



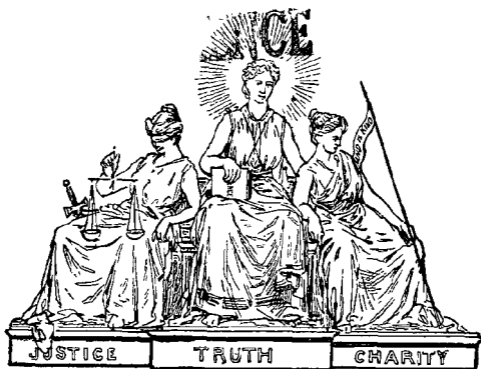
CALVIN AND SERVETUS IN THE HALL OF JUSTICE AT GENEVA, A.D. 1553.

CALVIN AND SERVETUS.

An Episode of the Reformation.

WITH

AN ANALYSIS OF THE GOD OF CALVINISM



THE TWENTIETH CENTURY GRACES.

BY

LEX NATURÆ.

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PREFACE.

MR. GLADSTONE lately used the expression, "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture;" but his simile is somewhat unfortunate, for there is no "rock" that is now impregnable to science. Moreover, "Holy Scripture" is not solid rock, but simply a conglomeration of old-world notions—some good and some bad. Time and scientific solutions are disintegrating the cement that binds the mass together, so that by-and-by it will fall to pieces; but the really good rock that is in it may be used in building up a new and better structure, just as our forefathers did with the old cathedrals.

Bibliolatry is giving way to discriminatory respect, and in the course of time the Bible of the Hebrews, as a whole, will be looked upon and treated as an interesting and valuable archæological relic, like, *e.g.*, the Vedas of the Hindoos.

The Jewish religion and Bible were only examples among many others prior to and coincident with them. We have had Indian, Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, and Roman religions and Bibles, just as we have had their various styles of national architecture; and while in the latter the Grecian is pre-eminent, so in the former, we will admit, stands the Jewish. But each and all were equally the natural outcome of human knowledge and experience. It is only either childish delusion or absolute pigheadedness that can now suppose there was anything of the *supernatural* in the one, any more than in any of the others. In fact, this notion of a supernatural is absurd. If the invention of the steam-engine is entitled to be looked upon as a merely natural occurrence, then either as much or ~~more~~ so does the

production of the series of pamphlets now forming the Bible deserve to be so designated. Being a natural production and the work of the men of the past, the Bible exhibits to us the ideas and actions of the men of the past. While in some cases we perceive knowledge and high aspiration, in others ignorance, credulity, superstition, and cruelty are only too apparent. That men should have stultified themselves so long by worshipping the mental work of their ancestors as divine when it dealt with religious matters, and considered all else they said and did as purely human, only shows how foolish the majority of our race has been. Faith has simply been credulity, and Hope delusion; for where the premises are fanciful there can be no substantial superstructure. Faith, Hope, and Charity, although held forth as the Christian graces for eighteen centuries, still see Europe covered with standing armies! As the first two have spoiled the latter, we must give Charity—"the greatest of these"—better companions; hence the suggestion of Truth,* Justice, and Charity as the new or improved Graces for the soon-to-be-inaugurated Twentieth Century.

A new illustration is given of Calvin and Servetus debating before the Council of Geneva. The latter is shown in the act of ridiculing Calvin anent the doctrine of the Trinity:

"He says three are one, and one is three,
Equal in substance, power, and degree!"

The other illustration, "Searching for the Witch-spot" (in which two seventeenth-century "divines" are supervising a woman being pricked all over in search for the supposed painless part, while the barber who has shaved her is admiring the cut-off hair) is intended to exemplify the foolishness of accepting as gospel, at the end of this enlightened nineteenth century, the notions of men, supposed to be "godly," who, dead to all chivalrous feeling, considered they were doing God service by persecuting

* Truth holds a scientific book in her right hand, while embracing Charity with her left arm. Justice is allied with Truth in token that apart from truth there cannot be real justice.

and maltreating women—the daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers of their fellow-men and neighbours—in such cruel and brutal ways as that portrayed.

“You may praise, you may pall’ate the men, as you will ;
But the shame of their actions will hang round them still.”

In the article on “Witchcraft” in “Chambers’s Encyclopædia” we are told that “the *clergy* were the great witch-finders,” and that Dr. Sprenger computes “the entire number of persons who have been burned as witches during the Christian epoch at nine millions” ! And it was men who took an active part in, or approved of, such devilish work who drew up the seventeenth-century Westminster “Confession of Faith.” That “Confession” which millions, who are oblivious of its evil origin, consider they honour Him whom they praise as the God of Love by subscribing to ! No wonder that the author of “Woman: Her Glory, Her Shame, and Her God” writes as he does, or that thinking men now consider the acceptance of such a production as the Westminster Confession anything but a compliment to either the manliness or the intelligence of our age.

The world is progressing, however, and to the coming Twentieth Century seems to be reserved the grand work of ridding this earth of ours of ignorance and superstition, with their accompanying miseries and cruelties. In this work the schoolmaster will take a leading part ; hence in the, it is to be hoped, truthfully-prophetic illustration on page 38 he is shown as being crowned with laurel ; while the useless priest, with his worthless wares, is bundled off the scene forever. Truly knowledge is power.

As to the *Roaring Lion* who “went about seeking whom he might devour,” his name is “Ichabod”—his glory has departed. Men have discovered—thanks in great measure to medical and chemical science—that, with so much of the devilish within themselves, the existence of a pretended devil outside of them, to distract their attention from the real one within, is not only objectionable, but also quite superfluous.

As for our Protestant clergy, who complain that men are neglecting their ministrations, might they not get

another chance to do their duty? Some of them look with longing eyes to that time and land of Freedom when and where they will be able to speak out the truth apart from the traditions and chains of an ignorant and soul-repressing past. Now many of them have to mutter with grinding teeth ;—

“ Not for the truth do we declaim,
But for our stipends and the creed.”

Who is to blame for this? Not the clergy alone, but in many cases the laity. It is the duty of the more intelligent and independent among the laity to assist in cutting the clergy clear of the chains and traditions of the past, and to treat with scorn and opprobrium those shallow pates who are ever ready to bawl out “Heresy, heresy!” whenever a leader takes a step in advance of their own narrow conventionalities. The sword of the Lord is the sword of *Truth*, and for too long have our clergy been afraid to wield it. If they mean to perpetuate their race much longer, they must take a lesson from science, and, ceasing prating about post-mortem worlds they know nothing about, help mankind to abolish the hells out of this globe, and to make more of a heaven of it for humanity than has as yet been. When such work is really taken in hand, and the pulpit has become the Forum of Truth and Progress, instead of the dispensary of delusions, then above and around it may be read and felt in letters of living fire—“RESURGAM!”

CALVIN AND SERVETUS.

WHEN we are asked, Who made man? the answer is, God made man; but when we inquire, Who made God? the reply is, God was not made. Now, so far at least as the gods we read about are concerned, this last answer or assertion is open to question. In fact, the gods we find described either in our own or other people's primers and Bibles, etc., are all the productions of some human artist, just as much as the pictures hanging on our walls. All are the result of the motion of the molecules of the human brain. A low type of brain gives a low type of god; a higher type of brain produces a superior god. A healthy brain depicts before us a man-inspiring god, a diseased brain an ogre.

In the looking-glass many of our god-makers might see a magnified representation of themselves. If the man is selfish and cruel, his god delights in the blood of his enemies. If he be spiteful, his god is vindictive. On the other hand, when the man is humane and kind-hearted, he sets up a god who is generous and loving. The gods of the past are enlarged portraits of the men of the past. The gods of to-day are inherited. It is for the men of to-day to say whether or not they will pass on that inheritance, improved or otherwise, or whether, standing on a higher platform, they will or can, with wider knowledge, fashion a new and better god.

