, the great Shepherd.... at whose death were moanings, sighs, trepidations and lamentations in all the machine of the universe, heavens, earth, sea, hells. With this my interpretation the time agrees. For that most good, most great Pan, our only Savior, died at Jerusalem, reigning in Rome Tiberius Cæsar.—Pantagruel, these words said, rested in silence and profound contemplation.

A little while after we saw the tears rolling from his eyes, large as ostrich eggs. I give myself to God if I lie in a single word." Notwithstanding the thrilling pathos of this close, and my deep reverence for Rabelais, with whom no commentator in holy orders known to me can be compared, except Dean Swift, I am inclined on this point to follow the ordinary opinion that Pan the great god whose death was thus miraculously announced was the Pan of the heathen Greeks. Christ had died, but only *pro tem*; had descended into Hell, but with a return ticket, and simply to harry that realm of Old Harry; in three days he had risen from the dead, in forty more ascended into Heaven; his reign had begun and the reign of the old gods was ended; the spirit was exalted and the flesh brought low, this world and life were contemned for the life and world to come; Nature, the All, the great Pan, was annulled, and the Supernatural Nothing throned supreme. The poets have chanted this momentous revolution according to their religion, their phantasy, or their mood. Milton in his Hymn on the Nativity shouts harsh Puritanical scorn on the oracles stricken dumb, and the deities overthrown. Shelley in a magnificent chorus of "Hellas," "Worlds on worlds are rolling ever," contests not the justice of their doom, while in the final chorus he predicts the same doom for their conqueror in his turn, In our own day Mr. Swinburne in the "Hymn to Proserpine," and elsewhere, has bewailed the dead immortals, with nothing but aversion and contempt for the pale Galilean, the "ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods." Leopardi an early poem "To Spring," beautiful but not of his deepest, regrets the banished divinities, and since the halls of Olympus are void, appeals to Nature to restore to his spirit its first fire, if she indeed lives. Schiller in his "Gods of Greece" passionately laments them; and Mrs. Browning more passionately answers him, crying, "God himself is the best Poet, and the Real is his song and the Real we accept perforce in its fulness, but discern not how it can derive from an unreal God. Novalis in his "Hymns to the Night" laments with Schiller the unsouling of Nature, "bound in iron chains by arid number and rigorous rule;" but goes on to celebrate the resurrection of Humanity in Christ. Heine in his "Gods of Greece," after declaring in his wild way that he has never loved the old deities, that to him the Greek are repugnant, and the Romans thoroughly hateful, yet avows that when he considers how dastardly and windy are the gods who overcame them, the new reigning sorrowful gods, malignant in their sheep's, clothing of humility, he feels ready to fight for the former against these. This change of the celestial dynasty is indeed a favorite theme with him. Elsewhere he pictures the Olympians holding high revelry, with nectar and ambrosia, with Apollonian music and inextinguishable laughter, when suddenly a wretched Jew staggers in, his brow bleeding from a crown of thorns, trailing on his shoulder a heavy cross, which he heaves upon the banquet table; and forthwith the revel is no more, the divine feast

disappears, the everburning lights are quenched, the triumphant gods and goddesses vanish terror-smitten, dethroned for ever and ever. And again, in his incomparable "Gods in Exile," he tells us what became of these dispersed Olympians during the Dark Ages, in the thick night of the noontide of Christianity; how they were transformed from celestial to infernal by the monstrous superstition of that baleful era; as we find the hoofs and horns of Pan transferred to the Devil himself; as we find Venus in that legend of Tannhauser which has fascinated so many poets, as well as great Wagner,—

Vénus, ma belle déesse,  
 Vous êtes diablesse!

More than eighteen hundred years have passed since the death of the great god Pan was proclaimed; and now it is full time to proclaim the death of the great god Christ. Eighteen hundred years make a fairly long period even for a celestial dynasty; but this one in its perishing must differ from all that have perished before it, seeing that no other can succeed it; the throne shall remain void for ever, the royalty of the Heavens be abolished. Fate, in the form of Science, has decreed the extinction of the gods. Mary and her babe must join Venus and Love, Isis and Horus; living with them only in the world of art. Jesus on his cross must dwindle to a point, even in the realms of legend under Prometheus on Caucasus. For ages already the Father has been as spectral as Jupiter; for ages already the Holy Ghost has been but the shadow of a shade. And the last, not least, member of the Divine Royal Family, Satan the Prince of Darkness, Prince of this World, and Prince of the Powers of the Air, is no more alive than Pluto, who also was born brother to the Monarch of Heaven. The Hebrew dynasty of the gods is no more; it has done much evil in its long sovranity, which we will try to forget now it ceases to reign; it has done some little good, whose remembrance we will cherish when it is sepulchred, Christ the Great is dead, but Pan the Great lives again, as Mr. Maccall told us in some lines published in this paper several years ago. Pan lives, not as a God, but as the All, Nature, now that the oppression of the Supernatural is removed. I may be told that Christianity is yet alive and flourishing, that its priesthood and its churches hold possession of Europe and America and Australia. So the priesthood and the shrines of the Olympians kept possession of the Roman Empire centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus. When the spirit of a faith has departed, that faith is dead, and its burial is only a question of time. When the noblest hearts worship not at its altars, when the most vigorous intellects abandon its creeds, the knell of its doom has rung. At the risk of being thought bigoted or prejudiced, I must avow that to my mind the decomposition of Christianity is so offensively manifest and advanced, that, with the exception of a



very few persons whose transcendent genius could throw a glamor of glory over any creed however crude and mean, and whom I recognise as far above my judgment, I can no longer give my esteem to any educated man who has investigated and still professes this, religion, without grave deduction at the expense of his heart, his intellect, or his conscience, if not of all three. Miraculous voices are not heard in these days; but everywhere myriads of natural voices are continually announcing to us, and enjoining us to announce to others, Great Christ is dead!

# RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS

(1876.)

**I**N reviewing Mr. R. H. Hutton's Essay on "Christian Evidences, Popular and Critical," I was obliged to follow his lead, joining issue on such pleas as he put forward. Thus with regard to the resurrection of Jesus, as Mr. Hutton adduced what he thought confirmatory evidence only from the New Testament itself, I confined myself to showing or attempting to show that such evidence is unsubstantial. But I could not consider this argument adequate or conclusive, for there are large general considerations of incomparably greater importance which it leaves out altogether. It is as if a case ruled by broad principles of equity were to be decided on the narrowest technical grounds. Therefore, while confident that even on these grounds the case must go against the Christian believer, I wish to add a few words on its wider relations, in order that the decision may be established, not merely by the letter of the law, but also by the spirit of justice.

We leave thus the torturing of texts in the dim cells of the theological Inquisition, a process by which almost any confession required can be and has been wrung from the unfortunate victims, and emerge into the open daylight of common-sense and reason. And here I venture to assert that if the story of the resurrection and ascension were recorded of any other than Jesus in any other sacred book than the Bible, Mr. Hutton and all other intelligent Christians would not only disbelieve it, but would not even condescend to investigate it, condemning it offhand as too preposterous to be worthy of serious attention. Thus, what Christian has ever deigned to examine critically the marvels affirmed in the Koran, such as Mohammed's visit to heaven; although the Koran can be traced far more surely to the Prophet of Islam than can the Gospels to their reputed authors, and this Prophet bears a far higher character for truthfulness than do the early Christians? Nay, what Bibliolater has

ever seriously weighed the evidence for the miracles of his fellow Christian the great St. Bernard; such as those which are minutely related and solemnly attested by ten eye-witnesses, men well known and of unimpeached veracity, and which are thus infinitely better attested than any miracle in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation?

Your enlightened Protestant simply shrugs his shoulders at all such stories, and says with a superior smile: "Of course, mere imposture and collusion, or superstition and delusion; no sensible man can afford to waste his time in weighing that sort of stuff; we don't think twice before determining whether the impossible ever really occurred." How, then, can this enlightened Protestant receive without question the miracles of the Jewish books while rejecting without question all others? We have seen that it cannot be because of any superiority of evidence for the former, since the evidence for the latter is in many cases infinitely greater and better authenticated, and since he does not attempt to weigh evidence before either accepting or rejecting, though he may seek evidence and argument to confirm what he has already given himself to believe. He accepts the Jewish miracles simply because they have come down to him, through many generations of his forefathers, invested with a glamor of sanctity, and he regards them with the eye of faith which sees, and sees not, just what it wishes; he rejects miracles not in the Bible because they come to him without any hallowed associations, and he regards them with the eye of reason which beholds the plain facts before it, and neither wishes nor is able to avoid beholding them.

It is worth noting that while our Christian advocates insist with all their might, such as it is, upon the resurrection of Jesus, they willingly pass over as lightly as possible, if they do not altogether ignore, a similar miracle guaranteed by the very same authority. In Matt, xxvii., 52, 53, it stands recorded among the marvels following the death of Jesus: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." The reader of Shakespeare will remember the prodigies anterior to the death of Julius Cæsar when—

"The sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets."

This prodigal multiplicity and superfluity of resurrections seems to have been not a little embarrassing to modern Christian champions, though doubtless it did not in the least trouble the primitive non-scientific believers, to whom nothing was more natural than the unnatural, including the supernatural and the infranatural. An apologist of our days who *must* affirm the one resurrection, seeing that his whole religion is based upon it, and who, though valiantly defying science, seeks to conciliate historical possibility, finds his task quite heavy enough in accounting for the

facts that the risen Jesus “was seen of above five hundred brethren at once,” and yet that no record of his rising can be found beyond the limits of the New Testament. But the difficulties of the poor apologist are enormously increased if he must further contend that many bodies of the saints came out of their graves, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many, and still there is no external evidence. We are surely at the utmost limits of the possible in conceiving that Jesus could appear unto five hundred of the brethren at once (there is no hint elsewhere that he had so many permanent followers in his lifetime; in Acts i., 15, we find that there were about one hundred and twenty gathered after the ascension), without the priests and the Roman officials hearing of the apparition and investigating it. But if many others rose from their graves and appeared to many, it is absolutely impossible that anyone in Jerusalem could be ignorant of the miracle; equally impossible that Pilate and his officers did not investigate it, and equally impossible that finding it real he did not report it with the evidence to Rome, for the Empire was a thoroughly organised State, and the Romans were a thoroughly practical and business-like people. Once in the imperial archives, the record of the miracle would have spread everywhere; all subsequent historians would have related it, all subsequent writers referred to it. So it is no wonder that, recoiling from these manifold impossibilities, the Christian advocates prefer to dwell on the one resurrection as if it were unique, and avoid dwelling on the others that by the very same testimony immediately followed it. It is very significant that neither in the Acts nor in the Epistles is there any allusion to these resurrections. When Peter and the others were preaching the resurrection of Christ, why did they not adduce and produce some of these many, risen saints, whose visible, tangible, living and speaking evidence would have been irresistible?

Just as the resurrection of Jesus could be accepted without misgiving by the non-scientific early Christians, to whom miracles appeared among the most frequent occurrences of life, so could the ascension. Their earth was a plane, vaulted by the sky, lamped by the little sun and moon and stars; above this vault was Heaven, where their God dwelt enthroned; they knew nothing of the law of gravitation; their Christ, standing in the flesh on the Mount of Olives, floated up through this vault to sit enthroned beside his Father in the most natural supernatural manner. We can conceive and sympathise with this simple faith; but it is hard to conceive and sympathise with the blind faith, which seems wilfully blind, of the modern educated Christians. It has been often remarked that Copernicus and Kepler and Newton have destroyed all the old mythologies, including of course the mythology of both the Old and New Testaments. With the earth no longer the universe of mortal life, between a Heaven above its domed firmament and a Hades like a vast dungeon beneath, but a quite infinitesimal grain of sand involved by an infinitesimal drop of

dew, floating and revolving in an ocean of space boundless in height and depth and breadth, amidst innumerable other spherules, most of which visible are very much greater than itself, and at inconceivable distances from it; with man no longer the lord of the creation, for whose service all things were made, but an animalcule inexpressibly small, living for a moment inexpressibly brief, with limitless time before his beginning and limitless time beyond his end; the Christian mythology and system, among others, because ineffably absurd. Where is the Heaven for its God? where the Hell for its Devil? Where is above? Where beneath? Whence came the winged angels, with their wrings which would not enable them to fly?

If Jesus had ascended and continued to ascend with the speed of light, he might be ascending now and go on ascending for millions and millions of years, and still not reach a heavenly region beyond the range of our telescopes. I And think of the scheme of the Atonement in the system of the universe, as we are learning to know it now—try to conceive an infinite and eternal God of this infinite and eternal Whole sacrificing his only son for the salvation of us most insignificant insects on our most insignificant earth! The immense conceptions of science dwarf these petty conceptions of mythology to a littleness which reduces them beneath consideration, which in our days reduces them even beneath contempt.

Naturally the churches have always hated and resisted science, and the theologians have seldom dared to face its conclusions. They ignore the immensities, and confine their vision to the pages of a single book, to a history whose chronology counts not six thousand years. But, as I have remarked, even this minute field they cannot hold against the sceptic, who has made them abandon all the rest of the universe. Why did their risen Lord only slink about among his own disciples, appearing to these but at flying instants: why did he not, with his well-known features and with the wounds of the nails and the spear in his body, confront the chief priests and Pilate and the whole of Jerusalem, and compel them to acknowledge and bear enduring witness to his resurrection? Why did he not summon all the people from the highest to the lowest to the solemn spectacle of his ascension, securing multitudinous and permanently recorded evidence such as none of us could doubt? We might go on asking Why? and Why? and Why? in this fashion on a hundred points, confident that to not one of our questions could the Christian apologist give a straightforward and satisfactory answer. As the scheme of the Atonement is presented to us, God sacrificed his only son that all mankind might be saved through belief in him; yet not merely neglected to secure trustworthy evidence and certain record of this supreme fact and the miracles attesting it, but adopted every means possible to make the evidence untrustworthy, the record uncertain, the miracles and the sacrifice incredible.

# SOME MUSLIM LAWS AND BELIEFS

(1876.)

