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Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Great privations ennoble man, petty privations degrade him.—GOETHE.

Cruel Christians.

"ARE Atheists Cruel?" was the title of our front-page article in the *Freethinker* of April 26, 1891. It was elicited by the Bishop of Chester's speech at the Town Hall meeting of the local Branch of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. His lordship had stated, quite gratuitously as it appeared, that "the persons who were most liable to be guilty of cruelty to their children were those artisans who had taken up Secularist opinions, and who looked upon their children as a nuisance, and were glad to get them out of the way." This statement was grotesque in its absurdity. If Secular principles tended to make parents hate their own children, why was their evil influence confined to artisans? Why did they not produce the same result amongst the wealthier classes? The Bishop admitted that "poverty did not necessarily mean cruelty." What then did he mean? The answer was obvious. The Bishop of Chester was bent on libelling sceptics, and deeming it *safer* to libel the *poorer* ones, he tempered his valor with a convenient amount of discretion. He was not even a *brave* fanatic. His bigotry was cowardly, crawling, abject, and contemptible.

The Bishop rested his libel on the authority of the Rev. B. Waugh, general secretary of the N.S.P.C.C., who happened to be present at that Chester meeting. Mr. Waugh jumped up in the middle of the Bishop's speech and declared that "it was the case, that the class most guilty of cruelty to children were those who took materialistic, atheistic, selfish and wicked views of their own existence." This chaotic stuff passed readily at a Christian meeting, but it was not in itself worthy of the slightest reply. We condescended, however, to ask the Bishop of Chester and Mr. Waugh for some *evidence*. Partisan assertions were of very little value in such a controversy. "Where," we asked them, "are the statistics to justify your assertion? Men who are sent to gaol, for whatever reason, have their religions registered. Give us, then, the total number of convictions your Society has obtained, and the precise proportion of Secularists among the offenders? And be careful to give us their names and the date and place of their conviction."

The method of Christian libellers, when they are challenged, is to stand upon their dignity. They do not possess Jack Falstaff's wit, but they have all his impudence, and they decline to give a reason on compulsion. The Bishop of Chester and the Rev. Mr. Waugh vouchsafed no reply. We went down to Chester, hired a public hall, and challenged the Bishop in his own city, within earshot of his own cathedral. Our challenge was published in the local press, but his lordship made no sign. He was a confirmed Christian.

Years rolled by. Experience showed that this charge against Secularist parents was ridiculous. It happened, also, that in specially atrocious cases of cruelty to children the culprits were always particularly pious. This fact has now become a byword. Mr. Waugh could not resist such palpable proofs for ever. He retracted at Leeds what he had said at Chester. He apologised for his blunder. He is dead now and "gone to his account." But the Bishop of Chester lives on. Dr. Jayne still stands upon his dignity—with the aid of £4,200 per annum as a preacher of the gospel of "blessed be ye poor."

Since that time we have frequently said that the great ill-users of children are not Freethinkers but Christians. It is only in Christian countries that societies for the prevention of cruelty to children are needed.

Some day or other we knew that our contention in this respect would receive "respectable" support. It has at last done so. Mr. G. R. Sims dealt with the subject in last week's *Referee*, and we have pleasure (in one way it is, of course, a *ghastly* pleasure) in quoting the following passage from his "Mustard and Cress":—

> "This terrible cruelty to children is not confined to any one class, and it prevails in every town in the United Kingdom. The most painful investigation that it was ever my lot to make as a journalist was that which induced me to write "The Black Stain." I accompanied officers of that splendid organisation the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children on their visits to houses where terrible cruelty was practised in every part of London and a dozen of the principal provincial towns, and what I saw will remain in my memory as long as my memory lasts.
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> "We talk of the Congo and Putumayo. The horrors of the Congo and Putumayo are to be found in thousands of homes every day in this Christian country. It must be a form of insanity. I cannot bring myself to think that civilised men and women in full possession of their senses could systematically practise unthinkable barbarities on the bodies of helpless little children, often of their own flesh and blood. In the Official Report of the N.S.P.C.C. for last year it is stated that 156,637 children were involved in the cases of cruelty, and of this terrible total 154,387 were related to the offenders.
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> "For two months I wandered through an inferno of child torture. I only described half of what I had seen. The other half was too horrible for the columns of a daily newspaper. And yet it is only by the widest publicity that we can hope to arouse the conscience of the nation to the black shame of child suffering.
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> "When I had finished and had told the plain unvarnished truth I was assured by more than one journalistic friend that I had made a mistake in letting the light of day in upon the shameful deeds. 'The public don't want to read about such things,' I was told. No one *wants* to read about these things, but it is the duty of every man and woman with a conscience in this country to aid, at least with sympathy and encouragement, the great crusade of the N. S. P. C. C. against an infamy which in one way is even more infamous than the White Slave Traffic. The Society annually rescues thousands of little English children from homes where they are being starved and tortured by their own kith and kin. That this horror continues to flourish in our midst is a black reproach not only to our humanity but to our Christian Churches.
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> "In spite of the vast hordes of Jewish aliens who pour into this country every year, a case of cruelty to children is hardly ever found in a Jewish home. So far as I have been able to ascertain, child torture seems to be a form of barbarity entirely confined to Christian people. What is the answer of our churches and our chapels to this indictment? I should like to hear it."

Mr. Sims will not get that answer. But we welcome his honesty and courage in putting the question.

G. W. FOOTE.

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A Look Round.

ON the principle that nothing but good should be spoken of the dead, it is usual to look back upon only the brighter aspects of a year just closed. The practice is inspiriting, and so has much to say for itself. Moreover, it is the easiest thing possible to point out the rapid advance made by Freethought ideas during the past twelve months. In every direction superstitious ideas are becoming less assertive, and teachings from the pulpit that not so long ago would have provided a first-class heresy case now pass without comment. In literature also one sees Freethought ideas more and more freely expressed, with only a solitary voice here and there is raised in protest. Politics alone—the most backward and least scientific of all branches of human activity except theology itself—remains much about the same in relation to religious ideas. It is still extremely dangerous to make public avowal of unbelief. It may be even said that the recent growth of organised Nonconformity in political life has, so far as Freethought is concerned, worked for little but harm.

The growth of Freethought is unquestionable. Equally unquestionable is the decline of the belief in theology. One is, indeed, the reverse side of the other. So far, all is gain. But it is well to bear in mind that there is another side to the picture. It is well to avoid underestimating the strength of the enemy, or, what is equally important, to overestimate the value of the advantage gained. These are common mistakes for people to make, and there is no reason to believe that in this respect Freethought human nature is very different from human nature in general. During the course of the year, for example, I receive many letters from Freethinkers telling me of liberal utterances by the local clergy, and also many newspapers containing marked passages of a similar character. In addition, one is often told of certain clergymen whose sermons are mere lectures on social or ethical topics, theological doctrine being altogether excluded.

Apparently, this kind of thing is taken as something that is wholly to the good. A liberal clergyman, it is assumed, is better than an illiberal one; and a clergyman who adulterates his theology with a certain amount of Freethought is preferable to one who gives theology pure and undefiled. With this position I entirely disagree. It may be more pleasant to a Freethinker to hear a liberal clergyman than it would be to listen to an illiberal one. But is there any reason why he should listen to either variety? In any case, how do these things affect the Freethought position? It is gratifying to find that a narrow theology offends so large a class of the people; but what Freethought propaganda is aiming at is the liberation of the public mind from theology of every kind—whether it be of the City Temple or of the Spurgeon's Tabernacle variety. And so far as this purpose is concerned, the tendency under consideration is almost wholly evil in its consequences. It is, in fact, keeping people inside religious organisations who might otherwise be definitely apart from them.

Let us take the most recent of all great controversies—that of the doctrine of Evolution—as an example. Rightly conceived, evolution means the death of all supernaturalistic ideas. And in the origin of the controversy between evolution and religion this was substantially the position accepted by religionists. They were not slow to emphasise the logic of the situation, and the triumph of evolution should have meant the defeat of religion. Putting on one side the mere handful who still see this point of view clearly, what is the actual position? The mass of educated religious people have no hesitation whatever in accepting the general principle of evolution, and are quite convinced that it is consonant with religious beliefs. Nothing is more amusing in this connection than those people who imagine that by popularising evolution they are delivering a serious attack on religion. They would be doing so under certain conditions. As things are at present there would be no great difficulty in getting a clergyman to take the chair. So far as the majority of people are concerned, the impact of evolution on theology has been deadened by the liberalising theologian on the one side and by the theologising scientist on the other; with the result that evolutionary doctrines in the pulpit do not mean an aid to Freethought so much as keeping people away from a definitely Freethought position. Real Freethought work is not to be done to-day by a preaching of evolution or by the delivery of lectures on physical science. This can only be done to-day by the application of scientific principles to religious ideas, and by the demonstration of their essential incongruity.

What is true of evolution is true of many other things. Liberalism in the pulpit, a greater measure of rationalistic interpretation of religious beliefs among the people, is not necessarily pure gain. It may be only the religious method of weakening the Freethought attack. It is the method by which Protestantism held back the world for nearly two centuries; it is the method by which the eighteenth and early nineteenth century attack on the Bible was weakened, and it is the way by which the Churches have countered the attack on religious doctrines. Men like Dr. Campbell Morgan or Dr. Dixon threaten no danger to Freethought. The real danger is from the liberalising theologian who makes Christianity comfortable for those within the Church, and deceives a great many outside into believing that there is no longer need for so vigorous and so uncompromising an attack.

There is danger in still another direction. Many are inclined to take liberalism of thought, without any other qualification, as pure gain. This, however, is not the case. What is required is not merely liberal thinking, but, in addition, strong thinking and clear thinking. Now, I do not think it can be questioned that while there has been a growing want of interest in theology, while the number of non-believers have increased enormously, there has not been a corresponding growth of strong and vigorous thinking. While Christian doctrines were obviously barbarous, and Christian organisations openly oppressive, there existed plenty of incentive to keep Freethinkers active and thorough. But with Christian teaching covered with a spurious humanism, and a sham profession of toleration the fashion; many non-Christians are lulled into quietude. Thousands who ought to be taking part in aggressive Freethought work are idle, they say, because the fight is really over. There was never a greater mistake than this. Religion is never so dangerous as when it covers itself with a veneer of civilised customs, and disguises its thoughts in civilised language. Religion to-day is purchasing a new lease of life by accommodating its teachings to its avowed supporters, and by imposing on the shortsightedness of many of its enemies. And that way lies all the possibility and all the danger of reaction.

It is no use underestimating the power of the enemy, and encouraging ourselves with false estimates of our own strength. We must recognise the plain fact that, in spite of all our progress, Christianity still exercises a powerful control—more or less disguised—over the direction of social life. Every now and then one gets an indication of the real thing that lies below the veneer of civilised phrase and pose. When the Balkan States went to war, it was noteworthy that the Turk, held up as the ideal religious fanatic, refrained from all appeals to religion. It was the Christian who did this. And more striking still was the extent to which the cry was taken up in this country. The press was full of sentimental slush over restoring Santa Sophia to Christendom, and a parade of clergy was arranged to take place in the West End of London. In a flash the civilised Christian of England had thrown off his pretence of culture, and was revealing the uncivilised religious fanatic of the Middle Ages.

Moreover, in any case where Christian organisa-

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tions combine, it is the lower and less educated elements that exert commanding influence. This is indicated in two directions. First, in that of the control of education. In spite of all the advance that has been made, the schools are still under the influence of theology. Freethought has never been strong enough to keep the priest out of the elementary school, and very little help has been forthcoming from the religious world—despite professions of fair play—to secure this act of elementary justice. In face of a common danger, the Christian ranks are closed. Churchman, Roman Catholic, and Nonconformist are at one as to the necessity of keeping control of the child, and until Freethought is strong enough to keep the nation's schools free from all forms of priestcraft, we cannot be said to have made our first great advance really secure.

In the next place, Sabbatarianism still exerts considerable force in the country, and, next to the question of the child, this is an issue on which the Churches display the greatest unity. Recently, at Birmingham, a poll of the city was able to defeat a proposal for Sunday boats and bands in two of the public parks. In many other places successful opposition is offered towards Sunday entertainments. There is no question of the undesirable character of these entertainments. It is no longer profitable to play that card. It is even admitted that the entertainments are socially beneficial; that they provide a couple of hours clean, healthy entertainment for those who might otherwise spend their time in an undesirable manner. The opposition is frankly religious. It is the coercion of a section by a religious majority. And the fact that this can be done, the fact that one of the ugliest and most demoralising forms of English religious life is still so active and so strong, ought to give pause to those who regard the fight with theology as virtually over.

And in addition there are other things. The power of the religious boycott still exists although it may not be openly practised. It is still difficult to get a fair hearing for Freethought, and, in some cases, practically impossible. Free speech is threatened where it can be threatened, and prevented where it can be prevented. Recent prosecutions for obstruction, disorder, and profanity have no other meaning than this. Those in power would openly stop the advocacy of Freethought if they dared; that they proceed by a roundabout and often underhand method, is nothing more than a concession to unfavorable circumstances. But the old-time spirit of suppression and persecution is there, and, given favorable circumstances, would not be slow to express itself in the old-time drastic manner. And one ought not to omit to point out that while this spirit exists with any large number of people the extension of the powers of the State and of the police is a phenomenon full of menace to the future of Freethought.

Our work in the past has borne splendid results, but there is still much to be done before these results can be considered permanently secure. Such freedom as we have is, perhaps, of too recent growth for it to be taken as a matter of course by the mass of people. Until free speech is taken in this light, until it is accepted as something beyond even the scope of discussion, there is always danger. Old prejudices are still with us, primitive ideas are still powerful, religious interests and the interests that religion serves are still strong. Until these forces are robbed of their power for evil, we must always be on our guard. That we have won so much is only a reason for continued fighting—not for rest. Nineteen hundred and twelve has seen, as previous years saw, a great extension of Freethought ideas. But has it seen a corresponding growth in the number of men and women strong enough to defy all prejudice and let the world know their real opinions? On that point I have my doubts. And yet until and unless that kind of result is achieved, our successes provide occasion for but a limited measure of rejoicing.

C. COHEN.

Sabbatarianism.

HOWEVER great and numerous the faults of primitive Christians may have been Sabbatarianism was not one of them. The Gospel Jesus was a notorious Sabbath-breaker, and as such suffered persecution. Indeed, he is represented as denouncing Sabbatarianism in the strongest terms. To Paul also, all days were alike. He was exceedingly distressed to learn that his Galatian converts "observed days, and months, and seasons, and years." "I am afraid of you," he told them, "lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain." At best the Sabbath was to him but a shadow that had already served its purpose, and was no longer required (Col. ii. 16, 17). The duty of Sabbath observance is not once mentioned in the New Testament, and the fact of observance is spoken of with disfavor. There was a general conviction that Christ had abolished the Jewish law of the Sabbath, and the day of his alleged resurrection was believed to be of much greater importance than the last day of the creation week. Now, the curious thing is, that his alleged resurrection occurred on the day set apart by the Pagan world as the people's weekly holiday; but for three centuries the Christians treated all days practically alike. Whatever observance of Sunday there may have been was altogether voluntary. There were no Sunday restrictions of any kind. Origen held that "the perfect Christian is always keeping the Lord's Day," because "all his days are the Lord's." The first Sunday legislation, under Constantine, was of a mild character, forbidding only judges, town people, and tradesmen to pursue their avocations "on the venerable day of the Sun." Those engaged in agriculture were allowed to work as on other days. But in spite of that legislation the Church of the Middle Ages was anything but strictly Sabbatarian. Whenever she advised the people to rest from work, she was careful to add that Sunday work was in no sense a sin, and was discouraged simply because it prevented people from attending church.

Thus we see that, *in principle*, Christianity is absolutely opposed to Sunday observance. The so-called sanctity of the Lord's Day is repudiated in the New Testament, and, in the main, by the Catholic Church. Sunday was to be observed, not because of its superior holiness, but merely as the field-day of the Church. This principle was formally enunciated at the third Council of Orleans in the year 538; and when, in the thirteenth century, it was contended that a peculiar sanctity attached to the day, the object was to fortify the Church. In the main, however, the Church has always enjoined the observance of Sunday alone in her own interest. In his "Table Talk," Martin Luther says:—

> "If anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, if anywhere one sets up its observance upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to dance on it, to ride on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall reprove this encroachment on the Christian spirit of liberty."

Most of the Reformers spoke and wrote in the same strain. It is true that the Westminster Assembly of Divines regarded the observance of Sunday as a part of the moral law; but it is also true that Archbishop Whateley characterised such a dogma as "utterly unintelligible." But, although the leaders of the Reformation were the friends of liberty, it must be admitted that it was the Reformation that made the introduction of the Puritan Sunday possible in Great Britain. First of all, an attempt was made to restore the Hebrew Sabbath, but it miserably failed. Then the process of Hebraising the Christian Sunday began, and this met with considerable success, with the result that Sunday became, by Acts of Parliament, indescribably dull and dreary—an intolerable burden which the people were compelled to bear. But the object of the introduction of this Puritan "Sunday Sabbath," as Dr. Hardwicke aptly calls it, was to glorify the Church. Sunday work and Sunday

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amusements were forbidden simply in order that the Church services might reign without a single rival. Church attendance was made compulsory, and non-attendance a crime against the State as well as a sin against God. A man was fined for kissing his wife, child, or sweetheart on Sunday in order that his mind should not be diverted from the contemplation of spiritual realities. Places of amusement were closed that places of worship might have the day to themselves.

At last, after centuries of passive endurance, the people of this country are beginning actively to rebel against the cruel tyranny of such a forbidding Sunday. They are throwing off the yoke of bondage to it. The astonishing popularity of the Sunday cinema has opened the eyes of Christian leaders to the fact that the British Christian Sunday is seriously threatened, and the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall is afraid that it is doomed. Writing in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* for December 27, the reverend gentleman says:—

> "There is to-day a mighty struggle going on as to whether theatres and music-halls should be opened on Sundays or not. How this struggle will end it is hard to say. One fears, however, that mammon will win. The actors and actresses and artistes may be bitterly opposed to Sunday performances (indeed they seem to be), but there is vast capital invested in the business of amusement, and capital is soulless, remorseless, inhuman. Unless other forces, more determined and potent, overcome it, the sheer weight of gold must have its way."

Dr. Marshall is surely mistaken. There is more capital invested in the business of Divine worship than in that of amusement; and "if the sheer weight of gold must have its way," then the business of Divine worship is certain to be victorious. But the question will be settled, not by capital, but by the public taste. What is beyond all controversy is that the public taste is rapidly changing, and crying out with swelling insistence for Sunday amusement. Dr. Marshall is not blind to the issues at stake. He says:—

> "If the theatres and music-halls and cinemas are generally opened on Sundays in our land, the Continental Sunday, to which we suppose ourselves so superior, is here. How fatal an evil this would be, let our own past utterances testify. Have we not traced our national greatness to our national Day of Rest? Have we not treated the quiet of the Lord's Day as the salt of our religious life? Have we not urged it as the bulwark of purity in the home and of a high ideal of conduct for each day's business? Have we not insisted that the Sunday is a day set apart by God for his purposes?"

Dr. Marshall is quite right. The theologians have made, and still make, all those high claims in behalf of Sunday; but they have never been able to establish the truth of one of them. What proof is there that Sunday is "a day set apart by God for his purposes"? None has ever been adduced. As Bishop Andrews, in his *History of the Sabbath*, well says:—

> "The festival of Sunday is more ancient than the Christian religion; its origin being lost in remote antiquity. It did *not originate from any Divine command*, nor from piety towards God; on the contrary, it was set apart as a sacred day by the Heathen world in honor of their chief God, the Sun."

Again, it is utterly impossible to trace our vaunted "national greatness to our national Day of Rest." Our so-called "national greatness" is very largely mythical. We only fancy ourselves superior to other nations which have enjoyed a freer, more rational Sunday. An individual who continually calls attention to his superior qualities and attainments only succeeds in proving himself an unmitigated fool; and precisely the same thing is true of a boastful, vainglorious nation. We are usually set down abroad as a nation of hypocrites and braggarts. But whatever excellences we may possess, nothing is more certain than that we do not owe a single one of them to our strict Sabbatarianism. Indeed, Dr. Hardwicke informs us, in his interesting little work, *Sunday*, that when he "once asked an intelligent foreigner what, in his opinion, was the cause of so much inebriety in our country, he replied at once, 'Your Sunday'"; and then added "that he had never seen so much hypocrisy as he had during his visit of two months in England." The claim that Sunday is "the bulwark of purity in the home and of a high ideal of conduct for each day's business" is so palpably false as to deserve no serious consideration. Are British homes, on an average, purer that the homes of countries wherein the Continental Sunday obtains? We challenge Dr. Marshall to produce any valid evidence of the truth of such a contention.

Now, after writing so grandiloquently about our national greatness, the purity of our homes, and the righteous conduct of our business, all of which he traces to the beneficent influence of Sunday, the reverend gentleman proceeds to mourn over the fact that, in all probability, we shall not succeed in saving the institution to which we owe so much. And he makes the strange, almost incredible, confession that "in this struggle for the maintenance of the British Sunday the Church is taking no part. True, Dr. F. B. Meyer has had something to say—but then he has something to say about everything!" We agree with the reverend gentleman in the conviction that the Christian Sunday is a vanishing institution. Its secularisation has been steadily going on for many years. It is being gradually restored to what it was before the Church laid its mutilating hand upon it. What is so much needed just now, however, is liberty to spend the day according to one's predilection. Let the Christians realise, as John Stuart Mill perceived long ago, that "Sabbatarian legislation is an illegitimate interference with the rightful liberty of the individual"; but they are cowards. They foresee that unless they retain the unjust monopoly of Sunday they are sure to lose it altogether.

J. T. LLOYD.

Confitemini Domino.

THIS is not at all the Bay of Biscay I had been taught to believe in. The Biscay creed of my youth was full of visions of storm, and broken spars, and of drowned folk sinking "unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown." This blue water, spangled with morning light, might be the happy Bay of Bournemouth or the summer sea of Scarborough. Thus do the terrific gods of man's infancy dissolve into the purer and serener thoughts of his prime.

Folk-lorists say that some of the fairies of popular tales are the miniature survivals of older gods, no longer feared, and now reduced to amusing unimportance. I have heard, also, that the gay and painted clown of the Christmas pantomime is the representative of the Devil of the Middle Ages, who once performed pranks on the stage of Miracle-plays, and threw our ancestors into passions of terror and laughter. It is not the least interesting occupation of the sociologist to watch the dwindling of the gods, and to see how giant figures that formerly sat throned in cloudy majesty are now reduced to the small proportions of the puppet.

So, on Sunday morning, I attended Church Service in the saloon of the P. and O. steamer that was carrying me to the East. The gilt-buttoned captain led our devotions, and we were a thoroughly respectable congregation. I should have felt more comfortable if a few engineers from below had joined the assembly, and one or two red-capped and bare-brown-footed Lascars had mingled with our gentility; for these elements would have reminded us of the basis of labor upon which our Sabbatical ease rested. Yet, perhaps, the program was more logical as it stood. The genius of labor is massive, Herculean, and manly; and our Sunday morning gods were but frail and puny creatures, chiefly adapted for the adoration of the British middle-class intellect. When the psalm bade us "Confitemini Domino"—"Trust in the Lord"—we responded with a faint and

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æsthetic suburban trust. Little gods, little faith. We and the captain recited together the Mariners' Psalm:—

"They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in the great waters;

"These men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep;

"They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away because of the trouble;

"So when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he delivereth them out of their distress."

But our voices did not ring with the conviction that roared in the worship of our Puritan fathers. We were conscious all the time that, if this sunny Bay of Biscay changed its mood from smiles to tempest, our confidence would not be in the petty gods, but in the captain, the engineers, the Lascars, the boats, the Marconi messages, the chart, and the noble astronomy which the scientific patience of many generations has constructed for the law of times, seasons, and navigation. Gentle was the wheeze of the violin that formed our orchestra, and the bourgeois congregation so feebly sang the hymn:—

"Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide,
His boundless mercy will provide,"

that I felt obliged to answer the signal of distress, and, Agnostic as I was, to join in and strengthen the quavering choir. But, as I chanted the marvels of Divine Providence, my mind ran back to a conversation I had just held on deck with an invalid who was on his way to Ceylon in search of warmth and health.

"My intestines," he said to me, with a curious smile, "were entirely taken out."

This sudden insight into the manufacture of hollow ware fascinated my attention. I listened eagerly while my companion unfolded the story of his pains, his operations, his fears and hopes. He had lain under chloroform for the space of one hour and a half, and nine minutes; and he named a group of the most distinguished physicians in England as the examiners of his inner chambers and his friendly dissectors. The intestines were replaced, but with a junction on the left side of the stomach, instead of the right; and the orifice on the right side had been deftly sewn up and rendered "blind." And now, when the plaintive violin unenchantingly chanted,—

"Cast care aside, lean on thy Guide,
His boundless mercy will provide,"—

I thought of the cheerful invalid on deck, who, thanks to the providential wisdom of humanity, was endowed with fresh life, and was joyously expecting to breathe the spicy air of Ceylon.

If one must have gods at all, oh! let them be splendid! Let us have that magnificent Zeus who reigned, imperially and thunderously, among the glorious company on Mount Olympus. Or let us have mighty Siva, riding on a bull, and with the colossal stream of Ganges trickling down his shaggy hair and beard. Or let us have Odin, conqueror of giants of frost and blast, and honored by the valiant sea-kings of Scandinavia. Even Luther's piety had a worthy object,—"Our God's a sure stronghold" ("Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott"). But to-day the master-forces of the globe are wielded by other hands. The weakened hands of the divinities have resigned the lightnings and the bolts, and the dominion and the empire, to the Man who was once so much lower than the angels. They have yielded the stars to Herschel and Leverrier; the secrets of electricity to Faraday and Edison; the arcana of physics to Clerk Maxwell and Hertz; the passwords of the realm of biology to Darwin and Haeckel; the power of healing to Lister and Ronald Ross; and the art of Scripture-writing to Shakespeare, Montaigne, Goethe, Emerson, Nietzsche.

Poetic William Blake once asked a lady, "Have you ever seen a fairy funeral?" And he went on to describe to her the details of the procession he had witnessed.

Such a funeral I seemed to assist at on that Sunday morning in the saloon of a P. and O. boat. Perfectly certain am I that nobody in the congregation effectively believed in the gods in the grand mediæval manner, or even in the seventeenth-century manner of Spinoza and Bunyan. The gods that presided over our service were shaped after the fashion of the little images one sees in the Egyptian galleries of the British Museum,—tiny pocket-deities and heavenly dolls. Just as to-day the really great structures of London are the docks, the electric power-stations, the tube-railways, and the thousand schools and colleges, while the Tower of London is a mere phantom of barbaric tyranny, so the genuine triumphs of the human genius of our age are visible in science, art, craft, literature, and an immense Labor Movement and Woman Movement, while the gods are diminished to puny ghosts and thin imaginations that prepare to leave the soul of man forever.

F. J. GOULD.

Gibraltar, Dec. 24, 1912.

Literary Gossip.

WE have been looking again into that pious paper *Great Thoughts*. The first noticeable thing we came across was a half-page headed "George Meredith on Religion," acknowledged as from *Scribner's Magazine*, and therefore indicating that the editor had not read the two volumes of *George Meredith's Letters*, but only the selection printed beforehand in the American periodical. Religious men like the editor think nothing of the lie by suggestion. They do not say, but they suggest, that a quotation arbitrarily picked from the pages of a great writer represents his ripest thought, whereas it may represent (as it does in this case) only one of he landmarks which he has passed on the road to his full mental development. Meredith's fatherly letter to his young son Arthur, from which the passage in question was taken, was written as far back as April 25, 1872. He lived thirty-seven years after that date and passed through many stages of intellectual growth until he reached the final stage of pure Humanism, which is so nobly expressed in his later letters as well as in his later poems. Even in the passage on religion in that far-off letter there are signs that Meredith could say a good deal more if he were not writing to the young son of his first (unhappy) marriage. And it is clear that the idea of a personal God was waning in his mind and becoming merely symbolic of Virtue and Truth,—in short, not a term of theology but a term of moral idealism. Certainly he did not decorate the pronouns of the Deity with capital letters as they are printed in the pious *Great Thoughts*.

* * *

Rather more than two years after the date of that letter to his young son, Meredith mentioned a famous American scandal in one of his delightfully open letters to Captain Maxse. "You have seen the papers," he wrote, "and meditated upon the Beecher-Tilton scandal. Guilty or not, there is a sickly sanctimoniousness about the religious fry that makes the tale of their fornications and adulteries absolutely repulsive to read of, and but for the feeding of the reptile sarcasm in our bosoms, it would disgust one more than a chronicle of the amors of costermongers." "Religious fry" is a branding phrase. A little later Meredith was declaring to Maxse that the fight with priestcraft and priests was *the* fight of the immediate future.

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The next noticeable thing in *Great Thoughts* was a reference to Meredith in a review of Frederic Harrison's *Among My Books*. We have not read this book, nor do we mean to. We have no taste for a writer who calls Lamb a "poor thing"; Lamb whose life was a daily heroism, and who wrote things as sure of immortality as any prose of his time. Amongst the gems of wisdom and wit fished out of Frederic Harrison's volume is this—that Meredith was a brilliant novelist rather than a poet; nature having denied him an ear for music in verse. Fancy saying this of the author of "Love in the Valley" which Tennyson said he would be proud to have written himself, and that Stevenson almost raved about. That poem gave a new music to English poetry.

* * *

And now for Apollo's revenge. The clerical editor of *Great Thoughts*, after endorsing Frederic Harrison's denunciation of the unrest and frivolity of the present age, quotes what he calls the "appropriate counsel of Sophocles." Here it is:—

"Keep the young generation in hail,
And beneath them no tumbled house."

"Sophocles!" The knowing reader will remember, the unknowing reader will be surprised to learn, that these two

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lines are a spoilt quotation from one of the most Meredithian of Meredith's own poems. They are from "The Empty Purse," and should run thus :—

> "Keep the young generations in hail,
> And bequeath them no tumbled house!"

Excellent advice! No wonder Meredith called it "The cry of the conscience of Life."

* * *

"Sophocles!" Oh Downes!—Downes! No doubt thou meanest well. But thou art as wise as thou art accurate. In this very number of thy extravagantly named journal thou makest Samuel Johnson the author of "Hell is paved with good intentions." How could hell be paved? Hast thou not heard it is a bottomless pit? It is "the *road* to hell" that is "paved with good intentions." And there is some sense in that if we leave out the theology. Moreover, the saying is generations older than Samuel Johnson. It came from one of the old Puritan preachers—perhaps Richard Baxter, but we are not sure. But thou hast mangled it whatever its origin. Thou art a club-footed critic, and thou presumest too much in the company of thy betters.

* * *

We have been offered a big price for the George Meredith letters to ourselves, and still in our possession, as well as the presentation volume of verse he sent to us while we were in Holloway Prison under the Blasphemy Laws. But they are not for sale. Meredith prices are running high just now, and we do not think they are likely to drop. At Sotheby's last week the manuscripts of three of the four parts of *Odes In Contribution to the Song of French History* fetched nearly £300 ("The Revolution" £100—"Napoleon" £92—"Alsace-Lorraine" £95); and 44 letters to Dr. and Mrs. Jessopp £445—in round figures £10 each. The whole volume containing the three *Odes* and another entitled "France," extends to less than a hundred pages. What a change from the old days of unappreciation! One is reminded of the flippant reviewer who remarked that Shelley's masterpiece was well called "Prometheus *Unbound*"—for who would ever think of *binding* it? A copy of that very first edition would now fetch several times its weight in gold. Thus (in the case of real great genius) does the whirligig of time bring its revenges.

G. W. F.

The Church's Motives.

TAKE Church colleges and schools. Are they founded in the interests of true education? On the contrary, they are for the purpose of maintaining a creed. A Catholic college has for its object just enough education to make a student a Catholic. Any further knowledge would be heresy. A Lutheran school has one purpose in view—to make Lutherans. Knowledge that might militate against this end must be excluded. Methodist, Presbyterian, and other denominational schools are conducted along the same lines. Real education does not consist in teaching the mind according to a certain system of belief or dogma, but in training it to think and to reason from facts. One-half of Christian education consists of burdening the brain with myths, miracles, and other unnaturalisms, which must be outgrown later in life. The Church has prostituted education to creed. In the public schools, not controlled by the Church, a boy or girl learns more, learns more thoroughly, is better mentally and morally prepared for the battle of life than in any Church school. Consider, again, higher education. Once this was entirely in the hands of the clergy. Sixty years ago, according to Andrew D. White, the great majority of the presidents of our colleges and universities were ministers. To-day, the majority are laymen, to the greater efficiency of education.

When we look upon hospitals and other organised charities founded by the Church, the same motives and methods exist. They are not primarily to help afflicted humanity, but to make *Christians* and to perpetuate the power of the priesthood. The Church has used bad methods to further its progress, and it has, when necessary, resorted to good ones. But, above all, its end has been priestly domination, putting out the lamp of liberty, stifling free speech and honest thought. It points its finger to heaven, as a reward for the faithful, while, had not the false teachings of the Church turned men's minds to this imaginary heaven, this world would have been a fitter place of abode, and we would not require so much charity. If the Church has relieved some human suffering it has caused more than it has abolished.

FRANKLIN STEINER.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Acid Drops.

"Providence" gave us a particularly "Merry Christmas" by way of winding up 1912. We hope it will settle down a bit for the new year. Storms, shipwrecks, and all sorts of incidents caused by too much wind and water, are not quite so "merry" to the sufferers as they appear to the party inflicting them. It would be a good thing, indeed, if the said party took a long rest—for "Providence" nearly always means ructions.

The range of "Providence's" Christmas benevolence was very wide. No less than sixty Russian fishing boats capsized during the storm in the Caspian Sea. The loss of life is reported to be "very great." "Providence" will note the fact with great pleasure.

With what unction the *Daily Chronicle*, in its Christmas Eve number, maundered over the blessings of British rule in India. Whether the ruling of India by Great Britain is right and just, to begin with, did not occur to our contemporary. John Bull's brain is never crossed by an idea of that kind. He is too pious and too self-righteous to consider the possibility of his not being chosen by God to keep other people in their proper places. It has always been the characteristic of Christian nations, and of Great Britain the most of all, to disdain the notion that their power should be limited by their own frontiers. They see a special wickedness in throwing a bomb at the Viceroy of India. Lord Hardinge is British, moreover he is a Christian; and those are two special marks of the divine favor; the bomb-thrower is therefore worse than a mere criminal, he is guilty of something like sacrilege, he tried to kill the deputy of the Lord's anointed. All this was involved in the *Chronicle's* article. The British are "a ruling and civilising race," they have a mandate from heaven, as the Jews had in the land of Canaan. It justifies them in crushing down all opposition, and to lay a heavy hand even on honest criticism. What is for the good of India, though India may not see it, must be forced upon its three hundred million inhabitants. "Our clear duty," the *Chronicle* concluded, "is to persevere in that course with resolute determination, and cool courage, for that alone will make India peaceful, prosperous, and happy, sustain our own credit, hold high our honor, and justify our rule and our presence in India." These compliments, paid by ourselves to ourselves, are delightful. They display the proverbial humility of the good earnest Christians.

The unction of the dear *Daily News* was displayed in another direction. Nearly all the newspapers at this time of the year are cadging in the name of Christ for some "charitable" object. People living in destitution and misery all the year round are provided with one day's decent eating and drinking; editorial bosoms swell with the pride of benevolence; and this is considered a highly satisfactory state of things; besides, it silences the Secularists who are always twitting the Christians with trying to do good in the next world instead of in this one. So the Christmas Eve special article in the *Daily News* carried on in this fashion :—

> "Whatever else grows old and passes away, the spirit of Christmas will remain for ever fresh and vital. Its message of 'Peace on earth, good will among men' can never be exhausted. The reminder that, behind the struggles and controversies that embitter our relations, we are all—black and white, yellow and brown—members of one family, comrades for a little while in the great adventure of life, subject to like afflictions, exalted by like joys, enveloped equally by the mystery that will not yield its secret, needing equally the warmth of human friendship and human love—this can never grow stale or obsolete."

What a farce it is to read this little sermon and then turn to the facts. The "spirit of Christmas" has been prompting the Balkan States to demand "another slice of Turkey" for their Christmas dinner. The Christian States, in fact, have been presenting the Mohammedan enemy with terms of peace as hard, ungenerous, and humiliating as can well be conceived. We admit that this "spirit of Christmas" among Christians will "never be exhausted." It holds out to the bitter end.

The modern Christmas—what we may call the Dickens Christmas—is comparatively a thing of yesterday. It is really a recurrence to the old Pagan festival which Christmas supplanted. But the *Daily News* appears to think that human love and friendship are Christmas gifts to the world, and that without Christianity we should never have known of our common human nature and that at bottom all men are members of one family. This is claiming for Christianity what is no more due to it than it is to the religion of

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Mumbo Jumbo. Love, friendship, and the recognition of human brotherhood, were ethical commonplaces before Christianity was heard of. The great master of human nature, William Shakespeare, stated the truth of natural human brotherhood, without any assistance from the Christian or other religion, between three and four hundred years before Charles Dickens. When the monarch in *Richard II.* is falling he addresses to his courtiers that piece of incomparable eloquence on the frailty and mortality of all men alike, whether prince or peasant; and then, addressing his courtiers still more directly, he says to them :—

> "Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
> With solemn reverence; throw away respect,
> Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty;
> For you have but mistook me all this while:
> I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
> Need friends:—subjected thus,
> How can you say to me, I am a king."

The holy anointing oil of kings went for nothing in the last extremities of fate. The common nature of King Richard and his lowest subject was proved finally by their common feelings, common wants, common desires, and common weaknesses. There we come to the bedrock of humanity.

Reports are continuing to arrive as to the truly Christian spirit that prevails between the Greek and Bulgarian allies, and also as to the treatment of Mohammedans and Jews by the allied armies. At Salonika whole detachments of Greeks and Bulgarians have been drawn up in fighting array, and only dispersed at the last moment. One Bulgarian chief is reported as pillaging and murdering Greeks and Mohammedans alike. At Lagavani this chief, one Dumboulakoff, ordered the priest to omit the name of the King of Greece from his prayers, and then took the Turkish inhabitants and used them as targets for the rifles of his men. Four men, two women, and one child—all Mohammedans—were also found murdered one morning just outside Salonika. The correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* also continues to forward accounts of the open murder of Jews by the soldiers of the Cross. Yet the *Church Times* remarks in its last issue that no excesses have followed the victorious march of the allied armies. Well, we have given accounts of a fair number during the past month, and we are convinced much is to be said when the whole truth becomes public property.

The *Catholic Times* has a cheerful kind of message for its devout readers. The religious outlook it finds to be very black indeed. There is a "mighty army" leagued against Christianity with an influence all-powerful in the offices of newspapers. When representatives of this army "meet in their lodges and clubs to discuss public affairs, they ask themselves how, in dealing with national and international questions, they can hurt Christianity." All this has a very "raw-head-and-bloody-bones" air about it, and readers will take it for what it is worth. In some countries, we are told, this anti-Christian army has "captured the Governments and made them instruments for carrying out their own anti-Christian designs." Protestants, who are "Christians only in name," are powerless against this anti-Christian movement. "Their views can scarcely be distinguished from those of Freethinkers," and amongst Protestants Freethinkers are winning an "immense number of disciples almost without effort." The only bulwark is, of course, Roman Catholicism, and the moral of the article appears to be that unless all Christians become Roman Catholics, they will all turn into Freethinkers before they know where they are.

While we are on the *Catholic Times*, we may notice a curious defence of Catholic toleration offered by Bishop Keating. The Bishop said it was an ironical situation that Protestants should charge Catholics with intolerance, and, so far, we agree with him. Intolerance is as inherent in Protestantism as it is in Roman Catholicism. The wider latitude existing in countries where the majority are Protestants is due to the impossibility of union among them, not to any willingness to suffer differences of opinion. Bishop Keating, however, says that with Catholics toleration is determined "wholly and exclusively by considerations of right and wrong." And, he added, "they believed there was only one true religion." Well, if that means anything at all, it means that the Catholic will tolerate a difference of opinion so long as convenient. You may believe what you please so long as you don't disagree with the Church. In matters of practice that is really all that most Christians ever understand by toleration, but it is well to have something like an official declaration of the position. The only toleration we care about is that which allows every man to believe and teach what he pleases, whether it happens to be truth or error. It is enough that it is truth to him. And the court that should determine whether an opinion is right or wrong is neither Church nor State, but the tribunal of public intelligence.

God's Plaything is the title of Marjorie Bowen's latest volume of tragic stories. The *Daily Chronicle* reviewer quarrels with the title as "rather unpleasing, implying, as it does, that the Almighty has a grim and cruel sense of humor." But this is not a new implication. Has not the reviewer heard of Heine's "Aristophanes of the Universe"? And what of Thomas Hardy's reply to certain critics of *Tess*?

The newspapers give prominence to the statement that the authorities at Hereford Cathedral have decided to retain the Athanasian Creed. What a tenacious Creed that is! Many years ago the following riddle was propounded:—Why is the Athanasian Creed like a royal Bengal tiger? The answer being, Because it holds on by its damnation clause (claws).

Finding that they cannot legally close the Picture Shows on Sunday, the Brighton Town Council have decided to grant seven-days licenses, with the proviso that all employees shall have one full day's holiday every week. This is precisely what we have recommended all along. One stroke of the pen destroys the canting clerical objection to "Sunday labor." Not that the Sunday license is in any strict sense of the word legal. It is not. The old Statute of George III. against Sunday entertainments is still in force. The Sunday license is, however, an assurance that the authorities will not seek to enforce the Statute; and the Brighton Aquarium Act, as it is briefly called, renders the action of private citizens in the same direction a risky proceeding, since it declares that the Attorney-General has power to remit the penalties on behalf of the Crown,—in which case the "common informer" might lose instead of gaining considerably.

Middlesex County Council, by 43 to 17, have decided that Sunday cinematograph shows are not desirable, and have instructed the licensing committee to take proceedings against offenders. What on earth is meant by "not desirable"? Surely the shows are desirable to the crowds of orderly people who patronise them. They may not be desirable to those who do *not* patronise them, but it is not suggested that such be compelled to attend. They have all the rest of the world left them for recreation or edification. It is really a thing to be noted that the Sabbatarian bigots—in this like *all* bigots—regard "liberty" as meaning the right to do what they like and the right to prevent all their neighbors from doing anything else. The law of freedom is non-interference with the rights of others. You interfere with another man's rights when you prevent him doing what he wishes to do. He does not interfere with your rights in doing what *he* chooses and leaving you to do what *you* choose.

The following case is an item of Christmas news; we take it from the *Daily Chronicle* of December 27—its Milan correspondent having wired the news on Christmas Day :—

> "The extraordinary trial of Monsignor Appeddu, Canon of Sassari Cathedral, Sardinia, pending since August, 1910, has just terminated in the Local Assize Court, in the condemnation of that famous pulpit orator to 15 years' penal servitude.
>
> "As recounted in the *Daily Chronicle* at the time, Appeddu published a story according to which he and his valet had been waylaid by five brigands on the road between Pattada and Mamoiada, robbed of an enormous sum of money, beaten, and abandoned half-dead. The keys of his residence, he narrated, were also seized by the bandits, and when the police proceeded to the canonry, they found the place sacked from top to bottom.
>
> "No sooner, however, had a searching inquiry begun than Appeddu fled to Corsica. Besides being bankrupt for £8,000, it was found that the canon had been for several years defrauding banks and misappropriating vast sums from his admirers, in order to bolster up reckless speculations in the sugar industry, and that together with his valet he had concocted the brigand 'outrage' as a last desperate resource."

No doubt this case will soon be forgotten. Criminals are so frequently Christians; in fact, they are seldom anything else. Had the culprit been an eminent Freethinker his case would have figured constantly in pious "improving" literature as a frightful warning against the immoral influence of "infidelity."

The Rev. Father Graham, of Motherwell, says that the "grand characteristic" of the Catholic faith is that it enables people to believe. A Catholic has no doubts. He says, "Ask a Catholic 'Is there a hell? Is there an endless hell? Will people dying unsaved burn there for ever?' He will reply without hesitation, 'Yes, certainly.' Ask a

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Protestant, and he will answer, 'I do not know for certain. Some say Yes, and some say No.'" Therefore, Father Graham prefers Catholicism. He has a sincere pity for the poor souls who maybe die and are yet without the comforting reflection that there is a hell waiting where the unsaved will "burn eternally for ever." Father Graham knows there is a hell. He expects it in the next world. We are inclined to hope that he will not be disappointed.

In common, we suppose, with a large number of other people, we received a Christmas appeal for charity on behalf of a Christian organisation for the care of poor children. We were not surprised at this, nor, it being signed by the Bishop of London, at finding one or two silly statements in the course of the letter. And in this instance such statements were quite gratuitous. If people are not concerned to help poor children for the child's sake, it may well be doubted whether any other appeal is likely to move them. In this instance, however, the Bishop of London enforced the appeal by saying that Christianity had always made the care of the child its peculiar work. In a sinister sense this is true enough. In a broad, healthy, human sense it is altogether false. Religiously, Christianity has always aimed at capturing the child, because that was the only way to secure the adult. Religiously, too, the child has played a part in Christian writing and preaching as a symbol. But the child was held up as a symbol of innocence, helplessness, and dependence to the adult. We were to become as little children in order to gain the kingdom of heaven. We were to sacrifice the strength, the independence, the critical power of the adult mind, so that we might become the better believers. This is really what there is in the Christian exaltation of the child.

The study of the child, the care of the child, the social value of the child, as serious studies really belongs to the nineteenth century—a period that saw a more decisive weakening of Christianity than had ever before occurred. And the impetus to this came from two directions. First, from the development of a non-theological sociology; secondly, from the growth of the doctrine of Evolution. The extensive literature that has grown up around the child during the past thirty years owes nothing whatever to either Christian teaching or Christian influence. More than that, it should be remembered that the greatest brutalities ever practised against children occurred in this country, and in the full glow of the evangelistic revival. We do not think that in the whole history of humanity there is a more horrible chapter than that of child labor under the English factory system. Other people have occasionally practised infanticide; but killing a newly-born child is surely a harmless pastime compared with the systematic murdering of children of seven and eight years of age for the sake of making money out of their labor. And even to-day it may be questioned whether so large a number of *neglected* children exist anywhere in Europe as we have in Christian England. Travellers speak of Japan as the children's paradise. Little is heard of the ill-treatment of children in China or in the East. Nansen said the Esquimaux simply couldn't see why a child should be beaten. In England a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children brings thousands of cases of the ill-treatment of children every year into court, and deals with a still larger number that never come before the public.

America—meaning the United States—is a Christian country. Nobody but a Christian, and a loudly professing one, would be elected President of that great and glorious and free (yes, don't forget *free*) country. President Hayes found out the full force of American bigotry when he was appointing Colonel Ingersoll to the Ambassadorship at Berlin. Such a Christian howl went up from New York to San Francisco, and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes, that Ingersoll had to come to his friend President Hayes' relief by declining the appointment. Yes, America *is* a Christian country; and Anthony Comstock means to keep it so. American publications are mostly "mailed"; that is, they go from the publishers to the subscribers by post; and as the Post Office is really governed by Anthony Comstock, seeing that no publication gets through the mail without his approval,—and as he is prying piety and prurient puritanism personified,—it is easy to see how "free" the public, and especially the advanced, press is over there. Religious journalists and blatant pulpiteers are even crying out that "Ingersoll is a back number." We will not discuss that statement. It is really *too* absurd. But there are other things in America that are certainly *not* back numbers. Some of them have lately been ventilated by Dr. Thomas D. Woods, Professor of Physical Education at Columbia University, in an official report published by the Board of Education. Here are some of the up-to-date things in Christian America:—

> "Between 50 and 98 per cent. of the children [in the schools] have defective teeth, 25 per cent. defective sight, and 30 per cent. suffer from adenoids or enlarged tonsils. Many millions of children have several ailments, and 25 per cent. suffer from mal-nutrition. Five per cent. of the country's children have, or have had, tubercular disease of the lungs, and an equal number suffer from curvature of the spine or flat-foot to a degree that is most detrimental to their general health. Organic heart disease claims nearly half a million children among its victims in American schools."

Does any man in his senses imagine that such a state of things would exist in an Ingersollite society? Godliness would take a back seat, and cleanliness would come to the front—cleanliness of eating and drinking, cleanliness of person, cleanliness of dwellings, cleanliness of habits, and cleanliness of thinking and feeling.

In commenting on the decline of church attendance one of the religious weeklies notes that people are not inclined to talk about religious things, and points out that this is in contrast with our forefathers, who made religion a topic of every-day conversation. We do not think the last part of the statement is strictly accurate, but all the same it contains a truth. In earlier times religious phrases and expressions formed a much larger part of ordinary conversation, and for very obvious reasons. When religious belief is really alive it is expressed in ordinary talk because it expresses a common conviction and is not in direct conflict with common knowledge. Under such conditions men could invoke the name of God and use religious terms in a way that nowadays would be thought little short of blasphemous. With a more complete development there is a more drastic division between the world of actual life and religion. Religious phraseology assumes a special character for the simple reason that it no longer has any application to life, and when it is introduced the only effect is to display its incongruity. The more religious people are, the more this is experienced. It is this feeling that lies at the root of the objection to exhibiting the life of Jesus in a picture show. The Middle Ages had its religious plays, depicting nearly all the main incidents in the New Testament, and there was no outcry from anybody. It was perfectly natural that what was believed should be depicted. To-day such representations jar on believers because they represent a number of beliefs that people have really outgrown. They merely objectify what is to nearly all an utterly incredible story.

Ex-Lieutenant Sutor seems to have developed into a first-rate crank. The doctor at Bow-street Police Station reported that he could not be certified as insane. "He held certain religious beliefs which he wished to promulgate, and he broke windows to keep his name before the public." Religious fanatics generally want to promulgate their religious beliefs at other people's expense; and they love being advertised.

Freethought teachings find their echo in unexpected places, as we have often pointed out. Take, as an example, the following:—

> "The history of religion is largely the history of human cruelty and dread. In this respect I should think no single psychological force has ever equalled it. Whatever be the explanation of the fact—and it is not altogether without explanation—the religious instincts of mankind have, broadly speaking, been the direct cause of more misery, bloodshed, terrorism, and all manner of fiendishness, than the ambition of conquerors, or greed, or lust, or any other form taken by man's inhumanity to man.....There has always been a peculiar ingredient in religious zealotry which has rendered men insensible to human feeling in a way that nothing else can approach; they have steeled their hearts against natural impulses and mercy at the supposed bidding of their gods to a degree that nothing else could compel. The very last thing associated with Deity as a rule has been anything approximating to love."

This is not from an avowed Freethinker. It is from a recent sermon by the Rev. R. J. Campbell. The Freethinkers' work has been to make it possible for Mr. Campbell to say this and still draw a large salary for preaching the Gospel.

HELLO IN THE PULPIT.

An admiring parishioner of a young divine in an Ohio town recently had a telephone installed in the clergyman's house. The good man was delighted with the convenience and used it immediately before going to church.

When the time came for him to announce the first hymn he read the first lines with his usual impressiveness and concluded with, "Let us all unite in hymn seven O three."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

January 12, 19, and 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £268 6s. 1d. Received since:—Col. B. L. Reilly (second sub.), £1 1s.; Mrs. A. Brooks, 5s.; W. R. Angell, 5s.; Pretoria Freethinker (second sub.), 5s.; E. Truelove, 5s.; J. Burns, 15s.; W. P. P., 5s.; "Warrington Saints," 8s.; T. O. T., 5s.; R. L. M., £2. *Bloemfontein (South Africa) per F. Rose*:—N. M., 10s. 6d.; Friend, 5s.; J. Berks, 5s.; H. M., 10s. 6d.; E. W., 10s. 6d.; L. L., 5s.; Irving, 10s. 6d; L. N., 10s. 6d.; A. S., 10s. 6d.; F. Rose (second sub.), 10s. 6d.—Total £4 8s. 6d. This completes the subscription list to December 31, 1912.

Correction: James Blamford in last week's list should have been James Blampied.

W. OWEN.—Thanks for long explanatory letter *re* Glasgow.

T. BARKER.—We do not rank Matthew Arnold as highly as some of his admirers do, but we should be very sorry to call him a "minor" poet.

T. ROBERTSON.—See the result. Thanks also for your new year's good wishes.

A. PRICE.—There is room for what may be called an artistic *Life of Thomas Paine;* something as full essentially, and as accurate, as Dr. Conway's voluminous work, but less diffuse and documented. Of the short sketches of Paine's career our own, published as an Introduction to the Twentieth Century Edition of the *Age of Reason*, was very carefully written. The late George Jacob Holyoake called it "masterly." We have thought of adding something to it and including it in the "Pioneer Pamphlets."

W. T. CLARK.—Why shouldn't the same publishers issue sporting papers and pious papers from the same office? Ordinary publishers are only out to make money. Didn't you know it?

J. BETTERIDGE.—Glad you are "a lover of the *Freethinker*" after reading it three years.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

CONNIE BROOKS.—Pleased to hear that you and your mother both read the *Freethinker* eagerly. We recognise more than ever, if possible, the necessity of converting women to Freethought.

"VINCENT."—We have seen the brochure *Ma Vie*. It may be clever, in its way, but the discussion of the historicity of Jesus has gone far beyond that stage. Fresh "Lives of Christ," from any point of view, are only a waste of time. With regard to Mr. Mann's articles, we endorse your opinion that they are "fine."

PRETORIA FREETHINKER.—Glad you still "greatly enjoy" this journal and do your best to promote its circulation in your part of the world.

PETER GRAY.—Veterans of 77 are not numerous. We are glad to hear from one of them. Send us cuttings whenever you please.

T. H. PERKINS.—Good wishes reciprocated. It is pleasant to hear from readers who date from 1886.

W. CALLAGHAN.—Sent as desired. We note your "opinion that the *Freethinker* is the finest literary paper published."

JAMES NEEDHAM.—Why shouldn't a miner write? A miner is as good as anybody else. Not in our occupations, which are generally a matter of chance, but in ourselves lies our worth to the world. Glad to hear you reckon the night you heard Mr. Foote lecture at Manchester the best night in your life. We hope you will find more toleration in America.

CLYDEBANK.—An envelope with this postmark contains a 5s. Postal Order but no letter of instructions. What is it for?

J. BURNS.—Alloted as desired. Thanks. Shop manager will send you receipt for his portion.

E. B.—Thanks for useful matter.

L. GEMMER.—Presumably for the new year. Kindly confirm or otherwise.

W. BAILEY.—We are writing you on the matter, which is certainly important.

JOSEPH ROSTOCK.—We hope the acknowledgment is correct. Thanks for the Warrington "saints'" compliment and good wishes.

PHILIP VIVIAN.—Happy to renew acquaintance with your *Churches and Modern Thought* through your presentation copy of what we suppose is the new impression advertised.

T. O. T.—We note that you "have derived more intellectual light from the *Freethinker* than from any other paper."

BELFAST FACTORY LADS.—We have already given the "Manger to Cross" picture show as much attention as it deserves. It won't help Christianity,—quite the contrary. And why should we be angry when Christians blaspheme?

"BOLTON."—Your subscription was duly handed over, and should have been specially referred to. It dropped into the general account of the meetings. We propose to deal with your interesting letter next week—without disclosing your identity.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Our Fighting Fund.

[The object of this Fund is to provide the sinews of war in the National Secular Society's fight against the London County Council, which is seeking to stop all collections at the Society's open-air meetings in London, and thus to abolish a practically immemorial right; this step being but one in a calculated policy which is clearly intended to suppress the right of free speech in all parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. This Fund is being raised by the Editor of the *Freethinker* by request of the N. S. S. Executive. Subscriptions should therefore be sent direct to G. W. Foote, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to him.]

Previously acknowledged, £76 10s. 9d. Received since:—W. R. Angell, 2s. 6d.; J. Burns, 10s.; R. L. M., 10s.

Sugar Plums.

The Queen's (Minor) Hall lectures will be resumed on Sunday evening, January 12. Mr. Foote is preparing special lectures for the new course. A full announcement will appear in our next issue.

Further Sunday lectures have been arranged for during January at the Public (Minor) Hall, George-street, Croydon. It is hoped that the local "saints" will do their best to make these meetings well known. Mr. Cohen leads off this evening (Jan. 5), his subject being "Christianity and Social Problems." Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Miss K. B. Kough, and Mr. A. B. Moss will occupy the platform on the following three Sundays. Admission is free, so it will cost inquiring Christians nothing to attend, unless they choose to drop something into the collection box. Questions and discussion are cordially invited as usual. It may be added that Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., will be happy to supply applicants with neat little printed announcements of this course of lectures for judicious distribution.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 14. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by most of the leading Freethought lecturers in London, including Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Moss, and Mr. Heaford. There is sure to be a good dinner, some good music, and some good (brief) speeches. We hope to see a big rally of "saints" at the festive board, as a kind of send-off to a vigorous new year's work.

Mr. F. J. Gould's bright and (if he were not on the sea we might say) breezy article in this week's *Freethinker* was written in redemption of a promise he made us a few days before he set sail for India, where he has engaged to do some Ethical work in the interest of public education. Mr. Gould said that he must write an article for the *Freethinker* very shortly, or people would be saying that he was lost to the cause. This was a bit of our old friend's fun. He is as little likely to be lost to the cause, if the cause means Atheistic Secularism, as any man we know. But he has his own ideas of "constructive" work as a Positivist, which does not at all mean that he is nearer Christianity than he used to be, as some who read him misconceive.

At the dinner which was given to Mr. Gould (with £143) early in December, mainly though not officially by Ethicists

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and Rationalists, but which we did not hear of till it was over, he did not hide his respect for the *Freethinker* and its editor. "In my speech of thanks," Mr. Gould wrote us, "I made special friendly reference to you; and I mention this now, as I do not know what, if any, report may appear." Mr. Gould sails for home from Bombay on February 22, and should be back in London about the middle of March.

There is some interesting matter (we think) about George Meredith in this week's "Literary Gossip." Our special articles on Meredith's Letters will not be started till next week. The delay is owing to some correspondence we have had with the editor of another periodical on the matter of Meredith's letters to ourselves.

We are sorry for it, though not surprised, but the Glasgow Branch, now its old meeting-place has been burnt down, is feeling the pinch of Christian intolerance. Few halls are obtainable at all for Sunday lectures, and those few are under the crippling conditions that there shall be no charge for admission, that no discussion shall be allowed, and that no literature shall be sold. It seems likely, therefore, that the fire has annihilated Freethought propaganda in Glasgow during the present winter. Some open-air work will probably be done locally during the summer, and there is a good prospect of the indoor work being resumed in the autumn.

The December number of *Concord*, the organ of the International Arbitration and Peace Society, reaches us belatedly. It contains, amongst other interesting matter, some "International Notes" by Mr. W. Heaford, written with his usual vigor and vividness. Also a wise article by Mr. G. H. Perris on "The Worth of Man." Mr. Perris quotes a paragraph from the *Times* to the effect that "The Bible Society has given away 100,000 Testaments or Gospels among the armies of Turkey and the Balkan States, and is printing 70,000 more in Bulgarian, Servian, and Croatian." Surely this is what Rabelais would have called *sanglante dérision?* We rejoice to see Mr. Perris's protest against the importation of the *odium theologicum* to the detriment of the Turks:—

> "'Give a dog a bad name,' and you may do what you like. The *odium theologicum* plays its part. A German firm made the guns of Mahomet, a French firm those fired in the name of Christ. There are pashas in St. Petersburg as well as Constantinople, and the Duma has effected no more than the Young Turks; but shallow minds have easily convinced themselves that all Turks are savages, and deserve the worst that can be done to them. It is a base temper, this, ignorant and unmanly; and it may cost us dear, if it be not soon checked. The misgovernment of the so-called Christian populations by Turkish pashas and their agents has been a frightful scandal, eclipsed in recent history only by the misdeeds of the Government of Russia and its Holy Synod. But who thinks of butchering the Russian people to avenge the wrongs of Finland? Pack the Turk off to Asia! it is said. The Armenians, I suppose, are to be ignored, because they have not been able to provide a throne for some unemployed member of the Houses of Hapsburg, Bourbon, Hohenzollern, or Romanoff, to borrow money in Paris, or to buy big guns in Essen."

These words are very pertinent and timely.

The Christians are giving Freethought another advertisement at Leeds. Mr. Thomas Jackson has been prosecuted again for "profanity" of which we have not particulars. His first communication on the matter only reached us on Tuesday morning. A few hours later we received his telegram: "Twenty shillings or fourteen days. Doing the time. Jackson." We are just going to press and can say no more at present.

Our attention has been drawn to an editorial paragraph in the *Literary Guide* complaining that the *Freethinker* had "refused" a Rationalist Press Association advertisement of some of its recent publications. The complaint comes to our notice too late for a reply in this week's *Freethinker*. Some falsehoods are disposed of by a flat denial; others, as Tennyson said, are a different matter to fight. Moreover, this one gives us an opportunity of stating some facts that may as well be known. For the moment we must be content with assuring our readers that the alleged "refusal" is entirely imaginary—and not exactly the dream of innocent simplicity.

An American friend sends a pretty Christmas card. It is in the form of a letter, and it runs as follows:—Dear Mr. Foote,—If the 'Honorarium' lacks any part of the £300 on December 31, I will consider it a privilege to contribute the part wanting. I will send cheque on receipt of advice from you. Yours faithfully ——." A generous intention gallantly expressed! We leave it to the writer to decide whether his name shall go with his donation.

The Superiority of Science to Revelation.

THE claims of science to human regard are universal. The term "science" embraces knowledge in all its multitudinous forms. Apart from science, theoretical and applied, man would have remained an untutored child of nature, little above the man-like apes. It is to the fairy wand of science that civilisation and culture are due. Early man, when he provided himself with stone implements and weapons, laid the first foundations of modern civilised society. From a rude hunter, dependent for his very existence on the spoils of the chase, he acquired the art of domesticating certain of the lower animals which ministered to his needs. The earlier hunting stage was for a time combined with the pastoral stage, and at a later period man developed a rude system of agriculture. Originally a dweller in caves and other natural shelters, man proceeded to erect pile-dwellings on the margins of lakes and to raise primitive huts on the firmer earth. Step by step, from prehistoric times onwards, the scientific spirit in man has ingeniously evolved the art of breeding animals and cultivating plants—apart from which we would starve; the most up-to-date systems of land and ocean transit; beautiful cities with all their contained treasures of art and invention; the innumerable textiles and fabrics which, originally the costly luxuries of the favored few, are now numbered among the necessities of civilised life; with the thousand and one additional devices which minister to the comfort, convenience, and prolongation of human existence.

It would appear almost superfluous to enter upon a detailed disquisition concerning the benefits rendered by science to humanity were it not for the fact that the blessings of civilisation are so familiar that their secular creator is very frequently forgotten.

Science, then, is the result of the critical observations and experiments of the entire human race. But, irrational as it may seem, the "revelations of devout and learned," which date from a far-distant, ignorant, and uncritical past, have been blindly accepted by the majority of mankind. Other faiths besides the Christian vaunt their sacred scriptures. Vast value was in ancient Rome attached to the Sibylline verses. Homer and Hesiod were in Greece regarded as semi-sacred exponents of the Greek religion; but as civilisation advanced "the human element in their compositions was sifted from what was still considered as divine; all that was repugnant to reason, conscience, or taste was explained away either as an allegory or a corruption of the text." In our own day and generation, as many are aware, our own divine documents have been subjected to similar treatment.

The Zend-Aveeta of ancient Persia and the Vedas of early India were likewise adored as revelations from God. In a later age the Mohammedan Bible, the Koran, occupied a kindred position among the faithful. The Hebrew records were similarly exalted, and, according to Protestant theology, our salvation depends upon our acceptance of the divine veracities revealed in the New Testament Scriptures.

Curiously enough, with the triumph of the Christian religion, the civilisation of Pagan Rome sank into chaos and old night. For centuries the then known world was convulsed by the persecutions, squabbles, and wholesale butcheries which were the outstanding episodes of the time. With all the advantages which flow from a revealed religion at their command, the nations steadily refused to progress. It was with the decline of the sacred and the rise of the secular spirit that the scientific field was reoccupied. Instead of trusting uncritically to the fading legends of a musty past, men began to shake themselves free from the trammels of sacerdotalism, and proceeded to face the problems presented by the real world in which their lot was cast. Continents unknown to the ancients began to

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be opened up. Columbus discovered America; Magellan circumnavigated the globe. Copernicus, Galileo, and Bruno declared that our earth was not the centre of the universe, and prepared the way for the subsequent triumphs of astronomy. Newton weighed the universe in his balance. Kant and Laplace traced the genesis and evolution of the solar system. Hutton, Lyell, and their successors placed geology, the science of the earth, on a sound basis of orderly development. Astronomy, geology, and physics thus prepared the path for the doctrine of organic evolution.

With Herbert Spencer as its philosopher, and with Darwin and Haeckel as its two most powerful scientific expositors, the doctrine of the evolution of life and mind from the simplest beginnings became the accepted philosophy of all the younger searchers into nature's secrets. The Mosaic cosmogony was regarded as a product of the world's infancy. It became obvious that man had not fallen from a high condition, but had risen from a low one. The general history of man, considered as a whole, despite occasional relapses here and there, was discovered to have been one of advance towards the better and the best. Instead of a shadowy vale of sorrows and tears, our earthly home began to be looked upon as the main centre of man's healthful and beneficent activities. Human duties were to be performed while the day lasted. Man might repose in eternal sleep within the grave.

There was more material progress in the nineteenth century—which was essentially the age of scientific achievement — than all the others that went before. The standard of comfort was vastly raised, and the death-rate materially fell. The old lumbering sailing vessel gave way to the fast travelling steamship; the antiquated coach was replaced by the railway; the horse-drawn vehicle is being rapidly superseded by the motor. The dirty disease-engendering and ill-lit streets of the past are now being transformed into clean, healthy, and clearly illuminated thoroughfares. The means of transit have been so cheapened that countless people who in past ages never left their native homes may now visit celebrated cities which were previously unvisited save by a privileged few. As a result, the insular prejudices of centuries tend to disappear. All the world over, to study and understand foreigners is to appreciate their good qualities, and to sympathise with their particular point of view.

Among the notable characteristics of science is its tendency to liberate the human mind. Science, as Huxley says, commits suicide when it binds itself to a creed. On the other hand, as Shakespeare says, "In religion, what damned error but some sober brow will bless it, and approve it, with a text?" Theology is essentially stationary and stagnant. Those of its blots and blemishes which have been eliminated have been removed by the criticisms and discoveries of science. Wherever religion has come into collision with science, it has always been ignominiously defeated. For its present comparatively purified state, theology is heavily indebted to science. In every branch of secular knowledge progress is taken for granted. But the religious reformer is invariably ostracised by his clerical brethren. While the opener-up of new knowledge is accorded a respectful, if critical, scientific hearing, the progressive religionist is vilified or subjected to a conspiracy of silence. The case of Colenso in the Church of England and the more recent instance of Father Tyrrel in the Church of Rome bear abundant evidence of this melancholy truth, and these things were possible in an age of enlightenment. In more remote days, before science had humanised men's deeds, the rack, the thumbscrew, the gibbet, and the flames were the customary rewards of the heroes and martyrs of philosophical inquiry. But all clerical animosity and antagonism were unavailing. Science has, in the long run, rendered her enemy powerless.

One notable instance of the superiority of science to revelation is presented by her attitude towards the insane. Her conduct in connection with those who claim our most unstinted pity redounds to her honor and glory. In the bad old times of sacerdotal supremacy, the mentally diseased were regarded as victims or colleagues of the Devil. The doctrine of demoniacal possession was derived, according to the Church, from revelation itself. As a consequence of this, all lunatics were regarded as the temporary abodes of evil spirits. The devils were beaten out of their bodies; they were confined in pestilent prisons, and treated as enemies to the human race. Thanks to the growth of Rationalism, the medical man was ultimately permitted to minister to their disease.

In every branch of her multifarious activities, science represents the sun of righteousness. She carries on an untiring war against all the diseases which afflict mankind. The plague, leprosy, smallpox, and other dire diseases have almost disappeared from civilised Europe. Consumption, cancer, epilepsy, dipsomania, scrofula, and other maladies must ultimately succumb to her treatment. And if the people are to secure more rational social and economic conditions, sociology, the science of society, must render assistance in bringing into being this consummation devoutly to be wished.

The hall of science, said Buckle, is the temple of democracy. Science is essentially democratic, as her gifts are showered upon high and low alike. And we stand sadly in need of a more scientific system of education. It is of supreme importance that the children of this generation, who will be the parents of the one that is to follow, should be made acquainted with the actualities of the universe. There is nothing better fitted to broaden the mental horizon than a knowledge of the marvels and wonders of great evolving nature. No grain of sand but moves a brightly millioned peopled land. In a star-mist scattered through countless miles of space are resident the promise and the potency of worlds yet unborn. The flower in the crannied wall, the ivy clinging to a moonlit ruin, the clouds as they cast their moving shadows on a sunlit plain, the still waters when they reflect the orbs of heaven on a calm, cold winter's night, the laws that govern life in childhood, adolescence, maturity, and decay, all lie within the province of scientific inquiry and explanation.

The devotees of revelation demand acquiescence in their dogmas. The student of nature, on the contrary, counsels the fullest inquiry. The only scientific dogmas are those facts and principles which have been demonstrated beyond dispute. It is sometimes objected that science robs men of the poetry of life. If by poetry, falsehood is meant, it does. The mission of science is to unmask falsehood and bring truth to light. But there is nothing in science which dwarfs or deadens the imaginative faculty. On the contrary, science by bringing us into closer contact with realities promotes the growth of the imaginative and æsthetic powers. A drop of water is not less wonderful, but more so, when the microscope reveals its true condition. What appears as a transparent liquid to the unaided eye becomes a world of wonder and beauty when examined under a magnifying glass. As Carlyle once put it, what a vast difference existed between the picture presented to Newton's dog Diamond and to that of the natural philosopher when the two gazed in company upon the starry sky! The heavens revealed no more to the dog than to a lowly savage, but to the mind of Newton a glimpse was afforded of the unspeakable vastness of the universe.

Science, then, is superior to any form of alleged revelation. It has ever ministered to the mental, moral, and social well-being of the human race. It teaches us to realise our kinship with the lower animals and deepens our sympathies with them. It lessens man's pride and arrogance; it proves that he is not a special creation fashioned in the image of God, but a product, in company with countless others, of the forces of nature. Science affords no evidence of a future life, but it assures us that our good and evil deeds live after us in the thoughts and

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actions of succeeding generations. She forces the truth upon us that our duty lies in the present, and that sin is never washed away by any form of vicarious atonement. In the light of science, man's position in nature is precisely that which was accorded it by the greatest of poets and of men: "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"

T. F. PALMER.

Lyman Abbott on Immortality.—II.

A Lecture delivered before the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist), Chicago.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THOUGHT is no more independent of the body than is life. When I was still in the Church, one of my arguments in proof of the immateriality of thought was that the body consisted of oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, etc., and that these could not think. Can oxygen think? I would ask. If we were to place carbon or nitrogen into a glass tube, would the combination produce thought? Would the tube begin to think? But all I had to do to perceive the fallacy of my reasoning was to turn my question around and ask: Can there be thought without oxygen or nitrogen? Do we know of a single instance of the existence of mind apart from an organised body? If thought is not dependent on carbon and oxygen, why is it that there is no thought where these are not present?

Theologians make the mistake of assuming that before a given combination or organism can have a certain quality, that quality must be in each or any of the parts that make up the combination. That is to say, if oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen combined produce thought, then these elements should contain in their separate state what they produce when combined. But the reverse of this is the affirmation of both experience and science. Sugar, for instance, is a combination of so much of carbon, so much of oxygen, and so much of hydrogen, yet separately neither of these elements is sweet to the taste. Yet united they produce a new substance. Thought is the new substance which the combinations of the vibrating cells in the brain when flooded with blood from the heart produce.

The thought ability of any organism is always in precise proportion to the delicacy and perfection of the organism. As the brain develops, it thinks more and better. When the brain is shrunk or pinched, or injured by accident, its thinking becomes defective. A bullet in the head stops all mental activity, and thought does not return until the material damage is repaired. If thought or the soul is not a product of the organism, why is not the infant as good a reasoner as its grown-up parents, or if the soul is independent of the convolutions of the brain, why is not the savage as resourceful as a Shakespeare?

Again, we believe in the love, the hope, and the courage of mother because we can reasonably prove that she possessed these noble qualities. We cannot only convince ourselves, but convince also others, of the beauty of her character. When a man says his mother had the gentlest disposition he is not speculating; he can prove it. If he has any doubts of his mother's love he would be disconsolate all his life. But if I question the love and tender mercies of God it is because I cannot prove them. How a God could be infinite in power, in love, and in wisdom, and yet fail to enforce his will on earth—on this tiny atom of dust that floats in the air—as he is supposed to enforce it in heaven, is beyond my comprehension. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Goodness! If God does not have to ask anybody's permission to have his will done in heaven, why does he ask us to let him have his way on earth? I believe in my mother's love and devotion because there is nothing contradictory or mysterious about it. I cannot say I believe in the love of God, because a thousand things disprove it.

The Doctor's next argument is this: "My grounds of belief in God and immortality are based upon the comforts that I get in sorrow. I am sure there is an invisible being who talks to me." Not for all the world would I take away from anyone a single comfort he may possess, but is a doctrine true because it is comforting? Even as it is by accommodating ourselves to nature that we can live at all, it is by obeying the truth instead of commanding it that truth will bless us. We would not have to go to school to learn mathematics, or chemistry, or history, if we could command these sciences to mind us. To study them means to learn how to obey them. If the Bible is true, we do not need any education because we can reverse the process and command the laws of matter and force to study *us*, and to suit themselves to our needs and desires. The sea must learn how to step aside for us, the iron must learn how to float when we command it; fire must not burn, and sun or moon must not move, when we so order it. It is not we, it is nature that must go to school, if the Bible is true. That is why the Jews in the Old Testament, and the Christians in the New, say not a word about schools or education. When you can work miracles education is superfluous.

The real difference between theology and science, or between the supernatural and Rationalism, is that, while the former flatters us into the belief that we may command the truth, Rationalism teaches that we must obey the truth. Sooner or later, we must learn to square our desires, our beliefs, and our hopes with the facts, if we are to live at all. The child cannot go on for ever believing that the dolls it plays with are real. If we suppress the truth from the child, we will only be postponing the day of awakening. Not to tell the truth about dolls to children does not make them real, it only hides their unreality. That is what theology does, it hides the truth. It cannot do more. Rationalism arms us for the battle of life by opening our eyes to the difficulties and dangers which confront us; theology, on the other hand, puts us off our guard by raising false hopes.

Moreover, if comforting beliefs are true, why does the missionary attack or expose the idols of the heathen? Are not wooden gods comforting to some people? Why does the missionary denounce them? But if it is to give in its place something more comforting that he takes away the wooden gods, for the same reason we take away a far-away heaven to help make this earth a heaven. What would be more consoling than the conviction that if there is another life we cannot possibly miss it, if we have made the best of this, and if there be no other life we may still have the satisfaction that we have not lost this one by throwing it away for another. Nothing could be more comforting than to try to make the present life yield all that we expect of a future life. It is the only way to deserve another life. The Rationalist has this additional comfort, that he does not let the future, with its worries and fears, spoil the present. Nor is he driven to the verge of despair by the terrible prospect of an eternity of suffering for practically the majority of the human race. Is it comforting to look forward to a time when half of humanity will be in heaven and the other half in hell, and the two worlds side by side within view of each other? What great-minded man or woman would derive any comfort from such an outlook? Who would be so callous as to congratulate himself upon such a *finale* for the universe? How pinched in heart and brain is orthodoxy! It wants a hell alongside of its heaven, as a comfort! "How could anyone live," people ask, "without the Christian hope?" But what is this hope? A heaven and a hell! Real suffering in the one place, and unreal pleasures in the other. Let not the anxieties about such a future destroy the peace and tranquillity of

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the present life. If we are mortal, all the crying and fretting will not make us immortal. If, on the other hand, we are immortal, we cannot escape it. Peace to our troubled minds! One life at a time.

Furthermore, lack of anxiety about the unexplored future will help us to be more appreciative of our present opportunities. When an Italian or a Frenchman comes to America to tarry here only until he has saved enough to return to his old country, he cannot become very much interested in this country, or be sincerely attached to its institutions. It is not likely that he will even become naturalised, nor will he endeavor to assimilate our civilisation. He will remain a stranger during all the years he spends here, and America will occupy second place in his affections. In the same way, if we looked forward to a world beyond, and were always preparing to emigrate to it, we would be apt to care less and less for this world. The Christians are always talking about the next world: "I am a pilgrim, I am a stranger, and I can tarry but a night," is one of their hymns. "Here we have no abiding city," is one of the favorite texts of the pulpit. No wonder that during the Middle Ages, when faith in the next world was very much stronger, ignorance, disease, poverty, and misery played havoc with this world.

The Rationalist, not knowing anything about a future world, nor caring to speculate about it, devotes all his time to the service of the world he lives in. Oh! that the time, the money, and the energy employed to prove and preach another world had been devoted toward making this one habitable, happy, clean, and sweet! Instead of trying to get ready to migrate into some unknown world, let us do our best to make life in this world so beautiful, so exalted, so free, and so attractive as to make the people in the next world, if there is such a world, long to come and live with us!

Quieting a Maudlin Myth.

IT will be remembered that when, last spring, the ill-fated *Titanic* went down the story of the heroic band playing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," until swept from the deck by the angry waves, was sent broadcast throughout the world.

This alleged incident was a fruitful theme of discourse by the thousands of pulpiteers while Sunday-school teachers everywhere grew maudlin recounting to their youthful charges the alleged Christian zeal and fortitude displayed by that band as they calmly awaited death as only Christians could. But alas! this myth, like thousands of others before it, must also vanish before the light of truth.

Among the survivors of that memorable ocean tragedy was one Colonel Archibald Gracie, of Washington, D.C.