Among the god-makers of the past, whose work largely influences human thought to-day, the man Calvin stands prominently forth. Although dead personally, the influence of his productions is still an active power in our midst. It behoves us, therefore, to consider what manner of man he was. We will view him through his words and actions towards a brother thinker.

John Calvin was born in 1509. In or about the same year so was Michael Servetus. While both were but boys Luther had sounded the war-note of the Reformation. Calvin was brought up as a Roman Catholic, and held office in the Catholic Church; but, his religious ideas changing, he became Protestant. He claimed and took the liberty to think for himself; but, as after events showed, he declined to allow the same liberty to other people. Servetus appears to have been at first intended for the Church, and received such an education as would have qualified him for the priesthood. When about twelve or fourteen years old he appears to have attended the University of Saragossa for about four or five years, and, having given up the Church, qualified himself for the profession of the law at Toulouse. At this place he had opportunity of seeing the Bible, and also another book entitled "Rational Theology," by Raymund de Sabundi, both of which works seem to have so influenced him as to make him take a deep interest in the study of theological subjects. Servetus must also have well studied history in general, and especially from a scientific or rationalistic standpoint.

When at Toulouse, Servetus was invited by Juan Quintana—a Franciscan friar, who acted as Confessor to the Emperor Charles V.—to act as his secretary. In this service he attended at the coronation of Charles at Bologna, where he saw his Majesty kneeling and kissing the feet of the Pope—a part of the ceremony which appears to have disgusted the future Freethinking heretic.

The sale of indulgences being also carried on upon this auspicious occasion to fill the coffers of the Holy See, Servetus was led to exclaim: "O beast, most beastly, most wicked of harlots!" a description of the Church not at all commendatory.

After the coronation at Bologna, Charles proceeded to Germany to hold the Diet of Augsburg. While this was being held—in the summer of 1530—Servetus may have here met Melancthon and some of the other Reformers. Luther was not present, his friends considering it too dangerous for him to go. Shortly after this Servetus left the service of Quintana; possibly his heretical book, "De Trinitatis Erroribus," being the cause. While Luther and the other Reformers set themselves to reform the Church, Servetus undertook the more advanced task of trying to reform the religion of the Church. In this work his rationalistic ideas caused him to fall foul of the Reformers on many points, so that he virtually placed himself between Scylla and Charybdis. He opened a correspondence with Œcolampadius, not at all pleasing to the latter, who styled Servetus "a hot-headed Spaniard." In a letter to Servetus, Œcolampadius asks him to "confess the Son to be consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, in which case we shall be able to acknowledge you for a Christian."* Servetus, however, could not see his way to make any such silly "confession."

With the other Reformers, Martin Bucer and W. F. Capito of Strasburg, Servetus appears to have become

* In a letter to Bucer, Œcolampadius laments that Servetus "would have the man Christ to be the son of God in the *usual natural way*." This was too bad of Servetus! Luther appears to have had some trouble in his own mind over the Trinitarian doctrine; but he attributed the working of his reasoning faculties to the temptation of the Devil—the same gentleman that he once threw his ink bottle at, but missed.

more friendly, for a time at least ; but Bucer was not at all pleased with the views of Servetus on the Trinity. Both the Swiss and German Reformers attacked the book, "De Trinitatis Erroribus," so strongly that, although at one time it was largely sold, yet in 1551 a copy could not be got in Switzerland. This, of course, considering the intolerant spirit of the age, is not to be wondered at. Servetus was too Pantheistic in his ideas for his day. He looked upon the Son and the Holy Ghost as *dispositions* or *dispensations* of the one eternal, indivisible God, or as manifestations of God in the world, not as separate "persons."

Not succeeding in either Germany or Switzerland, Servetus appears in Paris in 1532, under the name of Villaneuve ; and between this and 1534 he met Calvin there, and tried if he could succeed better with him than with the other Reformers ; but Calvin and he soon came to loggerheads. A public discussion between them was proposed ; but such was too dangerous for the author of "De Trinitatis Erroribus" to engage in, and it did not come off, so Calvin and Servetus seem to have gone their own separate ways for twelve years. Servetus went to Lyons, where he got employment as reader and corrector of the press in the establishment of the Brothers Trechsel, and where, through his scholarly attainments, he soon was called upon to act as editor of various important works, among others a new, improved edition of "The Geography of Ptolemy." In this he introduced many interesting remarks. He quietly attacks the superstition of the age, when stating that he had seen the King of France touching people suffering from scrofula, by adding, "I did not see that they were cured." In dealing with Palestine he described it in a way which called forth the ire of his persecutors years after. He says : "Know, however, most worthy reader, that it is mere boasting and untruth when so much of excellence

is ascribed to this land ; the experience of merchants and others, travellers who have visited it, proving it to be inhospitable, barren, and altogether without amenity. Wherefore you may say that the land was *promised*, indeed ; but is of *little promise* when spoken of in everyday terms. Possibly, on the whole, no country so well as Palestine could serve to illustrate the truth of the old proverb, that "distance lends enchantment to the view." Yet, while the character and condition of the country are described as bad, and especially about Judæa, there are redeeming spots in it. The surroundings of Nazareth, and the views from its neighbourhood, are said by some writers to be beautiful. A medical mission has recently been settled at Tiberias, where both poverty and disease seem to be prevalent.* The natives look upon the medical missionary as a veritable miracle-worker ; one good M.D., with his salves and pills, being in their eyes worth a thousand D.D.'s with their Bibles and tracts. The plain of Philistia is rich in corn fields, and groves of olives, sycamores, and palms. With better government Palestine could be made very much superior to what it at present is.

While working for the Trechsels, Servetus had the medical writings of Dr. Campegius through his hands, and he probably became acquainted with the author. At all events, from this time he appears to have taken an interest in the study of physiology. After a stay in Lyons for about two years, he seems to have been so well remunerated by his masters that he returned to Paris in order to study medicine as a profession. He had as a fellow student here—under Winter of Andernach—Andrea Vesalius, the afterwards celebrated anatomist. Servetus assisted Winter so well in the prepara-

* The Sultan has granted a firman to erect an hospital for "the good work of *healing the sick*."

tion of his work, "Anatomical Institutions," that, in his preface, he described Servetus, then known as Michael Villanovanus, as "distinguished by his literary acquirements of every kind, and scarcely second to any in his knowledge of the teaching of Galen."

Having obtained his degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Medicine, Servetus began to lecture in Paris on Geography, and also, unfortunately, on Astrology. His views and teachings upon the latter subject led him into a dispute with the University. About this time he published a clever treatise on "Syrups and their Use in Medicine;" and, had he refrained from giving offence to his brethren of the Faculty of Physicians, he might soon have taken a high position in Paris as a physician. His quarrel with the University—in which legal proceedings were taken against him—caused him to leave Paris, and he seems to have gone to Charlieu, where, in 1538-39, he practised as a physician for a year and a-half or so. At this place he appears to have been baptised at the age of thirty, because, as he said, that was the age at which Jesus was baptised, and, consequently, he considered no man could be properly baptised before that age. As Calvin was about the same age as himself, Servetus made this the occasion of writing to him, exhorting him to undergo the rite in a proper manner now, and so show that he was a real follower of Jesus.