THE following notes are drawn from E. W. Lane's charming and instructive "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians" (fifth and standard ed., 1860), a worthy companion to Sir Gardner Wilkinson's book on the Ancient Egyptians, and written about forty years since, before steam-communication had materially changed that people. The muédoin's, whose summons to prayer is one of the few audible charms of the East to a western, are generally chosen from the blind, in order that the harems and terraces of houses may not be overlooked from the minarets. *Our* callers to prayer are generally blind also; but this is because few clear-sighted men will in these days accept the office. The imams or priests and other religious officials are all paid from the funds of their respective mosques, and not by any contributions exacted from the people: a lesson to us with our State Church. The imams have no authority above other persons, and enjoy no respect save for reputed learning and piety; they are not a distinct order of men set apart for the ministry, but may resign or be displaced, losing with the office the title of imâm; they chiefly obtain their living by other means than service in the mosque (for which their salaries are as a rule only about a shilling a month), many of them being tradesmen: here surely are several good lessons for us. The mosques are open all day, and the great mosque El-Azhar all night; the Muslims have great reverence for them, yet in many of the larger ones persons lounge, chat, eat, sleep, spit, sew, etc.: another lesson to us with our churches nearly always closed and useless. The Muslim does not abstain from business on the Friday, his Sabbath, except during the time of prayer, and for this he has the authority of the Kur-ân: when will our bigoted Sabbatharians learn so much liberal wisdom from him? The Prophet did not forbid women to attend public prayers in the mosques, but pronounced it better for them to pray in private;

in Cairo they are not admitted to the public prayers, it being thought that their presence would inspire a wrong sort of devotion. The result is that few women in Egypt pray at all. If ours were in like case, how many churches and chapels would attract large congregations? The Egyptians, like the modern Arabs, are not a truthful people, but there are some oaths which few would falsely take; such as swearing three times by "God the Great," or on a copy of the Kur-ân "By what this contains of the word of God!"—I wonder whether the Christian Englishmen are few who falsely swear by God and on the Bible. Mr. Lane witnessed many instances of forbearance in persons of the middle and lower classes when grossly insulted; and often heard an Egyptian say on receiving a blow from an equal, "God bless thee," "God requite thee good," "Beat me again": how many of the Christians obey in like manner one of the plainest precepts of Christ? In general a quarrel terminates by one or both of them saying "Justice is against me"; often after this they recite together the first chapter of the Kur-ân; and then, sometimes, embrace and kiss one another. If a similar custom prevailed here there would be little serious quarrelling; for the men would all avoid disputes save with pretty girls and charming women, and would always make it up very quickly with them. The Muslim believes that there have been six great Prophets and Apostles—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Mohammed; each of whom received a revealed law or system of religion and morality, each of the first five abrogated and superseded by the next, though all were the same in essentials. Thus the Jews from the time of Moses to that of Christ, and the Christians (if they did not accept the corrupt and idolatrous doctrine of the divinity of Jesus) from the time of Christianity to that of Mohammed, were true believers. Of course the last is the greatest Prophet, and since his revelation the Muslims only have been the faithful. The Pentateuch, Psalms and Gospels, though of divine origin, have been so much altered as to contain very little of the true Word of God; but the Kur-ân is supposed to have suffered no essential change whatever. Jesus was born of a pure virgin by the miraculous operation of God, without any father human or divine. When he had fulfilled the object of his mission, he was taken up to God from the Jews who sought to slay him, and another man, on whom God had stamped the likeness of Jesus, was crucified in his stead. He will come again upon earth, to establish the Muslim religion and perfect peace and security, after having killed Anti-Christ, and to be a sign of the approach of the last day. In all these doctrines the Muslims are decidedly more consistent and liberal, as well as somewhat less superstitious than the Christians, with their God-man and trinity in unity, their damnation of Mohammed as a mere impostor and of his religion, El Islam, as a vile fabrication of stolen materials. "The Egyptians pay a superstitious reverence not to imaginary beings alone: they extend it to certain individuals of their own species;

and often to those who are justly the least entitled to such respect. An *idiot* or a *fool* is vulgarly regarded by them as a being whose mind is in heaven, while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals; consequently, he is considered an especial favorite of heaven. Whatever enormities a reputed saint may commit (and there are many who are constantly infringing precepts of their religion) such acts do not affect his fame for sanctity: for they are considered as the results of the abstraction of his mind from worldly things; his soul, or reasoning faculties, being wholly absorbed in devotion, so that his passions are left without control. Lunatics who are dangerous to society are kept in confinement; but those who are harmless are generally regarded as saints. *Most of the reputed saints of Egypt are either lunatics, or idiots, or impostors.*” wonder whether this applies at all, and if it does, to what extent, to the countless saints of our Most Holy Catholic Church of Christendom. In Egypt, as in other countries of the East, Muslims, Christians, and Jews adopt each other’s superstitions, while they abhor the leading doctrines of each other’s faith. “In sickness, the Muslim sometimes employs Christian and Jewish priests to pray for him: the Christians and Jews, in the same predicament, often call in Muslim saints for the like purpose!” So much human nature is there in man, not to speak of woman. The Muslims profoundly reverence the Kur-ân, yet will quote it on the most trivial occasions in jest as well as on the most important in earnest. They are generally fond of conversing on religion among themselves; and the most prevalent mode of entertaining a party of guests among the higher middle classes, in Cairo, is the recital of the whole of the Kur-ân, which is chanted by special persons hired for the purpose, or other religious exercises. This chanting of the Kur-ân takes up about nine hours. When will our fashionable Bibliolaters issue invitations for the treat of hearing poor curates or scripture readers intone the whole of the Bible, or even so much of it at a time as might be got through in nine hours? When, oh when?

Ladies will learn with approval that it is thought improper, and even disreputable, for a man to be single. Mr. Lane was a bachelor during his first two visits to Egypt; and in the former of these, having to change his residence, engaged another house. The lease was duly signed and some money paid in advance, but the inhabitants of the neighborhood (who were mostly descendants of the Prophet) would not have an unmarried man in their midst. The agent said they would gladly admit him if he would but purchase a female slave, thus redeeming himself from the opprobrium of not possessing a wife of some sort. He managed to secure a house in a less scrupulous quarter, but had to engage that no creature wearing a hat should visit him. The Sheykh or chief of this quarter often urged him to marry; Lane objected that he intended to live in Egypt only a year or two longer. The Sheykh answered, with great moral force and earnestness, that a handsome young widow a few doors



off would be glad to marry him, on the express understanding that he should divorce her on going away; while of course he could do so earlier if she did not suit him. Now this young widow, in spite of her religion and veil, had several times contrived (the Sage saith that there is nothing a woman cannot contrive, except to refrain from contriving) to let our Oriental Englishman catch a glimpse of her very pretty face; and the miserable bachelor was reduced to plead that she was the very last woman he would like to marry *pro tempore*, for he felt sure that once wed he could never make up his mind to part with her. Doubtless all our single men, and especially our Christian young men, would much rather be deemed disreputable and denied decent lodgings than establish their character for virtue and respectability by buying female slaves, however cheap, or marrying nice young widows divorcible at pleasure!

As to polygamy, Mr. Lane remarks that it can only be defended as preventing a greater immorality than it occasions; and that Mohammed, like Moses, did not introduce but limited and regulated it. The ancient Egyptians had but one wife each, though they might have slave concubines. Polygamy, however, is rare, and rarer among the upper and middle classes than the lower; "I believe that not more than one husband in twenty has two wives." The mere sentence, "I give myself up to thee," uttered by a female to a man who proposes to become her husband (even without the presence of witnesses, if none can easily be procured) renders her his legal wife if arrived at puberty. A man may divorce his wife twice, and each time take her back without any ceremony, unless she has paid for it by resigning the reserved third of the dowry, furniture, etc.; but if he divorces her the third time, or puts her away by a triple divorce conveyed in one sentence, he cannot receive her again until she has been, married and divorced by another husband, who must have consummated his marriage with her. To divorce her, he simply has to say, "Thou art divorced," or "I divorce thee"; but the woman cannot separate herself from her husband against his will, unless it be for some considerable fault on his side, such as cruel treatment or neglect. The facility of divorce has depraving effects, upon both sexes. Many men in the course of ten years have married twenty, thirty, or more wives; and women not far advanced in age have been wives to a dozen or more successively. "I have heard of men who have been in the habit of marrying a new wife almost every month." But such conduct is generally regarded as very disgraceful; and few persons in the upper or middle classes would give a daughter in marriage to a person who had divorced many wives.

The women deem it more incumbent to cover the upper and back part of the head than the face; and more requisite to conceal the face than most parts of the person. Many among the lower classes never conceal their faces; women may often

be seen with nothing but a narrow strip of rag round the hips. The face-veils have the advantage of leaving the eyes visible, which are generally the most beautiful of the features; fine figures being more common than altogether handsome faces; though some faces are of a beauty distinguished by such sweetness of expression that they seem the perfection of female loveliness, "and impressed me at the time with the idea that their equal could not be found in any other country." The women of Cairo are less strictly guarded than in most Eastern lands; wives are proud of the restraint as showing that the husbands value them highly, looking upon themselves as hidden treasures. To such an absurd extent do Muslims carry their feeling of the sacredness of women that entrance into the tombs of some women is forbidden to men; and a man and woman are never buried in the same vault, without a wall between them—as if their very corpses might get up to mischief. For adultery on the part of the woman the Kur-ân prescribes death by stoning, but drowning is generally substituted. Unless detected by an officer of justice *four eye-witnesses are required*; failing these, the accuser is to be scourged with eighty stripes. This extraordinary law is traced to an accusation of adultery against the Prophet's favorite wife "Aisheh," who was thus absolved from punishment, and subsequent revelations established her innocence. If we had a similar law here we might close our Divorce Court. If a husband without any witnesses accuses his wife of adultery, he must swear four times by God that he speaks the truth, and the fifth time imprecate God's curse on himself if he is a liar; but the wife can counterbalance this by swearing four times by God that he is a liar, and the fifth time imprecating God's wrath on herself if he speaks the truth. The commentators and lawyers have agreed that in this dilemma the marriage must be dissolved. When a peasant woman is found to have been unfaithful to her husband, in general he or her brother throws her into the Nile, with a stone tied to her neck; or cuts her to pieces and then throws these into the river. In most instances a father or brother punishes in the same manner an unmarried daughter or sister who has been guilty of incontinence. These relatives are considered more disgraced than the husband by the crime of the woman; and are often despised if they do not thus punish her. Women in easy circumstances are put to bed for from three to six days after childbirth; but poor women in the same case seldom take to bed at all, and after a day or two resume their ordinary occupations, if these do not require great exertion.

The law of inheritance is remarkable in two respects; primogeniture is not privileged, and in most cases the share of a female is half that of a male in the same degree of relationship. A debtor is only kept imprisoned for debt if he cannot prove himself insolvent; but if able, he may be made work out what he owes. Apostacy from the faith is death if not recanted on three warnings. Blasphemy against God

or any of the Great Prophets, whether repented or not, is instant death: on the ground that apostacy or infidelity is but ignorance and misjudgment, while blasphemy shows utter depravity. If Christians blaspheming Mohammed were punished as are Muslims blaspheming Christians, what a number of our enlightened clerical teachers would have died the death of malefactors!

The Copts, or descendants of the ancient Egyptians, said to number about 150,000, are Christians, but scarcely a credit to that religion whose votaries boast of its civilising and elevating character. The fact is that in advanced countries the Christianity has been civilised by the Secularism, not the Secularism by the Christianity; in countries where the sciences and arts are stationary or retrograde, Christianity proves that it has in itself no motive-power, and is generally even more degraded than the other superstitions around it. Mr. Lane almost despaired of learning anything about these Copts, until he had the good fortune to become acquainted with a character of which he had doubted the existence—a Copt of a liberal as well as an intelligent mind. They hate the Greeks and all other Christians not of their own sect much worse than they hate the Muslims themselves. The priests are supported only by alms or by their own industry. Their language is a dead one. They pray seven times a day, in the course of these reciting the whole Book of Psalms, as well as chapters of the Bible, prayers, etc.: a fine example to their lax co-religionists here. They have long and arduous fasts. In spite or because of all this, they bear a very bad character as sullen, avaricious, abominable dissemblers, cringing or domineering according to circumstances. The one respectable Copt discovered by Lane admitted that they are generally ignorant, faithless, worldly, sensual, and drunken; he declared that the Patriarch was a tyrant and suborner of false witnesses; that the monks and priests in Cairo are seen every evening begging and asking the loan of money, which they never repay, at the houses of their parishioners and other acquaintances, and procuring brandy if possible wherever they call. So much for our esteemed fellow-Christians in Egypt, descendants of what in heathen times was long the foremost nation in the world.

“Women are not to be excluded from paradise, according to the faith of El Islam; though it has been asserted by many Christians, that the Muslims believe women to have no soul. In several places in the Kur-ân, Paradise is promised to all true believers.” They will be admitted by God’s mercy on account of their faith, not of their good works; but their felicity there will be proportioned to their good works. The very meanest male in Paradise is promised eighty thousand beautiful youths as servants, and seventy-two wives of the daughters of Paradise. These celestial virgins we commonly call houris, but learned and accurate Mr-Lane terms them hooreeyehs, vividly suggesting that the Muslim saints burst into rapturous

and prolonged hoorays on first perceiving them. He may also have the wives he had here below, if he wants them; and doubtless the good will desire the good. On behalf of the earthly fair sex, I must emphatically protest against this part of the heavenly arrangements. How do we know that the good husband will desire the good wife, however good, when he has two-and-seventy maidens of Paradise all to himself? The trust that he will, cannot be trusted; it is a perfidious consolation to poor women. No wonder Muslim wives are obsequious, when it depends on the will, pleasure or caprice of their husbands whether they shall be re-married in the other world or not. Mrs. Caudle herself would scarcely hazard a curtain lecture with this atrocious alternative in prospect. Try to fancy being an old-maid or grass-widow for ever and ever where all the men are very much married, having six dozen wives each at the very lowest! Such a heaven to a good woman were ten times crueller than hell. When the Muslim women have been aroused to a sense of their rights, they will insist on being treated in the next world on equal terms with the men: the meanest woman of the faithful (supposing any woman can be mean) shall have her eighty thousand beautiful servants, and her seventy-two husbands of the youths of Paradise, resplendent, adoring, ever obedient. This settled first, it will be a question for consideration between herself and her terrene spouse whether they shall combine their several establishments, or agree to be divorced by death. But I digress; women always lead us into digressions, only these are usually much more interesting than the dusty high-road along which it is our business to trudge. The meanest of Muslims will further have a very large tent bejewelled with pearls, jacinths and emeralds. He will be waited on by three hundred attendants while he eats, and served in dishes of gold, whereof three hundred shall be set before him at once, each containing a different kind of food, "the last morsel of which will be as grateful as the first." This absence of satiety, this ever-fresh vigor, I believe, is to mark all his enjoyments, however freely he may indulge in them. Though wine is forbidden in this life, he may drink of it *ad libitum* in the next, and the wine of Paradise doth not inebriate. He shall have perpetual youth, and as many children as he may desire. He shall be ravished with the songs of the angel Israfeel, "whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures." I really cannot go on; my feelings are too much for me. I remember when young being taught to sing (or rather to squall; for my voice could never have been mistaken for that of the angel Isrâfeel, even by a frequenter of revival meetings or music halls):

"I thank the goodness and the grace (grays?)  
 Which on my birth have smiled,  
 And made me in these Christian days (dace?)  
 A happy English child.'\*

But now that I am a man, this same consideration fills me with bitterest sorrow and anguish, so that I am ready to bellow:

I curse the evil and disgrace  
 Which have my birth defiled,  
 Who would have been in other case  
 A happy Muslim child!