It was Colonel Gracie who, soon after his arrival here from his harrowing experience, distinguished himself by announcing in church one evening that God had saved him from the wreck in answer to his prayers. Just why God had not heard and "answered" the prayers of the 1,600 or more who perished, this special favorite of God's mercy was, perhaps, too modest to explain. It may, however, be added parenthetically that some of his more irreverent hearers declared that as it was a characteristic trait of the Colonel's to always look out for number one, it might at least be a matter of doubt whether God had had a hand in "saving" him or not.

Be that as it may, Colonel Gracie, after a long silence, in an address before the University Club, in describing some of the scenes of that fearful night, declared that not only did the band not play "Nearer, My God, to Thee," but intimated that had they attempted to do so, the men among the passengers who were doing all they could to cheer and encourage the women and children would have prevented them, forcibly, if necessary.

Furthermore, Colonel Gracie declared that these bandsmen, who have been given a place in history for their fortitude in continuing to play as the tragedy was being enacted, and who were said to have gone to their deaths in the performance of their duty, so that they might cheer others with their music, in fact ceased to play some time before the ship went down. He added that he himself saw the men throw away their instruments, showing that the natural instinct of self-preservation outweighted the weaker side of human nature, mere sentiment.

What the band really did play was "ragtime" music, which was, of course, the sensible thing to do. This the Colonel himself admits when he said, "If the band had played that familiar hymn, panic would have resulted. Fixing the minds of the passengers on the possibility of their being nearer to God, and I say it seriously, would have been the last thing wanted."

He further declared that no music was played for fully half an hour before the *Titanic* finally sank, and that the men must have realised that their time could be much better employed in helping to load the boats, and this they probably did.

Two facts, then, stand out prominently in Colonel Gracie's narrative, and they are, that the band did not play "Nearer, My God, to Thee," nor any other hymn, and that they ceased playing altogether fully half an hour before the sinking of the ship.

Thus is shattered by an unimpeachable witness the "Nearer, My God, to Thee" myth, but this will not prevent our clerical friends from repeating this exploded yarn for generations to come. But now that the truth is out, all *Truthseeker* readers can in the future refute the statement by quoting as their authority Colonel Archibald Gracie, an eye and ear witness, who, on the evening of November 23, 1912, in a speech before the University Club of Washington, D.C., publicly denied that the band on the *Titanic* on the night she went down played "Nearer, My God, to Thee" or any other hymn; but, on the contrary, played ragtime music until within a half hour before she was engulfed by the waves, after which no music was played at all.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). J. J. SHIRLEY, M.D.

The belief in a God has hitherto been the seed of all the bloody dissensions among men. The various ways of worshiping an imaginary being have caused more wars and ruin than all the varieties of other interests. With the disappearance of belief in God disappears the foundation of all religious hostility, and in its place arises the foundation of human equality and universal peace. All wars have sprung from two grounds: on the political field, the monarchical subjects fight for their earthly despots; on the religious, the godly subjects fight for their heavenly ones; and as on the political field the abolition of Royal Majesty and its subjects lays the foundation for a union of the nations, so on the religious domain the abolition of the Divine Majesty and its believers lays the foundation for the solidarity of humanity.—*Karl Heinzen.*

As I stood behind the coffin of my little son the other day, with my mind bent on anything but disputation, the officiating minister read, as a part of his duty, the words, "If the dead rise not again, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." I cannot tell you how inexpressibly they shocked me. Paul had neither wife nor child, or he must have known that his alternative involved a blasphemy against all that was best and noblest in human nature. I could have laughed with scorn. What! because I am face to face with irreparable loss, because I have given back to the source from whence it came the cause of great happiness—still retaining through all my life the blessings that have sprung, and will spring, from that cause—am I to renounce my manhood and, howling, grovel in bestiality? Why, the very apes know better, and, if you shoot their young, the poor brutes grieve their grief out, and do not immediately seek distraction in a gorge.—*Thomas Henry Huxley.*

Obituary.

We have to record the death of David Turnbull, of 140 Rachery-street, Glasgow, on Friday, December 20, at the age of twenty-seven. For ten years he had been helpless from paralysis, during which time he had been attended with a mother's sublime devotion. "Mrs. Turnbull," a Glasgow correspondent writes, "nursed him through all those years with a devotion that never slackened. Her case shows how a rational view of things may mitigate the worst evils. Her son was only seventeen years of age when he was stricken down, and she recognised that his only salvation from the dreadful calamity of physical helplessness lay in stimulating the activities of his mind. She read to him day after day, she interested him in politics and Freethought, he looked forward to his weekly *Freethinker*, and was as interested as any of the family in the progress of the movement." We desire to associate ourselves personally with this tribute to a nobly affectionate woman. The Turnbulls all ring true, but the mother is one of nature's exceptional products. Her son's death is, in one sense, a happy relief; but the blow of bereavement is felt when it falls, and we beg to assure her of our sincere sympathy.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

CROYDON PUBLIC (SMALL) HALL (George-street): 7.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Social Problems."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Cowell's, 44 Jenner-road, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business Meeting—Lecturers' List and Dinner, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity Before Christ."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, E. W. Alderson, "Cremation."

OUTDOOR.

LEIGH (Market Place): Robert Mearns, 3, "Thought the Great Want of the Age"; 3, "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 2 SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

The peace of the two worlds depends upon these two words—Be kind to your friends, and be merciful to your enemies.—SADI.

The Passing of Christianity.

FOR some weeks the religious journals of this country have been crowded with articles and letters concerning the recent census of church and chapel attendance at Liverpool. Most of the writers maintain that the immense falling off reported must not be taken as evidence that the people generally are, at bottom, any less religious than they used to be. Not one of them concurs with Dr. C. R. Niven, the well-known Freethinker, in the contention that the decrease in church attendance is due to the fact that the modern man is making the discovery that however necessary religion may have been to his remote ancestors in times of ignorance and inexperience, yet for him, in this age of scientific knowledge, it is quite unnecessary. Dr. Niven is convinced that it is this discovery that really explains "the avalanche that is overwhelming the churches and chapels of these islands, and for that matter the world over." The *Christian World* for January 2 frankly admits that "in Liverpool, at all events, there is no escaping Dr. Niven's conclusion that where 100 people formerly attended worship (*i.e.*, twenty years ago) only 73 do so now." Our contemporary refers to Dr. Niven's article, presumably in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, as "a searching examination" of the results of the census, and characterises the following extract as "brutally frank":—

> "The net result of the last ten years' work of the Protestant churches and chapels in Liverpool is to show a decrease of 16,000 worshipers every Sunday, with an increase of over 8,000 seats for the 16,000 people who do not come to worship. In other words, the net gain of ten years' preaching in the Protestant churches is the production of 24,000 empty seats."

It seems to us that Dr. Niven's interpretation of the facts disclosed by the Liverpool census is unquestionably true. The steady decrease of church and chapel-going is only one of the symptoms of the passing of the Christian superstition. But the official defenders of the faith assert dogmatically that it is nothing of the sort. Dr. Clifford, in his review of 1912, which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for January 1, admits the facts, but rejects the Freethinker's interpretation of them. He says:

> "Just now, alas, the air is filled with lamentation and mourning over decaying Churches and Sunday-schools, declining attendances at public worship, and a general neglect of institutional religion. There are deep searchings of heart amongst the Churches. The Liverpool census is most discouraging, and everybody is apprehensive of a similar or worse state of facts being discovered by the statistics to be given us about London. The outlook is dark and threatening for organised religion."

Those are the facts; but no sooner are they stated than the Christian sophisticator begins to manipulate them to his own advantage. Dr. Clifford proceeds:—

> "But we must not forget that Churches may cease growing, without that meaning that religion is losing its hold of us, or that we are losing our grip of it. We may have to cease 'building temples' in order to 'worship God,' and dissociate ourselves from organisations that claim the Christian name in order that we may be faithful to Christ himself and his claims."

This fallacious reasoning is altogether too transparent, and is rooted in dishonesty as well. Dr. Clifford knows quite well that, as Dr. Niven observes, temple building is still indulged in as vigorously as ever; it is a Christian hobby of the hour; but the all-significant fact is that the temples built lack worshipers. What the Churches have to complain of is not merely the dearth of new recruits, but a vast plethora of deserters; not only that they have ceased to grow bigger with the population, but that, in spite of themselves, they have taken to growing alarmingly smaller. It is idle sophistry to say that the Churches, while retrograding *quantitatively*, may, in reality, be gradually advancing *qualitatively*. And yet we find even Principal Adeney, as Chairman of the Congregational Union, declaring that "we have had enough of statistics, the question being not the size of the church, but its quality, its tone, spirit, efficiency," forgetting that the Church, according to its New Testament ideal, is to prove its quality, tone, spirit, efficiency by conquering the world; or that the Church, if true to its Lord, exists, not for its own sake, but for that of the world outside. We read in the Book of the Acts that the Apostolic Church evinced its efficiency in the fact that there were being "added to it day by day such as should be saved." In other words, an efficient Church must be a victorious Church.

Dr. Clifford is a magnificent rhetorician. He has not "the sweet, silent rhetoric of persuading eyes," but the boisterous rampageous, and irresponsible rhetoric of the modern pulpiteer, who flees for refuge to subterfuge and evasion. Here is a sample:—

> "We may have been losing only to find; losing limited prejudices to acquire emancipating ideas, leaving behind us the crippling and obsolete machinery that we might breathe the fuller life, forsaking the broken and splintered cisterns of human manufacture in order to drink from the exhaustless fountain of the soul of the world. The tree of religion may be bursting and breaking the pot in which its roots have been bound, in order that it may be replanted in a purer and richer soil, and thereafter produce a more nourishing fruit."

If that passage has any meaning at all, the idea it conveys is that Christianity is securing a divorce from the Church, because of her manifold infidelities, or in order to contract a fresh marriage with the State. Nay, more, Christianity is sick and tired of monogamy and has resolved to make experiments in polygamy. The State is already almost a Church. District and City Councils, Parliament, and the movements of the modern mind, all these are becoming quite churchy; and thus is religion, "slowly but surely, ascending to its throne in the experience of men." But this is unutterable, intolerable twaddle. By the State, Dr. Clifford understands the democracy as against the aristocracy; by Parliament, the radical wing of the Liberal Party; by the County Council, its Progressive members; and by the movements of the modern mind, the New Theology and Socialism. In other words, Jesus Christ, in his theory of government, is a Democrat; in his politics a Radical; and in his political economy a Socialist; and, naturally, only Democrats, Radicals,

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and Socialists can be Christians. Aristocrats, Tories, and Individualists are enemies of the Cross of Christ, and shall be excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

The truth is, however, that the Churches are declining because Christianity is dying, and that Christianity is dying because humanity is slowly but surely coming into its own. Dr. Clifford is professionally blind to this truth, and attributes whatever natural good emerges in the world to the influence of Christianity, forgetting that throughout the ages Christianity was bitterly opposed to most of the reforms which he regards as its fruit. The Church not only tolerated but advocated slavery, and winked at feudalism. The Church carried favor with the high and mighty, and perpetuated poverty by her very charities. The Church hobnobbed with the landlord and the squire, and kept the working classes under her iron heel. Dr. Clifford may tell us that it was not Christianity but a corrupt Church that did all these dreadful things; but, we ask, where then was Christianity? Where was the omnipotent Christ, the head of the Church? Where was the Holy Ghost, the comforter, sanctifier, and protector of the Church? Does not Dr. Clifford realise that to admit that the Church was at any time corrupt and guilty of wicked deeds is tantamount to acknowledging that the Church has never been what it always claims to be? In any case, Christianity is whatever the Church chooses it to be, and she has chosen to make different representations of it at different periods, and even at one and the same period. Everybody knows that Dr. Clifford's version of Christianity differs widely from that championed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, or even from that so zealously promulgated by his own brother of the Metropolitan Tabernacle; and has he the hardihood to believe that he is more competent to interpret it than either of the other two? No, there never has been and there never can be any Christianity apart from the Churches; and even the Churches of to-day harbor extremely divergent views of it. "But," someone may object, "it is the spirit of Christ that ought to decide every question"; and yet the spirit of Christ is the vaguest and most variable thing in the world. It impels Dr. Clifford to fight with tooth and nail for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Episcopal Church in Wales, and the Archbishop of Canterbury to resist both with all his might. It sets all the Churches at sixes and sevens on the subject of national education, and keeps them endlessly quarreling about doctrine and ritual. In reality, the spirit of Christ is as great a myth as Christ himself, and as variously interpreted. There never has been, there never can be, any agreement as to either.

Naturally enough, the last thing Christian ministers are prepared to do is to admit that the religion on which they live is passing away; and quite as naturally, they will do everything within their power to prolong its life. Dr. Clifford asks us to "note the march of the Brotherhood movement in France, Canada, and England," and as a result of noting it we have come to the conclusion that the Brotherhood movement is a desperate device for catching recruits for the depleted Churches; and so is "the Men and Religion movement." And yet, in spite of all such devices, the Churches are getting to leak more and more every year. They are losing both adherents and members by the thousand. Nothing is easier than to assert in Christian pulpits that "moral salvation is not in politics nor in administration"; but nothing is more certain than that "moral salvation" has never been brought about through the instrumentality of the Churches. The fact that "moral salvation" is still to seek involves the absolute damnation of the Churches. When the divine tells the scientific moralist that he has not moralised society, the retort is irresistible, "Neither have you." One thing is certain: in whatever economic or moral reform that has recently been effected the Churches have not been even consulted; their very existence has been quietly ignored. "True, Dr. F. B. Meyer has had something to say" in each case; "but then he has something to say about everything"; and so it is not of the least account.

J. T. LLOYD.

One Out of Five.

ACCORDING to Sir Robertson Nicoll, of the *British Weekly*, out of every five children that pass through Nonconformist Sunday-schools, not more than one grows up to be a member of a Nonconformist church or chapel. Sir Robertson is naturally much perturbed at such a condition of affairs. He calls upon parents and preachers to be up and mend this condition of things—if they can. He asks them to form leagues of worshiping children, so that by-and-bye they will become worshiping adults. If they can do this all may yet be well. If they cannot, then we are witnessing the beginning of the end. Presently, not four out of five, but the whole five will escape the net of the clerical fishers. The Churches will try to subsist on an adult population, which could not last beyond a single generation. For it is a commonplace of observation that the only way to make anyone a Christian is to set to work on him before he is old enough to see what you are about. You must catch your believer young—the younger the better. If you catch him young enough, and train him hard enough, there is hope. He may never leave you, or, if he does, there is the possibility of recapturing him at a later period. For the religious virus bites deep. Once get it into the system and it is difficult to eradicate. Therefore, the maxim of all wide-awake Churchmen is "catch the kids." Every priest is a professional kidnapper. A church that leaves the children their freedom is doomed. Sir Robertson Nicoll says so, and every Freethinker will agree with him. To turn an adult Christian into a Freethinker is a good piece of work. To stop the child becoming a Christian is better work still. Therefore, I feel like congratulating the lucky four who—if they have not become real Freethinkers—have taken one step in the direction of freedom. And I sympathise heartily with the one who is left in captivity.

A complete philosophy of religion lies locked up in this struggle of the churches for the control of the children, and in the escape of so many despite all the precautions taken. Let us note, in the first place, how heavily the dice are loaded in favor of the Churches. The influence of the home is on their side. The parents clearly desire their children to grow up Christians or they would not send them to Sunday-school. They are sent for religious instruction during the most impressionable period of their lives. The value of religious belief is impressed upon them in a number of different ways. Religion becomes associated with early recollections of home, of parents, of teachers. Yet four out of every five break away. The Church that has fought so hard to keep them sees them depart. And all that the advisers of the clergy can say is "make the services brighter. Interest them, amuse them, give them pictures, singing and entertainments, then perhaps they will stay." And, strangely enough, many of the clergy seriously discuss the advisability of turning themselves into juvenile entertainers in the hope of securing a crop of adult supporters.

Next, let it be noted that this frantic struggle to get hold of children is a comparatively modern phenomenon. Where religious belief is a natural outcome of contemporary life the religious art of kidnapping is unknown. Indeed, among primitive peoples, the religious instruction of children is quite ignored. When they are just emerging from childhood some care is bestowed on their initiation into the mysteries of religion, but religion remains an affair of adult life. Even at a much later stage of social culture there is no special call for the religious education of children. With mediæval Christianity, for example, there was no demand for a religious

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"atmosphere" to be created around children. Religion did not have to be recommended to the child by the agency of tea meetings, singing, entertainments, or kindergarten games. The religious atmosphere was provided by the life of the time. There was no difficulty in keeping people—young or old—religious, the difficulty would have been to have kept them from becoming so. Between religious belief and the social environment, there existed, at least, no direct and obvious disharmony.

It is a change in the character of the social environment that produces the need for capturing children. Growing knowledge of the world, with the development of social life, sets up an unconscious antagonism to religious beliefs. The power of the priesthood, the welfare of all that a priesthood stands for, is threatened. A line of cleavage is established between inherited religion and contemporary life, with the result that a struggle for the direction of life becomes one of the marked features of all religious organisations. In place of social life confirming religious teaching, an antagonism is created between the Church and the world. And this, not because one is pure and the other impure, but simply because the stages of culture are in conflict. The theory that religious organisations have stood, or now stand, for a purer morality than that expressed in everyday life, is undiluted nonsense. The impulse to a healthier morality has always originated outside the Churches, and it needs little study to prove that, defective as it may be, the ethic of ordinary social intercourse is much higher than the ethic of the pulpit. The real cause of division, of the separation of things into sacred and secular, of the marking off the Church from the world, is that if religious beliefs are exposed to the free play of current life and knowledge, they inevitably decay. And in sheer self-defence religious organisations protect themselves by the maintenance of a special language, clothing, manner, and general "atmosphere"—all so many attempts to insulate the religious life and protect it from healthy criticism.

Proofs of this are numerous and unmistakable. It is a common complaint of all Churches that when their members move into new districts, or into a new country, they frequently cease attending a place of worship and drop religion altogether. In other ages, when religious belief had a real and independent vitality, people took their gods or their religion with them. It was a part of their mental life, and could not be shaken off with a change of habitat. To-day, the religionist is often like a ticket-of-leave man. He will report himself only so long as he feels he may be discovered. Not so long ago, Dr. Horton was complaining that Sunday cycling had done much to break down the habit of worship. The same complaint is constantly made concerning the week-end habit, picture shows, and a hundred and one other things. They are all illustrations of the truth that the maintenance of religion in modern society involves the operation of a host of artificial safeguards, and that, if these were withdrawn, religion is doomed. A belief that is not proof against a picture palace, a bicycle, or a Sunday on the river, is almost outside the bounds of respectful discussion.

The consequence of all this is that the Churches have been driven to concentrate more and more on securing control of the family, and of the children in particular. Everything else can wait for a more or less mature individuality. There is no frantic haste to cram a child with other subjects. The scientist, the teacher of art, of literature, of mechanics, waits until the child is old enough to appreciate what is being taught to it. To follow this policy in religion would be suicidal. Is there any instance known of an educated, intelligent person of, say, twenty years of age, brought up without religious belief, and then becoming religious? I have never heard of such a case, although I have been looking for one for many years. Religion must perforce commence with the child. It must breed clients for church and chapel if either is to possess them. That is the plain economic side of the problem. Every child represents a potential customer of the Church. The fight of the Churches for the control of children, under whatever form it may be, is a fight for clients and for revenue. Cut them off here and their supply is destroyed. They simply cannot wait to submit their creeds to an unbiassed mature intelligence. It is the children or nothing.

Of course, this is putting the matter very plainly, even brutally. And it is quite probable that many of the clergy, in resenting this charge, would do so with all sincerity. The majority of people develop a certain dexterity in disguising from themselves the operations of self-interest, and when one happens to be working with a sect or a party its workings become still more successfully cloaked. To openly admit, or even to recognise, its workings would be fatal to its success. An unselfish reason must be discovered for a selfish action; and it must not only impose upon those to whom it is given, but it must also, at least in the majority of cases, impose upon those who use it. So it happens that the workings of this particular piece of corporate self-interest is disguised under a concern for morality, for the development of character, for the creation of a healthy sense of citizenship. And all the time there is the plain, and now generally admitted, fact that good character, sound morality, and healthy citizenship may be cultivated, and actually exists, apart from all religious belief whatsoever.

The child has no pressing need for instruction in speculative doctrines, whether they refer to this world or the next. Such subjects can at least wait until each child is old enough to understand what it is being taught, and to exercise complete liberty of acceptance or rejection. Self-respecting men with sensible teaching ask for nothing more than this, and they should be satisfied with nothing less than this. What the child really needs is a measure of protection against the crowd of priests seeking to capture it in the interests of this or that religious organisation. Sadder still is the fact that the child should so often need protection against its own parents. A Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children already exists, but it is concerned only with the infliction of material injuries. We need another organisation, or at least a lively sense of the need for protecting children against having forced upon them teachings that are wholly unfitted to their years, against their innocently accepting as true doctrines that many afterwards discover to be false, and which are actually known to be of a dubious character by those who teach them. It is not the least of the offences of the priesthood that it converts into an instrument of oppression parental care and affection, which under proper conditions should form the child's principal defences against aggression.

The burden of Sir Robertson Nicoll's lament is cheerful news to all lovers of genuine progress. That four-fifths of the children who are dosed in Nonconformist Sunday-schools should escape the Nonconformist churches is so much to the good. It is an indication that the pull of life is more powerful than the teachings of religion. True, the liberated four-fifths may not all become avowed Freethinkers, but their not becoming avowed Christians is something to the good. If this condition of things can be maintained it is, as Sir Robertson Nicoll sees, the beginning of the end. The secularisation of the schools bids fair to become soon an article of practical politics. The secularisation of the home must follow. And that means that religion must depend upon an appeal to the educated adult intelligence for support. And its chances of success in that direction are not likely to fill any Freethinker with grave misgivings.

C. COHEN.

It is for the good of people in this world—to increase happiness on this side of the tomb.—*Ingersoll.*

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Francis Thompson.

"That same gentle spirit from whose pen
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow."
—SPENSER.

AMID thousands of unloved and obscure graves at Kensal Green Cemetery is one with the touching inscription, "Look for me in the nurseries of heaven." This is the last resting place of Francis Thompson, who was buried there about five years ago. He was then almost unknown, and during his lifetime he had suffered the hardships of lonely poverty to a degree not surpassed by any of the most unfortunate poets of the world. He had slept many nights upon the Thames Embankment, and under carts in Covent Garden Market. He sold matches in the Strand, and was a bookseller's porter staggering through London streets with a heavy sack upon his back. When he was carried to his grave only a few intimate friends, who had looked after him for the last few months of his life, were present to mourn. Now he is placed by all good judges in the ranks of poets of genius, and the garland of laurel decorates his tomb which was denied to the living man.

It is quite possible both to overrate and to underestimate Thompson's merits; but no one, we suppose, would contend that he was other than a genuine and unmistakable poet. He was a very unequal writer, sometimes soaring to the pure ether of the great singers, and sometimes falling to the lower slopes of Parnassus. He had, indeed, his faults; but against them must be placed his unbalanced, imaginative, reckless nature. There can hardly be a sadder story than his in the whole history of literature, though Chatterton, Villon, Poe, James Thomson, and Verlaine are among them. To be at once a genius and a drudge, to live in direst poverty and to die of a lingering disease, is as melancholy a lot as can be imagined. Nor would he deserve less pity if we denied his genius. His faults, whatever they may have been, injured himself alone; but genius he most certainly had.

Thompson is a poet's poet—like Blake, Rossetti, and Shelley. His kinship with these singers is far nearer than to Crashaw and the ecclesiastical mystics. He assuredly calls for a meed of praise equal to that accorded to Maeterlinck, D'Annunzio, Rostand, and others for whom so many British altars have flamed in worship. Thompson's genius was Oriental, exuberant in color, woven with strange textures. His poetry was mainly a splendid rhetoric, imaginative and passionate, as if the moods went by wrapped in imperial purple in a great procession. His masterpiece, "The Hound of Heaven," is molten white with passion. Listen to these lines, in which the alchemy of the poet's genius transmits the dross of theology into the fine gold of poetry:—

"I dimly guess what time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of eternity.
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsed turrets slowly wash again;
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith."

Now hear the great valediction which concludes his "Anthem of Earth":—

"Now, mortal, son-like,
I thou hast suckled, mother, I at last
Shall sustenant be to thee. Here I untrammel,
Here I pluck loose the body's cerementing,
And break the tomb of life; here I shake off
The bur of o' the world, man's congregation shun,
And to the antique order of the dead
I take the tongueless vow: my cell is set
Here in thy bosom; my little trouble is ended
In a little peace."

How fine, too, is his vision of the woman sleeping in the child, like a dryad hiding among the leaves:—

"Those whose young sex is yet but in thy soul,
As, hoarded in the vine,
Hang the gold skins of undelirious wine,
As air sleeps, till it toss its limbs in breeze."

The closing stanza of "Daisy" is dangerously near perfection:—

"She went her unremembering way;
She went, and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone,
And partings yet to be."

This sensitive singer, who suffered much, undisheartened and undismayed, was also a magnificent prose writer. His essay on Shelley, posthumously published in the *Dublin Review*, is unmatched of its kind. The jewelled panoply of his diction bears ample witness to the princely opulence of his imagination. Writing of *Prometheus Unbound*, he says:

"The final scenes especially are such a Bacchic reel and rout and revelry of beauty as leaves one staggered and giddy; poetry is spilt like wine, music runs to drunken waste. The choruses sweep down the wind, tirelessly, flight after flight, till the breathless soul almost cries for respite from the unrolling splendors."

This is a superb tribute from the Catholic poet to the Atheist singer. Literature, like music, is wider than opinion, broader than dogma, as limitless as the humanity to which it appeals. When Gladstone passionately addressed his speech on the Oaths Bill to a hushed and expectant House of Commons, he quoted some perfect lines of the old Roman Freethinker, Lucretius, as daring an iconoclast as Voltaire. The majesty of the quotation was its justification. Gladstone's brain and taste persisted in being independent of his heart, like the German soldier who fought through the Franco-German war, and who, when killed, was found to have in his pocket a well-thumbed copy of De Musset's poems. Catholic though he was, Francis Thompson deserves a few words of praise in a Freethought paper. He never did weak or puling work in prose or verse. Although he waged an unequal war against fate, he was at least a happy soldier. When his turn came, he yielded up his broken sword with a brave and a humble heart.

MIMNERMUS.

The Leeds "Profanity" Case.

MY advice has been asked on this matter. It might have been better if it had been asked before. I heard absolutely nothing about it until the very morning Mr. Jackson's case was to be called in court, and shortly after that I was apprised by telegram of his sentence of "twenty shillings or a fortnight." Mr. Jackson chose the fortnight. His choice shows he does not lack courage. But that is not the only virtue in a public propagandist. An Andalusian bull has plenty of courage, but he is generally carted out of the arena at the finish. His adversaries are too cunning for his methods of warfare.

I repeat that my advice has been sought. To begin with, the seeking is too late for any useful action. In the second place, Mr. Jackson's case is not one that could be taken to the Court of Appeal. Mr. Horace Marshall—who, by the way, complimented Mr. Jackson on his able and temperate defence—refused to state a case. He did not see any case to state. Nor do I. All he had to decide was whether the defendant was guilty of "profanity" under the Police Act. That question turned upon the first sentence. Mr. Jackson had publicly declared in Victoria Square, Leeds, that

"The God of this anti-infidel crusade is a mean, contemptible, cowardly, bloodthirsty old monster."

Without disputing the truth of this, one must admit that if it is not "profanity" in the ordinary sense of the word, it is remarkably like it. Personally, of course, I want to see all references to "profanity" as well as to "blasphemy" banished from the laws of England. But I cannot close my eyes to the fact that they are there, and I cannot expect magistrates and judges (not even the best of them—and we all know what the worst are) to overlook the fact either. One may insist on one's right to use "profane language" in public places, and take the consequences as

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cheerfully as possible. That is an intelligible policy, and no one could call it dishonorable. But the question of an appeal against one's sentence is simply one of law and utility. And in this case I see nothing that can be gained by such action. The Court of Appeal would be certain, in my opinion, to back up the magistrate. For there is nothing in dispute except the two points:—(1) Did the defendant use that language, and (2) Is it "profane language" within the meaning of the Act?

Some readers seem to have misunderstood what I have previously written on "appealing." What is the use of fighting over a hopeless case? Well, it may be asked, what is a favorable case? It is a case in which reasonable argument is possible. It is arguable, for instance, that the defendant ought never to have been prosecuted under the Police Clauses Act; that the words charged against him were part of a legitimate attack upon certain ideas which were defended by their own spokesmen; that they cannot fairly be regarded as "profanity" in the common meaning of the term; that the Act could never have been intended to apply to any language used in the course of a public address or a public discussion; that if the defendant is to be prosecuted at all he should be prosecuted under the Blasphemy Law, and indicted and tried in a superior court, and not dealt with in a court of summary jurisdiction, so that the invaluable right of free speech might be guarded against hasty assaults. I should like to argue such a case before the Court of Appeal, but I confess I should shun the task of arguing Mr. Jackson's present case. Moreover, the Freethought party has no money to throw away. Certainly the N. S. S. has not. I may add that Mr. Jackson was not speaking for the N. S. S. or the Secular Society, Ltd., when he used the "profane language" he is under sentence for.

I see that Mr. Jackson, in his address to the Magistrate, kept to the old Leeds plan of defence. Mr. Robert Blatchford was dragged in again. Certain warm words about Jehovah were quoted from his *God and My Neighbor*. But these words were not uttered in a public place; they were printed in a book, which was not given away, but had to be bought; they were thus not prosecutable under the Police Clauses Act; and Mr. Blatchford was discreet enough to say "Jehovah" instead of "God."

No one need go to prison under the Act in question. Mr. Jackson can easily refrain from language on which the police can base a prosecution. If he chooses to court prosecution, that is his affair, not mine. It is for him to decide whether the advertisement is worth the cost.

Perhaps we may all rejoice that the cost is limited. A fortnight's imprisonment is the utmost penalty for "profane language" under the Police Clauses Act. If the defendant preferred to pay a fine I should not be inclined to blame him. If he can spare his money better than his time, I think he has a right of choice; in either case he submits to *force majeure*. Giving an undertaking is quite another matter. That is a self-humiliation for the sake of safety.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE PREACHER'S PERQUISITE.

When the new minister, a handsome and unmarried man, made his first pastoral call at the Fosdicks, he took little Anna up in his arms and tried to kiss her. But the child refused to be kissed; she struggled loose and ran off into the next room where her mother was putting a few finishing touches to her adornment before going into the drawing room to greet the clergyman.

"Mamma," the little girl whispered, "the man in the drawing room wanted me to kiss him."

"Well," replied mamma, "why didn't you let him? I would if I were you."

Thereupon Anna ran back into the drawing room, and the minister asked:

"Well, little lady, won't you kiss me now?"

"No, I won't," replied Anna promptly, "but mamma says she will."

A Churchless Community.

A READER personally acquainted with the facts vouches for the truth of an article in the *Leader* of Davenport, Iowa, which states that the town of Walcott, thirteen miles west of that city, has no church, and yet that its people are not only contented and happy, peaceful and law-abiding, but also thrifty and prosperous. To dispose of the financial part at the outset, it may be said that Walcott is next to the richest city per capita in the world. The banks have a deposit of $1,126,000, and the inhabitants number 416. The article in the *Leader* says:—

> "One of the distinctive features of Walcott, aside from its heavily-laden banks, is the absence of a church or other place of worship. It has been twenty-seven years since the town has had a church. Like a flower by the wayside, it failed to thrive and finally withered for the lack of nourishment. The edifice was located on the old cemetery grounds. It was abandoned as a house of worship, moved further into town, and converted into a dwelling.
>
> "Fifteen years ago an itinerant Episcopal clergyman struck Walcott and endeavored to find a home there. But the community failed to receive him with open arms or to extend him any encouragement. So, after a brief tarry, he moved on in search of greener pastures.
>
> "'No, no; we do not want a church in Walcott. We have no use for one,' declared Louis Hinz, one of the pioneers of the town. 'We are now one community, one people, one happy family, you might say. We have no differences about religion. We are all peaceful and law-abiding. If we had a church there would be a division of sentiment. It would create two parties. One would go to church, and the other would not. Then one side would attempt to convince the other. This would create agitation and a division of sentiment. It would destroy our pleasant, happy relations. So you see why we don't want a church in Walcott.'
>
> "Walcott has three general stores, three implement stores, two banks, two blacksmith shops, two butcher shops, two barber shops, two garages, two grain elevators, three doctors, a lumber yard, a restaurant, two public halls, and one saloon."

The mayor of this churchless town is Dr. Carl Hinrichs, whose picture embellishes the newspaper account. He is serving his second term and is perfectly satisfied with Walcott as it is, so far as preaching is concerned. This village answers in the affirmative the question whether a community can thrive and its people enjoy all of the blessings of civilisation without supporting a church.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Mark Twain's "Confession."

[Written in the early eighties.]

I BELIEVE in God the Almighty.

I do not believe he has ever sent a message to man by anybody, or delivered one to him by word of mouth, or made himself visible to mortal eyes at any time in any place.

I believe that the Old and New Testaments were imagined and written by man, and that no line in them was authorised by God, much less inspired by him.

I think the goodness, the justice, and the mercy of God are manifested in his works: I perceive that they are manifested toward me in this life; the logical conclusion is that they will be manifested toward me in the life to come, if there should be one.

I do not believe in special providences. I believe that the universe is governed by strict and immutable laws. If one man's family is swept away by a pestilence and another man's spared, it is only the law working: God is not interfering in that small matter, either against the one man or in favor of the other.

I cannot see how eternal punishment hereafter could accomplish any good end, therefore I am not able to believe in it. To chasten a man in order to perfect him might be reasonable enough; to annihilate him when he shall have proved himself incapable of reaching perfection might be reasonable enough; but to roast him forever for the mere satisfaction of seeing him roast would not be reasonable—even the atrocious God imagined by the Jews would tire of the spectacle eventually.

There may be a hereafter and there may not be. I am wholly indifferent about it. If I am appointed to live again, I feel sure it will be for some more sane and useful purpose than to flounder about for ages in a lake of fire and brimstone for having violated a confusion of ill-defined and contradictory rules said (but not evidenced) to be of divine institution. If annihilation is to follow death, I shall not be aware of the annihilation, and therefore shall not care a straw about it.

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I believe that the world's moral laws are the outcome of the world's experience. It needed no God to come down out of heaven to tell men that murder and theft and the other immoralities were bad, both for the individual who commits them and for society which suffers from them.

If I break all these moral laws, I cannot see how I injure God by it, for he is beyond the reach of injury from me—I could as easily injure a planet by throwing mud at it. It seems to me that my misconduct could only injure me and other men. I cannot benefit God by obeying these moral laws—I could as easily benefit the planet by withholding my mud. (Let these sentences be read in the light of the fact that I have received moral laws only from man—none whatever from God.) Consequently, I do not see why I should be either punished or rewarded hereafter for the deeds I do here.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

JOHNNY SMITH was a thoughtful little boy who not only took great pains with his copy-book, but who paid more attention to the excellent moral precepts contained in them than little boys generally do. That sage injunction, "Be virtuous and you will be happy," early arrested his attention, and as, with painful effort and inky fingers, he traced each line of this familiar formula he became impressed with a growing conviction that the attainment of happiness must surely be an easier achievement than the reproduction of the sweeping curves and graceful symmetries of those beautiful letters.

This conviction remained with Johnny as he grew through boyhood, and he often wondered why happiness was always supposed to be so difficult to gain when all one had to do in order to gain it was to "be virtuous." So he began to make the experiment of practising what he understood to be virtue as often as possible in order to become, as he confidently expected, the happiest boy in the world.

In his schoolboy days it seemed to him that robbing birds' nests, torturing frogs, or throwing stray cats into ponds scarcely came under the category of virtuous conduct, so he steadily refrained from these pastimes, thus earning for himself the contempt of all his schoolfellows and the opprobrious name of "Amelia"—this being supposed to convey implications of feminine tender-heartedness and susceptibility unutterably despicable to all manly schoolboys. He also felt that fighting was not virtuous, so he never fought except in sheer self-defence. Thus he became the victim of all the bullies in the school, and was universally regarded as a coward, but he was neither a coward nor a weakling, for he was proficient in many boyish sports, notably swimming. This was proved on one occasion when the boy who had been in the habit of bullying him most unmercifully fell into a river, and when Smith plunged in and saved the bully's life at the risk of his own. But the only reward he got for this was a severe chill, followed by an attack of pneumonia, which nearly killed him, while the bully suffered no harm whatever from the accident.

When Smith left school he became a clerk in a bank, and gradually rose to a position of trust as an accountant. A fellow-accountant once proposed to him that the two of them should carry out a dastardly scheme of embezzlement, which of course, remembering the old copy-book of his childhood's days, he indignantly refused to participate in. This made the other accountant his mortal enemy, and when the embezzlement was carried out and discovered the perpetrator of the crime escaped unscathed, but there were circumstances which threw grave suspicion on Smith. He was tried, and, though acquitted for want of evidence, he lost his situation and had to start earning a living again in a distant part of the country. But the man who had committed the fraud bought a country house with the proceeds, was honored and respected by all his neighbors, and read the Lessons in the Parish Church every Sunday.

After some years of toil and privation, Smith once more found himself in fairly prosperous circumstances. He was now married, and had several friends whom he esteemed and trusted; and one of these, happening to get into financial difficulties, applied to him for assistance. To help one's friends in distress is certainly a virtuous act, so Smith had no hesitation in lending his friend all his hard-earned savings. But the friend, who had not paid much attention to copy-book maxims, neglected to repay a single penny of the loan, and Smith was once again plunged in poverty. Whereupon his wife, disgusted at what she called his imbecile stupidity, eloped with another of his friends.

Smith now began seriously to doubt whether his old copy-book maxim, "Be virtuous and you will be happy," was altogether to be depended on as a guide through life; and he had almost resolved to abandon it, and to seek for happiness on quite other lines, when he fortunately came across a volume of Essays by an anonymous writer. One of these essays seemed to fit his own case so admirably that it might almost have been written specially for his instruction. Here are some passages of it which impressed themselves most deeply on Smith's mind:—

> "Some of our copy-book headings ought to be carefully revised. Take, for instance, that familiar one, 'Be virtuous and you will be happy.' If this were altered to 'Be virtuous and you will deserve to be happy' no exception could be taken to it; but the injunction as it stands in our copy-books would be valid only in a perfectly virtuous social State. A virtuous character is one which prompts conduct favorable to the welfare of the community; but if the community be not itself entirely virtuous—that is, if it contain a certain number of non-virtuous individuals—virtuous conduct may often be the direct cause, not of happiness, but of bitter unhappiness to the virtuous individuals practising it.
>
> "Sages of all ages, from that rather over-rated person King Solomon down to modern times, have invited mankind to seek moral guidance from the habits of ants and bees; but no strict analogy exists between the communities of the social hymenopters and human communities, because the former are perfectly organised societies and the latter are not. Was it not Marcus Aurelius who observed that 'What is bad for the beehive cannot be good for the bee'? This is true enough for beehives, but not for human societies. Every individual bee is so organised through ages of inherited instinct that it *cannot* act in any way but what is beneficial to the hive, and any attempt to act otherwise would probably involve a painful effort. Therefore what is 'good' for each individual bee must also be 'good' for the hive. But supposing bee communities were not thus perfectly organised, and that they contained a certain number of bees who were, let us imagine, addicted to stealing the stored honey or devouring the eggs. An indulgence in such nourishing diet might well be 'good' for the non-virtuous bees practising it, and they would doubtless be 'happier' than the virtuous bees who refrained from such wrong conduct, but it would certainly be 'bad for the beehive.'
>
> "It must not, however, be supposed that this view justifies a negation of virtue and a dissolution of all ethical sanctions. Virtuous conduct is such as promotes the general welfare, and as the general welfare is always and indefeasibly right—it follows that virtuous conduct must be always and indefeasibly right. But it should not be pursued with any expectation of individual happiness — indeed, virtuous conduct practised with a view to one's individual happiness as a reward, whether in this world or an imaginary future one, ceases to be virtuous conduct at all. The sole and sufficient sanction for such conduct is the welfare of the community of which each individual is an integral and inseparable part. The sole reward of the virtuous man is a share in that social welfare along with his fellows. The final purpose of his virtue is the attainment of that far-off goal when the community shall be as perfectly organised as a hive of bees, when the social equilibrium shall be complete, and when the maxim, 'Be virtuous and you will be happy,' shall be really true."

The reading of this essay prevented Smith from abandoning his virtuous principles, but it also prevented him from expecting their practice to meet with much reward of a hedonic kind.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS!

Leave your holy parables,
Leave your pious suppositions;
Try to give straightforward answers
To the damnable old questions.

Why must Right, a bleeding outcast,
Trail the burden of the Cross,
While exultant as a victor
Riding the high-horse goes Wrong?

Where, then, lies the fault? Perchance
The Lord is not quite Almighty?
Or himself he works the mischief?
Ah, but this were too degrading.

Thus we ask, and ask for ever,
Till at length our mouths are stopped
With a handful of mere earth;—
But can this be called an answer?

—*Heine* (*translated by James Thomson "B. V."*)

If I had been helping the Almighty when he created man, I would have had him begin at the other end, and start human beings with old age. How much better it would have been to start old and have all the bitterness and blindness of age in the beginning. One would not mind then if he were looking forward to a joyful youth. Think of the joyous prospect of growing young instead of old! Think of looking forward to eighteen instead of eighty! Yes, the Almighty made a poor job of it. I wish he had invited my assistance—*Mark Twain.*

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Acid Drops.

The wisdom of trusting to "names" and "authorities" is proved by two recent facts. Mr. Frederic Harrison has been writing up the German scare in the *English Review*. He does it in the Jeremiah style. He reminds us, indeed, of our old friend Jonah, with his "Yet forty Days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Dr. Alfred Wallace, on the other hand, has just been laughing the German scare to scorn. These rival prophets are both old men, both highly intellectual, and both famous publicists. If age, and mental power, and moral sincerity, were enough to justify a public utterance, they would both be entitled to belief. But that is impossible, for they are at opposite poles to each other. The moral is that every man should do his own thinking. There are no real "authorities" in the realm of mind. The first of all gospels is the gospel of Freethought.

Mr. Plowden, the well-known London magistrate, had a Scotsman before him charged with being drunk on New Year's Day. Defendant couldn't see any harm in that. "Then it is part of your religion to get drunk on ——," Mr. Plowden said. "Yes, it is," the defendant interrupted. The sentence was "ten shillings or seven days." Such is the respect paid to North British religion in London.

The Salvation Army has been making use of the parasitic daily press again to puff the "wonderful work" of its Suicide Bureau. The work itself is not wonderful; the wonder is that people swallow all the lies told about it,—they are so transparently silly. Every person in distress who consults the Bureau officials, and doesn't commit suicide afterwards, is apparently counted as a person saved from self-slaughter by the "power of religion." Common-garden journalists seem to take this quite for granted. But after all it is utter nonsense. The only way in which the Salvation Army can show that it saves anybody at all from suicide is by showing a decrease in the general statistics of that "crime" over the area of the Suicide Bureau's operations. The Blood-and-Fire Brigade, however, is very chary of figures since Mr. Manson's criticisms were pressed upon public attention. Mr. Manson has placed on record the extravagant statements made by the "Army" officials about the success of its crusade against suicide in the earliest days of that effort. The very first week's results were given as follows:—

Non-suicide cases	12
Doubtful cases	5
Lives saved	194

The Bureau had only just started its work, and its efforts must then have been confined to London. Therefore the Bureau officials "saved" 194 suicides in one week. Now the Registrar-General's returns just then showed that only 587 suicides took place in London during the whole of the year 1906—and the Bureau started on January 1, 1907. In seven days the Salvation Army "saved" more than one-third of a whole year's suicides! Of course it did nothing of the kind. The officials omitted to look up the public statistics before uttering their false boastings.

English newspapers are boasting of the suppression of murderous witchcraft, with its inhuman sacrifices, in Southern Nigeria. Several of the chief priests have been condemned to death. Shocking, no doubt. But how long is it since human sacrifices in the name of witchcraft were common in England and other Christian countries? Does not the Bible teach the reality of witchcraft? Was it not believed in as late as the days of John Wesley, who declared that to give up witchcraft was to give up the Bible? And it is only 121 years since John Wesley died.

The Bishop of Carlisle's new year's pastoral letter to the clergy and laity of his diocese says that some of the clergy do good work, but—

> "There are exceptions, and two or three of the clergy are approaching the brink of exposure for their habits. Others seem to be afflicted with incurable indolence. The less they have to do the worse they do it. Others are dull and listless, and their ministry of the Word and sacrament is not a ministry but a mechanism. Their churches are shut from Sunday to Sunday, and on Sundays they are empty. Fortunately, this class is very few."

Evidently the second coming of Christ is badly wanted in that part of the world.

The *Daily Telegraph* continues to publish lengthy accounts of the cruelties practised by the Balkan Christian Allies on the inhabitants of the conquered districts. In its issue for December 31 the paper publishes a full column account of what it properly calls "the horrible cruelty" of the Servians on "unarmed, defenceless persons, old men, women, children, and infants at the breast" in Albania. Between Kumanovo and Uskub some 3,000 were put to death; near Pristina the number amounted to 5,000. Women were forced to watch their children being "literally carved to pieces with bayonets." We are told that "the deeds done exceed anything" which occurred under Turkish rule. Moreover, "the less the resistance of the Albanians to the invading armies the greater the massacre." Many of the details of the cruelties practised do not admit of being plainly recorded. The Turkish authorities have made representations to the Powers on the subject, but it is not likely that much will be done on behalf of Mohammedans and Jews when the ruffianly murderers are such pious Christians fighting an avowedly religious war of the Cross against the Crescent.

In the light of the *Telegraph* revelations, it is well to record the tribute paid the allied armies by Dr. Clifford in his New Year's address at Westbourne Park Chapel on January 1. Apparently it is enough for Dr. Clifford that Christians have won a much exaggerated series of victories against a Mohammedan enemy. Accordingly he bursts out as follows:—

> "They have faced the situation and patiently prepared for the fight on behalf of civic liberty. Their drill was their development. Character emerged. Character is mastery, and has won in the heroic struggle against corruption and tyranny, and the world."

Not a word, it will be observed, about the outrages reported, not by the Turks, but by English newspaper correspondents. The Christian has been victorious, the Mohammedan has been defeated, and Dr. Clifford would not be Dr. Clifford if he did not find the reason for this to lie with the superior character of the conquerors due to their Christian faith. Character has won! And these people of character and Christian faith are those of whom the crimes indicated above are reported, and *which are not seriously denied.*

Another striking feature of the situation is the complete silence of the religious papers on the subject. We have not come across one—and we glance through a number each week—that has made any reference to it. The *Church Times*, which regretted the war coming to end without the recapture of Santa Sophia, has not said a word about the outrages, although it has dealt with the progress of the war week by week. Had the outrages been committed by Turks on Christians, pious England would have been ringing with the story, with all the embellishments that could be suggested by a Christian imagination. Under these circumstances we were more than pleased to see a letter in the press from Mr. H. B. Marriott Watson expressing his astonishment that no public notice has been taken of the matter. He pertinently asks:—

> "Are these the people who boasted that they carried the liberating Cross against the Crescent? Are these the people who proclaimed a Holy War against the iniquities of Turkish rule? Are these the people who professed to extend the benefits of civilisation to the suffering inhabitants of Thrace, Macedonia, and Albania? Are these the people who claimed a few weeks back that they came as deliverers, they whose hands are now red with the blood of innocent victims?.....Away with all these mawkish and miserable sentimental lies which have bolstered up the legend that the Balkan peoples stand for enlightenment and justice and progress. Let us have done with cant, cant for which the pulpits are largely responsible, and recognise that the Balkan Allies are out to grab territory, and have waded to their goal through rapine, murder, and massacre."

Mr. Marriott Watson asks for the truth to be made public at any cost. But he little knows the pulpit of England if he expects the truth to be told there of the treatment of non-Christians by an ostentatiously professing Christian enemy.

The Rev. J. Stephen Roose says there was originally no demand for Sunday picture shows. The demand was created when their opening was permitted. Well, what more does the man want? People could not well demand a thing before they knew what it was. If they continue to demand it after they have once tried it, that is clear proof of a public demand, whatever may be said to the contrary. Mr. Roose also says that Christians have taken shares in cinematograph shows, and so do not oppose their opening because they do not wish to diminish the profits. We should not be surprised if this were true. The Christian conscience is usually susceptible to monetary pressure. It was Ruskin who said that if engineers could build a tunnel to hell Christians would invest their money in it, and they would willingly close the churches rather than lower the dividends.

Those poor picture palaces! And our poor addle-headed public officials! Three lads were recently charged at Wigan

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with robbery. The Chief Constable said that the money was stolen in order to obtain admission to picture palaces. He said it was his experience that these places had a bad influence on boys. We wonder how many forms there are of this particular superstition? At one time it is through reading boys' papers; then boys do wrong as a consequence of listening to Socialist orators. Now it is because of picture palaces. Generally, these excuses are put in the mouths of offenders by the police, or by the magistrate, or by someone else. And none of them have the wit to realise that when a boy—or an adult, either, for that matter—does wrong, he is quite ready to fall in with the views of those who judge him as to the cause of his misconduct.

The Universal Week of Prayer, under the World's Evangelical Alliance, hasn't improved the weather. The week-end was marked by storms, wrecks, and floods. Neither has it improved the prospect of peace in the East of Europe. We should like to know what good it *has* done.

"General" Bramwell Booth and his wife are visiting Liverpool next Wednesday and holding meetings in Hope Hall. They call it "A Day with God." We were not aware that the Booths had "God" on a string like that. Suppose he won't go with them! Well, they could keep it dark, and do the business all the same.

Church reports for 1912 continue what is now the usual tale of Christian progress—that is, increased accommodation for worshipers, with fewer worshipers than ever to fill them. In Wales the four principal Nonconformist denominations report a decrease of 877 members, making over a 30,000 loss in five years. In England the Congregationalists report a decrease of 2,221 church members and 3,178 Sunday-school scholars. To accommodate these people who stay away they have provided four extra churches, while 269 additional teachers minister to the 3,178 absent scholars. The Baptists also report a decline in membership of 2,231, and nearly 5,000 Sunday-school attendants. The authorities have, therefore, thoughtfully provided 36 new churches, with 17 extra preachers. The steady decrease in membership is no less striking than the steady increase in buildings. Some attempt to explain the decline in membership is offered by way of change of population. But the population does not vanish into air, and when people move out of one district they move into another, and this should not affect the totals. The only genuine explanation is that year by year a larger number of people simply dispense with Christianity altogether. It should be added that the figures given also represent an absolute decrease. If we take it in relation to the increase of population the loss would be still more striking.

Rev. Donald B. Fraser, of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, tells the local *Post and Mercury* that the emptying of the Christian churches is a very bad thing for the community. He says it means that morality is disappearing. Every man of God knows that you can't have morality without *him*. Other people are not quite so sure about it nowadays.

Rev. Dr. Clifford delivered his New Year's address to a large gathering at Westbourne Park Chapel. "We are a year's march," he said, "further on in humanity's journey; has it been a march nearer to God's goal or the Devil's?" The question is a poor compliment to God. Dr. Clifford also srggested that declining churches may mean the reverse of declining religion. When the churches are *all* empty, we suppose, Christianity will have reached the height of prosperity. It must be admitted that the old gentleman (Dr. Clifford—not the Devil) has an original way of looking at things.

Of all ways of promoting the cause of woman suffrage its lady friends have hit upon the very worst. They have prayed for it—in Westminster Abbey. What pathetic confidence in the do-nothing Christian God!

The leaflet calling the suffragettes to Westminster Abbey was signed by Mrs. Henry Fawcett, Lady Frances Balfour, Mrs. H. Percy Boulnois, and Lady Bunting. The call was to "a day of silent prayer." Perhaps they thought a whole day's silence would do some of the sisterhood good. But that isn't as bad as the argument of the man who declared that there were no women in heaven, and proved it (as he thought) by quoting the text, "And there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour." We are bound to add, for our own part, that we have known some men who would have found half-an-hour's silence a trial.

The *Church Times* wonders "What would Bethlehem and Calvary be to people living A.D. 300,000?" This is a very long way ahead, and we have little hesitation in saying that long before that date arrives people will not be thinking of Bethlehem and Calvary at all. And if anyone happens to mention the names, we expect there will be resort to some dictionary of mythology to find out what the words really mean. The poor *Church Times* editor seems to imagine that he has got hold of a god that will live for ever. It is sheer delusion. An immortal god has never yet been discovered. Some of them live longer than others, and some of them undergo a kind of reincarnation; but sooner or later they all come to an end. Man does not possess immortality himself, and he cannot confer it upon any of his creations.

John D. Rockefeller junior has been holding forth strongly of late on the efficacy of prayer. Here is a passage from his discourse on that subject:—

> "There came a time in my life when I met a grave crisis. My happiness and usefulness in this world depended on my decision. I prayed every night for four years. One morning, just before dawn broke, I awoke and felt just as sure which road to take as if there had been a big sign to guide me. I got up from my bed, lighted a lamp, and wrote a letter committing myself to that course."

That was one of the slowest answers to prayer that we ever heard of. But it was satisfactory when it arrived. We understand that young Rockefeller received a heavenly message that he was to do no work, but help spend the old man's money. The heavenly message arrived in time to prevent his being of any earthly use.

Rev. C. E. Lamb, of Gretton, Northamptonshire, left £8,381. Rev. Francis Griffith Jones, of Bryncorach, Conway, Carvarvon, left £16,365. Venerable Brownlow Thomas Atlay, of Ealing, left £4 505. These are little better than sprats. But here's a regular whale. Rev. John Filmer Anstey, of St. James's-terrace, Regent's Park, left £142,026. Blessed be ye poor!

The Bishop of Southwell has hit upon a good idea. He recommends what may be called "silent sermons." Preachers should give out a text and say "Dear people, we will sit perfectly still for a quarter of an hour and think about that text." The Bishop believes that many of them would feel that "they had drunk in a tremendous amount of knowledge." Perhaps the idea would catch on better if the reflection could take place in smoking pews, where a little something else could be "drunk in" at the same time.

Colonel Seely has informed the House of Commons that officiating army clergymen are paid according to the average strength of the garrison. We should have thought that the average strength of the congregation would be a better guide.

Our sympathy is sometimes with the parson. Here is a case in point. Rev. John Hosking, Congregational minister, Melbourne, found his Sunday evening service disturbed by a gang of roughs who had been called in for that purpose. The man of God felt the old Adam move in him. He descended from the pulpit, took off his uniform, and gave the ringleador "one on the jaw." Down he went, and his pals were easily ejected. We are glad to hear it. Every man is entitled to a fair hearing—even a clergyman.

The following are the last sentences in the criticism of a new theological book (no matter what one) in the January *British Review*:—

> "Christianity is a religion for the man in the street. You have got to inform him (if you are a preacher) either that the four Gospels are true from end to end, or that they are untrustworthy from end to end. If you say to him that they are largely false but that patient study will elicit vital truth from them, he will laugh in your face and very properly tell you that jesuitry of that sort is not to his liking."

This would be rather mild, perhaps, in the *Freethinker*, but in the first number of a monthly, with which the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* is incorporated, it is rather striking.

Those who are agitating for a fixed Easter have a good deal to say for it from the point of view of public convenience, but their success would hide the mingled sun and moon worship of the present arrangement. Not that it would really settle the date of the death, etc., of Jesus Christ; for if Easter is arbitrarily fixed it will have no relation to any past event whatever, real or supposed, but merely to the time most suitable for a general spring holiday.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, January 12, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "The King and the Bible."

January 19 and 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

ALGERNON HERVEY-BATHURST.—In reproducing Mr. Mangasarian's eloquent lecture we do not undertake responsibility for all its opinions or statements. Besides, your letter on behalf of Christian Science is not a correction,—it is controversial; nor has Mother Eddy superseded Webster.

ARNOLD HUNTON, a Cardiff tobacconist, after reading our article on the Bishop of Chester's statement that Secularists are prone to be unkind to their children, puts in a similar (trade) word for the "divine weed," as Spenser called it. "I have noticed," he writes, "that *non-smokers* are generally quite brutal to their offspring." A justified joke!

F. A. DAVIES.—Sorry to learn you find it impossible to attend the Annual Dinner this time. Better luck next time. Thanks for the cutting.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

H. MEREDITH.—They are "chestnuts." But we are glad to see that solemnity is losing ground at Calcutta

J. W. R.—Thanks for pleasant letter and wishes.

JOHN LATHAM (S. Africa).—Formal receipt follows this acknowledgment. Did you receive our registered letter of October 30? You have not alluded to it in any of your letters. Perhaps you think there is no need to, but we should like to have assurance at your end as well as the Post Office receipt at this end.

E. LATCHMERE.—Which fund is intended? Kindly let us know.

G. BEARISFORD.—Necessarily shortened, but "all there."

F. B. ZEIGENHEIN (Australia).—Order passed over to shop manager. Pleased you heard of us through Mr. W. H. Jackson, whose name is well known to us.

E. BURKE.—Glad you keep active in the Freethought "vineyard." We hope there will be no abatement of our own activity in 1913.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

L. ALEXANDER (S. Africa).—Formal receipt in due course.

A. HARVEY.—Will be acknowledged later.

A. H. ERNST.—We cannot tell you whether there are other readers of the *Freethinker* in Milan or not. Most of our readers get the paper through newsagents.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Our Fighting Fund.

[The object of this Fund is to provide the sinews of war in the National Secular Society's fight against the London County Council, which is seeking to stop all collections at the Society's open-air meetings in London, and thus to abolish a practically immemorial right; this step being but one in a calculated policy which is clearly intended to suppress the right of free speech in all parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. This Fund is being raised by the Editor of the *Freethinker* by request of the N. S. S. Executive. Subscriptions should therefore be sent direct to G. W. Foote, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to him.]

Previously acknowledged, £77 13s. 3d.

Sugar Plums.

London "saints" are earnestly desired to procure from Miss E. M. Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., a supply of the neat little printed announcement of Mr. Foote's Sunday evening lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. It is impossible to advertise these lectures in the ordinary way all over London. The area is too vast—the expense is too great. But much can be done by the "saints" themselves in the way suggested. Mr. Foote's opening lecture to-night (Jan. 12) on "The King and the Bible" should be entertaining as well as instructive.

This is the last time we can call attention to the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, which takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening next, January 14. The function is timed to start at 7 o'clock and the chairman will take his seat as punctually as possible. It is to be hoped the guests will assist him in this matter. A good dinner, of course, is expected at the Holborn. No doubt, also, there will be some good in the music and some in the post-prandial speeches. Besides the chairman's (Mr. Foote's) address there are to be a few brief speeches to the usual toasts. With decent weather there should be a large gathering on this popular occasion.

There will be an innovation in the top of the table arrangements at this year's Dinner in order to make the Chairman more accessible, instead of being built in by the usual barriers.

Mr. Cohen opened the new (January) course of lectures at the Public Hall, Croydon, on Sunday evening, with a good lecture to a good audience. Mr. Lloyd occupies the platform this evening (Jan. 12) and we hope to hear of another good meeting. The local "saints" appear to be very pleased with this enterprise.

Ex-Rev. E. Morris Young opens the Birmingham Branch's new season's propaganda to-day (Jan. 12), lecturing at 7 p.m. at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, on "What is Truth?"—the question that Pilate asked and Jesus didn't answer.

The Sheffield Branch had an enjoyable social gathering on New Year's Eve. The President, Mr. T. Dennis, gave a spirited address on the Society's principles and objects, and on the favorable outlook upon 1913. A picture painted by Mr. B. A. Shipman was then unveiled. The speeches of several young members were full of enthusiasm. We wish the new Branch all success.

Mr. Foote's first article on *George Meredith's Letters* has to be postponed again for a week. Too many other matters have been occupying his attention. And he wants to do all the justice he can to this particular piece of work.

The *London Typographical Journal* for January—an extremely well-printed periodical—reproduces an appropriate passage, filling one of its columns, from our "Literary Gossip" with due acknowledgment to the *Freethinker*.

The new year's circular *re* the President's Honorarium Fund will be issued to subscribers before the end of January. A few subscriptions for 1913 have reached us already, and will be formally acknowledged in due course.

The duty of a philosopher is clear. His path lies straight before him. He must take every pains to ascertain the truth; and having arrived at a conclusion, he, instead of shrinking from it because it is unpalatable or because it seems dangerous, should, on that very account, cling the closer to it; should uphold it in bad repute more zealously than he would have done in good repute; should noise it abroad far and wide, utterly regardless of what opinions he shocks, of what interests he imperils; should, on its behalf, court hostility and despise contempt, being well assured that if it is not true it will die, but that if it is true it must produce ultimate benefit, albeit unsuited for practical adoption by the age or country in which it is first propounded.—*Buckle, "History of Civilisation."*

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A Triangular Duel.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER,

Sub-Editor of the "Freethinker" and Author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers," etc.

IT was a lovely Sunday morning on board the steamship *Marmion*, bound from London to Leith. There were but few passengers, for it was the dull season. Among them was a Scotch minister, and the sailors were piped to morning service. All on deck, except myself, gathered round the minister, who proceeded to read from the Bible. Pacing up and down, I was soon accompanied by a gentleman, who before long told me he was a Deist. After a little chat we adjourned to the smoking cabin, where we were joined by the minister when he had concluded his short service. I cannot pretend to accurately reproduce the conversation that ensued, but what remains in my memory was something like this:—

CHRISTIAN.—I'm sorry you gentlemen did not put in an appearance, if only as an example to others.

ATHEIST.—I have no wish to act as an example to others in this particular.

DEIST.—The fact is, sir, we do not agree with your views and cannot countenance them.

C.—What is it you take exception to?

D.—Your doctrine of eternal torment, for instance. Who can credit a good God will so punish his children?

C.—You believe, then, in a good God?

D.—Certainly. Nature proclaims there is a divine power, and that he is good.

C.—I have just come from visiting a friend at a home for incurables. He is hopelessly paralysed, and cannot even move without pain. What do you say to that punishment, which, mind you, is from an accident, and not for his own misdeeds?

D.—I confess there is much in nature I cannot understand, but there is enough to show me there is an all-good God.

C.—To show *you*, perhaps—for you, I presume, have had a Christian education. But I have been out in Africa, where the only gods believed in are stone and wooden fetishes, and these are worshiped with bloody sacrifices and absurd ceremonies.

D.—Probably far less absurd to them than your creed is to me.

C.—You evade my case, which is that nature does not suffice to tell them about an all-good God. For this they need the light of revelation.

D.—But your revelation reveals nothing. The Jehovah of the Bible is certainly not an all-good God, but partial, savage, and bloodthirsty.

C.—My point, I must repeat, is that exactly the same difficulties confront us in nature that we find in the Bible. Jehovah declares he visits the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation. This is verified in my own experience. My grandfather was a three-bottle man, my father was over-fond of port, and I, though abstemious, suffer from the gout. Nature, too, seems savage and bloodthirsty. She kills her children day by day, and often agonisingly.

A.—It seems to me yours is an argument for Atheism.

D.—Just so. Two blacks cannot make a white. Your revelation should clear up the difficulties found in nature; instead of which it adds to them. Your arguments and those of Bishop Butler, whom you follow, would serve to defend all the atrocious and absurd superstitions of the savages you visited.

C.—Not at all. I hold that nature indicates the selfsame God more fully revealed in the Bible, and our duty is to learn his will and obey him.

D.—And I answer, the God of the Bible is not the God revealed by my heart and conscience, and I cannot worship what I can neither reverence nor love Jehovah is no more to me than Jupiter.

A.—And I answer that I find no all-good God revealed either in nature or in the Bible.

D.—But there must be a Supreme Power who designed everything.

A.—The mouse for the cat, and cats' skins for ladies' gloves?

C.—Nature does not suffice to tell us whether there be one or many superior powers. It cannot assure us that the designer is the creator. It does not reveal his omnipotence nor his infinite goodness. Its difficulties must be cleared up in another world. Nature, in short, is an enigma. We see through a glass darkly, but by the light of the Bible we may dimly discern, and yet firmly believe, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

D.—I'm not sure that man should arrogate immortality to himself any more than for the animals. In nature we find that of a thousand seeds but one ripens. I think I can discern some good purpose beneath all sin and suffering, but cannot flatter myself that my own personality is immediately concerned therein. I do not know anyone so good as to deserve eternal felicity, or so utterly and impossibly wicked as to deserve eternal torments.

A.—The only harmony I discern is that which must exist between life and its environment, and this is effected by constant suffering and death. What is the one growing seed to the myriads crushed out? All of good that I observe is from the efforts of human kind. What is man in his natural state without the inheritance of ages of civilised human effort? Let our missionary friend answer. In the discords of nature I note but one harmony—the still, sad music of humanity.

C.—Man in his fallen state is truly a wicked and corrupt creature.

D.—No, he is not a fallen angel, but a risen ape, and some day may as far outsoar us as Shakespeare does the savage fetish worshiper.

C.—This world is too evidently corrupt; wrong too often triumphs. Believe me, your ideal state must be in another world.

A.—How can a state of injustice in this world prove a state of justice in any other, when you agree all the arguments for that other world must be drawn from this present one? The fact is, you first assume a God, and then a heaven to cover his handiwork. The one assumption impels you to the other, at which my friend, who is more modest if less logical, pauses.

C.—I hope he agrees with me that this world, with all its sin and wickedness, is in a state of probation. If so, all the discipline we undergo is surely to prepare us for a future state.

A.—For what sort of a future state does your friend's paralysis prepare him?

D.—I've spent much time in learning various languages, but certainly I do not expect to put them to use in some future existence.

C.—You do not know.

A.—A good reason for silence, none for affirmation.

C.—I admit philosophy can give us no positive assurance of a future state, still less of eternal rewards and punishments. This conviction must come from religion. Where philosophy is weak religion is strong.

A.—That is, it bolsters up poor arguments by fictions.

C.—It is no use arguing with you. We have no common ground, though I hope my friend, when he sees the only alternative is Christianity or Atheism, will decide for Christianity.

A.—And I hope he will follow his reason whithersoever it leads him. If we want sure standing ground we must, as Descartes said, be prepared to doubt of all that can be doubted.

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Bathos and Botticelli.

IT is Christmas Eve. Borne on the breezes come the sounds of lusty singers, whose mournful tunes seem somewhat out of harmony with the season. They are singing carols in praise of the Founder of Christianity; they are also singing for a consideration. Thus we have at once a delightful combination of business and piety—characteristics which are never wanting in a profession which had its origin in Palestine.

At this time of year, any seasonable custom which yields a profit is trotted out; even the daily papers which minister to the intellectual needs of the public are not behind in these matters. We notice in the *Daily Telegraph*, under the heading of "Art Notes," two columns of intensely seasonable material. In these lines the devout reader may indulge his imagination, and find exactly what he wants—at this time of the year. We are treated to an elaborate discourse on the relative values of pictures of the Nativity. Botticelli, Mantegna, Duccio, Giotto, and many others have all essayed, with varying degrees of success, to portray this event of transcendent importance, yet we doubt whether their motives were any worthier than carol singers'. As works showing the progress of painting, they are excellent, but to seriously hold up these samples of barbarian art to an intelligent public is worthy of the daily press.

In a fine outburst, which can only be called intemperance of language, the writer of "Art Notes" eulogises the sublimity and grandeur of the stable "thick with the breath of the ox and the ass." This, we are obliged to admit, is not exactly a savory atmosphere, but religious rhapsody, real or simulated, takes no note of such trifling incongruities. Of course, no reference to the stable would be complete unless the stars were included, and our head swooned when we read of the long piercing rays of the stars shedding their light in this place, with which, according to the writer, Cæsar's palace could not compare. It is possible that the Bethlehem variety of stars differ from those we are accustomed to seeing in this unromantic country; we cannot but think that the stars on that particular night behaved in a most erratic manner.

With a pomposity of diction which nowadays passes for erudition, and a judicious placing of technical phrases peculiar to the art critic, he sets forth in glowing terms the wonderful genius of Botticelli, as revealed in the picture called "Nativity." And it is precisely at this juncture that we begin to realise what faith and imagination will produce. Although we cannot boast of having seen angels, our conception of such ethereal beings will not allow us to take for granted that they wear crowns made of leaves. To quote the writer, "leaf-crowned angels are seen embracing the shepherds, and above the roof—moved by, breathing forth, sphere-music—other angels, higher in the hierarchy, their whirling robes shot with a golden light, circle in a solemn song and dance." The spiritual and the material embrace, the spiritual indulge in recreation essentially mundane, and last, but not least, they wear clothes. The sphere-music is beyond our comprehension, but we suppose it is easily understood by those whose faith will move mountains. We will not weary readers of this journal with any more extracts of this pious nonsense; it had to be seasonable even if the writer was obliged to fly fifteenth-century painters for material. Doubtless the Italian knew on which side his bread was buttered, and painted accordingly. A nation which had swallowed Dante two centuries previous could easily assimilate a thousand pictures of the Nativity, especially as it was dangerous to life to be unorthodox. Goldsmith, one of the most charming and delightfully human of writers, once expressed his opinion of Dante by by saying that his works were written for barbarians, and we are inclined to think that this piece of drastic criticism also applies to old religious painters of Italy. At the present time, they have their paid apologists in the press, to whom sincerity spells ruin. And this is the outcome of a religion which has run riot through centuries—to finish up with press, public, and pulpit saturated with hypocrisy.

We are gratified to see this recourse of religion to art; it is illustrative of the turns and twists it takes to prolong its existence. However, the Church of Rome must smile to see its countrymen requisitioned to impress the subtle beauty of the Nativity—it can easily afford to do so, and then have much left to spare. The writer of "Art Notes" has made the best of a bad job; as Religion and Art are antagonistic terms, he would have been well advised to leave Christmas Eve in the hands of tradespeople, carol singers, and professional preachers. If he should require a specimen of Christian art, he will be recommended to view the page opposite the one where his own contribution scintillates. There he will find an advertisement of crippled children, not even worthy of a seller of patent medicines. Ghastly faces, bandaged eyes, children on crutches, these are the sights, badly sketched, which are intended to touch the hearts of the generous. Along with this specimen of bad taste is an appeal couched in semi-religious language; we sincerely hope that there will be a generous response. There ought to be, as Christians inherit the earth. We hope, also, that they are proud of the Deity who looks on a crippled, helpless mass of humanity and cannot do anything to prevent such failures in life. Whichever view they take, they are spitted on the horns of a dilemma which is the inevitable outcome of a faith discredited and disbelieved by half its adherents.

Biblical teaching and theological imagination have invested the Nativity story with the garments of a farce. From Genesis, where the curse was uttered to Eve, to the supposed birth of Jesus, and on to the present day, Christians' coarse and ruffian hands have polluted the holy of holies. Woman a chattel, and childbirth something to be tolerated, but overlooked after the "churching" service—a rigmarole of words which would insult a Kaffir's intelligence. Blundering fools all when they touch any matters essentially human. With their eyes to heaven, they forget the earth, and at the present time the followers of Gentle Jesus have not even influenced the Christian public sufficiently to greet expectant motherhood with anything but a titter or a lascivious leer.

By their fruits shall we know them—and we are profoundly thankful for the two pages from the respectable press, which, by some Rabelaisian touch, were arranged to face each other.

CHRISTOPHER GAY.

Nailed Down!

THE *Freethinker* is my oldest child, and I believe it has, first and last, cost me more than all my other children put together. I am naturally proud of its good character. It has fought hard against superstition and tyranny, and in doing so has offended some hyper-sensitive and timid people; but this is the only crime that has ever been alleged against it. In the matter of fair-play it has shown an example to all other journals in England. I have always acted, or tried to act, as I did in the famous "Atheist Shoemaker" case, when I printed all that Mr. Price Hughes and Mr. G. J. Holyoake had to say on the matter, without a word of mine being allowed to creep into the *Methodist Times*.

This is not boasting. It is a plain statement of an obvious truth. And there are times when the truth should be heard. This is one of them.

I referred last week to an editorial paragraph in the *Literary Guide* charging me with refusing to insert a Rationalist Press Association advertisement. I am going to break that paragraph to pieces and

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grind it to dust. But I shall do it in the old *Freethinker* fashion of absolute fair-play.

Here then is the paragraph in its entirety, exactly as it appeared :—

> "Most advanced journals have difficulty in obtaining advertisements for their columns. The *Freethinker*, however, would appear to be an exception to the rule. The other day the Secretary of the R. P. A. sent to this fortunate heterodox paper instructions to insert the advertisement of "Pamphlets for the Million" which is printed on the front cover of our present issue, and the following reply was received :—
>
> 'November 25, 1912.
>
> Dear Sir,—We beg to say there will be no room in the *Freethinker* for some months for outside advertisements of any length; we therefore return your advertisement herewith.—Yours faithfully, THE PIONEER PRESS.'
>
> Were the *Freethinker* not a Freethought paper, it might be suspected that its proprietors wished to join in the boycott of R. P. A. publications to which we called attention in these columns last month."

Although the Rationalist Press Association itself must be held responsible for that paragraph, I may as well say that I cannot easily be mistaken as to the writer's identity. I recognise certain family characteristics : first of all, the clumsy composition, with its superfluities such as "for their columns" and "in these columns"—than which there can be nothing more detestable from a literary point of view; next, the heavy-handed attempt at jocosity; lastly, the want of good manners, running into insolence, where it is thought to be safe. The brief letter of the Pioneer Press is a model in comparison. It says exactly what had to be said, without a word too many or a word too little.

That letter was as honest as it was plain. The Pioneer Press does not take the Rationalist Press Association's "instructions" about anything. An advertisement for the *Freethinker* was sent in by the Association's secretary. It was not *refused*, but had to be *declined*. The difference consists in the fact that reasons were assigned.

Let me at this point place a few facts before my readers; facts well known to the writer of that libellous paragraph, but not disclosed to the readers of his paper. Some may ask why I do not send a correction to the *Literary Guide*. This is my answer. I once sent a letter to that journal, and it was refused admission. No one has an opportunity of playing off that sort of insult upon me twice.

But the facts! Much against my will I carry on a small printing and publishing business. The insecurity of the *Freethinker* is the reason of this. I cannot afford to place it at the mercy of outsiders. They would "rat" at the first sound of danger. The only person I am sure I can depend upon is myself. So I keep a small printing office to produce the *Freethinker* and I keep a shop to sell it in. This is necessitated—and I go no further. My real function in the world is not "running" a shop or a printing office.

Now with regard to advertisements. I tried desperately hard a few years ago to get some, but the attempt was a fiasco. I am reconciled to the fact that the *Freethinker* must subsist without them. They are not even solicited now. For a long while the advertisement scale has been omitted. A regular, if small, inflow of advertisements, could be provided for; a sporadic few, at incalculable intervals, cannot be. They are not worth the trouble they involve. And there is always the danger of delaying the publication of the paper. I refused an "inset" advertisement some time ago for that very reason. Yet I inserted one gratuitously for the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. There are things I love better than money. It may sound strange to some people, but it is a fact nevertheless, that I have never charged the N. S. S. or the Secular Society, Ltd., a single penny for all their advertisements in my paper.

The R. P. A. advertisement was to be nine inches long and packed with matter. I could not take it that week, nor for some weeks after. I was daily expecting the fresh advertisements of the Annual Dinner, the new Queen's Hall lectures, the "Bible Handbook," and other things. These would bring me nothing, but I gave them their time-honored precedence.

The R. P. A. advertisement which it is represented that I did not insert in order to boycott its publications, had actually appeared in the *Freethinker* of July 21. "Pamphlets for the Million" will be found filling a column on page 464 of that issue. So much for the "boycott."

And now I have a harder thing to say. The Pioneer Press letter to the R. P. A. secretary is not printed as it was written. The original said that there would be "no room in the *Freethinker* for some *weeks* for outside advertisements of any length." The *Literary Guide* turned "weeks" into "months." Why? There is only one possible answer. It follows from the character of the "boycott" libel.

A man who does that sort of thing, in a public charge against a public man, is a scoundrel if he does it deliberately; if he does it unwittingly he is a careless contemptible fool.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Verbal Bomb.

"THERE is only one thing," the lecturer was saying, "that can keep a man pure-hearted, and that thing is religion. Find me a man who has forsaken the faith of his fathers, and I will show you a man whose conscience has become atrophied, a man who, having nothing to grip, nothing to hope for, whose arms are not outstretched to God, whose eyes are full of this world, and whose soul is a puny vessel full of corruption, is a man from whom we can expect nothing. Having no conscience, he is liable to cheat, to thieve, to be depraved, immoral, and——"

"Liar!"

The lecturer was startled. His cheeks became white in the gaslight; and he involuntarily took two steps backwards to the small table. Several times he vainly endeavored to force words from his dry tongue and lips.

A sudden silence had swept upon the assembly. For a few seconds there was a dead stillness, and again came the sharp, but cold and cynical voice, cutting through the silence like the swish of a sword, "Liar!"

All eyes looked to the back of the hall. A young man had risen from his seat under the gallery, and was standing, with his hands in his pockets, looking with a quiet, pleasant smile at the discomfiture of the preacher.

The big, burly individual, who, to all appearances at least, occupied the position of chairman, rose patronisingly from his chair; but one look from the interrupter crumpled him up, and he subsided to his former attitude of imbecility.

Again there were some moments of chilling silence; and, obviously, the lecturer was becoming more and more intellectually benumbed. The congregation sat agape, their minds made utterly useless by the strangeness of the situation. Never before had their little Bethel been so desecrated. Never before had the Lord been so ungracious as to permit such a monstrous occurrence. Never before had their peaceful prayer and praise received such an awful shock. It was a new experience, and they were, seemingly, quite incapable of dealing with it. They sat, like so many human dolls, wonderstruck, awaiting, perhaps, the divine guidance that did not transpire.

Once again the cold, sharp voice broke the quietness, this time adorned with a studiedly polished sarcasm.

"I say you are a liar, a scheming, miserable, and foolish liar. Have you anything to reply in refutation of my deliberate accusation?"

The preacher at length found the power to rescue his voice from the clutches of the phenomenal, and

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hissed, or rather spluttered, between his quivering lips, "Put him out."