While residing at Charlieu, Servetus (as "Villeneuve") met an old Parisian acquaintance, Pierre Poumier, who was now Archbishop of Vienne, Dauphiny. The Archbishop invited him to Vienne, where he got apartments in the precincts of the palace, so that, with the patronage of the Archbishop, he soon made friends. He here brought out, in 1541, a second edition of his "Ptolemy," which he dedicated to his friend and patron, the Archbishop. In this edition he altered various items—*e.g.*, taking out the disparaging description of Palestine, and



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changing his former jeering remark about the royal cure for scrofula to "I have heard say that many were cured" by the king's touch. This second edition, which was beautifully got up, is very rare. A copy exists in the British Museum. When Servetus was burnt in effigy at Vienne, in 1553, all the copies of his books that could be got hold of, including his new work, "*Christianismi Restitutio*," were committed to the flames.

In 1542 Servetus was engaged on a new edition of Santes Pagnini's Latin Bible. In his preface and annotations we find the advanced thinker again at work. He tells his readers they are generally "too apt to overlook the historical and literal sense of the Sacred Scriptures, the consequence of which is that they vainly and foolishly expend themselves in hunting after recondite and mysterious meanings in the text where nothing of the kind exists."* In this respect Servetus preceded by more than a hundred years Spinoza, Astruc, Simon, and Eichhorn, etc., who are considered the founders of the modern school of Scriptural exegesis.

"They pierced my hands and my feet," in Psalm xxii. 16, Servetus says refers to David getting his hands and feet lacerated among the rocks when fleeing from his enemies; while Isaiah ii. 2, etc., which so many expositors have asserted alludes to Jesus, Servetus states referred to Hezekiah. So with Isaiah xl. 1-3, Servetus holds the words point to Cyrus. These Rationalistic and anti-Messianic leanings were alike condemned by Rome and the Swiss Reformers. Calvin had no toleration for any views that differed from those seen through his own infallible spectacles.† Some time after this

* 1890-92. Theosophists please note.

† The successors of those seventeenth-century Westminster and General Assembly witch-hunting and women-murdering "divines," who set up Calvinism in this kingdom, are now losing faith in the infallibility of its author, as per the cry for Revision of the Creed.

“Villeneuve,” or Servetus, got into correspondence with Calvin through John Frelon, a publisher of Lyons, and, as we see from a letter of Calvin’s, dated February 13th, 1546, Servetus must have succeeded in irritating the anything but amiable Reformer very much. He considers his correspondent to be “highly presumptuous,” and styles him “a Satan who would divert me from studies more profitable” than arguing with him. Servetus resented Calvin’s assumed superiority, and a good deal of rather acrimonious language passed between the two. To silence Servetus, Calvin sent him a copy of his master work, “The Institutes of the Christian Religion;” but, to the horror and chagrin of the author, Servetus returned it with a large number of critical comments, not always laudatory, written on the margin. These comments grievously enraged Calvin, for we find him writing to a friend: “There is hardly a page that is not defiled by his vomit.”

Servetus attacked Calvin for slighting the value of good works as taught in the Epistle of James; and, in reference to Calvin’s ideas on justification by faith, Servetus wrote to him: “The justification you preach, therefore, is mere magical fascination and folly.” In a letter to Farel, Calvin thus delivers himself: “Servetus wrote to me lately, and, beside his letter, sent me a great volume full of his ravings, telling me, with audacious arrogance, that I should there find things stupendous and unheard of until now. He offers to come hither if I approve; but I will not pledge my faith to him; for, did he come, if I have any authority here, I should never suffer him to go away alive.” Writing afterwards to Madame de Cany (a French lady), Calvin says: “I assure you, Madame, that, had he not taken himself off so speedily, I should have held it my duty, in so far as it lay with me, to have had him burned alive.”

The “great volume” sent to Calvin was probably

Servetus's "Christianismi Restitutio" ("The Restoration of Christianity"), yet only in manuscript, and which Servetus sent to Calvin to read and review; but Calvin would not review it as Servetus wished; and, although the MS. was sent to him privately, Calvin would not return it back to Servetus. Servetus kept a copy himself, however, and sent it to Marrinus, a publisher of Basle; but he was afraid to print it. It was too much opposed to the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, and Melanchthon to run the risk. Servetus was not to be baulked, however, and managed to get Balthasar Arnoullet, publisher in Vienne, to print the book secretly; he, Servetus, taking all expenses on himself, and adding a present of a hundred crowns.

In addition to treating upon the principles of Christianity in this work, Servetus included in it thirty letters to Calvin, a disquisition on the reign of Antichrist, and an address to Melanchthon. Few, if any, copies of the book were sold, Calvin having exerted himself strongly to have it burned. Two copies of the thousand printed still exist. The one in the National Library of France cost 4,120 livres. It was lost to England through the bigotry of the Bishop of London, Gibson, who, in 1723, got burnt as heretical a reprint from it that Dr. Richard Mead was bringing out. In this work Servetus combats Calvin's ideas upon the Trinity in this wise: "If there were in eternity two incorporeal beings alike and equal, then were these twins rather than Father and Son; and, were a third entity added, like and equal to the other two, then were there a threefold Geryon produced." Such a statement was considered highly blasphemous by the Reformers. In reference to Isaiah vii. 14, Servetus maintains that the "virgin" referred to is Abija, the young wife of Ahaz, then pregnant with Hezekiah.

It is in this book that the notable description occurs of the pulmonary circulation of the blood, which is

greatly in advance of anything taught or published previously. Had not he and his books been condemned and burned as they were, Servetus might have stood in the niche now occupied by Harvey. His countrymen have not been altogether oblivious of what he did, for there is a statue of Servetus in the porch of the Instituto Antropologico at Madrid. The progress of both science and religion were retarded by the bigotry, conceited ignorance, and intolerance of the Swiss Reformers, and most of all by Calvin.

Part of a copy of this newly-printed work, "Christianismi Restitutio," which he had received from Frelon of Lyons, probably as a compliment, was sent, at the instance of Calvin, to the authorities of Vienne as a proof of the author's heresy. In this case Calvin made use of a young convert from Catholicism, named William Trie, who, on February 26th, 1553, is made to write in his own name a long letter, in which, *inter alia*, Servetus is denounced as "a certain heretic.....who ought to be burned alive."*

The upshot of the correspondence that ensued was that Servetus was arrested and lodged in gaol. He managed to escape, however, on April 7th, 1553, possibly with the connivance of some of the Catholic authorities, through friendship for Servetus, and also as declining to be made cats'-paws of to gratify the pompous bigotry and mean spite of Calvin.

After the bird had flown, his effigy, together with 500 copies of "Christianity Restored," were burned at Vienne on June 17th, 1553. It is to the honour of Erasmus that he condemned the unworthy part that Calvin played in this transaction.

* By such an expression Calvin justifies the action of the Romish Church in burning his own fellow religionists, and even himself had he been caught.

After his escape from Vienne, Servetus wished to reach Spain; but, not being able to manage that through France, he desired to go to Naples, and, unfortunately for himself, attempted to do so through Switzerland. He in this way somehow arrived at Geneva, where he was not long in discovering that he was only out of the frying-pan into the fire. Possibly he thought Calvin might be sufficiently chivalrous to treat him as a passing guest, or else so much of a Christian as to respect the words of Jesus: "But, I say unto you, love your enemies." If so, Servetus had sadly mistaken his man. Calvin had no more of chivalry in him than a mouse has of courage, while his Christianity was all in his head, none in his heart. He had no sympathy with the higher humanity of Jesus. Even the "Pagan" Seneca puts this pillar of the Reformed Church to shame:—

"Let thy forbearance no exception know,
Nor grudge the asked-for mercy to thy foe."*

Calvin had no thought of mercy so soon as he heard Servetus was within the walls of Geneva. Rather, he would seem to have exultantly cried out: "The Lord hath delivered thee into my hands, O thou mine enemy!" Entirely oblivious of Paul's injunction to "let not the sun go down upon your wrath," Calvin burned the midnight oil for long to give a devil's welcome to the stranger that came within his gate.