Yea, when I contrast these glowing and glorious prospects held out to the faithful by the Kur-ân, with the everlasting singing in white night-gowns, amidst the howling of elders and composite beasts all over eyes (what our Heine terms “all the menagerie of the Apocalypse”), in adoration of a God like a jasper and sardine stone to look upon, and of a Lamb with seven horns and seven eyes; then do I wring my hands and beat my breast and tear my hair, sighing and sobbing, moaning and groaning, weeping and lamenting most piteously—Alas! and alas! and alas! why was I bom in a Christian land and reared for the Christian Heaven? Would that I had been born among the Muslims and brought up in the faith of El Islâm! So should I be now looking forward (for from such a generous faith never, never would I have lapsed) unto a Paradise worthy of the name; revelling in anticipations of four-score thousand servants, uncloying courses of three hundred dishes, unlimited strong wine without inebriation, six-dozen wives of the refulgent celestial virgins, aging not themselves, aging not me; perpetual youth, unsating and unexhausting raptures, for ever, and ever, and ever; and instead of having to sing my own throat hoarse, I should have the angel Isrâfeel to sing for me. Ah, dear God! Thou most Compassionate! Thou most Bountiful! Thou to whom all things are possible! grant that I may even yet be converted from a doleful Christian infidel into a blessed Muslim true believer! O God the All-merciful, save me from the terrors and tortures of our Sankey and Moody Christian heaven! O God the All-gracious, let me lie secure in the arms of six-dozen hooreeyehs of Paradise of El Islam! Amen, and Amen.

# THE CHRISTIAN WORLD AND THE SECULARIST

(1876.)

THE *Christian World* of the 1st inst. has another note on the article on "Some Muslim Laws and Beliefs." As Mr. Foote responded to the first note on behalf of the *Secularist*, I, as the author of the obnoxious article, which was mainly mere compilation from the work of a Christian scholar and gentleman, may say a few words on my own behalf in reply to the second, which is as follows:—

"A correspondent writes:—In your 'Notes by the Way' last week there is a painful, though not unseasonable, quotation from a writer on 'Muslim Laws and Beliefs.' This, as coming from a Secularist, is deplorable enough. It is very much more so that the late Viscount Amberley, a son of a veteran statesman, should in his 'Analysis of Religious Belief,' which might indeed more justly be termed 'A Panegyric of all Heathen Beliefs, and a Travesty of that of the Christian,' have given a like description of the paradise of the Koran, and should have sneeringly told us that the Christian Scriptures, in their pictures of the heavenly life, '*strangely overlook this enjoyment*' of 'ever virgins' never growing old, who are to 'supply the faithful with the pleasure of love' (vide Vol. II., p. 200). This is but a specimen of the disdainful and derisive tone with which this writer, who at length leaves himself stranded in a region of the dreariest Atheism, continually speaks of that Book which what he terms 'the illusions of our younger days' might have taught him to respect."

I do not doubt that the quotation was painful to the Christian correspondent, since it is always painful to have our lifelong prejudices shocked by those who have never shared them, or who have attained freedom from their yoke. One might give not a few quotations from any number of the *Christian World* which would be very painful to a pious Muslim. Nor do I doubt that the quotation was not unseasonable, for quotations from the *Secularist* must always be seasonable in an influential Chris-

tian periodical, when they tend to expand the Christian narrowness, and show that there is much to be said in favor of other beliefs. And I admit that, like many other things coming from a Secularist, it must have been deplorable enough to a Christian suckled on the Bible, and assured in his unreflecting ignorance that it is the one true word of the three-in-one true god. But the correspondent finds it very much more deplorable that a son of a veteran statesman should agree with the Secularist—as if the sons of veteran statesmen were naturally expected to be sunk deeper than other persons in the prevailing superstition. The correspondent who, we may presume, has always been taught, and has never doubted, that all heathen beliefs are wholly devilish, and that the Christian belief is wholly divine, thinks that Viscount Amberley's book is a panegyric of the former and a travesty of the latter. If the unfortunate correspondent had the courage and intelligence to enter upon a real analysis of religious belief, he would soon discover that he and his co-religionists have been all along travestying every form of what they call heathenism. With amusing simplicity he is astonished that Lord Amberley gives a like description of the paradise of the Kur-ân to that which I gave in the *Secularist*, as if he could have been accurate in giving any other, when mine was drawn from one of the most careful and accurate of writers, the Oriental Englishman, unequalled in his knowledge of Arabic literature and life! Why, in the very week following the attack on the *Secularist*, the *Christian World's* twin sister, the *Literary World* (perhaps incited thereto by its study of our vilified paper), showed that it had been reading or dipping into Lane, by an article on him under the queer title of "A Man of One Book," he being distinguished for three—"The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians," the translation of the "Arabian Nights," with its peerless notes, and the monumental "Arabic Lexicon"; and the said queerly-named article echoed the general praise of his thoroughness and accuracy, and repeated the statement of those who knew him, that he was a deeply pious man. I am not concerned with the defence of Lord Amberley, and shall therefore not follow further the correspondent's remarks on his book, save to note that a man who says that any such writer "leaves himself stranded in a region of the dreariest Atheism," proves himself by this one phrase utterly incompetent to study that word or understand its subject matter; and, as ignorant and incapable, had better confine himself to the Sunday-school, the Young Men's Christian Association, the religious tea-meeting, and street-corner raving.

It may be as well to say something on my own account, in addition to the vigorous remarks of Mr. Foote, in reply to the first note of the *Christian World*, and vindication of the passage it impugned. And first, as to the Book of Revelation, which claims to be prophetic, and stands in our Bible as the work of St. John the Divine. Luther, indeed, who was not afraid to pass an independent judgment, said,

“I look upon the revelation as neither apostolic nor prophetic;” but it is received as both by our English Protestants, and continually referred to by them as the record of a genuine and authentic vision. But I assert, without fear of contradiction, that if they had never known it, and some missionary brought home an account of its marvels as belonging to the faith of some Polynesian islanders, they would be filled with wonder and compassion at the monstrous superstitions of those poor heathen barbarians. Yes, Exeter Hall and the readers and writers of the *Christian World* itself, would assuredly invoke help to enlighten the degraded idolaters who believed in a heaven whose God was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine; in the midst of whose throne, and round about whose throne, were four beasts—a lion, a calf, a man-faced monster, an eagle—each with six wings, and full of eyes before and behind and within; which beasts never rested day nor night from saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;” and which, moreover, worshipped a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes—a figment more extravagant than the many-headed and many-armed idols of India. And so with the other enormities of the Apocalypse. Our civilised gentlemen of the *Christian World* can only believe that they believe these things, because hallowed associations and unreflecting faith blind their judgment to the obvious absurdity of the imagery and the conspicuous non-fulfilment of the prophecy, which again and again claims to announce events then at hand, to come quickly.

In the next place I assert that the everlasting monotonous singing of the praises of the lamb, the interminable senseless routine, is not a whit more spiritual, while infinitely less alluring, than the occupations of the Mohammedan Paradise. If it be answered that enlightened Christians have nobler ideas of heaven, I reply that such anticipations are not warranted by the New Testament, and that magnanimous Muslims have also nobler anticipations of paradise, for which there is warrant in the Kur-ân. And while on the subject of spirituality, I may remark that the pure monotheism of the Muslim and the Jew is immensely more spiritual, as well as more rational, than the monotrithemism of the Christian, which not only deifies a man, but juggles with a so-called mystery that cannot be expressed in words without self-contradiction, cannot be conceived in thought, and, by the confession of its own apologists, defies reason.

As to the “hysterical buffoonery,” I have yet to learn that there is anything hysterical in a jolly burst of Rabelaisian laughter. And as to the “poor hollow mockery,” I can assure the writer in the *Christian World* that the mockery was quite rich, sound and genuine in relation to the Apocalypse of his idolised book and the popular Protestant Moody and Sankey heaven. (By the bye, can anyone inform us whether Mr. Sankey is really a Jew, and not a Christian Jew, as I have heard positively as-



serted on Hebrew authority?) As to the “blasphemous irreverence” and the “horrible and blasphemous invocation,” I deny the possibility of blasphemy where there is no belief. A man may blaspheme that which he accounts worthy of reverence, because in speaking evil of it he violates his own convictions and holiest feelings. But if for me there is no God, how can I blaspheme him? Speaking contemptuously of him, I but contemn nothing. If the writer in the *Christian World* were accused of blasphemy for reviling Jupiter and Venus, Brahma and Vishnu, Baal and Moloch, the Goddess of Reason and Mumbo Jumbo, he would reply, I cannot blaspheme false gods, meaning simply gods in whom he has no faith. Just so,

I say that I cannot blaspheme the trinity-in-unity of the Christian, which to me is non-existent, absurd, impossible. It would be well for the writers and readers of the *Christian World* to ponder these things.

# THE ATHANASIAN CREED

(1865.)

ON Christmas day, as on all other chief holidays of the year, the ministers and congregations of our National Church have had the noble privilege and pleasure of standing up and reciting the creed commonly called of St. Athanasius. The question of the authorship does not concern us here, but a note of Gibbon (chapter 37) is so brief and comprehensive that we may as well cite it:—"But the three following truths, however strange they may seem, are *now* universally acknowledged.

1. St. Athanasius is not the author of the creed which is so frequently read in our churches.
2. It does not appear to have existed within a century after his death.
3. It was originally composed in the Latin tongue, and consequently in the western provinces. Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, was so much amazed by this extraordinary composition, that he frankly pronounced it to be the work of a drunken man." (This Gennadius, by the bye, is the same whom Gibbon mentions two or three times afterwards in the account of the siege and conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, a.d. 1453).

Whoever elaborated the Creed, and whether he did it drunk or sober, the Church of England has made it thoroughly her own by adoption.

Yet it must be admitted that many good churchmen, and perhaps even a few churchwomen, have not loved this adopted child of their Holy Mother as warmly as their duty commanded. The intelligently pious

Tillotson wishes Mother Church well rid of the bantling; and poor George the Third himself, with all his immense genius for orthodoxy, could not take kindly to it. He was willing enough to repeat all its expressions of theological faith—in fact, their perfect nonsense, their obstinate irrationality, must have been exquisitely delightful to a brain such as his; but he was not without a sort of vulgar manhood, even when worshipping in the Chapel Royal, and so rather choked at its denunciations—"for it do curse dreadful." He could keep the faith whole and undefiled by reason, yet did

not like to assert that all who had been and were and should in future be in this particular less happy than himself, must without doubt perish everlastingly.

On the other hand one of our most liberal Churchmen, Mr. Maurice, has argued that this creed is essentially merciful, and that its retention in the Book of Common Prayer is a real benefit. Mr. Maurice, however, as we all know, interprets "perish everlastingly" into a meaning very different from that which most members of the Church accept. And his opinions lose considerably in weight from the fact that no man save himself can infer any one of them from any other. For example, if you are cheered up a bit by his notions as to "Eternal" and "Everlasting," you are soon depressed again by his pervading woefulness. Of all the rulers we hear of—the ex-king of Naples, the king of Prussia, the Elector of Hesse-Cassel, Abraham Lincoln, and the Pope included—the poor God of Mr. Maurice is the most to be pitied: a God whose world is in so deplorable a state that the good man who owns Him lives in a perpetual fever of anxiety and misery in endeavoring to improve it for Him.

What part of this creed shocks the pious who are shocked at all by it? Simply the comprehensive damnation it deals out to unbelievers, half-believers, and all except whole believers. For we do not hear that the pious are shocked by the confession of theological or theoillogical faith itself. Their reverence bows and kisses the rod, which we cool outsiders might fairly have expected to be broken up and flung out of doors in a fury of indignation. Their sinful human nature is shocked on account of their fellow-men; their divine religious nature is not shocked on account of their God: yet does not the creed use God as badly as man?

A chemist secures some air, and analyses it into its ultimate constituents, and states with precise numerals the proportions of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid therein. Just so the author of this creed secures the Divinity and analyses it into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and just as precisely he reports the relations of these. A mathematician makes you a problem of a certain number divided into three parts in certain ratios to each other and to the sum, from which ratios you are to deduce the sum and the parts. Just so the author of this creed makes a riddle of his God, dividing him into three persons, from whose inter-relations you are to deduce the Deity. An anatomist gets hold of a dead body and dissects it exposing the structure and functions of the brain, the lungs, the heart, etc. Just so the author of this creed gets possession of the corpse of God (He died of starvation doing slop-work for Abstraction and Company; and the dead body was purveyed by the well-known resurrectionist Priestcraft), and cuts it open and expounds the generation and functions of its three principal organs. But the chemist does not tell us that oxygen, nitrogen, and carbonic acid are three gases and yet one gas, that each of them is and is not common air, that they have each peculiar and yet wholly identical properties;

the mathematician does not tell us that each of the three parts of his whole number is equal to the whole, and equal to each of the others, and yet less than the whole and unequal to either of the others; the anatomist does not tell us that brain and lungs and heart are each distinct and yet all the same in substance, structure, and function, and that each is in itself the whole body and at the same time is not: while the author of this creed does tell us analogous contradictions of the three members and the whole of his God. And the chemist, the mathematician, and the anatomist do not damn us (except, perhaps, by way of expletive at our stupidity) if we fail to understand and believe their enunciations; but the author of this creed very seriously and solemnly damns to everlasting perdition all who cannot put faith in his. In other words, the chemist, the mathematician and the anatomist try to be as reasonable and tolerant as human nature can hope to be; while the author of this creed aims at and manages to reach an almost superhuman unreason and intolerance.

Giving him the full benefit of this difference, the fact remains that in other respects he treats his subject just as they treat theirs. He, a pious Christian, professing unbounded adoration and awe of his Divinity, coolly analyses and makes riddles of and dissects this Divinity as if it were a sample of air, a certain number, a dead body. This humble-minded devotee, who knows so well that he is finite and that God is infinite, and that the finite cannot conceive, much less comprehend, much less express the infinite, yet expounds this Infinite with the most complete and complacent knowledge, turns it inside out and upside down, tells us all about it, cuts it up into three parts, and then glues it together again with a glue that has the tenacity of atrocious wrongheadedness instead of the coherence of logic, puts his mark upon it, and says, "This is the only genuine thing in the God line. If you are taken in by any other, why, go and be damned;" and having done all this, finishes by chanting "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" And the pious are not shocked by what they should abhor as horrible sacrilege and blasphemy; they are shocked only by the "Go, and be damned," which is the prologue and epilogue of the blasphemy. Were the damnatory clauses omitted, it appears that even the most devout worshippers could comfortably chant the "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost" immediately after they had been thus degrading Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the level and beneath the level of their low human understanding. And these very people are horrified by the lack of veneration in Atheists and infidels! What infidel ever dealt with God more contemptuously and blasphemously than this creed has dealt with him? Can it be expected that sane and sensible men, who have out-grown the prejudices sucked in with their mothers' milk, will be reconverted to reverence a Deity whom his votaries dare to treat in this fashion?

Ere we conclude, it may be as well to anticipate a probable objection. It may likely enough be urged that the author and reciters of the creed do not pretend to know the Deity so thoroughly as we have assumed, since they avouch very early in the creed that the three persons of the Godhead are one and all incomprehensible. If the word incomprehensible, thus used, means (what it apparently meant in the author's mind) unlimited as to extension, just as the word eternal means unlimited as to time, the objection is altogether wide of the mark.. But even if the word incomprehensible be taken to mean (what it apparently means in the minds of most people who use the creed) beyond the comprehension or capacity of the human intellect, still the objection is without force. For in the same sense a tuft of grass, a stone, anything and everything in the world is beyond the capacity of the human intellect: the roots of a tuft of grass strike as deeply into the incomprehensible as the mysteries of the Deity. Relatively this creed tells us quite as much about God as ever the profoundest botanist can tell us about the grass; in fact, it tells relatively more, for it implies a knowledge of the *Final Cause* of the subsistence of God, which no future botanist can tell or imply of the grass.