But there was no movement on the part of his audience. They had not yet recovered from their vapid wonderment. They were still gazing in mute helplessness at the young man. With a bright smile he looked round, and bowing to the chairman, he replied, "It is quite unnecessary, I am going.

He lifted his cap from the seat, and quietly left the pew. Without a sound he reached the door, which he noiselessly opened and closed. He was gone: or rather, in religious language, materially he had disappeared, but spiritually he remained. His quiet smile, the fresh young face, the strong, cold, reprimanding voice, and the few words he had used, prolonged the silence after the door had closed behind him. He had left an antagonistic influence within the sacred tabernacle.

Something had happened. God did not seem to be so near now. The appealing, friendly presence of the Lord Jesus Christ had, in some unaccountable manner, taken a second seat to the young man of the modern world. The Holy Ghost had been diddled of he, she, or its pre-eminence; but the people were blissfully unconscious of a blank in their lives.

The text had been of the adulterated milk variety. Peculiarly enough, to those who could remember it, it seemed tame and stale beside the word "liar." The preacher's remarks, too, had become thin. Not that anyone in the tabernacle was able distinctly to recollect them in units; but they appeared, in their totality, like a blotch on a landscape, such as we sometimes see when we turn from facing the sun. Out of this confusion, or rather ending it, was the straight, clear, determinate idea, embodied in the word "liar."

The solemnity and hush and quietude generally associated with the house of prayer had changed its character. It was the difference between faith and doubt, between ignorance and the demand for knowledge, between weakness and strength. Minds that had been lulled to sleep seemed to be awakening. An electric thrill of life, a sense of vigor, as if charging the very atmosphere with an unaccustomed vitality, gave one the dim impression of the early convolutions in the growth of strength.

The idea of the building being the dwelling place of the Lord of Hosts had faded like a coward's courage before a man's unassuming assertion of his manliness. Holiness had evanished. The happiness of a cheery smile always evaporates holiness; which probably proves the unnaturalness of that wonderful condition which springs from the love of God. Amazement had overthrown worship. Mental genuflexion, or mental somnolence, was resolving itself into uprightness. These people were worshipers no longer, for a word had played the hat trick with the God, Son, and Holy Ghost Co., Ltd. The young man had temporarily evicted them from the House of Prayer; which may prove to some disgracefully Pagan minds that permanency of residence is somewhat of an assumption in this respect.

Wonderment still deleted character from the faces of the congregation; but eyes were beginning to show new lights.

Thought, the great purifier, the broom that sweeps superstition from the present and future into the dust-heaps of the past, was beginning to realise itself. Questions were coming into the minds of these people. They moved restlessly in their seats. For the first time, maybe, there was a desire to get outside. The tabernacle had become too small for some of them. They wished for fresh air. Were they slaves? Did the young man speak truthfully? Were they accusing falsely? What if they were all liars?

A man's voice murmured something. But the preacher managed to control himself sufficiently to guard against an outbreak of the restlessness. "Let us pray," he said stridently. And he prayed. But his prayer was not a success. This was, of course, to be expected; for had not the very presence presumably of an Atheist turned off the supply of divine wisdom at the fountain-head, and had, in truth, cut off the connection between the Heavenly Father and his sinful apostle? And so, after several shambling sentences relating to God's eternal presence amongst us, guiding, supporting, protecting us here upon earth, he abruptly brought the meeting to a close, and the congregation dispersed.

There is no moral. A word did it.

ROBERT MORELAND.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JAN. 2.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Davey, Davidson, Greyton, Heaford, Leat, Lloyd, Lazarnick, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Schindle, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough, and Miss Stanley.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Liverpool Branch and the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from Leeds, giving details of the hearing of the charge of profanity against Mr. Jackson on December 31.

The President pointed out that this was a fresh attack on Freethinkers, not under the Blasphemy Laws, but under the Police Clauses Act dealing with Profanity, which could not have been intended to apply to such cases at the time of passing the Act.

After further questions the following resolution was moved:—

> "That this Executive protests against the continued use of the Police Clauses Act for the prosecution of Freethought lecturers for 'profanity' on account of arbitrarily selected sentences in public addresses, which never could have been contemplated when the said Act was passed, thus avoiding the odium of proceeding against such speakers in the proper and legitimate way under the 'Blasphemy' Law, and making the indulgence of Christian bigotry comparatively safe and easy by raising the minimum of sympathy with the victims of persecution."

It was further resolved that in the event of Mr. Jackson's family being in need during his imprisonment the Society would be prepared to render assistance.

The resolution proposed at the Annual Conference by the Wood Green Branch to call a half-yearly meeting of members of the Society in London was discussed, and the Secretary instructed to arrange for such a meeting to be held during the first week in March.

The President reported that the members of the deputation who waited upon the L.C.C. Committee had resolved to wait for the decision of the L.C.C. General Purposes Committee, until the meeting to be held by that body in the middle of January had taken place.

The Secretary reported that Mr. A. B. Moss had notified her of his retirement from outdoor work, he having spoken continuously for thirty-six years, but that he would be prepared to speak occasionally indoors, his enthusiasm for the cause being as great as ever.

The Secretary was instructed to forward to Mr. Moss the following resolution:—

> "That this Executive, while regretting that Mr. A. B. Moss has decided to do no more open-air Freethought lecturing, desires to thank him in the name of the Freethought movement generally for his long and valuable service in the outdoor lecture field, and hopes his voice may still be heard for many years in other ways of propaganda."

Mr. Quinton suggested that a further invitation to members to avail themselves of the Scholarship Scheme should be given through the columns of the *Freethinker*.

The Secretary reported an innovation in the arrangements for the Annual Dinner.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mr. John Francis Martin, of 30 Hunstmoor-road, Wandsworth, which took place on Tuesday, December 31, 1912. Mr. Martin was a convinced Freethinker, and for about thirty years rendered valuable service as a member of the Battersea Branch of the N.S.S. It is comforting to think that he died in the faith to the service of which he had devoted his life. On Saturday, January 4, he was buried in the Wandsworth Cemetery, when a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside. We tender his sorrowing family our sincere sympathy.—J. T. L.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The King and the Bible."

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY (Fife Hall, Fife-road): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "The Churches and Labor."

CROYDON PUBLIC (SMALL) HALL (George-street): 7.15, J. T. Lloyd, "The Silence of God."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, E. Burke, "Bernard Shaw and his Mission."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Morris Young, "What is Truth?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, a Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, H. B. Hobson, "Taxation of Land Values."

Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

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Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and "bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—— "free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by "two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary "thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the "said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner

(Under the Auspices of the National Secular Society.)

AT THE

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BY

Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

January 12: "THE KING AND THE BIBLE."
„ 19: "MORE 'BRADLAUGH' FABLES."
„ 26: "THE FUNCTION OF ATHEISM."

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THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Deafness is not to be healed by breaking the head, nor blindness by pulling the eyes out: it is time the doctors should try new experiments; if they will not, it is time that the patients should try new doctors.—LANDOR.

The Logic of Persecution.

NEITHER the cruelty of tyrants, nor the ambition of conquerors, has wrought so much mischief and suffering as the principle of persecution. The crimes of a Nero, the ravages of an Attila, afflict the world for a season, and then cease and are forgotten, or only linger in the memory of history. But persecution operates incessantly like a natural force. With the universality of light, it radiates in every direction. The palace is not too proud for its entrance, nor is the cottage too humble. It affects every relationship of life. Its action is exhibited in public through imprisonment, torture, and bloodshed, and in private through the tears of misery and the groans of despair.

But worse remains. Bodies starve and hearts break, but at last there comes "the poppied sleep, the end of all." Grief is buried in the grave, Nature covers it with a mantle of grass and flowers, and the feet of joy trip merrily over the paths once trodden by heavy-footed care. Yet the more subtle effects of persecution remain with the living. *They* are not screwed down in the coffin and buried with the dead. They become part of the pestilential atmosphere of cowardice and hypocrisy which saps the intellectual manhood of society, so that bright-eyed inquiry sinks into blear-eyed faith, and the rich vitality of active honest thought falls into the decrepitude of timid and slothful acquiescence.

What is this principle of persecution, and how is it generated and developed in the human mind? Now that it is falling into discredit, there is a tendency on the part of Christian apologists to ascribe it to our natural hatred of contradiction. Men argue and quarrel, and if intellectual differences excite hostility in an age like this, how easy it was for them to excite the bitterest animosity in more ignorant and barbarous ages! Such is the plea now frequently advanced. No doubt it wears a certain plausibility, but a little investigation will show its fallacy. Men and women are so various in their minds, characters, circumstances, and interests, that if left to themselves they inevitably form a multiplicity of ever-shifting parties, sects, fashions, and opinions; and while each might resent the impertinence of disagreement from its own standard, the very multiformity of the whole mass must preserve a general balance of fair play, since every single sect with an itch for persecuting would be confronted by an overwhelming majority of dissidents. It is obvious, therefore, that persecution can only be indulged in when some particular form of opinion is in the ascendant: and if this form is artificially developed; if it is the result, not of knowledge and reflection, but of custom and training; if, in short, it is rather a superstition than a belief; you have a condition of things highly favorable to the forcible suppression of heresy. Now, throughout history, there is one great form of opinion which *has been* artificially developed, which has been accepted through faith and not through study, which has always been concerned with alleged occurrences in the remote past or the inaccessible future, and which has also been systematically maintained in its "pristine purity" by an army of teachers who have pledged themselves to inculcate the ancient faith without any admixture of their own intelligence.

That form of opinion is Religion. Accordingly we should expect to find its career always attended with persecution, and the expectation is amply justified by a cursory glance at the history of every faith. There is, indeed, one great exception; but, to use a popular though inaccurate phrase, it is an exception which proves the rule. Buddhism has never persecuted. But Buddhism is rather a philosophy than a religion; or, if a religion, it is not a theology, and that is the sense attached to *religion* in this article.

All such religions have persecuted, do persecute, and will persecute while they exist. Let it not be supposed, however, that they punish heretics on the open ground that the majority must be right and the minority must be wrong, or that some people have a right to think while others have only the right to acquiesce. No, that is too shameless an avowal; nor would it, indeed, be the real truth. There is a principle in religions which has always been the sanction of persecution, and if it be true, persecution is more than right, it is a duty. That principle is Salvation by Faith.

If a certain belief is necessary to salvation, if to reject it is to merit damnation, and to undermine it is to imperil the eternal welfare of others, there is only one course open to its adherents; they must treat the heretic as they would treat a viper. He is a poisonous creature to be swiftly extinguished. But not *too* swiftly, for he has a soul that may still be saved. Accordingly he is sequestered to prevent further harm, an effort is made to convert him, then he is punished, and the rest is left with God. That his conversion is attempted by torture, either physical or mental, is not an absurdity; it is consonant to the doctrine of salvation by faith. For if God punishes or rewards us according to our possession or lack of faith, it follows that faith is within the power of will. Accordingly the heretic, to use Dr. Martineau's expression, is reminded not of arguments but of motives, not of evidence but of fear, not of proofs but of perils, not of reasons but of ruin. When we recognise that the understanding acts independently of volition, and that the threat of punishment, while it may produce silence or hypocrisy, *cannot* alter belief, this method of procedure strikes us as a monstrous imbecility; but, given a belief in the doctrine of salvation by faith, it must necessarily appear both logical and just. If the heretic *will* not believe, he is clearly wicked, for he rejects the truth and insults God. He has deliberately chosen the path to hell, and does it matter whether he travel slowly or swiftly to his destination? But does it *not* matter whether he go alone or drag down others with him to perdition? Such was the logic of the Inquisitors, and although their cruelties must be detested their consistency must be allowed.

Catholics have an infallible Church, and the Protestants an infallible Bible. Yet as the teaching of the Bible becomes a question of interpretation, the

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infallibility of each Church resolves itself into the infallibility of its priesthood. Each asserts that *some* belief is necessary to salvation. Religious liberty, therefore, has never entered into the imagination of either. The Protestants who revolted against the Papacy openly avowed the principle of persecution. Luther, Beza, Calvin, and Melancthon, were probably more intolerant than any Pope of their age; and if the Protestant persecutions were not, on the whole, so sanguinary as those of the Roman Cathelic Church, it was simply due to the fact that Catholicism passed through a dark and ferocious period of history, while Protestantism emerged in an age of greater light and humanity. Persecution cannot always be bloody, but it always inflicts on heretics as much suffering as the sentiment of the community will tolerate.

The doctrine of salvation by faith has been more mischievous than all other delusions of theology combined. How true are the words of Pascal: "Jamais on ne fait le mal si pleinement et si gaiement que quand on le fait par un faux principe de conscience." Fortunately a nobler day is breaking. The light of truth succeeds the darkness of error. Right belief is infinitely important, but it cannot be forced. Belief is independent of will. But character is not, and therefore the philosopher approves or condemns actions instead of censuring beliefs. Theology, however, consistently clings to its old habits. "Infidels" must not be argued with but threatened, not convinced but libelled; and when these weapons are futile there ensues the persecution of silence. That serves for a time, but only for a time; it may obstruct, but it cannot prevent, the spread of unbelief. It is like a veil against the light. It may obscure the dawn to the dull-eyed and the uninquisitive, but presently the blindest sluggards in the penfolds of faith will see that the sun has risen.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Culture of the Supernatural.

IN the course of a recent lecture I had occasion to refer to "easily recognisable pathological and sexual elements in religious development," and added that a deal of what the world had taken as proofs of inspiration and illumination could be explained in this way. I gave at the time some illustrations of what I meant. Since then one of my audience has written asking if I would be good enough to explain myself further. The writer also refers me for proofs of "cases of genuine illumination" to the late Professor James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, a work that is receiving continuous laudation in the religious press—which is almost enough to damn its character as a scientific production. I have no objection whatever to explaining more fully the position taken up in the lecture referred to, particularly as "mysticism"—of a kind—plays a large part in what is called advanced religious teaching. These deliverances are more noticeable for their misty than for their mystical character, as in general they achieve unintelligibility and mistake it for profundity. The genuine mystics of old were not unintelligible. One knew what they meant, even though one did not agree with their meaning. The meaning of the modern Christian mystic is not only difficult—often impossible—to discover, but in nine out of ten cases it is worthless when it is discovered.

Regular readers of the *Freethinker* will perhaps recall that some years ago I gave a number of elaborate proofs of the play of pathologic and perverted sexual elements in religious phenomena. I have no intention of repeating those proofs now—only giving a summary, with no more than the necessary proofs of this position. And this may be done by way of criticism of Professor James's book—a work with which I am perfectly familiar, and which I regard as one of the most extraordinary pieces of religious yellow journalism ever put forward by a front rank writer. As a scientific study, the book is simply worthless. It can help no one to understand the phenomena; it only provides them with a catalogue of cases, useful enough for preacher and religious writer, and of which both have made good use.

Let us take, for example, a passage in which Professor James attacks what I may briefly call the pathologic study of religion. He says, "Few conceptions are less instructive than this re-interpretation of religion as perverted sexuality"; and, proceeding on the assumption that this interpretation is based solely on the use of amorous language by religious devotees, he points out religious literature is full of similes drawn from eating and drinking; and so one might as reasonably call religion a disorder of the digestive organs. Or, again, the Bible is full of the language of respiratory oppression, and one might call religion a disease of the respiratory organs. And against the statement that active interest in religion synchronises with adolescence, he retorts that increased interest in art, chemistry, etc., likewise synchronises with adolescence, and might with equal justice be put down to a perversion of the sexual instinct.*

Now, this is excellent fooling, but it is really little else. No one has ever claimed either that religion took its origin in sexuality, normal or abnormal, or that this alone will provide an explanation of historical religion. All that is claimed is that a great deal of so-called religious feeling, past and present, can be shown to be due to unsatisfied or perverted sexuality—which is a very different statement indeed. Between saying that certain feelings are wrongly interpreted in terms of an already existing idea, and saying that the idea is nothing but the feelings transformed, there is a vital and important difference. In every case the religious idea is taken for granted. The origin of that idea is quite a different line of inquiry. But once the idea is in existence there is always the possibility of people finding evidence of its truth in a quite wrong direction.

The analogy of the digestive and respiratory organs is clever, but futile. For the belief that much that passes for religious fervor is merely perverted sexual feeling is not based merely upon the language employed. This is only symptomatic. The language of respiration and digestion when used in connection with religion is frankly and palpably symbolic. The language of sexual love in the same connection is often frankly literal, and can be correlated with the actual state of the person using it. Digestion and respiration must go on in any case. But it is precisely the point at issue whether with a different sexual life these so-called religious ecstatic states would have been experienced. When we find religious characters of strongly marked amorous disposition, but condemned to a physically ascetic life, using towards the object of their religious adoration terms usually associated with strong sexual feeling, it does not seem very difficult to see here something more than the use of symbolic language. Would the mediæval monk have experienced temptations from Satan in the form of beautiful women had he been happily married? Would Santa Teresa or Saint Catherine have used the language they did use of their relations with Jesus had they been wives and mothers? I hardly think that Professor James would have answered such an inquiry in the affirmative. At any rate, it is curious that such visions did not appear to, nor were such expressions used, nor such feelings experienced by those who were married and living a normal life.

Again, it may be quite true that adolescence brings with it an awakening of the whole mental life, not of religion alone. But the analogy goes no further, and, at all events, it begs the question at issue. The interest in art, in science, in literature, or in sociology, are ends in themselves, and one need go no further than the developing mental life for an

* *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 11-12.

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explanation. But here the question is whether the interest shown in religion is or is not due to a misdirection of a growing mental, sexual, and social life? A developing interest in the larger social life is common to all. An interest in religion only exists with some—only with those whose natures have received this special inclination. Meanwhile, those who do not evince this interest in religion show no lack of anything—save the use of religious terms. In every respect they exhibit the same qualities as their fellows, and show the same feelings. The only discernible difference is that, while adolescent nature is expressed in the one case in terms of religion, in the other case it is expressed in terms of a larger social life. The problem might be put thus: Given a generation not taught to express its growing life in terms of religion, could satisfactory expression be found in the social life to which adolescence is an introduction? I believe it could and would. Moreover, I maintain that from this point of view modern religion is no more than an exploitation of man's social nature. At any rate, this is the essential question at issue, and yet Professor James never once, in the whole of his over 500 pages, addresses himself to it.

Further, there is the question of the relation between nervous diseases and religious illumination. How far has the one been mistaken for the other? To what extent have people accepted states of mind, purely pathologic in origin, as proofs of intercourse with an unseen spiritual world? That this idea is general among uncivilised people there is not the slightest doubt. And when we bear in mind the dense ignorance that until quite recently prevailed concerning the relations between mental states and the nervous system, when we remember that in all ages and places insanity and epilepsy have been counted as of supernatural origin, that fasting, solitary brooding, and self-torture have been taken as paths of celestial illumination, no one can possibly dispute the connection between a sense of religious conviction and pathological conditions.

The connection is, indeed, too obvious, to be even ignored. Professor James says that "we cannot possibly ignore these pathological aspects of the subject." Unfortunately, so far as attempting to explain them goes, he completely ignores them. The whole of his book consists of a throwing at the head of the reader a mass of "religious experiences" without any serious attempt at explanation. It is a glorified revival meeting in an expensive volume. No wonder it has been welcomed by preachers as an "epoch marking work." The testimony of a crowd of religious enthusiasts of all ages is accepted at practically face value. Thus, a religious writer who interprets the fairly common feeling of exaltation during a storm at sea, and explains his carelessness of danger as resulting from his "certainty of eternal life" (p. 288) is gravely cited as evidence of the workings of the religious consciousness. What, then, are we to make of those who have similar feelings, but who are without a certainty of eternal life? The declaration of St. Ignatius that a single hour of meditation taught him more of the truth of "heavenly things than all the teachings of the doctors," is given as one of the evidences of mystic illumination (p. 410). So are numerous other cases. Even the effects of nitrous oxide and ether is cited for its power to "stimulate the mystic consciousness to an extraordinary degree" (p. 387). There is really no reason why the same claim should not be made on behalf of whisky.

The use made by Professor James of his long list of cases is the more remarkable, since he points out, quite correctly, that there are no religious feelings, but only feelings directed to a religious end. But if this be so, how are we justified in taking descriptions of religious visionaries as correct accounts of the real nature of their mental states? Clearly, what we need is a study of such cases quite apart from the religious interpretation of them. Professor James does not give us such a study, he merely supplies us with a catalogue. And he is so averse to subjecting his cases to critical analysis, that when the extravagant features of certain cases are glaring, he warns us that it is unfair to impute narrowness of mind as a vice of the individual, because in "religious and theological matters he probably absorbs his narrowness from his generation" (p. 370). Granted; only one would like to know what reason there is for not deriving the virtues as well as the vices of religious leaders from the same source? And, deeper query still, may not a large part of the phenomena classed as religious admit of explanation apart from religion altogether?

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Massacre of the Innocents.

MANY Christian scholars now maintain that the birth-stories related by Matthew and Luke are unhistorical. The other evangelists and the author of the Acts never once mention them. Indeed, in John vii. 42, we learn that the people generally regarded Jesus as a native of Nazareth, a fact which some employed as an argument against his Messiahship, saying, "Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" It is a significant fact that in telling the birth-stories Matthew and Luke flatly contradict each other. Matthew says that almost immediately after the birth Joseph was commanded in a dream to "take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt," where they were to remain as long as Herod lived; but Luke assures us that when the parents "had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee." Luke knows nothing of the flight to Egypt and the massacre of the innocents, while Mark and John are equally ignorant even of the birth at Bethlehem. It follows from all this that the massacre of the innocents, described by Matthew (ii. 16), never took place at all, though there was nothing in Herod's character to prevent the commission of such a crime. And yet, whilst there is no evidence that Herod slaughtered all the male children of Bethlehem, from two years old and under, it is absolutely undeniable that Christianity, throughout its entire history, has been guilty of perpetuating itself by the metaphorical massacre of the innocents. Apart from this dark crime it would have died in its own infancy; and if this cruel offence were to be discontinued to-day, it is beyond doubt that in a few generations Christianity would only be an unhallowed memory. Of this its champions are perfectly aware, and knowing it they do not hesitate, they are even devoutly eager, to sacrifice the children. It is this alone that accounts for their bitter hostility to the policy of Secular Education and for their lamentation and mourning over decaying Sunday-schools. The children must be offered up or the Churches will cease to be.

In the *Saturday Review* for December 21, there is an article, entitled "The Children's Festival," from the pen of the Rev. Dr. J. Neville Figgis, in which Christmas is enthusiastically hailed as the child's peculiar possession. "Children have no special place at the other festivals," says Dr. Figgis, but "Christmas will always be theirs." The meaning of Christmas for the child, according to this divine, is summed up in the well-known couplet—

> "Jesus, who lived above the sky,
> Came down to be a man and die."

Dr. Figgis declares that "probably the child enters more readily than his elders into this notion of Christmas," which, if true, is not very complimentary to the elders. As a matter of fact, the child never enters into that notion of Christmas at all. Neither to the child nor to his elders does the so-called incarnation of the second person in the Holy Trinity bear the least intelligible meaning, and to speak of it as a fact is sheer mockery. It is indeed comparatively

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easy to persuade children to believe in it, and to sing the quoted couplet with emotional delight; but they get to believe in it alone on the testimony of those who are supposed to know all about it. They naturally take it for granted that their parents and teachers, whom they trust and revere, thoroughly understand the whole subject, and that the time is coming when they shall understand too. They cannot think it out; they can only believe what they are told about it. Now, is it not the most cruel abuse possible of their filial trust thus to treat them? The conviction, of course, is that unless they acquire the habit of believing before they are able to think they will never believe at all; and no conviction could be truer. Ignorance is the only soil in which faith can take roots and grow; and the natural tendency of all serious thinking is to weaken faith, and to end in uprooting it altogether.

But why should children be taught to believe that—

> "Jesus, who lived above the sky,
> Came down to be a man and die"?

What good comes of such a belief? In our opinion, no good at all, but much genuine harm, comes of it; and to instil it into the minds of children, prior to the awakening of their reason, is to degrade them. Dr. Figgis, however, thinks differently. He looks upon the birth-stories in Matthew and Luke, not only as true, but as indispensable to human nature. The purport of these stories is to show that Jesus was something more than human, and our divine ventures upon the assertion that "unless Jesus Christ was something more than human, men in general become less." But this is a mere dogmatic assertion, without a single fact adduced in support of it. Were men in general less than human before Jesus came? Are men in general less than human in China, India, or Japan? The assertion is so absurd and preposterous that one wonders how any man in his senses can make it. Dr. Figgis is bold enough to assure us that modern thought is now gradually veering round to renewed belief in it. He claims that there are many to whom the superhuman elements in the Christian faith prove "a great attraction." He says:—

> "They feel that the obstacles on the side of science are not what they were at one time thought to be; indeed, that the 'whole mechanical theory of the world is on its trial.' There is proceeding among us what has been well termed a 'renaissance of the supernatural.' The child motif is coming back into the world."

The reverend gentleman is a gigantic idealiser. The facts are all against him. The trend is in the opposite direction. There are doubtless times when Dr. Figgis himself lugubriously admits it. It is more than probable that we still "live in the world to which T. H. Green lectured." Science, at any rate, is just as materialistic in its terminology as it ever was. Dr. Chalmers Mitchell is not more friendly towards the supernatural than was Professor Tyndall, and Sir Ray Lankester is no less attached to the mechanistic view of the Universe than was Charles Darwin in his old age. Will Dr. Figgis have the kindness to inform us in what part of the world, or in what department of science or of life "the renaissance of the supernatural" is proceeding?

We happen to be among those to whom "the story of the birth and death of Jesus and 'faith in his blood' will be now, as always, midsummer madness"; but in his description of us Dr. Figgis is guilty of gross misrepresentation. It is false to say that we reject Christ because we hate or dislike him. Many of us do not even believe that he ever lived, and those of us who do, reject him, not because we dislike him personally, but because we totally disapprove of the religious system of which he is supposed to be the founder. We reject him in the same way as we reject Mohammed, or any other great exponent of supernaturalism. We are not Christians simply because we are convinced that Christianity is not true. This was true even of Nietzsche. He opposed the Christian morality not because he hated it, but because he regarded it as morality only fit for slaves. That he did hate it is true enough; but his hatred of it was not the cause, but the result, of his firm conviction that it is false. We hoped the time was past for taunting unbelievers in that cowardly and dishonest fashion, but Dr. Figgis has undeceived us. It is perfectly true that we have no sense of sin from which the Cross can deliver us, and that we have "neither belief nor interest in any way of life which is mainly dependent on the reality of the other world"; but it is positively false to represent us as being governed by low ideals and base ambitions.

Now, it is beyond controversy that there is a growing number of people who no longer believe in the Christian religion, who are persuaded that it has done incalculable harm in the world, and that the world would advance much more rapidly and healthily were it swept clean out of the way. This being the case, there is no getting away from the fact that Christianity is an open question, a debatable subject, and that we are all called upon to examine it with care, and to come to a conclusion with regard to it, of which our reason will fully approve. Dr. Figgis says that "liberty of speech is now our custom and that people will frankly repudiate what they no longer admire"; but he does not seem to realise that the existence of thousands upon thousands of people who "frankly repudiate" Christianity as false should open the eyes of believers to the utter injustice and cruelty of the present custom of forcing it down the throats of little children before they have acquired the art of thinking for themselves. The present system of religious education is fundamentally wrong and egregiously unjust in that it involves a wicked exploitation of the filial instincts, a cowardly abuse of the trusting disposition, which is so beautiful a feature of child-life. It has doomed multitudes of children to a lifelong slavery, from which only a few ever succeed in emancipating themselves. At first, no child takes kindly either to religious beliefs or to religious practices. It takes a long time to manufacture an earnest believer out of a healthy child full of animal spirits, and in many instances the work is never completed. We are continually meeting with adults who confess that in spite of the zeal and assiduity of their parents and others, they never really believed; and a large measure of their hatred of Christianity is the outcome of the attempt to force them into acceptance of it in their childhood. Why not leave them alone? The admission that if they are not taught to believe in their childhood days they are not likely to believe at all, shows that Christianity fails to commend itself to a wideawake intellect. If it were in itself believable it would appear more believable to mature age than to ignorant childhood. It cannot be denied that the majority of Christians believe in spite of the protest of their reason, just simply because they developed the habit of believing on their mothers' knees. Whole-hearted, ebulliently joyous believers are few and far between, even amongst ministers of the Gospel. If the children had justice meted out to them the Christian superstition would soon disappear.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Our Blessed Lord" on the Stage.

A GREAT deal has been written of late in the columns of various religious newspapers of the serious falling-off in church attendance, and a variety of reasons have been given to account for this alarming fact by the clergy and ministers of all denominations. They have noted, in the first place, that the observance of Sunday was dwindling away in a terrible manner. A large number of shops were open which might very well be closed on the "Lord's Day." Tobacconists, sweetstuff shops, and refreshment places of various kinds were open in every part of the great metropolis. Why could not children do without lollipops on Sunday? and as for tobacco and liquid

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refreshments, they were quite unnecessary on that day, and did not induce within the bosoms of those who partook of such material things that feeling of sanctity which should possess their souls on such a holy day. Also it was to be remarked that even those who attended church did not give serious attention to the sermon, and some actually had the audacity to leave the holy edifice the moment the preacher began to give out his text. All these things were undoubtedly very disconcerting to the clergy; but Canon Newbolt had recently discovered a more important fact—or at least he had been told—that "our blessed Lord is being presented on the stage in another name, and so has escaped the censor's notice." Of course, such a state of affairs is too terrible for words; but it is a fact nevertheless that the "Savior" is being presented on the stage in another name; and the censor has actually passed the play, and sees nothing objectionable in its representation.

Although I had not been to see the play in question, I made it my business, as soon as I had an evening off, to pay a visit to the Lyceum Theatre to witness a play called *The Open Door*, by Arthur Shirley and Benjamin Landeck. Now both of these gentlemen I had known for many years as writers of good old melodramas of the unsophisticated order, designed for the delectation of that section of the British public who take everything for granted that they see on the stage, without inquiring too closely into the probabilities of the story—always providing that it is interesting, pathetic, and amusing. But recently we have had upon our stage a number of old morality plays, and Messrs. Shirley and Landeck thought that it would be a good idea to introduce into their latest melodrama a fine figure answering to the character of the Chorus in some of our older plays, and so they boldly introduced the character of Homo into their play, *The Open Door*; and this was the character referred to by the worthy Canon as none other than "our blessed Lord" under another name. Now, the play itself was obviously a melodrama of the old-fashioned type, with a hero and heroine who are very cruelly persecuted, and with a cunning villain, in the person of a Russian nobleman, who is constantly at their heels with crafty devices to encompass their ruin. This play, however, differs from the ordinary run of melodramas in the fact that it has no comedy scenes and no low comedian to supply the humor or fun to lighten the more serious character of the play. The story is a very serious one, and has some substantial foundation in fact as materials for a very strong play. It is the story of the persecution of the Jews in Russia by the Christians, and the fearful torture to which they are subjected by those in authority. The hero is a young Jew in love with a young Jewess, and the Christian Count makes all kinds of serious accusations against them, so that the hero is thrown into prison; but the young heroine, under most trying circumstances, always remains faithful to him; and when the young couple are in their direst trouble, there comes the fine figure of Homo—the friend of Man, as he is called—to show them the way out. At the end of the second act one of the Russian soldiers strikes Homo on the cheek, whereupon this Savior of young Jews from the persecuting hands of cruel Christians exclaims: "You have smitten me on the one cheek; I now turn to you the other." The Russian soldier then raises his hand to strike another blow, but his arm is paralysed, and falls useless to his side. This makes what is called in theatrical language "a very effective curtain"; in other words, the curtain falls on a scene which arouses the audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Another effective scene is where Homo and another are ordered by the Russian soldier to whip the poor persecuted heroine, and they refuse; they and a rascal of a Jew, who was prepared to betrap the hero for thirty pieces of silver—a sort of modern Judas Iscariot, in fact—are thereupon ordered to be shot. The Russian soldiers retire to the summit of a hill, and from this eminence fire upon the prisoners, all of whom fall as though killed; but, after a few strains of celestial music from the orchestra, Homo slowly rises and, with an air of spiritual triumph, slowly walks off the stage. The audience, of course, shouted themselves hoarse at this marvellous manifestation of supernatural power. But when the curtain had gone down I asked a friend who was sitting next to me whether this action meant a resurrection on the part of Homo, or whether, after all, the authors only wished to imply that the Russians were such bad shots that they could not hit such a stately figure as this alleged friend of man? The hero escapes from prison, but Homo is ever at hand through all his trials and troubles to assist him and the faithful heroine; and the last we see of them is in a beautiful scene representing the sea by night, and they are being taken from a raft on to a ship; but Homo declines to be saved, and at last we just catch a glimpse of him on the raft alone; but what becomes of him—whether he remains there at the mercy of the sea or gets off and walks to the place of landing on shore—the authors leave to the imagination of the audience.

It goes without saying that the authors have treated the subject very reverentially—especially as one of them is a Jew, and unless he has been recently converted, has no more belief in the supernatural or historical character of the Jesus of the Gospels than I have.

The play has been beautifully staged, and the acting is admirable, especially that of the character of Homo, by Mr. Halliwell Hobbes, which was full of dignity and pathos.

But, of course, such a play as this was sure to arouse conflicting ideas and feelings in the minds and hearts of the audience, and I was not at all surprised to find members of the audience discussing various points between the acts. I ventured to remark to my friend that Christians did not often turn the other cheek when smitten on the one side, and even in this play the Russian soldier, who was a Christian, was quite ready to strike Homo on the other cheek when it was turned to him; and, as a matter of historical fact, even to-day all the Christian nations were armed to the teeth to resist the slightest signs of aggression on the part of the enemy. Most of the ladies in the audience, however, were very much impressed with what they evidently regarded as the nobility of the character of Homo—and they were almost as much moved by the elevating strains of the music and the splendid scenery—as they were by the acting itself.

Such plays, although obviously written for the purpose of teaching a Christian moral, more often provoke in the minds of the observer serious doubts, and tend to make such persons Freethinkers rather than Christians. "Our Blessed Lord," in the person of Homo, has now gone on tour throughout the provinces, and no doubt a good many Freethinkers will go and see him, as well as thousands of Christians, to see what real resemblance they can find to the character of the Jesus of the Gospels.

While I am writing about this play I may as well mention another that is being performed at the Haymarket. It is called *The Younger Generation*, and is by Stanley Houghton. It is designed to show the absurd and narrow views of the ordinary Manchester Nonconformist—and it applies just as well to Nonconformists from other parts of this island—and no doubt would be particularly interesting to Canon Newbolt and other clergymen with broader views of human life. In any case, I found it extremely amusing, and I am quite sure that such plays go a a good way towards breaking down some of the worst barriers to human progress.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.—*Ingersoll.*

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Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

No one doubts the existence of that inscrutable power called Fashion, which dictates how one must dress in order to be "correct"—which lays down the law as to the proper color for the ties, the proper pattern for the socks, and the proper shape for the hats of its faithful votaries. But there came one memorable London season when the worshipers of the God of Fashion had their faith sorely tried, and when that reputedly omipotent deity was nearly sent toppling from his throne. For a strange epidemic of eccentricity in dress seemed suddenly to seize the whole male world of Fashion—fortunately, it did not spread to the other sex. Sartorial heresies sprang up on every side, not only in the lighter matter of ties and socks, but even in the weightier matters of the law. The fundamental tenets of the faith—the solemn cult of the top hat, the sacred mysteries of the frock coat—were set at defiance. The high priests of the religion of Fashion could neither understand nor check the movement. They could only watch it in dumb wonderment, their hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after the things that were coming on the West-end of London. Huxley has somewhere referred to the justifiable scepticism with which we should receive a declaration by anyone, however honest and truthful, that he had just seen a centaur trotting down Piccadilly; but the astonishment which such a phenomenon might be expected to arouse would have been scarcely greater than that caused by some of the abnormalities of male attire observable that season in Belgravia and Park-lane.

But the explanation came at last. After the close of the season a letter signed "Sartor" appeared in all the "society papers" in London, and it was as follows:—

> "I feel that the time has come to allay that agitation in the fashionable world for which I must confess myself solely responsible. The means whereby I have been able to achieve the unprecedented feat of upsetting the long established conventions of male attire is simply my extraordinary physical resemblance to his gracious Majesty the King. In vulgar parlance, the King and I are 'alike as two peas'—indeed, the resemblance sometimes almost deceives myself, for when I suddenly see myself reflected in a large mirror I often experience a strong impulse to lift my hat.
>
> "I happen to be a member of a Debating Society, and at one of our meetings the subject for discussion was, 'Are the English Upper Classes Inherently Snobbish?' I took the affirmative view, but was in a hopeless minority of one, all the other members being dead against me. Thereupon, in the heat of discussion, I undertook to prove my point, and incidentally booked numerous heavy bets on the subject.
>
> "My method of procedure will be readily guessed. Taking advantage of that remarkable resemblance to his Majesty the King with which nature has endowed me, I proceeded to personate him in various incongruous and bizarre outfits. For instance, one afternoon, while the King was in residence at Buckingham Palace, I strolled through St. James's Park attired in a top hat, a short lounge coat, and knickerbockers; and this soon became the only wear for fashionable strollers in that and other West-end pleasure resorts. On another occasion, borrowing a horse exactly resembling the King's favorite steed, I rode in the Row wearing a frock coat, a red tie, and a tweed cap; and next morning my example was almost universally followed by equestrians in Hyde Park. Once, when his Majesty was staying at Windsor Castle, I walked through the streets of that ancient town in a rather 'loud' checked suit, and smoking a clay pipe; and students of fashion will remember the sudden adoption of garishly colored check suits for country wear by the aristocracy, and the rage which simultaneously set in among them for smoking 'penny clays.' When, last autumn, the King was spending a week in Scotland as the guest of the Duke of Gargoyle, I visited the same locality and put up at the village inn. And one morning, when I happened to know that the King was not playing golf, I drove a ball round the well-known links near Gargoyle Castle in full Highland costume. The effect of this among golfers was rapid and quite picturesque, for thereafter no one—none at least with any pretensions to social 'tone'—thought of playing the Scottish national game that autumn except in the Scottish national garb.
>
> "But I need not multiply these instances. It will be sufficient to say that any costume I chose to personate his Majesty in, however eccentric, was eagerly imitated. And now, having established my contention that the English upper classes *are* inherently snobbish, and having won all my bets, I make this confession and retire into obscurity."

This extraordinary disclosure was, of course, received with a storm of indignation, but it had the effect of quickly putting an end to the sad vagaries of male attire in the western part of the Metropolis. Within a week of its publication, the fashionable world had returned to a state of sartorial sanity and rectitude.

Acid Drops.

Mrs. Besant has been interviewed for *Great Thoughts* by Mr. W. H. Seed. Referring to the time when she was an active member of the London School Board, and much occupied with social reform, he says it was the period of her life "in which many people still think she did the most good." "She is now," he adds, "out of sympathy with the leaders of the Labor movement, and she spoke to me of 'trade-union tyranny' in pretty much the same way as a member of the Free Labor Association might have done." With regard to her new "spiritual" beliefs, Mrs. Besant said she came to them by hard thinking. No doubt she fancies this is true. Many people, however, will conclude that she is mistaken. None of her changes were really original. She is a born disciple. She passed from one master to another. Bradlaugh followed others, and the Blavatsky followed Bradlaugh. And now the Blavatsky is dead she governs Mrs. Besant from the grave.

Mrs. Besant has found out what to most people is the very antithesis of the truth. She has discovered that the more torpid the brain the brighter the intelligence. "One can learn," she says, "to leave the physical body and find one's mental powers increased and not diminished." Of course one can. One sees, hears, and says wonderful things in one's dreams. That is, they seem wonderful things to the dreamer; but wideawake persons who hear them talking in their sleep generally find it is great nonsense. Coleridge and Shelley composed poems in their dreams, but they were great poets beforehand. There is nothing surprising in that.

People who can do better intellectually without their brains should get rid of them. Many go about already with only just brains enough to swear by, but Mrs. Besant believes in getting rid of them altogether. The body is a mere incumbrance to the spirit. Why, then, don't the Theosophists get rid of their bodies and regain their freedom? You never hear of any of them doing it. Not even Mrs. Besant. They like to live on, as other people do, under existing conditions. Which shows their common sense at "the sticking point."

Mrs. Besant once believed that all religions were false. She now believes that all religions are true. She was as confident then as she is now. She is as confident now as she was then. The one thing that does not change is her cocksureness; in other words, her belief in herself. That quality makes for courage. It has no necessary relation to truth.

Mr. Seed notices the "doleful prognostication" that Mrs. Besant will "eventually find her way into the Roman Catholic community." That was prognosticated more than twenty years ago. We disputed the prophecy. We said that the Catholic Church offers women only suffering and silence. Mrs. Besant could do the suffering; she could not the other thing. And we were right. At least, there is no sign, after the best part of a quarter of a century, that we were wrong.

"President Taft followed the precedent set by himself and again assisted at mass in a Catholic church on Thanksgiving day. 'The preparations for the mass,' the newspaper report says, 'were on a grander scale than ever before. The church was decorated with the silk flags of the nations representing the Pan-American Union. Cardinal Gibbons sat on a scarlet throne on the right of the altar. Near him were the Very Rev. James A. Burns, D.D., and the Rev. John T. Whelan, chaplain to the Cardinal, and Mgr. Russell.' All the cardinals have thrones; mere Presidents occupy chairs ten feet below. Mgr. Russell should have more prominent mention. He is the priest who invented the trap that caught Taft by calling the Thanksgiving mummery a 'Pan-American mass.' All the other Americas except the United States are Catholic, and their representatives would attend mass any way; but ours is the America the Church is after, and ours the President; and the Pan-American expedient seems to be working very well. Without a struggle it caught the presidential fish, one of whose species is said to be born every minute."—*Truth-seeker* (New York).

It is strange what a difference point of view makes! A Christian missionary, the Rev. W. A. Shedd, who has spent many years among Mohammedans, says that the missionaries suffer great temptations from a Mohammedan environment, and are often inclined to compromise with the faith they are sent to attack. By this, we suppose, is

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meant that when a Christian is not an irredeemable bigot he will recognise many things to admire in Islamism. But, says Mr. Shedd, the Mohammedan seldom looks on religion as a power for personal righteousness, and this is the point a Christian preacher should emphasise. On the other hand, a missionary convert to Christianity explains, in the same magazine in which Mr. Shedd's article appears, that the reason why Christianity makes so little headway against Islamism is that Mohammedans are repelled because the Christian religion does not appear to have much influence on the lives of Christians. As a private individual a Christian may be vindictive, although he may be preaching the virtues of forbearance. Obviously, what the Mohammedan is looking for is not merely a preaching of the value of personal righteousness, but its practice. And if Christians show consistency in this respect when abroad, we feel that all of them ought to be encouraged to travel.

The old monkish proverb that *laborare est orare* was much liked by Carlyle. We see it is used by the Rev. S. C. Carpenter in a eulogy of the Church in the *English Review*. Both use it as meaning that "work is worship." Martin Luther, who was nearer the days of monkery, used it in the opposite sense, as meaning that "worship (or prayer) is work." We have no doubt whatever that Luther was right. The monks had no interest in declaring that laymen were as good as themselves; the time had arrived when they felt it necessary to declare that the lazy service of the Church was as much work as the hard service of the World.

News of the "Christian charity" and "brotherly love" of the "Soldiers of the Cross" is gradually creeping into the English press—whose policy in this matter has been simply disgraceful. Here is a cutting from the *Westminster Gazette* of January 9:—

"DISTRESS IN SALONICA.

"The *Vossische Zeitung* publishes a letter from Herr Brunan, a German pastor in Salonica, in which (says a Reuter telegram from Berlin) he asks for charitable gifts. He describes the need as beyond description, and says that the Turkish inhabitants in that vilayet have been massacred in thousands and their villages burned. Untold cruelties have been committed.

"The pastor adds that it is impossible for the expelled Turks to return to their homes, as they would perish of hunger and cold. The number of those to be fed in Salonica amounts to about 30,000."

"Untold cruelties have been committed." No one can realise the full dread meaning of that sentence. We believe it will turn out eventually, when the impartial historian records the real facts of this war of the Balkan Brigands, in the name of Christ, upon the Mohammedan Turks, already battered and drained by Christian Italy, that it was one of the bloodiest and most brutal tragedies of modern times—and one of the most inexcusable.

The Vienna correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* sends extracts from a long article in the greatest Hungarian journal, the *Budapest Hirlap*, giving new details of atrocities committed by the Christian Allies during the Balkan campaign. The following is a general list of these infamies:

"1. Slaughter of Albanians by Serbs: What the Serbs have done to the Albanians is putting all international law to ridicule. Albanian prisoners were fearfully tortured, then buried alive.

"Our Vice-Consul in Mitrovitza, Ludwig von Tahy, relates that the Servian troops slew the Albanians in masses. During the massacres of Albanians in Prizrend he himself saw Servian soldiers dragging small children into the streets, perpetrating atrocities upon them openly.

"Young girls and women were fearfully maltreated in the courtyard of the Consulate in Prizrend.

"2. Atrocities of Bulgarians and Bulgarian bands: The Bulgars murdered more than half of the Musculman population of the vilayet of Salonica—55,000 men. Only those were saved who embraced the Catholic religion. Not a single Musculman was left alive at Radovista and Avrathissar.

"Nearly 5,000 women who took refuge in the mosques in the neighborhood of Serres were burned alive at the order of the band leader, Sandansky. Hundreds of these corpses can still be seen under the ruins of the mosques of Tetova and Viterne, which were destroyed by fire.

"At Stundsha the slaughter of human beings lasted twenty days. Some 900 Musculmans were murdered, while the Bulgars slew 200 Musculmans at Toiran. In the small village of Bingoe 90 men were killed."

The writer gives particulars of alleged outrages on Jews at Salonica, and proceeds:—

"4. Greek Atrocities: Travellers from Salonica to Florina see hundreds of corpses alongside the railway line—old men, with their noses and ears cut off, corpses of women whose eyelids had been slit, and bodies of women who were hanged by their hair, can all be seen.

"Further, corpses of young men, with the heads severed from the bodies, and of infants murdered in their mothers' arms are visible."

What will the English religious newspapers say to all this? Probably nothing.

When Christians accuse Mohammedans of atrocities, although all the alleged facts come through purely partisan sources and channels, the Christian world believes them. It fits in with their preconceived notions that nearly all the good on this earth belongs to *them*, and nearly all the wickedness to the "heathen." But when Mohammedans accuse Christians, and still more when Christians accuse each other, of similar atrocities, the Christian world turns a deaf ear to them. It *can't* be true. *That's* settled. And they take the next business. This is the policy of the dear *Daily News*. "We must warn our readers," it said on Monday, "against the stream of concocted falsehoods about the conduct of the Balkan allies in the field which is being poured out from the press bureaus of Buda Pesth and Vienna. These falsehoods have been emphatically contradicted more than once by the English correspondents who were in the field with the armies." Indeed! We thought it had been a complaint from the first that war correspondents were not allowed in the field with the armies. In any case, an emphatic contradiction does not disprove a specific detailed charge. And just see what the *Daily News* argument comes to. You *mustn't* believe that Christians could be cruel to Mohammedans, but you *may* believe that Christians can accuse each other, without the slightest evidence, of the most abominable crimes. For, after all, it is Christians who run the "press bureaus of Buda Pesth and Vienna," and "concoct" all those falsehoods about the Balkan allies. This is saving them on the one side by giving them away on the other.

We don't understand it. William Nicholas Miller, aged seventy-four, a retired Canadian barrister, was worshiping at the Christian Science Church, Curzon-street, Mayfair, when he died suddenly of heart disease. "Natural death" was the jury's verdict, but it should have been "mental incapacity." All he had to do as a Christian Scientist was to think he had no heart disease, and to think he wasn't dead. He didn't think hard enough. That was the trouble.

An interesting and apparently fair-minded article is published in the *Methodist Times* for January 9 on "How Londoners spend Sunday." It deals with the West End only, and is written by Mr. H. Elmore—a clergyman, we fancy, but are not sure on that point. Mr. Elmore paid visits to a number of picture palaces and restaurants, and his comments on what he saw are instructive. First, the restaurants. The one he entered was filled with a well-dressed middle-class crowd of both sexes. Music was provided, and from the remarks overheard, the people seemed to take a genuine interest in listening to the selections given. It was, he says, a merry, light-hearted crowd, the people had probably spent the afternoon in the parks, and then dropped in for tea. Many sat for a couple of hours listening to the music. In the hands of professional purity-mongers of the F. B. Meyer type, there would probably have been seen a good deal of incipient or open ill-conduct, with a poorly concealed gloating over the presence of questionable female characters. Mr. Elmore saw nothing and heard nothing that was objectionable.

Mr. Elmore next paid a visit to a National Sunday League concert. "It is a highly respectable crowd," and the concert was "a high-class one." In a picture palace, next visited, the pictures are "popular and good," each "so far as good taste is concerned is unimpeachable." In another, described by someone as "rather bad," the pictures "are of the same class—there is the same absence of objectionable features." As to the audiences, Mr. Elmore says: "In both these picture palaces I take particular notice, so far as I can observe, of the behavior of the youth of both sexes. In the first, described as 'rather bad,' I neither see any indecorous behavior, nor hear a word that should not be spoken." In the second the same state of things prevails. The only difference noted was that in one place the audience was of a poorer class than that which patronised the other. Unobjectionable pictures and a well-behaved audience. No one should ask for more, and there seems no room for complaint.

But some complaint has to be made, and having described fairly what he saw, Mr. Elmore adds: "Thus it is on a Sunday evening in the West End. One and all, men and women, in a tainted atmosphere, sipping the cup of Pleasure, soiling their souls, and destroying their bodies." In the name of all that is reasonable, how? How can people

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soil their souls and destroy their bodies listening to music, "correct, of good class, and tastefully played," looking at pictures with an "absence of objectionable features," and exhibiting meanwhile behavior and speech that gave no room for hostile criticism? Mr. Elmore could not have reported more favorably had he been writing of church or chapel congregations. Would those "youth of both sexes" have been better employed if they had been idling in the streets? For our own part, we deny that they would have been better employed had they been in either church or chapel. Mr. Elmore's only objection is that they were not at church. Well, no one can prevent their going if they feel that way inclined. And if they are not inclined, why repeat this meaningless rubbish about soiling their souls and destroying their bodies? It is a pity that Mr. Elmore should end an unprejudiced report of what he actually saw and heard with such a stupid comment.

The managers of the Metropolitan Telephone Service have issued a notice to the girls in their employ warning them of the danger of speaking to any stranger in the streets or in public places, and telling them, should such a thing occur, to go as quickly as possible and report to the nearest policeman. We wonder whether these people really imagine that a girl is in any danger from any man who happens to speak to her in the streets or in a public place. And we wonder what impression an intelligent Chinaman, or Turk, or Japanese will form of the morality of a Christian city where such notices are deemed necessary. Above all, what a glorious commentary it is upon the civilising and moralising influence of the Christian religion. A.D. 1913, and this is what we have to show! Could things have been worse without Christianity?

Lord Haldane announces that Education is the next great question which the Government is going to take in hand. The whole system is to be reorganised from top to bottom. Well, we have heard something like that before. The present Government has brought in several Education Bills already and every one has come to grief. They have all been wrecked on the rock of religious instruction. How will the next fare any better—unless the Government adopts the principle of Disestablishment, and goes in boldly for Secular Education. That is the only way to success.

Sir J. Compton Rickett warns Nonconformists that the only way in which a "complete solution of the education problem" can be obtained during the life of the present Parliament is by consent. By this he means that Churchmen and Nonconformists must arrive at some sort of a compromise that will give each party something of what they desire. And this means that a form of religious instruction must be agreed on between the two principal divisions of the Christian Church in this country, with regard to its effect on those who are not Christians. We are so used to the impertinence of Christians in counting themselves as the only people in the community that matters, that we have ceased to be either surprised or annoyed at its manifestations. All the same, we can assure Sir J. Compton Rickett that if a miracle could be performed, and rival bodies of Christians agree on a compromise and *keep* it, there is a large and growing body of public opinion that would protest against the exploitation of State schools in the interest of Church and Chapel, and which would still work for a more equitable adjustment of affairs. There is, in fact, only "one complete solution of the education problem," and that is for the State to leave religion severely alone, and let those parents who wish their children to be taught religion to get it in whatever manner they and the clergy can devise between them.

The *Methodist Times* also treats us to a Nonconformist "chestnut" in connection with the same subject. "Free Churchmen," it says, "stand for the complete emancipation of the teachers who are appointed and maintained by the State from ecclesiastical tests and conditions of appointment." There is only one word that fits such a statement, and that is "bunkum." Free Churchmen only stand for the protection of teachers who are Nonconformists against the sectarianism of the Church of England. But what of those teachers who belong to neither religious camp? What chance would a known Atheist receive of getting appointed to the head-mastership of a Council school where the majority of the members of the Council are Nonconformists? The plain truth is that you cannot avoid religious tests—official or unofficial—so long as any form of religion is taught in the State schools. The only difference is that in the one case the test is open and above-board; in the other case it is concealed. So long as religion is in the schools it is idle to expect that teachers will be appointed without regard to their opinions on matters of religion. We do not think there is a responsible teacher in the country who will not agree with us on this point. And we have no doubt that the *Methodist Times* is as well aware of the fact as we. The bigot who denies one liberty in the name of duty we can respect, but the bigot who puts one in fetters in the name of freedom is enough to make decent people vomit.

Thomas H. C. McNeil, founder of a Red Cross boys' club in Everton, was sent to gaol at Liverpool on January 10 for eighteen months' with hard labor for obtaining goods by false pretences. It transpired that he had spent over twenty years in penal servitude for fraud carried out chiefly under the cloak of religion. There is no moral. He was not a Freethinker.

Amongst the latest wills are these:—Rev. William Wilberforce Gedge, 12 Montpelier-grove, Cheltenham, left £10 453. Rev. William Edward Allen Young, Pycombe Rectory, Hassocks, Sussex, left £4,675. Rev. Henry Rudge Hayward, Pine-grange, Bournemouth, left £10,772. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

It is rumored that the Congregationalists are going to join the Baptists. Query—in the water tank?

Reporting a sermon by the Rev. J. Campbell Morgan, the *British Weekly* notes that when the preacher said that "the man who says cheerily 'I am an Agnostic' is a fool," the Rev. Mr. Rattenbury and Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes "exchanged a swift smile of decisive assent." We don't know that we should easily recognise that kind of a smile if we came across it, but we are quite ready to believe that any number of preachers would agree with the sentiment. And doubtless when such giants in the intellectual world as this trio agree, the poor Agnostic ought to sharply reconsider his position. On the other hand, it is possible that the Agnostic may reflect that the folly of preachers of this class looking down on men of the stamp of Darwin and Spencer is only equalled by its impertinence, and he may further decide that both folly and impertinence are always at home in the pulpit.

We see from an address by the Bishop of Zululand that the color problem there is beginning to assume some of the features of the color problem of the United States. In Zululand, the white Christian will not go to communion with the black one, and the Bishop, apparently, does not see why he should. The brotherhood between Christians, he says, is a spiritual brotherhood, but it does not follow that they are sworn friends. And so the Bishop's advice is to let things alone, and black and white will each find their own place. We suppose they will, but we do not see what help "spiritual brotherhood" is going to be. The Englishman's claim to "wallop his own nigger" has not prevented his admitting a "spiritual brotherhood," but, on the other hand, the "spiritual brotherhood" has never prevented the walloping, so we quite fail to see what benefit the wallopee derives from his relation to the walloper. The long and the short of it is that Christianity in Zululand will no more help the native than it has helped the negro in the United States. The Bishop has come to England for the purpose of collecting £4 000. The future relations between Black and White he is content to leave in the hands of God. The collection of the money he will attend to personally.

The dear *Daily News* follows the *Daily Mirror* in giving its circulation daily. The latter also gives an accountant's certificate. We don't notice one in the case of the former.

It is usually said that religion makes men moral, and that, in fact, whether it be true or false, it forms an excellent safeguard, a sort of police regulation and disciplinary corrective. A simple glance at history will suffice to show how utterly baseless is such an assertion. One can say without exaggeration that the most religious times and the most religious peoples, or those in which or among whom the power of the Church has been the strongest, have, generally speaking, been the most immoral.—*Ludwig Buchner.*

Whatever turn may ultimately be taken by our convictions about a hereafter, society will uphold by law or social influence rules necessary to its own security and convenience here. It may even uphold them more rigorously, perhaps cruelly, if it is convinced that the present life is all. The natural affections, parental, conjugal, and social, will also retain their force.—*Goldwin Smith.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, January 19, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7 30, "More 'Bradlaugh' Fables."

January 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

J. W. DAWSON.—It is best to let Colonel Gracie's testimony stand as that of an undoubted spectator. The "arguments" of people who were not present at the loss of the *Titanic* are worthless. It is a waste of time to notice them.

R. NORTH.—Sailors have successfully resisted the regulation as to "divine service" and we think it might be done by soldiers if a few of them held together. Our comment in the paragraph you mention was satirical. Did we miss fire?

J. E. REMSBURG.—Delighted to have you still figuring on our list of subscribers. Shop manager will send formal receipt.

A. HUNCH.—Every precaution is taken at our publishing office against mistakes in the dispatch of subscribers' copies. The Post Office is often at fault; probably so in your case last week.

H. GEORGE FARMER.—Thanks for the cutting. The Leeds police are evidently short of work. If they can find nothing better to do than worrying Freethinkers some of them should be discharged or transferred to a less holy and moral town.

J. H. GARTRELL.—Shall appear next week. Cheque divided as desired. Shop manager will forward the pamphlets.

E. B.—Better if they reached us on Saturday. But, of course, some of them couldn't—chronology being in the way. Thanks for cuttings, etc. We note your delight at seeing that an American friend fills the 1912 Honorarium Fund to the brim.

E. PACK.—(1) You correct what was not our real point. We had the author and not the vendor or distributor in our mind. The constant Leeds plea is that Mr. Blatchford is not prosecuted. We reply that he could not be prosecuted under the Police Clauses Act on account of any "profanity" in his books. Whether vendors or distributors could be so prosecuted is a matter of opinion. "Non prosecutable" doesn't mean that proceedings could not possibly be started; there is no limit to the possible blunders of policemen and magistrates; it simply means that the case could not be carried to a successful termination. (2) We did not say we *could* argue a case before the Court of Appeal. We said we should *like* to. We supposed it was well known by this time that we are not in the legal profession. Neither are you. But you have advised all the Leeds defendants, and not one of them escaped. Mr. Stewart defended himself and got three months; you wrote Mr. Gott's defence and he had four months.

ISABELLA ROBERTS.—Glad to receive your good wishes.

J. B. (Birmingham).—We have got to the bottom of it; so look out.

ELIZABETH LECHMERE.—It will appear in list.

COLONEL REILLY and DR. S. LAING.—Formal acknowledgment in next week's first list.

A GOOD deal of correspondence stands over unavoidably till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The new season at Queen's (Minor) Hall opened well on Sunday evening, Mr. Foote being the lecturer and Mr. Roger the chairman. The lecture on "The King and the Bible" was greatly relished and much applauded. A few questions were asked, but there was no formal opposition. Mr. Roger appealed to the audience to help in advertising these Queen's Hall lectures, at least by circulating the waistcoat pocket announcements. We join in that appeal very earnestly. Supplies for circulation can be obtained of the Secretary, Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

"More 'Bradlaugh' Fables" is the subject of Mr. Foote's lecture at Queen's Hall this evening (Jan. 19). It should prove attractive.

Mr. Foote is obliged, after all, to defer any further announcement as to *George Meredith's Letters* until it is definitely decided whether a special article of his on Meredith's Freethought is to appear in a certain monthly magazine where it would command a wider audience than in our pages. This idea was dropped for a time, but has been raised afresh.

Mr. A. B. Moss has definitely retired from open-air lecturing. He has been working in that field—though not exclusively there—for more years than we care to count. Talking ancient chronology while you are alive is the way to hasten your cremation. Suffice it to say that Mr. Moss's long service deserves all the thanks which the N. S. S. Executive has tendered him in the name of the Freethought movement; thanks which are most heartily endorsed by the President personally. Mr. Moss will still be heard, as occasion serves, at indoor meetings. It will be long, we hope, before he retires altogether. Even then he may continue writing—for the pen outlasts the tongue as an instrument or a weapon.

Miss Kough occupies the platform at the Public Hall, Croydon, this evening (Jan. 19). We bespeak for her a good audience and a hearty welcome.

Mrs. Teresa Billington Greig lectures for the Manchester Branch to-day (Jan 19) at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, where she should be greeted by good audiences. Her subjects are appropriate ones—"No Bible in School" and "Woman and the Church."

Several subscribers to the President's Honorarium Fund have forwarded their 1913 donations already. We do not wish to discourage subscribers from remitting early; at the same time, we are not opening the formal list of acknowledgments till next week. Meanwhile the usual circular will be placed in the hands of the printer.

With regard to Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's excellent little volume on the Blasphemy Laws, entitled *Penalties on Opinion*, we have been given the right to say that the bold advertisement we gave it for several months was quite gratuitous. We wanted to see it circulated as widely as possible, and we did what we could to help it forward. The book was issued by the Rationalist Press Association, and that fact was stated in the advertisement every week, though it could easily and not unjustly have been omitted, as we were using our own machinery to push the sale of the volume. Perhaps this will be added to the list of boycottings by the wicked (and wealthy) *Freethinker*.

The new edition of the *Bible Handbook*, issued by the Secular Society, Ltd., at a very low price, as a propagandist effort, is on sale at our publishing office, and should have a large and prompt circulation. It is one of the most useful publications ever issued from the Freethought press. Nearly every question that Freethinkers ask us from time to time about the Bible can be answered by consulting this book. The references are given with great exactitude. The section on "Bible Contradictions" is printed in parallel columns, so that the contradictions stand out to the eye in a striking manner. Altogether this cheap issue of a work of such utility may be called "the sixpenny *limit*." The shilling edition is bound in cloth, and is the better of the two for those who can afford it, on account of the more lasting character of the binding.

Some of our readers must be getting tired of our "Fighting Fund" as it stands week after week. So are we. But it will not stand in that way much longer. We hope the London County Council will decide to act wisely and justly by withdrawing its mistaken and aggressive policy with regard to free speech and free collections (by *bonâ fide* societies) in the London Parks and other open spaces. It has had nearly six months' already to make up its mind in, and further delay could hardly be anything else than sheer procrastination. Our readers are bound to see a definite announcement on this matter very shortly.

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Ignorance and Religion.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THE greatest thing in the world which I encountered during my recent wanderings in Europe—the greatest, not for value, but for size and force—the thing most colossal, most impenetrable, most boundless and bottomless—was *human ignorance!* Knowledge is power, say we; but what about the power of ignorance? Was it not George Eliot who warned the sanguine reformers not to be too confident, in their hopeful ardor, of their ability to cope with this Abysmal Monster—Ignorance! It was particularly in Catholic Europe that I was brought into very close touch with this fearful foe to human progress.

The conclusion was forcibly impressed upon me during my summer in Europe that the countries which are the most religious,—which have the greatest number of churches, of priests and clergymen, of monks and monasteries, of nuns and convents,—are also without a single exception the most poverty-stricken and the most ignorant. Constantinople, for instance, is one of the most religious cities of the world; it was partly the scene of the conversion of the Roman Empire, the home of the first Christian emperor, and the *rendezvous* of ecclesiastical councils and synods. To-day it is as intensely Mohammedan as formerly it was Christian; but whether the one or the other, it has never ceased to be one of the most religious and one of the most wretched of the world's great cities. Churches and mosques are as thick as blackberries in Constantinople; and what is more, these numerous houses of Moslem and Christian prayer are always open and bustling with worshipers. The Turks themselves, one would suppose, are never quite out of their mosques. Five times a day they must absent themselves from business to appear in the presence of their God, to tell him there is only one God and that he is it. This last time my windows in Constantinople looked directly into the inside of the mosque across the street, which gave me an opportunity to witness the inveterate piety of the Turk. While the *muezzin* was crying from the top of the steeple, or "minaret," that the hour for prayer had arrived—and it arrives, as I said, five times in twenty-four hours—the little mosque was filling up with turbaned and sandalled Turks. The words "turbaned" and "sandalled" are apt to give you a picturesque idea of these worshipers, while in reality they are a most ragged crowd. But they are pious. I was convinced of that when I saw them performing their *namaz* with a seriousness and a scrupulosity difficult to duplicate.

But does religiosity, the constant praying and bending with the accompaniment of tapering candles, the curling fumes of incense, the chime of bells and the music of processions as in Catholic churches, induce God to do more for a people than he otherwise would? Does he love the Moslems for their five prayers a day more than the Christians? Does he love them as much? Or is he more prodigal with his blessings to the Italians and the Spaniards, who go to mass every day, than to the Germans or the Americans, who never go to mass? Are the material and moral conditions of the people in Catholic countries where the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, and the long list of saints are daily and loudly invoked, better, or even as good, as those prevailing in heretical countries? In which country of Europe is there more security of life, property, and liberty,—or better sanitary conditions, wholesomer bread for the masses, less grinding misery or blighting ignorance? Certainly not in the most devoutly religious lands.

I was standing on a Sunday morning in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, where I saw troops of Italian pilgrim peasants, one after the other, walk up and kiss St. Peter's toe. "You have been kissing that bare and cold foot," said I to them in my mind, "all these years, and your fathers and mothers before you; but what has it done for you or your country? You are wretched, poor, and even filthy. I can see it. There is an unpleasant odor about your clothes. You are uncombed and unwashed, and you have had scarcely enough to eat. You look sleepy and stupid. The human element is scarcely discernible in you! What, then, has St. Peter done for you? Or is it in the next world that he is going to reward you for kissing his toe and paying his pence so regularly? But what prevents him from blessing you now and here, when your needs are so urgent and your lot is so unspeakably wretched? Besides, if he insists on getting his pence now, why do you not insist on getting your reward now? If you were to tell St. Peter that you will keep your savings until you go to the next world, where you will place it all in a lump in his hands, he will shake his head, as much as to say, 'No, pay me now.' Why, then, should you be content with *credit*, when he insists on *cash?*"

I stood before the statue of St. Peter buried in meditations which really oppressed me. A black Peter in bronze, with a golden crown in the form of an *aureola* around his head, under a canopy of blue and gold, and with two huge keys in one of his hands resting upon his breast,—the one supposed to be the key of heaven, and the other of hell,—the control of both being handed over to him. In this posture St. Peter holds out one foot, the toe of which is pretty well worn out, not from kissing, but from being wiped by people before kissing it. It seems they are afraid they might contract some disease by kissing the apostle's toe without first wiping it, which shows really what little faith, after all, people have in the power of their saint for present help. If a saint cannot save men from catching a disease when they are kissing his blessed toe, what, then, can he do for them? If people have to use their minds and then their handkerchiefs before kissing a saint, why do they not extend that practice of self-help and common sense to everything else in life? I saw some of these pious folk not only kiss the toe, but also bow and shove their heads under it as a sign of absolute submission to the authority of St. Peter. Great is ignorance!

It must be admitted that the piety of these people is not mere lip service, but genuine. As in Turkey, so in Italy, so in all Catholic Europe, there is no such thing as religious cant. Emerson used to say that only the English and the Americans are given to the odious practice of uttering hypocritical phrases to God; he was right. Of course, the sincerity of the Moslems and the Catholics does not make their faith any the less, I am sorry to say, something of the nature of a malignant growth which is eating away all their material resources, as well as withering all their intellectual powers. But the ignorant are at least sincere, though their sincerity is no protection against the ravages of ignorance. It is pathetic to see how often an Italian beggar, the moment a penny is slipped into his hands, runs away forthwith to deposit it in the church box. The "*chink, chink, chink*," of the pennies falling into the church receptacles, everywhere visible, is a deplorable, yet a convincing, evidence of the sincerity of these simple worshipers. Of course, the money is not given to the Church in any disinterested spirit. On the contrary, the people have an idea that dropping money into the church box, especially when it has been blessed by the Pope or sprinkled with holy water, is like depositing it in a savings bank. Some day and somewhere they will get it all back again with compound interest.

On our way to Pompeii we drove for hours through Naples, which gave us an opportunity to see the homes of these pious people. Ah, what wretched dwellings! These unfortunate people are crowded into dark, dirty, barren quarters, not "flowing with milk and honey," as the promise runs, but dark and dingy. No carpets, no chairs, no beds, no tables, but a few black, broken, cast-away and nameless articles in the way of household furniture. Yet in some of the meanest of these habitations there could be seen on the walls an altar or a shrine of some virgin

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or saint, cased in glass, and an oil lamp burning before it day and night. The savings of the family go to give the saint a light, when it should help to give the children bread or an education. The poor Italians who buy and support these saints believe that without the presence of these saints in the house everything would go wrong with them—as if it were possible for them to sink into lower depths of want and ignorance.

In many of the Catholic churches of Italy we were shown by the guides the crutches which the lame had left there, having recovered the use of their limbs through the intervention of heaven. The pictures of the Madonnas were covered with silver hands and gold hearts in gratitude for answered prayers. In one of the Venetian churches, on the Grand Canal, we saw a wooden leg on the altar, which was exhibited to prove the power of the Church to restore lost limbs. "Is it possible," I asked the guide, "that a man came here with that wooden contrivance and exchanged it for a flesh and bone leg?" But he paid no attention to my question. Now think of an organisation that will resort to such advertisements for purposes of revenue. In this same church the religious guide led us into another room, where he explained to us how, some years ago, the roof had fallen during a fire and partly destroyed the mosaic floor, and also crushed and broken many of the images of the saints. Poor saints! they saved others, but could not save themselves!

In the Church of St. Mark, in Venice, one of the richest in all Europe, we were shown the grave of the apostle of that name. How in all the world they found out who St. Mark was and where he was buried, I cannot tell. It is believed that an Eastern anchorite, living in the desert, saw in a dream the Apostle Mark, who told him where he was buried and begged to be removed to Venice. Of course, his request was carried out. We were also shown in this church the stone upon which St. John was beheaded, and were actually informed besides that if we paid five francs apiece the guide would conduct us to the vaults in the basement, the keys of which he held in his hand, where we would see the blood "of our Lord," and a few of his bones. The Catholics hold on to "bones and blood" as their best answer to the doubter. If you say such and such a saint never lived, they show you his bones. To make sure the guide was in earnest, I asked him repeatedly if the church was really in possession of the blood and bones of "our Lord." Yes, he was not jesting. Who discovered all these relics? Money! If the ignorant could not pay, there would be no relics to exhibit.

Perhaps of all the sights the one which pained me most was what I saw in the Church of the Holy Stairs in Rome, near St. John the Lateran. From a circular posted in the vestibule of this little church, I learned that it possessed one of the richest treasures of Christendom—the marble steps which Jesus ascended when he was in the flesh, and upon which fell drops of his blood. These steps, which are supposed to have been miraculously preserved for the church, have now a wooden covering to preserve them from wearing out. What God has preserved for two thousand years is now being preserved by a wooden casing. The blood spots are there under the wood, though they are invisible except to the eye of faith. The circular in the vestibule, printed in Italian, German, and French—but not in English—says further, that these steps were brought to Rome in the year 861 by Queen Helen during the lifetime of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, and that Pope Leo IV., in the year 850, offered nine years' indulgences to everyone who climbed them on his knees while saying a prayer on each round. The circular further stated, in Italian, German, and French, that a Bull of Pope Pascal, A.D. 1100, confirmed this decree, and Pope Pius VII. declared the climbing of these steps on one's knees good also for the souls in purgatory. There were old men and women here going up these steps on their knees, some of them with arms outstretched, and muttering a prayer as they crawled to the top—about forty-three steps in all. I am restraining myself from exclaiming, "O the power of human ignorance!" for the simple story I am telling you needs no coaching to make it convey its lesson.

I look upon the mosques in Constantinople, the cathedrals in Rome, the great army of sleek, well-fed monks, the religious establishments with their enormous wealth, as the greatest and most enduring monument ever raised to the power of human ignorance. When I saw men and women dipping their fingers in holy water, and then falling on their knees before a clumsily dressed, doll-like Madonna, done with rouge, ribbons, and ruffles, calico skirts and sun-bonnet, and calling it "the mother of God," I did not feel like exclaiming with Shakespeare, "What a piece of work is man!" but with Voltaire I cried, "What an absurd animal is man!" The clock has struck twenty on the dial of time, and yet Ignorance, the abysmal monster, rules its millions, when knowledge has only a handful to depend upon. Walking down the street the other day, I saw an organ grinder, with his wife and daughter assisting him, devouring the windows of the houses on both sides of the streets with his eyes, and grinning and courtesying to the children for a penny. He was an Italian. Did I ask a moment ago what Rome had done for Italy? But see! she has left the hand-organ to a people once the proudest in the world.

But I must now try to explain how religiosity, such as it exists, especially in Catholic and Moslem countries, became the parent of two of the greatest evils which have ever inflicted humanity—poverty and ignorance. In all such countries the clergy have succeeded in shifting the centre of interest from the present to the future. Then, again, insistence upon the authority of the Book or the Church has impaired, hopelessly, the will, as well as the ability, to think independently. In the next place, the menace of hell fire has frightened the people away from new and progressive ideas as from poisoned food. Once more, the forcing of impossible and absurd propositions upon the intelligence as holy mysteries and as absolutely essential both to morality and salvation, has unhinged the people mentally and left them mere puppets in the hands of their exploiters. Flying from one saint to another; seeking now the intervention of the Virgin, and now of that; invoking to-day one martyr and to-morrow another; on a pilgrimage now to one holy relic or grave, and then to another, but living always with the dead—the people have neither the leisure nor the taste for study. Instead of learning and trying to help himself, the believer is praying for help from above. Petronius remarks in one of his letters that there were so many gods in Rome that there was no room left for men. In Catholic countries the gods and saints do everything, leaving man only to *wait*. But there is no evidence that the gods have ever hurt a man or helped him. Thus, we see how superstition cramps man's energies while science expands his mind and trains his hands. A people who *fear* remain slaves, and without science people must ever dwell in fear.

The Northern or Protestant nations are not hurt to the same extent by their religious beliefs, because their loyalty to these beliefs is largely nominal. It is a shocking admission to make, but it is nevertheless true, that the secret of the comparative freedom of Protestant peoples from the bad effects of their creeds is that they are insincere. The Protestants only profess, while the Catholics and the Moslems believe and tremble. When Bishop Colenso had finished fitting up a house for a British eighteen-pounder, the Zulus who had often heard him preach that they must put their trust in the good God, asked him why he reserved a part of his for the English cannon. But that is English; to *profess* faith in God, and to appeal to the cannon. James Nasmyth, the founder of the steam hammer, speaks of an announcement posted on the walls of Edinburgh streets before the days of railroads, which illustrates perfectly the radical difference between the Northern

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and Southern mind. The notice read: "The coach would set out from the Grass Market ilka Tuesday at Twa o'clock in the day, God Wullin, but *whether or no on* Wednesday." The Protestants intend to let God have his own way until Tuesday, but after that they will take the reins in their own hands. Their deference to the supernatural is partial and insincere, and it is to this fact—a fact which makes hypocrites and pharisees of them—that they owe whatever progress they have made in knowledge and civilisation.

A stupid people are worse than an insincere, hypocritical people, for while the latter may be converted to honesty, the former are past redemption. A stupid world would be infinitely less interesting even than a wicked world, for the one manifests an energy that might some day be put to better uses, while the other has the smell of the grave about it. "Against the stupid," says Schiller, "even the gods are helpless." It is this inconsistency, the insincerity of the Protestant, his "make-believe" loyalty to religious dogmas imported from Asia, and therefore alien to his native genius, that enables him to replace in all practical affairs, superstition by science, and "faith" by intelligence. But even the orthodox Catholic is not free from religious insincerity altogether. So long as religious practices and dogmas refuse to respect the rights of reason, it will be impossible to dispense with hypocrisy. My complaint against the creeds is that they make insincerity indispensable.

The Catholic nations of Southern Europe, who have no end of churches and crucifixes, Cararra marble Virgins and painted saints, bronze popes, alabaster Christs, and Madonnas with diamonds for eyes, and who are more interested in purgatory or in paradise than in life here and now, are the most backward peoples in Christendom. To be saved—that is to say, to have the *means* for a decent and useful life—ennobled by the untiring pursuit of truth in the service of humanity, the priest must become a teacher, the church a school, and the locust cloud of saints and gods must make room for *man!*

Of course, from the day that Garibaldi entered Rome, its secularisation began. Italy has at last turned her face toward the light. The reign of ignorance is drawing to a close. I have given you now a picture of old Italy. I will in my next tell you of the Italy that is breaking away from her chains.

—From a Lecture on "A Rationalist in Rome," delivered before the Independent Religious Society, Chicago.

If.

EVERY little while some Christian clergyman tells "what Christ [meaning Jesus] would do if he came again." I can think of no greater waste of words than results from such predictions, or guesswork.

But before anyone undertakes to paint a second career for Jesus it is necessary to prove a first one. There is not a particle of proof that any such person as the Gospel Jesus ever lived on earth. A character such as Jesus is not born; he is made. He does not have human parents. He comes from the brain of man, not from the body of woman. His career is manufactured to carry out the artist's idea. Divinity has been constructed in a myriad form—Jesus is only one of the mythological deities. He is made a little more human, brought a little nearer home to our hearts, than most of them have been. He is only half celestial. He is not pure divinity. There is earth in his picture. He is painted in human likeness, and is endowed with human weakness. Such a being is neither God nor man.

The Gospel Jesus belongs to literature, not to life. He has no history. All that is said of him could be said of Apollo, or Hercules, or Mercury, or of any other creature of human imagination. Jesus is only one attempt of man to make a god.

So we say that it is incumbent upon the person who tells us "what Christ would do if he came again" to show that he ever came; that he ever had an earthly existence; that he ever spoke to man; that he ever wrought a wondrous deed or died as he is represented to have died on the pictured cross.

But take the life of Jesus as a fact, and what is it but a foolish dream? As a model for humanity it is a wretched failure. Men to-day have to work with hand and brain; have to labor for all they get; have to meet the hard, cruel, heartless forces of nature with bleeding hands, with breaking hearts, with eyes burning with tears, and the admonitions of Jesus to "take no thought for the morrow" and to trust to God to feed and clothe them are but insults to the poor who live on the line of starvation and barely escape freezing.