The first act of the tragedy that was to make the name of Calvin for ever infamous was opened by Calvin himself. It was on a Sunday that he was informed of the presence of Servetus in one of the Genevan churches, and, as "the better day, the better deed," he immediately denounced him to one of the Syndics, and soon the police of the day had Servetus lodged in gaol.

* From "Paganism and Christianity," by J. A. Farrer.

In order to conform to the law, articles of impeachment had to be drawn up, which Calvin did at once, spending the greater part of the night in hastily picking out heretical passages or paragraphs from the "Christianismi Restitutio." The nominal prosecutor was Nicolas de la Fontaine, a French refugee, and one of Calvin's servants—some say his cook. The trial began on August 15th, 1553, Calvin being present and watching the proceedings.

In his pleadings Servetus having condemned the baptising of infants, his judges considered his criminality so far admitted that his nominal accuser, Nicolas, was released on Antoine Calvin, the brother of the Reformer, becoming bail for him. So we have here a nice little man-hunting family party, with John Calvin as the principal bloodhound. Servetus was sent back to gaol, and his money, ninety-seven gold crowns and other valuables, taken from him. On August 16th a dispute arose at the trial between Colladon, who was counsel against Servetus, and Berthelier, one of the councillors, which gave umbrage to Calvin, and led to Calvin being present next day on the bench, when he spoke out in the most persecuting spirit against Servetus for publishing that Judæa was not in reality a land flowing with milk and honey, Calvin characterising such teaching as "inculcating Moses, and egregiously to outrage the Holy Ghost"! Calvin here shows himself to be a big, ill-natured baby. This was a question of physical fact, not of religious faith.

As the case went on the prosecution was taken up by the Attorney-General. This person, Rigot by name, was a friend of Calvin, and, therefore, an enemy to Servetus. When Servetus asked liberty to engage counsel to help him in his defence, he was most unfairly refused such. Rigot's prosecution so far failed, as he attempted to traduce the character of Servetus, but did not manage

it. In a letter Calvin wrote about this time to Frankfort, asking Servetus's books to be burned, he styled Servetus a "scoundrel," a "wild beast from hell," and hopes he will shortly be condemned and punished.

Upon Servetus asking for books, pens, and paper to help him to write out his defence, he got only a single sheet of paper. Further, though still uncondemned, the persecution he was subjected to was so bad that on September 15th we find Servetus writing to the Syndics and Council blaming Calvin for leaving him to rot here in prison. "The lice eat me up alive; my breeches are in rags, and I have no change—no doublet, and but a single shirt in tatters." On October 10th he again wrote, complaining that nothing had been done for his cleanliness yet; he is "in a more filthy plight than ever." He suffers from cold, colic, rupture, etc., and bewails the inhuman cruelty he is subjected to. This last letter got some response; but the delay was disgraceful to all concerned.

Millions of people have enlarged upon the sufferings of Jesus until he has come to be pictured as pre-eminently "the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" but all this sentimental gush has very little to justify it. The pains and troubles of Jesus, in his short trial and quick sentence, were few in comparison with those of the man we are at present writing about, while thousands of other martyrs suffered far more in both mind and body than there is the slightest substantial reason for supposing Jesus ever did.* Servetus was a gentleman, a physician, and one of the foremost of his age; yet he, whom his accusers were unable to defame,

* The assertion that there is no other name under heaven whereby we can be saved than that of Jesus is purely fanciful. Saved from what? From an imaginary or scarecrow *after-death* hell that has no real existence? Many of the sayings of Jesus are good; but many of the doctrines of the Church are bad.

is kept locked up for months in a loathsome dungeon, as if he were the vilest of criminals. *Let there be justice in this matter.* If Jesus is to be deified, then Michael Servetus, Giordano Bruno, and a host of others are entitled to the same honour. They all alike trod the tortuous and flinty path of human progress with bleeding feet until they made it smooth for us, their more favoured successors. Socrates with his hemlock-cup, Jesus with his cross, Servetus and Bruno in their fiery chariots, were all types of many, even down to our own day, of whom the world was not worthy. Surely they *all* have borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon *them*, and by *their* stripes we have been healed.

We have been digressing somewhat, so we will return to the second stage of Servetus's trial, with M. Rigot, the Attorney-General, as prosecutor. This worthy, having failed to justify his attack upon the personal character of Servetus, fell back upon the so-called heretical opinions he had expressed in his books, and blamed him for publishing ideas and statements which were contrary to those of the learned theologians of the day, the "sole authorities on such subjects," said M. Rigot. Servetus boldly dissents from this, and points to Scripture as his justification for not "hiding his light under a bushel."* He considers his opponents should meet him by fair argument, not attempt to silence him by mere brute force. When under Rigot's examination, at this time (August 23rd and 24th), Servetus's case looked more

* Lord Braxfield, who was the head of the Scotch Criminal Court at the time of the political trials of 1793 and 1794, was the Jeffreys of Scotland. Gerald, one of the accused, in addressing the Court, said that Christianity itself was an innovation, and that all great men had been reformers, "even our Saviour himself." "Muckle he made o' that," chuckled Braxfield in an under voice; "he was hanget."—*Lord Cockburn's "Memorials," vol. i., p. 117.*

favourable for him, which so enraged Calvin that he took the most unjustifiable liberty or license to vilify Servetus—a public prisoner under trial, in which he had taken part as prosecutor—out of his pulpit. Fortified by the assistance of Calvin, Rigot returned to the attack on August 28th. He even denounced the petition of Servetus for counsel as pure “insolence”! “Who is there, indeed,” says Rigot, “who would or who could consent to assist him in his impudent falsehoods and horrible propositions?” Servetus, however, stands up for freedom for fair criticism and free disputation, and points out that even the Reformers were not unanimous on all points among themselves—as, e.g., Luther and Melancthon differing from Calvin regarding the Sacraments and free-will. Servetus appears to have further roused the ire of Calvin by stating that the Reformation had still room to advance in various relations. Calvin thought there could be no advance past him!

In reference to the Koran of Mohammed, Servetus said that, while he did not agree with the general contents of the work, yet it contained some good things. This idea was denounced as blasphemous; but it only proves how far Servetus was in advance of the narrow bigots who were hounding him on to his death.

On August 31st a letter from the authorities at Vienne was received, asking Servetus to be sent back to them, so that they might carry out upon his own person what they had already done to his effigy. The Council of Geneva, however, and at his own request, declined to give up their prisoner. It is a problem whether they did this in the interests of Servetus, or because they desired to have the *honour* of ridding the world of this monster of heretical iniquity all to themselves!

An attempt was now made by Calvin and some of the ministers to get Servetus to acknowledge to them personally that the ideas on the Trinity and on other

subjects which he had published were wrong ; but Servetus was made of sterner stuff than to falsify his conscience thus. He declined to admit he was wrong, unless they could prove him to be so. In regard to Jesus as the actual or real son of God, Servetus asserted he "only begun to be when engendered in the womb of the Virgin Mary." He does not bring forward any proof, however, that Mary was really still a virgin after this happened ; neither does he appear to know that this incarnation story was merely a legend that grew up long after the death of Jesus.

Calvin and his visitors, before ending their visit, strove to impress Servetus with their idea that the temporal power in the State had the right to suppress and punish theological error—*alias* heresy ; but Servetus would not admit this, he asserting that civil tribunals were not justified in punishing men for mere difference of opinion. Then, in regard to his own case, he considered that the Church of Geneva was specially precluded from giving an opinion, or pronouncing judgment, upon his ideas, seeing Calvin, who for long had been full of enmity towards him, wielded such paramount authority there as to make him either absolute master of, or, in fact, the Church.