# OUR OBSTRUCTIONS

(1877.)

WALKING along the Strand and Fleet Street and through the heart of the City, noting the churches on the way—high St. Martin's, St. Mary-le-Strand, St. Clement Danes, the Cathedral, and the many still left wedged in by offices in the narrowest and busiest streets, or lanes of London—I am always reminded of the old wooden ships laid up “in ordinary,” as one sees them at Plymouth and Portsmouth, and elsewhere. The churches, like the ships, though not so surely, may have done good service in their time; but their day is past, never to return. When we reflect on the subject, however, we find manifold differences between the state of the churches and that of the ships. These are dismantled, unrigged and dismasted, passive white hulls ghostly on the waters, as it were the phantoms of the old swift-winged and thunder-striking eagles of battle. But the churches remain in all their pride, complete in equipment from lowest vault to topmost spire, even those which are shut silent all the week, without the least pretence of use, and in which on Sunday the droning and drowsy worship of a meagre congregation “rattles like a withered kernel in a large shell.” Again, the crews of the ships were discharged as soon as these were put out of commission, while the full crews of the churches, rectors, vicars, ushers, beadles, are kept on at full pay, and saunter through the old exercises and parades as if they were valiant effectives instead of dummies and shams. And this death-in-life of the churches is more dreary and doleful than the naked death of the ships.

These churches officially and effectly represent what is called the English Reformation, the most ignoble in Europe; which, as Macaulay remarks, merely transferred the full cup from the hand of the Pope to the hand of the King, spilling as little, as possible by the way. It is true that the State Church thus established, in spite of its illogical position, boasted great men in its early days, inspired by patriotism as against Rome, with abounding faith for the mysteries, with firm belief in the Bible, with full confidence in metaphysical divinity. But now Rome is

formidable no longer, the mysteries are seen to be not only incomprehensible but self-contradictory, the Bible has been torn asunder by criticism, metaphysical divinity has been proved baseless; all the best thought of the age abandons the Church and disregards its dogmas; it has great men no more, nor ever again will have. Its general character is well hit off by Ruskin, himself a devoted Christian, in the phrase “the smooth proprieties of lowland Protestantism.” It may be worth while to quote a little more from him on this subject (“Modern Painters,” part v., chap. 20, “The Mountain Glory”)—“But still the large aspect of the matter is always, among Protestants, that formalism, respectability, orthodoxy, caution and propriety, live by the slow stream that encircles the lowland abbey or cathedral; and that enthusiasm, poverty, vital faith and audacity of conduct, characterise the pastor dwelling by the torrent side.” And again: “Among the fair arable lands of England and Belgium extends an orthodox Protestantism or Catholicism—prosperous, creditable and drowsy; but it is among the purple moors of the highland border, the ravines of Mount Genève, and the crags of the Tyrol, that we shall find the simplest evangelical faith and the purest Romanist practice.” In other words, in religion the highlander is enthusiastic and superstitious, the low-lander lukewarm and worldly. Thus our fat English Church still keeps to the text, “By grace ye are saved;” but its grace now is chiefly of deportment. It boasts that its clergy are gentlemen; and they may be, as a rule, in society, though we unbelievers seldom find them so in controversy; and it seems to be persuaded that we should continue to allow it several million pounds a year to keep up this supply of gentlemen, when every profession, every trade shows gentlemen quite as good, with the advantages of more intellect, more experience of life, more courage and more sincerity.

There is indeed a section of the clergy full of zeal—to restore the priesthood. How some of these gentlemen compound with their consciences in taking English pay and position for doing Romish work, is a standing puzzle to honest laymen untrained in casuistry. But as they do rank themselves among the parsons of our State Church, their ecclesiastical pretensions are even more ludicrous than they are outrageously arrogant. For ever preaching up the authority and discipline of the Church, they are the first to rebel against it when it does not suit their whims. Thus Mr. Tooth, of Hatcham, not only defies an Act of Parliament, but also defies his bishop, and has plenty of abettors in doing both. I read in the *Daily News*: “Two of Mr. Tooth’s supporters, whose letters we have published, insist that the Public Worship Regulation Act is not law and is not binding on Churchmen, because it has never received the sanction of Convocation”—the said Convocation having about as much influence and authority in the country as a tavern discussion society.

Again: “One writer talks of the Church having been declared to be free from

all civil jurisdiction in spiritual affairs by many successive Sovereigns. We did not know that our Sovereigns had a right to make laws by Royal declarations, [and] not merely for their own time, but for all time. According to these principles of constitutional government we have three rival law-making powers in England—the Parliament, with the Sovereign for one; the Declaration of the Sovereign for another; and Convocation for a third. Of these Parliament would seem to be the weakest, for it cannot negative the proceedings of the other two; but either of these two can declare invalid what it has done.” Can anything be more absurd? Here is a State Church established by Parliament with the sanction of the monarch, endowed with national endowments, liable to be disestablished and disendowed by Parliament with the sanction of the monarch; yet many of its ministers claim to be free from the authority of the State and Parliament to which it owes its existence and subsistence! If they really desire such freedom, they can easily obtain it. They have but to sever their adulterous connexion with the State, restoring to the nation the endowments they have so long misused, and they will then be emancipated from all control, at liberty to teach what doctrines and practise what ritual they please. But these super-spiritual clergy keep a desperate clutch on the revenues. If anything could be more absurd than the defiance of Parliament, it would be the defiance of their ecclesiastical superiors by these champions of absolute ecclesiastical subordination. His bishop inhibits Mr. Tooth, Mr. Tooth coolly disregards the inhibition, and one who sympathises with him calmly writes to the *Daily News*? “Considering how bishops have been appointed since the Reformation, it is hard to see why Mr. Tooth and your correspondents should even pretend to obey them.” This is frightful, and may well make even the hardened sceptic shudder. What! a genuine successor of the Apostles (else the English Church has no genuine priesthood) chosen by the Holy Ghost itself (in obedience to the recommendation of the King or Queen) against his own humble wish (for he declared *Nolo Episcopari*); and English Churchmen need not even pretend to obey him! Such is the subordination of those who maintain the extreme authority of the Church!

Jesus has told us that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and the house of our State Church is divided against itself most savagely. But as the factions, while opposed to each other in all else, thoroughly agree in adhering to their endowments and privileges, and with this object shore up and buttress the edifice whose fall would be otherwise imminent, it behoves us to exert ourselves in bringing to the ground as speedily as possible the unsure and dangerous building, and diverting the immense funds misemployed in sustaining its uselessness to the real edification of the people. For as materially the Church of St. Mary is planted silent, void and death-like in the midst of the living currents of the Strand, obstructing and breaking



the broad stream into two narrow arms, so intellectually and morally, in whatever channel our active life may flow, we find a similar obstacle, and in all directions we meet one cry—"The Church stops the way."

But when we have removed the obstacle, when we have blasted it as the Americans recently blasted that other rock of Hell-gate, clearing the entrance to New York's noble harbor, we shall find another and a more inveterate obstacle fronting us—a Book. A book seems but a slight thing to bar the way; but multiplied by millions and millions, and desperately defended as divine and infallible by legions of zealots, it constitutes a far more formidable barricade than the stoutest church of stone. The various sects of Nonconformists, who all join with us in attacking the State Church, will all join the Churchmen to maintain against us their common fetish, the Bible. Regarding this as a human production, there is much of it which we highly esteem; but regarded as the word of God, it works far more evil than good, and the evil is ever increasing while the good decreases; for the revelations of science grow ever more clear, and men must more and more strain their consciences and sophisticate their intellects in order to believe that they believe in the super-human character of the book which reason and science show to be so thoroughly human. We are told by men whom we respect that, considered historically, Christianity and the other great religions merit better treatment than we are wont to accord them. Certainly they merit better treatment than is accorded them by those who crudely brand them all alike, in all their doctrines and legends and ritual, as the mere inventions of priestcraft fostered by kingcraft and statecraft. But we are far from committing ourselves to such an impeachment, not less monstrous than the most monstrous superstition it assails. We freely recognise the naturalness of these religions in the past, their genuine consonance with the communities wherein they arose and prevailed; the sincerity and truth and nobleness formulated, however erroneously, in many of their dogmas, embodied, however imperfectly, in many of their myths; but we see that their day is gone by; we cannot allow the past, which was the real childhood and youth of mankind, to dominate the present, which is its riper age; we discern that the errors of the dogmas and the fiction of the myths are now so obvious and incontestable that to revere them as faultless and authentic is a gross self-delusion. When we say—"The tree is dead; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" we do not imply that it never bore good fruit. On the other hand, when we admit that it once bore good fruit, we do not imply that it is not now dead and an encumbrance to the ground. It is precisely because we do consider these old faiths historically, because we fully recognise their early efficiency and vigor, that we can thoroughly realise their decrepitude and dissolution. And taking western Christianity in particular, both the Roman embodied in Mary and the Protestant

embodied in Jesus, we affirm that it has no longer real life, but only the “ghastly affectation of life.” Reason and science have disembowelled it, have removed its heart and its brain. It is ready for the historical embalmer. Its great part in the drama of human life is played out; it is still kept above ground, its life still asserted, because large numbers would lose much by the frank acknowledgement of its decease, and other large numbers who cannot bring themselves to face the fact of its death, persist in hoping against hope that the lifelessness is hut a swoon or a cataleptic fit, from which it will yet awaken with renewed strength. We, however, dare to see what we cannot help seeing, we venture to avow the fact which is beyond fair dispute. Doubtless the living man did brave work in his time; but shall we therefore bow down worshipping his mummy, and keep it from its sepulchre, and continue to allot immense revenues to his army of servitors who have now no service to render? No; the sooner we bury the corpse and send the servitors about their business the better for us and for them.

Thus far I think all Secularists will go with me. But for many, perhaps the majority of us, who are not only Secularists, but Republicans, there is a third great obstacle, the Throne, which is now little else than a costly sham. Yet, sham as it is, it is still strong to obstruct, being encompassed and fortified by the power of the nobles, the power of the clergy, the power of the wealthy, the degraded and degrading snobbishness of the middle and lower middle classes. The artisans and laborers generally, as we know, care nothing for it or are distinctly hostile. We have had some great monarchs, though the greatest we ever had was crown-less, and we can yield to monarchy in the past something of such historical respect as we yield to Christianity. But who that is not a very serf by nature can feel any genuine respect for monarchy as we have it in these days? when the main duty of the King or Queen is to countersign the decrees of Parliament; a duty which the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker could perform just as well and with more promptitude. One need not dwell on the character of the reigning house, which, brought ignobly to the throne, has been consistently ignoble from the first until the accession of her present Most Gracious Majesty. A much nobler royal family would be just as superfluous now as the present we have outgrown the need of a paternal or guardian king. Nor is the question of principle really affected by the fact that this ignoble family, like other species of the lower animals, is excessively prolific, and that every prince or princess born of it, costs us several thousands a year. We should not grudge the money for service rendered; the gravamen of our impeachment is that no monarch now can render service of value. The effective energy of our monarchy in these days is well symbolised in the procedure at the opening of Parliament—royal carriages without royal occupants; royal life-guards with no royal life to guard; a royal robe

spread on a vacant throne; the Lord Chancellor reading a royal speech composed by responsible ministers. Her Majesty during fourteen long years has been doing her best to teach us how well we can get on without a monarch, and how stupid we are therefore to keep one at a great expense. We may find something venerable in the throne when put aside and conserved simply as a curious relic of the past; we find it merely absurd while retained for useless use, a pretentious seat with no one to sit in it. As Théophile says: "*Si rien nest plus beau que l'antique, est plus laid que le suranné.*"

# MR. KINGSLEY'S CONVERTITES

(1865.)

READERS can scarcely have forgotten the amusing “turn-up” between the Rev. Mr. Kingsley and the Rev. Dr. Newman, in which the latter got the former “into Chancery,” and punished him so pitilessly. While reading the “*Apologia pro Vitâ Sua*,” one naturally reflected now and then upon the opinions, as stated in the books, of Dr. Newman’s antagonist; and the fight grew more and more comically exquisite as one gradually learnt the thorough agreement at bottom of the two who were struggling so fiercely at top. When I speak of Mr. Kingsley’s books, I mean his novels and romances, all of which (except the one not yet completely published) I have duly read and enjoyed. As for certain collections of sermons, a dialogue for loose thinkers, a *jeu d’esprit* on the Pentateuch, together with various trifles by way of lectures on history and philosophy, I confess that none of these have I ever even attempted to peruse. To palliate this sin of omission I can only urge the high probability that a man of Mr. Kingsley’s character must find much more vigorous and ample expression in a free and easy novel than in any didactic or argumentative treatise, with its wearisome requirements of consecutiveness and cramping limitations of logic. I now ask the leaders of the *National Reformer* to accompany me in a general review of his romances, because I think that such a review will develop two or three facts seldom noticed in the critiques—whether friendly or adverse—that abound upon his writings. Especially, I think that it will be found that the popular phrases, “Muscular Christianity” and “Broad Church,” by no means sufficiently characterise his religious tendency; and that, with all the superficial unlikeness, almost amounting to perfect contrast between him and Dr. Newman, the opponents as religious men are fundamentally alike in this—that their respective creeds satisfy, or appear to satisfy, in the same manner the same peculiarly intense want in their

several natures.

In every one of Mr. Kingsley's romances there is a chief personage, more or less naturally good but decidedly godless at the beginning, god-fearing and saintly at the end. Some of the romances have each two or three of these convertites, the throes of whose regeneration are the principal "motives" of the most striking scenes, and may be thus fairly said to furnish the plot and passion of the book. My present object is not aesthetic, and I therefore need not argue the question whether narratives thus constructed can have any claim to rank as genuine works of art. With the melancholy Jaques in "As You Like It," I believe:

Out of these Convertites

There is much matter to be heard and learned—

so will stay "to see no pastime, I," but run through the stories of these conversions, touching only the most salient points.

Alton Locke, when adolescent, is a very poor tailor, a poet whose verses are far more vigorous than his character, a chartist, a sceptic. He madly falls in love with a Dean's daughter, and through the patronage of the Dean himself, gets a volume of poems published. As the fiercest of the rhymes have been soothed out of this volume by the decorous Dean, Radical friends forward to young Locke a pair of plush-breeches—fitting testimonial to the flunkeyism conspicuous in the omissions. He is imprisoned for inciting a rustic mob to a Chartist outbreak, confounds the prison chaplain by sporting the latest novelties in heresy direct from Germany, shares when released in the delirium of the memorable tenth of April, finds that the lady of his love is to be married to his cousin, and consummates the long orgy of excitement with a desperate fever. The Dean had directed his attention to the study of natural history; hence the frenzy of the fever takes a zoological turn, and he undergoes therein marvellous transmigrations through a series of antediluvian monsters; awaking at last to sane consciousness (*sane comparatively, he is never quite in his right senses, poor fellow*) to find himself nursed by a young widow, the dean's elder daughter, who soothes him with ladings from Tennyson. She has very recently lost her husband, who was merely a brilliant nobleman, and she herself a Convertite; in a few days the modest Alton is hinting at a declaration to her. She will not marry him, nor indeed any other man, but she sends him out to South America on a special poetical mission. On the voyage thither he dies, a believer, regenerate, leaving as legacy to his friends and the world at large a war-song of the Church (ferociously) Militant. What has converted him?—the plush breeches? the crash of the tenth of April? the loss of his first lady love? the reading of the "Lotus-eaters?" the delirious Fugue of Fossils? Some or all of these it must be supposed; for weak though he was,

he surely could not have been seriously influenced by the comical caricatures of Socratic dialectics, which the Dean sometimes played with him in lieu of chess or backgammon.