It is the truth that Jesus never did a thing to change the destiny of mankind; that neither his life nor his death altered the conditions under which mankind lives. He did nothing to make the frost less freezing, the heat less burning; nothing to save the aching hands; nothing to stop the sufferings of the body, the agony of the soul; nothing to lessen the drudgery of toil, the misery of existence.

Admit that that Jesus lived as the Gospel story says he lived, what right has anyone to assume that he would do differently were he to return to earth? And what right has anyone to assume that his second advent would benefit the world of man any more than did his first?

The New Testament has ceased to influence human thought, and its central hero has lost his hold upon the sympathy and respect of men and women for the reason that he cannot be shown to be a historical character. Fictitious suffering does not appeal to the honest heart, and persons of a drama or a novel do not move mankind as do flesh-and-blood beings who we know have lived and suffered and sorrowed on earth as we ourselves have done.

We do not want anyone to come back to earth after having once quit it dressed in the garb of death. Life cannot be repeated. A career cannot be lived again. Every soul must be a new soul; every life a new life.

But there is no danger of any person coming again to earth who has passed from it. Nature gives one life to each. It is as foolish to talk about "what Christ would do if he came again" as it would be to predicate what Shakespeare would write or Calvin believe or Jonathan Edwards preach.

—Truthseeker (New York). L. K. WASHBURN.

Literary Gossip.

How much real knowledge of English (or any other) literature is there in the editorial offices of our London newspapers? A correspondent of the *Daily Mirror* having referred to "Macaulay's New Zealander viewing the ruins of London" is pounced upon by another correspondent, who remarks that "Macaulay's idea was not original," and quotes the following passage from Captain Marryat's *Frank Mildmay*, written in 1829:—

> "London may one day be the same—and Paris; and you and your children's children will all have lived and had their their loves and adventures; but who will the wretched man be that shall sit on the summit of Primrose Hill and look down upon the desolation of the mighty city, as you, from this eminence, behold the once flourishing town of St. Jago?"

This idea is not so recondite that it might not occur to many imaginative persons. Still, if there is to be so much talk about "originality" it may as well be remarked that the conception occurs in the pages of a far greater writer than Marryat or Macaulay, who flourished before either of them. I refer to Shelley—in the serio-comic Dedication of *Peter Bell the Third*, dated December 1, 1819. I have just turned to that Dedication and read it through once more with unimpaired delight. Shelley's prose is, in its own way, as fine as his verse. I know this is a heresy, but I never trouble about a charge like that. I read for my own pleasure,—I judge from my own perception. But somebody will be telling me to "leave off my damnable faces and

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begin"—or rather come to the point. Here it is then: Shelley's last paragraph—the poet soaring above the satirist (you see I am incurable!)—runs as follows:—

> "Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the Fudges, you will receive from them; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be a habitation of bitterns, when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians.—I remain, etc."

The essence of this idea, in all these cases, is London in a state of ruin and desertion. Macaulay *had* read Shelley, Marryat *might* have, and both may have drawn from the same great source. I repeat, however, that the varied use made of the idea renders the discussion about "originality" and "plagiarism" as superfluous as it is inappropriate.

* * *

Fielding's genius has been the admiration of every great English writer since, and his masterpiece is one of the translated classics in most civilised languages. Gibbon's immortal compliment to our great novelist is famous; and to be mentioned by Gibbon, as Thackeray said, is like having your name inscribed on the dome of St. Peter's, where it is visible to visitors from all parts of the world. Thackeray's own admiration of Fielding is also well known. But it is not my intention to draw up a list of Fielding's eulogists. It would *take* too long—and would *be* too long. I will therefore just turn to Coleridge. That mighty and subtle genius, who was perhaps the most splendidly endowed of all English poets since Shakespeare, refers to Fielding frequently in his *Table Talk* and elsewhere. The following passage is one of the most characteristic:—

> "What a master of composition Fielding was! Upon my word, I think the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, the *Alchemist*, and *Tom Jones*, the three most perfect plots ever planned. And how charming, how wholesome, Fielding always is! To take him up after Richardson, is like emerging from a sick room heated by stoves, into an open lawn, on a breezy day in May."

Being asked whether *Tom Jones* is not a dangerous book for a young man, Coleridge replied "No,—unless the young man's mind is hopelessly corrupt already." The author of that great novel was "*manly* Harry Fielding" then, and he is manly Harry Fielding still to all whose minds are not morbid and prurient. And as to Fielding's style, it was George Eliot (in *Middlemarch*, I think) who speaks of his "lusty English." His is masculine English from head to foot. On all accounts he is admirable to men, and only distasteful to effeminates and eunuchs.

* * *

It may be objected that this classification is hard upon the Doncaster Corporation Free Library Committee. They had a copy of *Tom Jones* on their shelves and they resolved to burn it. A member took it home and read it for the first time. He reported it as immoral. In this, however, he was opposed by other members; but the majority agreed with him and resolved that the book should be burnt. We suppose the resolution has been duly carried out.

* * *

Nobody knows the name of the builder of the famous Temple of Ephesus. Everybody knows the name of the man who burnt it down. He immortalised himself by one act of vandalism. So has the Free Library Committee of the city of Doncaster. * * *

Public Free Libraries are good things in their way, but it is easy to overestimate their value—especially now that books are so cheap that twenty classics can be bought for a pound. They provide a plethora of reading (mostly novels—and *not* by Fieldings) to the general public,—chiefly to young ladies who have nothing else to do with their time. But they take as much care as possible to make all the reading they supply *harmless*. They keep out what excites thought on great questions, not merely of the day and hour, but of all time. Books by thinkers and reformers, whose names are in intelligent people's mouths, are carefully banned. Serious readers ask for them in vain. The average man rules there absolutely, through his representatives (a local Church parson, a local Dissenting preacher, a local builder, a local tailor, a local grocer, and a local "retired" gentleman, who came from nowhere and is going to the same place). And the rule of the average man in the realm of mind is intellectual desolation and death.

G. W. FOOTE.

GOD'S ADVISERS.

The Lord's most vain and stupid friends go out
To teach his pagan children how to pray;
The god-helped pagans kill God's friends, and flout
The God whose schemes they aid, whilst thus they slay;
And all's for best, God's friends agree.

God's creatures kill God's creatures, and obey
His grinding law of change: Life, Strife, and Death;
They work and love; they preach, and hate, and pray,
And think, poor fools! that God cares aught for breath
Of infant, tiger, priest, or flea.

Does Nature's hideous strife our Reason fill
With hope that Hatred's fell Designer feels
For those whose slaughter prompts the song-bird's trill,
Or those whom tyrants crush beneath their heels?
To sharks, go bend in pray'r your knee!

A pray'r to Him that doeth all things well,
That numbers, and makes the sparrows fall,
Must shake the universe, from heav'n to hell,
With mirthful shrieks of demons, great and small—
If God, heav'n, hell, and ghosts there be.

The priests and parsons—God Almighty's staff
Of cosmical, consulting engineers—
Advising God, are fit to force a laugh
From Christ himself, the man of threats and tears,
Whose frenzied frown could blast a tree.

The foolish folk that pray—if God there be—
Were made to pray, and we were made to think
That pray'r's absurd, and yet that they and we,
Their faith and our contempt, with all things link,
Perforce, to make what is to be.

If aught we know, we know that naught is known
Of heav'nly aid—man saves himself, or dies.
Let, therefore, work, true seed of hope, be sown
On earth alone, nor waste on silent skies
The time so short for you and me.

———— —*G. L. Mackenzie.*

God is not in the world. In all business transactions there is no mention of a deity. Go into all the offices of the town you will not run against God in any of them. We live without God, we do business without God, we plant, cultivate, and harvest without God. It is only the priest and preacher who keep God in stock. The priest and preacher get their living out of the God idea and they can only live by humbugging the world into the notion that there is a God. But ask them to show their God and they stand dumb.—*L. K. Washburn.*

THE SOUL'S SINCERE DESIRE.

Three Philadelphia ministers were watching the score board of the last game of the world series. It was the first half of the tenth inning, and the score read: New York, 2; Boston, 1.

A large colored man attracted the attention of the ministers by his attitude and intense interest. His eyes were glued on the score board, while his hands were folded in an attitude of prayer. One of the ministers touched him gently and inquired: "Brother, what are you doing with your hands folded?"

"I'se prayin', sah," was his reply.

"For whom are you praying?" asked the minister.

Said the colored man: "For Boston, sah, for Boston! Law's sake, sah, if Boston loses I'se ruined."

THE CAT'S COMMUNION.

In order that the revival spirit might be quickened, it was arranged in a negro church, near Savannah, that the preacher should give a signal when he thought the excitement was highest, and from the attic, through a hole in the ceiling over the pulpit, the sexton was to throw down a pure white dove, whose flight around the church and over the heads of the audience was expected to provide the climax.

All went well at the start—the church was packed. The preacher's text was, "In the form of a dove," and fervidly he piled up his periods till the emotion of the congregation grew to the breaking point.

The opportune moment had arrived, the signal was given, and the packed audience was scared out of its wits on looking up to the ceiling to behold a cat growling and spitting, dangling from a string above the preacher's head.

"Whar's de dove?" the preacher called out to the sexton.

The sexton's voice came down through the opening loud enough to be heard in all parts of the building:

"Inside de cat!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "More 'Bradlaugh' Fables."

CROYDON PUBLIC (SMALL) HALL (George-street): 7.15, Miss K. B. Kough, "What Should We Do Without Christianity?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Science and Morals."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. T. Arthur, "The Earth's Place in the Universe."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): Mrs. Teresa Billington Greig, 3, "No Bible in School"; 6.30, "Woman and the Church." Tea at 5.

OUTDOOR.

LEIGH (Market Place): R. Mearns, 3, "Is the Bible the Word of God?" 6.30, "Why I am a Secularist."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 4 SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Will there never be a sanctuary in every private house? Will there never be a time when every mother will be the priestess of her children and family?

—LANDOR.

Another "Bradlaugh" Fable.

ONE of the most instructive things, in its way, in the whole range of literature, is the chapter on "The Watch Story" in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's biography of her father, the great Charles Bradlaugh. Perhaps the following chapter on "Other Fables" should go with it. Taken together they show the invincible unveracity and incurable credulity of the general Christian mind. Deception and self-deception are displayed to such an extent in those two chapters as to suggest that any wicked imbecility or imbecile wickedness is possible to irrational human nature under the influence of religious bigotry. And the moral is that no report of Christians about Freethinkers should be believed without absolute corroboration.

Let the Christian say "I tell you, I saw it—I heard it. I couldn't be mistaken." He may be trying to deceive you, but he may have deceived himself. Charles Bradlaugh never gave the Almighty five minutes to strike him dead, either on a public platform or elsewhere. This is as certain as any negative proposition can be. Yet it is clear that in one or two cases the reporter must really have believed that he saw and heard Bradlaugh do it. At the time when Bradlaugh was prosecuting the man Edgecumbe for printing the Watch Story in the *British Empire* an interesting statement was made by the editor of the *Huddersfield Examiner*. He said that a person called at his office the previous week and alleged that "he had heard Mr. Bradlaugh utter such a challenge, and saw him pull out his watch in the manner stated in the course of the debate with the Rev. Dr. M'Cann in Huddersfield. To our certain knowledge no such occurrence ever took place, yet the man making the statement appeared to be fully convinced that he had heard and seen what he described as having taken place, and he was prepared to give evidence on the subject if called upon to do so."

We remember a somewhat similar case. It must be premised that the Watch Story was not confined to Bradlaugh; it was applied to every leading Freethought lecturer of the nineteenth century, including George Jacob Holyoake, who had to deny it before Bradlaugh appeared on the scene. Ladies like Mrs. Harriet Law and Mrs. Annie Besant fared no better than the male advocates of Freethought. The Rev. J. Moffat Logan, with whom we debated at Bristol many years ago, assured us that when he was a very young man at Glasgow he saw Mrs. Harriet Law perform what we may call "the watch trick" on the platform of the Secular Hall. We are certain he never saw anything of the kind. How he came to believe he did is more than we can explain. But he was a highly emotional man, and that was probably the governing factor in his case.

We could write a lot upon the Watch Story, but our present object is only to show that "fables" about Bradlaugh could arise and hold their own, without a particle of real evidence to support them, and in spite of the most complete refutation.

This is by way of introduction to a new Bradlaugh "fable" which appeared lately in the *Liverpool Weekly Post*, in the "Workaday World" department, edited by "Ben Adhem"—whoever that gentleman may be. It was a story of Bradlaugh being put to confusion by a young soldier at Portsmouth. One of our Birmingham readers asked "Ben Adhem" his authority for the story, and this was his reply (Dec. 28):—

> "J. B.—Thanks for the *Freethinker*. The Bradlaugh and young soldier incident is related by the soldier himself in his book—'From the Bottom Up,' by Alexander Irvine, published by Heinemann, London: and is quoted and endorsed by Mrs. Annie Besant—Bradlaugh's colleague for many years—in the 'Theosophist' for December, 1910."

Now we like to do things thoroughly, so we invested our money in the book and the periodical referred to. We speak, therefore, "by the card," as Hamlet says; which "Ben Adhem" could not have done, unless he is a very careless or a very dishonest writer.

We are not called upon to give an opinion of Mr. Alexander Irvine's book generally. His work as a Christian missionary in England and America is not the best training in logic and accuracy. Anyhow, here is his story:—

> "The most powerful speaker I ever heard was Charles Bradlaugh. I attended one of his lectures one Sunday afternoon in a large auditorium in Portsmouth. I shall never forget that wonderful voice as it thrilled an audience of four thousand people. Bradlaugh was engaged in one of his favorite themes, demolishing God and the theologians. It was the most daring thing I had ever heard, and my mind and soul were in revolt. When the time for questions came, I pushed my way to the front, was recognised by the chairman, and mounted the platform. My lips were parched and I could scarcely utter a word. The big man with the homely face saw my embarrassment, and said, 'Take your time, my boy; don't be in a hurry.'
>
> "He had been a soldier himself, and, I supposed, as I stood there in my scarlet tunic, Glengarry cap in hand, Bradlaugh became reminiscent.
>
> "When I got command of my voice, I said: 'I want to ask Mr. Bradlaugh a question. I have very little education and little opportunity to get more, but I have a peace in my heart; I call it "Belief in God." I don't know what else to call it and I want to ask Mr. Bradlaugh whether he is willing to take that away from me and deprive me of the biggest pleasure in my life, and leave nothing in its place?'
>
> "He rose from his chair, came forward, laid his hand on my shoulder, and amid a most impressive silence, said:—
>
> "'No, my lad, Charles Bradlaugh will be the last man on the face of the earth to take a pleasure from a soldier boy, even though it be a "belief in God!"'
>
> "The crowd wildly cheered, and I went out grateful and strengthened."

Mr. Irvine does not tell us when this happened. We gather that it must have been in the early 'eighties. The story is therefore some thirty years old. That is the worst of these things. Mrs. Besant justly noticed this in 1877, when the Watch Story was applied to her, not only by the smaller fry of Christianity, but by the famous Dr. Joseph

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Parker, who attacked her in the following elegant language :—

> "There is a woman going up and down the country lecturing, and may be in London city at this moment, and she proudly cries out that there is no God, and she takes out her watch and says, 'Now, if there be a God, I give him five minutes to strike me dead,' and she coolly stands watching the hands of her watchdial, and because she is not struck dead by the time she stipulates, she cries out that there is no God; and workingmen run after this woman, and pay for listening to this ginger-beer blasphemy, and the ravings of a half-drunken woman."

Mrs. Besant, in the course of her reply, made this very palpable hit :—

> "There is one very queer thing about the story; it never appears in any report given at the time of any lecture, and no one speaks of having heard the challenge, the day, week, or month, or year after it was done. The pious Christian always heard it about twenty years ago, and has kept it locked in his bosom ever since."

Not twenty years, but thirty years (apparently) has Mr. Irvine kept that Bradlaugh story "locked in *his* bosom." It is a ridiculous story on the face of it. Bradlaugh was lecturing against Theism in order to make Atheists. Why should he scruple at Alexander Irvine? What was it the crowd "wildly cheered"? Was it his eagerness to *get* off or Bradlaugh's willingness to *let* him off? The reply, too, is so unlike Bradlaugh! He thought Atheism a good thing. Why should he nearly weep at the thought of its infecting a soldier boy? The story is a perfect tissue of absurdity.

"Ben Adhem's" statement that Mrs. Besant "quoted and endorsed" Mr. Irvine's story is not true. The *Theosophist* review of the book does not *endorse* the story at all, but merely refers to it as a part of the author's narrative. And the review was *not* written by Mrs. Besant. It is signed "E. S." These are not the initials of Annie Besant. So that "Ben Adhem's" one strong point is "rotten."

G. W. FOOTE.

The Culture of the Supernatural.—II.

(*Continued from p. 35.*)

THE value of the study of religion from the point of view indicated in my last article, is of first-rate importance. It does not concern itself — except indirectly—with the origin of religion. This it takes as already existing, and inquires to what extent have manifestations of the sexual life, normal and abnormal, and nervous states, normal and pathological, been accepted as evidences of supernatural influence. Although much may have been said and written on this subject, in parentheses, so to speak, it is a line of inquiry that has never, I believe, been systematically and exhaustively worked. This is not due to any lack of material, for this is of great bulk, both with savage and civilised people. Perhaps it is that while it is permissible to point out that certain individuals here and there have mistaken their own morbid condition for supernatural illumination, it would rouse too much ill-will to demonstrate that a deliberate culture of perverted sex feeling and morbid nervous states have been features of all religious cults from the most savage to the most civilised. In this connection it is worth noting that a very clear and shrewd essay on the connection between sexual feeling and religious devotion that appeared in the first edition of D'Israeli's *Miscellanies of Literature*, was quietly dropped from subsequent editions.

At any rate, no one who is even slenderly acquainted with the facts will deny that sexual and mental aberrations have at all times been taken as evidences of spiritual illumination. We may, therefore, give Professor James's query concerning the Biblical writers: "Under just what biographic conditions did the sacred writers bring forth their various contributions to the holy volume?" and give it wider scope. What are the conditions, biographic and social, under which certain persons have imagined themselves, and have been believed by others, to be specially favored with divine illumination? The majority of people, it may safely be said, are conscious of no such experience. In what respect does the favored few differ from their fellows? Must we assume that by some finer development of their nature, or by some peculiar development of faculty, they are brought into touch with a wider and deeper reality? Or are we to seek a less romantic explanation by the help of known forces and tendencies in human nature? And, further, as this minority are not conscious of divine illumination all the time, what is it that differentiates their normal state from their abnormal condition?

No answer of any value to any queries will be found in ordinary religious writings. Rhapsodical eulogies of religion tell us nothing at all. Nay, they tell us less than nothing that is useful, since theories that obtain in this quarter are founded upon the absolute veracity of the phenomena under consideration. Speaking generally, it is impossible to learn anything of the real nature of religion from religious teachers. One may gather from them what religious people say or do, but not why they say or do these things. A description of the states of mind of religious personages, such as that supplied by Professor James, is interesting enough, but it is the causes of these states that is of real importance. And this causation can only be understood by associating them with other and more fundamental processes. Within recent years psychology owes its real advances to a closer attention to the physiology of the nervous system, and if any like advance is to be made in our knowledge of religious phenomena we must adopt the same line of inquiry. We do not, for instance, understand the nature of demoniacal possession by collating cases. It is only when we place them side by side with similar cases that now come under the control of the physician, and associate them with a peculiar mental and social environment that we find ourselves in possession of a rational explanation. In this instance, as in the case of delusion or of insanity, a study of the anatomy and physiology of the nervous system is essential. Without it we are in the position of trying to determine the nature of a locomotive while in complete ignorance of its internal mechanism. Yet this is precisely the position of all professional exponents of religion. As a student the budding divine has his head stuffed full of historic creeds, and texts, and doctrines, and dogmas, none of which can possibly tell him the real nature of religion. On the contrary, they act as so many obstacles to his acquiring knowledge. Which is one of the reasons that, while we turn to the astronomer for information about astronomy, to the biologist for information about biology, or to the sociologist for a knowledge of sociology, to gain real knowledge about religion we have to forsake the professional teacher of religion altogether.

To put the whole matter in a sentence, the study of religion must be affiliated to the study of life as a whole. If possible, we want to get at the determining conditions that lead one person to expend his energy in religion, while another person with the same qualities of mind finds full satisfaction in other directions. Religion can only be treated as a distinct thing so long as we believe in a "religious faculty" organically ear-marked for religious use. This is what people have in mind when they explain Darwin's Agnosticism as due to an atrophy of the "religious faculty" consequent on over-absorption in scientific pursuits, or who argue that the "religious faculty," like a physiological structure, increases in efficiency with use and atrophies with disuse. But this is without the slightest scientific justification. There is no reason for believing that had Darwin professed religion his mental qualities would have been different to what they were. They would merely have been expressed in different language. For there are no specifically religious qualities. There may be hope, or fear, or

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love, or terror, or devotion, in relation to religion, but they are precisely the same qualities that manifest themselves in relation to other things. Mental qualities may be roused to activity in connection with a belief in the supernatural, or they may be expressed in connection with mundane associations. Whatever be the exciting cause, the qualities themselves remain unchanged. And a scientific inquiry consequently concerns itself less with the form in which they are expressed than with an investigation of the causes of their operation.

It is perfectly true, as Professor James says, that "the whole array of Christian saints and hierarchs, including the greatest, the Bernards, the Loyolas, the Luthers, the Foxes, the Wesleys, had their visions, voices, rapt conditions, guiding impressions, and 'openings,'" but when he goes on to say that the subjects "actually feel themselves played upon by a power beyond their will. The evidence is dynamic. The God or spirit moves the very organs of their body," one can admit this as only true of the subject's own belief about the nature of their feelings and of the convictions of some of the onlookers. In any other sense, one may simply meet the conviction with a flat denial. It is not a question of the actuality of certain states, but of their origin and nature. It is quite beside the point to dwell upon the intense conviction of the subject of these seizures. The subjective state is always real, whether it belongs to a saint in ecstasy or a drunkard in delirium tremens. There are no subjective states more real than are the visions of an opium eater; but it is never suggested that we are to take the opium eater's proofs of his being brought into touch with a new world of being. In such cases the testimony of a normal onlooker is of more value than that of the visionary. So it may well be that what to one person is evidence of the supernatural is to another no more than a false interpretation of a real mental experience, although many are inclined to treat the rejection of the interpretation as equivalent to a denial of the fact.

It must also be remembered that it is a matter of actual demonstration that these religious experiences are strictly determined by environmental influences. Thousands of Christians have been favored with visions of Jesus or of heaven in their dying moments. Millions of Jews have lived and died without any such experience. The Virgin or Jesus have never appeared to a Mohammedan—the very person to whom such a vision would be most useful. The spiritual experience of each is determined by the pre-existing religious belief. When the Devil was generally believed in, visions of Satan were quite common. The evidence for personal conflicts with Satan is quite as strong as the evidence for intercourse with God. When the belief in Satan died out, the visions died out also. Moreover, these visions and this sense of contact with a super-normal world of being is not peculiar to religion. It is a common feature of a general psycho-pathic condition. Medical works are full of such instances. And, naturally, when the psychopath is of a deeply religious nature, the affection is expressed in religious terms. In the well-known case of Martin Luther, his complaint of the Devil's attempt to interfere with his work by buzzing in his ears and knocking on his head, there is no need to go any further than a nervous affection for a complete explanation. Many similar cases might be quoted of ignorant people who have complained of the same diabolic persecution, but who have had Satan exorcised by the aid of a physician.

One could, in fact, construct an ascending series of cases, all of which agree in the symptoms displayed, and differ only in the explanation offered. The series would commence with the explanation of a possessing spirit, and end with that given by modern science. Ignorant of the nature, or even of the existence, of a nervous system, primitive man explains abnormal mental states as due to a malignant spirit. Martin Luther, George Fox, or John Bunyan, living at a time when the activity of a personal devil was one of the most firmly held of religious beliefs, are convinced of satanic activity as the cause of their affections. All the phenomena on which the animistic explanation rested are still with us, but they are described, and prescribed for, in medical manuals instead of in manuals of exorcism. The religious theory gives way to that of the expert neurologist. The exorcist is replaced by the physician. To argue that while the mental states remain constant, their causes may have been different in earlier ages, is sheer absurdity. To claim that the religious mystic is, in moments of exaltation, brought into touch with a "deeper reality," is to invite the retort that one might, with equal truth, say the same of the inmates of a lunatic asylum. It may be quite true that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy, but there is no need to make this a ground for useless speculation and grotesque theory. It is far more useful to drive home the much-needed lesson that there are few things in heaven or earth that will not yield their secrets to a method of investigation that is sanely conceived and diligently employed.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Christian Lying.

THE Bishop of Southwell, according to a report in the *Burton Evening Gazette* for January 14, told a Derby audience that "the Midland Railway Company had created a class of men of which any town might be proud." By its "very rules the moral standard of the employees was lifted." Now, these people, whose moral standard was lifted, and of whom any town might be proud, were further described by his lordship as being, "generally speaking, not hostile to religion," while "an enormous mass of them was on its side, although they might not always attend church." Whether Dr. Hoskyns's estimate of the character of the Midland Railway's employees is accurate or not we do not know, and we also lack first-hand information as to their general attitude to religion. If we doubt the correctness of the Bishop's characterisation of them, we do so simply because he went out of his way to misrepresent what he called "the Atheistic propagandist" of to-day. This hateful pariah is not so prominent now as he was thirty years ago, and his lordship found that "intellectually he was falling short of those whom he sought to convert to his views." How many Atheistic propagandists did the Bishop know thirty years ago, and of how many has he any personal knowledge to-day? To under estimate an enemy is a proverbial human weakness, and it is quite evident that Dr. Hoskyns suffers severely from it. The high intellectuality of Atheists, as a class, is unquestionable. Only a person endowed with a considerable amount of brains is capable of becoming a convinced Atheist. The moment a man becomes a critic he ceases to be a good believer. The more a man thinks for himself the less grows the area of his faith. It is not so long ago since we read of a preacher who asked the Lord to help him to believe and to deliver him from the evil of thinking. Had that minister been guilty of real thinking he could not have indulged in such a silly prayer.

The truth is, that all genuine Atheists are such as the result of very serious thinking, while Christians are generally encouraged to depreciate the intellect and enthrone what is called intuition. One of the charges against the present age is its so-called excessive intellectualism. The reason, we are told, should be of secondary value and importance in human life, the first place rightly belonging to sanctified emotion. Such is the general teaching, though there are a few notable exceptions to it. Surely the Bishop of Southwell must be aware that intellectually very few preachers are shining lights. "Dry as a sermon" is a most familiar comparison. The inferior intellectuality of theologians is proved

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by the ease with which many of them accept the theory of evolution and combine it with their theology, though the former is of necessity the complete negation of the latter. Fancy an evolutionist defining the Divine Fatherhood as "God's self-reproduction in man!" Then God began to reproduce himself when the first tiny mass of living slime appeared a hundred million years ago; and the process went on without interruption, now producing wolves, tigers, and snakes, and now the birds of the air, until man came forth, who, by eating the forbidden fruit, arrested "God's self-production." The inference is, that when man fell, God ceased to reproduce himself. Then fancy, if you can, an evolutionist defining sin as "no part of evolution, not the remains of the brute, but the initial lapse of the race at its individual start." Here is another brilliant definition of sin: "It is not the failure of a son, but the failure to become a son." Take another instance of theological intelligence:—

> "If the purposive element of evolution be the racial reproduction of the Divine image, it is manifestly incongruous to attribute to an abnormal, degenerated species an individual deathlessness which can propagate itself indefinitely and permanently in the ever multiplying members of a sinful race."

If that be the case, there must be either redemption or annihilation for such a race of sinners; and individuals are represented as free to choose either the one or the other. But what is redemption? Astonishing to relate, it is defined as "the recovery of the vanishing environment," whatever on earth or in heaven that may mean. Seriously we do not think that, intellectually, an average "Atheistic propagandist" falls far short of the author of such amazing definitions as those just given.

But theologians are in the habit not only of under-estimating their enemies, but of under-estimating them in order to over-estimate themselves and the might of their religion. There is a striking example of this evil habit in "The Correspondence of Rev. Prof. David Smith, D.D.," in the *British Weekly* for January 16. The Professor is dealing with the case of a certain local preacher who is troubled over 2 Tim. iii. 13: "But evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." We have no fault whatever to find with Dr. Smith's interpretation of that verse, though there is the utmost uncertainty as to by whom and when it was written. Even on the assumption, adopted by the reverend gentleman, that this epistle was sent to Timothy by Paul when a prisoner at Rome in the reign of Nero, the picture of Rome painted here is horribly exaggerated. It is as follows:—

> "It was an age of gross superstition, the golden age of charlatans. The ancient religions were dead, and the souls of men, with their ineradicable need of God, had fallen a prey to impostors—astrologers, sorcerers, and diviners. Nowhere was the evil so rife as at Rome, the imperial capital, whither all the rascality of the world streamed, in Sallust's phrase, as into a common cesspool; and Paul, a prisoner awaiting his final judgment before Nero, was in the thick of the moral pestilence, and breathed its poisoned atmosphere. It is interesting to recall that at that very crisis Apollonius of Tyana, that prince of charlatans, was at Rome, the hero of that deluded populace."

It is impossible to pass over in silence Dr. Smith's gross misrepresentation of the famous Pagan, Apollonius of Tyana. He was anything but the "prince of charlatans." Neander, the distinguished ecclesiastical historian, describes him as a man of great gifts and exalted character, whose one object was to restore Paganism to its primitive simplicity and beauty. Such was his humanity to animals that he refused, even on the invitation of a king, to take part in the chase (Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 165). He has the credit of having caused the abolition of the cruel gladiatorial games at Athens some two hundred years before Honorius abolished them in Rome. As a contrast to Dr. Smith's caricature, take the following picture by Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie:—

> "How then should we regard Apollonius? Certainly not as the originator of any new gospel or beliefs, but as a revivalist whose power lay in exhortation and moral rebuke; without much sense of humor, to save him from being over-didactic; but with purity of motive and disinterestedness which gave him a great power over communities sunk in effeminacy and selfishness.....A preacher but not an apostle, a saint but not a prophet, must be our appreciation of Apollonius of Tyana" (*Personal Religion in Egypt Before Christianity*, p. 165).

Dr. Smith has proved, on several occasions, his utter incapacity to be just to a Pagan.

He seems equally incapable of doing justice to Paganism and Pagans generally. Nero was undoubtedly a bad man, but he had his good points. It was he who appointed a magistrate to hear the complaints of the slaves against their masters, and to punish the latter when guilty of barbarous treatment, of making their slaves instruments of lust, or of withholding from them a sufficient supply of the necessaries of life (Seneca, De Benef., iii. 22). In the first years of his reign it was his strong wish to abolish taxes, and he would have done so had it not been for the opposition of the senators who praised his magnanimity. The court was certainly extremely corrupt; but it was not nearly so corrupt as the Christian Church was in the tenth century during the supremacy of "the Pornocracy." What does Professor Smith think of Popes Sergius III., John X., John XI., and John XII.? Does he not know that they were morally worse than the worst people that surrounded Nero? Has he not read that when the Emperor Otto the Great instituted a strict inquiry into the character and habits of the pontiff there was disclosed the most abandoned profligacy? And yet, with all these horrible facts staring him in the face, Dr. Smith has the temerity to affirm that "all down the ages God has been working out the redemption of the world and raising humanity, by the patient process which science calls evolution, ever nearer and nearer to the ideal which was revealed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It is as black a lie as was ever told. If we take the testimony of only Church historians, we learn that between the fourth century and the middle of the eleventh there was steadily going on a downward evolution. Instead of rising, humanity was sinking deeper and deeper into moral degradation. When Christianity was most powerful, Christendom wallowed in the foulest moral gutters. He who runs may read all this in the annals of the past. During the centuries that Christianity reigned alone, having forcibly suppressed all rivals, the world kept getting worse, which proves beyond the possibility of a doubt to unprejudiced people that Christianity has been from the beginning a gigantic failure; and its failure can only be accounted for by the fact that it is entirely false. Christendom did not begin to get better until secular forces came into operation and gradually broke the monopoly so long enjoyed by the Church; and it has been and is improving almost in the exact proportion in which the Church has been and is being deprived of its power.

In spite of the fact that Christianity is now rapidly dying, its official defenders declare that it is about to march on to final victory; but truth is great and shall prevail. O Science, thou hast conquered.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Neglected Humorist.

> "John P. Robinson, he
> Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee."
> —*Biglow Papers.*

THERE is more in a laugh than meets the ear. Everybody has laughed at least once in a lifetime, not excepting the professional bodyguard of the Man of Sorrows, whose perennial rigidity of features has always been the cause of the polite wonder of outsiders. Even priests laugh in private. Laughing is, happily, a more common indulgence than weeping, although the ever-growing sternness of the battle of life is tending to the elimination of real, hearty

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laughter. There is, moreover, an increasing body of laughless folk who regard the indulgence as ill-bred, if not criminal. They join cause with my Lord Chesterfield, who congratulated himself on the fact that since he had full use of his reason nobody had heard him laugh.

The function of the laugh-maker is underestimated. The man who grins at you through a horse-collar, and sets you laughing back at him, does you a great service. The physiological value of laughter has never been correctly appraised. Although doctors bestow a certain patronage on cheerfulness, and give it a minor place in the pharmacopœia, no one will dispute that the humorists are the benefactors of society. Yet, with the exception of Moliere, Rabelais, and Dickens, humorous writers are held to be only second-rate artists. The world will not take them seriously. Perhaps it is their own fault for electing to provide mirth for sober folk. Many jesters are neglected worthy of more than passing attention.

Take "Dod Grile" for example. Why his books are not so popular as those by Mark Twain, Max Adeler, or Artemus Ward is a mystery. That he is as funny as either is evident. If his humor is not appreciated by the public to the extent of those others, it may be because he has chosen to expend it largely upon a disrespectful perversion of religion. The proper study of mankind is man, and possibly the only burlesque that causes the wide mouth of the general public to broaden to a grin must also concern nature, and not the alleged supernatural. "Dod Grile" deserves a place beside the other jesters mainly because his work is of a rarer quality than theirs. Ambrose Bierce, for that was his correct name, was a journalist who was for many years connected with the *London Figaro*, *Fun*, and other humorous periodicals. He published two volumes, with the quaint titles, *The Fiend's Delight* and *Cobwebs from an Empty Skull*, under his *nom de plume* of "Dod Grile," and a third, *In the Midst of Life*, with his own name on the title. The two former books were as full of profanity as an egg is full of meat. Indeed, the title-page of *The Fiend's Delight* was ornamented with a drawing showing a devil toasting a tiny baby at a large fire, whilst in the body of the work the Christian superstition fares as badly as it did in the hands of Colonel Ingersoll. *In the Midst of Life*, which is far and away the most popular volume issued by Bierce, is a collection of short stories, mostly tragic, and all written with the hand of a master.

The gems of humor scattered throughout his writings would make the fortune of a comic writer. Here are a few taken at random:—

> "I once knew a man who made me a map of the opposite hemisphere of the moon. He was crazy. I knew another who taught me what country lay upon the other side of the grave. He was a most acute thinker—as he had need to be."
>
> "The Psalmist never saw the seed of the righteous begging bread. In our day they sometimes request pennies for keeping the street corners in order."
>
> "It is wicked to cheat on Sundays. The law recognises this truth, and shuts up the shops."
>
> "If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man."
>
> "Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling."
>
> "Most people have no more definite idea of liberty than that it consists in being compelled by law to do as they like."
>
> "People who honor their fathers and their mothers have the comforting promise that their days shall be long in the land. They are not sufficiently numerous to make the life-assurance companies think it worth their while to offer them special rates."
>
> "Everybody professes to know that it would be difficult to find a needle in a haystack, but very few reflect that this is because haystacks seldom contain needles."
>
> "In calling a man a hog, it is the man who gets angry, but it is the hog who is insulted. Men are always taking up the quarrels of others."

But to pick out passages at haphazard is not doing justice to a clever jester. Not only does a jest's prosperity lie in the ear of him who hears it, but it has its life in an atmosphere of its own, and there are few plants so tender in the transplanting. While the creator of Dr. Dooley is welcomed, and the author of *Three Men in a Boat* is passing popular, one cannot help regretting the inadequate appreciation "Dod Grile" has won. Of course, all reading people must needs know his writings, but that the larger public should not have an opportunity of testing what he has written is unsatisfactory.

MIMNERMUS.

FETISHISM.

It is profoundly curious that in a city like Paris, which inherits the civilisation of Greece and of Rome, and after the progress of science accomplished during the last four centuries, there are still minds so belated or rudimentary as to represent the world as the work of a supreme being, who is a kind of almighty machine constructor, like Edison or Eiffel.

This fetishism, this African theology, this Papuan philosophy, belongs not only to the different Churches—Jewish, Christian, or Moslem, fossil *débris* of early ages of thought vainly trying to comprehend the world. Even present-day teachers seem as little emancipated in this particular as the magistrates, the politicians, and the common run of writers. The words, "God," "Providence," "soul," "immortality," are retained as much in the academies and the chairs of education as in synagogues, mosques, or churches. Since all infirmities are worthy of compassion, perhaps this is a sore which respect for humanity might interdict exposing to daylight; even the animals lick their ulcers. How long will this immense flock of deicoles make us assist at the spectacle of their superstition? There seems to be no remedy—at least, for all those who have neither the leisure to learn nor the power to reflect. We must take account of them. It has ever been thus, and perhaps will be always so. Democritus and Protagoras hardly found themselves in any better company.

I say this spectacle is profoundly curious. I say no more. To be astonished is simple; to be angry extremely bad taste. The naturalist who studies the social life of hymenoptera soon ceases either to admire or be indignant at the doings or antics of bees, wasps, and ants. When young, we dreamt of reforming the world; later, we held that all is probably for the best, or for the least evil in the human ant-hill.

Besides, to one who follows and observes, even from afar, the transformations of the public mind, it becomes evident that the leaders of opinion, who are always in reality serfs, do little beyond transposing the political institutions or the religious and metaphysical beliefs of a nation. These great players on the lyre sing and play in one key that which has been noted in another. That is all. But fetishism loses nothing by all this. The Mexicans have placed at the feet of the Pope a crown of gold and precious stones destined for some statue of the Virgin. Leo XIII. blesses the crown at audiences accorded to the academicians. The French raise statues to their heroes, and, above all, to their heroine. The worship of Joan of Arc succeeds to that of the Madonna, as this last succeeded the worship of Isis. Yet these are men of the nineteenth century, doubtless in possession of "integral instruction," and not poor, ignorant monks. Well, in my opinion, this fetishism is well worth that of the Eternal Father.

I say that the most striking result of the knowledge of the world and of life, accumulated during two thousand years in human brains, is not that there is no God, Providence, immortal soul, etc., but that it is useless to discuss, save as an historian of language and ideas, conceptions which have been as necessary, but are as childish, as those of the devil, of ghosts, or of phlogisticon. No instructed person, capable of reflection, provided sincere and not under the weight of inherited physiological fatalities, admits that the causes of things are to be sought for outside the universe itself—that is to say, in nothingness; for what can there be outside all? The sane and penetrating reason of the old Greek philosophers long since posited the problem in the same terms as Laplace and Darwin.

I know well, and profess, that we have not, and cannot have, any other knowledge of ourselves and of the universe than one which is subjective and ideal, and that the reality of things is only a postulate. Such is the result of an analysis of the human understanding. But if the last word of science should be a supreme avowal of ignorance, assuredly it will not be an act of faith. It is not enough to

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be ignorant that one must also be a dupe? Nothing, absolutely nothing, as far as we can penetrate into infinity, leads us to think that that which now exists has not ever existed, under some form and in some condition. Nothing suggests the idea that the universe does not suffice for itself, its own cause, or, as says St. Beuve, all can be deduced from the eternity of matter.

That this matter is neither brute nor inert, in the sense of antique atomism, may be seen by the physico-chemical sciences. But if for life and the elementary properties of life the same eternity may be argued as for force and matter, it does not follow, in my opinion, that we must place consciousness among these, or any consciousness whatever among those primordial properties which are common to inorganic and organic existences. Nothing reveals the existence of consciousness, however elementary, neither in the sidereal universe, nor in the life of plants, nor in that of animals, until physiological division of labor has determined the appearance of nervous structure.—*Jules Soury.*

GOD'S GOODNESS.

We were told that there is a purpose in suffering. Easy words to utter! but they carry no balm of consolation to my mind. I have witnessed suffering: I have felt a little, and witnessed much. This suffering is a grim fact. You say there is a purpose in it. Tell us what you mean by a purpose. A purpose must have some sort of explanation. Do not call it a purpose unless you can give us some indication of what the purpose is. The general theory is that suffering is for the education, and chiefly the moral education, of the race. Ah, but it gets distributed in the wrong way. And there comes a time when suffering, instead of helping you, thrusts you down, degrades you, brings you to impotence, abjectness, and despair. If the suffering is for education in ethics, how is it that the very poorest, who, by the hard labor of their lives, are under less temptation than the idle or luxurious, get by far the most of it, while the idle and luxurious frequently go scot free? I see no purpose in this at all. Why, we actually band ourselves together to abolish or diminish the very suffering which you say is so beautifully designed. God has a purpose in inflicting it, and we put the sufferers into a place we call a hospital, and we say to the men of science "fight it." We appoint nurses, and we say to them "fight it." We ask the public at large to find the money to assist in doing away with it. God is sending the suffering for moral purposes, and we are striving to abolish it, and so to prevent the ethical education which you say God intends by his inflictions.

God, we are told, has a right to take the life he sends. For the sake of argument, I will not impugn that. There is no time to discuss it. But, assuming that God has the right to take life, let us see how it works out. Under the law we have the right to take life. A criminal is tried and sentenced to execution. But society insists that, if he is to be killed, he shall be killed in the most painless manner possible. We insist that the hanging shall be done with the utmost dispatch. In America they are trying whether electricity is not even less painful than hanging. In short, although we must (as we say) kill (though I doubt if anybody has that right), still, if we must kill, we are refined enough to say we must kill swiftly and painlessly. But that is not God's method; what we see in nature is not *swift* killing; it is *slow* killing. When man is killed by "the act of God," it is often done very slowly; not in a moment as by the hangman's noose or by electrocution. A lingering disease comes on and kills him week by week, month by month, and year by year. It is an agonising form of cruelty. If God has the right to take life, I deny that he has the right to take it in that way. If life must be taken, it should be taken swiftly and painlessly. All this cruelty in nature, all this killing of human beings by slow disease and long agony, gives the lie to the statement that your God is a being of infinite kindness and love.—*G. W. Foote, "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?"*

No matter whose lips that speak, they must be free and ungagged. Let us believe that the whole truth can never do harm to the whole of virtue; and remember that in order to get the whole truth you must allow every man, right or wrong, freely to utter his conscience, and to protect him in so doing. Entire unshackled freedom for every man's life, no matter what his doctrine—the safety of free discussion no matter how wide its range. The community which dares not trust a member in the free utterance of his opinions, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves.—*Wendell Phillips.*

Acid Drops.

As compared with the French or German working man the English working man is very much of a Philistine. He is quite right in fighting for better wages and fewer hours of labor, but he ought not to stop there. It is stupid on his part to shut his eyes, for instance, to the Education question. Apart from the intellectual and æsthetic aspects of this question, there is the social and political fact that it is through their superior education that the "upper" classes govern the "lower" classes. If the "upper" classes had the same knowledge, the same manners, and the same ways of speech that the "lower" classes display, their dominance would be an impossibility. Even from that point of view the working people should be anxious to secure the best possible education for their children. At present they get almost the worst possible education. The reason is that the higher development of education is sacrificed to the quarrel of the Churches over the question of who shall control the religious instruction in the schools. And the only way to terminate that quarrel is to remove the subject of religion altogether. Hence the necessity—to say nothing of the utility—of Secular Education. Once establish that system in the schools and the higher education would go forward with leaps and bounds.

Working-class leaders used to recognise this, and the Trade Union Congress passed a resolution in favor of Secular Education at every annual meeting. Catholic miners, however, under the direction of their priests, have succeeded, not in getting a resolution passed *against* Secular Education, but in shunting it altogether. Under the pretence that the debate on Secular Education was a religious controversy, they induced the last Congress to decide that the question should not be allowed to appear on future Agendas. The Catholic Church was always clever, and that was one of its cleverest moves. Without defeating Secular Education the Catholics have got it put out of the way. And this seems quite the proper policy to some persons who are not Catholics. Here is the *Daily Citizen* crying out against the Government for declaring that its next task will be the reorganisation of the Education system. What do we want of a new Education Bill, our contemporary cries? Why stir up religious controversy again? Why not go on with "social reform"? The obvious answer is that improved education is at the bottom of *all* reform. The children of to-day will be the men of to-morrow. The better the material the better the structure. Never mind the material (the *Daily Citizen* says in effect), let us hurry on with the building. Which does not look like wisdom.

Religion spoils everything it touches. It often makes the most serious things absurd, and the best of things contemptible. It was with mixed feelings that we read the following announcement in the *Daily News* (Jan. 16):—

> "By arrangement with various bodies interested in the suffrage question, February 1, St. Bride's Day, will be held as a day of special meditation and intercession in Westminster Abbey, in St. Paul's, and in various cathedrals, chapels, and churches throughout Great Britain.
>
> "An appeal to men and women to keep five minutes at noon for silent remembrance and prayer during the week January 20 to 27, during which days the suffrage question will be before the Commons, is signed by many influential personages, including Archdeacon Wilberforce, the Rev. John Clifford, D.D., Muriel Countess De La Warr, the Rev. Percy Dearmer, D.D., Mrs. Florence Bramwell Booth, Miss Lena Ashwell, the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, J. Forbes Robertson, and Gertrude Forbes Robertson, etc.
>
> "An all-day devotional meeting will be held on Monday next by the Free Church League for Woman Suffrage at Caxton Hall."

Nations have always prayed for victory for themselves and defeat for their enemies. This practice is now, apparently, to be extended to the warfare of political parties. God Almighty is to be asked to take sides in our public disputes. One lot of supplicators will beseech the Deity to favor Mr. Asquith; another lot will beseech him to favor Mr. Bonar Law. Mr. Lloyd George and the British Medical Association will both have the help of their prayerful partisans. What will the poor Deity do between them? His best policy is to do nothing—for disappointment is generally stronger than gratitude. And then the unfairness of it. For a whole week the ladies are to tease and coax the Lord into deciding, over the heads of members, the voting on a Bill in the House of Commons. Now if this can be done successfully in regard to *one* Bill it can be done successfully with regard to others. And as nobody can tell what "God" will do at the finish, politics would become a mere lottery. Speeches and arguments would have nothing to do with the

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fate of any measure. Even the Referendum would be useless. On the whole, we think that all the gods should be warned off the political field, leaving it entirely to the people's representatives.

Another point! Archdeacon This and the Rev. Mr. That naturally believe in prayer. It is their business. But do the ladies themselves really believe that all the prayer in the world could batter down the male opposition to the female franchise? If they do believe this, it is very cruel on their part to resort to assault and arson. If they do not believe it, they are simply playing to the gallery. We strongly advise them to play their game according to the best rules, without the help of "God" or his agents. It is the belief that they would use their vote under the control of the clergy that makes a large number of men hesitate to entrust them with it. This may be unjust, but is a fact, and has to be taken into account.

Why not? Dr. Miller, in an address before the Medical Society of London, said that the one thing a drunkard felt was physical pain. He therefore advocated that the chronic drunkard should be flogged. We have not had to wait long for the House of Commons' vote in favor of flogging to find imitators. And, of course, if flogging is able to stop one thing, why not another? It is a short and easy method of dealing with objectionable persons and things. Moreover, it is a doctrine that, to use a common phrase, appeals to the meanest intelligence—and, we should add, the meaner the intelligence the stronger the appeal. In a general way we should advise Dr. Miller to stick to whatever other subjects he happens to understand, for it is quite evident that he does not understand that of alcoholism. Still, if the arguments in favor of flogging are good enough in relation to the "White Slave Traffic," we do not see why they are not equally good with regard to other offences. And so we ask, Why not?

The sooner our penal system is taken out of the hands of pietists and ex-military men the better. The same people who cry out for "more flogging" are the people who support the senseless and degrading system which now exists. Mr. Thomas Holmes has just been pointing out that about a million persons, during the past ten years, have been imprisoned quite needlessly. Being fined for trivial offences, and not having the money in their pockets at the moment, they have been refused a few days' grace in which to obtain it, and treated as hardened criminals. The thing is so utterly silly and brutal that one wonders how even "God's Englishmen" can stand it.

It is fortunate for some people that a district can be slandered with impunity. If one says that John Smith, of a certain address in Wandsworth, is a blackguard, that is actionable; but if you say the whole of Wandsworth is vile, you are quite safe. Now, the Rev. T. L. B. Westerdale, of Streatham, writes that when it was announced at a Picture Palace that the place would be open on Sundays, the information "was greeted again and again with hisses." From this Mr. Westerdale draws two conclusions:—

(1) Streatham is respectable;
(2) The Methodist Church here is alive.

Now, these are horrible things to say of any person, and they are quite as objectionable when said of a locality. Certainly no one with any sense of moral responsibility would make these charges without the strongest provocation and without their being accompanied by the clearest of proof. We know that many districts in and around London are not all that they should be, but we do not believe there is any adequate reason for selecting Streatham for special denunciation. At any rate, if this is the kind of feeling towards one's neighbor that Christian charity develops, the less we have of it the better.

Mr. Harry Elmore continues, in the *Methodist Times*, to narrate his experiences of how Londoners spend Sunday. On this occasion he deals with Brixton and East Ham. In Brixton he found a number of picture palaces open. The crowd was, as usual, well-behaved and appreciative. "The pictures are of the usual healthy type—the 'moral' of the picture story.....being always a good one." In East Ham the only brightly lighted street was High-street. There were crowds of young men and women perambulating the streets, and Mr. Elmore was struck by the "apathetic" look on the majority of faces. There is no sign of keen poverty, but there is an absence of enjoyment. Mr. Elmore inquired of a policeman if there were any picture palaces open, and was told, No. Asking where people went when it was wet, the policeman said, "Don't know, sir. Some go to the pubs, I suppose." Mr. Elmore rightly concludes that "The people seem to be simply aimless, wanting somewhere to go, and the publichouse is the only place that attracts many of them when the streets fail," and also that "To sit in a picture palace might be a better proceeding than this aimless strolling." Some of the readers of the *Methodist Times* will probably have their eyes opened by Mr. Elmore's articles; some of them may be brought to realise the truth that the Christian Sunday has been and is one of the most potent forces for demoralisation that we have. For ourselves we are curious to see the kind of moral—suitable to the *Methodist Times*—Mr. Elmore will draw when he has completed his investigations.

"From Manger to Cross," described as "A Cinematograph Representation of the Life of Jesus of Nazareth," is still going strong at the Albert Hall. "From Annunciation to Ascension" would be a truer title. But neither the first nor the last incident in the Gospel story of Jesus could be presented in a picture show. The Annunciation is too ticklish; the Ascension is too farcical.

"Joseph and His Brethren" is drawing crowds to a picture show in New York. Presumably a lot of the attraction *is* due to Mrs. Potiphar's courtship of *il casto Giuseppe*. Another story with two ladies in it would no doubt draw even better. We refer to Lot and his daughters.

Some time ago, in "Literary Gossip," we drew attention to *Great Thoughts* quoting a poem of James Thomson's as one of William Blake's. It first appeared at the end of Thomson's essay on Blake in his early contributions to the *National Reformer*. Fifty years afterwards it is printed as Blake's own, and Thomson's authorship is dropped out altogether. And this seems likely to continue, in spite of our correction. The blunder reappeared in the *Westminster Gazette* the other night (Jan. 16) in an editorial on "London and Its Directory":—

> "'The Desert of London Town,' with its 'grey miles long' and its 'mirk miles broad,' as William Blake once described it.'"

Nothing of the sort. It should be "as James Thomson once described it, in relation to William Blake." To speak plainly, we regard this kind of blunder as quite inexcusable. No one with an ear for poetry could take "grey miles long" or "mirk miles broad" as William Blake's work. It is James Thomson's work all over.

More accurate quotations! Christians seem blessed with a mania in this direction. Rev. R. J. Campbell, in one of his recent City Temple sermons, reported in the *Christian Commonwealth*, quoted Henley's "Out of the night that covers me," and this is how he did it,—at least this is how it appeared in the New Theology's weekly:—

> "Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever gods there be
> For my unconquerable soul."

"There be" is wrong—and badly wrong. Henley wrote "may be." And if Mr. Campbell fancies his misquotation is as good as the original he lacks both ear and understanding.

By far the most complete, and we are afraid, deliberate misrepresentation of historic truth in the interests of Christianity that we have seen for some time occurs in a couple of articles by the Rev. Percy Dearmer in recent issues of *Everyman*. He writes on the "Cross and the Crescent," his purpose being to prove the inferiority of Mohammedanism when compared with Christianity. His method is a simple one, although it is a plan that would only be pursued by either a fool or a knave. Certain countries under Mohammedan rule are inferior to other countries where Christianity is prevalent. Therefore, the superiority of these latter countries is due to Christianity. The centre of civilisation has drifted away from two sides of the Mediterranean, northward and westward, and the reason for this is to be found in the rise of Mohammedanism, which destroyed civilisation wherever it exerted an influence. And so on, and so forth. This is the history of an old-fashioned Christian Evidence lecturer. Many of even this class are beyond that to-day, but Dr. Dearmer has revived it in a journal that boasts of its claims to represent modern culture. Even schoolboys are taught the reasons for the decline of power on the shores of the Mediterranean, apart from religion. Dr. Dearmer never appears to have heard of such causes—at least, he is careful not to mention them.

But Dr. Dearmer's crowning misrepresentation is contained in his treatment of Spain. After noting the check

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received to the Mohammedan Conquest in 732, Dr. Dearmer says:—

> "Yet Spain itself remained under the Moors until the fifteenth century. Perhaps, when we speak of Spanish cruelties and the horrors of the Inquisition in the sixteenth, we ought to remember that. The other nations of Christendom have been slow enough in learning the lessons of mercy, peace, and goodwill among men; and it is not to be wondered at that Spain was slower still."

If this passage means anything, it means that the backward condition of Spain and the cruelties of the Spanish Church, including the Inquisition, were due to the influence of the Mohammedan rulers, who kept the country in a backward condition and developed habits of cruelty. And such a position is so monstrously untrue, so plainly at variance with facts noted in almost every history of Spain written which deals with the Mohammedan period, that Dr. Dearmer can hardly be unaware of the truth. At any rate, we hesitate to charge him with such miraculous ignorance without positive proof.

For the facts, as we say, are so easily got at. Buckle, Draper, Lea, Prescott, Hallam, Renan, the writers of the articles on this topic in any decent Encyclopædia, all point out that under Mohammedan rule Spain, or the portion under its control, was the most civilised and most tolerant place in the Western world. They led the way in all the sciences, they taught the men who brought about the awakening of Europe. They developed the commerce, the agriculture, the trade of Spain. They made Spain a wealthy civilised country. And the same authorities point out that expelling the Jews and Mohammedans destroyed the trade and commerce of Spain, crippled its scientific activity, and left it, as Buckle said, proud of having all that a nation should be ashamed of possessing.

The statement concerning the Inquisition is, we are afraid, a deliberate untruth. Mohammedanism had no such institution. No other religion ever had such a damnable instrument of religious defence. The Spanish Mohammedans allowed Christians and Jews to fill public offices, while in the rest of Europe Christianity was butchering heretics and sending scholar after scholar to linger in Christian prisons. It was Christian intolerance that set the example of butchery in the name of religion, and which made Spain a byword for all that was backward and mentally repulsive. The facts are well known to all with the slightest pretence to a knowledge of history. Anyone will find them well set forth in Mr. H. C. Lea's authoritative work, *The Moriscoes of Spain*. We can only congratulate Dr. Dearmer on his profound faith in the ignorance of the public to which he addresses himself.

An evening paper has been discussing the question, "Are we too busy to think?" It is a stupid way of putting it, because the busier a man is, the more he thinks—about the things that keep him busy. The vital question is not even whether we think, it is rather "What is it that we are thinking about?" There is no lack of thinking in the world, but there is a lack of right thinking, and of things that are worthy of attention. There is a lack of mental proportion abroad which leads many to place in the front rank things that are of quite a subordinate importance, and delegate prime things to the rear. The man who is spending his energies in going one better than his neighbor in social display, is thinking, within the limits of his capacity, as hard as a philosopher, but he is using his mental energy on a matter of no real importance whatever. The people who, preaching from one year's end to another about God, or a future life, or some other religious dogma, are thinking, but their thinking involves a misunderstanding and a misinterpretation of matters that are of infinitely greater consequence. No, we are never too busy to think, but we are often too ill-informed or too poorly trained to think about the right things. And it is *how* we think, and what we think about, that is of primary importance.

"Can Methodism Save its Soul?" asks the editor of the *Methodist Times*. We are reminded of Oliver Wendell Holmes' remark that when a man is always worrying whether his soul will be damned, he will usually be found to have a soul that isn't worth a damn. Whether Methodism can save its soul or not is, perhaps, an important question to Methodists. For our part, we have never seen any reason for believing that it has a soul worth preserving.

"A reminder of the grip which the old superstitions retain on present generations comes from Virginia, where a case has been carried up to the Supreme Court of Appeals because of the ruling of Judge Martin of the Court of Law and Chancery at Norfolk that an Atheist is a competent witness. The witness was N. M. Osborne, Jnr., of Norfolk, who disclaimed any belief in a supreme being. Judge Martin held that under the statute based upon the bill of Religious Freedom, as originally drawn by Thomas Jefferson, no man's civil capacities can be diminished because of his opinion on matters of religion, and he permitted Osborne to testify. It appears that affirmation as a substitute for swearing is unknown in Virginia, for which reason the witness took the Bible oath; but because of his unbelief the case will go up to the Appeals Court for a decision on his competence. That such a question could arise in Virginia shows a degeneration since the days of its great statesman, the collaborator of Paine in the production of the Declaration of Independence—Thomas Jefferson."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

We thought the *London Signal* was a sporting paper. Would it were so honest a journal! we might now say, with a recollection of Hamlet's words to Polonius. We find it is edited by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne—the gentleman who won a safe seat for Ipswich in the House of Commons, where, by the way, he seems to be a failure. Someone has sent us a cutting from the January number of the magazine, containing an answer to the question "Is Christianity Failing?" Of course, the answer may be guessed. Who would go to Mr. Horne or his paper for a straight reply? Why should he cry stinking fish, and give his business away? He does nothing of the sort. Christianity may be losing ground in England, but it is gaining in China—where our Christian Government seems to be bent on forcing some millions of pounds' worth of opium upon the Heathen Celestials—in spite of treaties, justice, and common decency. Mr. Horne finds comfort, too, in Mr. Joseph Hocking's statement that "Crude infidelity of the Bradlaugh and Ingersoll school is practically dead." Fancy a creature like Horne calling Bradlaugh and Ingersoll *crude!* Let him try his hand at answering Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism* or *Doubts in Dialogue*. He might find on any single page of Ingersoll enough wisdom and wit to last him a lifetime.

"Even Agnosticism," Mr. Horne rejoices, "is by no means so rampant as it used to be." We suppose he means "so prevalent." Who ever saw Agnosticism *rampant?* Does the reverend gentleman understand this word? Christian preachers—and even Christian journalists—would often be improved by a little study of the Dictionary.

Rev. Robert Louis Wild, M.A., of Hurstmonceaux, patron of the living, which he enjoyed himself for forty-six years, and has bequeathed (with right of presentation) to his son, the Rev. Herbert L. Wild, of Oxford, left £113,715. He desired that his manuscript sermons, manuscripts, and correspondence, should be burnt. Wouldn't it have done to put them in his coffin?

The cracks in St. Paul's are to be mended. But who is to mend the cracks in Christianity?

YOU NEVER CAN TELL.

The following is one of the best Yankee stories I have ever heard. An American was re-visiting the scene of a terrible battle he had been through, and he recognised a hut to which he had crawled after the fight, and where the occupier, a handsome colored woman, had given him food and shelter. He went down to renew his acquaintance with his benefactress, and found her alive and flourishing.

"Good day," said he; "isn't this the place where the famous battle was fought which lasted two days, and—don't you remember me?"

"No, sah," she replied; "I remember the battle, but I don't remember you."

"Come, come," he remarked; "don't you remember a man crawling in here about four o'clock on the second day of the battle, and you giving him some bread?"

The woman looked at him intently, and then asked very slowly: "Are you quite sure that you are de gentleman who came in here 'bout four o'clock ob de second day ob de great battle?"

"Yes," he answered, solemnly; "I swear it's the truth."

Then the benefactress called to someone in the next room, "Lucinda, my girl, come in here right away. *Here's your pa.*"—*Lord Rossmore, "Things I Can Tell."*

The world embraces not only a Newton but a Shakespeare—not only a Boyle but a Raphael—not only a Kant but a Beethoven—not only a Darwin but a Carlyle.—*Tyndall.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, January 26, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "The Function of Atheism."

To Correspondents.

J. BELL (New Zealand).—Thanks for your good wishes. Subscription arranged to start with the year. Shop manager will send you formal receipt.

VAUGHAN GREY.—We received your telegram from Paris at the Annual Dinner. Sorry you could not attend the function. Your "hearty wishes" were realised; it *was* an "enjoyable evening."

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

E. PACK.—We repeat that while Mr. Blatchford stands as simply the author of the book in which a "blasphemous" passage occurs he cannot be liable to prosecution under the Police Clauses Act. We know no more about Mr. Gott's defence than we found in the book you wrote yourself.

R. BELL.—You complain that we "write too much about London." We were not aware of it. But the *Freethinker* is edited and published in London, and we naturally know most of what goes on there. You date from Stanley, S.O. We should be happy to report any Freethought work going on there. Is there any?

J. BATESON.—The article you send us from *Everyman*—which we hoped would be a good paper, but turned out one of the most namby-pamby things we ever saw—is not worth answering in detail. It is said to have been written by "a member of the diplomatic service." Where did he serve? In the kitchen? Anyhow, we will make one remark. It is this. What right have Christians to blame the Turk for fighting in the name of Allah? Don't *they* fight in the name of Christ? Did not the Bulgarians hold a big dedication service in their biggest church, and did not King Ferdinand assure them that they would march to victory as Soldiers of the Cross? The toleration of the Turks is a matter of history. It can be demonstrated. Christian toleration never existed, except among the smallest of all sects—the Quakers.

G. E. Q.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. E. R.—Glad to have your encouraging letter, and to know you enjoy the "Literary Gossip" so much.

WELL-WISHER.—Too late for this week.

EDWIN MILLS.—Next week, if possible.

POSTMAN.—Very shortly.

D. LAMBERT.—Gladstone and Stead were brought up as Christians. Their adherence to Christianity counts for nothing. Ingersoll did not disown the appellation of "Atheist." He said that Agnosticism and Atheism were the same thing.

J. SOLOMONS.—Contributions intended for the *Freethinker* are considered on their merits.

G. F. E. SAMUEL.—Thanks for new year's good wishes.

ARTHUR BROOKES.—There is nothing in your verse likely to lead to a "blasphemy" prosecution.

A good deal of correspondence stands over again unavoidably.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectured at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening on "More 'Bradlaugh' Fables." Travelling along to the hall from Fenchurch-street Station, he watched the empty rain-swept streets, and wondered if he would find any audience at all. In the circumstances it was quite a good one, and the lecture was very warmly applauded. Mr. A. B. Moss, who occupied the chair, elicited a few questions from the meeting, but failed to woo any critic on to the platform. Mr. Foote occupies the Queen's Hall platform again to-night (Jan. 26), taking for his subject the important question of "The Function of Atheism."

We were glad to see our old friend, the veteran Mr. Side, of Walworth, at the Annual Dinner, in spite of his eighty-nine years. Barring a slowly increasing deafness he is nearly as lively as ever. He looks forward cheerfully to completing his century. Certainly he has aids in doing this, for he has children and children's children about him to the third and fourth generation.

We were also glad to see our old friends, Mr. and Mrs. G. Alward at the Dinner. They came up from Grimsby, where, in the long-long-ago, we used to enjoy their homely, but generous, hospitality, during our lecture visits. The Secularists had a hall of their own then—and, strange as it sounds, that was their misfortune. They put their money into it, and found it was a white elephant. Hiring halls is, on the whole, better (for Secularists, at least) than acquiring them. It limits responsibility and enables you to see the end of your expenditure.

Mr. Heaford has explained to us how it was that we missed him at the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 14. He labored under the fixed impression that the Dinner was to take place on the Wednesday, and it was the only on going to the Holborn on that evening that he learned of his mistake. The incident has its comic aspect, but its serious aspect too. Mr. Heaford has been overworking himself ever since the martyrdom of Francisco Ferrer. We have strongly advised him to ease off a bit, but he hasn't seen his way to do so. He will have to see it now. Work and worry tell their own tale in time, whether you want them or not.

Mr. Herbert Burrows deserves our thanks—and we are happy in tendering them—for his honest and manly words about Secularists at the close of his article on "Religion and Social Reform" in the *Christian Commonwealth* of Jan. 8. This article is one of a series which the *C. C.* has been obtaining under that general title from "distinguished" persons. Rev. E. W. Lewis, who started the discussion, seems to fancy that not even Socialists can live good lives without belief in God. Mr. Burrows hopes Mr. Lewis does not, and never will, mean this nakedly. "I am sure," he says, "Mr. Lewis will not affirm that a good life, a true life, a loving life, a human life, a life which is athirst for the saving of humanity, cannot be lived on the secular basis. If he does so affirm, then he is a dogmatist of the Torquemada Inquisition order."

Miss Kough's audience, considering the weather, was a very good one at the Public Hall, Croydon, on Sunday evening, and her lecture was highly appreciated. Mr. A. B. Moss occupies the same platform this evening (Jan. 26), winding up the present series of lectures there.

Bournemouth is progressing. Six years ago a poll of the ratepayers settled Sunday tramcars by a majority of nearly a thousand against them. Another poll just taken shows a majority of 448 the other way; the full figures being 4,716 for, and 4 268 against. There is hope for all places when Bournemouth turns its back on Sabbatarianism.

A correspondent sends us a little picture from the *Daily Mirror* of "Pablo Garcia, the Spanish marine who was sentenced to imprisonment for refusing to kneel before the Host"—that is, the priest-manufactured Body of Christ. The young fellow has a fine clear-cut face and his body is as upright as an electric standard. We lift our hat to him.

Acknowledgment of subscriptions to the President's Honorarium Fund for 1913 is postponed till next week, when the Annual Circular will appear in our columns. We shall also have something to say then about the "Fighting Fund" and its object.

As scientific generalisation has steadily extended the region of natural law, the region which theology has assigned to divine action has steadily diminished. Every discovery in science has stripped off territory from the latter province and added it to the former one. Every such discovery has accordingly been promulgated and established in the teeth of bitter and violent opposition on the part of theologians. A desperate fight it has been for some centuries, in which science has won every disputed position, while theology, untaught by perennial defeat, still valiantly defends the little corner which is left of it.—*John Fiske.*

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The Meaning of the Eucharist.

SAVAGE and semi-civilised peoples in all parts of the world have for many ages observed the custom of devouring their divinities. The most sacred mystery of the Christian religion—the Eucharist—is a sacrament of this character. All the innumerable sects into which Christianity is split up, with the solitary exception of the Quakers, celebrate the Lord's Supper, however much they may differ as to its meaning.

We have every reason to believe that the Agapæ, or love-feasts of the early Christians, were combined with the celebration of the Eucharist or Communion. At these love festivals the celebrants partook, in the form of bread and wine, of the body and blood of Jesus, their dead divinity. Down to the end of the second century, the observance of the Agapæ coincides with that of the Eucharist. Whatever these love banquets may, or may not, have been in the "pure ages" of the Church, in the third and fourth centuries they were without doubt joyous gatherings, in which departed relatives and sanctified martyrs were commemorated. It was during this period that the various sections into which the true faith was already segregated openly accused each other of using the Agapæ as a cover for the grossest licentiousness. So great grew the scandal that Church Councils pronounced against them and forbade the priests all participation in their celebration.

It had long been customary for the Greeks and Romans to assemble together to celebrate their sacred anniversaries. As Dr. Conybeare, in his essay on the Eucharist, pointedly remarks:—

> "Professor Sanday has reminded us that Providence even in its revolutions is conservative. The world could only be Christianised on condition that holy days and customs were continued. The early Christian agape admitted of adaptation to older funeral and sacrificial feasts, and was so adapted."

Truly, the solar orb seldom shines on anything theologically new.

The doctrine that the bread and wine consumed at the celebration of the Lord's Supper were, in reality, his body and blood, was not sanctioned by the Church until the eleventh century. It was at the Council of Rome in 1079 that official approval was granted to transubstantiation, and it yet remained for the Fourth Lateran Council at Rome in 1215, held under Innocent III., to pronounce transubstantiation an article of faith. And as such it has continued in the Roman Church ever since.

Many Protestants assume that the communicant drinks the communion wine in the Catholic ceremony. But this assumption is erroneous; the wine, or blood, is reserved to the priest. As the Marquis of Bute states, it has been the rule of the Church since the fifteenth century that the celebrant only (with the exception of the Kings of France at their coronation, and a few of the assistants at a Papal high mass) is permitted to communicate from the chalice.

In his monumental masterpiece, the *Golden Bough*, that brilliant anthropologist, Professor J. G. Frazer, has gathered together a mass of information relating to the world-wide custom of god eating. Illustrations are furnished by savage, barbarian, and civilised peoples in all parts of the earth.

A very close parallel to the Catholic ceremony is afforded by the ancient Mexican custom of eating a dough image of the Huitzilopochtli as a means of communion with the divinity. Before Mexico was discovered and devastated by the Spaniards, bread was eaten sacramentally as the body of this god. Twice a year an image of the great Mexican deity was made of dough, then broken to pieces, and solemnly eaten. The principal feast was celebrated in spring. According to an eye-witness, a few days before the festival took place, the sacred virgins of the temple prepared a mixture of beet seed and roasted maize, which they moulded with honey. This compound was then fashioned into the likeness of Huitzilopochtli; grains of maize serving for the deity's teeth, and colored grains of glass doing duty for his eyes. The Mexican noblemen then adorned the image with a choice and beautiful garment. The dough divinity was then seated in a chair and carried in a litter on patrician shoulders. An hour before dawn on the morning of the feast, the virgins appeared in white garments and crowned with garlands of maize, while their necks were adorned with chains of corn. Youths attired in red robes and bearing maize then carried the image in its litter to the steps of the temple. It was then solemnly drawn up the steps, performers playing on musical instruments as it ascended, while the people reverently watched the spectacle. When the young men had deposited their holy burden in a bower of roses prepared for its reception in the temple, the interior and exterior of the fane were strewn with floral tributes. The virgins then brought pieces of paste prepared from the same ingredients as the image itself, and these they handed to the young men, who solemnly laid them at the idol's feet. Then the sacred and secular magnates, each according to their dignities and antiquities, proceeded to range themselves in due order about the fragments of paste.

Certain ceremonies, accompanied by singing and dancing, were then gone through, and thus was the dough religiously transformed into the flesh and bones of the god. The paste, having thus been consecrated and blessed, was worshiped by the multitude. The feast and the idol were next celebrated in dance and song. It was absolutely imperative that all should abstain from food and drink at this solemn time, lest the body of the god which the priests afterwards administered in the manner of a communion should be contaminated by contact with ordinary food in the stomachs of the worshipers.

We thus learn that the Mexicans were fully acquainted with the doctrine of the real presence long before their country was invaded and plundered by European adventurers. Dr. Frazer writes:—

> "They believed that by consecrating bread their priests could turn it into the very body of their god, so that all who thereupon partook of the consecrated bread entered into a mystic communion with the deity by receiving a portion of the divine substance into themselves. The doctrine of transubstantiation, or the magical conversion of bread into flesh was also familiar to the Aryans of ancient India long before the spread, or even the rise of Christianity." *

Until recently, the Huichol Indians of Central America, and the Malas of Southern India even now make themselves at one with their gods by eating their effigies. While in modern Europe, as Frazer says,—

> "the Catholic Church has resorted to similar means for enabling the pious to enjoy the ineffable privilege of eating the persons of the Infant God and his Mother. For this purpose images of the Madonna are printed on some soluble and harmless substance and sold in sheets like postage stamps. The worshiper buys as many of these sacred emblems as he has occasion for, and affixing one or more of them to his food, swallows the bolus. This practice is not confined to the poor and ignorant. In his youth Count Hoensbroech and his devout mother used thus to consume portions of God and his mother with their meals."

And, in a footnote, Dr. Frazer states that this practice was officially sanctioned by a decree of the Inquisition, July 29, 1903.

Among uncivilised races there exists an almost universal belief that by eating an animal or plant the eater acquires the distinguishing qualities of the plants or animals in question. Once we realise this we may easily grasp the primitive ideas which underlie the mystery of the Christian communion service. When a savage devours the flesh of an animal or man, he is convinced that he acquires not merely the physical, but also the mental, qualities which characterised these organisms before death. Consequently, when the man or animal is deemed

* *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, 1912, vol. ii., p. 89.

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divine, its savage worshiper considers that he absorbs a part of its divinity when he consumes its flesh. Innumerable instances of this belief are known to exist, even in cases in which it is never supposed that the fleshly nourishment is in reality the body or blood of a god. The doctrine, as Frazer says, forms part of a widely distributed system of sympathetic magic.

Some savages refuse to eat venison in case they should become timid like the deer. Certain of the Brazilian tribes will not partake of slow-moving birds, quadrupeds, or fish lest they contract their inactive habits, and thus be unable to flee from their enemies. On the other hand, the Kansas Indians, before entering upon a war, devoured dogs' flesh, which was held to serve the double purpose of rendering them valorous and inspiring them with deathless loyalty to their chiefs. The Miris of Assam "prize tigers' flesh as food for men; it gives them strength and courage. But it is not suited for women; it would make them strong minded." The wolf, bear, leopard, serpents, and other creatures are eaten in various parts of the world, as their flesh imparts wisdom and courage. Certain savages devour the flesh, particularly the hearts of dead men, and drink their blood with the object of acquiring their good qualities. It is said that when *Sir* Charles McCarthy was killed by the Ashantees *in* 1824, his heart was eaten by the chiefs of the Ashantee army for the purpose of gaining the dead soldier's courage.

Similar superstitious fancies induced the Central Australian Dieri tribe to take the weapons with which a prisoner had been judicially executed and to wash them in a wooden vessel. The resulting gory liquid was then poured down the throats of the executioners of the tribe. This was supposed to vastly increase their strength and courage for future enterprise. The ethical qualities possessed by the dead are capable of acquisition by the living through simple contact with their bones.

Savages all the world over never doubt that through the transfusion of a few drops of their blood into each other's veins two men at once become kinsmen and allies. Nor does this blood-covenant end with life. Some savages hold that they can become reconciled to their slain foes by swallowing their blood. The fear inspired by their dead enemies' avenging ghosts is thus allayed. It was an article of faith among the Maoris that if they tasted the blood of enemies slain in battle they had nothing to fear from their avenging spirits. Another way of establishing post-mortem harmony is to swallow the ashes of defunct kinsmen or enemies:—

> "Savages also inoculate themselves with moral and other virtues by making cuts in their bodies and inserting in the cuts the ashes of animals and plants in which they suppose to be endowed with the virtues in question. Some savages attempt to acquire the mental and physical qualities of the dead by anointing themselves with their remains."

Sufficient has now been said to explain the savage's custom of eating the flesh of divine animals and men. By eating the body of the god, he participates in the god's attributes and powers. The representative of the corn god is bread. The juice of the grape is the representative of the god of the vine. The juice of the grape is the god's precious blood. And thus it happens that, through eating the bread and drinking the wine, the communicant partakes of the real blood and body of his deity:—

> "Yet a time comes when reasonable men find it hard to understand how anyone in his senses can suppose that by eating bread or drinking wine he consumes the body or blood of a divinity. 'When we call corn Ceres and wine Bacchus,' says Cicero, 'we use a common figure of speech; but do you imagine that anyone is so insane as to believe that the thing he feeds upon is a god.' In writing thus the Roman philosopher little foresaw that in Rome itself, and in the countries which have derived their creed from her, the belief which he here stigmatises as insane was destined to persist for thousands of years, as a cardinal doctrine of religion, among peoples who ride themselves on their religious enlightenment by comparison with the blind superstitions of pagan antiquity. So little can the greatest minds of one generation foresee the devious track which the religious faith of mankind will pursue in after ages."[*]

T. F. PALMER.

A Frost Picture by God.

NATURE'S wand had passed over the woods and hills during the hours of our sleep. For weeks our spirits had been dulled to tiredness by the constant closeness, the rain, and mud, and grey, unbroken skies. But the wind had swung swiftly into the north in the night, and had borne down, over the cold seas, from the northern Icelands, bringing on its broad wings change and joy. There were beauty, and health, and happiness, energy and love of life, in the morning, where, the night before, were satiation, weariness, dispiritment, and ugliness.

Within a few hours the roads had become diapered iron. Sheets of white ice hazily reflected the sun's early rays. The cart-ruts through which we had squashed the previous evening were roadway viaducts moulded in beautiful corrugation. The hard earth rang to our feet. Beneath its covering of glistening frost we imagined we could hear its hearty response to our footfalls.

Inclination to woo the fairies of the fireflames had given place to a healthy desire for physical activity. There was a fresh and strong vitality in the mind that urged us outside. The keen, frosty air had awakened within us a demand the house restriction could not supply; and we felt impelled to be energetic, to be out amongst the ensilvered trees, where the robins were chirping and chattering to themselves, seemingly in great glee at their vain attempt to rival their neighbors, the crows, and where a blackie nobly endeavored to introduce a shake into his monotoned music.