At this stage it was resolved that the Councils and the other Reformed Churches of Switzerland should be consulted on the merits of the case. A precedent for this course existed in the case of Jerome Bolsec, who was previously tried for heresy (he having attacked Calvin's doctrine of predestination) at Calvin's instance.* Calvin and his ministerial colleagues were therefore requested by the Court at Geneva to make extracts in

* In Bolsec's case the reference to the other Churches resulted in his (Bolsec's) favour, so Calvin, fearing a possible like result for Servetus, took steps privately to prevent such.

writing from the prisoner's works, *but without any comments of their own*, of the particular passages containing the heretical opinions found fault with.

Calvin drew up thirty-eight articles from Servetus's works, and the Court assembled on September 15th with Calvin now installed as the virtual prosecutor. When Calvin proceeded to interrogate Servetus on his new articles of impeachment, a long discussion ensued between the pair, which the judges could not follow, and so they resolved that the discussion should be carried on in writing and in Latin.

Servetus appeared to hold the view regarding Jesus as the Son of God that, while he never existed as a distinct *entity* until he did so in his mother's womb, yet there was a pre-existing *idea* of him in the mind of God. He seems to consider God the Father as 'all-pervading Being, and Jesus the Son as the special manifestation of God on earth, or to men; while the Holy Ghost is the active force throughout nature; but when we follow him up we are landed in mystification. Both he and Calvin wrangle away upon false or fanciful premises, and so both in great measure merely beat the air. Reference is made to God speaking to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, just as if "God" ever spoke verbally to any of these real or supposed worthies six, four, or three thousand years ago, any more than, or in any other way than, He does to any of us to-day. Servetus was, indeed, much in advance of Calvin upon many points; but we could not expect him to be able to argue upon these subjects in the middle of the sixteenth century in the same way as if he had been living at the end of the nineteenth. Rather may we ask upon whom has his mantle fallen? Has it been reserved for Professor Momerie to be a second Moses or Elisha? If not, who?

It was not until about September 21st that Servetus's case was remitted to the other Protestant Churches of

Berne, Basle, Zurich, and Schaffhausen for their opinion. Copies of the "Christianismi Restitutio," and of the works of Tertullian and Irenæus, also the thirty-eight articles drawn up by Calvin from the writings of Servetus, with Servetus's replies in defence, and Calvin's so-called refutation of the asserted errors of Servetus, with the latter's jottings and criticisms, were sent on to the Churches, with the request that they should pronounce upon the orthodoxy or heretical character of the inculpatory passages. In thus asking the opinion of Protestant clerics upon the heretical character of Servetus's works, the fact of the universal condemnation by the whole Catholic world of Calvin's own "Institutions of the Christian Religion" seems to have been ignored.

Calvin had the start of the Council in its appeal to the other Churches, and had already written to his various friends in these in a way to stigmatise Servetus, and influence them towards his own views. *E.g.*, in a letter to Henry Bullinger,* on September 7th, he says: "The Council will send you ere long the opinion of Servetus in order to have your advice. It is in spite of us that you have this trouble forced on you," etc. Then, in a letter to Sulzer, of Basle, dated September 19th, 1553, Calvin refers to the activity of the Catholic Church in disposing of heretics, and says it would ill become them to be less remiss! Were the matter not so serious, one would be tempted to laugh at such miserable notions being promulgated by men who considered themselves the salt of the Christian world. Methinks, if Jesus drove the money-changers out of the Temple with a

* Bullinger backed up Calvin in his persecution of Servetus in a way that was anything but creditable to him. He denounces Servetus in the spirit of an ignorant bigot, not as one who was really acquainted with Servetus's work.

scourge of small cords, he would have chased and lashed Calvin and his pharisaic persecutors out of the Church with a scourge of scorpions. No Indian savage ever hankered more after the scalp of his enemy than did Calvin thirst for the life of Servetus. In letter after letter he exults over the prospect of Servetus's cruel death.

Another pillar of the Church, who in this matter acts as the obsequious shadow of Calvin, was Farel. He considers that it is a wonderful dispensation of God that has brought Servetus to Geneva at this time, and he prays Calvin so to act as that in future no one will dare to promulgate "new" doctrines! The enunciations of Calvin, Farel, & Co. were to be final, and infallible like themselves. We can excuse the boisterous Farel more readily, however, than we can the scheming, selfish Calvin.

By October 23rd the replies from the four Churches were received, and ready to be laid before the Council upon that day. These replies were unanimous in their condemnation of the writings of Servetus as being both heretical and blasphemous.*

As to the capability of the various referees to judge, we find an amusing confession in a letter from J. Heller to Bullinger, dated "Berne, October 19th, 1553": "But, as the matters in question were very little intelligible to them, they desired that I should reply in a letter as from myself to the Council of Geneva."

After the opinions from the referees had been laid before the Council of Geneva on October 23rd, it was agreed, owing to the absence of some of the leading councillors, to call a special meeting three days later on

* If not already up, these four ought to assist the Genevans now to erect a monument in Geneva to Servetus, as was lately done in Rome to Giordano Bruno.

--viz., on October 26th. Upon this day, therefore, the Council met—Amied Perrin, who was friendly to Servetus, presiding. A member of the clerical (or Calvinist) party in the Council having proposed that Servetus be found guilty of the heresies and blasphemies imputed to him, the President met this with a counter-motion, that he be declared not guilty. The first motion, however, was carried. The President then proposed that the matter be remitted to the Council of Two Hundred; but he failed to carry this. After this the following motion was proposed and carried by a majority of votes, and so became the finding of the Council: "Having a summary of the process against the prisoner, Michael Servetus, and the reports of the parties consulted, before us, it is hereby resolved, and in consideration of his great errors and blasphemies decreed, that he be taken to Champel, and there burned alive; that this sentence be carried into effect on the morrow, and that his books be burned with him."

In anticipation of this verdict Calvin had already communicated with Farel, in order that, for decency's sake, a strange clergyman should attend the condemned prisoner in his last moments, and not one of his immediate persecutors.*

In a letter written at this time to Farel, Calvin ridicules the unsuccessful attempt of Perrin to save Servetus, and glories over his failure as follows: "Our comical Cæsar, having feigned illness for three days, mounted the

* Of what real service to *Servetus* could the presence of *Farel* be on this occasion? His conceited bigotry and unsympathetic proselytising zeal were only an annoyance and insult. Humanity might have suggested the presence of a friend, not of an enemy. "Charity," said to be the chief of the Christian graces, had to hide its head in shame and grief for centuries at the cruelties of its own religion. "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three. and the greatest of these is love."

tribune at length with a view to aid the wicked scoundrel to escape punishment. Nor did he blush to demand that the cause might be remitted to the Council of the Two Hundred. But in vain—all was refused; the prisoner was condemned, and to-morrow he will suffer death."

Calvin pretends that he tried to have the sentence of death by burning altered into beheading with the sword; but it is questionable if any real value is to be attached to this.

Information of his sentence was not given to the prisoner until the morning of its execution—viz., October 27th, 1553. Servetus, not having anticipated any such cruelty, was naturally very much shocked, and, at first, highly excited. Calming down, he intimated his desire to see his persecutor. Calvin, imagining Servetus was now ready to confess his errors, got two of the Councillors to accompany him to the prison about 10 a.m.; but, to his grievous disappointment, Servetus had no such idea in his head; he had simply, like a gentleman, desired in his last moments to apologise to Calvin for any rude language he may ever have made use of in the heat of controversy. Calvin tried to get Servetus to admit he was wrong upon some points; but he declined to do so, and Calvin had to leave, not at all pleased at the result of his visit.