Next comes Yeast, whose great Convertite is Lancelot Smith. He is introduced to us as fresh from Cambridge, a stalwart gallant fellow of great abilities, rather debauched, but discontented with his debauchery, and utterly without fixed creed. An accident confines him long to the house of the Squire whom he is visiting. During his convalescence he becomes a lover of one of the Squire's daughters—a young lady whose vernacular name is Argemone, and who is herself rapidly growing a perfect saint. He also becomes the friend of a gamekeeper who reads Carlyle, writes poetry, and has experienced special religious illumination. Lancelot then loses all his fortune by the failure of his uncle's bank, and loses his sweetheart by the sulphuretted-hydrogen fever; turns street-porter for the nonce to earn a bit of bread, and finally goes off one knows not whither; an excellent fervid Christian, after playing through several bewildering pages a wild burlesque of the Platonic dialogue with a personage so mysterious that I prefer not to attempt a description of him. What has converted Lancelot? The loss of his money and the death of his sweetheart seem to have been the main influences. For although he was stunned with calamity, I will not deem him so stupefied as to think that he was made a believer by the unintelligible dialogue.

Then follows Hypatia. And here I may remark that I am unable to concur in what seems the general opinion—namely, that Mr. Kingsley intended his heroine to represent the character of the Hypatia of history. Although living in the same city at the same period, both lecturing on philosophy, and both ultimately murdered by Christian mobs; it appears to me that, as women, the two Hypatias differed so much from each other that no one having heard them talk for five minutes could have the slightest doubt as to which was which. History and Mr. Kingsley have each composed an acrostic on this lovely name, and with the same *bouts rimes*; but the body (and the spirit) of the one poem is extremely unlike the body (and the spirit) of the other. Mr. Kingsley proffers us an ancient cup and a flask, Greek-lettered "Wine of Cyprus"; we commence to drink solemnly and devoutly, but—O most miserable mockery! it is indubitable brandy and water. Well may he call this an old foe with a new face! The Kingsley Hypatia is not altogether, but is very nearly a Convertite; so nearly that he would certainly have made her altogether one, had not the *bouts rime*'s been too well known for alteration. Her best pupil (of whom more anon) abandons her, she begins to love a beautiful young Greek monk, and yet (that philosophy may have the help of worldly power in its mortal duel with Christianity) consents to marry the Prefect of Alexandria, whom she very justly

despises. While miserable with the consciousness of how low she is stooping to conquer, she is fascinated or mesmerised by an old Jewish hag, and crouches in a sort of fetish worship to what she thinks a statue of Apollo, said statue being represented by the handsome monk. In the agony of shame which follows her discovery of this cheat she performs a short parody of the Socratic dialogue in concert with the pupil who had left her and who has returned a Christian, and at last, when going to the lecture hall (where murder shall prevent her from ever lecturing more) she confesses to a certain longing for Christianity. Why? She was wretched, humiliated, defeated, weary; she had staked all on the red, and had lost—what more natural than a yearning to try the black? And this character is published and generally received for the Hypatia of history!

But the great Convertite of this romance is the pupil already mentioned, the renegade Jew, Raphael Ben Ezra. In the prime of life, wealthy, the favorite comrade of the Prefect, superlatively gifted with that subtle Hebrew clearness, which, swayed by a strong will and intense self-love, can scarcely be distinguished from genius, we find him in the opening chapters already as used up as the old King Solomon of Ecclesiastes, having exhausted all excitements of wine, women, and philosophy, all voluptuousness, physical and intellectual. Desperate with *ennui*, he abandons Hypatia, casts away his wealth (how many Jews do the same!), barter clothes with a beggar, and sets out to wander the world with an amiable British bull-bitch (afterwards the happy mother of nine sweet infants) for his sole guide, philosopher and friend. The chapter wherein his Pyrrhonism disported itself “on the floor of the bottomless” seems to have been, in great measure, borrowed from the talk of one Babbalanja in Herman Melville’s “Mardi;” perhaps, however, both were borrowed direct from Jean Paul’s gigantic grotesque, “Titan.” Becoming involved in the meshes of the great war in Africa—that revolt of Heraclian against Honorius which Gibbon treats with such contemptuous brevity in his thirty-first chapter—he is nearly killed himself, saves an old officer from death and soon falls in love with this officer’s daughter. He reads about this time certain epistles, and infers therefrom that Saul of Tarsus was one of the finest gentlemen that ever lived. Also, while the guest of good Bishop Synesius, he hears Saint Augustine preach, and engages with him in long discussions, fortunately unreported. Returning to Alexandria, he almost converts Hypatia, sees her murdered, sharpens his tongue on Cyril the primate, and leaves again to marry his saintly sweetheart, and end his lire as quite a model Christian. What has converted him? His love for the young Christian? the gentlemanly character of Paul’s Epistles? the bull-bitch with her ninefold litter, like Shakespeare’s nightmare? the murder of Hypatia by the Christians, who rent, and tore and shred her living body to fragments? Or was it mere satiety and weariness

of thinking—the weariness which leads so many who thought freely when young to find a resting-place in the bosom of the Church as they get old?

In “Westward, Ho!” the great conversion is of Ayacanorah. But as this is a conversion not merely religious but also moral, social and intellectual, a conversion from barbarism to civilisation, it does not come fairly into the class I am describing. Two incidents in the romance, however, must not be passed over. The first occurs in the Lotus-eating chapter. Will Para-combe tired, as well he may be, of wandering about savage America in search of El Dorado, blindly refuses to see that it is his chief end as man to continue wandering until El Dorado is found and the captain has glutted his heart with vengeance on the Spaniards; and Will gives such excellent reasons for staying in the beautiful spot where he is, with the beautiful and affectionate native woman whom he is willing and anxious to marry in the most legal mode attainable, that Captain Amyas Leigh, who has been urging him onward with true Kingsleyan diffidence and mildness, finds himself dumbfounded. But valuable logical assistance is at hand. A jaguar like a bar of iron plunges on poor Will, and he and his arguments are settled on the spot. Amyas thanks God for this special interposition of providence in his favor. And the man who wrote the adventure of Amyas can sneer at the faith of a Catholic like Dr. Newman! The other incident is the conversion of Amyas from his diabolical hatred of the Spaniards in general, and of the Don with whom Rose had eloped in particular. A lightning-flash strikes him blind, and he thereupon repents him of his hatred and desire of revenge, and, moreover, has a vision of the Don drowned with his sunken galleon, who assures him that his hatred was without just cause. These are the true Kingsleyan dialectics; these, and not those burlesques of what Plato wrote and Socrates spoke, and Mr. Kingsley is no more able to conduct than I am to lead on the violin like Herr Joachim, a great concerted composition of Beethoven. Let a jaguar loose into your opponent’s syllogistic premises, blind him with a lightning-flash that he may see the truth and have clear vision of the right way. Yet Mr. Kingsley has undoubtedly read about a tower in Siloam that fell, and what Joshua Bar-Joseph said of the people killed by this accident.

Lastly, we have “Two Years Ago,” whose great Convertite is Tom Thumal. Tom is one of the jolliest of characters, true as steel, tough as oak, quick and deft for all emergencies, a compact mass of common sense, and courage, and energy, living in the most godless state, He is not a heathen—he is more godless yet; for a heathen has something of wood or stone which serves him for a deity. In the Saga of Saint Olaf (in that great and glorious work “The Heims-kringla”) we read how this pious and terrible king going to his last battle was asked by two brothers, who were freebooters, for permission to fight in his ranks. But although these and



their followers were "tall" men, and the king was in sore need of recruits, he would not accept their services unless they believed in Christ. Whereupon they answered that they saw no special need of the help of the "White Christ"; that they had been hitherto wont to believe in themselves and their own luck, and with this belief had managed to pull through very well, and thought they could do the same for the future. Ultimately, these excellent fellows did consent to be baptised and called Christians—not from any religious motive, alas! but only because of a "strong wakeness" they had for taking part in a set battle. Tom Thurnal has just as much, and as little, religion as these had. After wandering all over the world in all sorts of capacities, he comes back to be shipwrecked on the Cornish coast, and is the only one on board saved. While he is being dragged up the beach senseless, his belt of money—the fruit of a season at the Australian diggings—disappears; and he resolves to settle in the village, in order to discover it or the thief. Here he falls in love with the village schoolmistress, a sweet mystical devotee, whom he rather suspects of stealing his gold, and whom he defends from one ruffian in order to grossly insult her himself. In the village Tom is doctor, and, when the cholera comes, he is assisted in bringing the village through it by this saintly schoolmistress, and a pious Major, and a fervid High Church parson. At the breaking out of the Crimean War, Tom gets charged with a secret mission to the East. Somewhere in Turkey, in Asia, an imbecile Sheikh or Pasha whom he is endeavoring to serve, mistakes his manœuvres, and keeps him in captivity for a year or two. From this imprisonment he comes home crushed and abject, "afraid in passing a house that it would fall and smother him," etc., marries his sweetheart and ends a model Christian. What has converted him? Simply, it appears, the year or two of solitary confinement—which took all the pith and manhood out of him. This last case, the work of Mr. Kingsley in the full maturity of his powers, is the most flagrant of all.

If I have not summed up these cases fairly, the novels and romances in question are in everybody's hands to convict me of the unfairness. I have simply sketched the leading points as they remain in my memory, not referring to the books again to pick out what would best serve my purpose. It is not my fault if the personages, who looked so great and grandiose in the flowing and ample draperies of romance, do not strip well for anatomy.

Now, what is common to all these cases of conversion? This: that the characters become religious, not when healthy, but when diseased; the religion in every case is exhibited as a drug for the sick, not as wholesome food for the healthy. While you are sane, well and hearty, doing your work in the world deftly, sound in mind, and wind, and limb, and fairly prosperous, you have no need of this religion—you can get through the world very well without it. But when your fortune is lost, your

sweetheart dead or married to another, your courage cowed, your heart broken, your mind diseased, your self-respect humiliated, then you long for and embrace Christianity (or whatever religion is dominant around you): it is a soft pillow for the aching head, a tender couch for the bruised body, a flattering nurse for the desolate invalid. I can scarcely add that it is a medicine for the sickness, for its medicinal virtues are hardly shown; but it is, at any rate, as we read of its effects in these books, a narcotic and an anodyne for restlessness and pain. It is a religion to die with, not to live with. All these things, so soothing and beneficial to the invalid, are nauseous and noxious to the healthy.

A man could no more live vigorous life on such religion than he could live vigorous life couched tenderly, pillowed softly, nursed assiduously, and drugged with narcotics and anodyne all the days of his life.

Is the religious world willing to accept this view of religion? It would seem so by the remarkable popularity of these books. This view may be correct or incorrect, wise or foolish; at any rate, it is strangely at variance with the view commonly ascribed to "Muscular Christians," and strangely identical with that which Dr. Newman explicitly avows in the most eloquent pages of his "Apologia." People generally consider "Muscular Christianity" as a clever and cheerful improvement on the old solemn ascetic Christianity, as a doctrine which fully recognises the goodness of the common world and common worldly life, as a liberal cultus which does not sacrifice body to soul any more than soul to body, but is at once gymnastic and spiritualistic in its "exercises"; a vague notion is abroad that, whereas the early religion of Christ and his apostles was of sorrow and suffering, this, its latest development, is a religion of happiness and health; in short, it is believed that "Muscular Christianity" has added the Gospel<sup>(1)</sup> of the body and this life to the primitive Gospel of the soul and the next life: and yet the most popular and vigorous writer of this new school, after exhausting a very fertile imagination in the suggestion of methods and modes by which godless sinners may be converted to godliness, has absolutely found no other process effectual than this of showering upon them misfortunes, humiliations, afflictions, calamities (such as do not in real life fall upon one human being in a thousand, and working results such as they would not work in one real human being out of ten thousand); until health and hope, self-respect and the capacity for sane joy are altogether destroyed in them, the manhood and womanhood overwhelmed and crushed out of them; after which he brings in these miserable wrecks and relics of what were once men and women as all that he can contribute to the extension of the Church, which ought to be the cheerful congregation of wholesome men and women throughout the world, the richest flower and ripest fruit of humanity. If the Church of the future is to be composed of creatures like Mr. Kingsley's Convertites,

Westminster Abbey must be turned into a Grand Chartreuse, and St. Paul's into an Hospital for Incurables, and the metropolitan Cathedral of England must be Bedlam.

1. The Gospel of the body and this life has been powerfully preached in the most explicit terms on the Continent. In England we have been too prudish to advocate it so clearly, although it is, of course, essential to the most enlightened Positivism and Secularism. That much-abused book the "Elements of Social Science" preaches it with more thoroughness, knowledge and ability than any other English work I have met with. I do not pretend to be wise enough to judge this book, and so far as I can judge it, I differ from it in many respects; but on the broad question of the spirit in which it is written, I do not fear to assert that no honest and intelligent man can find pruriency and impurity in it, without he brings the pruriency and impurity in his own heart and mind to the study of it. I can understand ascetic Christians abhorring it, I can understand timid Freethinkers being frightened by it because they are timid; but I cannot understand men who claim to be bold and honest Freethinkers avoiding it as an unholy thing merely because of the subjects it treats, without reference to the mode of treatment, and without sympathy for the admirable motives which manifestly incited the author. He may well say with the most brilliant and daring of all who have preached this Gospel of the body in our age (this Gospel which is so sorely needed to complement and modify the exclusive Gospel of the soul—this Gospel which Plato preached along with the other, while Jesus preached the other only), he may well say with Heine

Doch die Castraten Klagten,  
 Als ich meine Stimm' erhob;  
 Sie Klagten und sie sagten;  
 Ich sange veil zu grob.

# THE PRIMATE ON THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

(1876.)

THE Archbishop of Canterbury is making his second quadrennial visitation to his diocese, and delivering an elaborate Charge to the clergy, in seven instalments. Of these the first two are reported at considerable length in the *Times* of the 27th and 28th inst., a couple of columns of small print being given to each. The *Times* has moreover generously vouchsafed a leading article of encouragement and approval on each; and surely the State Church ought to be proud of such lofty patronage, and Lambeth Palace ought to be very grateful to Printing House Square. The *Daily News* could only spare half a column for the first; and the *Daily Telegraph*, whose exuberant Christianity, hot and strong as boiling rancid oil, amazes the world on every great festival of the Church, showed its estimate of the importance of our Primate's manifesto by allotting to it eight or nine lines of small print at the foot of a column—a pickpocket in a police-court gets as much notice.