The feeling the frost had inspired in our bodies resembled somewhat the mental influence of a dose of Freethought tonic. We were alert, quick, active. There was a new joy in being alive, a keener interest in the things around us, a grander delight in being appreciative. The range of our vision, and its acuteness, were too diminutive to permit us catching and retaining all the wonders we passed. Entwining twigs had been formed into marvellously pretty grottos and palaces, into exquisite designs and rare pictures, all eloquent with beauty, and full of the choicest art. The hedgerows, so lately dark and ugly and funereal in their sombre, rain-sodden hopelessness of spring, were now bright with light and loveliness. Were our eyes entranced by some seemingly daring piece of extravagant design, it was but for a moment; some other more beautiful structure of hedgerow architecture immediately claimed their admiration.

And so we were lured on from picture to picture, along the road gallery, till we reached the hill gate. It seemed like the doorway leading into an annexe, whose contents had been chosen and grouped because of their delicacy. Every leaf of grass was fringed and set with tiny beads of crystallised purity, all sparkling in the sunshine. Every tuft of frost-starred grass entangled the mind in a web of beauty. The tall grass leaves, laden with their wealth of jewels, bent over till their lips touched those of their smaller brothers and sisters, forming miniature caverns into which the sunbeams shot and were kept captives to illume the fragile splendor of the crystal chambers.

The hand of God! No God, although he be never so cunning in artistry, never so full of genius, never so inventively "creative," could have accomplished such a transformation of a few hours. Man's influence in the making of the idea of God is most obvious in God's restrictions. That God may have

[*] *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, 1912, vol. ii., pp. 167, 168.

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the suggestion, at least, of comprehensibility, some restriction is inevitable; and God's limitations are gauged by the mental power of his worshipers. They cannot, even if they would, see beyond the limits of their knowledge. As their knowledge is restricted, so is their God. And no man or woman, looking at such a marvellous array of wonderful pictures, of exquisite fragility and sublime exactitude, such as was spread before us on the hillside, could possibly believe a God was the designer. From my own mental experience I am fully convinced that no man in his innermost conscience truthfully believes his God performs these marvels.

The task is too great for a God. It is too stupendous. The result is too lovely. The stupid Christian *thinks* he believes; the artistically sensitive Christian *says* he believes; but the former's thought is the last thin smoke column of a dying fire, ascending to lose itself in uncharted immensity, and the latter's professed conviction is a specious superficial tenacity to adhere to beliefs, not because he finds any rationality in them, but because to abjure them would entail, he thinks, discomfort. There is a trace, too, of the child's reactionary obstinacy against a parent's rebuke in his attitude: the rebuke being the agreement between the man's deep-lying doubt of the truth of his belief, and the denial his knowledge would give, were he to allow it full and open voice.

Behind the appreciative consciousness of the beauty of one leaf of grass glittering with its robe of frost pearls, the belief in God as its creator, although the idea be imagined in the most glorious verbal drapery, is as an amateur water-color to a masterpiece: it is a puny idea set in a heavy frame of words. Were we true to ourselves, we would admit that we cannot conceive a God capable of producing such a delicate piece of magnificent handiwork. You cannot dispart from your conception of Deity a human semblance, without annihilating him. Consequently, whether you like it or not, a limit to his power is inevitable. If he must retain some similarity to humanity, then limitation of his power is the first similitude that comes to the mind when there is stretched outwards and upwards before you such a wealth of loveliness as that which we saw on the hillside.

God, the idea of God, is a poor thing to a frost-empearled leaf of grass, waving in the wind, and glistening in the sunshine. Grant the existence of God; bespeak for him all the might in which you have hitherto enswathed him; all the power and possibility of which you have sung; all the wonder-working love of which you have prayed, and for which your thanksgiving has touched the vermilion clouds of sunset; all his genius that you have dinned into our ears till we recoiled before your imaginative potentialities; and you have but chanted a rude folk-song. There are notes unknown to your voice; words with which you are unfamiliar; ideas too sublime for the setting of your song.

There is something greater, something more wonderful, more powerful, something that awakens, not worship nor thanksgiving in us, but the desire to know—something, or, rather, many things, more marvellous than this little and badly executed photograph you have mounted on a cardboard of lies, before which you bow down and praise.

Beside these things, these activities, and results, as yet so imperfectly recognised by our knowledge, which we group in the name of Nature, your idea of God is a weak and faulty solution to a foolish problem of your own making.

Some of these thoughts my voice formed into words, as we bent over to examine a tuft of grass that had been transmogrified into a fairy stage, with the drooping blades as the proscenium.

"I'm not going to argue with you," Mainie said, "however much you'd like me to. Besides, if it will give you any consolation, I wasn't thinking of God at all. It's too lovely for anything."

ROBERT MORELAND.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

MR. WILLIAM BROADARROW, known among his associates as the Night Bird, and Mr. Samuel Shortcrop, familiarly called Slim Sam, pursued their business careers chiefly in London, and their energies had frequently been rewarded by the provision of free board and lodging in various Government establishments in the metropolis. But the nature of their business was such as often necessitated sudden excursions to foreign parts, and on one occasion, finding it expedient to get as far away from London as possible, they resolved to profit by the geometrical principle that the greatest distance between two points on a sphere is equal to half its circumference, and accordingly made a hurried departure for the antipodes.

They travelled by way of New York and San Francisco, but between the latter port and Sydney their ship foundered in mid-ocean. The Night Bird and Slim Sam did not perish, however. On the contrary, these two, the most abandoned and worthless individuals on board, were the only ones who escaped, thus affording yet another instance of the whimsical playfulness of Divine Providence. After drifting about in an open boat till all their companions died of starvation, they were cast on a coral reef encircling one of those "summer isles of Eden" which afford so fertile a field for the activities of slave-hunting labor agents, swindling traders, and Christian missionaries. As their boat was smashed on the reef, our adventurers had to strip themselves of most of their clothing and swim across the intervening lagoon to the island.

The march of civilisation has carried its blessings to many savage lands, but to this particular island it had not yet penetrated. Its dusky inhabitants had not yet enjoyed the privileges of having the Gospel preached to them, of getting drunk on "trade gin," or of having their blood poisoned by imported disease—indeed, they had never yet set eyes on a European. So when the Night Bird and Slim Sam, their white skins shining under the tropic sun, emerged as it were from the ocean's depths and walked up the coral strand, their appearance occasioned no little astonishment among the islanders. They were soon surrounded by an excited crowd, gesticulating and clamoring to each other, but all the while paying the white men a strange deference. A council was hurriedly held among the leading men, and then the visitors were conducted towards the interior of the island in what seemed to be a solemn procession. This presently came to a halt before a large building which proved to be a temple, and into the dark recesses of which the Night Bird and Slim Sam were conducted, to the accompaniment of the beating of tomtoms and the chanting of priests. A great ugly idol was now removed from its throne in the holy of holies; the Night Bird was ceremoniously requested by signs to take its place, which he did; while Slim Sam, who was much the smaller man of the two, was installed on a low stool at the foot of the throne.

"Strike me dotty if they ain't making a *gawd* o' you, Bill," said Slim Sam. "'Ere's a pretty go."

"I b'lieve yer right, Sam," replied the Night Bird, looking down at his companion with some complacency. "I wos 'ardly prepared to okkerpy such an eggzalted persition, but I must do my best. Any'ow, it's better than being killed an' eaten, which I thought we wos in for at fust."

"But I'm blowed if I can understand 'ow even these silly niggers could make a gawd o' *you*, Bill," said Sam, who seemed very dissatisfied with his subordinate role. "I'd make a damned sight better gawd than you, with my intelleck and eddication."

"Wot does a gawd want intelleck and eddication for?" asked Bill, contemptuously. "It's my 'andsome face and fine fizzeek wot's done it. You can't expeck people to worship a gawd with an ugly mug like yours."

"I fancy yer wrong, Bill," said Sam, reflectively. "Come to think of it, they nacherally want their new gawd to be something like their old un. Wot's infl'enced their chice is yer resemblance to that old graven image they're now 'auling out o' the front door."

Sam's surmise as to his friend's deification was quite correct. Having installed their new divinity, the savages now proceeded to burn their old wooden idol on an immense bonfire, which, as night approached, threw a lurid glare around the precincts of the temple. All night long the religious rejoicings continued. The wild barbaric din of drums, the horrid hooting of horns, and the yells of the excited multitude made a pandemonium which, Slim Sam declared, reminded him forcibly of "Mafficking" night in the Mile End-road.

But the ensuing days and weeks were monotonous enough. The physical wants of the new divinities were carefully attended to, as they always are in savage

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lands. Food and drink were regularly and abundantly supplied by the priests, but except for an hour or so at midday and for some six hours at night they were required to occupy their seats in the temple to receive the worship of their devotees.

The ennui induced by this sort of life was greater than they had ever experienced, even during their periods of residence in those Government establishments already referred to, and it caused much irritability of temper.

"I'm getting 'ellish sick o' this 'ere gawd business," observed the Night Bird, during one of their midday hours off duty. "I'd a damned sight rather be doing six months' 'ard in chokey than be sitting six weeks on the throne o' gawd—that's flat."

"And if its slow for you, wot d'you s'pose it must be for *me*?" said Slim Sam, sullenly. "Any'ow, yer getting the honner and glory—the psalm-singing and the alleloojers—but I've just got to sit at yer blooming feet. What perseition am I s'posed to okkerpy in this blessed show? Am I a gawd or am I not?—answer me that."

"Oh, I dunno," replied Bill, with a yawn of intense boredom. "P'r'aps yer s'posed to be a sort o' 'Oly Ghost, 'anging about in the background and looking sollum, but not doing anything pertickler."

"If it comes to that, I don't see as you've been doing anything pertickler yerself," retorted Sam. "W'y don't you get up and work some wonders?"

"Oh, that's orl right," replied Bill. "Gods don't do anything pertickler nowadays, as I knows on. I'm playing the game orl right, only it's a damned slow one. If it goes on much longer I'll 'ave to get up and murder one o' them yowling priests to r'lieve my feelings."

As the days passed these colloquies assumed a more and more acrimonious tone, till they seemed likely to end in an open fight; but, fortunately, relief arrived before the occurrence of an incident so disturbing to the theological system of the islanders as a bout of fisticuffs between their deities.

One morning a steamer cast anchor off the island, and presently there came ashore a missionary, accompanied by some native Christians, one of whom was found to have some acquaintance with the language of the islanders, and could thus act as interpreter. After the usual presentation of glass beads and other products of civilisation, mostly of German manufacture, the missionary got to business, and asked the chief of the islanders whether he would not like his people to become servants of the living God—the God of the white men?

The chief replied that they already possessed two living gods who had probably come from the white men's country, as they were quite white themselves, and had marched straight out of the sea.

This information so deeply interested the missionary that he asked to be conducted to these gods at once, and on arrival at the temple he was ushered with much ceremony into the holy of holies, where the Night Bird and Slim Sam were duly fulfilling their divine functions.

"Jolly glad to see you, guv'nor," said the Night Bird. "'Ere 'ave I and my pal been playing at gawds in this stinking 'ole for two blooming months, and we're about fed up with it. I 'ope yer capt'n 'll send a boat off to-night, so as we may 'ook it from 'ere in the dark and get aboard. The gawd business don't suit us a little bit, and we're quite willing to leave the field open to you to intrerjooce the genwin article. These niggers burnt their old graven image w'en we arrived, and after we clear out they'll be pretty 'ard up for something in the gawd line, so you'll 'ave a charnce for a smart deal."

The Night Bird and Slim Sam got away safely to the ship, but when their absence was discovered the indignation and ferocity of the natives broke out alarmingly. Their resentment was chiefly directed against the missionary, whom they held responsible for the loss of their gods, and so threatening was their temper that he decided to depart with the ship, and to defer the conversion of these poor heathen to a more favorable opportunity.

But the reverend gentleman had to submit to some light pleasantries from the captain and officers, who pointed out how wrong it was to make Atheists of the inhabitants of an entire island by taking away the gods they had and not leaving them a substitute.

By a man's life, by his acts, it was then, as it is now, impossible to know whether he was a believer or not. If there be a difference between one who openly professes the doctrines of the Orthodox Church and one who denies them, the difference is not to the advantage of the former. The open profession of the orthodox doctrines is mostly found among persons of dull intellects, of stern character, who think much of their own importance. Intelligence, honesty, frankness, a good heart, and moral conduct are oftener met with among those who are disbelievers.—*Leo Tolstoy.*

The Annual Dinner.

THE London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner (under the auspices of the National Secular Society) took place on January 14 at the Holborn Restaurant, and was attended by nearly 200 people, among whom were quite a fair proportion of our women friends, which is one of the best and surest signs of the growing success of our propaganda. Provincial members mustered in good force, among them being Mr. and Mrs. Alward, from Grimsby; A. C. Brown and party of friends, from Oxford; Johann Scu, from Nottingham; and F. Goodwin and friends, from Grays.

The legal, medical, and military professions were all represented; and, stranger still, we had a clergyman still on the active list among the company, as well as the two ex-members of the profession who have thrown in their lot with us.

An innovation in the arrangement of the tables, which left the Chairman, Mr. G. W. Foote, much more accessible to his friends, was generally approved of; and when the good dinner had been partaken of, an excellent musical program was given, interspersed between the speeches and toasts.

After Madame Saunders' overture on the piano came the address from the Chairman, who was in his usual good form, and was listened to with marked attention and interest.

The toast of "The National Secular Society," proposed in a neat and commendably brief speech by Mr. Victor Roger, the oldest of our vice-presidents, in the regretted absence of Mr. William Heaford, was effectively responded to by Mr. A. B. Moss.

"Freethought At Home and Abroad," proposed by Mr. Morris Young (who, as a newcomer to the party was enthusiastically received, and who, in an amusing and most interesting speech, mentioned that he had a surplice and cassock for sale, but so far had found no bidders for them), was briefly spoken to by Mr. Lloyd, and at more length by Mr. Cohen, who made use of the opportunity to give some good advice to his friends.

Between these more serious items the musical portions of the program made some pleasant breaks. Mr. Morley Peel has an excellent baritone voice, and gave some well-chosen songs; and Miss Helen Blaine's most delightful singing will not soon be forgotten. Our old friend Mr. Will Edwards was funnier than ever—and that's saying a great deal. His hearers were just convulsed. A most successful evening's entertainment was brought to a fitting close by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" by all those present.

E. M. VANCE.

Correspondence.

THE GRAVE OF A FREETHINKER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A few days ago I was on top of one of the highest hills in Cornwall—Castle an Dinas—about half way between Penzance and St. Ives. In a field close to the top of the hill I saw the grave of a Freethinker. It had a stone wall around it, and carving on three of the stones. On the centre stone was cut the name Hasking, aged 65, and date of interment 1823. On the second stone was cut, "Custom is the idol of Fools"; and on the third stone, "Virtue only consecrates the ground." The hill gets its name from an old prehistoric castle on the top, built thousands of years ago, and is an interesting example of primitive fortifications. It is a circular wall, in ruins now, the enclosure about 100 yards in diameter. From the hill may be surveyed Mount's Bay and the English Channel on one side, and St. Ives Bay and the Bristol Channel on the other; and on a clear day twenty-four parish churches can be seen, and the Scilly Isles may be descried on the horizon's verge like clouds resting on the ocean. Should any Freethinker visiting Penzance wish to see this grave and castle, I shall be pleased to motor him up there.

J. G. GARTRELL, SEN.

"The law of this State provides that no more than one-half of an estate may be left to religious or charitable institutions when the person making the will has a wife or children. The late John Ladin, a Catholic merchant of this city, evaded the law by leaving the bulk of his $810,000 estate to the archbishop of the diocese; and although it is well-known that the clergy are constrained by their vows to leave all their property to the Church, the Court of Appeals has upheld the validity of the bequest. Ladin left a daughter and grandchildren, who sought to break the will, alleging a secret arrangement between the testator and the archbishop."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Function of Atheism."

CROYDON PUBLIC (SMALL) HALL (George-street): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. J. Darby, "The Bible and Slavery."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Robert Ingersoll and Jesus Christ."

FAILSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "All Things Die: There is No Death."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arnold Sharpley, "What the Devil is the Origin of Puritanism?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "Christ's Estimate of Morality."

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When once you can trust yourself, you know how to live.
—GOETHE.

The Black Army.

AFTER a Sunday evening lecture of mine a young gentleman rose to offer some opposition. While not wearing clerical attire, he had a very decided clerical accent, and I concluded that he had caught the twang in addressing Sunday-school children or in debating at Young Men's Christian Associations. Perhaps he had aspirations for the ministry, for one of his objections to my lecture was urged with much feeling. I had said that the ministers of all denominations were, for the most part, actuated by commonplace motives; that they went into pulpits as others go into law, or physic, or the army—for a living; and that their being called by the Holy Ghost was only the cant of their profession. My critic declared that I was wrong. He asserted that hundreds of them, perhaps thousands, entered their Churches, and engaged in the service of Christ, for purely disinterested reasons; that their great object was to save souls and fill heaven; that many of them were very poor, the average income of curates, for instance, being only £120 a year; and that some of them went abroad as missionaries to convert the heathen, facing all sorts of hardships, and carrying their lives in their hands. I cannot say that my critic put his case so tersely, but this was the substance of his objection; and I will give an answer, once for all, to what I daresay is a very common argument.

Now at the outset I wish to make my own position clear, and to guard against misunderstanding. In the first place, I have nothing to do at present with the truth or falsity of Christianity; yet at the same time I am entitled to expect of its ministers a decent conformity to its teachings. In the next place, I do not assert that there are *no* ministers or missionaries who are earnest and sincere. Some of them, I have no doubt, would preach Christianity if it were poor, despised, and oppressed. These are men of principle and conviction; men with a passion for their calling; men who really believe that they are under God's orders to exhort and reprove a fallen, sinful world, and to point out the only way of eternal salvation. There are also some lawyers with a passion for law, some doctors with a passion for medicine, and some soldiers with a passion for military affairs; as I daresay there are men with a passion for almost every one of what are called the "humblest" employments. But these are the exceptions, and may be eliminated from a general survey. When we talk of any profession, as such, we have to go by the average; and I say that the average minister, like the average lawyer, doctor, soldier, tinker, tailor, or ploughman, is simply earning a subsistence for himself and his family; in short, that he preaches for a living. Simply this and nothing more.

Let us look at the *number* of these clerical gentlemen. There are some fifty thousand of them in England alone. Will any man in his senses affirm that the law of averages does not apply to this huge Black Army? Are they all heroes and enthusiasts? The very idea is an absurdity. Try them by any other test, and what is the result? They are average in stature, average in shape, average in looks, average in strength, and average in intelligence. Why then, even on the most favorable estimate, should they not be average in character? Has not the Catholic Church always recognised this fact, and made its priests sink their little individualities in the greatness and splendor of the Church? Has it not found a compensation for the pettiness of its myriad agents in the magnificence of its organisation? Are not all its orders, wheel within wheel, from the Pope down to the poor bog-trotting Irish priest, a practical recognition of the hard truth that the men of God, like the masses of other men, are actuated by the fundamental motives of human nature?

Look next at the *unfailing supply* of these clerical gentlemen. Exceptional motives are liable to fluctuation, and are therefore unaccountable. Any one of twenty men who saw a sovereign lying at his feet would pick it up, but it would be hard to tell which of them would risk his life to save a fellow being's. The British Army is filled by enlistment, and *well* filled, because poverty and misadventure drive thousands into taking "the King's shilling." But how full would it be if it depended upon the accession of men who yearn to fight and die for their country, turning from other attractions to follow that stern ideal? And how full would the Black Army be if it were not recruited like the Red Army, under the forceful pressure of the necessities of existence? Year by year every vacancy is filled, and a waiting crowd is clamoring for admission. The supply always equals the demand, and goes beyond it, as it does in every other trade and profession. This phenomenon can only be explained by the ordinary laws of human action. Were the Churches manned by persons of exceptional—that is, incalculable—motive and character, there would be variations in the supply. Sometimes there would be a lull, and sometimes a feverish activity. But nothing of this sort ever occurs; the supply of ministers is as regular as the supply of carpenters and tailors, and must be subject to laws of the same generality.

This is quite consistent with the fact that *aptitude*, as well as accident, plays a part in determining a minister's career; but it also operates in the case of other professions, without implying any ethical consideration. A young man at one of the universities may have a taste for theology, as another has a taste for science or art or history or poetry. He may have a bent for public speaking, without the active, enterprising character which is requisite for successful oratory in politics; he may be fond of the social attentions which are paid to clergymen, especially by the female members of their congregations; or his temperament may be suited to the comparatively easy, unharassed life which is led by the general run of Christian ministers, who go to bed when they like, rise when they like, and adapt their duties to their convenience.

We will now consider the financial aspect of the question. It may be true that the average income of Church of England curates is only £120 a year. But before I recognise any hardship in this, I must be assured that they would earn more (I mean on the average) in the general labor market. I am not at all satisfied that the ordinary curate is gifted with

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more brains than the ordinary skilled artisan. He may talk better English, but that is an accident, and we all know that great nonsense may be couched in very elegant language. Being able to speak grammatically is no criterion of a man's ability to do anything serviceable for his fellow men, for which he may reasonably expect a fair remuneration. One's own experience, of course, is not everything; but I have met both curates and artisans, and I cannot say that the former showed any distinct superiority over the latter. Perhaps I shall be told that their superiority is ethical and spiritual; to which I reply that I am not discussing their character, but their capacity.

It must also be remembered that income is not the sole factor in determining employments; or we should not see so many clerks keeping up a respectable appearance on meagre salaries, while they might earn more in a rougher or more active occupation. A minister's life has certain advantages of personal comfort and social respectability. Nor is this all. His position is not precarious; he is not affected by commercial disasters and aberrations; his income is generally as certain, and as regular, as the succession of the seasons.

There is also the *prospect* to be considered. A curate's position is humble, and his income is "sadly limited," but a long vista of possibilities is before him—temporal as well as spiritual. He may become a vicar, a rector, a dean, an archdeacon, a canon, a bishop, even an archbishop. Who knows? Every one of Napoleon's soldiers fought with "a marshal's baton in his knapsack." Few of them *could* become marshals, but there was at least the chance, and the hope lured them to a hundred battlefields. And is not the "poor curate" under a similar inspiration? He also may climb the ladder of preferment, at the top of which shines resplendent, in the sunlight of glory, the golden prize of the great Archbishopric.

(*To be continued.*) G. W. FOOTE.

The Culture of the Supernatural.—III.

(Concluded from p. 51.)

THE utter uselessness of accepting at its face value anyone's explanation of the cause of his own subjective experience, is well illustrated by the belief in witchcraft. If there is a single belief on which clouds of apparently unimpeachable evidence could be produced, it is this. It has run its course throughout the whole of the world. Eminent men, not alone theologians, but doctors, lawyers, men of letters, and statesmen have given their testimony to the reality of diabolic intercourse. Those accused have themselves confessed to such intercourse; and although some of these confessions were extorted under torture, many were quite genuine. Thousands of people have been "bewitched" into a certain class of disorders and have manifested appropriate symptoms. Yet this belief is now dead amongst civilised and educated people. Even religious teachers accept the explanation that these witchcraft cases were due to distinctly pathological conditions and to the power of suggestion operating upon uninformed minds during an unenlightened age. But there is really no better evidence for communication with Divinity than there is of communication with Satan. The testimony of a man like Mr. R. J. Campbell, that he is conscious of a divine influence in his life, is of no greater value than that of a sixteenth century witch that she was conscious of a satanic influence urging her to particular actions. Whether the inspiration be angelic or diabolic, the evidence for either, or both, is the same. Mr. Campbell is no better authority on the matter than an ignorant peasant of four centuries ago. His is simply the survival of the belief in a form more acceptable to the changed religious convictions of the twentieth century.

There is nothing new under the sun, and human nature remains substantially unchanged generation after generation. All the phenomena on which the old belief in witchcraft was based is still with us. Similar cases of delusion are still here, and the power of suggestion is one of the established facts of modern psychology. Nay, there may still be found thousands of people who are convinced of the activity of Satan. What, then, has happened? Only this; that taking the same facts on which certain religious beliefs were based, the modern scientist shows that they may be explained in terms of forces and conditions that altogether exclude operations of a supernatural character. The facts of the religious life remain; our understanding of them has changed materially. If Mr. Campbell, or anyone else, tells us that he had a feeling of a "divine presence," we may admit the feeling, but inquire how he became acquainted with its source? Mr. Campbell would not hesitate to challenge the conviction of a West African that an attack of epilepsy was due to enchantment or possession. Is his explanation of the origin of certain of his own emotional states of a really higher character? Between Mumbo-Jumbo and God, as casual agents, the difference is verbalistic only.

Old occurrences have to be explained in the light of new knowledge. This is the rule in all directions, and it is of peculiar force in relation to religion. To know what religious people have thought, and felt, and said, is no more than the data for a scientific study of the subject. To know why they thought, and felt, and said these things is what we really need to understand. And to do this we must either conclude that religious experiences are quite apart from life in general and stand in a special and isolated category, or it must be shown that they can be grouped with other experiences of an admittedly non-religious character. I believe that it is quite possible to do the latter. From medical records and from numerous biographies, it is easily possible to parallel all the experiences of the religious mystic. We can see the same sense of exaltation, the same conviction of illumination, the same belief that one is the tool of a superior power. Let us take, for example, the case of so eminent a writer as John Addington Symonds. He tells us that until he was twenty-eight years of age—the significance of this age limit will not be lost on those who know the connection existing between religious conversion and adolescence—he was liable to extreme states of exaltation concerning the nature of self. It is worth pointing out that Dr. Crichton-Browne expressed the opinion that Symonds' higher nerve centres were in some degree enfeebled by these abnormal states. In addition to this confusion, Symonds placed on record an interesting experience while under the influence of chloroform. He says:—

> "After the choking and stifling had passed away, I seemed at first in a state of utter blankness; then came flashes of intense light, alternating with blankness, and with a keen sense of vision of what was going on in the room around me, but no sensation of touch. I thought that I was near death; when suddenly my soul became aware of God, who was manifestly dealing with me, handling me, so to speak, in an intense personal reality. I felt him streaming in like light upon me.....I cannot describe the ecstasy I felt. Then, as I gradually awoke from the influence of the anæsthetic, the old sense of my relation with the world began to return, the new sense of my relation to God began to fade."

With a slight variation of expression this passage might have been taken straight from the pages of some mediæval mystic. There is no question of the intense reality of experience. That was as real as anything that ever occurred to any saint in the calendar. The distinction here is that Symonds knew and stated the cause of his sensations. And no one would question that Symonds' explanation completely covers the ground. Of course, one may be met with the rather cheap retort that saints and mystics did not use chloroform to produce their visions. Granted, but chloroform is not the only agent by means of which the subject may be thrown into an abnormal condition as a means of inducing a sense of spiritual illumination. And, as a matter

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of fact, from the most primitive times, the use of herbs and drugs, valued in religious ceremonies for the state of exaltation induced, is one of the commonest practices. Tobacco, hashish, coca, laurel water, with numerous other agents of a similar kind, have been largely used in religious ceremonies. And when we have not this plan—sometimes side by side with it—we have the practice of fasting and other forms of self-torture, solitary brooding, and the like, obviously practised because of the abnormal conditions provoked.

It is not argued that there was in all this deliberate imposture. That would have implied the presence of more knowledge than people actually possessed. But it was known that these abnormal states followed the use of certain drugs, or was consequent on the practice of certain austerities. They were accordingly valued because they were thought to bring people into touch with an already believed in supernatural world. In this way there was always going on, and is still going on in a more or less modified form, a positive culture of the supernatural. People create a sense of the supernatural by the cultivation of states of mind that are of no greater evidential value than the experience of an opium eater is proof of the objective reality of his vision.

Above all, if one wishes to really understand the nature of religion, one must never lose sight of the earlier forms of religious life. It is sometimes said that we must explain the lower by the higher. This is sheer fallacy. The higher can only be explained by the lower. In biological investigation it is now generally conceded that the secret of animal organisation lies in the cell. Let this be modified as much as is possible, it is still the basis of organic structure. So, too, with religious phenomena. The important feature in the history of religion is that the story is a continuous one. The forms of religion change with time and place, but its fundamental properties remain. And as we are driven back to the cell to explain organic activities, so we are compelled to take the mental life of primitive man as supplying the key to an understanding of all forms of religion. Apart from this, we are merely engaged in a word-contest which inevitably ends in false theory and confusion.

Finally, the study of abnormal nervous states, as providing much of the material on which all religions have built, does not exhaust the survey. There still remains the misinterpretation of feelings and frames of mind that are perfectly normal, and of their diversion into religious channels. Current religious literature is full of quite worthless chatter concerning the way in which religion opens up a larger and fuller life. Because, at a certain time of life, young men and young women begin to take an active interest in the social life around them, and because this is often connected with religious work, it is assumed that religious belief is the impelling force. But against this there is the positively demonstrated fact that this is a phenomenon of adolescence. Statistics are quite conclusive on this point. And the whole significance of adolescence, physiologically, psychologically, and socially, is the calling into operation of feelings hitherto dormant, and the creation of a consciousness that simply craves for a part in the larger life of the species. At this stage the whole nature of the individual cries out for communion with his fellows. He becomes less self-centred, more alive to the demands of others upon him, and manifests tendencies in the direction of what the world calls self-sacrifice. It is not the religious nature that is craving satisfaction at adolescence, it is the social nature. It is the period when development awakens in the individual a sense of unity, of kinship with the species to which he belongs.

Left alone, and in a thoroughly civilised environment, these awakening impulses would receive gratification, and undergo a healthy development, by participation in a rational social life. If, however, as so often happens, the strongest expressed influences encountered are of a religious form, these developing feelings are clothed in a religious dress. The new, strange, and inchoate feelings of sex, the gropings of a social consciousness of kind, are by interest or ignorance, or by both combined, interpreted as the direct influence of the spirit of God, and the individual is induced to give to religion what properly belongs to society. In such cases we are concerned with the wrong interpretation of normal feelings, or with the exploitation of the social nature of man by religious organisations. Man is emphatically not a religious animal; he is a social animal. But how man interprets his own nature is determined by the actual knowledge in his possession. Given a sufficient absence of knowledge, and the religious explanation is completely triumphant. Given adequate knowledge, and the religious explanation is seen to be useless, and is discarded. The gods are seen to be only man in masquerade, and the activities of a supernatural world the product of human ignorance of the nature of the natural one.

C. COHEN.

Twaddle About the Soul and Inspiration.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for January 22 there is a very remarkable sermon by the Rev. James L. Gordon, D.D., entitled "Inspiration." This discourse is remarkable for its great length, its grandiloquence, its self-contradictions, its pretentiousness, and its shallowness. Dr. Gordon gives us the following ascending degrees of fineness, or scale of values: "The hand is finer than the foot, the ear finer than the hand, the eye finer than the ear, the brain finer than the eye, the mind finer than the brain, the spirit finer than the mind, and the soul—the soul is the essence and quintessence of all unseen and spiritual values." Having got at the soul in that novel fashion, the reverend gentleman favors us with several original definitions of it. He calls it "a bit of God, a perfect atom of Divinity," "the exact centre of a universe," "the invisible force of a human personality," and "the sum total of all human sensations and aspirations." Then he quotes Henley's well-known lines—

> "Out of the night that covers me
> Black as the pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever Gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul."

According to this divine, God is broken up into innumerable little bits, and each little bit is encased and corrupted in a material body. And yet, after setting the soul in so lofty and dignified a position, he drags it down again thus:—

> "What the shell is to the nut, what the skin is to an orange, what the glove is to the hand, what the shoe is to the foot, what the casket is to the jewel—that the soul is to the body."

Adopting Dr. Gordon's style, we say that as the nut is finer than the shell, the orange than the skin, the foot than the shoe, and the jewel than the casket, so is the body finer and more valuable than the soul, which is the very opposite of what the preacher wishes to set forth.

Unless the printer is grossly unfair to him, Dr. Gordon is an extremely careless writer. In another part of the sermon he describes the soul as "an extinguishable spark of Divine life." It is perfectly true that to blow out the flame is not to blow out the candle; but any fool can see that the candle's usefulness depends upon the flame. What the preacher desires to prove, however, is the indestructibility of the soul; but he never gets within sight of his goal. Here is a fine sample of his style:—

> "Your hand may sleep in paralysis, your eye may slumber in blindness, your ear may decline in deafness, your brain may fag in weariness, your nerves may relax in sheer exhaustion, but your soul lives on, fresh, vital, and strong."

That is the dogmatism of complete ignorance. When hand and eye and nerve and brain shall have ceased to be, neither Dr. Gordon nor anybody else knows of any-

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thing destined to survive them. The soul is a purely imaginary entity. God is admittedly an incomprehensible being, and a bit or an atom of him would be equally inconceivable. To define the soul as "a bit of God," or "a perfect atom of Divinity," is therefore to use words to which intelligible meanings cannot be attached. Then, again, to speak of the soul as "the sum total of all human sensations and aspirations" is to deny its existence as an entity; and the dissolution of the body puts an end to all sensations and aspirations. The surest thing about human sensations and aspirations is that they *are* human both in their origin and in their nature.

Indeed, all talk about the soul as an entity is wholly absurd. Dr. Gordon says that "the grandest moment in a man's life is when he becomes conscious of his soul." As a matter of fact, no man ever does become conscious of his soul. An ignorant belief in it is common, but knowledge or consciousness of it no one has. A man will be born again in very truth when he becomes conscious of possessing a soul. We are only conscious of ourselves as units. The people who believe that they have souls are, as a rule, unbearably conceited. Dr. Gordon tells us that when Richard Mills was converted, he wrote in his diary these words: "Clang! Clang! Clang! went all the bells in heaven, for Richard Mills was born again." Of what infinite importance the poor fellow believed himself to be in the Universe. Even Dr. Gordon regards himself as great enough to speak for God. Without a blush he says that "God divides men into two classes, Spiritualists and Sensualists." If so, all we can say is that God's classification is incorrect, men being by no means so divided. Millions of people who are not Spiritualists conscientiously live by their higher nature, and never become the slaves of their appetites and passions. If Dr. Gordon does not know this we must pronounce his ignorance culpable. Science, which knows nothing of the spiritual, unhesitatingly condemns sensuality as an offence against our own nature. All allusions to and descriptions of "the spiritual" are utterly unmeaning, "the spiritual" being nothing but the city of refuge of total ignorance. Here is an apt example:—

> "The fundamental fact about man is expressed in five words—Man is a spiritual creature. He has a soul. He is a soul. He can respond to a spiritual inspiration. He can reflect the thought of God. He can mirror the face of Truth. He can know God."

High-sounding words, but as empty as any drum that fills the atmosphere with sound. He who speaks of "the response of the moral qualities in man to the moral qualities in God" entirely misinterprets man's moral nature. Man's moral qualities are the result of countless ages of social evolution, and have absolutely no connection with any other world than this.

We are quite willing to accept the statement that society is governed by ideas, and that "the progress of the world depends on the startling power of new thought." Neither have we any objection to the further proposition that "new ideas depend on new inspirations," because "inspiration" is a word whose primary reference is to a physical act, and which may legitimately be employed as a symbol of mental stimulation. For instilling into it a supernatural meaning there is absolutely no justification in a single well-attested fact. And yet Dr. Gordon claims the term in the interests of supernaturalism. "An inspiration," he says, "is a flash of soul-revealing consciousness"; but it would be more intelligible to define it as a natural quickening or stimulation of the mental faculties. Were it not for the theological misapprehension and misapplication it would be perfectly legitimate to call a man of genuis an inspired person, in which event Shakespeare could be spoken of as one of the most inspired men that ever lived. There is no limit to Dr. Gordon's rapacity. He steals the word "insight" and rechristens it "soul-sight," assuring us that "the soul has dreams, visions, and revelations." He praises Haydn for his dramatic declaration during a performance of his *Creation*: "It came from above! It came from above!" He wants us to believe that great sermons and noted hymns are gifts from God. Indeed, he waxes eloquent in the glorification of what he calls an inspiration:—

> "It is the Divine original. It bears the trade-mark of the skies. The signature of God is upon it. It is history and prophecy in one red lightning flash of supernatural glory. Its thrill is the sure sign of the touch of God for the soul. It is the greatest thing in human experience."

We should dearly love to come across an inspiration that answers to that extravagant eulogy. We have searched the Bible and the theological literature of all the ages without once catching the faintest glimpse of it. We have heard and read innumerable sermons, Dr. Gordon's included, without discerning the slightest trace of it. More than once have we waded through Baxter's *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*, in the writing of which he prided himself on being "only a pen in God's hand," but never met with one idea that bore "the trade-mark of the skies." Those who take the preacher's claim seriously must surely come to the conclusion that the Holy Ghost talks a vast amount of nonsense, and never utters a thought with his own signature upon it.

We believe with all our heart in the splendor and glory of the human imagination, in the inspiring grace and beauty and elevating influence of poetry and art, and in the cultivation of the noblest moral qualities for the betterment of human conditions; and it is our honest conviction that there is ample scope for the full exercise of all man's faculties within the sphere of this world alone. It is highly probable that the greatest poet the world has ever seen was an unbeliever in supernaturalism; and it is an established fact that one who might have almost become his equal, had he lived, was an avowed Atheist. Shelley had his inspired moments, when ideas of transcendent charm and loveliness were suddenly born within him and found expression in faultless music. The flights of his glowing imagination were not hampered or circumscribed by the fact that he acknowledged neither God nor the spiritual world. Lucretius was no less a poet because the supernatural was non-existent to him: his unbelief did not clip the wings of his fancy in the least, though he went the length of saying that—

> "When our mortal frame shall be disjoined,
> The lifeless lump uncoupled from the mind,
> From sense of grief and pain we shall be free;
> We shall not *feel* because we shall not *be*."

No, there is nothing in Freethought to damp the ardor or to curb the genius of poet or artist. The world we live in is densely packed with all sorts of wonders and beauties and experiences which are calculated to stimulate the mind, and the problems of life are sufficiently numerous and great to give incessant and fruitful occupation to the strongest and keenest intellects, and to fire the finest imagination. Poets generally take very little practical interest in social questions, however religious they may be. But Shelley had a passion for social reform because he loved his fellow-beings. Destitute alike of the love of God and the hope of heaven as incentives to good works, he was irresistibly moved thereto by his humanity alone.

J. T. LLOYD.

Pears' Soap Bubbles About Paine.

Pears' Shilling Cyclopædia for 1913 is a pocket edition of omniscience in 1,070 pages, containing, amongst other things put together in handy form for quick reference, an infinite number of bovrilised biographies of prominent men. At p. 861 is an account of Thomas Paine in ten lines and one "thumper." Here is the "thumper":—

> "In 1794 his *Age of Reason* was published, and again his atheistical opinions roused strong opposition."

After reading this airy description of Paine's opinions, one is surprised to find that, in the

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general "Introduction," the editor states that "*in every instance* the essential facts are given, and each edition is revised to the date of publication." Taking for granted that in this particular instance the "essential facts" were "revised so recently as a few months ago, it must be assumed that the editor had access to documents and declarations, hitherto unknown to all the world, in which Paine must have revised and re-edited his pronounced Theistic opinions as writ large on every page of the *Age of Reason*. For everybody who knows Paine's writings, and especially that classic piece of polemical English, the *Age of Reason*, knows that Paine lived and died a Theist; that he wrote elaborate and passionate arguments against Atheism and its doctrines in the very work cited by *Pears'*; and that in almost the opening lines of the *Age* he wrote down his decidedly anti-atheistic opinions, as below:

> "I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life."

No Christian apologist can add to the sum of arguments adduced by Paine in Part I. in favor of the God idea. They may copy his language, but they cannot surpass the beauty and the forcefulness of his rich and varied style.

In *Pears' Cyclopædia* of general information (one of the twenty crammed sections of this wonderfully cheap volume) a generally fair definition is given of Atheism as "the denial of the divine, [and] it assumes three forms—denial of the existence of God, denial that God has been *proved* to exist, and denial of the possibility of knowing of divine existence." Judged by this threefold test, Paine was the very reverse of being an Atheist. In fact, he did not deny the existence of God; he adduced a long string of what he considered proofs of God's existence, and he emphatically answered "Yes" to the question, Canst thou by searching find out God?

The truth is that the lie that Paine was an Atheist got started a hundred years ago, and a thousand holy agencies of organised lying have kept up the deceit ever since. With the illuminating instance before us of fair play towards Atheism given in Pears' compendious description quoted above, I am unable to believe that the *Cyclopædia* has sinned maliciously against Paine, and I venture to believe that Pears' editor will make an honest attempt to digest a few more essential facts for the benefit of the sane people who expect to find facts in a book of reference, and that he will in future editions remove this blemishing inaccuracy from the pages of this marvellous shillingsworth.

We make this appeal to Pears' in the academic interests of literary and historic truth. As Atheists, some of us have perhaps groaned to find Paine, like Voltaire, fighting keenly in the Theistic ranks, armed *cap-à pie* with all the weapons of logic, in the general assault upon the impregnable rock of our holy Atheism. Well, it is useless for us to kick against the dead wall of facts, or to curse the nature of things. Paine, in spite of all our regrets or of the ignorant denial of his detractors, was a Theist; but transcendently above that label shines his greatness and courage in speaking unpopular truths in an age not always cruel enough to kill the unbeliever, but always mean enough to lie about him. Will our age be candid enough at last to disown a hoary lie?

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Agency of Insects in the Dissemination of Disease.

THE part played by insects in spreading disease has been made startlingly evident by recent medical science. There are various reasons for thinking that all diseases will be ultimately traced to the malign influences of microbes. Immense weight is added to this theory by the fact that in every instance in which we possess a full history of the genesis and development of a disease, the germs responsible for its existence have been detected through microscopical observation and experiment. In the inquiries which have for their object the prevention and ultimate extinction of disease, zoologists, botanists, entomologists, and physicians have all lent their aid. The victories already won constitute one of the most amazing episodes in the chronicle of scientific achievements.

As Metchnikoff and other bacteriologists have demonstrated, comparatively few of the parasitic organisms which reside in or upon higher animals or plants are seriously detrimental to their hosts. For this providential concession we should be sincerely grateful, for were even a tithe of their number inimical to the wellbeing of higher living things, our planet would soon be swept clear of all its most characteristic animals and plants.

It is most proper to remark that, from the standpoint of the plant or animal preyed upon by parasites, these unwelcome intruders are most assuredly where they should not be. In the eyes of cold and dispassionate Nature, however, there is nothing anomalous in their presence. Parasitism is a necessary condition of their existence; apart from their hosts they would perish. Every time a human being doses himself with quinine or any other drug he is either slaying or ejecting from their natural dwellings millions of these minute creatures who have dropped in upon him for the time being. Still, it is quite ethical on our part to place our own comfort and convenience first, and to expel the microbes whenever necessary.

At this point it may not be altogether unprofitable to emphasise the important distinction between infectious and contagious disease. What are known in medical circles as contagious diseases are those which are transmitted by contact with the diseased subject, either by touch or by the use of the same articles, by the breath or effluvial discharges from the body, as well as other sources of contagion. Small-pox and measles are well-known examples of contagious disease. Infectious diseases, on the other hand, are those that are disseminated indirectly, as, for instance, by the adventitious introduction of solid or liquid substances into a human or animal body. Yellow fever, malaria, typhoid, and other diseases are examples of this nature. It is therefore obvious that all contagious diseases may be contracted through infection; but a large number of infectious diseases are very rarely contagious, and even then in very exceptional circumstances. The importance which resides in this distinction between infection and contagion is clearly illustrated in the following passage:—

> "Until a few years ago it was believed that yellow fever was highly contagious, and every precaution was taken to keep the disease from spreading by keeping the infected region in strict quarantine. This often meant much hardship and suffering, and always a great financial loss. We now know that it is infectious only, and not contagious, and that all this quarantine was unnecessary. The whole fight in controlling an outbreak of yellow fever or in preventing such an outbreak is now directed against the mosquito, the sole agent by which the disease can be transmitted from one person to another."*

Among all the insect enemies of man the mosquito is probably the deadliest. When Linnæus prepared his famous list of living things in 1758, he catalogued six species of mosquitoes only. When, in 1901, Dr. Theobald published his work on mosquitoes, he enumerated three hundred and forty-three kinds. At the time of writing some six hundred species are known to exist, and numerous others doubtless remain to be discovered.

A great impetus was given to the study of mosquitoes when it began to be suspected that these creatures played a very uncanny part in the propagation of disease. It was discovered that the eggs of the insect are deposited in water. When the eggs hatch the larvæ burst open the lower end of the eggs, and then enter the water. An aquatic medium is absolutely essential to the growth of the larvæ. A small quantity of water will suffice, but unless there be sufficient to cover the larvæ they die. The

* Dr. Doane, *Insects and Disease*, p. 9.

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mouth parts of the different species vary very considerably, as their feeding habits are frequently quite dissimilar. Some mosquito larvæ prey on the young of other species, or on other insects. The majority of the "wigglers," as the Americans call them, content themselves with a diet of algæ, diatoms, and other lowly-living forms, which they sweep into their mouths. This end is achieved by the motions of their little brush-like organs, which impel currents of water towards their mouths.

When hatched the larvæ are extremely small, but, given a high temperature and an abundant food supply, they grow very rapidly. In a day or two the outer skin becomes hard and inelastic, and in this manner prevents further growth. A new integument now forms underneath, and the old skin is discarded. This process is termed moulting, and is repeated four times during the weeks covered by the life of the larvæ. After the fourth moult the free-swimming larva is transformed into a still active, but fasting, pupa. The pupal period occupies from two to six days more. When the mature insect prepares to emerge, the pupal skin splits along the back, and the fully-developed mosquito makes its appearance. After resting on its discarded skin, or on the water, until its wings have hardened, the insect enters upon its flying career.

Although all mosquitoes appear much alike, there are nevertheless marked structural differences in the two sexes. This is important, as the male's mouth organs are so constructed that it cannot, even if it desired to suck our blood, engage in that disease-creating occupation. Some authorities contend that the female is alone capable of biting, but others think that the males of some species draw blood. In any case, the lady mosquito is the chief offender.

Malaria dates from the dawn of human history: and although various theories were propounded in antiquity concerning it, it was not until the commencement of the eighteenth century that modern views began to be expressed. In 1718 Lancisi advanced the view that the swarms of gnats, mosquitoes, and other insects which haunt malarial regions carry poisonous substances, and introduce them by means of their mouth organs into the human body. This was a most progressive step, as all previous inquirers appear to have associated malarial fevers with impure air alone. But it was not until 1880 that Laveran, a French army surgeon, began to study the blood of malarial patients microscopically, and he soon detected the parasite responsible for the disease. He met with the usual experience of the pioneer; but his discovery was amply verified by other investigators, and was universally acknowledged by the world of science. That his experimental work is now fully recognised is evidenced by the fact that the Nobel prize for medicine was recently bestowed upon him.

In 1885 Dr. Golgi proceeded on the lines laid down by Laveran, and made a minute study of malarial parasites. He determined their life-history in the blood, and distinguished the three parasitical organisms which cause malarial fevers of the tertian, quartan, and remittent types. It is now known that the life-histories of these parasites are very similar, the main difference residing in the time taken in their reproduction. At first the parasite is rod-like in form. It moves in the blood-plasm, and quickly proceeds to attack the red blood-corpuscles and penetrates into their interior. It feeds upon the blood-cell it has pierced until it has completely assimilated it.

> "After about forty hours, if the parasite is *vivax*, or about sixty-five hours if it is *malariæ*, it becomes immobile; the nucleus divides again and again, and the protoplasm collects around these nuclei, forming a number of small cells or spores, as they are called. In about forty-eight or seventy-two hours, depending on whether the parasite is *vivax* or *malariæ*, the wall of the corpuscle bursts, and all these spores, with the black pigment and the waste products that have been stored away within the cell, are liberated into the blood-plasm."

(To be continued.) T. F. PALMER.

Acid Drops.

We have been amused lately by a reperusal of Moncure D. Conway's *Autobiography*. It is a bold and honest book intellectually, but it was written in Conway's old age, and there is a subtle blight of "respectability" all over it—especially in its later portions. Conway had bravely denounced the prosecution of the *Freethinker*, and indignantly protested against the malicious use of the word "indecent" by its enemies. At the great St. James's Hall meeting after the editor's liberation from Holloway Prison, he raised a perfect storm of cheers by saying that some of Mr. Foote's elders had thought he was going a little too far in his attacks on Christianity, but the Christians had gone out of their way to prove that all Mr. Foote had said against it was true. They answered him by putting him in prison, which was exactly the policy that he had charged them with through the whole of their history. It was a great hit, and the meeting rose to it. But there is not a word about Mr. Foote or the *Freethinker* prosecution in Conway's *Autobiography*. He had fallen exclusively into the society of "respectable" people; that is, people of social standing and more than average income. We gratefully remember his attitude at the time of our prosecution. And we sincerely regret that he edged away from "common" (that is, poor) people in the later years of his life.

The worst of that sort of thing is that it always spells failure in the end. An agitation of any sort without the support of the masses is doomed to sterility. Conway found that out, but he did not profit by the lesson. He relates the brief history of his Congress of Liberal Thinkers, held at South Place Chapel in 1878. We attended it in company with James Thomson ("B. V."), who was bitterly satirical over the sorry exhibition of half-heartedness we witnessed. The "classes" were represented—but not the "masses." The organisation started came to nothing. The world couldn't be set on fire by twenty-four highly respectable unorthodox ladies and gentlemen meeting occasionally at Huxley's house. The one open fighter who helped in calling the Congress was Clifford—and he, alas, was dying. There was *another* fighting man whom they had not taken into their calculations; he was a man of the people, and he was destined to lead and inspire the real fight for Freethought for many years to come. His name was Charles Bradlaugh.

We recollect hearing at the Congress of Liberal Thinkers that the fight for mere freedom of speech was over. Nearly everybody was saying so. We have been hearing the same thing from the same sort of people ever since. But the event has always belied their cheerful (and timid) optimism. Conway was obliged to see this. He admits that while that Liberal Congress was sitting London was seething with superstition. There was soon "a recrudescence of wildest fanaticism" and "also a recrudescence of legal persecution." In that phrase, presumably, the *Freethinker* case is discreetly included. But the point we want to emphasise is Conway's admission that while the Liberal Thinkers were "theoretically abolishing superstition" it was actually flourishing with remarkable and even explosive vitality. The same thing is to a large extent true now. Let us never be deceived by easy counsels in which the wish is father to the thought. The Goddess of Wisdom is always armed. She wears her helmet and wields her sword. It was a grand symbol of the old Greeks. And we hope Freethinkers will not forget the great truth it enshrines. Civilisation is never safe from superstition while they co-exist. Look at the Rome of the Cæsars and the Rome of the Popes. Who could have imagined that the one would be succeeded by the other? Yet it was so. And to forget the lesson is to invite disaster.

The danger of a recrudescence of superstition is noted by Dr. Benjamin Andrews, President of Brown University, U.S.A., in an article in the *International Journal of Ethics*. He is doubtful if the scientific mind is holding its own. "Superstition not unlike belief in ghosts," he says, "is still widespread and rank," and "ideas of prayer as irrational as fetish worship have immense vogue among the people." The Gods, in short, threaten to come back. George Macdonald, editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, with reference to this matter, puts the case very pointedly. "Christianity produced the Dark Ages once," he says, "and who knows that it cannot repeat the trick?"

From the *Christian World* we learn "there is a strong movement among the leaders of Free Churches" to induce the editor of the *Daily News* to reconsider the advisability

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of a Church census in London. We are not surprised. What is the good of printing columns of sensational stuff about the progress of the Gospel, the way in which London is being won for Christ, with the many thousands of converts gained by professional evangelists, if a census is to be taken which proves that all these successes have resulted in a diminished attendance? The Free Churches have always twitted the Church of England, when it objected to a religious census in Wales, with being afraid of having its weakness disclosed. What other reason is there for their objecting to the *Daily News* census? Of course, the real reason is disguised by a professed fear that important items of the religious life are ignored and unimportant ones emphasised. But the census does not pretend to deal with the state of religion, but with the number of church attendances. And if we give the Churches the full benefit of all who attend from non-religious reasons, this will about balance those who stay away without having their faith in religious teaching diminished.

"Materialism is dead." "It is the doctrine of a handful of discredited thinkers." Such is the burden of men like Sir Oliver Lodge and of many others who are less conversant with the real facts of the situation. Meanwhile, science goes on its way making one discovery after another in virtue of its loyalty to the materialistic principle of investigation. And here is one of our leading neurologists, Sir T. S. Clouston, in an article in the current *Quarterly Review*, insisting that if we are to understand mental phenomena "we must think of mind not as a self-existing, self-acting entity, but as an energy which is as dependent on brain and brain memories for its exhibition as electricity, motion, or heat are on matter." And in a recent address by Dr. Schafer, we observed that eminent physiologist declaring that the outcry over the Materialism of his presidential address before the British Association only demonstrated the ignorance of Fleet-street. This is exactly what was said in the *Freethinker* at the time of the hubbub. The ordinary English journalist is really an uneducated person, and the developments of newspaper work seem to hold out greater attractions than ever to irredeemable mediocrity.

The Bishop of London says that for every ten men in East London who listened to the Gospel twenty-four years ago, you will now find six hundred. Perhaps the twenty-four years has reference to Bishop Ingram's appearance on the scene, and this is his graceful way of paying himself a compliment. We have no means of testing the figures, but we should like to know where this additional 590 manage to hide themselves. Evidently they don't show up in church attendances. And one cannot think of a Bishop telling an untruth.

None so blind as those who won't see. A reviewer in the *Guardian* remarks that "In England, though it may be otherwise in the Latin countries, unbelief is rare." We readily grant that in England unbelief is neither so bold nor so pronounced as it is, say, in France; but to speak of it as "rare" is simply ridiculous. We do not believe that the proportion of unbelievers to believers is very much different in England to what is the case in France. But here it goes under a number of more or less fancy names. Moreover, in the political world the rule is for those who are Freethinkers to keep their opinions to themselves, or at most never allow their Freethought to make itself obvious in connection with their political life. But if England were to be suddenly seized with an epidemic of mental honesty and straightforward speech, we believe it would be found that the number of unbelievers would not be very far short of many sects that rank themselves as quite respectable in point of numbers.

A Wycliffe preacher—that is, a Kensitite—went into St. Matthew's Parish Church, Sheffield, with a hammer, which he used on an image of the Madonna and Child. The head of little Jesus was knocked right off, and the Madonna's head and face were seriously injured. The iconoclast begged the Archbishop of York to prosecute him. Whether his wish will be granted remains to be seen. Meanwhile we note the strange harmony in the household of faith.

Another poor professional Christite. Rev. William Henry Arundell, rector of Stockleigh, Devon, left £23,043. If the Gospels are true he must have made a big splash in hell.

One thing is certain amidst the chances and changes of French politics. The men at the head of affairs are nearly all Freethinkers. The new Ministry under M. Briand is as full of Freethinkers as the old Ministry under M. Poincaré. The latter, who is now President of the French Republic, is a well-known materialistic scientist.

Among the interesting, and sometimes valuable, books included in Nelson's "Shilling Library" is the *Letters of Dr. John Brown*. This is not the place to say anything about the general contents of this volume. Our object here is not literary. We desire to illustrate a very significant fact in the bearing of Christians towards Freethinkers. Now that the Blasphemy Laws are falling into disgrace, it is often contended that "blasphemers" are rightly punished, not for for their heresy, but for "hurting the feelings" of their orthodox fellow citizens. How absurd and hypocritical this is may be seen by the fact that it is only one set of people's feelings that receive protection. A question of "wounded feelings" should be considered impartially. A Christian should be punished for "outraging" the feelings of Freethinkers as much as a Freethinker for "outraging" the feelings of Christians. But this is never contemplated—and it never will be. For the present view of the Blasphemy Laws is merely an excuse for punishing Freethinkers by incurring an unanswerable charge of intolerance. Now one of the things most strongly reprobated by Christians is "ridicule." This is no wonder. The most trying of all criticism is *ridicule*—when you are not sure of your ground, which no Christian of to-day really is. But the Christian who objects to ridicule when applied to *his* convictions does not object to it when applied to the convictions of his opponents. On the contrary, he thoroughly enjoys it, and says it is the most just and effective way of dealing with them. Moreover, the Christians are all pretty much alike in this respect. Station and education seem to make no difference; neither does character,—and that *is* curious. Dr. John Brown was one of the best and kindest of men by nature. Christian as he was, and an orthodox Christian too, a beautiful sonnet was addressed to him by Swinburne, which opens this collection of his Letters; while the very last thing in the volume is a letter from another Freethinker, Mark Twain, wittily declaring that "He was the most extensive slaveholder of his time, and the kindest; and yet he died without setting one of his bondmen free." Yet this good man, so finely eulogised by two Freethinkers who loved him, had the gracelessness to refer to Professor Tyndall in the following manner, three or four years after the delivery of the famous Belfast address:

> "Thanks again for the Tyndall; ridicule is one of the best ways of meeting his pernicious and idiotic stuff."

How ridiculous this sounds after the lapse of nearly forty years! How ill-mannered, also, is such language in reference to a scientist of Tyndall's size and weight! "Don't let us argue with him," Dr. Brown seems to say, "let us ridicule him and make people laugh at him." And this in spite of the fact that Tyndall's own style of controversy was as grave as possible, and his language of the most correct good breeding. One cannot help reflecting that Christian bigotry was enough to poison so sweet and sound a nature as Dr. Brown's; and what worse could be said of it?

We remember an almost sadder case than this. Bishop Berkeley, a man of saintly character, to whom Pope ascribed "every virtue under heaven," wrote an article in the *Guardian*, in which he said that the author of the famous *Discourse on Freethinking* "deserved to be denied the common benefits of air and water." And who was the author of that wicked book? Anthony Collins, a man of most exemplary character. The great John Locke was charmed with him and made him one of his executors, praising his "love of truth and moral courage as superior to almost any other he had ever known"—according to Professor Fraser.

In another part of this week's *Freethinker* we reproduce a *Star* report of a curious case at the court of Coroner Waldo, of Southwark. Evidently the Coroner was angry at the foreman of the jury preferring the Affirmation to the Oath. But that does not excuse the vulgar insolence with which he addressed Mr. Ray. The Bradlaugh Oaths Act gives the same rights in every respect to those who affirm as to those who swear. Dr. Waldo may think otherwise, but in that case he is mistaken,—as he may learn to his cost if he insults an affirming juryman who is able and willing to carry the matter further.

For two or three generations at least after John Wesley, says Dr. Scott Lidgett, "when any man became distinguished for religious fervor, for moral earnestness, or for humane sympathies, men said of him, 'He has turned Methodist.'" Well, this is simply not true. Methodists *might* have said it; but then no one has ever accused them of lack of impertinence. Rightly or wrongly, but as a mere

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question of fact, with large numbers of people a profession of moral earnestness and humanitarian sympathies was in no sense identified with Methodism. Methodism was rather a synonym for moral cant and religious hypocrisy. We are not now saying whether this identification was justifiable or not, but it was there. All the same, we should like to know with what humanitarian movements Methodism was allied in its earlier years. It was certainly not the Temperance movement. Neither was it the movement for the rational treatment of criminals, nor for the equality of the sexes. And it is significant that the developments of the worst features of the English factory system, with its systematic depopulation of the countryside in the interests of the factory owner, and its wholesale murder of women and children for the sake of huge profits, was coincident with the development of Methodism. Perhaps Dr. Scott Lidgett will explain.

A correspondent of the *Methodist Times*, commenting on Mr. Elmore's description of Sunday in East Ham (noted in last week's *Freethinker*), wishes to know why the Churches were passed over in dealing with East Ham's Sunday resources. We fancy Mr. Elmore might reply that he was dealing with the absence of places that offered a clean, healthy entertainment, and which might offer to the crowds parading the streets some better attraction than the public-house. Of course, in the ordinary way, such articles in a religious paper would have dwelt upon the number of churches, their tremendous power in beautifying and purifying the district, and the eagerness with which the crowds flocked to the services. For once in a way, a little of the truth was allowed to show itself. Hence the surprise of the correspondent. The same gentleman also observes on Mr. Elmore's remark that the streets of East Ham on Sunday presented "a dismal spectacle," "What better of a sane and health community could one wish to meet with?" That sentence is a gem, and it would be a pity to spoil it by comment.

"When Miss Mary Boone arrived in New York last week from Munich with a gold and diamond chalice which Princess Louise Ferdinand of Bavaria wished to present to the new Spanish church in this city, the customs officers refused to let the bauble pass without duty. Miss Boone thereupon hiked to the residence of Cardinal Farley, who went forthwith to the custom house and came away with the chalice. We do not understand the action of the customs officials. If there is a law under which they acted in refusing to let the importation pass in the custody of the woman, how could the appearance of the Catholic prelate alter the state of affairs? What is the graft? How are Farley and the Catholic churches privileged above secular citizens and institutions to import articles of value duty free? Does exemption from taxation and assessments imply an equally corrupt immunity from the customs charges the rest of us have to pay? Do corruption, protection, and graft become virtuous when practised in the name of religion?"—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A lady living at Plumstead has six sons in the Army, four of whom have reached non-commissioned rank. Their mother is naturally proud of her sons, and we should be very sorry to say anything that would diminish her pride in her family, or the sons' respect for their mother. But in connection with this we came across a comment in one of our leading newspapers to the effect that not many women have rendered more splendid or honorable service to their country than this one. And to that we do object most emphatically. The notion that parents only do the country service when they supply sons for the Army or the Navy is simply monstrous. Any parent that brings up a child in a clean and honorable manner, and leaves it at maturity capable of playing his or her part in the work of the world, has done the State full and honorable service. The mother who has sons working honorably on the land, or in any other decent occupation, has quite as much cause to be proud of her family as has the mother of these six soldiers, and we hope that she would endorse our opinion. We do not wish to saddle her with responsibility for the opinion of the newspaper from which we quote, but that opinion may surely be taken as an indication of the undeveloped character of our civilisation.

The *Guardian* warns people against assuming that Disestablishment will heal religious differences and cause the various sects to work more amicably together. It also points out that neither in America nor in Ireland has the absence of an Established Church had this effect. For once in a way, we find ourselves in agreement with a religious paper. We should, of course, support any measure of real Disestablishment on purely political grounds, and as an act of justice towards all citizens. But we should not expect, in the present state of the world, any remarkable results to follow from it. We certainly should not expect Christians to become less Christian or less intolerant, either towards each other or towards non-Christians, as a consequence of such a measure. All that the absence of one Established Church in the States has meant is that all Churches are established. They are more or less protected by the State, and non-Christians are more or less harmed by them.

This is really what we should expect to see follow the Disestablishment of the Church in England and Wales. And this is really all that the vast majority of Nonconformists have in view. Their objection is not to religion patronised, protected, and endowed by the State, but to one religion being selected, and that one not their own. If the State offered to endow all sects alike, the cry for Disestablishment would be killed outright—except with a few enthusiasts for principle. The clamor of Nonconformists to have their sects officially represented at State functions, their acceptance of public money in the shape of remission of rates, their maintenance of religious functions in connection with municipal life, their use of the State for the suppression of anti-Christian opinion, with their support of the State teaching and endowment of religion in schools, proves that they are not advocating a genuine Disestablishment of religion. It is the Disestablishment of a Church they are after. And, candidly, we have no desire to see the Church of England pulled down in order to erect in its place Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the numerous other rag-tag and bob-tail of the religious world. Religion is only genuinely disestablished when a sufficient number of people have ceased to believe in it. While they do believe in it, all history shows that they will scheme and manœuvre for the help of the secular power in maintaining it. The man who does not recognise this has read history with his eyes closed.

The truth is gradually leaking out as to the conduct of the Balkan Allies during the recent war. Here is a passage from an article in the *Outlook*:—

> "Not one, but a hundred, Cawnpores have marked the march of the Servian and Bulgarian Nana Sahibs. 'The blood of scores of thousands of Turkish and Albanian women and children is on the hands of the 'Christian' armies. Old men and prisoners have been shot, stabbed, or brained with the rifle-butt after almost every Servian and Bulgarian occupation of conquered territory. 'The Cross' has not been 'raised above the Crescent,' as Mr. Harold Spender fondly asserts in the gushing columns of the *Daily News*, but it has been raised above a hundred and fifty thousand butchered men, women, and children, sacrificed to a devilish inhumanity and to a still more devilish cupidity and calculation by the officers and soldiers of King Peter of Servia and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria. It was not merely the defeat of the Turkish arms that the savage victors desired. They wanted the conquered land to be utterly cleared of inhabitants in order to have unimpeded room for Servian and Bulgarian colonisation. 'There will be no Moslem questions for the future in Macedonia,' said a Serb conqueror to Miss Durham, as reported by her in the *Nation*. 'The Moslems have been killed off.' The lowest estimate which has been made of the work of ruthless, deliberate massacre places the total of murdered Turkish and Albanian people—men, women, and children—at over a hundred and sixty thousand and probably as many as two hundred thousand."

"The common bond of outrage and butchery," the *Outlook* says, "will hardly provide a solid base of Balkan union."

Some day or other a collection of noble sayings of actual personages will be made. It will be a fine task for whoever undertakes it. We doubt if anything in the collection will beat the saying of the lofty-souled Frenchwoman who offered Condorcet a shelter when he was proscribed during the French Revolution. According to the law, whoever gave refuge to a proscribed person incurred the penalty of death. But that did not frighten her. "If you are outside the law," she said, "we are not outside humanity." Isn't that grand? Condorcet's action was also grand. He would not bring peril upon her house, and he went forth to his doom. He was an Atheist. Probably she was too.

We told the Leeds police that there was plenty of necessary work for them without worrying Freethought speakers over a little "extra" language. Many of the clergy want a great deal more looking after. We see that the Rev. Joseph Armitage Haigh has been arrested with a reformatory-school boy and charged with "a grave offence." His guilt or innocence the law will decide. We are merely congratulating the Leeds police on attending to their proper business.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 2, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "Woman's Worst Enemy."

February 9, 16, and 23, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

J. D. REDDING.—You can obtain "specimen" copies of the *Freethinker* (back numbers, of course) from our publishing office for free distribution. You would merely have to pay the carriage.

E. B.—Your cuttings, etc., are very welcome.

G. BARNARD.—The reply is simply disreputable. But it is not worth a rejoinder. And if the Rationalist Press Association does not object to such an abuse of its name by one in whom superiority of nature does not correct the defects of education, there is no more to be said.

E. HANNAH.—See paragraph. Thanks.

E. J. JONES.—Too late for this week; in our next.

"BAFFLED."—Yes, the Deity *has* sold the Suffragists. But will they take it as his answer?

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

M. M. MANGASARIAN (Chicago).—Very glad to hear from you again. Thanks also for your new lectures. We shall be writing you very shortly. Meanwhile we wish to assure you that you have many admirers (amongst our readers, at any rate) over here.

HARRY SHAW.—You have full permission to translate any of our articles into Esperanto. Is there any need to say more? Of course our great object is to be read.

C. W. COYLE.—Glad to hear that this journal affords you so much "intellectual enjoyment."

SOME correspondence stands over unavoidably till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

"Woman's Worst Enemy" is the subject of Mr. Foote's lecture at Queen's Hall this evening (Feb. 2). It should be of peculiar interest in view of the "week of prayer" organised by the leaders of the Suffragist movement and the prompt collapse of "woman suffrage" cause in the House of Commons on Monday.

The January course of lectures at the Public Hall, Croydon, was wound up on Sunday evening by Mr. A. B. Moss, who had an excellent audience. The Secular Society, Ltd., having started this interesting experiment at considerable cost is now leaving it to the new N. S. S. Branch to continue the local propaganda.

The West Ham Branch holds a "social" at the Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, on Saturday evening, February 8. Admission is free and all Freethinkers are cordially invited. Start at 7.30.

The Annual Meeting of the Rationalist Peace Society will be held at 167 St. Stephen's House, Westminster, on Thursday evening, February 13, at 8 o'clock. Members are earnestly invited to attend. St. Stephen's House faces the Embankment just a little east of the Parliament buildings.

The late Andrew Lang's book on the Bacon theory of "Shakespeare" has been published promptly. Another book on the same subject is now announced—"The Bacon Heresy," by Mr. J. M. Robertson, which is sure to be a thorough piece of work, whatever judgment it may challenge in other respects.

We see by the *Truthseeker* that an effort is being made to organise Sunday morning Freethought lectures in New York, with Mr. William Thurston Brown as speaker. We wish the experiment all success. There certainly appears room for it. We have often wondered why nothing of the kind existed in the biggest city in America.

Mrs. Ingersoll, the widow of R. G. Ingersoll, who is therefore the first lady in America in our estimation, has sent us a card announcing her daughter Maud's marriage to Mr. Wallace Marcus Probasco. Of course the nuptial ceremony was on secular lines and of the greatest simplicity. We wish the bride and bridegroom a long and happy union. Our one regret is that we cannot accept their kind invitation to look in at one of their at-homes.

The Ingersoll family is still a subject of attention in America. It also seems to be growing in spite of the Colonel's death. Billy Sunday, the revivalist, is running round the story that Ingersoll recanted and told his son to return to his mother's faith. Mrs. Ingersoll's "faith" was the same as her husband's, so their "son" hadn't far to go; moreover, the said "son" is like Jesus Christ in this that he is a product of Christian imagination.

This week's *Freethinker* leaves the editorial hands on Tuesday evening. Two days later there will be a meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive. At that meeting the whole matter involved in the purposes of our "Fighting Fund" will be discussed and decided. It is probable that very early action will be taken. The policy of the London County Council appears to be one of evasion by delay. But this will not be submitted to by the friends of free speech and discussion. A really definite statement may, therefore, be expected in our next issue.

The matter of the President's Honorarium Fund stands over for another week. We desire to say something about it ourselves in addition to the annual circular, and we prefer to let both appear in the same number of this journal. Meanwhile subscriptions—which will be publicly acknowledged in due course—are being acknowledged privately.

The American friend who offered to make up any deficiency on the full £300 for the 1912 Fund forwarded us his cheque with the utmost promptitude, but he omitted to say whether we were to disclose his name or not, so we are waiting until we hear from him again.

Correspondence.

FIELDING—MACAULAY—SHELLEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your luminous exposition of the resemblance between Shelley's dedication of *Peter Bell* and Macaulay's forecast of the New Zealander suggests to me the possible relationship of Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop to Fielding's Mrs. Slipslop in *Joseph Andrews*.

The Rivals appears to have been first produced in 1775, while *Joseph Andrews* appeared in 1742; and may it not have been that, to enhance the risible element in his first attempt as a dramatist, Sheridan expanded the somewhat limited vocabulary of Mrs. Slipslop into Mrs. Malaprop's somewhat overdone "derangement of epitaphs"?

J. W. O'LEARY.

[The Dame Quickly of Shakespeare (*Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*) is probably the "great original" of the whole species.—EDITOR.]

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Religion and Rapine in the Balkans.

THE Balkan nations have sullied their triumphant career of conquest and racial revenge by exhibiting some of the worst vices of the "bottom dog" rendered vicious by the new-found capacity to bark and bite. The fact that the conquerors are Christian will not deprive them of one atom of the sympathy and enthusiasm with which Freethinkers throughout the world are wont to greet the efforts of brave races "nobly struggling to be free." But the fight for liberty and national redemption from an intolerable yoke is one thing, and the entrance upon a veritable crusade of ferocity is another.

The initial proclamation by the Bulgarian Ferdinand of a crusade against the Turk, with the religious sanction and approval of the Bulgarian variety of the Christian faith, was of bad omen for the humane prosecution of the war—that is to say, for its prosecution with only the ordinary accessories of superfluous killing consecrated by the usages of war as practised by the present-day followers of the Prince of Peace. The events of the last few months have served to prove that a war of religions under the immediate patronage of rival gods and priests can engender more ferocities than a mere war of races, and that the Christian hatred of the Moslem and Jew, *qua* Moslem and *qua* Jew, has suffered no mitigation in the long course of the ages.

Already, in mid-November, the news was known in England that the Greek soldiers in Salonica had sacked the Jewish quarter, ransacking and destroying the synagogues; and this, coupled with the time-honored violation of young Jewish women, completed the picture of terror and desolation wrought by the newly consecrated soldiers of the Cross. The *Times* correspondent at Salonica tells us that, "inaugurated by the local Greek press, a crusade of anti-Semitism has spread over the armies, with the result that the unfortunate Israelites have been pillaged and mercilessly ill-treated." The correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* did not confine the blame to the Greeks, for he says that "on their march to Salonica the Bulgarians had already had more than a taste for blood and rapine, having ravaged without mercy the Turkish villages on the way, and as soon as they entered Salonica they began to pillage systematically the quarters occupied by them." As the Greek and Bulgarian armies made practically simultaneous entry into Salonica, the inhabitants, who, as is well known, are mostly Jews, were caught between two fires and maltreated by two sets of infuriated bigots. We can now understand why certain pious people in this country were hungering after a full-dress national thanksgiving and singing of the *Te Deum* in the churches and chapels in laudation of the Lord for crowning with victory the army of the Balkan Allies.

The Jews of European Turkey are mostly the descendants of the 300,000 Jews that were driven out of Spain by the Holy Inquisition and the Christian monarchs of Spain, who acted as the familiars of the Holy Office. There are now in the Balkans some 400,000 of these scattered offshoots of a scattered race—the Sephardim, as they are called, to distinguish them from the Achkenazim, who came from Poland, Hungary, and Germany, driven forth, in both cases, by the holy zeal of the Christian. The Sephardim speak—writing it in quasi-Hebrew characters—the old language of Spain, and hold a tenacious remembrance of the prosperity and brilliant culture that their forefathers created in Spain under the Arab domination.

My friend Lorand, who knows these Balkanic Judeo-Spaniards well,* states that for some time after their dispersion, the Sephardim were subdivided into as many local groups as there were centres of origin, and that right down to the seventeenth century the Castilian, the Toledan, and the Barcelonian groups of emigrants kept themselves distinct and separate. Salonica contained thirty-six of these divisions, corresponding to as many parishes, but with the march of time unity was at length established.

At a period of their chequered history when the cup of their sufferings was filled to overflowing, the Jews enjoyed in Turkey a long spell of hospitality and toleration. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were the age of gold for the Sephardim. The Jewish refugees from Spain and Portugal, who were distinguished by their culture, found ready access to the Sultan's court, and careers were opened up to them in diplomacy or in the public administration. For two centuries the Sephardim Jews in Turkey carried on the high functions of state, but, subsequently, these passed from them into the hands of the Greeks. During the early days that succeeded the establishment of the Sephardim in the diverse states of the Sultan's dominions, the first emigrants from Spain and Portugal, whose forefathers had provided a rich succession of savants, philosophers, and renowned physicians to the Caliphs of Cordova, strove to develop in their new home the culture which they had fostered in Spain. The sterilising influence of the Turk was, however, by no means so favorable to their efforts for culture and civilisation as the enlightened rule of the Arabs.

In these later years the educational work of the "Alliance israélite" brought about a revival of culture amongst the Balkan Jews, and this has borne moral and political fruit; the enlightened Jews in Macedonia, who, for the most part, were affiliated to the Masonic lodges, were amongst the first to rally to the liberalising movement which, four years ago, brought about the downfall of the Hamidian regime. The lodges of Salonica became the principal hotbeds of the Young Turk revolution, and the Israelitish element was honorably associated with the new Government of Turkey: with the official Government as also with the secret government organised by the Committee of Union and Progress. Until the Kiamil Cabinet was formed, the Jews occupied the highest posts under the Porte, and the boycott against Greek commerce was especially their work. The revenge which the Greeks have recently taken in the form of massacre, rape, and rapine is thus seen to be the culminating point of a long series of racial and religious rivalries between Greek and Jew, accentuated by the recent irritations occasioned by commercial loss through the boycott; and, secondly, by an insolent sense of mastery and victory on the part of the Greeks.

There is danger lest, in its anxiety for peace and its indifference to anything so ideal as fair play for Jews against Christians, Europe may ignore the hard case of the persecuted Jews at Salonica. Apparently, some 100,000 Sephardim are immediately affected by these tragic outbursts of mediæval horrors in and about Salonica, which, whether it become a Bulgarian or a Greek town, is already predominantly a Jewish town. In fact, Salonica is, perhaps, the place where the Jewish element is most predominant from a numerical, and normally, from a self-government point of view.

My attention was drawn with special interest to this dark shadow on the Balkan horizon by a pathetic article in *El Progreso* of January 10, written by Senor Sam Levy, the late editor of *La Epoca* of Salonica. The article, written in the curious Spanish which survives amongst the Balkan Jews, is an appeal to Spain and to her people and government to defend "the holy cause of humanity" by intervening in defence of the threatened Sephardim,—

> "that is to say, in defence of a hundred thousand Judeo-Spaniards who are your brothers in language and nationality. Europe is looking on with indifference at the scenes, so dishonorable to humanity and to modern civilisation, that are being enacted in Macedonia, a cursed land soaked with human blood, and, above all, in Salonica, which has been the cradle of liberty.....In the streets, in the squares, and in every corner of Salonica, the Greeks, those unworthy descendants of ancient Hellas, are wounding, robbing, violating, assassinating, and despoiling under the indulgent eyes of the officials and the authorities."

* *Le Rattachement* (Bruxelles), January 5, 1913.

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This touching article, which originally appeared in the *Heraldo*, and produced a painful and sympathetic impression on Spanish public opinion, winds up with an appeal to the mother country for protection :—

> "All these victims, Spain, are thy children; the children whom thou did'st abandon five centuries ago; but they have not cast aside their maternal language, nor their traditions, nor their memories."

Resolute intervention on behalf of these, her long-lost children, is Spain's obvious duty, and such an act in noble reparation of an ancient wrong would be more honorable to Spain than the wasting of her substance upon illusory empire in the Rif. Here is a chance for Spain now that a new regime of progress seems dawning upon the country by the signal revenge upon Maura which the ghost of Ferrer has again inflicted upon that dangerous bigot.