About 11 a.m. one of the police officials entered the prisoner's cell, and ordered him to come along and hear the pleasure of My Lords the Councillors and Justices of Geneva. These dignitaries were assembled before the porch of the Hotel de Ville, where the various offences of the prisoner in publishing heretical books and promulgating so-called blasphemous doctrines were read over to him. Among his offences the following rather curious one occurs, seeing his judges are Protestants: "Item.—For having perfidiously broken and

escaped from the prison of Vienne,* where he had been confined because of the wicked and abominable opinions confessed in his book." Having recapitulated his offences, and with the Bible before them, the Councillors and Justices, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, re-affirmed the sentence that Michael Servetus should be burned alive, and his books and writings with him, and that this be done at once. According to custom, the staff was then broken over the prisoner.

The silence that ensued was broken by Servetus requesting that his death might be compassed by some means less dreadful than that now intimated to him. No response was given to this. Farel, who was with him, then spoke, advising him first to confess his errors before he asked for any mercy. Servetus would not admit he was wrong. A procession was then formed to the site of the execution at Champel, outwith the city, passing out by the gate of St. Antoine. Farel, who walked along with Servetus, tormented him on the way with attempts to get confession from him of error; but Servetus was proof against all his attacks, asserting that his condemnation was unjust.

Upon arriving at the place of execution, Servetus knelt in prayer before the pile that was soon to consume him. The executioner then sat him on a block, while his body was secured to the stake by an iron chain, and his neck fastened by a rope. His books were also attached to him, while his head was, in mockery, encircled with a chaplet of straw and green twigs bestrewed with brimstone. A torch was then applied to the faggots, and the brimstone, shortly after catching fire, wrung a cry of agony from the doomed man; but after this he

* Calvin might have remembered his own flight from Paris in 1533, when he had to lower himself from the window by means of the sheets off his bed.

was silent until near his end, when he cried out : " Jesus, thou son of the eternal God, have compassion upon me."* Soon thereafter Michael Servetus was beyond the power of either Catholic or Protestant Pope or Church to further torture. And, as the late Dr. Willis

* A similar cry has gone up in thousands of like cases ; but what deliverance ever came ? Jesus personally is as dead as last year's rose. His personality is of no more account, or exists now any more than the personality of Confucius, Buddha, or Mohammed. Like the mother with her child, the believer in either considers his own prophet the best. The incarnation, resurrection, and ascension stories of Jesus are simply fables, mere legendary myths, based upon prior reputed similar occurrences, and got up after his death. Visits of " angels " of the masculine gender to lone virgins, who afterwards became mothers, have rather a suspicious look about them. What about the medical evidence in this case ? If Joseph had not a hand in the pie, he was easily pleased when he was satisfied with a dream. Then as to the ascension, where was Jesus to ascend to to be better than here ? and how was the law of gravitation to be overcome ? Neither he nor his followers knew that the atmosphere extended only about forty-five miles above or out from the solid earth, and that a person would be frozen to death about seven miles up. In their simple ignorance, and because they observed birds flying in the air, they saw no reason why certain favoured individuals should not take a short cut from this poor earthly tabernacle to the supposed heavenly mansion-house, where the sun never sets and the troubles of insomnolence are unknown. Credulity in the name of faith lent enchantment to the dreams of the visionaries. The Carpenter of Galilee, although a moralist, was not a scientist. Paul also shows his want of knowledge of Nature's working when he said that, as in Adam all fell and were dead, even so through the resurrection of Jesus shall all be made alive. " But if Jesus be not risen, then are we all dead." = Believe a fable, or you are all done for ! What does that matter to the majority, however, when only ten per cent. are to be saved at the best ? Far better annihilation than to be eternally tortured. All the sayings and doings of Jesus have been viewed through a magnifying glass. No matter although some prior or contemporary Pagan sage had spoken similar words to those uttered by Jesus, it was the latter only who was held to speak as never man spake. In their beliefs *re* Jesus, Christians never get out of the nursery. To

says,* "so died, in advance of his age, one of the gifted sons of God, the victim of religious fanaticism and personal hate."

them Jack-the-Giant-killer is forever a reality. As Dryden puts it :

"By education most have been misled,
So they believe because they so were bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man."

The "prayer" of the child is a cry for food and protection uttered to its parents. The prayer of the man is, or should be, self-communion with his highest ideal, and an earnest desire to attain to it. Begging may do for the infant, but aspiration is the province of the adult. To suppose that the God of the Jew heard him, any more than the Gods of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, or Romans heard them, is pure fancy. Was it not a case of regular see-saw with them all? The one that was up to-day was down to-morrow, and *vice versa*. While the Elijah episode, as depicted in 1 Kings xviii. 38, etc., and which is so often pointed to as a record of literal facts, is only an example of the gullibility of our credulous and easily-deluded-by-priestcraft race.

It may be interesting here to give a short *résumé* of the career of Buddha, from the evangelical standpoint, pictured in the *New Review* for October, 1891. About 600 years B.C. Maya, the wife of Siddhodana, found herself with child; but *it was of no earthly father that the holy thing which should be born of her was begotten*. This child, which was to be known as the Buddha, was named Siddhartha. When sixteen years old he married his cousin Yasodhara, who bore him a son. In order to become a Buddha he fled from his wife and son and other earthly joys. When in the desert the Prince of the Power of the Air tempted him; but Buddha triumphed, and ultimately attained to the knowledge of truth. And this is the doctrine of Buddha. A man is what he does. His *works* are his true self. Of these is made his Karma. All else drops from him at death. Scrupulously to avoid all wicked actions, reverently to perform all virtuous ones, ever to purify our intentions from selfish ends—this is the doctrine of all the Buddhas. Forty-and-five years did the Buddha go up and down the country preaching. Then perceiving that the hour of his departure had come, he said: ".....Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence." This was the last word of the Buddha.

* In his work on "Servetus and Calvin."

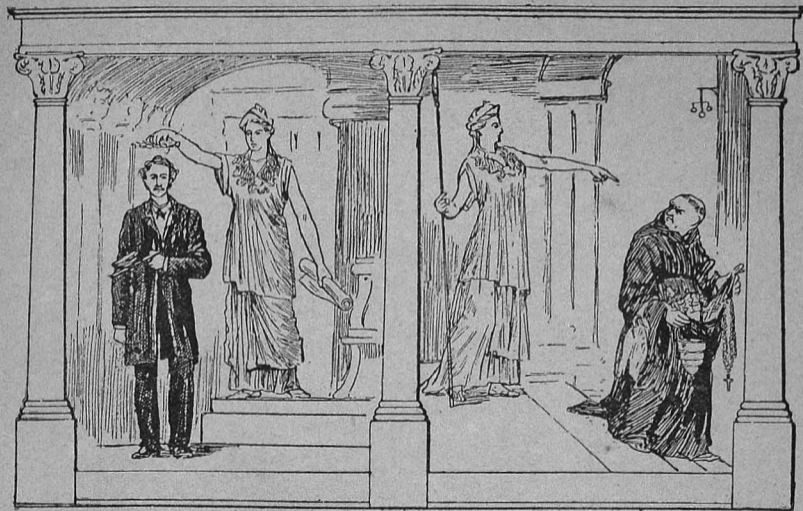
Several writers have attempted to whitewash Calvin for his action in this disgraceful tragedy; but the attempt is useless. Calvin stands condemned by his own handwriting and the persistent and pitiless way in which he acted towards Servetus from the time he gave him in charge, and all through the prosecution, until the memorable death scene.