Let us glance down the *Times*' reports, pausing at anything worth a note if not by its intrinsic value yet on account of the position of the speaker:—

“I wish to set before you some thoughts as to the particular duties, which at this time devolve upon the Established Church as the National Church of this country. In the days in which we live some even hesitate to assign to us the position of a National Church. A National Church is a national protest for God and for Christ, for goodness and for truth; and if we of this National Church are not making this national protest, no one else certainly makes one. No other body in this country can claim that commanding influence over the thought of the age, which by God's blessing is assigned to us. No other religious body in the country has either that connection with the State, or if that be thought a small matter, that power of influencing the whole nation which, thank God, is still reserved to us.”

It will be noticed that the Archbishop in his definition of a National Church has humbly copied the unorthodox Matthew Arnold, who in his address to London clergymen at Sion College, (reviewed in the *Secularist* of April 8) declared with an exquisitely humorous gravity that he regarded the Church of England as *a great national society for the promotion of goodness!* But the Archbishop is really too loose in his imitation of this charitable definition bestowed by a man of letters. He says: "A National Church is a national protest for God and for Christ;" according to which, Mohammedanism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism, as the national churches of several countries, are so many national protests for God and Christ. We do not expect a mere Primate in these days to write with the precision of an accomplished literary man, but we do think that he ought to be somewhat less inaccurate than this. However, it is to the last two sentences quoted that I would particularly call attention. The Church of England has a commanding influence over the thought of the age! It has the power of influencing the whole nation! Here be truly astonishing announcements. The thought of the age in our country is embodied in such persons as Spencer and Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall, Carlyle and Browning, George Eliot and George Meredith; and what a commanding influence the State Church has over these! As for its influence over the whole nation, is it not the fact that a large portion of the educated classes, and the great bulk of the artisans, are either sceptical or indifferent, and that more than a half of the shopkeepers are Nonconformists bent on Disestablishment and Disendowment? The Archbishop has made a most unlucky start.

Passing over some commonplace and common-sense remarks on the duties of the clergy, we come to the following:—

"This is an age in which there is a great deal of uneasy thought seething throughout the nation. It is a time when, more than any other, serious and earnest learning is required to meet the wants of those among whom we live. Let us be thankful that the arrangements of cathedral bodies do provide quiet places where men may follow a studious course, and cause their light to be seen throughout the land, guiding the thought of those who are in need of guidance in this anxious age."

Admitting the truth of the opening sentences we may add that in every age since the supremacy of the Church was first shaken by the invention of printing, the recovery of the Greek and Latin classics, and the revival of science, there has been a great deal of uneasy thought seething throughout this nation and every other nation in Christendom, and that age by age this seething has scalded more and more pitilessly the dogmas, the Scriptures, and the authority of the Church, whose Hebrew old clothes, as Carlyle fitly calls them, must soon be literally boiled to rags. We may also freely admit that the arrangements of Cathedral bodies do provide

quiet places where men may follow a studious course; but we ask, how many of them really pursue it? How many of them cause their light to shine throughout the land? How many guide the thought of those who need guidance in this anxious age? Is it not as notorious as it is disgraceful to the Church, that, with few exceptions, the canons and other dignitaries make scarcely any contribution to the thought, or scholarship, or science of the age, in return for the large leisure and ample stipends with which they are endowed? These stalled canons may ruminate much, even like stalled oxen, but what nourishment do we get from the rumination of the former? Look through lists of standard works, of really important works, published during the last quarter of a century, and see how few of them, even in theology and kindred departments, have come from the “learned leasure” of our rich cathedrals.

If there is one thing more closely connected than any other with true religion, that thing is money. Always the most spiritual exhortations and speculations end in very practical appeals to the pockets—of course the pockets of the laity. We are reminded what Paul Louis Courier said of the clergy in his day: “They have need of good examples and will find them amongst us. But if we are stronger than they as to the commandments of God, they in their turn have the advantage of us in respect to the commandments of the Church, which they remember better than we, and of which the principal is, I believe, to give all we have for heaven. ‘You ask me,’ said that worthy preacher Barlette, ‘how to get to Paradise? The bells of the convent tell you: Giving, giving, giving.’ The Latin of the monk is charming: “Vos quæritis a me, fratres carissimi, quomodo itur ad paradisi? Hoc dicunt vobis campance monasterii, dando, dando, dando” Very early in his discourse does our Primate ring this favorite chime of all church bells, but with a noble disinterestedness, a magnanimous depreciation:—

“We may think lightly of the vast sums of money which of late years have been poured into the treasury of the Established Church for the re-edification of our buildings; we may think lightly even of the vast sums which have been contributed by the members of our Church for the instruction of our poorer brethren, thinking that, after all, it is not the silver and the gold, but the precious doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the purity and holiness which attend the true profession of that doctrine on which we have to rest our claims. But still even the outward signs of the influence which God has given us are not to be despised.”

“We may think lightly of the vast sums of money!” we, the archbishop with £15,000 a year and a palace rent-free, and the members of the Cathedral body of Canterbury each with our several hundreds a year and our snug residences! Very lightly, no doubt! But “still even the outward signs of the influence which God has given us are not to be despised.” How unworldly, how humble, is our right reverend

father in God; it is a pity that his voice here has such a twang of Pecksniff and Uriah Heap. I really believe that he is too much of a gentleman to speak in this tone with his natural voice; it is that fatal falsetto of the pulpit. Well, in sober truth, these Churchmen had better not despise the outward signs of their influence, for there is an abundant lack of inward ones. And discreetly do they boast of the re-edification of their buildings, for edification or re-edification of their congregations, alas, there is little or none whereof to boast. Having rang this preliminary diffident chime of Dando dando, dando, the Archbishop revels in riotous peals to the same words before concluding:—

“Depend upon it a country that produces in a short time £30,000,000 [sic in *Times*; *Daily News*, ‘three millions’] to restore the outward fabric of our churches, will not fail to respond to any appeal when made for the funds which may be wanted to assist those who otherwise cannot provide themselves with a due education that they may be fitted for the ministry. Another matter which I think presses upon us is this. Is it not desirable something should be done to provide the means of passing their last days in comfort, for those worn out in the service of Christ? Here again I feel confident that an appeal to the wealthy of this country would be answered at once if those who have the leisure—none more fit than the dignitaries of our cathedral churches—were to take up this question, and to our existing charities might well be added some means of supplementing the resources and meeting the wants of the poorer clergy. I visited yesterday the Clergy Orphan School. I was informed that that school was perfectly full—more full than it had ever been before—and still there were twice as many applicants for admission as there were places to admit them to. Does not this show it is very desirable we should all of us direct our efforts to see that the charity of our fellow-Churchmen should be appealed to, to assist in the education of the orphan children of our clergy, and not only the orphan children?”

Our fellow Christians, the laymen, having laid for us three million golden eggs in a short time (the lavish geese!) will not fail to give us more to educate young men for the ministry; and more yet to pension our worn-out clergy; and more yet again to educate the children, orphan and not orphan, of our clergy. We archbishop and bishops, dean and chapter, are so poor, so poor, so very very poor, that we can do nothing at all for any of these miserable clerical critters; the whole revenues of our State Church are so insignificant that they are quite inadequate to provide decently for its ministers! But we know well that our dear, good, stupid, unedified lay brethren and sisters will give all the out-door relief we have the impudence to ask; will educate our young and pension our old; marching ever briskly heavenwards to that cheerfulest church chime: Giving, giving, giving; Dando, dando, dando! Does not our Archbishop rival or outrival that worthy preaching monk, Barlette? Here I

must pause, but shall have to return again to the Charge, which threatens to be a heavy charge indeed to the purses of the richer and more foolish members of our impoverished State Church.



# SPIRITISM IN THE POLICE COURT

(1876.)

WE have just had a couple of professional “mediums” in the police courts, and it is to be heartily hoped that all their colleagues of any notoriety will soon be submitted to the same searching test, and duly rewarded according to their merits. At Huddersfield the Rev. Francis Ward Monck, formerly a minister at Bristol, was cleverly caught out by Mr. Lodge, a woollen merchant and amateur conjurer, who at the close of a private seance offered to do all the “Doctor” had done, and insisted on seeing his “paraphernalia.” The Doctor protested with profuse virtuous indignation, but his detector was firm. At length this reverend medium took refuge in his own bedroom and locked himself in, and while the profane sceptics were besieging the door he managed to escape from the window by the help of a sheet. In his sore haste he left behind him some of the “paraphernalia,” whose existence he had so indignantly denied, including “spirit hands” and prepared musical boxes. He took out a warrant against Mr. Lodge for the recovery of these precious articles, and was met by a counter-warrant issued by the chief constable under the Vagrant Act, for using subtle craft means and devices to deceive and impose on certain of her Majesty’s subjects; he being charged with thus defrauding one person of £20, while Mr. Heppleston, a general dealer, in whose house the exposure took place, had paid him £4 for two séances, the prisoner assuring him that the manifestations were genuine, and were produced by spiritual agency. The prisoner’s solicitor said that the Vagrant Act did not apply to a gentleman in the position of Dr. Monck, who kept his carriage and yacht at Bristol. We may admit that the application of the Vagrant Act is an awkward and round-about mode of dealing with such cases, and the sooner Parliament in its great wisdom provides a more direct and effectual remedy, the better; nor could a stronger argument for its provisions be adduced than the fact, if

fact it be, that this reverend medium by the illicit production of spirits very much below proof, has been getting money enough to keep a carriage and yacht. When the Huddersfield magistrates remanded him for a week at the request of the chief constable, offering to accept bail, himself in £250, and two sureties in £100 each, the bail was not forthcoming; and the prisoner made a high-minded and pathetic appeal to the bench, “asking them not to make him suffer the indignity of incarceration in the police-cells; he said he had forsaken everything to follow this calling, believing in his inmost soul that it was right.” So far as I can see, a convicted burglar or manufacturer of counterfeit coin, might with as good reason make just such an appeal; pleading pathetically that he had forsaken everything to follow this calling, affirming nobly that he believed in his inmost soul that it was right; while as to the jemy and the skeleton keys, or the moulds and the battery, which had been seized in his possession, they were manifestly for purely scientific experimental investigations—exactly as were the spirit-hands affixed to wires and the musical boxes of the Rev. “Doctor” Monck.

The London case of “Doctor” Slade, is too well known to require being detailed here. As his fee was a sovereign, well-off people having much time to kill with any excitement, and empty heads to fill with any nonsense (much the same sort of silly people as those for whom some West-end High Church is the half-way house to the Pro-Cathedral), must have been his most numerous visitors. Thus Society with a capital S took great interest in him, and our penny daily press, always ready to pander to Society, and to the snobbery of its readers who are not in Society but ever on their knees worshipping it—our penny daily press furnished full reports of the proceedings. Mr. Flowers, the magistrate at Bow Street Police Court gave a written judgment on the case, sentencing the “Doctor” to three months’ imprisonment with hard labor in the House of Correction; which sentence to the credit of our common sense, sadly discredited by much that came out on the trial, was received with some applause, and Mr. Lewis the prosecuting solicitor was cheered by a large crowd on leaving the court. Of course, there being money to back the “medium,” notice of appeal was given, and bail accepted—the defendant in £200, and two sureties of £100 each.

In the course of the defence there was read from the *Spiritualist* an account of a sitting with Slade by Mr. Serjeant Cox, who, as Mr. Flowers observed, would, if an appeal were raised, be one of the judges of that appeal. The said account, after relating various wonders, concludes thus: “I offer no opinion on the causes of the phenomena, for I have formed none. If they be genuine, it is impossible to exaggerate their interest and importance. If they be an imposture it is equally important that the trick should be exposed in the only way in which trickery can be

explained—by doing the same thing, and showing how it is done.” Now this, at any rate, seems to show judicial fairness if not judicial sagacity; and is beyond blame, as having been written before the learned Serjeant (unless warned by the spirits) could have had any expectation of being called upon to deliver a legal judgment on the matter. But after Mr. Flowers had passed sentence, and the appeal had been raised, this same Serjeant Cox, having become a prospective judge of the case, opened the third session of the Psychological Society of Great Britain, whereof he is president, and which, under such a president, will doubtless do a vast deal for the science of psychology. According to the report of the *Standard* of Friday the 3rd inst., much of the address of this admirable judge and philosophical president “was an indictment of materialist scientists for their attitude towards psycho-logy, and on this point he said the most important event of the year in relation to psychology had been the recent prosecution. Of the true motive for that proceeding there could be no doubt. The pretence of public interests was transparent.” To a mere layman the words of this judicial Serjeant read very much like a reckless libel. Perhaps only a lawyer can properly appreciate them. “The object really sought was plain enough. It was not to punish Dr. Slade, but to discredit through him all psychological phenomena, the proof of whose existence was destruction to the doctrines of materialism.... Whether Dr. Slade was or was not guilty, the trial had had the unlooked-for effect [!] of directing the attention of the whole public to the fact that phenomena were asserted to exist... which swept away now and for ever *the dark and debasing doctrines of the materialists.*” After which, according to the same report, a Mr. Dunlop, with admirable gravity, whether sincere or ironical, expressed a high opinion of the judicial mind of the president! and said that he felt sure that if the appeal in the Slade case came before Mr. Serjeant Cox, he would give as dispassionate a decision as if he had had no previous knowledge of the circumstances!! For myself, as a mere unlearned layman, I can only ask in astonishment, Is this Serjeant Cox, with his indecent partizanship and wild personal imputations, fit to sit in judgment—I will not say on this Slade business—but on any case at all which requires impartiality and discretion?

“The dark and debasing doctrines of the materialists”! Can anything be darker and more debasing in a so-called civilised time and country than this Spiritism has proved itself from the beginning until now? I have yet to learn that the whole of its world of spirits, now for many years at the beck and call of countless mediums, professional and private, has ever dictated or written a single great sentence, revealed a single great truth—discovered a single important fact. Nothing but the dreamiest drivel, or delirium, the most wretched and imbecile juggling tricks, with all sorts of evasions, and deceptions and lies! Mr. Wallace himself, one of the few good

men it has got hold of by some weak place in their minds, in his evidence for Slade said “that he attached no importance to the subject-matter of a message, but only to its being written intelligibly, the subject-matter seldom being of any value.” And for seldom he might fairly have said never. The truth is the truth, whether dark or bright, debasing or ennobling; but if we are called upon to consider a theory in these aspects, what, I ask again, can be more dark and debasing than this, that we live after death to rap and turn tables, play villainous snatches on light musical instruments, write badly-spelt balderdash, dictate ungrammatical imbecilities or lies, grasp hands and jog knees—all for the profit of showmen and the hysterical wonder of fools? Who would not prefer annihilation to such a degraded and idiotic immortality? Shakespeare, Bacon, Byron, Shelley, and countless others who on earth were splendid geniuses, have been called from their spheres by knaves or dupes, for what?—to show themselves reduced to the hideous state of Swift’s Struldbrugs. The only famous character I have heard of, not intellectually degraded since death, was Bucephalus (see *Secularist*, number 40), who told the company that he still took great interest in literary pursuits, particularly in connection with education; Bucephalus, whose name doubtless suggested an ancient philosopher to the shrewd medium, having been the war-horse of Alexander the Great!