Senor Sam Levy has written to me with further information on these Greek outrages and on the future dangers to which the Sephardim are subjected. He states that when the invaders entered into the Macedonian towns the Sephardim, who were well affected to the Turks, did not indulge in any manifestations of joy, nor did they display any outward signs of sympathy with the conquerors. The Greeks have officially declared that the persecutions to which the Jews have been subjected were due to the frigid reception which they accorded to the soldiers of the Cross. But even if the Jews had given way to transports of delight in welcoming their implacable enemies, the Greeks, the latter would doubtless have persecuted them under some other pretext equally frivolous. The truth is that the Greeks are jealous of the commercial prosperity of the Jews, and are piously anxious to effect their ruin. According to advices received from Macedonia, more than 8,000 Jewish families have been the victims of numerous acts of robbery, the infliction of the bastinado, and the rape of young girls in the presence of their parents. Jewish merchants and traders have been assassinated in broad daylight and their property plundered. Already three accusations of the ritual crime, the blood accusation—that sure provocative of massacre so dear to the heart of Christians in Eastern Europe when they lust to kill—have been made against the Sephardim. My correspondent dreads the awful consequences to his race when the Easter festivities take place. Senor Levy declares most positively that if the press in Western Europe takes no notice of these abominations, the persecutions will break out again in more terrible form. If the Greeks remain at Salonica, the total ruin of the Sephardim is—he thinks—a matter of certainty. For that reason he insists that Spain and the rest of Europe should seriously concern themselves with this new danger to civilisation. His view is that Spain ought, in the first place, to take under its protection the Sephardim of the Balkans, and afterwards organise a systematic and rational system of emigration for the reintegration of the Sephardim into the body of the Spanish race. The uncultivated lands in Spain, left fallow since the days when Moor and Jew lived peaceably side by side under the Spanish sun, might, he considers, be apportioned to the refugee Sephardim, true sons of mediæval Iberia, expatriated from her once fertile soil by the relentless ferocity of the Holy Inquisition. Senor Levy appeals to the English press to create a strong current of public opinion on behalf of the threatened Sephardim, and I am glad to be his mouthpiece in making urgent appeal for humanity and justice. As for Spain, she has every interest, and her Government has every incentive of national duty, to step forward now to repair in some measure the calamitous mistake and crime—the mistake being greater than ordinarily is the case than the crime—to which the nation was driven five hundred years ago when the Church rooted out of Spain and Portugal the quick-witted, cultured, and industrious ancestors of the Sephardim. I am glad to say that the question of repatriation has already enlisted much sympathy in influential quarters in Spain. Thus one generation is called upon to heal the wounds of the past, and thus the conscience of the race slowly but surely acquires the painful but salutary conviction that religion in general, and the Christian superstition in particular, are seminally the *morbus maleficus*, the perennial plague-spots of humanity, ever sapping the foundations of sympathy and goodwill between man and man and race and race; yielding only to the disinfecting influence of rational culture and to the enlightened secularisation of the social activities of mankind.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

God's Views on Women.

GERTRUDE ATHERTON, an American authoress, says of men : "They admire God because he made himself in their gender, and knew what he was about when he invented woman." According to the Bible, however, woman was merely an afterthought of creation, and "brought sin into the world and all our woe," shortly after he appearance on the scene. She owes to man the rib for her manufacture. Eve, says Paul, was in the trangression. She had the curse which involves most suffering, and "He shall rule over thee" was a prophetic portion thereof. From first to last the Bible is a he-book. God is masculine, and his only-begotten child is a son. Why did he not beget a daughter to right the wrong Mother Eve is said to have committed? The Roman Catholics have endeavored to supply this omission by elevating Mary to a position of more importance than God the Father himself.

Throughout the Bible women are treated with contempt. All God's favorites were polygamists. Women were bought and sold in the same way as other merchandise. Rebekah was virtually bought by Abraham's servant for Isaac. In the Ten Commandments a man's wife is classed with his ox, his ass, or anything which is his. In the chapter following the Decalogue permission is given to fathers to sell their daughters into slavery. Sarah gave Hagar, her female slave, "to her husband, Abraham, to be his wife," and when he was tired of her he cast her with her child into the desert. "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman."

The patriarchal system had long been established when the Bible was compiled, although there are traces in the Old Testament records of a far earlier matriarchal stage, when kinship was traced through mothers, fathers being uncertain. The power of the father was supreme, extending, as in the case of Abraham, to life and death. He never thought of consulting Sarah as to whether he should sacrifice her only son. According to the divine laws dictated by God to Moses, all that a husband had to do if his wife found no favor in his eyes was to "write her a bill of divorcement, give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" (Deut. xxiv. 1). The woman had no power of appeal. Her husband was accuser, judge, and jury. No remedy is offered to the woman if her husband finds no favor in her eyes. A female child was held to be an extra defilement to a woman, and an additional atonement was required.

Painters depict angels as feminine, but the Bible angels are all males. The three who appeared to Abraham were mistaken for men. The one who wrestled with Jacob is called a man. The angel that announced a child to Manoah's wife was "a man of God." The angel that announced to Zachariah the birth of John was a male, and so was the one who appeared to Mary. It is curious how often angelic visits were followed by births.

The preacher who writes in the name of the sensual sultan Solomon declares : "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." This is put forward as God's word, and his opinion of his handiwork. Burns paid God a better compliment when he wrote of Nature :—

> "Her prentice han' she tried on man,
> And then she made the lasses, O!"

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The women most praised in the Bible are Rahab, the harlot, who betrayed her own people, and Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, who basely assassinated a man who took refuge in her tent. If women had written the Bible, they would not have selected such heroines as these. No wonder some of them desire a revised Woman's Bible of their own!

God surely never meant women to read his holy volume, or he would have expunged the many shameless stories and filthy words which it contains. A decent deity would hardly have had the effrontery to inspire such narratives as those of Lot and his daughters, Tamar, the Levite's concubine, Bathsheba, Abishag, Aholah and Aholibah, and the details of Ezekiel, Hosea, and the Song of Solomon, if he had expected feminine readers. Had the Bible been written by women, be sure we should have had a different representation of them. Perhaps we might have read that it was Adam, not Eve, who was in the transegression.

The New Testament regards woman in much the same light as the Old. Paul says: "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man" (1 Cor. xi. 3). In his epistle to the Ephesians (v. 22), he commands: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord." That is to say, the submission must be unquestioning and complete. "For," he repeats, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church.....Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands *in everything*." No despot could require a larger charter than granted by Paul. Again he says: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection" (1 Tim. ii. 7). He affirms, in the most pronounced terms, that the position of woman is a subordinate and servile one. "I suffer not a woman to teach," he exclaims with masculine arrogance (1 Tim. ii. 12).

In the seventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul deals with the marriage relation, he puts that institution on a purely bestial basis, and says: "He that giveth a virgin in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." Not a word as to the possibility of a girl having a will of her own in the matter. In a succeeding chapter (xi. 6-10) he insists that "the woman" must either be covered (wear a veil, as they do in the East) or "let her also be shorn." "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." The verse which follows, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," has puzzled the commentators. It is illustrated by similar precepts in the Koran. Paul, like Mohammed, thought that even the angels might fall into the snares of female beauty. A little further on (xiv. 34, 35) Paul again says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Paul well knew that the whole tenor and spirit of the Bible touching the status of woman is that her main mission is but to minister to man—his inferior, not his equal.

Our "great exemplar" was a male, who never married. The references of Jesus to the sex are entirely of a monkish character. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" he brutally exclaims to his mother. His chosen disciples were men, though he let women minister unto him. He taught that marriage was an inferior state, praising those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew xix. 12). In the Apocalypse we find that the elect of heaven are those "not defiled with women" (Rev. xiv. 4). The Catholic Church has always taught that unnatural celibacy is the higher state of life, and the early Christian Fathers unite in contemning the characters of women. Tertullian calls her "the gateway of hell." Through the ages when Christianity was predominant she was regarded emphatically as the temptress, the agent of Satan, to lead man from the holy life. Of the nine millions who, it has been computed, were slaughtered in the persecution of witchcraft, probably only one in five hundred was a male.

The teachings of the Bible have contributed to make slaves of women and tyrants of men. There are abundant signs that this old teaching will not suit the present day. Women, who desire the emancipation of their sex, should cease to work for the religion which has built its churches on their prostration, and have the courage to affirm that Paul's authority has no influence with them.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

—Sub-Editor of the "Freethinker" and Author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers," etc.

The Infidel and the Christian.

[The following extract is from Mark Twain's *What is Man?* which was given to the public only after his death. The book is in the form of a dialogue between an Old Man—a Determinist—and a Young Man—an orthodox Christian. The Old Man's theory is that conscience is a product of environment and outside influences, and, therefore, the standard of right and wrong must vary according to circumstances. The Old Man further contends that the mainspring of all of our actions is to do that only which gives us pleasure. The purport of the following story is to force home the admission that if it is wrong for an infidel to disturb a Christian's religion, it is equally reprehensible for a Christian to shake the faith of a heathen in his own pet gods.—E. B.]

OLD MAN.—I will tell you a little story. Once upon a time an Infidel was guest in the house of a Christian widow whose little boy was ill and near to death. The Infidel often watched by the bedside and entertained the boy with talk, and he used these opportunities to satisfy a strong longing of his nature—that desire which is in us all, to better other people's condition by having them think as we think. He was successful. But the dying boy, in his last moments, reproached him, and said:—

"I believed and was happy in it; you have taken my belief away and my comfort. Now, I have nothing left, and I die miserable; for the things which you have told me do not take the place of that which I have lost."

And the mother also reproached the Infidel, and said:—

"My child is for ever lost, and my heart is broken. How could you do this cruel thing? We have done you no harm, but only kindness; we made our house your home, you were welcome to all we had, and this is our reward."

The heart of the Infidel was filled with remorse for what he had done, and he said:—

"It was wrong—I see it now; but I was only trying to do him good. In my view, he was in error; it seemed my duty to teach him the truth."

Then the mother said:—

"I had taught him all his little life what I believed to be the truth, and in his believing faith both of us were happy. Now he is dead and lost, and I am miserable. Our faith came down to us through centuries of believing ancestors; what right had you, or anyone, to disturb it? Where was your honor, where was your shame?"

YOUNG MAN.—He was a miscreant, and deserved death.

O. M.—He thought so himself, and said so.

Y. M.—Ah—you see, *his conscience was awakened!*

O. M.—Yes—his Self Disapproval was. It *pained* him to see the mother suffer. He was sorry he had done a thing which brought *him* pain. It did not occur to him to think of the mother when he was misteaching the boy, for he was absorbed in providing *pleasure* for himself then. Providing it by satisfying what he believed to be a call of duty.

Y. M.—Call it what you please, it is to me a case of *awakened conscience*. That awakened conscience could never get itself into that species of trouble again. A cure like that is a *permanent* cure.

O. M.—Pardon—I had not finished the story. We are creatures of *outside influences*—we originate *nothing* within. Whenever we take a new line of thought and drift into a new line of belief and action, the impulse is *always* suggested from the *outside*. Remorse so preyed upon the Infidel that it dissolved his harshness towards the boy's religion, and made him come to regard it with tolerance, next with kindness, for the boy's sake and the mother's. Finally, he found himself examining it. From that moment, his progress in the new trend was steady and

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rapid. He became a believing Christian. And now his remorse for having robbed the dying boy of his faith and his salvation was bitterer than ever. It gave him no rest, no peace. He *must* have rest and peace—it is the law of our nature. There seemed but one way to get it; he must devote himself to saving imperilled souls. He became a missionary. He landed in a Pagan country ill and helpless. A native widow took him into her humble home and nursed him back to convalescence. Then her young boy was taken hopelessly ill, and the grateful missionary helped her tend him. Here was the first opportunity to repair a part of the wrong done to the other boy by doing a precious service for this one by undermining his foolish faith in his false gods. He was successful. But the dying boy in his last moments reproached him and said:—

"I believed and was happy in it; you have taken my belief away, and my comfort. Now, I have nothing left, and I die miserable; for the things you have told me do not take the place of that which I have lost."

And the mother also reproached the missionary and said:—

"My child is for ever lost, and my heart is broken. How could you do this cruel thing? We had done you no harm, but only kindness; we made our house your home, you were welcome to all we had, and this is our reward."

The heart of the missionary was filled with remorse for what he had done and he said:—

"It was wrong—I see it now; but I was only trying to do him good. In my view, he was in error; it seemed my duty to teach him the truth."

Then the mother said:—

"I had taught him, all his little life, what I believed to be the truth, and in his believing faith both of us were happy. Now he is dead—and lost; and I am miserable. Our faith came down to us through centuries of believing ancestors; what right had you, or anyone, to disturb it? Where was your honor, where was your shame?"

The missionary's anguish of remorse and sense of treachery were as bitter and persecuting and unappeasable now as they they had been in the former case. The story is finished. What is your comment?

Y. M.—The man's conscience was a fool! It was morbid. It didn't know right from wrong.

O. M.—I am not sorry to hear you say that. If you grant that *one* man's conscience doesn't know right from wrong, it is an admission that there are others like it. This single admission pulls down the whole doctrine of infallibility of judgment in consciences. Meantime, there is one thing which I ask you to notice.

Y. M.—What is that?

O. M.—That in both cases the man's *act* gave him no spiritual discomfort, and that he was quite satisfied with it and got pleasure out of it. But afterwards when it resulted in *pain* to *him* he was sorry. Sorry it had inflicted pain upon the others, *but for no reason under the sun except that their pain had given* HIM *pain*. Our consciences take no notice of pain inflicted upon others until it reaches a point where it gives pain to *us*. In *all* cases, without exception, we are absolutely indifferent to another person's pain until his sufferings make us uncomfortable. Many an infidel would not have been troubled by that Christian mother's distress. Don't you believe that?

Y. M.—Yes, you might almost say it of the *average* infidel, I think.

O. M.—And many a missionary, sternly fortified by his sense of duty, would not have been troubled by the pagan mother's distress—Jesuit missionaries in Canada in the early French times, for instance; see Episodes quoted by Parkman.

Y. M.—Well, let us adjourn. Where have we arrived?

O. M.—At this. That we (mankind) have ticketed ourselves with a number of qualities to which we have given misleading names. Love, Hate, Charity, Compassion, Avarice, Benevolence, and so on. I mean we attach misleading *meanings* to the names. They are all forms of self-contentment, self-gratification, but the names so disguise them that they distract our attention from the fact. Also, we have smuggled a word into the dictionary which ought not to be there at all—self-sacrifice. It describes a thing which does not exist. But, worst of all, we ignore and never mention the Sole Impulse which dictates and compels a man's every act; the imperious necessity of securing his own approval, in every emergency and at all costs. To it we owe all that we are. It is our breath, our heart, our blood. It is our only spur, our whip, our goad, our only impelling power; we have no other. Without it we should be mere inert images, corpses; no one would do anything, there would be no progress, the world would stand still. We ought to stand reverently uncovered when the name of that stupendous power is uttered.

Y. M.—I am not convinced.

O. M.—You will be when you think.

"My Lord the King."

FOREMAN OF JURY REFUSES TO AFFIRM AT SOUTHWARK INQUEST.

THE foreman of a jury at the Southwark Coroner's Court to-day refused to take the oath, or to pronounce the words "on behalf of my Sovereign Lord the King," in the affirmation.

The coroner (Dr. Waldo) noticed that the foreman, a man named Ray, was not holding a Bible. Mr. Ray explained that his objection was a conscientious one.

Mr. Ray then repeated the affirmation until he reached the words "on behalf of my Sovereign Lord the King." He then observed, "I shall not say that."

The Coroner: What objection is there?

The Foreman: I am here to do my duty in the interests of the people present. The King has nothing to do with what is to be decided here.

The Coroner: You are not worthy to sit here, you had better go.

The Foreman: I do not see why I should say those words.

The Coroner: You are subject to a penalty, you know, if you do not do what you are summoned to do.

The Foreman: I might do it just as a matter of convenience if the jury wish, but I am not bound to pledge myself to the King.

The Coroner went over the affirmation again, and the foreman repeated the words until he reached "on behalf of my Sovereign Lord the King." The foreman then remarked: "There you bring him in again. It is the same thing again."

The Coroner: You had better go. You are not worthy to sit here.

The Foreman: I am here to serve faithfully in the interests of the people present, and the King is not here, and is not interested in the case.

The foreman said he was willing to do his duty, but not to repeat the words.

The Coroner: You are subject to a fine, you know, and you could go to prison for contempt of court. Officer, just remove this man.

The coroner's officer then spoke to the foreman, who left the box saying, "Don't summon me in future, then, to attend a jury."

The Coroner: You are subject to a fine for contempt of court or to be sent to Brixton Prison, but you can go.—*Star* (Jan. 21).

A NOVEL PRAYER.

O Lord, you know that I do not believe in you as you are described in the Bible and believed in by the Church. You know I do not believe in the Bible as the Word of God. If it is true, as affirmed, that you created the universe, it follows that you have created all that is in it. You have created evil as well as good, the Devil as well as the angels, hell as well as heaven. If you have made men at all, you have made them as they are. If they are good it is because you have made them so, if they are wicked it is equally your work. If you are omnipotent and universal, as you are said to be, there can be no evil thing or wicked deed that is not the result of characters and conditions which you have created. If there is a hell and men are to be burned in it, it is because you have wished it to be so. All things are possible with you; had you wished to make men good and happy you would have done so. It has pleased you to make them evil and wretched. You are not, then, good, nor do you love your creatures. It is evident their sufferings give you pleasure or you would make them happy. Could I believe in you, I could not worship you, except through fear, the meanest of emotions, but the only one you seem desirous to excite. We cannot love you for the good you have done, for it serves only to make us more miserable, by contrast with the evil you have forced us to endure. And so, O Lord, if the Bible be truly your Word, and you are as the Old Testament describes you, I can only hate you and be thankful that I do not believe. And now, O Lord, if I am wrong it is because you have made me so, and because you wish me to continue so; for you can make me believe and do what you please. Created by you, I am a mere creature in your hands, and am responsible for nothing. I have not the power to choose between good and evil, as I am told I should do, for I can judge of right and wrong only through the use of a brain created by you in the full knowledge of the conclusions it would lead me to; with you and not with me rests the responsibility. I can only be thankful that I am not cowardly enough to fear nor weak enough to worship so horrible a creature as the God of the Church. Amen.—*By the late W. S. Andrews, Commissioner of Records, New York.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Woman's Worst Enemy."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Wright's, 327 Essex-road, Islington, N.): 7.30, Business Meeting—Plan of Lectures.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "What Should We Do Without Christianity?"

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, F. A. Davies, "Labor and the Churches."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 3, "The Physiology of Faith"; 7, "Religious Ideas in the Light of Science."

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For I think that all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us.—GEORGE MEREDITH.

A Great Book on Religion.

As a seat of learning Oxford has had an exceedingly interesting though somewhat chequered history. The leaders of the Methodist revival were nearly all Oxford men, as were also the authors of the famous *Essays and Reviews*. About the middle of the nineteenth century, the university became enamored of Mill's philosophy, and a kind of phenomenal Idealism has reigned there ever since. When M. Taine visited Oxford, on the occasion of the meeting of the British Association there in 1860, he met a young Englishman of genius, whom he questioned as to the philosophy of his country. After listening to the scientific papers, and examining the museums, the great French writer said to the Englishman, "You have no philosophers; you have savants, but not thinkers." The young gentleman, thrown upon his defence, named, as the original thinkers of England, Benjamin Jowett and John Stuart Mill. Jowett was a great teacher, but not a great philosopher. Theologically he was looked upon as a dangerous heresiarch. It was with him that the idea of the *Essays and Reviews* originated; and he shared to the full the cruel persecution to which the authors were subjected for many years. His *Epistles of St. Paul* created a tremendous sensation in the theological world. Mark Pattison was another theological heretic, whose works were for a time of immense influence. Oxonian heretics have been by no means rare. Only six years ago a Fellow and Tutor at Merton College, Mr. H. W. Garrod, published a heretical book, entitled *The Religion of All Good Men*, which fell like a bomb upon the theological camp. But Jowett and Pattison, though heterodox, were Christians, and championed their own versions of Christianity. At last, however, an Oxford Professor has just issued a volume in which he sets out to say all the good he can about Paganism. The author is the brilliant Greek scholar, Professor Gilbert Murray, to whom we were already indebted for most charming translations of some of the plays of Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. The present work, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, is one of the boldest books ever published from a Christian university. Professor Murray believes in religion, but admits that there can be no such thing as religious knowledge. He says:—

> "In the first place, religion essentially deals with the uncharted region of human experience. A large part of human life has been thoroughly surveyed and explored; we understand the causes at work; and we are not bewildered by the problems. That is the domain of positive knowledge. But all around us on every side is an uncharted region, just fragments of the fringe of it explored, and those imperfectly; it is with this that religion deals. And secondly we may note that religion deals with its own province not tentatively, by the normal methods of patient intellectual research, but directly, and by methods of emotion, or sub-conscious apprehension" (p. 18).

To what extent any religious system is regarded by him as being anything but mere superstition, it is difficult to tell; but it is unquestionable that he would not hesitate to pronounce all theological dogmas false. "Superstition," he says, "is the name given to a low or bad religion, to the kind of religion we disapprove." The four stages of Greek religion are so described as to lead one to infer that in the Professor's opinion no religion can be wholly true at any stage in its development. The first stage he calls an "Age of Ignorance." Dr. Preuss uses stronger words still, namely "Primal Stupidity." This "Age of Ignorance," this "Primal Stupidity" is regarded as "the normal beginning of all religion, or almost as the normal raw material out of which religion is made." Then comes the Olympian or classical stage, the stage immortalised in the Homeric poems. In the first stage there were no gods, but only qualities which Homer converted into man-like personalities. The Olympian gods were super-men and super-women. They were not supposed to have created the world, but simply to have conquered it. Professor Murray pokes fun at them thus:—

> "When they have conquered their kingdoms, what do they do? Do they attend to the government? Do they promote agriculture? Do they practise trades and industries? Not a bit of it. Why should they do any honest work? They find it easier to live on the revenues and blast with thunderbolts the people who do not pay. They are conquering chieftains, royal buccaneers. They fight, and feast, and play, and make music; they drink deep, and roar with laughter at the lame smith who waits on them. They are never afraid, except of their own king. They never tell lies, except in love and war" (p. 65).

Now, if "Primal Stupidity" be "the normal raw material out of which religion is made," one would naturally infer that at no stage in its history can religion be true, though at some stages it may embody certain elements of truth. In its second stage, as well as in its first, Greek religion was false; and it was a failure in both. The Professor says:—

> "The Olympian Religion did not merely fail: it did worse. To make the elements of a nature-religion human is inevitably to make them vicious. There is no great moral harm in worshiping a thunderstorm, even though the lightning strikes the good and evil quite recklessly. There is no need to pretend that the lightning is exercising a wise and righteous choice. But when once you worship an imaginary quasi-human being who throws the lightning, you are in a dilemma. Either you have to admit that you are worshiping and flattering a being with no moral sense, because he happens to be dangerous, or else you have to invent reasons for his wrath against the people who happen to be struck. And they are pretty sure to be bad reasons. The god, if personal, becomes capricious and cruel" (p. 88).

Dr. Murray bestows praise upon the Olympian system, not for its truth, but for its beauty. It was so highly artistic. "Truth, no doubt, is greater than beauty; but in many matters beauty can be attained and truth cannot" (p. 93). The Professor admires Olympianism also, not because it was a religious faith, but because "it was at least a vital force in the shaping of cities and societies which remain after two thousand years a type to the world of beauty and freedom and high endeavor" (p. 94).

The third stage of Greek religion reaches roughly from Plato to Paul, "a period based on the consciousness of manifold failure, and consequently touched

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both with morbidness and with that spiritual exaltation which is so often the companion of morbidness." The propaganda of Hellenism was a heroic attempt to redeem the world from its corruption and barbarism; but it failed, with the result that people lost self-confidence and hope, and learned to depreciate the present transitory and imperfect life, and to fix their minds upon an imaginary world in which all their desires would be abundantly satisfied. The fourth stage was only an accentuation of the third, "when the old religion in the time of Julian roused itself for a last spiritual protest against the all-conquering 'Atheism' of the Christians" (p. 18). Christianity conquered and Paganism was crushed. The controversy, the conflict between the two was not of long duration, and Professor Murray characterises it thus:—

> "As in other wars, each side had its wise men and its foolish, its good men and its evil. Like other conquerors, these conquerors were often treacherous and brutal; like other vanquished, these vanquished have been tried at the bar of history without benefit of counsel, have been condemned in their absence and died with their lips sealed. The polemic literature of Christianity is loud and triumphant, the books of the Pagans have been destroyed" (p. 180).

In all its stages alike, Greek religion was a failure, and the inevitable inference is that it failed simply because it was not true. But has not Christianity been equally a failure? The asceticism that crept into Greek religion during the Hellenistic period was taken bodily over by the Christians. Contempt for this world and retirement from it came to be considered as highest virtues. As Professor Murray says, "the Emperor Julian was probably as proud of his fireless cell and the crowding lice in his beard and cassock as an average Egyptian monk. The ascetic movement grew, as we all know, to be measureless and insane. It seemed to be almost another form of lust and to have the same affinities with cruelty" (p. 181). Our author is marvellously fair and moderate; but in spite of his eagerness to speak ill of no religion, and of his desire to praise Christianity, he cannot be blind to "its comparative indifference to the virtues which are specially incumbent on a governing class, such as statesmanship, moderation, truthfulness, active courage, learning, culture, and public spirit" (p. 179).

This is truly a great book, and may prove epoch-making. The author is clearly religiously inclined, but what his religion is, if he has one, we are not told. He disbelieves in all personal deities. To state that religion deals with an uncharted region is to admit that its truth or falsehood cannot be established. It is an affair of the emotions purely; but it cannot be an affair of the emotions unless it consists of certain beliefs concerning the uncharted regions, and it is practically impossible to distinguish between beliefs and dogmas. Indeed, they are really identical. Even in the New Testament faith is treated as if it were the same thing as supernatural knowledge (John xvii. 8, 25, 26). On this point Professor Murray is perfectly sound:—

> "I confess it seems strange to me as I write here, to reflect that at this moment many of my friends and most of my fellow creatures are, as far as one can judge, quite confident that they possess supernatural knowledge. As a rule, each individual belongs to some body which has received in writing the results of a Divine revelation. I cannot share in any such feeling" (p. 152).

How unutterably foolish are they who allow themselves to be carried away by emotions artificially roused by supernatural beliefs which are completely outside the realm of knowledge. Professor Murray affirms that the religious region is uncharted; but is not the very existence of such a region a mere dream of the fancy? The Professor declares that "as far as knowledge and conscious reason will go, we should follow resolutely their austere guidance"; but is it expedient even to imagine that we *can* go any farther?

J. T. LLOYD.

The Primitive Mind and the Beginnings of Religion.

ONE of the outstanding contributions of Herbert Spencer to the science of sociology was his description of social life and social institutions in terms of psychology. Whereas other writers had emphasised the initiatory power of physical conditions, Spencer, in his *Principles of Sociology*, placed chief stress upon the emotional and intellectual state of primitive man. Since Spencer wrote, this conception has been steadily gaining ground, with the result that most of the leading European and American writers on sociology recognise, or are well on the way towards recognition of, the important truth that the essence of social life lies, not in a common need for food, shelter, and protection, but in a community of emotional and intellectual life. The need for food and protection is common to all life; it is the additional factor that gives us true social phenomena. The *form* of this cementing mental life may be, in turn, determined by physical conditions; but once it exists, it reacts on the physical environment and rapidly becomes the controlling factor.

Now, there is no question that the most powerful force of which primitive peoples are conscious is that which goes under the name of religion. Frazer has very properly pointed out that "the continuity of human development has been such that most, if not all, of the great institutions which still form the framework of a civilised community have their roots in savagery," and has, with equal propriety, dismissed those theorisers who fail to reckon "with the influence of superstition, which pervades the life of the savage, and has contributed to build up the social organism to an incalculable extent." The recognition of this does not involve the admission that social life could not have existed in the absence of religion, it only means that the essential forms of social existence are in primitive times expressed in a religious guise. It is part of the truth that man is always under the dominion of his emotional and intellectual life, whether that life be rich or poor, expansive or contracted.

This being taken for granted, the immediate inquiry is: How comes it that man should express his social life in terms of religion? To answer this question one must bear in mind a further truth, which is that while man is largely at the mercy of his ideas and his beliefs, these in turn are determined by the stock of knowledge available in the society to which he belongs. Thus, if one were to ask an educated man to-day the meaning of some striking occurrence in the physical world, the reply would be in terms that implied a considerable development of scientific knowledge. He would have at his command the labors of generations of scientific workers, the products of which had become part of his environment and of his social heritage. But with primitive man this knowledge was yet to be, the heritage had to be created. The social environment that determined his ideas was vastly different to that which surrounds us to-day. Like the modern, he explained things in terms of the forces known to him. His reasoning was determined by his knowledge. If his inferences were faulty, it is not because his mind worked differently, but simply because of a difference of data. Given the premises of the savage, and the savage conclusion follows. The savage is quite as logical as the modern; the knowledge of the modern is more accurate. Hence the vital difference in their conclusions. Hence, too, the dominance of religious ideas in primitive life.

A half-century of work by anthropologists has made one thing clear. This is that while the modern scientific mind explains man by the world, working from without inward, primitive man explains the world by himself, working from within outward. There is substantial agreement among those able to express an authoritative opinion—an agreement supported by evidence that simply has

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nothing against it—that the world of primitive man is overpoweringly animistic. In the absence of that mass of knowledge, which the modern accepts as part of his social heritage, humanity commences its intellectual career by endowing the world with the same conscious personality that is possessed by itself. The only forces conceived are living ones. They are to be dreaded exactly as human beings are dreaded, and appeased as human beings are appeased. And the problem before the savage is a very real one. He is not concerned with the elaboration of theories, or with the desire to gratify some vague "spiritual yearning." His difficulty is how to control, or placate, those personal powers upon which everything is believed to depend. He would willingly ignore them if he could, and would cheerfully dispense with their presence if he believed things would not be affected by their absence. But there they are, inescapable facts that have to be reckoned with.

Miss Mary Kingsley, in her *West African Studies*, well describes the general outlook of the primitive mind in the following passage:—

> "To the African the Universe is made up of matter permeated by spirit. Everything happens by the direct action of spirit. The thing he does himself is done by the spirit within him acting on his body.....everything that is done by other things is done by their spirit associated with their particular mass of matter.....The native will point out to you a lightning-stricken tree and tell you that its spirit has been killed. He will tell you, when the earthern cooking pot is broken, it has lost its spirit. If his weapon fails him, it is because someone has stolen its spirit or made it weak by means of his influence on spirits of the same class.....In every action of his life he shows you how he lives with a great spirit world around him. You see him before he starts out to fight rubbing stuff into his weapon to strengthen the spirit that is in it; telling it the while what care he has taken of it.....You see him leaning over the face of the water talking to its spirit with proper incantations, asking it when it meets an enemy of his to upset his canoe and destroy him.....If a man is knocked on the head with a club, or shot by an arrow or a bullet, the cause of death is clearly the maligaity of persons using these weapons; and so it is easy to think that a man killed by the falling of a tree, or by the upsetting of a canoe in the surf, or in a whirlpool in the river is also a victim of some being using these things as weapons. For a man holding this view, it seems both natural and easy to regard disease as a manifestation of the wrath of some invisible being, and to construct that intricate system which we find among the Africans, and agree to call Witchcraft, Fetish, or Juju."

Miss Kingsley is dealing specifically with West Africa, but hers is a description that applies, in general terms, to the whole of the primitive world. For the savage philosophy of things is simple, comprehensive, and given the data, logical. He does not divide the world into natural and supernatural; it is all one. The supernatural only appears as a distinct category when a definite knowledge of the natural has arisen to which it can be opposed. He has no such distinctions as that of the material and immaterial; even death itself has a different appearance to that which it subsequently wears. To the modern mind, death puts a sharp termination to life. To the primitive intelligence, there is no such ending. Death is no more a break than is sleep; the "dead" man simply goes on living. He is still there; he may be incarnated in a tree, or a stone, or an animal; or he may remain one of the innumerable company of tribal ghosts. But he remains, a force to be reckoned with, and the need for dealing with these ghostly personages lies at the root of most, if not all, fundamental religious ceremonies.

Once this initial blunder has been committed, daily experience seems to give it the strongest confirmation. The only thing that could correct this blunder is knowledge, and that is not merely a plant of very slow growth, there is a positive danger in its application to religious beliefs. Above all, there is the proof conveyed to the savage mind by the presence of disease, mental and physical. I do not, at present, want to labor this point; it is enough to say that all over the uncivilised or semi-civilised world there is one prevailing theory of disease, which is, that it is due to the malignant activity of ghostly beings. Almost any decent work dealing with savage life will furnish proof of this statement, and readers of the Old and New Testament hardly need to be told that this is the Biblical theory of disease. We see it also in full activity in the Christian Church. One of the great fathers of the Church, Origen, laid it down that, "It is demons which produce famine, unfruitfulness, corruption, and pestilences." Saint Augustine also said that "All diseases of Christians can be ascribed to demons." On this topic the leaders of the Christian Church, and the New Testament Jesus, were upon precisely the level of Miss Kingsley's West African. The Church of England still contains in its Articles an authorisation to its clergy to cast out demons, while the theory of demoniacal possession held its place in Christian teaching until at least a century ago.

It is not, then, difficult to conceive the kind of environment in which religion is born and to which religious ideas are adapted. Situated in a world where everything has yet to be learned, man's earliest attempts at understanding are of necessity blundering and tentative. He sees himself, his own passions, strength, and weaknesses reflected in the world around him. This is the outstanding, governing fact in primitive life. Leave out this consideration and primitive life becomes an insoluble enigma. It is in this mental atmosphere that religion is born. It is not something that can be considered apart from the rest of primitive social life, since it permeates it and colors all conscious action. The mistake once made is perpetuated. This is brought about partly because of the conservatism that attaches to all established ideas, partly because of vested interests that it subserves, partly because of the deliberate cultivation of abnormal nervous states and the misinterpretation of normal ones. From this point of view both the phenomena of sexuality and of disease have played no small part in confirming, strengthening, and so perpetuating religious beliefs. How much this has been the case has never yet, I believe, been fully realised. But to me it is tolerably certain that had there not been offered to people evidence in the shape of visions, ecstatic states, etc., with an erroneous interpretation of activities that are purely social and secular in origin and application, religion would now be a negligible force in all civilised societies. Religion has not been without its "evidences," or it could not have continued in existence. And the hopelessness of the religious outlook is most clearly seen by our taking all the facts of the religious life and proving them susceptible to a non-religious explanation.

C. COHEN.

Curiosities of Religious Bigotry in Spain.

THE Madrid telegrams have just lately announced that the King of Spain has pardoned Pablo Garcia, the soldier who was sentenced to imprisonment for refusing to kneel down before the Host. Garcia was that *rara avis*, a Spanish Protestant, and when present with his company at church he refused to obey the military regulations which require that soldiers attending church shall obey the officers' commands to prostrate themselves before the consecrated elements which, by the magical incantations of the priest, are converted into the body and blood, the bones and tissue, and the full anatomical parts and parcels that belonged to our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this heinous offence Pablo Garcia was sentenced, on appeal from an inferior court which had acquitted him, to six months' imprisonment. If he had been rushing about in a motor-car, and had killed a few small boys and a stray apple-woman, it is most likely that he would have purged his offence by paying a slight fine, or by receiving a pompous lecture from the magisterial bench. But, of course, there is a differential tariff

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of punishments for offences against Our Father which art in heaven and those against our brother who is a mere man in the street.

The release of the imprisoned soldier is naturally a matter of rejoicing to every lover of liberty of thought and speech. The sentence upon the brave Protestant soldier raised a great commotion in Spain, and gave rise to much discussion in the Cortes. The Radical, Socialist, Republican, and Freethinking organs of public opinion were the chief vehicles of indignation against this monstrous conviction, and but for their protests and the changed aspect which, through their action, Spanish politics have assumed since the virtual political suicide, a few weeks ago, of Maura, Pablo Garcia would now be eating his heart out in a fetid Spanish prison, for want of other nourishment. When the laws of a country set up a God and compel the reluctant outsider to prostrate himself before the symbol or altar erected in his honor or for his exploitation, the natural result is to turn every honest man into an adversary of a religion which upholds its supremacy by the terrors of prison.

All this has happened in twentieth-century Spain, although Article 11 of the Constitution declares that no Spanish citizen shall be molested on account of his religious beliefs. The establishment of that charter of liberty cost the Spanish people oceans of blood in cruel strife of a singularly prolonged and atrocious character, and it is an ignominious reminder of the fragile character of mere paper parliamentary guarantees of freedom that three generations after the battle had been "won," an arbitrary, albeit meritorious, exercise of the royal prerogative becomes necessary in order to pardon an offence that had apparently ceased to be a crime. No wonder Shakespeare called the law an ass.

The ordinary penal law as to religious offences in Spain is antiquated and full of perils for the free exercise of private judgment and for liberty of thought and conscience. A few examples may suffice. There is in the Penal Code an article, number 240, which punishes with imprisonment and a fine of 250 to 2,500 pesetas (a peseta is equal to a franc) any person who publicly brings into contempt any of the dogmas of any of the religions having proselytes in Spain. In practice, the interpretation of this law has degenerated into a species of gag upon the free expression of ideas in Spain. The terminology of this and of other legal dispositions of an analogous character suffers from the usual legal vice of vagueness to such an extent that diverse and conflicting interpretations have been made of the general provisions of the law according to whether the judges administering the same happened to be believers or unbelievers, Catholics, Freethinkers, or indifferentists in matters of religion. According to a well-known Spanish deputy and journalist, Alvaro de Albornoz, the Supreme Tribunal has adjudicated in various cases that have come before it to the effect that the denial of Christian dogmas does not constitute a crime, although the denial has been expressed in an excessive form, it being held that what the law chastises is the gross and insulting expression of contempt. At other times, the Supreme Tribunal has considered punishable the expressions of opinion that were merely lacking in respect. Certain other tribunals have inflicted penalties for the mere denial of Christian dogmas; for indulging either in scientific criticism of Christianity, or in Rationalist criticism of religion.

A fine example of the vagueness of terminology, which thus leaves the interpretation of Spanish law at the mercy of the judges, is offered to us by the application of Article 586 of the Penal Code, which punishes as an offence the omission to uncover one's head at the passing of the Viaticum or before a religious procession or at an interment. In certain judgments under this Article, the test of crime is whether the actions complained of shall have been committed with intention to wound the sentiments of religion, and whether they did or did not, in reality, signify mere carelessness or simply indifference. Other judgments have been given in which it has been declared that no offence has been committed when the refusal to salute the Viaticum has been motived by the fear of compromising one's health. In another judgment, the constitutional principle has been openly declared that no man shall be molested for his religious opinions, and this has been followed by the legal dictum that he who *abstains* from honoring the Host, or *refuses* to take off his hat to a passing God, commits no offence if his action springs from an anxiety "not to allow his conscience to be violated, and because he believes that the law of God prohibits the doing of the act." On other occasions the law has taken into account the greater or lesser degree of solemnity attending the religious act; thus, it has been declared that the refusal to salute the Viaticum is not punishable when you come across it in a public road, the priest at the time not being in his robes and unaccompanied by acolytes. On the other hand, certain judges have laid it down that neither the principle of religious toleration nor that of liberty of religious profession absolves one from the respect and external marks of consideration due to the collective manifestations of religious sentiments, and have constituted it an offence against religion to remain uncovered at the passage of a religious procession, of a funeral party, or of the Viaticum. In accordance with that dictum, a professor at the secular school at Orense was recently condemned to two months' imprisonment for having refused, at the instance of the priest and of the Municipal Guard, to salute the Holy Viaticum. The case, which happened on March 27 last, was carried to the Supreme Court of Justice at Madrid, and, although the Court recognised that the offender, Don Luengo, was only casually passing along the street when he met God being taken out for a walk, the appeal was rejected, with costs, and the sentence of the inferior court was upheld. The result of this decision is that in Spain no unbeliever can venture into the public streets without a feeling of insecurity.

It comes to this, then, that at the present time, in Spain, a man can be prosecuted for blasphemy and receive much more copious correction than our recent Leeds blasphemers, without venturing upon speaking unpalatable things in the street about religion in crude language easily understanded of the common people, but merely for refusing to conform with ceremonial deference to the religious symbols or acts of the priest. The offender of this sort is prosecuted in Spain as for the crime of "mocking at religion." It often happens that the priest, on noting some "mocker" who keeps his hat on in the presence of the Host, etc., rushes out of the ranks of the procession, threatens him, and even strikes him—all this without prejudice to the holy man's legal right to obtain the instant arrest of the offender. In such cases the prosecution and imprisonment, not of the insolent priest, but of his unfortunate victim, always happen. Things have now come to such a pass that peaceful people in Spain who are not anxious to be punched first and imprisoned afterwards actually flee into the back streets when they notice that a religious procession is passing along their way. In Spain, at the present time, there are several thousand victims of these vexatious prosecutions. These Spanish criminals, like the police-made criminals recently created at Leeds and elsewhere in England, committed their blasphemy in the public streets; they offended public order; their act or inaction constitutes legally a mockery of religion. The bigots in England might ponder the analogy and begin to blush.

The case of Pablo Garcia, the Spanish marine of Ferrol, although a very grave case of religious persecution, is only the last to date of an interminable line of Spanish martyrs in modern times immolated upon the altars of religious persecution. A worse case of flagrant injustice, perhaps, is the sentence pronounced nearly a year ago against the well-known Freethinker and ex-Catholic priest, José Ferrandiz, better known by friends and foes as El Padre

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Ferrandiz. What was his atrocious crime? It was this: that in an article in *El Progreso*, about two years ago, he stated that the young priests looked up to the Church with veneration; those who were more advanced in years looked her face to face in a critical spirit; and those of mature age looked down upon her with disdain and hatred, having been skinned alive by her injustice.

This was not a very savage affront to Christianity, and the treatment dealt out to Ferrandiz for his epigrammatic language deserves to be recorded for the benefit of certain people who affect to believe that Christian judges in the twentieth century are not to be tempted by appeals to their religious sentiment to sully the fair annals of judicial moderation in the administration of the law as affecting Freethinkers. The judgment delivered last March in this preposterous case was a sentence of four years, six months, and I forget how many days of imprisonment; the payment of costs; and a fine of 250 pesetas. The sentence of death was not pronounced, but no doubt there was the savage desire to inflict that penalty, for no twentieth-century judge, without being a Torquemada at heart, could bring his lips to utter so fearful a sentence without a secret longing to destroy the life of his unhappy victim. José Ferrandiz is not an illiterate nobody. He is one of the chief ornaments of the Radical and Freethought press in Spain. He has made two notable contributions to Spanish Freethought literature by his translation of Strauss' *New Life of Jesus* and his translation of that masterly work of Lanfrey's, the *Political History of the Popes*,* which he has enriched with a Prologue and by some additional chapters, carries Lanfrey's story down to the pontificate of the ineffable Sarto. Unless this savage sentence is quashed on appeal, this distinguished ex-priest, who sought the arduous life of a journalist and man of letters in exchange for the pious sloth of a monastic career, and whose able articles on religion have for some years been a notable feature in Spanish Radical papers, will be swallowed up in a loathsome Spanish prison for the better part of five years for stating in cold print what he knows to be the opinion of the Church entertained by many of the liveried and consecrated servants of the Lord.

Whilst these odious principles of intolerance are thus consecrated by law and usage in Spain, the new Franco-Spanish Treaty as to Morocco establishes, in Article 8, the principle of absolute toleration for the new Moslem subjects of Spain in the Rif. This concession, absolutely opposed to the Catholic traditions of Spain in its historic relations with the Moors, is virtually the official recognition by the Spanish Government of to-day of the criminal policy of religious persecution which tore the Spanish race into three sections (the Iberian, the Arab, and the Jewish), and decimated and impoverished the country. To-day, in the Rif, the Synagogue, the Mosque, and the Church are to enjoy equal liberty; and Spain gives an absolute guarantee to France, in a diplomatic document invested with the sanctity of international law, that the religious liberty and the external practice of all existing religions in Morocco shall be respected. On African soil Spain plants the banner of religious toleration and places the criticism of Christian dogma under the protection of her flag. No wonder that the proud Spaniard, who cannot call his soul his own for fear he may meet in the streets an arrogant and ignorant priest "conducting the Sacred Form" (to quote the Judgment in the case of Don Luengo), envies the fuller religious liberty of the semi-savages of the Rif.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The son of a clergyman was asked if his father would accept a call that had come to him with the offer of increased salary. The boy replied that the old man was praying for light and his mother was packing up.—*George Macdonald.*

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* Both works are published by Sempere y Cia, Valencia.

Free Speech at Edinburgh.

LORD SKERRINGTON, in the Court of Session to-day, gave judgment in the action by John M'Ara, 3 Guthrie-street, Edinburgh, against the Magistrates of Edinburgh and others. Pursuer sought declarator that the magistrates had no authority to issue a proclamation prohibiting the citizens from holding meetings at the Mound, Princes-street, unless permits were obtained from the defenders, and interdict was sought against the defenders issuing such a proclamation, and granting such permits. Pursuer also sued for £250 damages in respect of alleged wrongous arrest for a breach of the proclamation. His lordship found that the magistrates were not empowered by common law or by any statute to issue the proclamation, and that the pursuer was not bound to obey it. His lordship found it unnecessary to pronounce any declaration or grant interdict. He dismissed the conclusion for damages so far as against the Corporation, but as regards the magistrates allowed the pursuer to lodge an issue without pronouncing any decision as to the competency or relevancy of his claim of damages. No expenses were found due to or by either party as between pursuer and the Town Council.

TITLE TO SUE.

In the course of his opinion his lordship, referring to defenders' plea of no title to sue, said the magistrates of Edinburgh had issued a proclamation threatening their fellow-citizens with penalties, but they now wished to avoid a judgment as to its legality. His lordship did not understand that policy on their part, or why the pursuer should not have a title to challenge the legality of a proclamation which attempted to stop a practice which he had pursued for years without objection upon the part of the civic authorities. The defenders' counsel argued that the only remedy open to a citizen who objected to the proclamation was to disobey it and to plead the illegality in defence to a prosecution. That argument seemed to his lordship contrary to good sense and good order. He did not see why, in order to obtain a judgment upon a purely legal question, a citizen must expose himself to arrest and imprisonment or why the magistrates must be exposed to claims of damages. His lordship dissented from the view that the public had only a bare right of passage over a country highway or over the streets of a burgh.

THE ACT OF 1606.

The magistrates maintained that their proclamation was justified by the Act of 1606. The question whether that Act was still in force depended primarily upon the construction which ought to be given to the decision of the High Court of Justiciary in the case of Deakin v. Milne, 1882. That case might be quoted as an authority for the proposition that the Act was not in desuetude, or alternatively for the proposition that the magistrates of a burgh had power at common law to issue a proclamation prohibiting a meeting, with the result that any person who disobeyed was guilty of a substantive offence. His lordship had come to the conclusion that the judges in that case did not intend to affirm either of these propositions. His lordship read the opinions as meaning that in the special circumstances the magistrates had power to prohibit a procession which was likely to cause a breach of the peace, but he did not think the judges intended to affirm that disobedience to the proclamation was a substantive offence apart from breach of the peace. It was, his lordship thought, certain that both at the present day and as far back as the memory of man could carry the offence prohibited by the 1606 Act was not only practised without being checked, but was no longer considered or dealt with in this country as an offence against the law.

NO POWER TO LICENSE.

Apart from the Act of 1606, the magistrates had no power to institute a licensing system in order to prevent annoyance, disorder, and obstruction, or even breach of the peace, consequent upon the holding of meetings upon the Mound. A person convicted of causing an obstruction, or of conduct which, if continued, would produce reasonable apprehension of "the breaking up of the social peace," might be fined or ordered to find security for his future good behavior. The proclamation, if effectual, would dispense with the necessity of both trial and conviction, and would subject a citizen to disabilities merely because the magistrates, in their private room, had come to the conclusion that his conduct was calculated to produce obstruction or breach of the peace. His lordship could figure nothing more arbitrary or unconstitutional. For the purpose of preserving the public peace the magistrates of Edinburgh had, in addition to the powers pertaining to magistrates, the powers of Justices of the Peace and of Sheriffs. His lordship assumed that if they thought it necessary they might lawfully issue a proclamation prohibiting the holding of any

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meetings which, in their opinion, were likely to lead to a breach of the peace, and they might warn the citizens that persons who disobeyed would be liable to prosecution for obstruction and breach of the peace, but they could not lawfully threaten the citizens with penalties for contravening their proclamation.

A USURPATION OF PUBLIC RIGHT.

The proclamation was a usurpation by the magistrates of the right which belonged to the citizens as represented by the Corporation to regulate the use of the streets so as to benefit so far as possible the community as a whole. It would be a fitting question for the consideration of the Town Council whether those citizens who derived edification, instruction, or amusement from street preachers ought to be allowed to gratify this taste on the Mound although other members of the community might object to the inevitable noise and crowd and to occasional coarse language. Even if the judgment of the Town Council were adverse, the pursuer would be entitled to be heard by his counsel or agent before the Sheriff allowed any bye-law prohibiting meetings on the Mound. The proclamation rode roughshod over those rights and liberties.—*Edinburgh Evening News* (Jan. 28).

Acid Drops.

Now that the war is breaking out again, and the Bulgarians promise to give the world "a new surprise," we pity the poor Mohammedans who come in their way. We refer to the civil and not the military population. The latter will give a good account of themselves.

What a curious boast of the Bulgarians that was about the surrender of Adrianople. Seven weeks ago it was bound to surrender in a few days. It appears to be still as far off surrendering. Turkish soldiers are not so easily beaten when they have food for their stomachs and ammunition for their guns and rifles. The "great Bulgarian victories" at the beginning of the war were due to the Turkish armies being caught in a helpless condition.

Very late in the day, and now that the matter can no longer be ignored, one of the religious weeklies has broken silence concerning the massacre of Mohammedans by Christians in the Balkan struggle. The *Guardian*, in its issue for January 31, without any special words of condemnation, chides the Turks for overstating "as recklessly as they do the number of peaceable Moslems butchered in Macedonia by so-called Christians." It quotes the *Times* correspondent's estimate that 20,000 have been massacred in Macedonia, but has no words of condemnation for the butchers. There is a half-hearted attempt at justification even in the remark that the massacre of Christians when the Crescent was in the ascendant was hardly less terrible. Its final comment is, "What can be done to put a stop to this state of things it is difficult to say." We hardly know which is the more contemptible—the silence of the religious press concerning the massacres by the soldiers of the Cross, or the attempt at condoning the evil now that it can no longer be hidden.

The Rev. R. F. Horton is visiting India, and having spent two or three weeks there, feels able to express an authoritative opinion on the condition and needs of the Indian people. We do not observe that Dr. Horton has discovered the development in India—in connection with the cotton industry particularly—of one of the worst features of the old English Factory System, but that is what one would expect. The main thing with Dr. Horton is whether the people are properly religious or not. If they are, nothing else is of any great consequence. If they are not, then all is wrong. Now, curiously enough, Dr. Horton has discovered, what a good many people in London could have told him, that the people of India have "far more of genuine and inward religion" than we have. He says that, "looking at our own godless and irreligious people at home, who never worship, and have no vital creed, or even religious interest, I am very ready to admit that India is more religious than England." But the point is that this religion, even though "genuine and inward," is not the right kind of religion. "What is wanted is not religion, but a good religion, a religion which builds character, and makes a strong and progressive state possible. In these all-important respects the irreligion of England is better than the religion of India."

Now, here is a very curious situation. A large proportion of our people at home are "godless and irreligious," and in developing character and a progressive state this irreligion is better than some people's religion. Yet Dr. Horton wants to see India Christian! But, unless he at the same time imports this godless and irreligious element, there is no security that India will become progressive and develop character. Of course, Dr. Horton has a saving clause. "Our worst people at home," he says, "are personalities; centuries of Christian tradition have given them the sense of freewill and responsibility." So that it apparently comes to this: Our strong progressive characters at home are the products of Christian tradition (it must be assumed that there are no strong characters without a Christian tradition, Japan for instance), but this development in turn leads to a personality that becomes "godless and irreligious," without ceasing to make a strong and progressive state possible. We owe our strength of character to Christianity; our strength of character ends in our rejection of Christianity. It really looks as though Dr. Horton is in a bit of a muddle.

Here is another specimen of Dr. Horton's wisdom. The Moslem countries, he tells us, are all going by the board. "They cannot find the foundation of a stable society or of a just administration. The reason lies in the Koran itself. That inspired book is the limitation of the Moslem mind, and it does not contain the principles on which an enlightened and progressive community can be formed." Now, it is about as reasonable to judge a Mohammedan people by the Koran as it is to judge a Christian people by the Bible. Christians do not stone heretics to death, they do not burn witches, they do not practise non-resistance, they do not carry out a hundred-and-one other ridiculous and criminal things that are taught in the Bible. And they will say in defence that the Bible must be interpreted in the light of the present age. Yet they take the Koran, and quietly ignore the fact that Mohammedan teachers adopt quite the same principle in relation to the Koran. As having said this, we beg to say very definitely that the Koran is the superior of the New Testament in so far as presenting teachings on which a State may be built are concerned. The one precept in the Koran, "A ruler who appoints any man to an office, when there is in his dominion another man better qualified for it, sins against God and the State," is superior to any counsel on the subject in the New Testament. There the attitude towards the State is negative or passively submissive. Had Christians been tied down to the New Testament, which practically ignores both the family and the State, society would have ceased to exist. The salvation of Christians has been that the very extravagance of New Testament teaching compelled modification. A piece of advice that is impossible in practice is really less dangerous than bad counsel that can be carried into action.

Two poor Jesuites are in the latest list of Wills. Rev. William Hart-Smith, of Launceston, left £7,453. Rev. John Thomas Pearse, of Chiddingstone, Kent, left £2,508. These are small fortunes in comparison with many that we chronicle, but they would have appeared colossal to Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Here is a bigger clerical fortune—though by no means the biggest. Rev. Alfred Turner, of Hillersdon-avenue, Barnes, S.W., left £26,331. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Churchmen pray, in the language of the Prayer Book, against "battle, murder, and sudden death," but they are no more preserved from these things than other people are. Canon Edward Townsend, vicar of St. Peter's, Fulham, died on the last Sunday evening in January at Lezant, near Launceston. Soon after supper he fell forward in his chair and died. "One thing befalleth them; yea, they have all one breath."

Mr. Harold Begbie is always "gassing" about something or other. It is the way he gets his living. His latest subject is "the soul of the convict"—as though it were a speciality in "spirits." What the convict really wants, according to Mr. Begbie, is religion, more religion, and still more religion. Well, there ought not to be much difficulty about that; Mr. Begbie himself has religion enough, apparently, to supply "the blooming lot." Unfortunately, however, his prescription is not as satisfactory as he fancies. Mr. Thomas Holmes, who knows a thousand times more about prison life and prisoners than Mr. Begbie does, plainly tells him so. "If Mr. Begbie will make himself acquainted with the mental and physical condition of the bulk of the prisoners he will see that a great deal is wanted in addition to spiritual regeneration, the fact being that no one can find social and industrial positions for a great number of the prisoners because of their disabilities. About 1,000 convicts

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are discharged from prison every year, many of them certified as feeble-minded; others suffer from epilepsy, or other kinds of fits, or from physical afflictions, and still more are very aged, and their day of useful labor is past. These people can only do a very small amount of work when under control, at liberty their industrial value is nil." But all this is below the notice of Mr. Harold Begbie.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer seems to think that the world would come to an end if it lost the privilege of listening to his evangelical voice. He talks on every subject under the sun, and always conveys the impression that his one business in life is to set the Church and the world right on every conceivable point. According to the *North Mail* for January 29, he informed the Novocastrians that "there was something in the air." Everywhere, among all sorts of people, civilised and savage, in the East as well as in the West, "there was something in the air"; and this something, of course, was the spirit of Christ. There is something in the air, it is true, but not the spirit of Christ, which has reddened Christendom from end to end with innocent blood. It is the spirit of humanity that is in the air; and this spirit is working its way to the throne by gradually casting out the spirit of Christ.

Another foolish utterance that fell from Mr. Meyer at Newcastle was this: "There is going to be a great revival in England. I know it is coming before many months are gone, and our nets will be so full of fish that they will burst." This prophecy is an old acquaintance. We have been personally familiar with it for forty years, and know there is nothing in it but wind. For the last forty years, instead of reviving, the Church has been steadily dying. Mr. Meyer himself knows this; and conscious of it, he has joined the Bishop of London in imploring the *Daily News and Leader* not to take their contemplated census of church and chapel attendance in the metropolis.

Sir John Benn, the leader of the Progressives on the London County Council, has issued an appeal to the Churches in connection with the forthcoming elections. The only passage we are concerned with here is one dealing with Sunday entertainments. Sir John Benn says:—

> "Recent experiences in connection with picture palaces show that on this pressing question the Churches must at least insist that those entertainments shall not be run for private gain or by way of trade."

Except as an electioneering "dodge," we cannot congratulate Sir John Benn on his deliverance. We can appreciate a straightforward objection to any kind of entertainments on Sunday. We can also appreciate an advocacy of any entertainment so long as it is "wholesome and properly conducted." But anything in between seems clearly to involve stupidity or hypocrisy. A body such as the L.C.C. has an obvious right and duty to see that licensed places are properly conducted. But what justification has it for saying that, although an entertainment is quite unobjectionable—even on Sunday—those whose business it is to run such places shall make no profit whatever from them? Charity or no charity, the work involved is the same. If these entertainments are objectionable, can one conceive a more contemptible position than that of "We will consent to what we believe to be wrong providing you salve our conscience by paying a few pounds into some charity"? And if they are unobjectionable, it is an act of sheer bigotry and tyranny to impose what is virtually a fine upon the owners of these picture shows. Sir John Benn does not take up the position of a straightforward bigot or of a clear-sighted public reformer. His appeal strikes one as a mere electioneering attempt to enlist the services of the most bigoted and ignorant section of Christians. We think it is about time that those responsible for Sunday entertainments plainly resisted this attempt to treat them as a kind of criminal class, subject to a weekly fine for appearing before the public.

Mr. Meyer is on the warpath against Sunday picture shows again. He sees that all is lost unless churches and chapels "stand together" as he puts it in defence of their trade monopoly. Not that he uses such a bald and sordid word as "trade," but that is what he really means. Meanwhile the Sunday picture shows are multiplying in London, and churches and chapels are getting emptier and emptier. And what will be the end thereof who knoweth?

Canon Christopher, who is ninety-three years of age, shows much activity in view of his chronology. He is also very optimistic. He invited a meeting at the Oxford Town Hall to listen to the eloquence of Prebendary H. E. Fox, secretary of the Church Missionary Society. This gentleman had just returned from a visit to Japan, and he was bursting with the happy news that the Japanese were getting ready to adopt Christianity. The reason he gave was rather peculiar:—

> "The Japanese Government has got alarmed at the decadence of a great deal of the national character by its touch with the Western world. The Japanese were distinctly a religious people, and were ready for Christianity."

Surely the Japanese were not such fools as that! Contact with Christians has corrupted them, so they are going to adopt the religion of their corrupters in order to set themselves right again! This is worthy of Bedlam.

We have heard that Japan was going to adopt Christianity any time for the last forty years. But she never does it—and she never will. The Japanese are a sensible people. They quite understand the Christian missionary business.

"No man," said the Rev. J. D. Jones, at Liverpool, the other day, "should be a minister who could be anything else." Mr. Jones may make his mind easy; there are few men who do become a minister who can be anything else. And of those who do, a portion find out their mistake and forsake the "sacred calling."

More consolation for the microcephalic pietist! The Bible Society publishes the following from Sir Sven Hedin:—

> "With a strong and absolute belief in God and in His almighty protection I should not have been able to live alone in Asia's wildest regions for twelve years."

To make this more impressive, the letter is reproduced in facsimile. Readers, therefore, can see the actual caligraphy of the explorer, and that will, of course, carry still greater conviction. For a personal testimony in print is nothing like so strong as in a man's own handwriting. Personally, we were inclined to give Sir Sven Hedin *all* the credit for his travels and discoveries. Travellers like Nansen, Burton, and Winwood Reade managed to get through their work without the help of God, and it is strange that in the person of Sir Sven Hedin the race of explorers has so far degenerated. And in common justice, as God did part of the work, it is only fair that he should receive half the profits. Therefore, we hope that Sir Sven Hedin devotes fifty per cent. of his income from lectures, articles, and books to Church work. It would be depressing to find that God had not only helped Sir Sven Hedin to do his work, but was now being further exploited by way of advertisement.

Dr. Woodrow Wilson, the incoming Democratic President of the United States, is likely to raise the Philippines question. There is already a Bill before Congress proposing Home Rule for 8,000,000 Filipinos in eight years. This proposal has alarmed President Taft; indeed, all the "Imperialists," including Roosevelt, are against it. Taft denounces doing for the Filipinos what has already been done for the Cubans as a policy that is sure to end "in confusion, humiliation, and defeat." Like the wily fat gentleman he is, Taft appeals to religious prejudice in favor of the opposite policy. Listen to this from a recent speech of his at a Washington banquet:—

> "Mr. Taft appealed to the Democratic leaders to ask not American officials nor American business men interested in Philippine trade, but missionaries of every denomination who are giving up their lives teaching religion and virtue in the tropics. They would agree that the Filipinos were not yet ready for self-government, and that if autonomy were forced upon them, no influence more discouraging to the march of Christian progress in those islands, whose guardianship providence had thrust upon the American people, could well be imagined."

Taft knows what the missionaries are really working for. That their object is to "teach religion" is a proposition that Taft himself must laugh at under the rose. As to their teaching "virtue," Taft must know that if they are able to do that their services are far more needed in the United States than in the Philippine Islands. The missionaries are looking, as far as possible, to the interests of the good Americans who send them out and pay them to "save the heathen"—who, by the way, are mostly Roman Catholics. They are prepared to take their solemn affidavits that the Filipinos are too bad a lot to be trusted to walk without U.S.A. crutches. The Filipinos require moral crutches, and the United States supplies them. The arrangement benefits both sides, and if the Filipinos don't see it they must be made to.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter, Dean of Westminster, goes to Boston and talks about tobacco, and his wonderful words are telegraphed across the Atlantic for the edification of the people

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in England. One would hardly think a Christian preacher's opinions on such a subject were worth so much trouble and expense. It appears that Dr. Boyd Carpenter doesn't see why women shouldn't smoke as well as men. At present he talks only of cigarettes; perhaps he will go on to cigars and pipes, and even short clays. We have seen many an old Irishwoman in Lancashire smoking a "dudeen"—without asking the Dean of Westminster's permission. While he was at home in England nobody troubled about his views on smoking; when he went to America his opinions became important enough to communicate them to his native land. Anyhow, it seems odd that God Almighty—as they say Christ was—should establish a special religion on earth in order that, two thousand years afterwards, its ministers should deliver oracles on 'baccy.

The Winchester Board of Guardians differed from one of its members, Mr. Stephen Bull, who knelt down and asked God to give them his guidance. This led to a suspension of the sitting, whereupon Mr. Stephen Bull called his fellow members "heathen dogs" and then fell upon his knees again, addressing the Almighty on their behalf once more. There they left him. We have not heard that the "One Above" has interfered with the natural course of events. Had he done so Mr. Stephen Bull would be the absolute master of the Winchester Board of Guardians; and that, to say the least of it, would be very awkward for the town.

The following is from the New York *Truthseeker*:

> "Elbert Hubbard, publisher of the *Philistine*, was brought before Judge Hazen in the United States District Court at Buffalo, N.Y., January 11, charged with circulating through the mails a publication containing 'certain prints of an obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, and indecent character.' It was hoped by the defenders of free mails that Hubbard would put up a good fight, but he disappointed them, pleading guilty to mailing the aforesaid obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, and indecent matter, promising to do so no more, and submitting to a fine of $100."

What a rare thing is courage! The whole American press is controlled by Anthony Comstock, the professional secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Vice—the English original of which William Cobbett used to call the Vice Society. Whatever old Comstock chooses to call "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, and indecent" is knocked out of the mails by the Post Office authorities, and the responsible persons are lucky when they are not prosecuted and imprisoned. Yet the Americans put up with this intolerable tyranny with the greatest complaisance. Even a writer like Elbert Hubbard shows no fight when he is attacked. The case seems almost hopeless.

The *Church Times* rejoices that the date of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race has been changed from the Wednesday in Holy Week to Thursday, March 13. It is very undesirable, we learn, that a race should be run while people are dwelling upon the "Passion of Our Lord." We should have thought that anyone who wanted to dwell upon the "Passion" could easily have got far enough from the Thames to do so undisturbed. Naturally, if one starts dwelling upon "the Passion of Our Lord" in the middle of a boat race, one may be disturbed. But that is quite one's own fault. We also note that the joy of the *Church Times* is diminished by the fact that the King is going to Portsmouth on Ash Wednesday to inspect the *New Zealand*. This is evidently wrong, as he ought to have been at home, also dwelling on the "Passion." Some comfort is derived from the visit being a private one, for which, we are told, the inhabitants of Portsmouth will be thankful. We suppose it is hoped that, there be no public ceremonial, the Lord will not observe a private visit by the King. It is unflattering to George the Fifth, but pleasing to the religious mind. And we call ourselves a civilised people!

Wednesday, February 12, is fixed as the day of intercession on behalf of the Church of England's work at home, and against the threatened disestablishment of the Church in Wales. The latter is a very hopeful supplication. Mr. Lloyd George is a Nonconformist, Mr. Asquith is a Churchman; and we can picture both of them smiling at the Archbishops' simplicity.

Father Pinnamonti's *Hell Open to Christians* and Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell* are still published by Duffy & Co., with the authority of the Holy Catholic Church. These publications are intended for the special edification of young people and children. They are among the most disgusting things ever issued to frighten such readers out of their natural senses and drive them into the arms of priestcraft. Father Pinnamonti's volume is "ornamented" with pictures—one for every day in the week, showing the physical tortures of the "souls" in hell. The writers of these things must have known that the contents were all imaginary. They were therefore scoundrels to terrify children in this way. It is a scandal that such impostures should be permitted in a civilised country.

"Dr. Lancelot Blackburne, the eighteenth-century Archbishop of York, who is the earliest recorded smoker among Anglican Bishops, would hardly have furnished a desirable precedent for the Bishop of Peterborough. For he was a retired pirate. According to Oxford tradition, he was "sent down" from Christ Church for stealing a violin, and joined the buccaneers in the West Indies. His fellow-criminals were eventually captured and hanged, but Blackburne returned home, attached himself to Bishop Trelawney—of the Cornish song—and received rapid promotion. Horace Walpole writes about 'the jolly old Archbishop of York, who had all the manners of a man of quality, though he had been a buccaneer, and was a clergyman; but he retained nothing of his first profession, except his seraglio.' He was made Archbishop of York for reading the marriage service over George I. and his mistress the Duchess of Munster. Those were 'the good old times.'"—*Daily Chronicle* (Jan. 27).

Rev. James W. A. Mackenzie, vicar of Whitwick, Leicester, has been committed for trial at Douglas, Isle of Man, on a charge of attempting to utter a forged promissory note. Bail was fixed at £400. There is no moral. There would have been one if the defendant had been an Athiest.

We have no fault to find with the jury's verdict of "suicide while of unsound mind." This was the result of the inquest over the dead body of the Rev. G. H. Lamb, curate of Southwick-on-the-Weir, who jumped through the window of a train on the Great Northern Railway. It was said that he suffered from a nervous breakdown following on influenza. Quite so. But the same might have been said of an Atheist in the same circumstances. Where did the "safeguards of religion" come in?

A Sydney paper called the *Sun*—which, we see, boasts of the largest circulation in Australia—prints the following in its issue of December 8:—

> "San Francisco, Saturday.
>
> "Five Seattle men are planning to go one better than Noah. They are going to build an ark bigger than that into which the animals went two by two.
>
> "Noah's cockleshell was very small potatoes, they say, and the new craft is to be fitted with every convenience.
>
> "When it is finished a pair of every known type of living creature is to be put on board, together with a first-class troupe of circus performers, and then the ark will sail round the world, stopping at every big port to give a performance.
>
> "The articles of incorporation of the Noah's Ark Company were filed yesterday, the capital being £300,000."

All they want now is a Flood.

Perhaps the Leeds Police fancy that their prosecutions for "blasphemy" and "profanity" do a great deal towards keeping the city orthodox. Poor creatures, dressed in a little brief authority, they are vastly mistaken! There must be a lot of "infidelity" knocking about the district when the *Yorkshire Evening Post* (Jan. 27) can publish leaderettes like the following:—

> "'THE HEATHEN.'
>
> "The meetings which are being held in Leeds this week in celebration of the completion of a hundred years' work for the Church Missionary Society may induce the Man in the Street to spend a little time in considering a subject which is a favorite topic for his cheap sarcasm. In his lordly way he is as fond of telling people that foreign missions are a mere fad, that they represent a great waste of money, inasmuch as the 'heathen' don't need the missions, and the missions themselves are a failure. Now, to put it vulgarly, when the Man in the Street talks like that, he is 'talking through his hat'; and, if he can so far forget his belief in his own omniscience as to seek information at first hand, he will find that he is wrong in both particulars. He would probably be a good deal surprised if he were told that many of the so-called 'heathen' know a good deal more about religion than he does, and practise what they know in a way he never dreams of doing. At the same time, the very men who know that best, and most readily admit it, are precisely those who are most convinced of the need for missionary effort."

The clergy can hardly be dull enough to appreciate these sarcastic compliments.

"I want a nice book for an invalid," the lady said. "Something religious, madam?" asked the shopkeeper. "Er—no," replied the lady," he's convalescent."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 9, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "Blood on the Balkan Cross."

February 16 and 23, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

FIGHTING FUND.—S. H. Adams (Transvaal), 5s.; J. H. Gartrell, 10s.

CANTERL.—See paragraph. Thanks.

T. HODGSON.—Provincial aspirants would not be barred in any way from obtaining "diplomas."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

R. MARELAND.—We hope to give more attention to literature generally, and to new books especially, in future.

E. B.—We suppose you know that Mark Twain's *What is Man?* is not obtainable now. It is another case of the family of a distinguished man trying to suppress the best fruit of his brain. Mark should have published the book during his lifetime. He admits that he had not the courage to do so.

M. ROGERS.—The little books are not new, though they may be new to you. They have been referred to in our columns from time to time during the last thirty years.

H. BEARSFORD.—Order passed on to shop manager. We send the *Freethinker* post free to any part of the world at our advertised rate. We do send to most parts of the world. Few papers are so widely distributed.

S. H. ADAMS.—With regard to wish that our shadow may never grow less, we may be allowed to take a prosaic view of that orientalism and state that we have kept nearly the same weight for the last twenty-five years.

W. P. HEDLEY.—We cannot answer your questions about Determinism in this column. We should need a lot of space. A question of a few words in length often fills pages in reply; especially when the question is controversial. Your first question, however, answers itself. "Is man a machine?" This is a confusion of language. Man is a living being; and living beings are not machines, and machines are not living beings. Biology and mechanics are different sciences.

E. RAGGETT.—Mr. Foote's articles on "The Real Robert Burns" appeared some seventeen or eighteen years ago. Numbers so far back are not in stock now.

J. B.—Glad you enjoyed our article on the new Bradlaugh fable so much. But it won't stop the lie. Christian lies, when they once get started, last as long as they are profitable. You deserve credit for your share in the matter.

S. LIDGETT.—We were never fond of political badges, and we have certainly never worn one since we became President of the N. S. S. That was twenty-three years ago. During that long period we have neither been for nor against Socialism. We have worked with Socialists, as we have with other parties, for objects held in common. We are devoted first of all, and above all, to Freethought, which we regard as the most important work of all, and which has fewer friends than most others.

W. CALLAGHAN.—Pleased to know that your two friends, to whom six consecutive copies were sent, have become regular readers and admirers of the *Freethinker*. Lea's great *History of the Inquisition* is the best, but it is expensive. You might find it in your Free Library.

SOME correspondence unavoidably stands over till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

January, 1913.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

We the undersigned renew our appeal on behalf of the above Fund.

Its object is to relieve Mr. G. W. Foote—President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society, Ltd., and Editor of the *Freethinker*—from financial worries that would prevent his devoting himself entirely to his work as leader of the militant Freethought movement in this country.

During previous years Mr. Foote has actually had to pay money out of his own pocket to sustain the *Freethinker*, besides doing all his own work on the paper without any remuneration whatever. We are happy to have his assurance that this state of things has improved. He has no longer to make up a deficit, but the slight profit from the increased circulation of the *Freethinker* is only sufficient as yet to treat the contributors a little more liberally.

This is the sixth year of the President's Honorarium Fund. We suggested that £300 might be raised in this way annually. During the first two years it was nearly raised, the third year it was fully raised, the fourth year it was exceeded, owing to a special donation of £50 from Mr. John Helm, of Canada, since deceased. Death has, indeed, been busy with the larger subscribers during the last year or two—such as Major Harris, Mrs. Donaldson, Mr. George Payne, Mr. F. Smallman, and Mr. Horace W. Parsons. Nevertheless, the Fund for 1912 only lacked some £20 of the total, which has been made up by a generous American supporter. It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Foote must have gained new friends to balance the (financial) loss of old ones.

All subscriptions received have been acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*, and will continue to be acknowledged in that way.

Subscriptions for 1913 can be forwarded to the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear in print should state how they wish their subscriptions to be acknowledged.

It would be pleasant if the bulk of the £300 could be raised in the first few months and the balance before the close of the summer.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road Gt. Yarmouth.

R. T. NICHOLS, M.D.,
28 Park-road, Ilford,

A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount Grove-road, Highbury,
London, N.

First List of Subscriptions.

R. T. Nichols, £5 5s.; J. M. Gimson, £2 2s.; A. Hurcum, £1 1s.; J. Green, 10s. 6d.; T. Stringer, 2s. 4d.; Harriet Blake, 5s.; T. Sutcliffe, 5s.; N. S. Mundy, 10s.; J. B., £2 2s.; A Friend (per Miss Vance), £2; T. M. (Ficksburg), 10s. 6d.; W. Dodd, 10s.; E. G. (Paris), 10s.; Mde. Augusta Forrer, £1; Col. B. L. Reilly, £1 1s.; Dr. and Mrs. Laing, £2 2s.; W. P. Kennedy, £1 1s.; H. Silverstein, 10s.; L. Gjemre, £2; Thomas Young, 10s. 6d.; Andrew Harvey, 10s. 6d.; Elizabeth Lechmere, 9s. 6d.; E. Truelove, 5s.; J. T. G., £1; Col. H. H. Hart, £1 1s.; G. F. H. McCluskey, £1 1s.; Harry Tucker, £1 1s.; H. T., 5s.; J. H. Gartrell, £1,

Sugar Plums.

"Woman's Worst Enemy," the subject of Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening, drew a number of ladies to Queen's Hall. They not only listened with great attention but several of them asked pertinent questions when the

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lecture was over. Mr. Foote's answers seemed to give general satisfaction.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Queen's Hall this evening (Feb. 9) should attract a large audience. "Blood on the Balkan Cross" is its title. Mr. Foote will show what the Christian Powers are really seeking. Their real object is systematically concealed by the Christian press.

Mr. Cohen had a crowded audience on Sunday evening at Liverpool. We regret that his visit was not announced in our last issue, but the fault was not ours—and all's well that ends well.

Mr. Robert Blatchford wrote three columns in last week's *Clarion* on the Leeds prosecutions for "blasphemy" and "profanity"—and incidentally he makes a curious reference to "Mr. Foote." Mr. Blatchford's position, at least, makes what he has to say on this matter of some importance, and we shall give it our attention next week.

Mr. Maurice Young, the ex-clergyman who made such a favorable impression at the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner on January 14, lectures twice (afternoon and evening) for the Manchester Branch to-day (Feb. 9), at the Secular Hall in Rusholme-road. We trust he will have good audiences and a hearty reception.

The Rationalist Peace Society holds its Annual Meeting next Thursday evening (Feb. 13) at 8 o'clock in Room 167 St. Stephen's House, Westminster—near the Houses of Parliament, facing the Embankment. Members should try to attend. Mr. Foote expects to be present.

The Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws is organising a public demonstration, which will probably be held early in March at South Place Institute. Several well-known speakers have promised to join in the oratory. Further particulars will appear in our next issue.

The Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League will be held at Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30. Members are specially urged to attend. A public meeting will follow at 8.15, with Mr. Halley Stewart in the chair. The list of speakers includes Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D.

The General Committee dealing with the matter of the London County Council's policy with respect to meetings and collections in the Parks met again on Tuesday (our press day) and decided to make a final effort in a peaceable way before drawing the sword and flinging away the scabbard. The N. S. S. does not wish to break away from its associates on this question. Hence a further unavoidable delay.

We reproduce on another page a report of a very important law case from the columns of the *Edinburgh Evening News*. The Court of Sessions has taught the Edinburgh magistrates their proper place and warned them against straying outside it. These municipal busybodies have learnt that they have no power whatever to decide who shall deliver open-air addresses and what opinions shall be expressed at public meetings. Lord Skerrington has made that perfectly clear, and his judgment will encourage us up in London to resist the arbitrary action of the London County Council. Thanks are due to plaintiff in the Edinburgh case and to the committee that supported him in his resistance to despotism.

Some time ago a correspondent asked us whether the contents of the two volumes of the *Flowers of Freethought* represented our present views on all the subjects treated in them. This was a question that could only be answered in general terms. Our correspondent then did the right thing; he wished to make the volumes a present to a friend, so he bought them and read them himself, with a view to forming his own judgment. And this is the result. "I have now read these two volumes," he writes us, "and without offering any extravagant praise I must say that they are *splendid*; in fact, no Freethinker's library is complete without them. It would be a hard task to choose the best half-dozen 'Flowers,' as they one and all come in very useful in arguments and debates in which I frequently indulge."

The Agency of Insects in the Dissemination of Disease.—II.

(Concluded from p. 70.)

THESE spores now proceed to attack other blood-cells, and all succeeding generations of these parasitic intruders repeat the process above described. As a result, in a few days hundreds of thousands of human blood-cells are destroyed, and the blood-stream is poisoned with parasitic waste products, leaving the patient pale and exhausted.