The burning of Servetus has again and again been described as a "murder," and Calvin is the man who is justly accused as the author of the foul deed. His name stinks in the nostrils of advanced thinkers, and among all who advocate and respect freedom of thought "Calvin" is the synonym for bigotry and intolerance. His vanity was great, and so he resented the idea of Servetus addressing him as an equal. He was very much disappointed at not getting a retraction from his victim.

After the death of Servetus, the Genevan Council appears to have considered it had gone rather far, and refused to proceed with the indictment against Arnoullet's foreman, who printed Servetus's book. The Genevans themselves privately lampooned Calvin, until he was stung to reply in a defence which was no credit to him. He basely strives to traduce and misrepresent Servetus, and then, in writing to Bullinger, tells him that, if he has done wrong, he (Bullinger) is also to blame for instigating him! How are the mighty fallen!



ICHABOD.



TRIUMPH OF EDUCATION.

EXODUS OF SUPERSTITION.

“ THIS IS THY GOD, O ISRAEL.”

HAVING in the former article pictured the man, we will now examine his “God.”

“ This is thy god, O Israel.”

So said Aaron, the high-priest, when he set up the golden calf before the eyes of the rude and foolish Israelites. But what does a priest care so long as he can gather in the coin? Prophets have been men;* priests have generally been charlatans. There was much of the priest about Calvin, and so, like Aaron, he manufactured and set up a “god.” Not a *calf*, however—that beast was too mild and homely for Calvin’s ideas. Rather a tiger would have suited him better; but even it was too tame and not vicious enough, so he produced a fiend who would put to shame even the devil for intentional and callous cruelty.

This “God” *having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some, etc.* :—

“ O Thou, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha as it pleases best thysel’
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A’ for thy glory ;
And no for ony guid or ill
They’ve done afore thee !”

The tiger catches only what it can, and soon disposes of its victims. Not so with this Calvinistic ogre, styled a

* As, *e.g.*, Micah about 700 years B.C., and as per vi. 6-8 of his book.

"God." He from all eternity appoints the greater part of a conscious humanity yet unborn to destruction, and, not content with that, adds *eternal* torture. To give a quasi-aspect of legality to this damnable treatment, the victims are accused of sins; but, all the time, it is the "God" himself that pulls the strings leading to the committal of the so-called "sins"! Were they not all "fore-ordained"? Oh, Calvin! Calvin! Out upon you and your silly following. The lens of this nineteenth century is too strong for your sixteenth-century handiwork. Your "God" is revealed as naught but a monster, a creature of your diseased imagination, and the magnified representation of the worst parts of your own personality.

Vindictiveness, callousness, and self-glorification are the characteristics of the God of Calvinism. By their deeds ye shall know them, so he quite naturally—

"Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for his glory."*

We will excuse you, Calvin, so far, that your work was in great measure the outcome of ignorance and mistaken judgment. Galileo had not yet been imprisoned for declaring it was the earth that moved, while the telescope had still to be invented. You imagined all men are the descendants of an individual called

Although Robert Burns is dead personally, he, like Jesus, has risen again, and lives on now in his words, or *works* (p. 34, "A man is what he does"). We are acquainted with much of the life of the former, and admit that he was a *sinner*. We know little or nothing of the youth and early manhood of the latter, and, perhaps all the more readily because of this, he has been idealised as the only perfect man. Yea, more, has not he who said, "Why callest thou me good?" been exalted by his fellow men to the dignity of a god? Yet, "sinner" or "god," the higher thoughts of each, enshrined for us in their words, appeal to our better humanity. They have helped on this world's progress. The Jew was a man, and no less so was the Scot.

Adam, who, being specially made by your God about 6,000 years ago, became the parent of the whole human race, and, further, that it was his so-called “fall” that brought pain and death into the world. But all this is wrong.

Calvinism is lauded as being a severely grand logical system; but what is its real value when it rests upon false and fanciful premises? The earth is not the centre of the solar system, while it is less than a drop to the ocean in comparison between it and the universe.* In-

* The very first verse in the Jewish Bible is a mistake. There was no “beginning” to the universe, and “the heaven and the earth” were not “created”—or made out of nothing—as the commentators on the Bible assert, and as we were taught at school. Neither were “the materials out of which the world was made” “created” about either six thousand or six million years ago. The *Quarternion*, Space, Time, Matter, and Energy, are *eternal*. While, without matter, there would have been no phenomena; but in connection with, or through the motion of, the atoms or molecules of matter all the phenomena in the universe have been evolved. Life and thought are the result of the rhythmical motion of matter under favourable conditions. Matter has been despised as vile and dead, and “spirit” exalted; but, as with the empty whiskey bottle, any spirit left in it is but the effect of the remaining atoms of the liquid which once filled it. Under no condition in our universe is matter ever dead scientifically. It is never powerless, but ever active. Take to heart the lesson from a particle of floating crust thrown into a slop-bowl. As Professor Tyndall said in 1874, at Belfast, and still affirms: “Matter.....has within itself the promise and potency of all terrestrial life.” And, again: “The life which we now see upon the earth is the development of a power resident in matter before it shaped itself into worlds.” On pages 372-373 of the *Agnostic Journal* for June 11th, 1892, Mr. W. L. Prosser, in a very interesting way, attempts to explain the evolution of living protoplasm from not-living matter, and shows very lucidly that the transformation is not so great a feat for nature to accomplish unaided as has been, by the theologically educated, supposed. In our universities, while the study and promulgation of theological lore and bunkum have been lavishly endowed and encouraged, the promotion of scientific education and the proper study—especially

stead of Adam being the first man, men existed on the earth thousands of years before the time of his pretended advent;* while death has been busy on our globe for millions of years. Further, man has not "fallen," but has *risen*. Peace and plenty, live and let live, though still too rare, are much more common now than when your God personally visited the earth and talked with men.† Modern civilisation has advanced the true interests of humanity, despite the opposition of the vicegerents of your God. No worse blocks to human progress, truth, and manly freedom have existed anywhere than in the proclamations and denunciations of the God of Calvinism.

The "God" that, for his mere good pleasure, could hatch a plot—seemingly in part to spite a devil—involving the death of his own son and the eternal damnation of millions upon millions of sentient beings, instead of being a something or "person" to be worshipped, revered, and loved, would rather be a ghoul or monster to be despised, ridiculed, and abhorred.

" And so, methinks, they wrong God less
Who doubt or disbelief confess,
Than they who worse of God believe
Than of a man they could conceive,

experimental—of physics, have been rather ignored or curtailed. It is to be hoped the wider-spreading good sense of the community will soon force a change in this. Men are beginning to feel they have been tied for far too long to the apron-strings of their grandmothers.

* See the chapter on "Antiquity of Man" in Samuel Laing's "Modern Science and Modern Thought."

† The transcendental, anthropomorphic, or personal God of Moses or Calvin was but a dream, the projection of their own untutored and unscientific imaginations. Admitting the existence of *God*, that "God" is immanent IN Nature—an eternal energy, like gravitation, *e.g.*—and Archdeacon Farrar, *et sui generis*, nevertheless, neither *pre* nor *supernatural*. There is no *supernatural*.

And every vice to Him assign
 To prove Him fickle, false, malign ;
 As I would rather men should say,
 ‘There is no Plutarch,’ than that they
 Should speak of Plutarch as so mean,
 So full of petty spite and spleen,
 That, if you vexed him in the least,
 Into your crops he’d turn his beast.”