We are compelled to accuse the religion which has been so long dominant among us, of fostering the state of mind which welcomes these miserable marvels instead of rejecting them with scorn. The Bible with its Witch of Endor, its recognition of witchcraft, its magicians, its angels releasing the Apostles, its doctrines of the supernatural, its abounding miracles, has saturated the people with superstitiousness, whose evil effects Science can but slowly counteract. And of those who have ceased to submit themselves to the Bible, the larger number are still infected with its non-natural spirit; having renounced one set of irrational marvels, they yearn more or less consciously for another to replace it. In this connection, the point on which Mr. Flower’s judgment turned is very significant, and its significance is increased by the approval of our most Christian press: “*I must decide according to the well-known course of nature.*” This is exactly what Science demands. Carry out honestly and thoroughly the application of this rule to the miracles of the Bible, from the speaking serpent, to the birth, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and what sentence must be passed upon them? The Bow Street Magistrate has given us a really excellent, concise, practical maxim of rethought. When a Christian comes with his supernatural dogmas and non-natural occurrences, one has but to answer on the judicial authority of Mr. Flowers: “I must decide according to the well-known course of nature.”

# A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON ROYALTY

(1876.)

THE subjects for our solemn consideration are the seclusion of her Most Gracious Majesty, and the complaints thereanent published in several respectable journals. In order to investigate the matter thoroughly, we constituted ourselves (the unknown number x) into a special Commission of Inquiry. We are happy to state that the said Commission has concluded its arduous labors, and now presents its report within a week of its appointment; surely the most prompt and rapid of commissions. The cause of this celerity we take to be the fact that the Commissioners were unsalaried; we being unanimously of opinion that had we received good pay for the inquiry throughout the period of our session, we could have prolonged it with certain benefit, if not to the public yet to ourselves, for a great number of years. If, therefore, you want a Commission to do its work rapidly vote no money for it. And do not fear that the most headlong haste in gathering evidence and composing the report will diminish the value of such report; for when a Commission has lasted for years or months it generally rises in a quite different state of the subject matter from that in which it first sat, and the report must be partly obsolete, partly a jumble of anachronisms. In brief, it may be fairly affirmed as a general rule that no Commission of Inquiry is of any value at all; the appointment of one being merely a dodge by which people who don't want to act on what they and everybody else see quite well with their naked eyes, set a number of elderly gentlemen to pore upon it with spectacles and magnifying glasses until dazed and stupid with poring, in the hope that this process will last so long that ere it is finished the public will have forgotten the matter altogether. And now for the result of our inquiries on this subject, which is not only immensely important, but is even sacred to our loyal hearts.

A West-end tradesman complains bitterly that through the absence of the

Court from Buckingham Palace, and the diminished number and splendor of royal pomps and entertainments, the "Season" is for him a very poor season indeed. The Commissioners, find that the said tradesman (whose knowledge seems-limited to a knowledge of his business, supposing he knows that) is remarkably well off; and consider that West-end tradesmen have no valid vested interest in Royalty and the Civil List, that at the worst they do-a capital trade with the aristocracy and wealthy classes (taking good care that the punctual and honest shall amply overpay their losses by the unpunctual and dishonest); that if they are not satisfied with the West-end, they had better try the East-end, and see how that will suit them; and, in short, that this tradesman is not worth listening to.

Numerous fashionable and noble people (principally ladies) complain that they have no Court to shine, in. The Commissioners think that they shine a great deal too much already, and in the most wasteful manner, gathered together by hundreds, light glittering on light; and that if they really want to shine beneficially in a court there are very many very dark courts in London where the light of their presence would be most welcome.

It is complained on behalf of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales that they have to perform many of the duties of royalty without getting a share of the royal allowance. The Commissioners think that if the necessary expenses of the heir to the throne are really too heavy for his modest, income, and are increased by the performance of royal duties, he had better send in yearly a bill to his Mamma for expenses incurred on her account, and a duplicate of the same to the Chancellor to the Exchequer; so that in every Budget the amount of the Civil List shall be equitably divided between her Majesty and her Majesty's eldest son, doubtless to their common satisfaction.

It is complained on behalf of various foreign royal or ruling personages that while they in their homes treat generously the visiting members of our royal family, they are treated very shabbily when visiting here. The Commissioners think that Buckingham Palace, being seldom or never wanted by the Queen, and very seldom wanted for the reception of the English Court, should be at all times open for such royal or ruling visitors; that a Lord Chamberlain, or other such noble domestic servant should be detailed to attend on them, and see to their hospitable treatment in all respects; and that to cover the expenditure on their account a fair deduction should be made from her Majesty's share of the Civil List, which deduction, being equitable her Majesty would no doubt view with extreme pleasure.

It is complained on the part of her Majesty's Ministers, that when they want the royal assent and signature to important Acts of Parliament, they have to lose a day or two and undergo great fatigue (which is peculiarly hard on men who are

mostly aged, and all overworked) in travelling to and from Osborne or Balmoral. The Commissioners think the remedy plain and easy, as in the two preceding cases. Let a law be passed assuming that absence, like silence, gives consent; so that whenever her Majesty is not in town, the Speaker of the Commons or the Lord Chancellor, or other great officer of State, be empowered to seal and sign in her name, and generally to perform any of her real and royal duties, on the formal demand of the Ministry, who always (and not the Queen) are responsible to Parliament and the country for all public acts.

A taxpayer complains that for fourteen years her Majesty has been punctually drawing all moneys allotted to support the royal dignity, while studiously abstaining from all, or nearly all, the hospitalities and other expensive functions incident to the support of the said dignity. The Commissioners consider that her Majesty is perchance benefiting the country more (and may be well aware of the fact) by taking her money for doing nothing than if she did something for it; that if she didn't take the said money, somebody else would (as for instance, were she to abdicate, the Prince of Wales, become King, would want and get at least as much); so that while our Government remains as it is, the complaint of the said taxpayer is foolish.

Another Taxpayer, who must be a most mean-minded fellow, a stranger to all sacred sympathies and hallowed emotions, says: "If a washerwoman, being stupefied by the death of her husband, neglected her business for more than a week or two, she would certainly lose her custom or employment, and not all the sanctity of conjugal grief (about which reverential journalists gush) would make people go on paying her for doing nothing; and if this washerwoman had money enough of her own to live on comfortably, people would call her shameless and miserly if she asked for or accepted payment while doing nothing; and if this washerwoman had a large family of boys and girls around her, and shut herself up to brood upon her husband's death for even three or four months, people would reckon her mad with selfish misery. The Commissioners (as soon as they recover from the stupefaction of horror into which this blasphemy has thrown them) consider and reply that there can be no proper comparison of a Queen and a washerwoman, and that nobody would think of instituting one, except a brute, a Republican, an Atheist, a Communist, a fiend in human form; that anyhow if, as this wretch says, a washerwoman would be paid for a week or two without working, in consideration of her conjugal affliction, it is plain that a Queen, who (it will be universally allowed) is at least a hundred thousand times as good as a washerwoman, is therefore entitled to at least a hundred thousand times the "week or two" of salary without performance of duty—that is, to at least 1,923 or 3,846 years, whereas this heartless and ribald reprobate himself only complains that our beloved Sovereign has done nothing for

her wage throughout “fourteen years.” The Commissioners therefore eject this complainant with ineffable scorn; and only wish they knew his name and address, that they might denounce him for prosecution to the Attorney-General.

A Malthusian (whatever kind of creature that may be) complains that her Majesty has set an example of uncontrolled fecundity to the nation and the royal family, which, besides being generally immoral, is likely, at the modest estimate of £6,000 per annum per royal baby, to lead to the utter ruin of the realm in a few generations. The Commissioners, after profound and prolonged consideration, can only remark that they do not understand the complaint any better than the name (which they do not understand at all) of the “Malthusian;” that they have always been led to believe that a large family is a great honor to a legitimately united man and woman; and that, finally, they beg to refer the Malthusian to the late Prince Consort.

A devotedly loyal Royalist (who unfortunately does not give the name and address of his curator) complains that her Majesty, by doing nothing except receive her Civil List, is teaching the country that it can get on quite as well without a monarch as with one, and might therefore just as well, and indeed very much better, put the amount of the Civil List into its own pocket and call itself a Republic. The Commissioners remark that this person seems the most rational of the whole lot of complainants (most rational, not for his loyalty, but most rational as to the grounds of his complaint, from his own point of view; in accordance with the dictum, “A madman reasons rightly from wrong premises; a fool wrongly from right ones,”) and that his surmise is very probably correct—namely, that her Majesty is really a Republican in principle, but not liking (as is perfectly natural in her position) to publicly profess and advocate opinions so opposed to the worldly interests of all her friends and relatives, has been content to further these opinions practically for fourteen years past by her conduct, without saying a word on the subject. The Commissioners, however, find one serious objection to this surmise in the fact that if her Majesty is really a Republican at heart, she must wish to exclude the Prince of Wales from the Throne; while it seems to them that the intimate knowledge she must have of his wisdom and virtues (not to speak of her motherly affection) cannot but make her feel that no greater blessing could come to the nation after her death than his reigning over it. As this is the only complaint which the Commissioners find at once well-founded and not easy to remedy, they are happy to know that it is confined to the very insignificant class of persons who are “devotedly loyal Royalists.”

The Commissioners thus feel themselves bound to report that all the complaints they have heard against our beloved and gracious Sovereign (except the one



last cited, which is of no importance) are without foundation, or frivolous, or easily remedied, and that our beloved and gracious Sovereign (whom may Heaven long preserve!) could not do better than she is now doing, in doing nothing.

But in order to obviate such complaints, which do much harm, whether ill or well founded, and which especially pain the delicate susceptibilities of all respectable men and women, the Commissioners have thought it their duty to draw up the following project of a Constitution, not to come into force until the death of our present beloved and gracious Sovereign (which may God, if so it please Him, long avert!), and to be modified in its details according to the best wisdom of our national House of Palaver.

# Draft

WHEREAS it is treasonable to talk of dethroning a monarch, but there can be no disloyalty in preventing a person not yet a monarch from becoming one:

And whereas it is considered by very many, and seems proved by the experience of the last ---- years that the country can do quite well without a monarch, and may therefore save the extra expense of monarchy:

And whereas it is calculated that from the accession of George I. of blessed memory until the decease of the most beloved of Queens, Victoria, a period of upwards of a century and a half, the Royal Family of the House of Guelph have received full and fair payment in every respect for their generous and heroic conduct in coming to occupy the throne and other high places of this kingdom, and in saving us from the unconstitutional Stuarts:

And whereas the said Stuarts may now be considered extinct, and thus no longer dangerous to this realm: And whereas the said Royal Family of the House of Guelph is so prolific that the nation cannot hope to support all the members thereof for a long period to come in a royal manner:

And whereas the Dukes of this realm are accounted liberal and courteous gentlemen:

And whereas the constitution of our country is so far Venetian that it cannot but be improved in harmony and consistency by being made more Venetian still:

Be it enacted, etc., That the Throne now vacant through the ever-to-be-deplored death of her late most gracious Majesty shall remain vacant. That the mem-ers of what has been hitherto the Royal Family keep all the property they have accumulated, the nation resuming from them all grants of sinecures and other salaried appointments. That no member of the said Family be eligible for any public appointment whatever for at least one hundred years. That the Dukes in the order of their seniority shall act as Doges (with whatever title be considered the best) year and year about, under penalty of large fines in cases of refusal, save when such

refusal is supported by clear proof of poverty (being revenue under a settled minimum), imbecility, brutality, or other serious disqualification. That no members of a ducal family within a certain degree of relationship to the head of the house be eligible for any public appointment whatever; the head of the house being eligible for the Dogeship only. That the duties of the Doge be simply to seal and sign Acts of Parliament, proclamations, etc., when requested to do so by the Ministry; and to exercise hospitality to royal or ruling and other representatives of foreign countries, as well as to distinguished natives. That a fair and even excessive allowance be made to the Doge for the expenses of his year of office. That the royal palaces be official residences of the Doge. That the Doge be free from all political responsibility as from all political power; but be responsible for performing liberally and courteously the duties of hospitality, so that Buckingham Palace shall not contrast painfully with the Mansion House. Etc., etc.

God preserve the Doge!

The Commission of Inquiry having thus triumphantly vindicated our beloved and gracious Sovereign against the cruel aspersions of people in general, and having moreover drafted a plan for obviating such aspersions against any British King or Queen in future, ends its Report, and dissolves itself, with humble thankfulness to God Almighty whose grace alone has empowered it to conclude its arduous labors so speedily, and with results so incalculably beneficial.

P. S.—Since the above report was drawn up, that ardent English patriot and loyalist, Benjamin Disraeli, being by the grace of God and the late Earl of Derby Prime Minister of this realm, has proposed that Parliament shall enable her Most Gracious Majesty to assume the additional title of Empress of India, and Parliament has so far humbly assented. Being sore pressed by many cantankerous persons to give valid reasons for this change, he has given reasons many and weighty; such as the earnest desire of the princes and people of India, which desire has been so abundantly expressed that the expressions thereof cannot be produced lest they should overwhelm Parliament and destroy the balance of the world in general; then the imposing authority of “Whitaker’s Almanack,” a dissenting minister and a school-girl aged twelve: and lastly the necessity of such a title for scaring all the Russias from India. But I believe that in deference to the well-known modesty of her Most Gracious Majesty he has not produced the most cogent reason of all, which is that for her wonderful and continual goodness during the past fourteen years in abstaining from the active functions of royalty, thus not only doing no mischief but preparing us for a Republic *de jure* by habituating us to a Republic *de facto*, she merits a great reward; and that, as she has already more money than she knows what to do with, this reward of royal virtue can most fittingly be rendered by her grateful subjects

promoting her to the rank of Empress. And it should be noted that whereas the old title of Queen has a certain strength and stability in the habitudes if not in the affections of the people, the new fangled title of Empress has no such support, so that in assuming it our beloved monarch is but working consistently and resolutely toward the great end of her reign, the speedy abolition of monarchy and establishment of a Republic.

# A BIBLE LESSON ON MONARCHY

(1876.)

THE old theory of “The right divine of kings to govern wrong,” and the much-quoted text, “Fear God and honor the king,” seem to have impressed many good people with the notion that the Bible is in favor of monarchy. But “king” in the text plainly has the general meaning of “ruler,” and would be equally applicable to the President of a Republic. In Romans xiii. 1—3, we read: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.” Without stopping to discuss the bold assertion in the last sentence, we may remark that the real teaching of this passage is that Christians ought to be indifferent to politics, quietly accepting whatever government they find in power; for if the powers that be are ordained of God, or in other words, if might is right, all forms of government are equally entitled to obedience so long as they actually exist. Of course Christians are not now, and for the most part have not been for centuries, really indifferent to politics, because for the most part they now are and long have been Christians only in name; but it is easy to understand from the New Testament itself why the first Christians naturally were thus indifferent, and why Christianity has never afforded any political inspiration. Nothing can be clearer to one who reads the New Testament honestly and without prejudice than the fact that Christ and his apostles believed that the end of the world was at hand. Thus in Matt, xxiv., Jesus after foretelling the coming to judgment of the son of man in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, when the angels shall gather the elect from the four winds, adds, v. 34, “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” This is repeated in almost

the same words in Mark xiii., and Luke xxi., and a careful reading of the Epistles shows that their writers were profoundly influenced by this prophecy. But with the world coming to an end so soon, it would be as absurd to take any interest in its politics as for a traveller stopping two or three days in an inn to concern himself with schemes for rebuilding it, when about to leave for a far country where he intends settling for life. If therefore we want any political guidance from the Holy Scriptures, we must go to the Old Testament, not to the New.

Now the first lesson on Monarchy, which we remember made us think even in childhood, is the fable of the trees electing a king, told by Jotham, the son of Gideon, in Judges ix. The trees in the process of this election showed a judgment much superior to that which men usually show in such a business. It is true that they did not select first the most strong and stalwart of trees, the cedar or the oak, but they had the good sense to choose the most sweet-natured and bountiful, the olive, then the fig, then the vine. But the bountiful trees thus chosen had good sense too, and would not forsake the fatness and the sweetness and the wine which cheereth God and man, to rule over their fellow trees. Then the poor trees, like a jilted girl who marries in spleen the first scamp she comes across, asked the bramble to be their king; and that barren good-for-nothing of course accepted eagerly the crown which the noble and generous had refused, and called upon the trees to put their trust in its scraggy shadow, "and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." Young as we were when this fable first caught our attention, we mused a good deal over it, and even then began to learn that those most eager for supremacy, the most forward candidates in elections, are nearly always brambles, not olives or fig-trees or vines; and that the first thought of a bramble, when made ruler over its betters, is naturally to destroy with fire the cedars of Lebanon.

But God himself in the case of the Israelites has vouchsafed to us a very clear judgment on the question of Monarchy. In the remarkable constitution for that people which he gave to Moses, he did not include a king, and Israel remained without a king for more years than it is worth while endeavoring to count here. We read, 1 Samuel viii., how "All the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Hamah, and said unto him, Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

"... Now therefore hearken unto their voice: how-beit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them."

Some students of the Bible may have thought that God's severe condemnation of the Israelites for wanting a king arose chiefly from wounded pride, from the fact that they had rejected him, and we cannot affirm that this feeling did not inflame his anger, for he himself has said that he is a jealous God; but the protest which he orders Samuel to make, and the exposition of the common evils of kingship, prove clearly that God did not (and therefore, of course, does not) approve this form of government. And, indeed, it is plain that if he had approved it, he would have given it to his chosen people at first. For although divines have termed the form of government under which the Jews lived before the kings a theocracy, God did not then rule immediately, but always through the medium of a high-priest or judge, and could have governed through the medium of a king had he thought it well so to do. And he who reads the history of the Jews under the Judges, as contained in the Book of Judges, and especially the narratives in chapters xvii. to xxi. which illustrate the condition of Jewish society in those days when "there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes," will see that God must have thought a Monarchy very vile and odious indeed when he was angry at the request for it, and implied that it was actually worse than that government by Judges alternated with bondage under neighboring tribes which the theologians call a theocracy. Samuel warned the people of what a king would do, and doubtless thought he was warning them of the worst, but kings have far outstripped all that the prophet could foresee. The king, he said, will take your sons to be his warriors and servants; and will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and cooks, and bakers. This was the truth, and nothing but the truth, but it was not the whole truth; for the sons have been taken to be far worse than mere warriors and servants, and the daughters for much viler purposes than cooking and baking. Samuel goes on: "And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants"—when he does not keep them for himself might have been added. "And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants." Surely much more than a tenth, O Samuel! We will not quote the remainder of this wise warning. Like most wise warnings it was ineffectual; the foolish people insisted on having a king, and in the following chapters we read how Saul the Son of Kish, going forth to seek his father's asses, found his own subjects.

The condemnation of Monarchy by God, as we read it in this instance, is so thorough and general that we feel bound to add a few words on an exceptional case in which a king is highly extolled in the Scriptures, without any actions being recorded of him, as in the instances of David and Solomon, to nullify the praise. The king in question was Melchizedek, King of Salem, and priest of the most high God,

who met Abram returning from the defeat of the four kings and blessed him, and to whom Abram gave tithes of all, as we read in Genesis xiv. But this short notice of Melchizedek in Genesis does not by any means suggest to us the full wonderfulness of his character, though we naturally conclude from it that he was indeed an important personage to whom Abram gave tithes of all. The New Testament, however, comes to our aid, and for once gives us a most valuable political lesson, though the inspired writer was far from thinking of political instruction when he wrote the passage. In Hebrews vi., 20, and vii., 1 to 3, we read: "Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." Now he to whom Jesus is compared, and who is like the Son of God, is clearly the noblest of characters; and therefore, as the history in the first book of Samuel teaches us that Monarchy is generally to be avoided, these fine verses from the Epistle to the Hebrews delineate for us the exceptional king whose reign is to be desired.

The delineation is quite masterly, for a few lines give us characteristics which cannot be overlooked or mistaken. This model monarch must be a priest of the most high God—a king of righteousness and king of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God. Whenever and wherever such a gentleman is met with, we would advise even the most zealous Republicans to put him forthwith upon the throne. But in the absence of such a gentleman we can hardly do wrong if we follow the good advice of Samuel dictated by God Almighty, and manage without any Monarch.



# PRINCIPAL TULLOCH ON PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

[two excerpts.]

(1877.)

**D**R. TULLOCH has the sense to perceive and the candor to acknowledge that even to those who have not any faith in God or Immortality, death need not be terrible, and often is not; that they may be resigned or peaceful, and meet the inevitable with a calm front; that they may be even glad to be done with the struggle of existence. Of course this is no news to us who have stood at the bedside of dying Materialists and Atheists, or are familiar with trustworthy well-authenticated accounts of the last hours of such persons. Still it is encouraging to find a distinguished and influential minister openly recognising the facts, instead of distorting them with the old contemptible pious fictions, again and again repeated after being again and again refuted. But Dr. Tulloch considers that only the light of the higher life in Christ can glorify death. It would have been well had he been more specific as to this higher life and the glory it casts on death. If they are as described at length in the only authoritative Christian Scripture on the subject, the Book of Revelation, it seems to me that the life is anything but high, and radiates anything but glory. However, tastes differ, and man is a queer fellow; and there may actually exist many people who would prefer to annihilation a sort of everlasting Moody and Sankey meeting, and would even regard this as celestial beatitude. Concerning such I will only say with Goethe, I hope I shan't go to heaven with that lot! Yet these are not quite the lowest of the low in our civilised Christendom; or are there not many who look forward with complacency and even enthusiasm to a life beyond death, wherein they shall be largely employed in rapping tables, jogging arms and scrawling illiterate nonsense? Dr. Tulloch, in quoting St. Paul, seems to forget that he was writing of himself and his fellow Christians, to whom his words

were thoroughly applicable; not of mankind in general, to whom they were not, and by the construction of the sentence could not be. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable;" we, the Christians. And why would they be of all men the most miserable? Clearly because, in obedience to the injunctions of their Master, they had cut themselves off from this world that they might secure the next; had renounced wealth, honor, society, enjoyment, all interest in art, science, literature, all political and national aspirations, and had courted obloquy and persecution; so that if the next life should turn out to be a mockery, a delusion and a snare, they were of all men the most miserable, being the most miserably deluded. Those poor simple early Christians (on the showing, true or false, of the books all Christians revere as sacred and divine), having only Jesus and his apostles to instruct them, had not reached that lofty mercantile wisdom which made the late Mr. Binney one of the most popular preachers in our pious and mercantile country, when he solved the problem of *How to Make the Best of Both Worlds*. Of other-worldliness they indeed had enough and to spare; but they lacked the large modern grasp which combines and intermingles it with an equal measure of this worldliness. "They didn't know everything down in Judee;" and St. Paul, though fairly intelligent and cultivated for his benighted time, was in a deplorable need of some lessons from Weigh-house Chapel.

When the worthy Principal says that men cannot find strength or comfort in what has been called the Religion of Humanity, and that they crave a personal life, is he aware that he has descended from the highlands of morality and truth to the lowest lowlands of Paley and Binney expediency? Is he aware that he is moreover begging the question, making the monstrous assumption that men must get what they crave? I call this the childish lollipop attraction of religion, so absurd as to be really beneath the contempt of full-grown men and women. Just as young ones would look forward to having the free range as long as they liked (which they would interpret for ever and ever) of shops full of sweeties, so those big babies, our dear simple Christian brethren, look forward to their Lubberland of eternal bliss, in singing Glory! Glory! Glory! Their claim to it is purely the infant's, because they would like it. Their mouths water, they lick their lips, they gurgle luxuriously with the foretaste: "Oh, we shall be so 'ap-'ap-'appy! Canaan is a happy place; we'll go to the land of Canaan!" And usually these beatific adult babies are creatures such as an intelligent man would be ashamed to bring into the world, much more a God. You can't endure an hour of their society here, and they pester you to come and spend eternity with them! I am really sorry to find Dr. Tulloch in such company.

In conclusion, I ask the reader to note especially the preacher's avowal that his faith in personal immortality has no warrant from Nature, no warrant from Science;

may, more, that the suggestions of scientific analysis “mockingly sift the sources of life only to hint our mortality.” There is indeed no temper of mockery in Science, but its soberest deductions may well seem to mock with a terrible derision the inordinate greed and self-conceit of men, who, because they profess an unscientific and unnatural faith, have lost all sense of proportion between their infinitesimal selves and the infinite Universe.

# THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH

Its Real As Distinguished From Its Apparent Strength

(1862.)

**I**N discussions with “Infidels,” Churchmen are very ready with the taunt, “You are but a handful of fanatics. Nearly the whole intellect of the nation is for us and against you.” In general the taunt is merely parried by a “What matter, if we are right?” whereas it should also be retorted by a counter-thrust of denial. For, in truth, but a very small part of the intellect of the nation—*i.e.*, intellect in the only sense in which it is of importance—*active* intellect, is devoted to the Establishment or even to the Establishment and the so-called Dissenters combined. If they only are the true soldiers of the Church militant whom she spiritually feeds and equips for the warfare of life, and who are loyal to her with their whole heart and mind, how many legions must be deducted from the armies gathered round her banners before we can fairly estimate her actual power in the field! Should Jesus come to eliminate his true followers from the multitudes of professing Christians, as Gideon selected his, three hundred from the two and thirty thousand Israelites, let us consider whom he would reject.

*First*, all the cowards and hypocrites who simply cling to what appears the dominant party, and who would therefore call themselves Atheists were Atheism in the ascendant; a vile brood, the incumbrance and disgrace of every cause they adopt; “hateful to God and to the enemies of God”; of whom even to write is not pleasant.

*Secondly*, the indifferent through lack of vitality; men of tepid heart and inert brain, who are incapable of any strong sane affection. I use the word *sane* because these creatures have intense self-love, which in its essence is insane; and because also they may be frenzied by the drunkenness of fanaticism, in which state they can die as devotedly as they can murder atrociously. The adhesion of these also I count no gain to any cause.

*Thirdly*, the indifferent through excess of vitality, including the most eminent “practical” men, soldiers, sailors, lawyers, engineers, statesmen. These, applying their whole energies to their several professions, rarely trouble themselves with theological any more than with other extraneous matters, but passively acquiesce in whatever creed may be prevalent around them. Their real church is the world; their real worship is labor; and they no more add to the strength of their nominal church than did the *savants* to that of Napoleon’s army in Egypt—those *savants* whom the wise Napoleon always ordered (with the donkeys) to the centre whenever an attack was expected. To these must be added all the men whom we call fine animals, who enjoy such a red-blooded life in this world that they are not subject to bilious forebodings of another. Some classes of the most famous men—the poets, philosophers, doctors, physicists, mathematicians—are commanded by their very vocations to think seriously on some of the great theological questions, and therefore, whether ranged for or against the Church, count for something. The reader must ask his memory whether their weight in the balance has preponderated for orthodoxy or for heterodoxy. The statesmen I have counted among the indifferent, because their support of religion, in whatever form, has been almost universally no more than political.

*Fourthly*, the supersubtle, including laymen and divines of first-rate talent; who cannot help delighting in the exercise of their skill of fence, and who instinctively feel that it is much harder to champion any existing institution than to attack it, and naturally (like all unconquerable knights-errant) prefer the most difficult *devoir*. Their adhesion to the Church, therefore, though seeming to strengthen it, really proclaims its weakness. Macaulay tells us how Halifax, the Trimmer, always joined the losing side.

*Fifthly*, the supremely reverential, including the very best of the laymen and divines; men whose lofty reason is drowned in a yet deeper faith, as mountain-peaks high as the highest in air are said to be submerged in the abysses of the Atlantic. In many cases these might be ranked in the preceding class; for it is a general rule that the more reverence, the more subtlety. They see—how clearly!—the flaws and imperfections of their Church, they even realise the danger of its total fall; but they cannot tear themselves away from the venerable building wherein all their forefathers worshipped, in whose consecrated precincts all their forefathers were buried in hopes of a happy resurrection; whose chants were the rapturous music and whose windows were the heavenly glories of their pure childhood; whose prayers they repeated night after night and morning after morning at their mother’s knee. Can they leave this, with all its treasured holiness of antiquity for some new bold glaring erection, wherein men certainly congregate to talk about God, but which might

just as well be used as a warehouse or a manufactory? No; rather than leave it they will believe, they will force themselves to believe, that some miraculous renovation is at hand, or that (as the structure was certainly raised by God) God will uphold it in spite of the law of gravitation. These are the men who keep the Church from falling into insignificance, but they are not essentially hers. It is not she alone whom they could thus worship. Had they been brought up idolators, idolatry must have retained almost the same influence over spirits so reverentially humble, so loving and pure.

And here it may be remarked that one can scarcely conceive a Church so frail and gloomy and even vile, but that a fervent soul and a strong intellect could fortify it with argument, adorn it with the gold and jewels of imagination, illustrate its dark altars and vivify its dead idols with the burning fire of spirituality, until it should be far more noble and mighty and splendid than ever was aspired to by the majority of men. But mark, such men as these of whom I speak do not derive their religiousness from, but really bestow it upon the Church in which they pray. She is subject and indebted to them, not they to her. She does not nourish them, they nourish her. She is the statue, they are Pygmalion. And they are indeed idolators, for they worship a creation of their own souls. Perhaps Pygmalion himself fell down and adored his flushed and breathing statue, thinking her, with artist-reverence, nothing less than a transformation of Venus Urania. When one thinks of certain noble men and women—as Maurice and Kingsley, Ruskin and the Brownings—devoting themselves in spite of themselves to an effete faith, one is sadly reminded of poor Abishag the Shunammite wasting and withering her healthful youth to cherish old worn-out David, “who knew her not,” who could fill her with no new life, and who was, despite her cherishing, so certainly near death. He had been a great king in his time, but now his time was past, and as it was now the maiden’s spring-time, he should have left her to live her proper life.

But when all these are separated from the host, who are left to whom we may point in answer to Emerson’s question, “In Christendom, where is the Christian?” Strictly speaking there has never been but one Christian—the man Christ Jesus. But I would give the title to those who thoroughly believe the Bible after having investigated it to the best of their power, who find its doctrines completely satisfy them, and who sincerely endeavor to act up to those doctrines. How many of such are there? I have known perhaps half a dozen. Has any reader known many more? Will any one dare assert that they are more numerous in England than the equally sincere Secularists or Atheists? I scarcely think any honest and thoughtful person will.

FINIS.







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