Were proof needed of the real savage origin of man, we have it hitherto—and far too much of it, to be any credit to humanity—not only in his gods, but also in himself. None of the other higher animals or “beasts,” as they are slightly designated, can at all approach man in cruelty to his own species. Is not “man’s inhumanity to man” proverbial? While what makes this cruelty all the more reprehensible in the case of men is that it is practised by so-called *reasonable* beings, not by soulless brutes.* Priestcraft has had much to do with this evil

* The idea that man has a soul that will live after he is dead, and a horse, *e.g.*, has not, is only a piece of human conceit. The consciousness or “soul” of both is only the result of brain action. This “soul” has no existence independent of the brain. “Soul” is not an entity; it is a property of the brain. “Thought,” as Professor Huxley says, “is as much a function of matter as motion is.” No brain, no soul. A diseased brain, an idiot. To talk about a man’s “soul” or consciousness going to either heaven or hell after his death is only priestly imposition or delusion, although the notion has for long brought grist to the Church’s mill. No human soul can get beyond the atmosphere of our globe, any more than, if so much as, the sound of a fiddle; and, as the fiddle’s powers of producing music cease when the instrument is destroyed or burned, so with the body’s consciousness or soul, or so with the power of the body or its brain to produce consciousness or soul. The only everlasting or long-continued human life is in the race; the individuals soon die off, and, except an odd one here and there, are forever forgotten. The priest may teach, and his pupil may believe, otherwise; but upon what substantial foundation? An eternal, dreamless sleep is better than an everlasting, conscious hell. Have not many persons suffering from some incurable and painful disease longed for death and unconscious

career of mankind. It fattened on the ignorance of its credulous and too easily deluded victims ; at one time rousing them to frenzy with its poisonous inoculations, and again, as now, like an enormous vampire, sucking

oblivion ? What is " Hope in a glorious immortality " but the scrip of the clerical bubble by means of which the hard-won money of the too-easily-deluded multitude is lured into the ever-yawning coffers of the Church ? The parent may here cry out against this eternal separation from his or her child ; but the reply to that is, Take better care of your child, and not lose it prematurely. Attention to, and practical improvements in, the conditions of life do much more good in warding off disease and premature death than any amount of sentimental dreaming. It is natural for the old to die, and Nature is kinder by far than either the Church or its gods. It will be well for the race when saved from both the latter, and especially until their character is radically altered. A dreamer or aspirant for an eternal annuity of after-death life, with, of course, everlasting happiness thrown in, without telling what he has done to deserve such, or paid to get it, writes some verses in *Macmillan's Magazine*, from which I quote the following :—

- “ Does Life survive the touch of Death ?
 Death's hand alone the secret holds,
 Which, as to each one he unfolds,
 We press to know with bated breath.
- “ Some whisper that the dead we knew
 Hover around us while we pray,
 Anxious to speak. We cannot say :
 We only wish it may be true.
- “ I know a Stoic who has thought,
 As healthy blood flows through his veins,
 And joy his present life sustains,
 And all his good has come unsought,
- “ For more he cannot rightly pray ;
 Life may extend, or life may cease ;
 He bides the issue, sure of peace,
 Sure of the best in God's own way.
- “ Perfection waits the *race* of man :
 If, working out this great design,
 God cuts us off, we must resign
 To be the refuse of His plan.

their life-blood, while it soothes them with the flapping of its ghoulish wings.*

The Bible has been called “the Word of God;” but many of its passages read more like the vengeful utterances of a devil. Deuteronomy xiii. 6, etc., commands the murder of one’s own brother, daughter, or wife in the name of religion. No new ideas are to be permitted. The ecclesiastics, 1,500 years B.C., like those of 1,500-

“But I, for one, feel no such peace;
I dare to think I have in me—
That which had better never be,
If lost before it can increase.

[Why not marry, then?]

“I think, if we must cease to be,
It is a cruelty refined
To make the instincts of our mind
Stretch out towards eternity.

“Wherefore I welcome Nature’s cry
[That’s it, get a wife]
As earnest of a life again,
Where thought shall never be in vain,
And doubt before the light shall fly.”

This human butterfly, because he fancies he would like an eternity of life, considers it “cruelty” if HE does not get it; but what about the thousands of poor hungry men, women, and children who in this life peer into our bakers’ and clothiers’ shop windows with watering teeth and longing eyes, yet, having no money, cannot go inside? And what about the value of this “Nature’s cry” when millions of people are starving for want of rain in due season? Does Nature, or anything else, bring back the starved dead to life again of either men or other animals? The foregoing “Nature’s cry” is, in great measure, the baited trap of priestcraft—another instance, also, of distance lending enchantment to the view.

* “*O magna vis veritatis!*” cried Cicero. Rather “*O magna virtus fraudis!*” chuckles the priest. “Yea, verily,” responds the Holy Father; “it is I who wear the triple crown!” “Very true, your Holiness, very true,” says the priest; “but, between ourselves, it is not very firmly set, and looks rather the worse of the wear. Going the way of all things mundane, I suppose [see page 38]; but as well to brave it out to the last.”

A.D., were to be held as the infallible mouthpieces of Deity. Deviations from, or non-acceptance of, their proclamations, however fanciful, merited nothing but death. Instead, however, of persecution stereotyping the established religion, it, as history shows, has rather often planted the seeds of the new views that were to supersede it.

It was possibly with the foregoing and similar passages in his mind that that arch heretic of his own day, Jesus, spake out: "But I say unto you, love your enemies." And again: "If thy brother sin against thee, thou shalt forgive him, not until seven times, but until seventy times seven." These were words worthy of a god; but his fellow-men killed the speaker as a blasphemer! The Jewish Bible was accountable for this. It has been an accursed book. It would have been well for humanity if a great part of it had never been written. It may be interesting as an archæological relic; but the time is long past when it should have been put upon the shelf, and a new and better "way of salvation" introduced instead.* Its pages, as has been indicated, contain in many places the ravings of a fiend, not the counsel of a worthy-to-be-revered and loving God.

It is often well to dig a ton of earth for the sake of an ounce of gold; but men do not retain the dross—they preserve only the precious metal. Let the lesson be taken.

The world must progress in religious ideas as it has done in physical matters, for the good of all.† Know-

* It has been asserted more than once of late years that "The Bible of the future has yet to be written, or at least compiled."

† In the theological locker, and especially of late, we do occasionally observe the sparkle of a real gem, as, *e.g.*, on page 21 of "The Greatest Thing in the World," by Professor Henry Drummond, of the Free Church College, Glasgow, where we read of "religion" that it is "the inspiration of the secular life." This little

ledge is power, so superstition's night is passing, although a selfish priesthood does anything but herald the dawn. The priest has revelled in the moonlight. See how he everywhere looks after number one. He may pay you with *post-mortem* bills upon a heavenly bank ; but catch him accepting such waste-paper for himself.* O ye poor deluded bones and sinews of this world's humanity, when will ye get brains to think for yourselves? Truly ye have no souls ; ye are but beasts of burden to your wiser brethren, and hark how ye praise the Lord for the privilege ! On bended knee ye kiss the toe of your pope, while ye also plant his foot upon your neck. Verily, ye do well to cast yourselves below the wheels of your Juggernaut. Arise ! Open your eyes and let in the sunlight upon your souls, so that ye may be quickened into a new and nobler life. Educate yourselves, so that ye may have power to think, and be able to distinguish the tinsel from the gold. Verily, be ye men, and, casting forth your idol gods to the dogs or to the dust-heap, have faith in yourselves. Then, honouring Justice, revering Truth, and practising Charity, ye may lay the foundations of a godhead which will last while the world endures.

“ Make, like the gods, beneficence thine end ;
 Freely for others thy best powers expend ;

* * * * *

Nor let thy native country bound thy zeal,
 But deem the world itself thy commonweal.”

pamphlet is worth a train-load of such books as “ Natural Law in the Spiritual World.” Like the world and wine, the Professor appears to be getting better as he gets older.

* The quack mediciner must often have been envious of his more favoured theological brother. We fancy him exclaiming : “ O that I were a *licensed* Dispenser of Delusions.”