As we have seen, these parasites reproduce themselves by the simple process of nuclear division; their spores or young result from the splitting up of the parent parasite body, which occurs while the parasite is destroying the blood-cell in which it has taken up its temporary abode. Now, it is well known that this method of asexual reproduction cannot be carried on indefinitely, and the difficulty was to discover in what manner the sexual generation was consummated.

This seemed an insurmountable problem; but, thanks to the untiring labors of a band of medical men, its solution has been found. But the two investigators to whom the palm must, above all others, be given, are Patrick Manson and Ronald Ross.

Dr. Smith, while investigating the life-history of the germ which produces the Texas cattle fever, noted that some of the germs did not reproduce themselves like the others.

> "When these individuals were drawn from the circulation and placed on a slide for study, it was found that they would swell up and free themselves from the inclosing corpuscle, and some of them would emit long filaments, which would dart away among the corpuscles."

Now, it became obvious that certain of these parasites fail to develop unless they are removed from the blood in which they dwell. The question to be decided was, the conditions that were required to enable them to leave the blood of their victim so that their processes of reproduction could be carried out. It was necessary to determine this before the greater problem as to the means whereby the parasite is transmitted from one human being to another could be successfully attacked. Manson, after pondering over the difficulty, reached the conclusion that suctorial insects were the agencies he was in search of. His reasonings led him to the belief that, when insects removed germ-infected blood from their victims' veins into their own stomachs, they in this way provided the parasites with the conditions essential to their reproduction. This daring theory of Manson's greatly impressed Ross, who began a long and laborious investigation with the object of determining its truth. The parasite which he strove to discover is just visible under the most powerful microscope. Ross, who was at the time in India, selected the mosquito as the most likely insect for his purpose. In the course of nearly three years he made a thorough examination of thousands of mosquitoes without discovering the slightest trace of the parasite. But at last a friend sent him a mosquito of the Culex species; and, when this was placed under the microscope, Ross observed certain nodules on the walls of the insect's stomach. Closer observations disclosed the presence of granules of the coal-black melanin of malarial fever. Further experiments led to the epoch-making discovery that these special cells were always to be found on the walls of the stomach of this species of mosquito a few days after it had sucked the blood of a malarial patient. Ross's subsequent researches have since made clear the complete life-history of the parasite. All independent investigations made by other medical men have done nothing except establish his conclusions as absolutely beyond dispute.

The above results may be summarised thus: The malarial parasites carry on their life-processes in the human blood-stream, but after a time the develop-

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ment of a certain percentage of these parasites is arrested. When these particular parasites are introduced into the bodies of most mosquitoes, they are digested like ordinary food. But when they find their way into the stomach of a mosquito of the genus anopheles, or other nearly related genera, they are not assimilated, but continue their development, and conjugate with other parasitic cells. As a consequence of this fertilisation, more elongated parasitical forms make their appearance, proceed to pierce their way through the linings of the mosquito's stomach, and evolve into the tiny nodules which Ross detected on the insects he studied. These parasites then divide and develop within their enclosing sheath, until at last the nodule bursts, and thousands of rod-shaped sporozoites enter the body-cavity of the mosquito. These sporozoites now make their way towards the large vacuolated cells of the salivary glands, where they cluster together. Thus it happens that when the mosquito bites a man or other animal, these rejuvenated parasites re-enter the human or animal blood, and are in this way enabled to reproduce themselves at the expense of their victim's health or life. A vivid idea of the danger arising in this way may be formed when we learn that the "nodules or cysts on the walls of the stomach of the mosquito may contain as many as ten thousand sporozoites, and as many as five hundred cysts may occur in a single stomach."

Another disease with which the mosquito is closely associated is yellow fever. This scourge manifests itself mainly in seaport cities, and the United States has suffered more from its ravages than any other country. The West Coast of Africa, Havana, Rio de Janeiro, and other places were long considered as permanent endemic spots, from which it travelled to other port towns with which they were in communication. The American territories in the neighborhood of the Mexican Gulf have been among the keenest sufferers. But, when given a sufficiently high temperature, yellow fever has been known to spread to Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.

An appalling outbreak of yellow fever took place in New Orleans in 1905. Eight thousand people were smitten with the disease, and nearly one thousand perished. Instead of humiliation and prayer, the methods of science were put into operation. The result was that the scourge was stayed at the very time when, according to all precedent, its ravages should have been most severe. The older remedies of isolation and quarantine were abandoned, and a direct attack was made upon the mosquitoes which were the disseminators of the disease.

The history of the scientific studies which enabled New Orleans to cope with this serious outbreak is extremely instructive. Owing to the prevalence of yellow fever in Cuba, the American authorities, in 1900, appointed a board of medical officers for service in Havana, for the purpose of investigating the malady on the spot. This board, afterwards known as the Yellow Fever Commission, was made up of some of the greatest American doctors. Their first duty was to ascertain whether any of the germs which were suspected to be the cause of the disease were really responsible for its existence. Bacillus icteroides was by some authorities regarded as the culprit, but after a thorough inquiry this bacillus was shown to play but a secondary part in the matter. Various other theories were put to the test, and some very remarkable experiments were made upon those who volunteered as subjects. Dr. Carroll, a leading member of the Commission, thus describes the experiments:—

> "Two separate lines of work were now presented: one, the study of the bacterial flora of the intestine and anaërobic cultures from the blood and various organs; the other, the theory of the transmission of the disease by the mosquito, which had been advanced by Dr. Carlos Finlay in 1881. After due consideration it was decided to investigate the latter first. Then arose the tremendous responsibility involved in the use of human beings for experimental purposes. It was concluded that the results themselves, if positive, would be sufficient justification of the undertaking.....On the afternoon of July 27, 1900, I submitted myself to the bite of a mosquito applied by Dr. Lazear. The insect had been reared and hatched in the laboratory, had been caused to feed upon four cases of yellow fever—two of them severe and two mild. The first patient, a severe case, was bitten twelve hours before; the second, third, and fourth patients had been bitten six, four, and two days previously, and were in character mild, severe, and mild respectively.....After having slight premonitory symptoms for two days.....I was carried to the yellow fever camp. My life was in the balance three days.....On the day I was taken sick, August 31, 1900, Dr. Lazear applied the same mosquito, with three others, to another individual who suffered with a comparatively mild attack and was well before I left my bed. It so happened that I was the first person to whom the mosquito was proved to convey the disease.
>
> "On September 18, five days after I was permitted to leave my bed, Dr. Lazear was stricken, and died in convulsions just one week later, after several days of delirium with black vomit. Such is yellow fever."

A large number of similar experiments have since been conducted, and all of them prove that the stegomymia mosquito will transmit the disease under certain conditions. It has also been demonstrated that mosquitoes are alone chargeable with the dissemination of the fever.

Camp Lazear was established, and in it was erected a mosquito-proof structure, which was divided by a wire screen from floor to ceiling. In one of these chambers several mosquitoes, which were known to have bitten yellow-fever patients, were liberated. A non-immune then entered this chamber, and was bitten by one of these insects. He was twice afterwards bitten by these mosquitoes, and after the usual five days' interval he betrayed the symptoms of yellow fever.

While the foregoing experiment was being conducted, two other non-immunes placed themselves in the other compartment, where they slept for eighteen nights. The wire screen prevented the entrance of the mosquitoes, and the two men never showed the least signs of the fever. Another experiment proved that two soldiers and a surgeon, all non-immunes, could live in a mosquito-proof house in perfect security for three weeks while surrounded by all the instruments of contagion. They were supplied with unwashed clothing and bedding direct from the yellow-fever hospital in the town:—

> "These articles had been soiled by the urine, fecal matter, and black vomit obtained from fatal and other cases of yellow fever. These articles were handled and shaken daily, but no disease developed among the men, and at the end of twenty-one days two other non-immunes relieved them and handled a new supply of clothing in the same way, sleeping between the same sheets that had been used by a patient dying of yellow fever, and exposing themselves in every possible way to the soiled clothing."

But the disease did not appear. As soon as these men were inoculated, they developed the fever. Further test experiments by independent investigators, as well as French and English Commissions, completely substantiated these findings.

The results above described were put to practical use in Havana in 1901 and 1902, and the fever was completely stamped out. Another splendid opportunity for demonstrating the triumph and methods of science occurred with the terrible outbreak of yellow fever at New Orleans in 1905. Cautioned by the panic which prevailed in the city during the epidemic of 1897, the authorities at first endeavored to conceal from the public the nature of the disease which was raging. But it spread with such awful rapidity that it was soon realised that it was necessary to unite the entire community in a warfare with the accursed mosquito. The all too abundant breeding places of the mosquitoes were drained, salted, and cleansed. Well-organised medical services fought the mosquito until the disease died down, so that long before wintry weather arrived, the pest had been overcome.

When the French were attempting to build the Panama Canal, yellow fever held undisputed sway over the entire region. The death-rate among the

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laborers, engineers, doctors, and nurses was appalling. But, thanks to science, yellow fever is now practically unknown throughout the Panama zone. And in every fever area at present known, it is only necessary to successfully combat the mosquito in order to banish the terrible disease.

Plague has always been justly regarded with horror. And when we remember the misery and death it has occasioned in the past, its commitment to the control of science may be reckoned as one of the supreme triumphs of medical research. Quite recently San Francisco has been visited by an outbreak of plague, which in earlier and more religious times would have swept from the Pacific to the Atlantic. But medical and sanitary science not merely held it in check, but succeeded in stamping it out, with the loss of little human life. In this instance the authorities declared war upon the rats. Thousands of men were engaged in rat-catching in all parts of the city, and about a million of these rodents were slaughtered. Their breeding quarters were burnt or made rat-proof, and the refuse of the city was stored so that the rats could not infest it.

When, in 1896, a serious outbreak of plague occurred in India, the Indian Plague Commission carried out a most exhaustive inquiry into the causes of the disease, and also into the manner in which it is communicated. The evidence clearly indicated that the chief mode of infection both for man and rats was through some kind of abrasion in the skin. And it was ultimately established "that the flea is the most common agent in transferring the disease from rat to rat or from rat to man." And the highly valuable experiments made a few years ago by Dr. Verjbitski carry these conclusions still further. He has shown among other things that:—

> "All fleas and bugs (bedbugs) which have sucked the blood of animals dying from plague contain plague microbes.
>
> "Human fleas and fleas found on cats and dogs can live on rats as casual parasites, and therefore can under certain conditions play a part in the transmission of plague from rats to human beings, and *vice versâ*."

Insects in all parts of the earth are indirectly responsible for almost all deadly diseases. The common house fly is one of the most dangerous of these. Not only is it an important agent in spreading typhoid fever, but it has been found guilty of transmitting several other very serious maladies. That the fly may carry and disseminate the cholera-germ has been demonstrated. And that it is capable of spreading leprosy, consumption, anthrax, and smallpox is much more than a mere medical suspicion. Flea-bites and fly-stings are therefore not the mere innocent and unimportant insect antics that some of us were taught to believe them to be.

T. F. PALMER.

The Black Army.—II.

THE clerical profession, like every other, has its prizes, and they are so graduated as to inspire hope in the least capable and sanguine. No doubt it is true that in the Church of England, particularly, a minister may wait long, or all his life, for preferment, unless he has influential friends or relatives. But this is a disadvantage which is common in every branch of industry. While, however, there are doctors with no patients, and barristers with no briefs, there are comparatively few ministers without occupation and salary. However small their income may be they begin with *something*, which is solid and secure; whereas a doctor has often to spend years in seeking patients enough to keep him in bread and cheese, and a barrister to wait years for his first solicitor's cheque.

A complaint was made at one of the Church Congresses that many incumbents were deplorably poor, and it was proposed that a gigantic national fund should be raised in order to level up the poorest to £300 a year. Now, I ask any man of candor and intelligence, who has seen anything of the average "poor" incumbent, to say whether he is really the equal, in energy and general ability, of the average man who occupies a post worth £300 in the commercial or professional world.

Probably the clergy would resent their ability being canvassed in this profane manner, but when they complain of their poverty they invite such treatment; in fact, it is inevitable.

Much as it may hurt their feelings, I will even go farther. I have already said that we have a right to expect from Christian ministers, as from all other men, a decent conformity to their own teachings. Now, if there is any teaching in the New Testament which is clear, explicit, and unmistakable, it is that wealth is a danger and poverty a blessing. According to the Sermon on the Mount, the "poor" are the first to inherit the kingdom of heaven; and according to the epistles of Saint Paul, every Christian should content himself with little, and only minister to the bare necessities of his "carnal" part during his early pilgrimage. I do not accept this teaching myself. I believe that man is a risen animal, not a fallen angel; and that our sensuous nature should have its rational gratification. But I am *not* a Christian, while the clergy *are*—at least by profession. They are bound to follow Jesus and Paul, or to confess themselves hypocrites. And if the teaching of Jesus and Paul should be followed by every ordinary Christian, how much more should it be followed by those who assume to exhort and reprove their brethren.

Apart altogether from the express teaching of the New Testament, there is something incongruous in the action of *spiritual* teachers, who would wean us from the *material* world, and who at the same time demand a fair share at least of all the good things of this life. It reminds one of the Cornish minister, whose sermon was interrupted by the news that a ship had run ashore. The wrecking instinct was strong in that congregation, and every man started for the door. They were arrested, however, by the stentorian voice of their pastor, who bade them take their seats before God; and then, casting off his ministerial robe, he exclaimed: "Let us start fair."

Considering the *spiritual* pretensions of the clergy, I smile when they complain that they are poor. That is precisely what they ought to be. It is their only honest condition. Every penny they expend on themselves, or their families, beyond what is necessary to support life, is a confession that their *doctrines* are absurd and impracticable, and that *they* are subsisting on false pretences. I am not at all sure that they are entitled to take *any* care of their bodies. If they had a proper supply of the *faith*, which they recommend to *us*, they might trust to God for a supply of their bodily wants, as Elijah did in the desert and the Jews in the wilderness.

Let us turn our attention now to the missionaries. It is popularly believed that these gentlemen are all animated by a burning zeal to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ; that they court hardship and danger in the spirit of martyrdom. But what is the real truth? It is beyond doubt, to anyone who has investigated the matter, that the great majority of missionaries have positions of ease and emolument. They are generally within reach of protection, and their salaries, though sometimes moderate if expended in England, are always sufficient to provide them with every comfort in the land of their labor, and generally to provide them with a retinue of servants which they could never hope to have in their native country. I have no hesitation in saying that the lot of the average missionary is an enviable one. If the statement be disputed, I will furnish conclusive evidence from the writings of travellers, and even from the reports of Missionary Societies.

It is of course undeniable that there have been missionaries who held their lives cheap, and faced hardship, peril, and death itself with unfaltering devotion. I honor such men, though I do not share their faith. Courage and conviction are always admirable, and a martyr's grave is holy ground. But

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every cause has had its heroes. A doctor in a hospital has been known to suck the poison of diphtheria from the throat of a strange child, and imperil his own life in the attempt to save another's. Large bodies of men will always yield a percentage of such noble spirits; and we may reverence the martyr missionary without throwing a false halo round the heads of all his profession.

Missionary Societies, in practice, are chiefly agents for relieving the congestion of the clerical labor market. It is better to send the superfluous men of God abroad than to let them stay at home, competing with their brethren and reducing the general rate of wages. Emigration is an advantage to those who go and to those who remain. And when this is understood by the British public, the missionary business will be seen in its true light. A few go converting the heathen for Christ, some from Christ and themselves, and more for themselves and Christ.

Of a piece with the chief motive of this missionary enterprise are the arts employed in raising its expenses. School children are cheated of buns and toffee to fill the mission-box with halfpence. Shameless begging goes on from door to door. False pictures are drawn of missionary heroism, and falser pictures of the moral darkness of the "heathen." It is perfectly certain that in many cases, whatever may be said of the "civilisation" of the heathen, and their scanty costume in hot climates, they are essentially more moral than the majority of the missionary's countrymen; more truthful, more honest, more sober, more tender to their children, and more respectful to their elders and parents.

It is a common reply, on the part of its apologists, that the Black Army is too much judged by exceptional cases. In the Church of England, for instance, there are only two Archbishops, and less than three dozen Bishops; and what are these among the many thousand ministers of the Establishment? But what is the real value of this objection? Are not the plums few in every profession? How many physicians, how many King's Counsel, how many writers make their thousands a year? The number is just sufficient to keep the fire of hope alive in the breasts of the less fortunate; so that, after all, we find the same commercial law operating in the clerical profession, which operates in other departments of human activity.

The critic to whom I referred in my opening paragraph asserted, as though it were a fact of his own knowledge, that the Archbishop of Canterbury does not spend a penny of his £15,000 a year upon himself; that it is all expended upon his diocese, his own wants being supplied by his private income. I do not believe this: but if it be true, it proves nothing. One swallow does not make a summer, and an argument cannot be based on a glaring exception. It cannot be *usual* for Church dignitaries to subsist on private fortunes. Nor is my critic's suggestion in any way reconcilable with the fact that such immense sums of money have been left by so many Bishops during the present century. I take it that their estates, as disclosed by probate, were partially, if not wholly, built up by savings out of their episcopal revenues; and I say that their conduct in this respect is scandalous, when we consider that Bishops are constantly pleading to laymen on behalf of "the poor clergy," and that Jesus Christ told them to feed, and not to fleece, the flock committed to their charge.

Another objection of the Black Army's apologists is that the Church of England does not comprise the whole Christianity of the country, and that the Nonconformist ministers must be taken into account. None of these, it is said—not even the highest—is paid five thousand a year. I daresay not, but I think it probable that they take all they can get. Some of the luckiest Dissenting ministers in America have salaries running into four figures. Dr. Hall, of New York, was reported to be in enjoyment of £8,000 a year. Dr. Talmage took a very large salary at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, with freedom to make as much more as he could by writing and lecturing. When he visited England, and discoursed for Christian bodies, he never opened his mouth for less than £50 a night. Surely it is difficult to see anything but commercialism in such conditions of advocacy. The late Mr. Spurgeon was paid £1,200 a year, in addition to the revenue accruing from the extensive sale of his publications. Dr. Joseph Parker lived in a fine house and kept his carriage. Even the salary of a provincial minister, like the Rev. A. J. Berry, of Wolverhampton, was far from despicable. This gentleman publicly called me "a professional infidel." I replied that his salary exceeded the earnings of all the "infidel" lecturers in this country put together. Of course there are plenty of Nonconformist ministers with very small stipends, but are there not plenty of ill-paid doctors and barristers, and still more of journalists? The law of supply and demand operates in *all* professions. The clericals may not get as much as they *desire*, and indeed they were never heard to say they had *enough*; but they obtain all that is possible in the existing state of the market.

(To be concluded.)

G. W. FOOTE.

The baby boy kept crying while the sermon was on, and at last his mother got up to take him out. But the preacher begged her not to do so. "He doesn't disturb *me*," he assured her. "Perhaps not," she said, "but you're disturbing *him*."

We should hardly fancy that Mr. Jay Franklin, of Burlington, Vermont, is the most popular man in his State, if he frequently talks in the following manner. "You often hear the religious churchgoer," he says, "shout with delight that his creed is the oldest, and he apparently thinks age is a great asset. Did you ever hear a grocery man shout with joy because he had the oldest eggs in stock?

The Salvationists have had a "three-day whirlwind campaign" in Toronto to collect £20,000 towards the Booth memorial. With the help of the newspapers (of course!) they succeeded in extracting that sum from the public on behalf of the greatest religious imposture of modern times. Let us pray!

Obituary.

I regret in one way, though not in another, to hear of the death of my old friend Mr. B. L. Coleman, of Sandwich. He had a good head and a sound heart; always ready to express his Freethought, which raised the ire of the bigots—and always ready to do a kind deed, though it seldom brought him gratitude. He experienced how hard and painful it is to pull against the stream of prejudice and superstition, but he was not built to go along with the thoughtless and the cowards that constitute the great majority. Secretly he was admired and respected by many who dared not say so. "Ben Coleman" was a familiar name to all the town. But nature is no respecter of persons, in any sense of the words; he had far more than one man's share of misfortunes—peculiarly painful misfortunes—which broke him down and wore him out. His housekeeper informs me however, that he awaited death with perfect serenity. He often spoke of me, but when she asked if she should write and tell me of his condition, he replied that he would not have me troubled (which was a mistake, after all). His housekeeper says: "If all Freethinkers were as good as he I wish there were more about." Unfortunately those who had legal control paid no respect to his well-known wishes; they gave him a Christian funeral, the one thing he hated to think of; and a Church clergyman lent himself to the ignoble farce.—G. W. FOOTE.

North London Freethinkers will hear with regret of the death of Mr. Benjamin Stanniforth, who died on Jan. 23, aged sixty-nine. Although unattached to any Society, Mr. Stanniforth was a zealous propagandist. Widely read, especially on the subject of Egyptology, his researches in the British Museum, where he spent the greater portion of every week, were always at the disposal of young lecturers. He was a regular attendant at the Parliament Hill meetings, and a constant thorn in the side of our Christian opponents. During his brief illness attempts were made by the local Christians to offer him assistance, which, being unsought, was most indignantly declined by this sturdy and independent old Atheist. He was interred at Finchley Cemetery on January 30, but, unfortunately, owing to the secresy preserved by his family, only a few of his Secularist friends were able to be present.—A. STANLEY.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Blood on the Balkan Cross."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Heaford, "War, Religion, and Humanity."

COUNTRY.

FAILSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): Joseph A. E. Bates, afternoon, "Evolution of the Devil Myth"; evening, "The Philosophic Necessity of Materialism."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, E. Egerton Stafford, "The Riddle of the Universe."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): E. Morris Young (ex-Anglican Clergyman), 3, "Reason *versus* Theology"; 6.30, "The Penalty of Honest Heresy." Tea at 5.

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One should only advise about matters in which one is prepared to co-operate.—GOETHE.

Mr. Blatchford's Blunder.

THE title of this article does not mean that Mr. Robert Blatchford has made only one blunder. He has made many. He blundered over Determinism, he blundered over Shelley. He now blunders over the Blasphemy Laws.

He has just been writing on the last subject. His reason for doing so is that "some of the Freethinkers in Leeds have been sent to prison for making 'blasphemous' speeches in the streets," and "one of them writes to ask me for help in the *Clarion*."

Whoever wrote to Mr. Blatchford was very ill-advised. He has never given help in "blasphemy" cases. Why should he alter now? He has not even interest enough in the matter to be reasonably accurate. Prosecutions for "blasphemy" have been dropped at Leeds; the more recent prosecutions have been for "profane language" under the Police Clauses Act, in which the heaviest possible sentence is only a fortnight's imprisonment.

All that Mr. Blatchford can offer the person who asks him for "help" is "friendly and good advice." No doubt the advice is as good as it is friendly—and as friendly as it is good.

Mr. Blatchford's advice is characteristic. Practically he says, like the gentleman in the comic song, "You do as I do." He believes in written Freethought, and apparently in nothing else; and that is because he has no faculty for anything else. If he were a public speaker he would have more respect for oratory. He would even sympathise with the rougher propagandists of "the streets."

But to return to our main point. Mr. Blatchford says he "thinks the Leeds Freethinkers are guilty of bad manners when they annoy Christians in the streets." Now "in the streets" is a popular and striking expression, but in this case it does not represent the truth. The Freethought speakers at Leeds do not run up and down the streets shouting "blasphemy" or "profanity" to the annoyance of passers-by. They deliver lectures at open places, like Victoria-square, which have always been devoted to outdoor oratory, and are patronised by all sorts of societies. When this fact is perceived it throws a strange light on Mr. Blatchford's advice. "Don't speak blasphemy in the streets," he says. They don't. They speak it, if it *is* blasphemy—and the word sounds odd from Mr. Blatchford's lips—in a kind of public discussion forum. People who stop to listen know they are likely to be "annoyed." Their remedy is to walk on if they cannot hear their own views challenged in plain language.

Why is Mr. Blatchford's advice confined to Freethinkers? Why did he not give it long ago to Socialists? He begs Freethinkers to spare the feelings of the Christians. Why has he not begged Socialists to spare the feelings of "exploiters" and "capitalists"? It is all very well to say that "we Rationalists" have "a strong case" and "can afford to be tolerant, courteous, and calm." Mr. Blatchford believes that the Socialists have a strong case too. His advice, therefore, is equally applicable in both cases.

Observe that it is not a question of good manners all round. It is a question whether Christians should imprison Freethinkers for "annoying" them. It has never been suggested that Freethinkers should serve Christians in the same way. Mr. Blatchford speaks sternly to the imprisoned Freethinker; he speaks pleasantly to the "annoyed" Christian who imprisoned him. That is what we object to. When you *imprison* a man he should have committed a *crime*. It is not enough to say that he "annoyed" his adversaries in a public discussion.

Mr. Blatchford would stop all Freethought propaganda "in the streets"—meaning, of course, in the open air. Listen to this:—

> "I am convinced that this street oratory is useless to the cause of truth. It is not only bad manners: it is bad policy. To convince a Christian that his Bible is not true it is necessary to educate him anew. It needs much reasoning and many books; and he must read in quiet and in private. Fancy trying to convert anyone to Determinism and Evolution in a short speech in the open street.....My advice to the Leeds men is to abandon a useless and irritating form of propaganda and find a better way of serving the cause."

This "irritating" form of propaganda should be dropped by all parties, if it is dropped at all. If Mr. Blatchford means this, let him plainly say so. If he does not mean it, let him plainly say why.

Mr. Blatchford's tenderness towards the "annoyed" Christian is wonderful. Usually, the "annoyed" Christian is a policeman. Mr. Blatchford takes a different illustration. After quoting a well-known passage about Jehovah from *God and My Neighbor*, he proceeds:—

> "Imagine the effect of such words in a crowd. Some decent but not well-informed Methodist hears what I say. He does not even guess what I mean. He thinks I am talking about God—his God. He goes away quickly, his simple and reverent mind full of anger and disgust. He does not know that Jahweh is not his God. He does not wait for me to prove my charges. He goes away feeling that I am a vile blasphemer."

This overwhelming sympathy for the "simple and reverent" Methodist who goes, for instance, to the Leeds discussion forum, is really touching. Mr. Blatchford has a tender heart.

We see Mr. Blatchford's generous nature—besides some other qualities—in the following passage:—

> "And here I will notice a blunder made by Mr. Foote. Mr. Foote says: 'Mr. Blatchford was discreet enough to say "Jehovah" instead of "God."'
>
> "Mr. Blatchford was discreet enough to say Jehovah instead of God, because Mr. Blatchford was speaking about Jehovah, and not about God.
>
> "If Mr. Blatchford had said about God what he said about Jehovah he would have been as stupid as Mr. Foote."

It is not for us to discuss the relative proportions of Mr. Blatchford's stupidity and our own. We leave the public to attend to all such matters. We are sorry that he resents the word "discreet." He ought to have welcomed it in the light of his present article. We are also sorry that he is under the impression that Christians have any other God than the God of the Bible. When he says there are *two* Gods in the Bible he might as well say a *thousand*.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Religion of Disease.

IN my last article I tried to show that religion was a normal, inevitable, and logical expression of human intelligence dealing with a host of forces the nature of which was quite unknown. In that stage of culture, the gods are no more a deduction from observed facts. Certain things are seen and experienced, and the conclusion is that they are the products of supernatural agencies. From this point of view, religion takes rank as a primitive science. It is the first stage of that long series of generalisations that, beginning with primitive animism, ends with the discoveries of a Copernicus, a Newton, a Darwin, and a Spencer. It is a history which begins with vitalism and ends with mechanism. A world in which we commence with a chaotic assemblage of independent personal forces, and end with a universe that is self-acting, self-adjusting, and in which there is neither room nor any allowance made for the operation of intelligence save such as meets us in animal organisation.

So far, we have what one may call the normal basis of religious belief. But, in addition to this, the religious idea has received enormous support from the occurrence of purely pathologic states, and, what is more important, from the cultivation of abnormal conditions, with the deliberate intention of producing a conviction, in both the subject and the onlookers, of supernatural communion. Nor is there need to assume deliberate imposture. With some existing medicine men, this may be the case, but in the mass, certainly with a people more primitive than any existing tribe of savages, the operator imposes on himself quite as much as he imposes on others. Noting that privation of body, or torture of mind, or the eating or use of certain herbs is followed by an ecstatic state that brings one into touch with an assumed ghostly world, it is believed, not that the vision is the direct result of the practice, but that the practice is the condition of communication.

It is inevitable that this should be so. One could hardly expect uncivilised or semi-civilised man to know why conium should stimulate the nerves, or belladonna arrest the secretions; why aconite should decrease sensibility, or laurel water induce ecstasy. What are the precise effects of fasting on the nervous system is, again, a question quite beyond the powers of primitive man, and even in our own day is not always sufficiently recognised. And the instructive fact here is that the history of religion shows the same features throughout. The modern preacher no longer advocates the use of drugs as a means of securing celestial illumination; but he does advocate the cultivation of certain habits of mind if we desire to properly realise the workings of the spirit of God. That is, we are to achieve by a mental discipline what the savage secures by a coarser and more obvious method. The modern preacher is one with the savage in his inability to recognise the truth that the illumination is the product of the discipline, not the mere condition of its possession. Between the drug of the savage, the fasting and self-torture of the mediæval monk, and the prayerful meditation of the modern religious mystic, the difference is only one of changed times and altered conditions. The method is the same throughout.

This aspect of the matter is well put by Tylor in the following passage:—

> "From the earliest stages of culture we find religion in close alliance with ecstatic physical conditions. These are brought on by various means of interference with the healthy action of body and mind, and it is scarcely needful to remind the reader that, according to philosophic theories antecedent to those of modern medicine, such morbid disturbances are explained as symptoms of divine visitation, or at least of superhuman spirituality. Among the strongest means of disturbing the functions of the mind so as to produce ecstatic vision, is fasting, accompanied, as it usually is, with other privations, and with prolonged solitary contemplation in the desert or in the forest. Among the ordinary vicissitudes of savage life, the wild hunter has many a time to try involuntarily the effects of such a life for days together, and under these circumstances he soon comes to see and talk with phantoms which are to him invisible spirits. The secret of spiritual intercourse thus learnt, he has thenceforth but to reproduce the cause in order to renew the effects." *

In the history of religion, and as a means of inducing a sense of religious conviction, we have to reckon, therefore, with the deliberate cultivation of abnormal states of mind and body as a very powerful factor in the perpetuation of religious beliefs. This exists, as Tylor says, from the earliest ages. Thus we find the Australians using a certain shrub in their religious ceremonies, or, since contact with the whites, tobacco. In Western Siberia a species of mushroom is used to produce religious ecstasy.† An early Spanish observer also records of the ancient Mexicans that they ate on religious occasions a species of mushroom, which produced visions, and which was called "the bread of the gods."‡ Among the North American Indians the most generally used agent is tobacco. The Californian Indians give children tobacco in order to obtain information from the resulting visions. The Darien Indians used the seeds of the "Datura Sanguinea" for the same purpose. In India the Laws of Manu describes as one of the means of producing sacred visions the use of the "soma" drink. This is prepared from the sap of the lotus flower, and, while poisonous in large doses, in small quantities merely induces hallucinations. Opium and hashish, a preparation of the hemp plant, has been in general use as a means of producing ecstasy among Eastern peoples from a very remote antiquity. Opium, it is known, produces an extraordinary state of exaltation, intensifying the sense of one's personality and inducing a pleasurable consciousness of mental clarity and strength.§ Belladonna, a drug much used by the mediæval witches and sorcerers, has also its vogue for purely religious purposes. With a people as generally advanced as the Greeks, the laurel was sacred to Æsculapius. Those who wished to ask counsel of the god had to appear before the altar crowned with laurel and chewing some of the leaves. The Greek priestesses, before prophesying, drank a preparation of laurel water, which contained two toxic substances—prussic acid and the volatile oil of laurel. The first would induce convulsions and the latter hallucinatory visions. The two combined would produce, both on the subject and on the spectators, a profound conviction of spiritual illumination and possession.

Apart from the religious use of drugs in either a natural or a prepared state, there are various other methods of inducing a sense of religious exaltation. Dancing, howling, and singing are common methods to this end, from the primitive savage down to the latest Welsh revival. Primitive dancing had both a phallic and a religious significance, although, as will be shown later, to the primitive mind the sexual functions themselves are closely connected with the idea of supernatural agency. In many cases the religious dance is preceded by drug-taking; in other instances reliance is placed on the dance alone. In Ceylon this is the case with the "Devil Dancers." In Africa the witch doctor discovers the wizard through the vision induced by a prolonged dance. The Eastern Dervish produces a state of frenzy by a whirling dance. In the Bible we have the Jews dancing round the Ark in a state of nudity. David, too, danced naked before the Lord. Dancing was also part of the Greek religious ceremonies attendant on the worship of Dionysius and Bacchus. In the mediæval period witch dances were used as a means of producing exaltation. When in a state of frenzy

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* *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 410.

† J. G. Bourke, in his *Scatologic Rites*, has some curious and interesting notes on the use of this mushroom among various peoples. Pp. 69-75.

‡ Bourke, p. 90.

§ For a clear statement of the effects of hemp preparations, calculated to produce a feeling of religious ecstasy, see Hale White's *Text-Book of Pharmacology*; 1901; pp. 318-22.

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visions of Satan naturally followed. In the dancing mania of the fourteenth century the sufferers saw visions of heaven with Jesus and the Virgin enthroned. Dancing was one of the prominent features of the Convulsionaires of France in the eighteenth century. People were seized with convulsions, rolled on the ground, leaped in the air, and indulged in other forms of extravagance. So far as the religious world was concerned there was a common agreement as to the supernatural origin of the epidemic. Disagreement only arose as to whether the source was divine or diabolic. In the early period of the Methodist movement we have frenzied dancing and singing and convulsive movements again accepted as proofs of the working of the "Holy Spirit." In more recent times—except among the religiously primitive Welsh revivals—dancing and jumping seems to have been principally an outlet for the nervous energy generated at religious gatherings. In earlier times there is no doubt that dancing was deliberately resorted to as a means of inducing a sense of religious exaltation.

In both classes of cases dealt with we have the deliberate cultivation of abnormal states of mind, owing to the belief that these bring the subject into touch with a hidden supernatural world. Later, I hope to show how, with a change of form, essentially the same thing is taking place in present day religious organisations. At present we have to note that, in addition to deliberately inducing states of mind that favor or strengthen religious belief, there are other conditions of mind and body that have the same result. It has already been pointed out that amongst primitive peoples there is only one current explanation of disease. The insane person, the epileptic, the diseased person, is in the power of an indwelling spirit. There is no need to cite again evidence in favor of this statement. The main point is that people see in such cases continued and cumulative evidence of the existence of a supernatural world. Just as the inhabitants of a Welsh village have their religious beliefs quickened and strengthened by the hysterical ravings of an Evan Roberts, and the convulsive capers of a whole congregation, so in all ages people have seen endorsement of their belief in a supernatural world in the existence of cases that are now universally handed over to the care of the physician.

Consider how much of the New Testament evidence for the supernatural rests upon cases that are obviously pathological. Thus in Matthew xvii. 15 we have recorded what is, on the face of it, a clear case of epilepsy. The man describes his son as "lunatic and sore vexed; for oftimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water." The boy is brought to Jesus, who promptly rebukes the Devil and casts him out. The description of the seizure is more detailed still in Mark (ix. 18) but the method of cure remains the same. In Luke (viii. 2-3) there is also an account of many people out of whom devils are cast. But there is no doubt whatever as to the nature of the complaints under which the demoniacs of the New Testament were suffering, and it is a nice question, as Dean Trench remarks, with unconscious sarcasm, if one of the disciples "were to enter a madhouse now, how many of the sufferers there he might recognise as possessed?" The answer is, All. More, it is certain that a savage taken from any part of the world would find in the New Testament treatment of disease nothing incongruous with his own beliefs on the subject. He would be moving in a familiar atmosphere, and could cite his own experience in confirmation of the New Testament, or use the New Testament as confirmation of his own beliefs and practices.

C. COHEN.

(*To be continued.*)

Modern Criticism and Christianity.

A MAN'S religion is determined by geography. A mere glance at the religions of the world makes this perfectly clear. Whatever a man's religion may be, if he professes it with any degree of sincerity and zeal, he believes it to be the only true one. If there are a million different religions in the world, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand of them are false. Everybody denounces superstition as vain and unprofitable; but it is the people who are not of the speaker's religious way of thinking alone who are superstitious. When a Christian is reminded of the fact that his religion is the result of the geographical accident of his birth, he waxes exceedingly indignant, and would deny it if he could. Deny it he cannot, however, except with deliberately closed eyes. Only the other day a well-known divine expressed the opinion that the Turk would be a very fine fellow if only he possessed a better religion; but he forgot that the Mohammedans cherish the same conviction concerning the Christians. Where can you find an umpire competent to settle the point in dispute? Dr. Horton admits that the Indians generally are much more religious than Britishers; but their religions are so imperfect and corrupt that they cannot produce the noblest type of character—Christianity alone can do that. Mrs. Besant is equally convinced that Theosophy is the best character-forming religion in the world, while thousands of intelligent people make the same claim for Buddhism. This is the tritest of truisms, though the majority of us act as though we had never heard of it. It is the same in connection with everything. It would be easy to name four or five European nations, each of which glories in the dream that it is the greatest in the world. Mr. Lloyd George seldom addresses an audience without indulging in that boast on behalf of the British nation. The champions of France and Germany sing the praises of their respective countries in the same superlative degree—all alike forgetting that comparisons of that kind are always invidious. It is a common human weakness to place self and its interests in the position of highest honor and dignity.

Now, the comparative study of religions exposes the utter absurdity of such an ignorant and selfish claim on the part of the representatives of any religion. We will consider it in its relation to Christianity. We are assured by the divines that Christianity is the only infallible religion in existence, and by infallible is meant not capable of erring, not liable to fail, deceive, or disappoint; the only religion in which redemption through the blood of a crucified Redeemer is offered free to a lost world. But the truth is that the Christian doctrine of the Redeemer is neither original nor unique. Professor Bousset says that "the figure of the Redeemer, as such, did not wait for Christianity to force its way into the religion of the Gnosis." There are two pre-Christian documents, according to the erudite Dr. Reitzenstein, in which he clearly appears; as a rule, these pre-Christian Gnostic sects were violently anti-Jewish, speaking of "the accursed God of the Jews," and identifying him with Saturn and the Devil; and even in the Mandean and Manichean systems an entirely non-Christian standpoint is still visible. Speaking of all these pre- and non-Christian systems, Professor Gilbert Murray says:—

> "Their Redeemer is descended by a fairly clear genealogy from the 'Tritos Soter' of early Greece, contaminated with similar figures, like Attis and Adonis from Asia Minor, Osiris from Egypt, and the special Jewish conception of the Messiah of the chosen people. He has various names, which the name of Jesus or 'Christos,' 'the Anointed,' tends gradually to supersede. Above all, he is, in some sense, Man, or 'the Second Man,' or 'the Son of Man.'.....He is the real, the ultimate, the perfect and eternal Man, of whom all bodily men are feeble copies. He is also the Father; the Savior is the Son, 'the image of the Father,' 'the Second Man,' 'the Son of Man.'.....In the main he descends, of his freewill or by the eternal purpose of the Father, from Heaven through the spheres of all the Archontes or Kosmokratores, the planets, to save mankind, or sometimes to save the fallen Virgin, Wisdom, or 'the Pearl.'.....When his work is done he ascends to Heaven to sit by the side of the Father in glory" (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, pp. 144-5).

The Rev. B. W. Bacon, D.D., Professor of New

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Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University, is in full agreement with Professor Murray, and, on the whole, more to the point. He says:—

> "In the Pauline gospel the story of Jesus is a drama of the supernal regions, wherein his earthly career as a prophet, leader, teacher, sinks to the level of the merest episode. As pre-existent spirit, Jesus had been from the beginning of creation 'in the form of God.' As the period of its consummation drew near he took upon him human form, descended through suffering and death to the lowest depths of the under-world, and by Divine power had re-ascended above all the heavens with their ranks of angelic hierarchies. Whether Paul himself so conceived it or not, the Gentile world had no other moulds of thought wherein to formulate such a Christology than the current myths of Redeemer-gods. The value of the individual *soul* had at last been discovered, and men resorted to the ancient personifications of the forces of Nature as deliverers of this new-found *soul* from its weakness and mortality. The influential religions of the time were those of personal redemption by mystic union with a dying and resurrected 'Savior-god,' an Osiris, an Adonis, a Mithra. Religions of this type were everywhere displacing the old national faiths" (*The Making of the New Testament*, pp. 49 50).

Dr. Bacon is a distinguished member of the Modernist School of Liberal Christianity, the distinction between which and Unitarianism is more nominal than real. He finds two distinct gospels in the New Testament, the Gospel *of* Jesus, or the gospel which Jesus himself preached, of which Dr. Bacon is minister, and the gospel *about* Jesus, which Paul and his followers proclaimed. Jesus was only a man. Paul changed him into a God-man, in order to make him acceptable to the Gentile world. Even if the human Jesus ever lived at all, he could not have lived in history had he not been arrayed in the borrowed garments of the God-man of Paganism. Christianity has persisted, not because it is true, but because it assumed a form in which it is palpably false. In a world saturated with superstition only a superstitious cult had the slightest chance of surviving.

Is it not indisputable, then, that the Christianity of the orthodox Church is fully as mythical, fully as great a failure as any Pagan religion ever was? Dr. Bacon himself practically admits this when he says that the difference between Paul and the Jerusalem Apostles had reference to the *quality* of their respective gospels, and not merely to the *extent* of their message. Professor Bacon puts it thus:—

> "Paul's whole message of redemption through the cross and resurrection started from other premises than those of the Galilean apostles, and was conceived in other terms. For this reason it leads over to a new Christology. In short, the transition of Christianity from its Jewish to its Gentile form is not a mere enlargement of its field by the abolition of particularistic barriers. The background we must study for the understanding of it is not so much mere contemporary history as the contemporary history *of religion*. The development from the Petrine gospel, broadly characteristic of the Synoptic writings, through the Pauline Epistles to that of the Johannine writings, is a transition from Hebrew to Hellenic conceptions of what redemption is, and how it is effected" (*Ibid*, pp. 47, 48).

Thus, Biblical criticism, though it started on its career for the pious purpose of defending the traditional view of the Scripture, has been of the highest service to the cause of truth, firstly by putting the Bible in the same category as other sacred writings, and, secondly, by thrusting Christianity into its appropriate place among other religions. Instead of being, as its advocates vainly imagined, a thing apart, a special balm from heaven for the healing of the world's wounds, the science of criticism has positively proved it to be a blood-relation of every other religion on the planet. In origin, in nature, and in pretentiousness it is no exception to the rule. Its egotism is insufferable, its haughtiness is colossal, and its intolerance unequalled; and these wicked qualities were never in greater evidence than at the present moment. Almost daily they obtrude themselves upon us, and rob us of our rights and privileges. Dr. F. B. Meyer is perfectly well aware that there is "a growing demand for Sunday amusements," and yet he would move heaven and earth to prevent its being yielded to. In this metropolis, out of a population of six millions less than one million ever darken church or chapel doors; and yet the barely one million arrogate to themselves the right to determine how the remaining five millions shall spend their Sundays. Dr. Meyer has the temerity to expect the London County Council to legislate in the interests of the one million, and pay no heed whatever to any demands that may be made by the rest of the people. Is not this selfishness at its lowest and worst? Is it not bigotry in all its repulsiveness and shamelessness? Dr. Meyer's mode of life may have deprived him of the capacity to enjoy such amusements as theatres, music halls, and cinemas provide, and no doubt he has a perfect right to exhort Christians to stay away from such godless places; but he certainly has no right to impose upon the non-church going community the narrow rules by which he and his followers see fit to regulate their lives. As long as Christianity remains in our midst it will do all within its power to put down everything that does not tend to subserve its own interests. Therefore, we are resolved to devote all our resources to the task of bringing its nefarious and injurious career to as speedy an end as possible.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Vanguard of Science.

THE armies of ignorance were powerless against it. Prejudice, custom, conceit attacked it with all their malignity, and were sent awandering in the maze of credulity: they were utterly routed, but could not believe it. Strength rose up against it, fiercely innocuous. Surrounded, often, by almost inconceivable hardships, it survived to confound the imposers of them. Restricted, thwarted, bruised and broken on many a wheel of torture, its life suffered no developing weakness. Miseries were heaped upon it, and the misery-makers rewarded with a smile. Forced by bigotry into the prison of silence, it changed that into a house of thought, wherein it fashioned weapons for the future. Against it and around it religion massed its devotees, using every fair and every mean advantage to capture and enslave it, but unsuccessfully. For the desire to know is stronger than prisons, braver than its bravest enthusiast, greater than all religions, grander than its grandest discovery. To seek to enslave it, as religion has done, is but "to chasten the high sea with rods." The desire to know is immortal, in the only understandable sense, because humanity is immortal; and religion's attempt has but shown to all open minds how pitiably ignorant, or how grossly self-seeking, the upholders of superstition have been and are.

The searching for facts, and their accumulation in sequential order, named Science, has been man's principal and most glorious task. It is the father of all progress; has given into our hands the power to raise ourselves from the level whereon our predecessors walked. It has taught us their errors; nor has it omitted to tell us how to avoid them. From the greatest things to the smallest, in every aspect of our lives, the ministrations of Science have outswamped the influence of Religion. The veriest detail of our most commonplace duty is resplendent with the glory of man's organised knowledge. Contrast it with the vaunted indispensibility of Religion, and where is the latter? Hidden in the miasma of its own inutility.

Knowledge is no ascetic. Its nature is social. It belongs to humanity; not to the individual or to a sect. Its chief function is to attend humanity. And Science, classified knowledge, knowledge brought into mathematical perfection, has never stayed for one moment the dictates of its nature. Science is man's best friend. Accompanying him during his times of travail, easing his pains, smoothing the hard rough road before him, probing, with inexpressible sympathy and consideration, the pain-racked depths of

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his being, that it might discover some lever whereby the load could be lifted from his heart, going ahead that it might light the lamp of encouragement and hope, guiding, assisting, attending, Science has never ceased to be man's most noble companion.

The tasks it has accomplished have been as tremendous in their import as they have been wide in their range. It has disrobed the stars of their secrecy. It has given the wayside violet a story more marvellous than the God-myth. The Book of Ages, so long heavily sealed, it has opened and partially translated for us. In the history of a flame Science has told a tale more wonderful than the assumed glory of an assumed Jesus Christ. From the past it has drawn facts that give the lie to the past as men have painted it for us. It has broken the bars that encircled the priest-slave, Knowledge, giving us a whiff of the fragrance of freedom. Throughout all its multifarious activities Science has ever sought the wellbeing of humanity. Behind even its errors, its shortcomings, its failures, we can often see its real nature shine.

Men, under the influence of Religion, which never sought to know, but ever remained amongst the unknown things, often treated Science contemptuously and superciliously, and yet they based their little lives upon its teachings all the time. Their bitterest condemnations were made possible by the Science they affected so thoroughly to despise; they did not renounce, in their severest fulminations, the results of Science they found in organised language.

Because it undermined some of man's most deeply rooted and cherished prejudices, many men, self-styled teachers, have turned round and rent the faithful attendant. In their ignorance and ire they have countenanced a persecution the results of which no one can truthfully reckon. Around man's ankles they have locked the gyves from which he has yet to escape. He is manacled and loaded with irons moulded from priest opposition to knowledge. He lives in a narrow dark den, and breathes a fetid atmosphere Religion has fouled. It has been inevitable! Yes, it *has* happened; and, were it not for the vainglorious assumption of unparalleled humanitarianism in which Religion enswathes itself, we would willingly forego condemnation; but the attitude of Religion demands condemnation, and there are those who shall see it fails not.

One by one the bars are being cut through, and the shutters unhinged. Slowly, stone by stone, the demolition of the structure Religion has raised takes place. Gradually the prisoner is drawn from the farthest corner of his den nearer to the light.

Science gave man power, and received buffets. She gave him mastery and was repaid with scorn and diatribe. From the chalice of her might she poured forth at his feet the fruits of her labors, and man trod the best of them under his heel. But the light, streaming through the orifices of his prison is beginning to stir within him a sense of remorse. With the gleams of understanding comes appreciation, and with appreciation comes the desire to test and to realise. And ears that were open only to the insidious word-fooling of priests are now hearing the clash and clamor of the war of ideas that rages outside the prison.

While Science worked, studied, and searched, there was something that used the ammunition provided, something that advanced boldly, militant and relentless, against the armies of superstition. It was Freethought, the pioneer, the vanguard of Science. Against the huge batallions that ranged themselves to confront the discoveries of Science the Freethinker toiled and struggled in active opposition, with never diminishing strength. Science worked patiently in peace, remote from the din and turmoil; but Freethought was there in the midst of the fight battling for the liberty of mind that is the spirit of Science. If Science has attended humanity, Freethought has attended Science. In the war of Reason with Religion the protagonist of Science has been and is Freethought. Despite the odds and hardships, the thanklessness of the task, Freethought will never crave peace; not till the bars are all broken and the walls all razed to the ground, not till the foundation of religion is disentombed from its depths in ignorance.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Saucy and Audacious "Science."

"Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humor."—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

SCIENCE and religion have ever been mortal enemies. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, has always been incompatible with assent to the dogmas of religion. The entire organisation of priestcraft has invariably been brought to bear against science on the ground that it is a powerful solvent of religious faith. This resistance of the Church of Christ to the prevalent opinions of scientists has no indisputable claim to our respect. When we remember that the system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, and the Darwinian theory were all in turn received in the same venerable quarter with equal disfavor, we are inclined to attribute that resistance, not to the weakness of the arguments of the scientists, but to a general dislike of knowledge.

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of "God." The early chemists were regarded as agents of "the Devil." Physiology and medicine were opposed on similar grounds. Geology and biology were also opposed tooth and nail by the Bride of Christ. She bitterly resented inquiry, and preferred explaining natural phenomena by mythological invention.

After these many centuries of opposition, however, a lady has boldly attempted to build a golden bridge between the two. As the lady hails from the land of tall buildings and tall statements, the new evangel is not hid under a bushel. It has been spread abroad, and the gospel of Mary Baker Glover Eddy bids fair to rival the older evangel of Jesus Christ. The newest of new bibles, *Christian Science: A Key to the Scriptures*, of which the American lady-savior is the author, appeared in 1866, and is now nearing its two hundredth edition. It has been enthusiastically received by thousands of half-educated religious men and women, reverent of learning, quite unable to discriminate it from its adulterated imitation. And Mrs. Eddy, quite as indiscriminating as any of them, was admirably equipped by a nodding acquaintance with theology, metaphysics, and a pseudo-scientific vocabulary, and the gift of a tenacious memory, to give them the thing they longed for. Words were Mrs. Eddy's sole stock-in-trade. Her pomp of court and her priesthood were verbosity. There are five hundred pages of polysyllabic words in her book. To a reader familiar with the sober use of scientific terms, her explanations and definitions are delirious jargon. They are the bastard offspring of a riotous imagination playing, in the light of half-grasped ideas from the scientists, upon resonant polysyllables. For example, here is a—definition!—

> "Matter, mythology, mortality; another name for mortal mind; illusion, intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality; life resulting in death, and death in life; sensation in the sensationless; mind originating in matter; the opposite of truth; the opposite of God; that of which immortal mind takes no cognisance; that which mortal mind sees, feels, tastes, and smells in belief."

The author of this farrago of nonsense has been appropriately hailed as a teacher "second only to" Christ. It was only proper, therefore, that she should regard matter, mythology, and mortality as synonymous. Even the sacrosanct individual who thought a "whale" was a "fish" could not improve upon that blunder. On another page of this "divine revelation" we read that—

> "the metaphysics of Christian science prove the rule by inversion."

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For example:—

> "There is no pain in truth, and there is no truth in pain."

Mrs. Eddy regrets that ontology receives less attention than physiology, and relates the following improving anecdote, worthy of Baron Munchausen or Dr. Torrey:—

> "It is related that a father, anxious to try such an experiment, plunged his infant babe, only a few hours old, into water for several minutes, and repeated this operation daily, until the child could remain under water twenty minutes, moving and playing without harm, like a fish. Parents should remember this, and so learn how to develop their children properly on dry land."

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" What, in the name of common sense, did the lady-savior suppose ontology to mean? It was fitting such a teacher should give her disciples a form of prayer and a confession of faith which bears the same resemblance to the "Lord's" Prayer that margarine does to butter. The new high-priestess strutted in borrowed plumes, and charged 300 dollars for a dozen lessons. No American oil-king ever kept a keener eye or a tighter fist on money—the only material thing in existence which "Christian" science allows to be real. She never allowed a dollar that had no friends to get by her alive. In short, Ma Eddy was a religious "boss" like the late-lamented General Booth. The high-priestess of the newest and most successful form of religiosity did not escape ridicule. Mark Twain, with that characteristic twinkle in his eye, that irresistible drawl in his voice, that gravity of manner, tried to convince the lady-savior that she was mistaken. This is the way Mark burlesqued the American Abracadabra:—

> "There is an account of the restoration to perfect health in a single night, of a fatally injured horse, by the application of Christian science. I can stand a good deal, but I recognise that the ice is getting thin here. That horse had as many as fifty claims; how could he demonstrate over them? Could he do the All Good, Good-Good, Good Gracious, Liver, Bones, Truth, all down but nine, set them up on the other alley? Could he intone the scientific Statement of Being? Now could he? Wouldn't it give him a relapse? Let us draw the line at horses. Horses and furniture."

This is genuine fun, and more effective than reams of argument. It never affected the continued popularity of the Eddy evangel. For when a person joins the Christian Science temples he must leave his brains at home. Leave them locked up in an iron safe, or else have them removed by a skilled surgeon. If he should forget himself, and think just once, the bye-law provides that he shall be fired out—instantly—for ever—no return ticket.

We set out in a spirit of inquiry to make a serious examination of the claims made by Ma Eddy. But this nonsensical system makes us giddy; for, of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the imaginations of religious maniacs, this book takes the first prize. It is more incoherent than the ravings of Joanna Southcott. Beside it the Book of Mormon is a plain, unvarnished tale. The *Forty Coming Wonders* of the late Prophet Baxter is shrinking modesty compared with the effusion of Mrs. Eddy. This Yankee Bible fairly takes the breath away. No other less colloquial phrase can so aptly describe the effect of claims so far transcending sanity. One reels back from the insane heights of "Christian" Science to the simplicity of a rational system like Secularism, suited to the requirements of the age, and freed from the absurd aberrations of pre-scientific times.

MIMNERMUS.

We don't wonder that the Free Church Council of the Aberdare district are denouncing the picture-show of the Life of Jesus called "From Manger to Cross." Their wailings nearly made a funeral number of a local newspaper. They scent mischief. People may prefer to see "The Old Old Story" in a picture theatre to hearing it in a church—and that will play Old Harry with the clerical business.

Acid Drops.

"Ben Adhem" of the *Liverpool Weekly Post*, whom we had to challenge a few weeks ago for giving extra publicity to a ridiculous fable about Charles Bradlaugh and a Christian young soldier at Portsmouth, and trying to justify it by declaring that it was endorsed by Mrs. Besant, has devoted a long column of small type to a reply which is no answer. The one important point he had to deal with was the statement about Mrs. Besant. The fable itself was taken from the book he referred to. He did not invent that, he did not even misrepresent it. But he did invent, or he borrowed from someone else who invented it, the fiction of Mrs. Besant's having endorsed it. We obtained the number of the *Theosophist* he mentioned as his authority, and all we found in it was a review of Mr. Alexander Irvine's book, signed by "E. S.," which are not Mrs. Besant's initials. The Portsmouth story is quoted in that review, but to say it is endorsed is absurd. "E. S." does not endorse it. "E. S." treats it as a pleasant story which he (or she) has heard of for the first time. A story can only be *endorsed* by a person who knows whether it is true or not. "Ben Adhem" is not a fool. He sees this clearly enough. But he seeks to relieve his endangered infallibility by pretending now that it doesn't matter whether Mrs. Besant endorsed the story or not. He says that is "a minor issue." Well, it was the *only* issue he raised when he was challenged. It was therefore neither minor nor major. It was all in all. Mrs. Besant's endorsement settled the matter. But it turns out that this was only supporting one fable with another.

"Ben Adhem's" case, his *only* case, breaks down. The Bradlaugh fable was not endorsed at all in the *Theosophist*, much less endorsed by Mrs. Besant. But there is no end to the wriggling of a Christian when his infallibility is attacked. "Ben Adhem" is like the rest of his fraternity under an obligation—to his editor or his God—never to be mistaken. So he defends himself with another infallibility. "I am sure," he says. Is he? Sure of what? Why, that Mrs. Besant "would not print anything about her old colleague unless she endorses it as correct." We beg to tell "Ben Adhem" that he would be laughed at if he tried this sort of logic in a court of law. Judges don't take inferential statements as valid testimony. A plain peremptory allegation has to be justified by plain peremptory evidence. Let us also tell "Ben Adhem" that his idea of editorial responsibility is ridiculous, and especially so in this case. Mrs. Besant spends most of her time in India. How, as a mere matter of fact, can she see everything beforehand in a monthly magazine which one buys in London? Even if she did—even if she saw "E. S.'s" review of a new book published in London—it is nonsense to say that she endorsed what the reviewer did not endorse. "Ben Adhem's" argument comes to this,—that any statement about Bradlaugh must be true if it appears in the *Theosophist*—even if it is only quoted by an unknown contributor from a book casually under review! Such is the intellectual legerdemain which takes the place of the clear assertion that the Bradlaugh story was "endorsed" by Mrs. Besant.

"Ben Adhem" cannot even keep up this nonsense in his own person. After declaring that any Bradlaugh story must be true if it appears in the *Theosophist*, and arguing that *this* story must be considered as certified by Mrs. Besant's endorsement, he asks "Is Mr. Irvine's story true?" and he replies "As to that I cannot say." Of course he cannot. He sees the truth in a lucid interval.

What more is to be said? "Ben Adhem's" case is done for. The long list of Bradlaugh fables is lengthened by another. But a few words may be devoted to "Ben Adhem" himself.

There is said to be an editor in the Midlands who declares that he is the only sane editor in the district; at least the only editor who can *prove* he is sane. He was once confined in a lunatic asylum, and he was released with a certificate of sanity. He flourishes it. He defies other editors to show one like it. "Ben Adhem" goes one better than that. He writes and signs his own certificate. He assures his readers that *his* mind is of a high philosophical type. He always sees both sides of a question. Bradlaugh did not. He was a fanatic. Foote does not. He is a fanatic. "He is unbalanced," this great critic says, "as every man must be who believes that he is right and that all who hold a different view are wrong." At this rate we are *all* fanatics—including "Ben Adhem." Every man believes he is right; he *must* do so,—otherwise he would hold another opinion. Every man, likewise, believes that all who differ from him are mis-

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taken. To say that he is right is to say that they are wrong. This is not fanaticism. It is a necessary law of thought. A fanatic is not a person who believes he is right, and that those who differ from him are wrong. All men do that. It is inevitable. A fanatic is a person who tries to back up his opinions with his personality; who is insulted by the dissidence of others; who assumes that others are easily mistaken and that he cannot be; who attaches an exorbitant value to his opinions on the smallest questions; and, above all, who is prepared to promote his own views by any and every available form of force, instead of trusting to intellectual and moral persuasion. Judged by this standard, both Bradlaugh and Foote (it is "Ben Adhem" who puts them together) might hope for a verdict of Not Guilty against the charge of fanaticism.

We don't see why "Ben Adhem" should be annoyed at our observation "whoever that gentleman may be." He says that he might as well say "Mr. G. W. Foote—whoever that gentleman may be." Really! We have said that "Ben Adhem" is not a fool, but a man who is not a fool may sometimes be foolish. To print Mr. Foote's name is to say who he is. To print a writer's name as "Ben Adhem" is not to say who he is. Doesn't the gentleman see the difference?

All that can be inferred from the pseudonym of "Ben Adhem" is that the gentleman is acquainted with Leigh Hunt's beautiful poem. He might be better acquainted with it than he is. "Ben Adhem" is not a name at all. The name of the hero of the poem is Abou,—which doesn't sound so nice. Ben Adhem means a son of the family, house, or tribe of Adhem. "Ben" occurs in the Bible—for Hebrew is a Semitic language. The familiar name of Benjamin is a case in point. But we will stop here. If we went further "Ben Adhem" might regard us as a "fanatic" in accuracy —which we are sure *he* is not.

There was an illuminating passage in "A Correspondent's" reminiscences of Adrianople in the *Daily Chronicle* of February 5:—

> "The people do not trust themselves alone in the streets at night where the population is mixed. Dark deeds can easily be done quietly. This is not so true of Adrianople as of smaller towns in Turkey, where *the feud between Greeks and Bulgarians have always been very bitter.*"

So much for the alleged "happy family" character of the Soldiers of the Cross.

Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett has been the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* during the Balkan War. His communications have not manifested any very strong partiality for the Turks, and what he has to say in their favor comes, therefore, with the greater force. His experiences have just been issued under the title of *With the Turks in Thrace*, and in this volume he meets with a flat denial the stories of Turkish atrocities that were circulated, apparently as a counterblast to the undoubted Christian atrocities that occurred. The following description of the behavior of the retiring Turkish troops from Lule Burgas is taken from a *Daily Telegraph* review of the volume named:—

> "The men were starving and disorganised, but they left untouched the flocks, the chickens, and the corn of the villages they passed through, and when food was refused to them by the Christian inhabitants, who had plenty, they were gentle and forbearing. One of them offered to share with the Christian foreigner his last crust of bread. Amid all the welter of confusion and failure that these pages record there is revealed a quality of fortitude and magnanimity in the beaten Turkish soldier which is profoundly impressive."

We wonder of how many Christian troops, embittered by failure and defeat, it would be possible to write the same words?

There are times when a man of simple mind will take up a much more straightforward position, because of his simplicity, than that occupied by a more acute intelligence. The Bishop of London has been discussing the question of a miraculous *versus* a non-miraculous Christianity. Quite properly, he defends the miraculous. Being a Bishop, that, as Heine said in another connection, is his trade. He is convinced that if once the working man of East London wakes up to the fact that belief in the miraculous is absurd, he will cease to believe in the Christian Church. We agree with him. A non-miraculous Christianity is no Christianity at all. The life of the New Testament Jesus is simply saturated with the miraculous. It begins before his birth and it follows him after his death. And if anyone believes in either the miraculous birth or the resurrection of Jesus, it is simply idiotic to boggle at accepting any other of the miracles recorded. We agree with Bishop Ingram that a genuine Christianity must hold to "a supernatural and miraculous Christ." They who say otherwise are either dishonest or stupid. And we will only add that a supernatural and miraculous Christ is precisely the thing that the educated intelligence finds it increasingly difficult to accept.

The Rev. Dr. W. F. Adeney has been gladdening a Church congregation by an address on the same subject. In the course of this address, he is reported as taking his hearers back some fifteen centuries and proving from Christian writings, by what the report calls "infallible evidence," that the writers of that time believed that Jesus Christ *did* live. We don't doubt it. But there was no need to travel back fifteen centuries to produce this wonderful testimony. The *War Cry* would have done quite as well, and would have been equally conclusive. People believed, three hundred years after his alleged death, that Jesus actually lived. How on earth does that prove that their belief was solidly based on fact? Above all, how does it prove that the stories told about the Jesus whom they believed to have lived were the true stories? Dr. Adeney is the principal of a theological training college, and one can imagine the kind of thinkers that will be turned out after being subjected to his discipline.

After all, what does it matter? Suppose it could be shown that people, not fifteen centuries ago, but people living in A.D. 30 believed and knew Jesus lived. How much further have we got? All it proves is that people believed in him and the stories related about him. They believed he had a miraculous birth, that he was a supernatural person, that he worked miracles, that he rose from the dead. They believed all these things, but it does not prove that any of them occurred. Does the belief of the girl Bernadette that the Virgin appeared to her at Lourdes, and the belief of thousands of others that she did appear, prove that the Virgin Mary actually landed in Lourdes on that occasion? It proves this just as much or just as little as the belief of the primitive Christians prove that the Gospel story is true. Freethinkers do not want Christians to prove that other Christians, centuries ago, believed these stories, they want them to prove their truth. And the question is not, fundamentally, a question of history. It is a question of psychology. All the stories told about Jesus were believed about other people—both before and after him. Find out how people came to believe these stories about others, and you will understand how they came to believe them about Jesus. Dr. Adeney is merely illustrating in his own person the persistence of the type of mind that craves for the miraculous, and accordingly discovers it.

For sheer cant a sentence in the Rev. F. B. Meyer's appeal to the Churches concerning the L.C.C. elections beats everything we have seen for some time. He refers to "the variety artistes, with whom I have cast in my lot." The notion that Mr. Meyer has anything in common with music-hall artistes is supremely ridiculous. One would imagine that Mr. Meyer intended seeing that the poorer ones were better paid, or that in any legitimate grievance they have in the mode of their employment they could count on his assistance. It might even be expected that he would not be averse to doing a "turn" himself on the music-hall stage, in order to help those with whom "I have cast in my lot." Of course, all that this clerical "artful dodger" desires is to exploit the music-hall artistes in the interests of his own bigoted Sabbatarianism. We would impress upon music-hall artistes the necessity of having an eye on the company they appear to have been keeping.

What wonderful things happen to preachers. The Rev. R. J. Campbell told his congregation the other day that "One of the ablest men in the House of Commons, a man of world-wide fame, told me with the utmost simplicity and frankness that he was converted all at once from Agnosticism to faith in Christ through the power exercised, all unknown to him, by the daily prayers of someone who loved him dearly." This converted Agnostic said that the change had "nothing to do with his mentality," which we can quite believe. What we are curious about is how it was done. And how did this "ablest man in the House Commons" know it was done in that way? And if it worked with this one individual, why cannot it work with others? Why does not Mr. Campbell, for instance, select some well-known Freethinker and convert him, "all at once," by the same method? It is really a pity, with so many Freethinkers abroad, and such a cheap and easy method of getting them to see the error of their ways, that the plan is not put into practice more.

What an unspeakable scoundrel was that Parson Knight who not only abandoned his wife and went off with a girl

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engaged in Church work, but let it be supposed that he had fallen over Flamborough cliffs, and thus set far better men than himself risking their lives in a charitable effort to find him! That was the worst part of his offence. It was simply detestable.

We hear that several ladies of the congregation went into deep mourning for the "dear vicar." Their comments now are decidedly interesting. So are their husbands' who paid for the mourning.

Freethinkers may derive some amusement, at any rate in looking back, from the way in which "God" was made a party to the Hunslet farce. A memorial service was held in the eloping vicar's church, with the Bishop of Richmond as the principal performer. Men and women wept over the poor "deceased" and sang "O God Our Help in Ages Past." "God" said nothing; the pious farce went through without a word of remonstrance; which seems to us to prove the extreme improbability of "God" being a real existence.

The eloping vicar's clerical friends naturally make the most of that knock on the head. Rev. W. L. Moreton, of St. Clement's Church, Leeds, for instance, addressed his Shrovetide congregation on the subject as follows:—

> "We are met together to-night with sad hearts. It has been a heart-breaking affair to us who were friends of him of whom we are all thinking. I am glad that you all in St. Clement's parish stood up for him before this news came. He was one whom we knew to be good, and I don't think that the dreadful things of the past twelve months would ever have happened but for that motor-car accident of five years ago."

We don't suppose the Rev. W. L. Moreton extends this sort of consideration to ordinary offenders. Yet if he would give the matter a few minutes' honest reflection he would see that, whether the existing state of a man's brain was produced by an accident or given him as a natural endowment by God or Nature, he is equally under the compulsion of his physical organism. The eloping vicar is entitled to the same consideration as other offenders—no less and no more.

Parson Knight's curate, the Rev. H. J. Cobett, believing his superior officer in the Army of the Lord to be dead, published the following about him in the February number of the parish magazine:—

> "Our dear vicar has left us an example. His life was beautiful, and a few years of such service as he gave are worth a hundred years of humdrum toil. We need the inspiration of such a life as his."

What a joke! It is enough to tickle the melancholy rhinoceros.

Suppose this vulgar and vicious priest of the Church of Christ had been one of the prosecuted Freethought advocates at Leeds, only a few miles distant from Hunslet. What a hullabaloo would have been raised then! What articles would have been written, what sermons preached, on the awful effects of infidelity! As it is, however, the reverend blackguard's performance is attributed by many to his having knocked his poor head some time ago.

Parson Knight's little boy, seven years of age, is most to be pitied. He was told that his father was dead. He has since learnt that his father is a living scoundrel. Poor boy! And they sentimentalise over his father's "fondness" for him! Christianity used to be cruel; it is now simply disgusting.

Rev. Robert Leamon, aged sixty, has been sentenced at the Old Bailey, London, to three months' imprisonment for publishing libels concerning Mr. Douglas Earle Marsh. The Common Serjeant said he had no doubt that the prisoner's object was blackmail.

A young woman of twenty, called Lucie Allaigre, of Annecy, murdered her mother because she would not allow her to become a nun in a convent. In face of suspicious circumstances she finally confessed her guilt, and is now doing twenty years' imprisonment. We presume the clergy will *not* parade this case as a testimony to the moral influence of religion.

Buddhu, the prisoner who has turned King's evidence in the Clark case at Agra, mentions a curious instance of religious action in the course of the murder. One of the assassins hired to kill Mrs. Clark "proceeded to the Clarks' house with a large knife, which Mohan kissed and worshiped and sharpened on a stone." There is nothing new in this to the student of religion, but it may strike the ordinary man as extremely strange. The explanation is that religion is not necessarily connected with morality at all. It is frequently the last sanction of crime.

In the course of a recent application at a Consistory Court on behalf of Grosvenor Chapel, Hanover-square, it was mentioned that the chapel had accommodation for 800 persons but 80 was now considered a good congregation. It was thought that more people would be attracted if a four-post canopy (a balachino) were erected over the communion table. What a sensible and dignified way of trying to fill a church!

Sunday tramcars have just started at Bournemouth. We shall see whether the cliffs fall in.

The opponents of Sunday picture-shows are now railing at what they call the "thin pretext of charity" on the part of the management. We beg to remind them that it was their own invention. They did not like to deliver a frontal attack on "Sunday amusements" so they raised an objection to such things being carried on "for gain." It was a silly objection—as well as a dishonest objection; but it caught on with the "authorities," and committees were formed to comply with the new regulation. When it was found that the Sunday picture-shows were not stopped by this difficult regulation the Sabbatarians took to denouncing their own offspring. They now talk about "gain" and the "thin pretext of charity" in the same breath.

The Wolverhampton Free Church Council has passed the following resolution:—

> "This Council, composed of ministers and laymen representing the Free Churches of Wolverhampton and district, deeply deplores the publishing of newspapers to be sold on Sunday, and especially regrets the intention to add to such papers by the issuing of one in Wolverhampton."

Note the trade spirit of this protest. It is Sunday *selling*, not Sunday *labor*, that is found so objectionable; for Sunday papers are edited and printed on Saturday, while Monday papers are edited and printed on Sunday. Of course the *selling* of papers on Sunday is a rivalry with the Churches. Anything that interests the people on the "Lord's Day" tends to keep them away from "divine service." What the Free Church ministers and their friends want is a monopoly of business on the Blessed Sabbath. They don't say so, but that is what they mean, and it is the key to all their acts and resolutions.

A remark made by the Rev. Davison Brown in the discussion was very naive. "If they had administrative power to the extent of their convictions," he said, "there would be a great change in the social conditions in Wolverhampton." No doubt there would. Fortunately it isn't likely to happen.

As our readers are probably aware, the proposed census of the churches by the *Daily News* has been abandoned, owing to an appeal from the Bishop of London and the Rev. F. B. Meyer. Both these clerical lights argue that numbers prove nothing, or are positively misleading. Their position is that what the churches lose in quantity they gain in quality. The lukewarm and indifferentists drop out, and the church is left with a band of devoted and enthusiastic believers. We are glad to see the *British Weekly* protesting against this assumption, and calling for the census to be taken. It also quotes from the *Inquirer* to the effect that a declining church attendance, instead of meaning a concentration of "spiritual power," really "means that the diminishing congregations of the faithful are depressed and out of heart..... The decline in the habit of worshiping means a decline in the power of religion, and should be treated from that point of view." And this, we think, is the only sane point of view from which to treat it.

The assumption that it is the mentally lazy, the indifferent, and the "worldly minded" who throw up the churches is simply untrue. It is precisely those classes that remain. In the vast majority of cases the people who sever their connection with churches are those who think seriously about religious questions, and who value consistency above worldly advancement. There is simply no question that, if one could subject to some common test those who have thrown up the churches and those who still remain, there would be a big balance of moral force and intellectual strength in favor of those who are outside. No man gains anything by throwing up a church; it may often subject him to loss. And the notion that the remaining church attendants are filled with moral fervor, intellectual strength, and high spiritual aspirations is about as ridiculous as anything could well be. Look at a church or chapel congregation, listen to their conversation, or follow their progress from Monday morning to Saturday night, and see.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 16, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "The Meaning of Death."

February 23, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

J. B.—We have not the slightest idea who "Ben Adhem" is. He says he contributed to this journal when he was a mere boy. We do not recollect it, but there have been hundreds of "contributors" to the *Freethinker*, first and last, outside the regular staff; besides, nothing hangs on that point in the present controversy.

T. HODGSON.—The quotation from the *Huddersfield Examiner* was written by the editor in 1880 and might have been challenged at the time if it *could* be challenged. What is the use of a contradiction at this time of day? You may rely upon it that the gentleman you refer to is mistaken. The watch story is a myth. It has been told of *all* Freethought leaders, and every one of them has *denied* it in his or her own case. Bradlaugh asked for the evidence in his case; it was never produced, even though he took legal action in order to kill the slander. If the evidence could not be produced then, how on earth is it to be produced now? Besides, the gentleman you refer to, being 64, must have been remarkably young at the time when Bradlaugh was alleged to have performed the watch trick at the Philosophical Hall, Huddersfield. That was in 1860 or 1861. Ask the gentleman to work out the figures for himself.

E. HANNAH.—Thanks for the cuttings. We did not know that the eloping vicar of Hunslet had publicly debated with Mr. T. A. Jackson at Victoria-square, Leeds.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "I hope the Fund may be early completed, and that you may have health and strength to enjoy it and to give that service to Freethought which is the salt of life to you."

F. C. HOLDEN (U.S.A.).—Thanks for your efforts to extend our circulation.

F. HILL.—Quite right. Freethinkers who claim to affirm under Bradlaugh's Oaths Act should recollect that they are demanding a right not requesting a privilege. If they ask *why* they claim to affirm, they should reply that they do so on the ground that they have no religious belief. They should stick to this and respectfully decline to answer any other question.

E. RUSSELL.—There is nothing to take hold of in the reverend gentleman's sermon. Glad you owe your mental emancipation to the *Freethinker*.

H. SILVERSTEIN.—Your appreciative and encouraging letter is valued. As a member of the N. S. S. Executive you are in a position to judge, and you know what you are talking about. Thanks for your good wishes, as well as subscription (in last week's list) for the President's Honorarium Fund.

JOSEPH BAVINS.—Sorry for the oversight.

A. W. HUTT.—Harold Spender's articles on the war are jokes. He is just a hired partisan. Mr. Foote keeps tolerably well.

S. SOLOMONS.—Not quite up to our mark—and we have plenty of copy at present.

H. HUMPHREYS.—Shall appear.

E. B. forwards cheque "With compliments and best wishes for a more rapid inpouring of the subscriptions to the Honorarium Fund, which stands as the tangible appreciation of the gifted editor of the all-alive *Freethinker* by its grateful readers."

JOHN SUMNER (Birmingham) remarks that his subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund for 1913 is twice the amount of last year's. This is on account of the reference in the Appeal to the death of former large subscribers. "I sincerely hope," he says, "that many others may be like-influenced, and that the sum aimed at may be considerably exceeded." Our correspondent wishes that "an additional nought could supplement" the present figure. It is good of him, but our wants do not rise to that majestic height. We are not a Bishop—though we hope we are more useful.

F. PRAWETT.—The sentence you quote from Mr. Lloyd is a fine one, but we don't think it quite meets the questioner's trouble *re* Determinism. At the root of most misunderstanding of the subject is the confusion of free choice and free will.

M. M.—Sorry you had the trouble.

R. P.—Mr. Foote is an extemporaneous speaker; all his notes for any lecture would go on one page of a sheet of notepaper, and would be unintelligible to anyone but himself. It would be too expensive to have verbatim reports of his lectures taken for publication, either in the *Freethinker* or in pamphlet form.

A. R.—Next week. Thanks.

AVON DALE.—Dante was a great poet, of course, but it is a pity that his genius is associated with such a theme as the exploded theology of the Middle Ages. It has not been in our way to refer to him much. We have no other reason for our silence. We are sorry the publicist you refer to is so "jumpy."

CAN anyone supply us with Nos. 14 and 34 of the *Freethinker* for 1893?

KRIDON.—Shall be very pleased to receive it, or anything else from your pen. Glad to have your opinion that the "Logic of Persecution" is "exceptionally fine."

E. N.—It is impossible to say how much the State Church really costs. The clergy have always managed to baffle inquiry. Gladstone reckoned its capitalised revenues would represent a hundred millions. Estimates vary from four to ten millions annually.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

SECOND LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Previously acknowledged, £30 10s. 10d. Received since: C. F. Simpson, 10s. 6d.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2 2s.; E. B., £1 1s.; John Sumner, £2 2s.; Josiah Pendlebury, £1; Joseph Bevins, £1; M. M., 5s.; W. H. Morrish, £2 2s.; T. Robson, 5s.

Correction: Harriet Blake in last week's list should have been Harriet Baker.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's subject at Queen's Hall this evening (Feb. 16) is "The Meaning of Death." Such a subject should be generally attractive. It affords a good opportunity for Freethinkers to bring their orthodox friends along to the meeting.

London Freethinkers should heckle their County Council candidates on the question of collections at meetings conducted by *bond fide* Societies in the Parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. The Parks Committee are trying to stop all such collections, and a Central Committee of delegates from advanced Societies, including the N. S. S., is trying to assert the old right. The fight will begin in grim earnest as soon as the new Council meets.

Mr. Cohen is paying Belfast another visit. He is booked to lecture at the Old School of Art on February 13, 14, and 16. We hope all readers of the *Freethinker* in the neighborhood will try to attend these meetings.

The Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League will be held at Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30. Members are specially urged to attend. A public meeting will follow at 8.15, with Mr. Halley Stewart in the chair. The list of speakers includes Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D.

The newly formed Croydon Branch of the N. S. S. held its first meeting on Sunday at Ruskin House, West Croydon. There was a good attendance. Officers were elected for the ensuing twelve months, and it was arranged to hold meetings at Ruskin House opposite West Croydon Station. Freethinkers in the neighborhood are earnestly invited to attend the next meeting on March 2 at 7.30 p.m. Further information may be obtained of the secretary, Mr. J. U. Wood, 200 St. James's-road, Croydon.

The half-yearly meeting of London members of the N. S. S. will be held at Chandos Hall, Maiden-lane, Strand, on Tuesday, March 4. Chair will be taken at 8 p.m. by the President, Mr. G. W. Foote. The Executive will be present. Members are reminded that admission can only be secured by showing cards of membership. This rule will be strictly observed. The business of the meeting will be a discussion

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on the lines of the resolution carried at the last (Leeds) Conference.

We are pleased to hear again from our veteran friend Mr. W. H. Morrish, of Bristol, whose memories of Freethought go back to the days of Charles Southwell and the imprisonment of George Jacob Holyoake. Our old friend's handwriting is nearly as good as ever, but we regret to hear that he has been ailing lately. He says of the President's Honorarium Fund "it has always commanded my warmest sympathies." "I have still a warm corner in my heart for the *Freethinker*," he adds, "and it is a frequent wonder to me that you still find so many good things to say."

The local press notices the death and funeral of Mr. B. L. Coleman, of Sandwich, but nothing is said about his having been almost a lifelong Freethinker. We see by the *Advertiser* that the clergyman who lent himself to the "ignoble farce," as we called it, of burying Coleman as a Christian, was the Rev. Orlebar Payne, who must know that the dead man would laugh in his face if he could. The *Deal, Walmer, and Sandwich Mercury* confirms a point in our own obituary notice of Coleman. He says that he "will be greatly missed by many in the district whom he has at various times befriended."

Rev. Dr. Inge, preaching at St. Ann's Church, Manchester, on "Christianity and its Opponents," said there were three counts in the indictment against Christianity (we quote from the *Daily Mail* (Feb. 7) :—

> "First, the educated man of the world said, 'Your ethics on the whole are sound and good, but they are entangled in a mythology which has become almost incredible and barbarous.' Secondly, the student of evolutionary science said Christian ethics were founded on sentiment, not on reason. It thwarted the beneficent action of nature by protecting the weak against the strong. It preached forgiveness, whereas nature never forgave. Thirdly, and much more clamorously, they heard all round them a very different complaint, couched in less academic language, 'You sky-pilots offer us cheques on another world in order that we may tamely submit to be swindled in this. We don't want to hear about heaven or hell; we want better wages and shorter hours. If your religion will help us to get what we want here and now, well and good; otherwise, we have no use for it.'"

Dr. Inge's reply was of no importance. It was, indeed, no reply at all, but a rapturous eulogy of Christianity. The really important thing is the admission which we reproduce.

China and Our Christian Civilisation.

A FEW weeks ago I had the pleasure of meeting, at one of the principal hotels in London, a distinguished Chinese Freethinker, Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia, the founder of the Parliamentary Sinophile group in Europe. Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia is a cultured young man, apparently of the higher literary class in China. He has spent the last six years of his life in France and Belgium, principally as a student at the University of Liège, preparatory to entering upon his professional career as a civil engineer. His knowledge of English is confined to the reading of our authors, but his mastery of the French language has been justly admired, especially on account of his notable speech at the Freethought demonstration at Brussels in November last, when he occupied the platform and divided the honors of the evening with such accomplished orators as M. Gustave Hubbard, the French Deputé, and the Portuguese Senator, Senhor Magalhaes Lima.

Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia is evidently a man of considerable energy and determination of character, with a phenomenally impressive personality. Despite the immense disadvantage of being an unknown and unaccompanied individuality, he has been able, in quite a surprisingly short space of time, to visit the different capitals of Europe, and obtain introductions to, and awaken the deep interest of, some of the most prominent parliamentarians of France, England, Belgium, Germany, and Austria in his semi-official project for the formation of Sinophile groups in the different countries of Europe and America. His mission was to expound the present situation as between China and European civilisation, and to invite the different Parliaments of the West to send representatives to attend the approaching assembly of the first legislative Chambers of the Chinese Republic. The opening of the first Chinese Parliament will take place two months hence (in April), and this event will form one of the most remarkable occurrences in contemporary history. Not the most optimistic amongst the friends of human progress would have dared, a few years ago, to prophesy that a Chinese Republic was destined to be formed within the lifetime of this generation, or that a clean sweep would be made of the Manchu regime. But this and many other things even more astounding have been realised in the epoch-making year of 1912, the first day of which was signalised by the proclamation of the Chinese Republic and the deposition of the Emperor. In this work of regeneration we may see the leaven of the principles of Freethought and its collateral political principles brought into China from Europe in the quick brains and receptive intelligence of the many Chinese students who have been sent to Europe as "chiels amang ye takin' notes," and have studied and reflected upon the virtues and vices inherent in our Western civilisation.

The regeneration of China and the rejuvenating of its anachronistic type of civilisation became the inevitable law of national defence and of the corporate stability of the yellow race after the culminating horrors which the coalesced nations of Europe imposed upon the Chinese people at the time when the allied robber nations of Christendom were Shanghaied into a crusade of plunder and spoliation in China. The process of national rejuvenation, indeed, became inevitable after France and England had nefariously combined to levy the odious opium war against the "heathen Chinee" Government. China's crime was that she sought to defend her subjects against the imposition of Christian-grown opium, with its demoralising train of consequences. The pillage of the Summer Palace was the barbaric sign and manifestation of the superior morality of Christianity as a civilising agency in the Farther East. The Shanghai expedition, ten years ago, was but the culminating point at which a cynical display was made of the rapacity and unblushing piracy of the religious robber races of the West in their dealings with the defenceless hordes of the East. It is clear that unless Europe is willing in the near future to make atonement to China by adopting the policy nearest to the heart of the Chinese people—a policy of *laissez faire*—the course of national evolution in China will assuredly take shape in the militarisation of the Republic and the ultimate consecration of its chief resources to the patriotic task of driving the European nations into the sea.

My intercourse with Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia taught me that such a line of national development is farthest from the thought of the capable and enlightened men who are at the helm of affairs in the Celestial Republic. Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia assured me that China has but one wish, and that is to develop her internal resources and to remain at peace with the whole world. The Chinese, in fact, although far from lacking animal courage, are naturally the most pacific race of men, and have no ambition to overrun the neighboring nations, inasmuch as the enormous territory settled by them forms in itself a complete world, amply meeting all the requirements of the national ideals. If the evolution of the sceptical and utilitarian Chinese is, indeed, to take the direction of excessive militarisation, it will be entirely the fault of the peace-loving followers of Christianity. At this very moment, Russia—Christian and holy—is endeavoring to grab Mongolia, and is, moreover, laboring in an underhand manner to obtain the restoration of the fallen Manchu dynasty. All the Powers besides seem actuated by the maleficent desire to secure the economic servitude of China by imposing loans upon her that shall be territorially secured, or by extracting from her enforced concessions for the benefit of unscrupulous financial syndicates. This dangerous Christian game, already successfully played quite recently in Persia, of "beating my neighbor out of doors," can only have

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one issue—the partition of China; and China would follow the downward path pursued by Poland, and share the fate of Poland, with all the usual dreadful consequences of national absorption, enforced by irresponsible satraps and by soldiery acting at their behests. In view of these grim possibilities, the Chinese, who, though heathen, are not idiots cretinised by the slave ethics of Christianity, are quite determined to defend their national integrity and are not sighing to be placed under the tender mercies of European tutelage.

The leading men who are now guiding the destinies of the Chinese Republic are anxious to establish sympathetic relations between the intellectuals of China and the intellectuals of Europe. Up to the present, as Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia has epigrammatically stated, China has only come in contact with three categories of Europeans, the diplomatists, the financiers, and the missionaries. The first step towards the establishment of this eminently desirable understanding was the formation of the French parliamentary group, under the presidency of M. Painlevé, Membre of the Institut de France and Deputé. Similar groups have since been formed in Belgium, Germany, Austria, Portugal, and the United States, and in each case the initiative has been undertaken by our friend, Hain-Jou-Kia. As the result of his labors, a joint parliamentary visit will be paid to Pekin, and the party will most likely consist of Herr Scheidemann, the veteran German Socialist Democrat, my friend Magalhaes Lima, representing the Portuguese Parliament—the latest Republic in Europe thus saluting the first Republic in Asia—and my good friend Lorand, who says that though the journey is a long one, it is worth the time and the money and the labor in order to take part in this embodied proof of the awakening of the yellow races. M. H. de Pressensé, the eminent French Socialist, and M. Pichon will go as representing the French Government, and England will probably be represented by Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, M.P.

The formation of the English parliamentary group took place on January 1. A preliminary meeting was held the same day in one of the Committee Rooms of the House of Commons, and several well-known M.P.'s, including Mr. Arthur Lynch and Mr. J. Wedgwood signified their willingness to join. In this way England was happily brought into line with the other progressive nations of Europe in this important movement for a better understanding between East and West.

In my interview with him, Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia stated that as soon as the French parliamentary group had been formed at Paris, Yan-Shi-Kai, the provisional President of the Chinese Republic, at once gave his adhesion to the French group, and the President of the Provisional Assembly telegraphed to him that he had formed a parliamentary group at Pekin amongst the Chinese delegates. He told me that, in forming these groups, "we are concerned not only with a principle of justice, but with a principle dealing with the universal conscience of mankind towards the aspirations of the Chinese people for more light and liberty." He was abounding in gratitude to the French nation, because it was in France, in March last, at Paris, that he had the honor of organising the first manifestation in Europe favorable to the maintenance of the Chinese Republic—viz., at the inaugural banquet at which three hundred parliamentary delegates and university professors took part, under the presidency of M. Paul Painlevé, assisted by M. Monis, late President of the Council, and the world-renowned M. Anatole France, who, in a superb speech, expressed himself in these terms:—

> "The Chinese Republic is founded on the principle of justice and liberty. In spite of the troublous experiences and the somewhat uncertain situation through which the Republic is passing, I have confidence in the Chinese Republic. China, now a Republic, is the preparation for universal peace."

In expounding his object, Mr. Hain-Jou-Kai reminded me that the Chinese people, up to the present, have been in contact with only two sorts of European—the religious missionaries and the men of commerce. But the great bulk of the Chinese—those in the interior—have been for thousands of years trained in the Confucian philosophy and are indifferent to religious questions; and, as for the European traders and exploiters, whose only interest is in material affairs, the Chinese people are equally suspicious of them and their particular ways of pushing their commercial interests. The intellectuals in China know that in Europe there exist great numbers of independent and high-minded politicians and savants and philosophers of immense value, who enjoy an important moral authority in the world of thought. These are the sort of Europeans too little known in China, the men with whom it is extremely important that China should become intimately and sympathetically acquainted. I, therefore, propose (he said) to form an Anglo-Chinese Association, consisting, first of all, of members of the English parliamentary group, and, secondly, of English scientists, savants, philosophers, journalists—in a word, of all the men of liberal thought and humanitarian principles, in order to bring home to the Chinese people a clear knowledge of the true conditions of civilisation, as understood in Europe; to teach them that the Europe outside China is not to be judged by the Europe as seen in China; and, finally, to complete the work of the parliamentary group, as exerted upon governments and diplomacy, by a sympathetic understanding between the progressive and enlightened elements both in Europe and China.

I hope that these Sinophile groups, so happily inaugurated by Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia, will prosper in every land; and I shall look forward with intense interest to the reports which our parliamentary missionaries will render as to the prospects of stability before the new Republic of China. To Freethinkers, especially, this mission of goodwill from West to East will be of deep interest, as opening up a new world to be won for the eternal principles of human liberty.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Black Army.—III.

I MAY be told—in fact I *have* been told—that the salary is not *everything* to the members of the Black Army. I never said it was. They have tastes and inclinations, like other men, and prefer to earn their living in that way. What tickles my risibility is the pretence that they are "moved by the Holy Ghost." They are really "called" by the motives which lead men into other professions. When a man already in holy orders receives a "call," in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is to a more lucrative or eligible situation. The farce which is gone through on such occasions is sickening. When a clergyman leaves a poor living for a richer one, he solemnly declares that he is directed thither by the third person of the Trinity. Every man of sense knows this to be a hypocritical falsehood. Nor is the case any better among Nonconformists. A minister is invited by a neighboring or distant congregation; the stipend is higher, and the church more famous. He cannot give an immediate answer, for it would look too much like a mere business transaction. He says he will consider it, and consult the Lord, and pray to be told what he should do. Meanwhile he makes inquiries, the negotiations continue, and perhaps his old congregation makes him a tempting offer to remain. When he has thought the matter out and come to a decision, he finds that he has a clear call from the Holy Ghost; and when he preaches his farewell sermon, he does not say that he has accepted a better situation, but that he is going to a wider sphere of usefulness.

Many years ago a friend of mine was a member of a Congregational Church at Manchester. The minister was an attractive rhetorician, and was known to be contemplating a career in London. His congrega-

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tion wished to retain him, and money was raised to purchase him a house. Subsequently a fresh bribe had to be put in his way. Another house was purchased for him, and a handsome cheque was presented to him in the vestry. The man of God pocketed the cheque with great complacency: but he could not tell the deputation whether he would stay with "his old church" or go to London. He would have to lay the matter before the Lord. A week later he said he had been told to go. But he did not return the cheque, and within another week the house was advertised "to be sold." My friend thought the church was sold too. It was a lesson to him for life. He has understood the Black Army ever since.

English history furnishes a colossal illustration of the worldly, mercenary motives of the Black Army. During the sixteenth century England was converted, reconverted, and converted back again; and it was all done with the high hand of temporal power. Henry the Eighth quarrelled with the Pope, repudiated his spiritual supremacy, and set up an independent Church. Under his successor this Church was made definitely Protestant. The reign of Edward the Sixth was a short one, but during that brief period the Prayer Book was drawn up and ordered to be used in all churches, under penalty of fine, imprisonment, banishment, and finally death. The Church officials declared that they were moved in this matter by the Holy Ghost. But soon after, when Mary came to the throne, they kicked out the Prayer Book, and declared that the Holy Ghost had nothing to do with it. Once more the English Church became Catholic, and the Protestant clergy turned right about face to keep their livings. Only a hundred and twenty, out of about thirteen thousand, had the honesty to stand by their convictions. Elizabeth succeeded Mary, the English Church went back to Protestantism, and the glorious Reformation was a standing proof of the ease with which the pulpit can be turned by those who have power over the bread-and-cheese of the clergy.

Let me conclude with a few words on the function of this Black Army. Our red-coats have to fight a visible, tangible enemy; they shoot, and they are shot at; they kill, and they are killed. Many who are not killed are wounded, and bear about them the scars of combat. But the Black Army fight an enemy who is intangible and invisible. They fight the Devil. This personage was once a grim reality, at least in the imagination of believers; but he has sunk into a comic figure, and is now laughed at as a bogey. Nevertheless, the Black Army survives. It is engaged in fighting "Sin." But what a ridiculous notion it is that sin can be put down by preaching. The Black Army should be disbanded, and the money it costs be expended on the secular improvement of the people.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Vital Lies."

"How shall my friend revere the truth in my mind when I myself am careless about it, when I believe things because I want to believe them, and because they are comforting and pleasant? Will he not learn to cry 'Peace' to me when there is no peace? By such a course I shall surround myself with a thick atmosphere of falsehood and fraud, and in that I must live. It may matter little to me, in my cloud-castle of sweet illusions and darling lies; but it matters much to Man that I have made my neighbors ready to deceive. The credulous man is father to the liar and the cheat; he lives in the bosom of this his family, and it is no marvel if he should become even as they are."—PROFESSOR W. K. CLIFFORD, *Lectures and Essays*; 1886; pp. 345-6.

"This is a common argument: 'If you only knew the comfort of belief!' My reply is that I choose the nobler part of Emerson, when, after various disenchantments, he exclaimed, 'I covet *truth!*' The gladness of true heroism visits the heart of him who is really competent to say this."—PROFESSOR TYNDALL, *Fragments of Science*; 1879; vol. ii., p. 233.

"The profoundest of all infidelity is the fear lest the truth be bad."—HERBERT SPENCER.

EVERY year, with monotonous regularity, when the statistics of the Nonconformist Churches are published, it is found that their membership, instead of increasing, has decreased, and this in spite of the increase in the population. And yet, in spite of this increasing slump in membership, we are assured by the religious press that there is not less religious belief prevalent, but more; that the mechanical and materialistic explanations of the scientists of the last century have been abandoned, and that science is now leading us to a belief in a spiritual, in place of a material, basis of the universe.

Now, those who are conversant with the aims and methods of modern science know that this is untrue, and if the writers in the religious press knew anything more of science than what they skim from the pages of the *Hibbert Journal*, the *Contemporary Review*, and similar spineless publications, they also would know that it was untrue.

That there has not been so much attention bestowed by scientific men upon what is called the conflict between religion and science, is due to the fact that the scientists of the last century, represented by Tyndall, Huxley, Clifford, and others—using the bullets moulded by Spencer and Darwin—so completely put the theologians to rout that their successors have regarded any further operations in this direction in the light of flogging a dead horse. As Huxley once remarked, scientists "have better than mere antiquarian business in hand, and if dogmas, which ought to be fossils but are not, are not forced upon their notice, they are too happy to treat them as non-existent."*

Taking heart from this victorious peace, we find the defenders of supernaturalism now claiming that science is not opposed to the teachings of religion as to creation and a future life, and back their assertion by citing Kelvin, Wallace, and Sir Oliver Lodge. We have gone into this question before, and have pointed out that Wallace admits, and deplores, that scientists as a body are wholly given over to the mechanical view of things. Sir Oliver Lodge declares that the "atmosphere of modern science is adverse to the highest religious emotion," and it "shows us a self-contained and self-sufficient universe.....nothing supernatural or miraculous, no intervention of beings other than ourselves being conceived possible."† When Lord Kelvin—deservedly famous for his discoveries and inventions in mathematics, physics, and mechanics—appealed to creative power for the production of life, the introduction of the supernatural into this department of science was promptly repudiated by our leading naturalists and biologists, Sir Thistleton Dyer roundly declaring that "For dogmatic utterance on biological questions there is no reason to suppose that he is better equipped than any person of average intelligence."

But it is from the philosophers like the French Professor Bergson and the American Professor James that the reactionaries draw their greatest strength. We make bold to assert that neither of these gentlemen would have been heard of beyond their own circle but for their gift of fine writing with which they have clothed their ideas, such as they are. As Mr. Hugh Elliott has observed, "The metaphysic of Bergson has all the incomprehensibility that are essential to the most respectable philosophy."‡

By the way, was the Bergsonian philosophy responsible for the conversion of Mr. Bernard Shaw—who used loudly to proclaim his Atheism—whose "Life Force" bears a suspicious family likeness to Bergson's "Vital Impetus"? Meeting Mr. Shaw one day, the Rev. R. J. Campbell—like another Paul at Athens—improved the occasion by saying: "Do you know, Shaw, that your 'Life Force' is identical with my God?" Stunned by this revelation from the City Temple prophet, Mr. Bernard Shaw replied: "Good God! Campbell, you don't say so?" "Oh, yes; it's quite true," said the divine; "and what's more, Shaw, you're a Christian without knowing it." And Mr. Bernard Shaw went straight home and

* *Lay Sermons*, p. 277.

† *Man and the Universe*, pp. 4-6.

‡ Hugh Elliott, *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*; 1912; p. 7. Those who wish to see an uncompromising exposure of Bergson's philosophy should read this work.

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wrote a tract in which he declared his belief "not only in a trinity, but in a trillion-trinity," and in the immaculate conception of Jesus, because he believed in the immaculate conception of every mother.* The Rev. R. J. Campbell thankfully accepted this marvellous—and evidently inspired proof—of doctrines which even Christians had become ashamed of, and published it in his "Modern Pulpit" series. This comes of consorting with a priest and a metaphysician.

Mr. Hugh Elliott dealt faithfully with Professor Bergson, and now we have another trenchant work dealing with Professor James and other obscurantists, by the brilliant and accomplished lady who writes under the pen name of "Vernon Lee."†

Professor James is best known as the author of *The Will to Believe, Pragmatism*, and *Varieties of Religious Experience*. It is to these works that Vernon Lee more especially addresses herself. Says the author:—

> "The peculiarity of Pragmatism is (as I hope to demonstrate) its tactics of advancing untenable propositions and falling back upon received ones; its shuffling the principle which is hard to accept in a handful of principles we have willingly accepted; its medium-like device (for only successive metaphors can illustrate habits so protean) of slipping a hand out of the seemingly unbroken circle of concatenated thought, in order to produce all manner of new and desirable manifestations" (vol. i., p. 8).

Pragmatism was not invented by Professor James, although it is now identified with his name; it was the name adopted by Mr. Pierce for the principle of "How to Make our Ideas Clear," a very laudable undertaking until Professor James, as Vernon Lee shows, transmogrified it into the Will-to-Believe and the Making of Truth, "and by converting this principle, by endless moves revoked whenever detected, into the very thing which that proto-Pragmatist had invented Pragmatism to expose, disprove, confute, and reduce for ever to silence" (vol. i., p 12)

In the chapters dealing with "What is Truth?" Vernon Lee lays bare the true inwardness of Pragmatism. It works out like this (to give a very short and condensed summary): Professor James begins with the seemingly innocent statement that you can say of an opinion "either that 'it is useful because it is true' or that 'it is true because it is useful'—both these phrases mean exactly the same thing." That is the first step. Then further:—

> "The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite assignable reasonable reasons. Surely you must admit this, that if there were no good for life in true ideas, or if the knowledge of them were positively disadvantageous and false ideas the only useful ones, then the current notion that truth is divine, and its pursuit a duty, could never have grown up or become a dogma. In a world like that, our duty would be to shun truth, rather."

That is the second step, which brings us to the third step, as follows:—

> "If there be any life that it is really better we should lead, and if there be any idea which, if believed in, would help us to lead that life, then it would be really better for us to believe in that idea, unless, indeed, belief in it incidentally clashed with other greater vital benefits."‡

And there you have it; the believer, or rather the one who wills to believe, can be safely trusted to take the last step for himself, and say that he believes in a future life and a benevolent God, not because they can be proved true, but because they are useful or comfortable.

Vernon Lee also calls attention to Professor James' claim for alcohol, that it "stimulates the mystical faculties of human nature." That drunkenness "brings its votary from the chill periphery of things to their radiant core. It makes him for the moment one with truth." This provides a new excuse for the toper, who may now plead that he is only stimulating his "mystical faculties." The Professor does not state that he himself experimented in this direction; but he submitted himself to the influence of nitrous oxide gas—commonly called "laughing gas"—and he gives some examples of the resulting gibberish. This is one: "What's mistake but a kind of take? What's nausea but a kind of ausea? Sober, drunk,—unk, astonishment, etc., etc." How sublime!

However, Professor James was not the first to experiment in this direction. Mr. Moncure Conway tells us that, when ether was discovered, Oliver Wendell Holmes—thinking it might possess some spiritual virtues—placed himself under its influence, pencil in hand. Being seized with a vast thought, he wrote it down.

> "It proved to be these words: 'A strong smell of turpentine pervades the whole.' But he was not satisfied with that, and made another effort. 'This time,' he said, 'I felt as I wrote that I really had seen the secret of the universe. The words proved to be: Put Jesus Christ into a Brahma press and that's what you'll get!'"*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

* *Modern Religion*, by George Bernard Shaw; 1912; p. 3.

† *Vital Lies*, by Vernon Lee; 1912; 2 vols. (John Lane; 10s. net.)

‡ These quotations of Professor James are all taken from *Vital Lies*, pp. 50-69-73.

* Moncure Conway, *Autobiography*; 1904; vol. i., p. 342.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JAN. 30.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. Other members present were: Messrs. Barry, Brandes, Cohen, Cowell, Davey, Davies, Davidson, Gorniot, Leat, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Schindle, Wood, and Misses Kough and Stanley.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Liverpool and West Ham Branches and the Parent Society, and an application was received and granted for the formation of a new Branch at Croydon as the result of the lectures recently given there under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.

A suggestion from M. Victor Charbonnel, Secretary of the Cercle Berthelot, of Paris, was received through a friend of the movement, that an interchange of visits between French and English Freethinkers might be arranged, and that whilst in this country the French delegates might join in a protestation against the Blasphemy Laws. The Secretary was instructed to reply cordially reciprocating their desire.

Further particulars having been received, it was resolved to affiliate with the Social Defence Committee, and Messrs. Heaford and Cohen were elected as delegates.

The Executive being informed that the L. C. C. Parks Committee had not reported to the Council, the President suggested that it was time for the N. S. S. to act, the Executive heartily concurring.

The following resolution was moved by Mr. Rosetti, and strongly supported by Mr. Cowell and Mr. Gorniot:—

> "That this Executive ask the Management Committee to draw up a syllabus and details of examination for the Scholarship Scheme. To prepare copies, and insert a notice in the *Freethinker* inviting intending candidates to apply for a copy. That a date be fixed for close of applications, and arrangements be made for examination to take place in London in May, 1913."

An application from one candidate under the Scholarship Scheme was received.

Other matters of business were held over until next month.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

The first person to report what is false is a liar. When a lie is a few days, or a few years old, it becomes hearsay, and when the lie has lived to a patriarchal age it is then called tradition. But Nature prevents any lie from becoming history. Nature is true and always tells the truth, while every lie is unnatural and must at last be exposed as such. This is why the story of Jesus must die out of men's minds and men's mouths: it is false and unnatural.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Meaning of Death."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Where Recent Researches in Science Have Put God."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, F. E. Willis, "The Religion of the 'Terrible Turk.'"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "Christianity, Old and New."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Egerton Stafford, "Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*."

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Is it sublime to strain our vision into a fog? and must we fancy we see far because we are looking where nobody can see farther.—LANDOR.

God Damn!

"'Tis strange—the Hebrew noun which means 'I am,'
The English always use to govern 'damn.'"
—BYRON.

THE late Dr. Joseph Parker, of City Temple fame, once cried "God damn the Sultan!" It caused a tremendous flutter in many circles. Some papers cried "Bravo!" Several others cried "Shocking!" The religious press was much divided. Organs of the Nonconformist Conscience were quite delighted over Dr. Parker's expletive, while the more sedate of the Church organs condemned it as an exhibition of very bad manners. For our part, we were neither pleased nor disgusted. If a minister likes to swear in the pulpit, we are not at all disposed to quarrel with him. It is more a matter for his congregation than it is for us. Besides, although swearing—as the angry rebuker said—is a damned bad habit, it is better to let off steam than to burst the boiler. There are occasions in life when the mildest-mannered man, even a saint of the first water, may be pardoned for indulging in a recitation from the slang dictionary. Has not Mark Twain said that when a man goes into a dark room, and sits on the business end of a tintack, his only refuge is profanity?

Great allowance, too, ought to be made for Christian ministers. In the first place, they are—or are supposed to be—diligent students of the Bible. Now the Bible is a first-rate cursing manual. Jehovah opens the ball in Genesis by cursing pretty nearly everything—the serpent, Adam and Eve, and the very ground under their feet; and the author of the book of Revelation closes with a red-hot curse on anybody who should presume to add anything to, or subtract anything from, that mysterious composition. Between this fine beginning and this noble end there is a vast variety of malediction. Most of the Bible writers take a hand in the business. Jehovah assumes the lion's share, as is natural, for the boss should be the first in everything; but one or two of his subordinates occasionally run him pretty closely. Moses, though the meekest man on earth, could let out rarely when his blood was up. David, or whoever wrote the cursing Psalms, played up well for a front place in the competition. Some of the prophets did their level best. Even the great New Testament saints, Paul and Peter, labored to sustain the credit of their profession. Jesus Christ himself was very successful when he let himself go. His outburst in Jerusalem, towards the close of his career, was highly creditable. It was Professor Newman's opinion that he outdid Tacitus and Suetonius in malignant denunciation of his enemies, who were after all simply his rivals. He called them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, vipers, and children of hell. In his last sermon on the Day of Judgment he used the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And after his Resurrection, according to the second Gospel, he declared that those who believed should be saved, and that those who did not believe should be damned. No doubt a great literary artist, like Shakespeare or Rabelais, could have considerably improved on this performance, but it is a good one nevertheless.

The fact is that "damn" is a remarkably common word in the Bible, and if an irate saint is not to be allowed to use it when he feels disposed, what on earth has become of English freedom?

But why, it may be asked, should Dr. Parker have damned anybody, even the Sultan of Turkey? Is it not written that Jesus came to save, not to destroy; and should not Dr. Parker have followed in the footsteps of his Master? But this question involves a very partial view of the glorious Gospel. Jesus did, indeed, come to save the few, but he also came to damn the many, or at least to let them be damned by his Father. Many are called, but few chosen; many slide down the way to Hell, few climb the path to Heaven; the sheep are a little flock, the goats are a countless multitude. Salvation is for the elect, and damnation for the mob. According to the old religion—instead of the modern makeshift—the chief work of the Lord is the damnation of sinners. He sometimes protests that he doesn't like it, but he laid down his plan and abides by it, and even a deity must be judged by actions rather than by words. Byron felt, in the good old orthodox days of years ago, that he was very much alone in wishing to circumscribe the limits of Hell's hot jurisdiction, and that the clergy would hold that he ought to be damned for "hoping no one else might e'er be so."

On the whole, therefore, we think that Dr. Parker's "God damn" is susceptible of an easy justification. But some people will ask why "*God* damn"? Why not call on the Devil to do it, as Macbeth does to the messenger who brings the tidings that Burnham wood has come to Dunsinane?—"The Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon." Well, the answer is very simple. The Devil damns nobody; all who are damned are damned by God. When you look at it closely, the Bible God *is* the Devil. The two personages have got on the wrong tickets. This is felt to be so by unsophisticated people. When a rough fellow swears, he says "God damn you." He knows instinctively who it is that presides over damnation.

Over in America they say there are three sorts of fools: fools, damn fools, and God damn fools. Wherever the English language goes, it carries with it the peculiarity which Byron noticed in the *Don Juan* couplet at the head of this article.

Many years ago Colonel Ingersoll was quoting a legal author called Moses in arguing a case of Mandamus in court, and the Christian judge, thinking he would take a rise out of "Bob," asked: "By the way, Mr. Ingersoll, is that the gentleman you go about the country abusing?"—alluding to the then very famous lecture on "The Mistakes of Moses." "Oh, no," Ingersoll readily replied; "this is Moses on Mandamus; the other is Moses on God damn us." That judge never tried it on "Bob" again. As for Dr. Parker, he was not exactly an Ingersoll, but he was not to be bullied for his "God damn," at least by Christians. From every point of view the expression is strictly orthodox.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Religion of Disease.—II.

(Continued from p. 99.)

IT is not the least of the evils induced by the triumph of Christianity that, by its advocacy of the savage theory of the nature of mental and physical disorders, it arrested the advance made in Greece, Rome, and Alexandria, and saddled European life with a set of beliefs that now have their counterpart only amongst uncivilised peoples. The effect of this may be traced in many directions; at present I am concerned only with showing the extent to which it served to keep alive a sense of intercourse with a supernatural world. And it is not too much to say that every case of disease, particularly of mental disease, gave to the fervent Christian additional proof of the activity of the spiritual world. Indeed, the expulsion of demons from afflicted persons was one of the powers upon which Christians prided themselves, and a belief in its possibility continued at least up to the time of John Wesley. The most elaborate regulations and formulæ were devised, all inspired by the idea of making the evil spirit's dwelling-place as uncomfortable as possible, and so ensuring evacuation. If an insane person was to be dealt with, he was prayed over, drenched with incense, and evil-smelling drugs burned under his nose. Then a set form of objurgation followed, thus:—

> "Thou lustful and stupid one.....Thou lean sow..... Thou wrinkled beast, thou mangy beast, thou beast of all beasts the most beastly.....Thou mad spirit..... Thou greedy wolf.....Loathsome cobbler.....filthy sow .....perfidious boar.....envious crocodile.....malodorous drudge.....wounded basilisk.....swollen toad.....entangled spider.....lousy swineherd.....lowest of the low .....cudgelled ass," etc., etc.*

Then followed the exorcism proper:—

> "By the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ by which God hath given to make known unto his servants those things which are shortly to be.....I exorcise you, ye angels of untold perversity.....May all the devils that are thy foes rush forth upon thee and drag thee down to hell.....May the Holy One trample on thee and hang thee up in an infernal fork, as was done to the five kings of the Amorites.....May God set a nail to your skull, and pound it with a hammer as Jael did unto Sisera.....May.....Sotter.....break thy head and cut off thy hands, as was done to the cursed Dagon..... May God hang thee in a hellish yoke, as seven men were hanged by the sons of Saul."†

All over Europe, for centuries, lunatics and epileptics were tormented and ill-treated under the obsession of these ideas. Whipping-posts were set up, and the insane soundly scourged. Here is a specimen recipe of this class:—

> "In case a man be lunatic, take a skin of mere swine, work it into a whip, and winge the man therewith. Soon he will be quite cured. Amen."‡

In some parts of Scotland, as late as 1789, lunatics were placed in the churchyard all night, bound hand and foot, and with a holy bell over their heads. In Cornwall, St. Nun's Pool was famous for its cure of those possessed. Even the embraces of prostitutes were recommended as a cure for insanity.§ So proud were the priests of their power to expel demons that in Vienna, in 1783, the Jesuit Fathers boasted that they had cast out no less than 12,652 "living devils." Two centuries later (1788), in Bristol, a drunken epileptic, one George Larkins, was solemnly brought into church and seven clergymen as solemnly set themselves to work to cast out the possessing demon. Whereupon Satan swore "by his infernal den" that he would not come out—an oath, says the chronicler, nowhere to be found but in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Under date of October 25, 1739, John Wesley also relates how he was sent for, and assisted at the expulsion of a demon from the body of a young girl.

It is no wonder that we find a missionary from New Guinea confessing that the native demoniacs "are certainly not unlike those described in the New Testament. Frantic gestures, convulsions, foaming at the mouth, feats of supernatural strength, furious ravings, bodily lacerations, gnashing of teeth, and other things of a similar character may be witnessed in most of the cases which are supposed to be under diabolical influence."‖ In truth, there is not a resemblance merely between these cases and those described in the New Testament; they are identical. No rational line of difference can be drawn between the uncivilised inhabitant of New Guinea or Africa, the early Christian, the mediæval Churchman, or John Wesley. Faced by the same facts, they arrive at the same conclusion. This conclusion is one suggested by their religious beliefs, and in turn it reacts and strengthens their religious convictions.

Of all diseases, that of epilepsy appears to have been most favorable to the encouragement of a belief in spiritual operation. One medical authority has pointed out, as the result of his own experience, that with epilepsy there is often an exaltation of the religious sentiments.† A still more recent authority, Sir T. S. Clouston, has also remarked that strong religious emotionalism often accompanies epilepsy.‡ Another eminent physician, while pointing out that "a high degree of intelligence, amounting even to genius, has in some cases been associated with epilepsy," points out that "The epileptic is apt to be influenced greatly by the mystical and the awe-inspiring, and he is disposed to morbid piety. He has an outward religiousness without corresponding strictness in morals."§ The very name of this disease shows its association with religion. Emanuel Deutsch says:—

> "There is a peculiar something supposed to inhere in epilepsy. The Greeks called it a sacred disease. Bacchantic and corybantic furore were god-inspired stages. The Pythia uttered her oracles under the most distressing signs. Symptoms of convulsions were ever needed as a sign of the divine."‖

So, too, a modern observer, Mr. W. Ellis, writing of the Polynesians, says:—

> "As soon as the god was supposed to have entered the priest, the latter became violently agitated and worked himself up to the highest pitch of apparent frenzy; the muscles of the limbs seemed convulsed, the body swelled, the countenance became terrific, the features distorted, the eyes wild and strained. In this state he often rolled on the earth, foaming at the mouth, as if laboring under the influence of the divinity by whom he was possessed, and in shrill cries, and often violent and indistinct sounds, revealed the will of the god."¶

There is every reason for believing that Mohammed received many of his celestial messages and visions during epileptic seizures, hallucinations of sight and hearing being the normal accompaniments of such attacks. Swedenborg's visions may also be traced to a similar source. These, and others, were illustrating in their own person the policy of the Siberian Shamans, who actually select epileptic lads to be trained for the priesthood. Long experience had doubtless taught them that the hallucinations which beset epileptics are of exactly the kind that create a sense and appearance of religious illumination. Thus, Dr. Ball says that the most common hallucinations are those of vision. And Dr. Maudsley thus describes the normal accompaniments of an epileptic attack:—

> "The patient's senses are possessed with hallucinations, his ganglionic central cells being in a state of what may be called convulsive action; before the eyes are blood-red flames of fire, amidst which whoever happens to present himself appears as a devil, or otherwise horribly transformed; the ears are filled with a

* Quoted by A. D. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii., p. 107.
† White, vol. ii., p. 108.
‡ Tuke's *History of the Insane in the British Isles*.
§ Fort's *Medical Economy During the Middle Ages*, p. 345.

* Cited by Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 130.
† Dr. Howden, Medical Superintendent of Montrose Lunatic Asylum, in *Journal of Mental Science*, 1873.
‡ *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*, p. 248.
§ Dr. R. Jones, in Allbutt's *System of Medicine*, vol. viii., p. 335.
‖ *Literary Remains*, p. 83.
¶ *Polynesian Researches*, vol. ii., 235-6.

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terrible roaring noise, or resound with a voice imperatively commanding him to save himself; the smell is perhaps of sulphurous stifling, and the desperate and violent actions are the convulsive reaction to such fearful hallucinations."*

If anyone will bear in mind the numerous descriptions of religious visions and the accounts, written in all good faith, of the behavior of "inspired" personages during their seasons of inspiration, he will have little difficulty in realising that in all stages of culture, from Ellis's Polynesian medicine-man down to the modern revival, epilepsy has played no small part in inducing and developing a sense of intercourse between man and a spiritual world.

It has already been mentioned that one of the commonest methods of inducing a sense of spiritual intercourse is that of fasting. A lowered vitality is eminently favorable to hallucinations of every description. A shipwrecked sailor is placed in the same condition, through no act of his own, as is the primitive medicine-man and the mediæval saint by their own volition. There is really much more in the Christian outcry against "fleshly indulgence" than a revolt against mere sensualism. It might even be claimed that indulgence in sensual gratification in one direction was condemned in order to *increase* sensual gratification in another direction. A well-fed body has been deprecated because it cut off one of the conditions of "spiritual" illumination. The Zulu maxim, "A stuffed body cannot see secret things," really expresses the philosophy of the matter.

Among the Blackfoot Indians of North America, when a boy reaches fourteen years of age he is sent away from his father's lodge in search of a spiritual protector or totem. Seeking some secluded spot, he abstains from food until such time as he dreams, or receives a vision of some animal or bird, which he at once adopts.† Similarly, the Malay, to procure supernatural visitations, retires to the jungle and abstains from food. The Zulu doctor qualifies himself for intercourse with the tribal ghosts by spare diet and solitary fasts. Fasting is part of the regular regimen of the Hindoo Yogi. In the New Testament, the encounter of Jesus with the Devil is preceded by a forty days' fast. Santa Teresa kept severe fasts for lengthy periods each year. George Fox confesses that he "fasted much," and "walked abroad in solitary places." Less fasting and more genial intercourse with his fellows might easily have prevented his hearing spiritual voices offering counsel. Perhaps the most curious religious reason for fasting is that cited from a monkish preacher by Brady, in his *Clavis Calendaria*:—

> "As a coach goes faster when it is empty, a man by fasting can be better united to God; for it is a principle with geometers that a round body can never touch a plane except in one point.....A belly too well filled becomes round, it cannot touch God except in one point; but fasting flattens the belly, and it is united with the surface of God in all points."

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

"Personal Religion."

WHAT is religion? As a matter of fact, nobody knows. Everybody defines it to suit himself, and scarcely any two frame an identical definition. One divine assures us that religion is neither cultus, creed, nor conduct, but fellowship with the Unseen, or communion with God. Another is equally certain that religion means the sense of dependence and the various obligations which that sense carries with it. To others, religion signifies acceptance of a definite creed and the adoption of a mode of life suggested or enjoined by such a creed. At present, the Rev. W. E. Orchard, D.D., of Enfield, is issuing a series of what he calls "Modern Tracts on Religion," the first of which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for February 5, and which he entitles "Personal Religion—Your Concern." In the very first sentence Dr. Orchard falls into the common error of thinking that "we are all religious nowadays—more or less." It would be easy enough to bring the reverend gentleman into touch with thousands of people in London alone who glory in the fact that they have no religion at all in the popular acceptation of the term. Some of them were trained to live without it, while others have succeeded in throwing it off at the bidding of their reason. No doubt there are not a few even at Enfield who do not believe in a Supreme Being nor take part, in public or in private, in any acts of worship. Thomas Paine said that to do good was his religion, and Dr. Orchard refers to the man who declares that "his religion consists in doing all the good he can." But this definition is really a complete negation of religion in any of its approved significations; nor is Dr. Orchard himself satisfied with it. Speaking of the man who takes refuge in it, he says:—

> "Is that right? No, for he, too, has not gone far enough back. Behind all the good we do there is the impulse to do it. And it is this that makes all the difference. Very few of us can be sincerely content only to yield to the impulse without inquiring where it comes from, for the one sufficient reason that the impulse seems never to be satisfied by what we are actually able to do. To do all that we could for one short day, would certainly involve us in very big adventures. When have we felt at the close of day that we had done all that we could?"

We must confess that we are rather surprised to find a man of Dr. Orchard's calibre falling back upon such spurious reasoning. Obviously the impulse to do good comes from the same source as ourselves. It is a product of social evolution, and is shared, more or less, by all the gregarious animals below us. Prince Kropotkin, in his excellent work, *Mutual Aid a Factor of Evolution*, furnishes numerous instances of its active presence in ants, bees, birds, and many others of the lower animals. And without a doubt the impulse is in its nature the same in them as in us. It is an essential requisite of a happy social life. We are aware that Dr. Orchard was bound, in the interest of religion, to ignore this undeniable fact in natural history. His ambition is to show that the impulse to do good is of supernatural origin, in which event religion may be defined as "a sense of connection with something higher than ourselves, something that has power to move us and inspire us to thought and activity." Now, Prince Kropotkin informs us that the impulse to do good, or mutual aid, "is to be met with even amidst the lowest animals." He writes:—

> "Some land-crabs of the West Indies and North America combine in large swarms in order to travel to the sea and to deposit therein their spawn; and each such migration implies concert, co-operation, and mutua support. As to the big Molucca crab (*Limulus*), I was struck (in 1882 at the Brighton Aquarium) with the extent of mutual assistance which these clumsy animals are capable of bestowing upon a comrade in case of need. One of them had fallen upon its back in a corner of the tank, and its heavy saucepan-like carapace prevented it from returning to its natural position, the more so as there was in the corner an iron bar which rendered the task still more difficult. Its comrades came to the rescue, and for one hour's time I watched how they endeavored to help their fellow prisoner" (*Mutual Aid*, p. 11).

If Dr. Orchard is right, those ministering crabs were acting from a sense of connection with something higher than themselves, something that had power to move and inspire them to such noble activity; that is to say, they were performing a religious duty, or taking part in a religious ceremony; but Dr. Orchard is not right. The impulse to do good is not a gift from above, but an acquirement instinctively won on the upward road. Its existence in man does not connect him with anything higher and better than himself, but is merely an indication of the stage he has reached in the evolutionary process. It simply shows exactly where he stands.

* *Physiology of the Mind*, p. 251. See also Dr. Mercier's *Nervous System and the Mind*, p. 55.

† Catlin, *North American Indians*, vol. i., p. 36.

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For Dr. Orchard, all roads lead to God, only not one of them is a real road. That they are not genuine roads is proved by the fact that nobody knows who, what, or where God is. The reverend gentleman himself admits that the moment we pronounce the name of God we "are in the thick of a hundred controversies." Some are quite sure that he is a personal being, who hears and answers prayer; others refer to him as the Unknowable; to others he is the Ideal, their deepest self, or the Cosmic Consciousness; and each view "is supported with loud asseverations and mighty arguments." And yet, in the teeth of this admission, Dr. Orchard maintains that God is, at least, "a spiritual activity with whom we can have personal relationship and who can be incarnate in our personality." Personal relationship is possible only between persons, and, necessarily, to say that we can have personal relationship with God is to declare that he is a person, a declaration which, on Dr. Orchard's own showing, nobody is competent to make. We much fear that the famous divine is here guilty of "darkening counsel by words without knowledge." He has ventured beyond his depth, and is at the mercy of many contrary currents. He exhorts us to get "an increased sensibility to God." How shall we get it? "By meditation and laying ourselves open to the visitation of God." That answer is correct, and it lets us into the whole secret of personal religion. Without knowing in the least what God is, Dr. Orchard jumps to the conclusion that the term IT is obviously an inadequate description of him. Quite as obviously, then, God is a HE; and we are to arrive at a realisation of him as such by meditation. It is a perfectly simple and safe rule, and it never utterly fails. If you meditate upon God as a personal being he will certainly grant you a personal visitation in due course; but so will King Œdipus or King Arthur, or any other great fictitious character in literature, on precisely the same terms. Nothing in the world is easier than to get into personal relationship with purely imaginary beings if we are willing to pay the price. Martin Luther was in personal relationship with the Devil, and his Satanic Majesty paid him several memorable visits. On this point we are in complete agreement with the Presbyterian minister of Enfield. Religious experience is real, as real as that of any novelist who lives in a world of fiction. God used to be tremendously real at the old-fashioned Methodist prayer meeting, when the faithful deafened him with the thunders of their impassioned petitions. But the fact that God is real to ardent believers is no evidence whatever that he really exists. They think they can see him with the inward eye; but there is absolutely nothing to prove that he sees them or takes the slightest interest in their affairs. The reality is all on the human side; and surely Dr. Orchard will concur in the statement that the sense of reality enjoyed by devoutly religious people is no guarantee that there is any reality on the Divine side, or even that there is a Divine side at all except in their own minds.

Dr. Orchard has the temerity to think that he has found "the clue to the mystery of all the ages;" but, although we know that he is an exceedingly clever man, we are confident that he is mistaken. "The solution of existence" is not so easy of accomplishment as he seems to imagine. What is the fulfilment of human personality? Dissolution. We know of no other possible fulfilment. We do not even know what personality is; but we do know that, whatever it is, the time comes when it ceases to be. It fulfils itself only in the hour of death. Why we are here we know not; but, being here, our mission is to make the most and best of life while we have it. If this is religion, we are eager to be classed with the profoundly religious; but if religion means "a sense of connection with something higher than ourselves," then let us be put in the category of the notoriously non-religious. In Dr. Orchard's explanation of the term, we are not ashamed to publish it in Gath and to sing it out in the streets of Askalon that we have no religion at all. A hundred years ago even Dr. Orchard would have been numbered among the non-religious, and probably put to death as an enemy of the cross of Christ. On the one side of his nature he is an out and out Rationalist; but the Rationalism is rendered of non-effect by the undiluted mysticism on the other side. In his Rationalism we are heart and soul with him; but when he retires for refuge into the shadowy realm of mysticism, we are obliged to part company with him, preferring to remain in as close touch as possible to Mother Earth. We also beg to assure him that there is no unbroken testimony that nowhere except in religion have men found themselves at home. On the contrary, we are in possession of very ample testimony from men and women who never felt at home until they got rid of religion, but whose emancipation from the bondage of superstition has spelt for them "peace, power, purpose, that which alone can make life worth living."

When, therefore, a tract comes our way with the arresting title, "Personal Religion—Your Concern," we reply thus: "Dear Tractarian, you are really laboring under a vain delusion—religion is no concern of ours. We have outgrown it and left it behind. In your sense of the word, as well as in that of your more orthodox brethren, we are proud to be numbered among the large army of the non-religious, and to be engaged in a distinctly anti-religious propagandism. You yourself repudiate much of what our forefathers loved as the very truth of God; and the only difference between you and us is that our Rationalism has compelled us, not only to drop the dogmas of orthodoxy, but also to renounce Supernaturalism in all its forms."

J. T. LLOYD.

"Vital Lies."—II.

(*Continued from p. 109.*)

"You appear to think, as I used to think in earlier days, that mankind are rational beings, and that when a thing has been demonstrated they will be convinced. Everything proves the contrary. A man is a bundle of passions which severally use his reason to get gratification, and the result in all times and places depends on what passions are dominant."—HERBERT SPENCER. Cited in Moncure Conway's *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 409.

"Every step towards truth has had to be fought for, and there has had to be abandoned for it almost whatever otherwise human hearts, human love, human confidence in life are attached to. Therefore greatness of soul is required: the service of truth is the hardest service."—NIETZSCHE, *The Antichrist*; 1899; p. 323.

NOTHING is more disconcerting to the young—at least we have found it so—than, having discovered the falsity of a religious idea and replaced it with a truth, to find that other people, instead of receiving the proof with pleasure, receive it coldly and grudgingly—if they receive it at all. They wish to believe, and do not wish to be undeceived.

We have just noticed a case in point in the *Saturday Review* (Jan. 25), where Mr. Filson Young, the novelist, dealing with Mr. Maskelyne's exposure of Madame Blavatsky,* and, incidentally, with Indian magic, declares:—

> "I am sorry to have these great delusions destroyed for me.....I do not like to come near a thing which I have believed to be magic and wonderful, and find it tawdry and mean and insignificant.....To expose a thing is to rob it of its agreeable coloring, and lay bare its ugliness; and many people have a preference for the decent coverings being left on."

It is for these people who "Will to Believe" and do not wish to be undeceived in matters of religion that the books dealt with by Vernon Lee in *Vital Lies* are written.

Leaving Professor James, Vernon Lee deals next with the "Modernist" movement represented by

* J. N. Maskelyne, *The Fraud of Theosophy Exposed*. Our older readers will recognise that there is nothing new in this booklet. All the evidence in it, and a great deal more, appeared in this journal, and in two pamphlets by Mr. Foote, at the time of Mrs. Besant's defection to Theosophy.

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Father Tyrrell. The Modernist movement, as our readers know, is the attempt of those Roman Catholics who, having an acquaintance more or less deep with the facts and hypotheses of modern science, and knowing the incompatibility of this knowledge with the traditions and dogmas taught by the Church of Rome, attempt to establish a right to believe in the demonstrated truths of science and yet remain in the Church, similar to the latitudinarianism of the Church of England, where little is required besides belief in God and conformity to the ritual.

In the part devoted to Father Tyrrell, Vernon Lee's writing is seen at its best; the style is not hampered by the necessity of tracking "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," as was the case when dealing with Professor James. As Vernon Lee remarks, and the passage is an illustration itself of fine writing:—

> "After a course of Pragmastic theory, with its hurry to talk over; its shirking of conclusions and shifting of responsibilities; its words thrown down at random, revoked when convenient; its twilight of suggestion and occasional Sludge-the-Medium gesture of turning on the light and showing that there's no deception; after the jumbled metaphors of Dr. Schiller, the verbal slovenliness of Professor James; after that lack of logical structure which makes even M. Bergson's magnificent volumes like caverns, glittering with gems and ores, but viewless and without exit; after all that confusion of genius and shoddy, of ideality and hustle, the satisfaction inspired by this book of Father Tyrrell's* is almost moral, and is most certainly æsthetic. It is like the satisfaction felt in certain churches: the recognition that all is swept and garnished, well set ashlar and massive silver, fair linen and pure vessels; everything done and spoken without hurry or passion; with no audience save the One, whom the Initiate carries in his own consecrated hands." †

Father Tyrrell is abreast of the scientific thought of the day; religion itself he holds to be the result of evolution, and has no more supernatural origin than science, philosophy, or art. Religion, beginning in magic and discipline, in the course of ages evolved, or developed, a spiritual element denied by Father Tyrrell to the primitive magic from which it sprang. Moreover, he holds that the continued progress and ultimate survival of religion depends upon its adaptation to the progress of science, and stands in the same relation as medicine does to the chemical and biological sciences. In other words, if religion does not accommodate itself to the progress of science it will become entirely extinct.

> "Nor is this all," says Vernon Lee. "According to Father Tyrrell, the Founder of Christianity worked miracles only in the ignorant belief of men who did not even distinguish between natural and supernatural, because they had no conception of nature's regularity. Jesus did not rise from his grave and show himself to his disciples, but his disciples thought that he had thus risen."

Moreover—

> "Jesus was an uneducated and superstitious Jew, of the reign of Tiberius; his mind was incapable of certain views which are nowadays attributed to him; him, on the other hand, full of ideas which had to be revised as a result of his own death, and the non-fulfilment of his own prophecies. Jesus was not a moral innovator, since his morality was current both among the Jewish pietists and the Gentile philosophers of his day." ‡

We see by this that Father Tyrrell, a Catholic priest, had advanced far beyond the limits marked out by any of our tinpot Protestant sects, who look down upon Roman Catholics as superstitious image-worshipers.

Of course, there is a limit to Father Tyrrell's Rationalism, or he would have to proclaim himself an Atheist, or at least an unbeliever in Christianity. As Vernon Lee remarks, his thought starting on plain rationalistic lines, but "ever and anon running against that hidden centre of habitual and beloved beliefs, and against the need to believe in them which he finds in himself" (vol. i., p. 189). To the scientific evolutionist the Christian God, like the Christian Christ, becomes more and more shadowy as man's thought progresses, until at last it shuffles out of the universe altogether. But according to Father Tyrrell the Deity, having allowed man to struggle and fight his way upward through the laws of evolution, suddenly discovered man's dire need of salvation, and, about the year one of our era, revealed himself

> "in the province of Judea and through the miraculous mediation (we might almost say mediumship) of an ignorant and superstitious Jewish pietist, whose mind is, if possible, more incapable of grasping the divine reality than that of mankind as a whole, and of his contemporaries in particular." *

Then, again, we have the wholly irrational theory of good and evil:—

> "For some inexplicable reason this absolutely Good, Infinite, and Eternal is crossed in its own designs (or crosses its own designs) by the presence of what Man knows as Suffering and Sin. But this contradiction is set right by the divine arrangement of an after-life in which suffering is compensated, and sin either obliterated, if we have arrived at a humanitarian stage in the interpretation of symbols, or if we are in a previous stage—let us say the Dante or Pascal stage—thoroughly well, indeed eternally punished." †

These beliefs culminate in the direct communication—by means of prayer and the sacraments—between God and man. "But why," asks the Rationalist, "why did not Father Tyrrell carry his evolutionary science to its natural and logical conclusion, and dispense with the Deity and the supernatural altogether?" How are we to explain his partiality and fidelity to the Church of Rome? Vernon Lee supplies the answer: "Having arrived at the point where Father Tyrrell refuses to ask more questions, we must apply our further examinations, not in his company, but to his person." And the question immediately arises "What is this Modernist priest likely to have *wished?*" Thus, after a long circuit, we are back again at the *Will-to-believe.* ‡ That is what we found at the bottom of Professor James's philosophy—the Will-to-believe *in an after-life in which everything will be set right*, and the efficacy of the sacraments of the Church in this life.

It is in explaining this phase of the problem that Vernon Lee shows the keenest sympathy and insight. None but those who have themselves believed in these legends and undergone the mystical state of conversion can really understand the strength of these non-rational states of the mind. As our author acutely remarks:—

> "Religion is born not of Man's strength, but of his weakness.....Religion provides for the mortal want which cannot provide for itself; it promises more of whatsoever is stinted—more love, more justice, more life; the very promise arising from the felt insufficiency. The understanding and sympathy it brings is born of the loneliness of the lonely."

They want not only to love but to be loved:—

> "Religious persons require also community of feeling, or the illusion, the feeling, of community of feeling. They would, indeed, like to be the best-beloved child, but they also want other children, brethren, with whom to love in company. For human creatures feel insecure and lost by themselves. They require almost as much as light and bodily warmth the sense that others are thinking and feeling like themselves." §

Vernon Lee, who resides in Italy, describes her visit lately, during the twilight of a wintry afternoon, to some of the humbler churches in her neighborhood:—

> "The people who have stolen in one by one, barely lifting the leather door curtain, do not take heed of one another; and when each has sat or knelt down among the empty benches, he sees, in that gloom, only the mystic golden blaze of the altar and the vestments.

* *Christianity at the Cross Roads*; 1909.
† Vernon Lee, *Vital Lies*, vol. i., p. 165.
‡ *Vital Lies*, vol. i., p. 169.

* *Vital Lies*, vol. i., p. 173.
† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 191.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 227.
§ *Ibid.*, vol. i., 248.

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But they feel that they are not alone: They are side by side with unseen fellow-creatures stripped by this darkness of all vain work-a-day personality, reduced to mere similar souls, suffering or hopeful, human, with a common human need for sympathy or consolation; the human being in its weakness and sadness, the ghosts that lurk in all of us, but shrouded in the majestic impersonal forms of that church, of its half-visible aisles and arches. And even if custom blunt and leaves things scarcely noticed, there must be peace and rest and refreshment to be brought back from these places; the sense of those other men and women, unseen, nameless, and almost shapeless, who murmur or chant the same (even unheard) words of supplication or thanksgiving, must leave the certainty that there is brooding, like the dusky architecture, thinning out mysteriously like the distant altar, a great Reality who hears and answers" (vol. i., p. 255).

And if an unbeliever like Vernon Lee can enter into and sympathise with the feelings of these worshipers,—

"What must not be the longing for all this of one who has participated without suspicion of his own fancy's share; the longing for that certainty such as neither act nor the imagination brings—the certainty that this is not the illusion of the Creature, but the reality of the Divine."

We can only wonder that the Modernists have travelled "so far from the full, unreasoned acceptance of all these things which the poor human heart has fashioned for its comfort during the innumerable ages."

As Vernon Lee further observes, "*Catholicism hinges not on doctrine but on Sacrament.*" Now, what the Modernists really wish to do is to get rid of the dogmas of the Church and retain the sacraments. But, as our author further points out, the soaring cathedral is built upon a foundation of alleged facts,—

"And if you pull up fact after fact, crumble one dogma after another into mere symbol, your edifice will speedily show rent after rent, and the day will come when it will strew the ground, as the pine-woods of Olympia are strewn with the column-drums of the temple of Zeus, which, in its day, was one of the seven wonders of the world."

And in the end Father Tyrrell's efforts were a failure, the Modernist movement was condemned by the Pope, Father Tyrrell himself was excommunicated, and died broken-hearted, not living long enough to see his book (*Christianity at the Cross Roads*) in print.

(*To be concluded.*) W. MANN.

The Jumping Bible.

WITCHCRAFT IN A GERMAN VILLAGE.

THE efficacy of white witchcraft as a means of detecting evildoers was raised in the second Berlin penal court yesterday when an elderly woman named Adelheid Gebhardt, who lives in the village of Bohnsdorf, was charged with slandering a neighbor, the wife of the village barber.

Gebhardt has an old leather-bound Bible which she declares is enchanted. When a crime is committed in the village she takes the Bible in one hand and puts a huge, ancient key between the leaves, holding the ring end of the key in the other hand. She repeats an appropriate text and then asks: "Dear Bible, say who is the guilty person," meanwhile herself reciting the names of possible offenders. When the right name is uttered the Bible springs out of her hand and falls to the floor.

This method of detecting crime naturally caused considerable unpleasantness in the village. Recently Gebhardt missed some money. The Bible declared that the barber's wife was the thief. Gebhardt promptly denounced her, but in the absence of evidence the charge fell through. Gebhardt was then prosecuted for slander.

She showed the court how she established the guilt of the barber's wife with the Bible, which actually again fell to the floor when the accused pronounced the woman's name. The court, however, decided that one reason for the falling of the Bible was that Gebhardt's septuagenarian fingers could not hold it while she was reciting twenty names; also that unconscious reflex action of the nerves at the mention of a particular name had something to do with it. But in view of her obvious sincerity Gebhardt was let off with a fine of 10s.—*Daily Mail* (Feb. 3).

Acid Drops.

How the clergy and their friends hurried up to reap all the benefit they could from the death of poor Captain Scott. It was Christianity and the Churches first with them. They even got the King to go to St. Paul's Cathedral and figure in a Memorial Service. What the service was for, except to advertise the Church, was a puzzle. Was it to thank God for calling Captain Scott "home," or for not calling him sooner, or for sending the continuous severe weather that settled the fate of the three sound men hindered by two sick ones? We should be glad to have some sort of an answer to these questions.

Captain Scott himself does not appear to have been troubled very much with piety. There is only one religious expression in the whole of that brave and pathetic message he left for his countrymen and the world, written with the hand of death pressing heavily upon him. It is the expression about bowing to the decree of Providence. But this must not be taken too literally,—for he went on to say that they would still struggle to the last; which makes "Providence" more a fashion of speech than anything else.

"Captain Scott and the Gospels" was a pretty heading in the *Daily Chronicle*, which always comes out strong on these occasions. It appears that Mr. F. J. Cross offered to send copies of the Gospels for the use of the members of the expedition. We are not told why he did so. Did he suppose that Captain Scott and his companions were not likely to take any religious literature—not even a Bible or a New Testament? If that was the idea it is a tribute to the failure instead of to the success of Christianity. And Captain Scott's reply was not gushing:—

"Thank you for your kind offer. I gladly accept it to the extent of ten copies of each Gospel—more raises difficulty of weight and transport. Perhaps you will be good enough to arrange delivery as follows:—

"Books to be in a box with plain statement of contents on outside; to be addressed British Antarctic Expedition, 1910, East India Docks, and forwarded between May 1 and 14.

"These precautions are necessary on account of the proper stowage of the ship and the chance of unauthorised goods being sent to us.—Yours faithfully, R. Scott."

This seems to show that Captain Scott and his companions had made no provision for their own religious reading themselves. Nor did they want the Gospels *en route*. The place for them was with the luggage, in a properly secured box; where, for all we are told, they may still remain.

The inscription on the cross and cairn erected over the remains of Captain Scott and his two remaining companions found dead in the tent with him, ended with the text, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." We are a wretched Freethinker, who only disbelieves the Bible because he does not know what is in it, but we felt certain the text was wrongly printed, so we turned to Job i. 21, where we found it printed thus—and it is the same in the Revised Version:—"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job spoke in that manner over the violent death of his children. He was making a personal confession. He was not concerned about the theory that "the Lord *taketh* away" but about the practical truth that "the Lord *hath* taken away." The "gave" is naturally balanced by "hath taken." "Taketh" would balance "giveth." Either the memories of the men who buried Captain Scott failed them or they shrank from the plain "hath taken away" and found refuge in the generalisation "taketh away." But what is to be said for the pious journalists who let the misquotation of the Blessed Book pass without recognition?

The late George Bigwood, the well-known comedian, who died recently, was witty off the stage as well as on. He used to tell a good story concerning a benefit concert in which he took part. The organiser was a bigoted teetotaler, and, after the show, he said in the ante-room, "I am sorry, Mr. Bigwood, we cannot offer you anything to drink; but will you take an apple?" Bigwood had no desire to follow Adam and Eve so closely.

Some of Harmsworth's young men have been quoting Swinburne and Whitman in their references to the death of Captain Scott. When it comes to ideas Christians have to fall back on the Freethinkers.

A Polish priest has been dragged to prison for refusing to mention the Czar in his prayers. That priest is now

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probably, invoking the Almighty to bestow all the plagues of Egypt on the Emperor of all the Russias.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron is one of the vice-presidents of the British Federation for the Emancipation of Women. If this is a Suffragette organisation, the reverend gentleman must find it quite tame after the more vigorous propaganda of the Christian Evidence Society.

According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Rev. R. B. Exton, of Edmonton, said, speaking at a Suffrage meeting, "Until the word 'obey' is omitted from the marriage service, and women are put on an equality with men in that service, I shall decline to officiate at any more weddings." Is this to be regarded as a marriage-service strike?

The religious conspiracy against the mental integrity of children, known as "The Young Worshipers' League," is being energetically pushed by the *British Weekly*. The object of the League is to force upon children a "worshipful habit," so that when they are grown up they may become customers at some gospel shop or other. This is the real gist of the movement, and it is well to keep this plain fact before our minds. For ministers have been driven to form this League, not because children were less religious than they used to be, but because adults were staying away from church in increasing numbers. It is the grown-up clients they want, not the juveniles. And if clergymen could feel sure of the adult they would not trouble in the least about the child. The proof of this is, as we have already said, that not until the decline of adult patronage became serious did these traffickers in spiritual merchandise become seriously concerned about the child. For there is no immediate profit in making the child religious, that only comes when the child reaches maturity. The child is in the nature of an investment from which it is hoped to secure a handsome profit in the future.

In earlier times pressure of external forces secured a certain observance of religious forms by the adult. With current knowledge not in any violent and obvious conflict with religious teaching, the adult could give, at least, a passive assent to current doctrines. The child could, therefore, be let alone, and generally it was let alone. But, as the environment underwent a change, as the moral and mental life of the day became essentially antagonistic to religion, this was felt to be a dangerous policy. Something had to be done to protect the adult against the religiously corrupting influence of modern life, and it was rightly felt that the best way to do this was to so treat the plastic brain of childhood that it would be proof against change on reaching maturity. Hence the growing desire of priests of all denominations to practise the direct cultivation of religious habits in children, instead of depending upon the pressure of family and social life. The Rev. J. W. Butcher, one of the leaders of the movement, says it must be recognised as a truth of psychology that, unless a certain type of habit be formed in the pre-adolescent period, it will probably never be formed when the adolescent age is reached. This is all very well in its way, and no one would object to children being taught good *habits*. But it is not the cultivation of habits that these people are really aiming at. It is the implanting of doctrines, of beliefs, that is their real object. And they seek to implant these beliefs in the pre-adolescent period because they feel that otherwise the mature intellect would be sure to reject them. It is this to which objection is really raised. It is the deliberate exploitation of the helplessness of childhood in the interests of religious organisations that are afraid of the unbiassed adult intelligence which is going on. This is a point that Freethinkers should never lose sight of, and should take care that it is kept well in front of Christians.

At the funeral of Franz Schuhmaier, the Labor leader, of Vienna, which took place on Sunday, upwards of half-a-million people took part. Twenty-eight hearses were filled and covered with wreaths, and the procession extended four miles. It is significant that the clergy had no place in the ceremony.

"On one occasion, being asked to meet an Irish enthusiast who went about the country enlightening people's minds on the subject of Popish errors, Hartley Coleridge after dinner asked to be presented to the lecturer; and, taking his arm while the guests were gathered round, he addressed him with solemnity: 'Sir, there are two great evils in Ireland.' 'There are indeed,' replied the Irish guest, 'but please to name them.' 'The first,' Hartley resumed, 'is Popery.' 'It is,' cried the other, in emphatic acquiescence; 'how wonderful you should have discovered it! Now, what is the second great evil?' 'Protestantism,' was Hartley's reply in a voice of thunder, as he ran away screaming with laughter."—*Liverpool Post.*

Rev. William Stacey, of Charing, Kent, left £21,913. He is wintering in a place where there is no cold weather.

"England has ceased to be Christian," said Father Benedict, C.S.S.S., speaking at Chelsea. We wish this were true, but much regret to have to confess that there is a considerable quantity of Christianity still with us. Father Benedict declines to be cheered even by the fact that his own Church showed an increase of worshipers in the recent Liverpool census. He asks, plaintively, "What is the increase of a few hundreds compared with the tremendous loss and abandonment of all faith on the part of the rest?" We quite agree, however, with Father Benedict that there is a steady movement "away from God," and that this is "not the frenzy of a moment, but the steady tramp of a whole nation away from God." And we find pleasure in reflecting that this is only part of a still wider movement—the march of the human race from superstition to reason.

The early Christians believed in a community of property. Lingering traces of this belief may account for the fact that hotel managers place framed texts in their premises "The proprietor is not responsible for any articles left in the bedrooms."

Some of the clergy are clamoring for the multiplication of bishoprics. If the proposed "Fathers-in-God" are to be as handsomely rewarded as the present holders, we can quite understand the cause of the excitement.

The editors have been making headlines about a case in which a man had three wives. What a chance the scribes would have had if they had lived in the Holy Land in the days of Solomon!

Religion is not so brutal as in the days of yore. In old times the ladies who kicked over the matrimonial traces were stoned. This happens to-day; but the stones come from Bond-street.

The Pope is mourning the loss of his sister, Signora Rosa Sarto, who, the newspapers unkindly state, was unable to write. It is a popular failing in Catholic countries.

The Salvation Army's "Self-Denial" Week commences on February 22. It is being preceded by a week of prayer. Of course, the prayers are being well advertised, and the public are informed that the Lord will be asked to move their hearts to give liberally to the Army. The honest way to hold a week of prayer for this purpose would be to pray in secret, and only tell people afterwards. But the Army is too "slim" to work on this plan. It prefers to let the religious public know that it is praying to the Lord, so that genuine believers will feel impelled to back up the Lord's credit by giving; and the Army may even feel that, by making the prayers public, they are putting God Almighty on his mettle, and compelling him to support their efforts. An organisation that continuously supplies newspapers and journalists with laudatory accounts of its own work, and then reproduces these as independent testimony to the value of the work it is doing, is not likely to be caught napping. And there is always the stupidity of the British public to fall back on.

Everyone is familiar with the Christian pose about the non-existence of Atheism. Some Christians have kept this up so long that they believe in it themselves, and with the number of Atheists growing larger each year, will solemnly assert that there used to be Atheists in the time of Charles Bradlaugh, but they are now extinct. We are reminded of this by a remark of "Claudius Clear" (Sir Robertson Nicoll) in a recent issue of the *British Weekly*. He says, "There used to be persons who went about the country making public attacks on Christianity, but they seem somehow to have disappeared." If the assurance is really needed, we can inform Dr. Nicoll that he is quite under a delusion, and the propaganda of Freethought on the platform is still carried on under better conditions than it was ever carried on before. Of course, the newspapers do not report these meetings—or, at least, they do not often report them—but non-reporting and extinction are not quite the same thing. Sir Robertson says the attack on belief is carried on by books and papers, and he admits that "many attacks on belief are formidable by reason of the knowledge and power and sincerity of their authors." Well, it is something to

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have even this much recognised. Presently, maybe, Sir Robertson Nicoll may realise that the attack on religion is considerably more powerful, more scientific, and, therefore, more potent than it was thirty or forty years ago. At the risk of being thought egotistical, we venture to say that there is no other movement in the country, religious or non-religious, that carries behind it the same weight of brains and ability that is to-day at the service of Freethought.

Every minister ought to properly understand the mind and temper of his congregation; and we may assume that the Rev. W. Patterson, of May-street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, understands his congregation thoroughly. In a little magazine, *The Greeting*, issued from the church, Mr. Patterson gives a number of reasons why his congregation ought to subscribe to the Foreign Missionary movement; and, knowing the spiritual spring of Christian conduct, he lays chief and first stress on the fact that it pays as a commercial investment. He writes:—

> "When John D. Rockefeller was convinced that mission work in the Foreign Field would likely lead to an increased use of oil, he contributed a large sum to the cause, and from his standpoint he was right, for to-day hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil are being used in China since that sleeping nation woke up, and she was first roused from her slumbers by the missionary trumpet. What is true of oil is true also along other lines of merchandise. For example, in the same nation at the present time there is a wonderful demand for European clothes and for British commodities. Every shilling our country has contributed towards evangelising she has brought back to our treasury twenty shillings in return.....Every person who reads and does a little thinking on the subject is well aware that the Christianising, which includes the civilising of heathen nations, pays a hundred per cent. even on this lower level of the financial and commercial."

Of course every thinking Christian knows it pays, otherwise he would not support it. The missionary movement is the advertising agent for the trader, and both are the advance guard for the soldier. It pays the good Christian to see that the native's appetite is aroused for British commodities. If we can supply him with cotton goods, rum, and shoddy manufactures of various descriptions, why should we not do so? Whether the Chinaman or negro is the better for our trading is quite another question. He is Christianised. And as Mr. Patterson well says, for every shilling we give to send missionaries abroad we get twenty shillings in return. Christianising the native pays. Mr. Patterson does not say that it pays the native. But it pays the Christian at home, and that is the all-important aspect. As for civilising—well, the notion that a Belfast Presbyterian parson could civilise anything is one that could only find lodgment in the brain of a lunatic.

The Mormon missionaries have been active at Southend-on-Sea lately, and the local Free Church Council is up in arms. The latter has not the same financial interest in Brigham Young as in Jesus Christ.

Gerhart Hauptmann's *The Fool in Christ* has just been published in English by Methuen. We should turn the title the other way round.

Rev. Lionel Lewis, Vicar of St. Mark's Whitechapel, presents a fresh view of the atrocities perpetrated by the Balkan Allies. If they are true, he says, the Turk has no right to complain. If Christian regular troops have done these unchristian things it is the result of centuries of education by Mohammedans! This is the first time we ever heard that Christians needed lessons in cruelty. Perhaps the reverend gentleman will tell us who taught it to Alva, Torquemada, Louis XIV., or even the present Czar of Russia. We might also inquire what Mohammedan or other model is imitated in the English organisation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. We have always understood that this Society is an original effort of Christian genius. Has not Mr. G. R. Sims been telling us lately that it is only in Christian countries that such a Society is necessary? We should like to hear from Mr. Lewis again.

One of the prisoners in the Paris motor bandit trial has the name "Dieudonné." Another better-known criminal who bore that title was his Catholic Majesty, Louis XIV.

The police are making "further inquiries" about the eloping Vicar of Hunslet. Why not let him be? Is it such a luxury to pursue a bad egg? We should hesitate to get within a mile of such a Christian product.

The connection between Atheism and suicide was once more illustrated by Frederick Albert Phillips, who threw himself over the Dover cliffs. A Bible was found in his pocket with passages underlined in red ink. Clearly an Atheist!

A religious census at Reading shows that one in thirteen of the inhabitants attends church regularly. This takes the biscuit. Christianity is getting on in Reading.

The Bishop of Oxford has been discoursing on "The Religion of the Poor." Is he an authority on that subject? We thought his income was several thousands a year.

Correspondence.

WATER FROM THE ROCK.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In times like the present, when many highly respectable Christians are very busily engaged in trying to explain the Biblical miracles on the basis of natural phenomena, perhaps a little experience of my own might be usefully added to their efforts.

From 1881 to 1885, I served in the Egyptian Light Camel Corps and took part in the dash to Khartoum in the attempt to rescue Gordon.

One night we encamped at a place called Jackdrill (Jackdaul) Well. On looking for the well in order to refill my water bottle, I found a rocky hill over 150 ft. high, instead of a muddy pool, as was usually the case. In the side of the hill, about 6 ft. from the ground, a pipe had been inserted, from which gushed forth a constant stream of water. Feeling rather curious, I climbed to the top of the hill and found, to my surprise, that the mass of seeming solid rock was hollow and formed a huge, natural reservoir.

Some days afterwards, I got into conversation with an interpreter, and mentioning the peculiarity of Jackdrill Well, he explained the matter to me.

In that particular district, rain falls but once in about six years, but when it does rain the downpour is tremendous. Some of it is caught in this natural cavity, and the thickness of the sides, combined with its depth, prevents the heat of the sun from evaporating the water thus accumulated.

Now, when I had received this explanation, my mind immediately flew to the alleged miracle of Moses, when in the desert he struck a rock in order to find water for the clamoring children of Israel. It is a moot point whether Moses ever existed, but might not the story be founded on some hocus-pocus trick of a wily old medicine-man of long ago.

Such an one, knowing of the existence of a well of this description, might have easily obtained a cheap reputation as a miracle monger by striking the rock, which had previously been weakened by artificial means on the spot struck. Naturally, the water would gush forth, and the pious multitude of that day would swallow the miracle as eagerly as they swallowed the water.

H. HUMPHRIES.

Jove nods, we have been informed, and God, or whoever is the author of the Bible, has a poor memory. We don't look for mistakes in a deity who is perfect, and for this reason we fear that a very imperfect God inspired the Gospel of Matthew or the book of the Acts, or both. In Matthew we read that Judas repented of having betrayed his master, Jesus, and "went and hanged himself," but in the first chapter of the Acts we are told by Peter that Judas "purchased" a field with the reward of iniquity and "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out." We should prefer to cut down Judas rather than pick him up, but, if he hanged himself, then Peter is up to his old tricks. If God inspired Matthew, who inspired Peter? The discrepancy in the two accounts of the end of Judas does not prove that "every word of the Bible is true," as some Christians claim.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

SAINT MICHAEL.

He contended with the devil about the body of Moses Now, I do not believe that any reasonable person would contend about the body of Moses with the devil or with anyone else.—*S. Butler.*

"THE ANCIENT MARINER."

This poem would not have taken so well if it had been called "The Old Sailor," so that Wardour-street has its uses.—*S. Butler.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 23, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "Captain Scott and Providence."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £40 18s. 4d. Received since:—Juliet and Julian, 7s. 6d.; Mrs. and Mrs. James Neate, £1.

MR. AND MRS. JAMES NEATE, sending their annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, wish they could send ten times as much, and trust "to have the honor of subscribing" for many years yet.

J. B.—Tuesday is too late for paragraphs. May do for next week. Mr. Foote is much better now.

W. STEWART.—Shall be sent. Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. BRITTAN.—We are much obliged.

A. C. WYKES.—Swinburne's poems (not including the dramas) are published in six volumes at 5s. each. It is ridiculous that there is not a cheaper collected edition. *Songs Before Sunrise* is published separately at 7s. 6d. we think.

B. D. WINLAND.—Will look into it and write you.

JOSEPH ALWARD.—Sorry to hear that the Christian Esperantists (bless them!) have made a dead set at Dr. Stromboli as an Atheist and brought about his resignation.

T. HODGSON.—Clearly a case of confused memory after a great lapse of time. Thanks for cuttings.

W. LOVETT.—We cannot let a political discussion be started in our columns. Article writers will indulge in incidental observations now and then, which must not be allowed to become themes of debate.

GEORGE RENNIE.—We are a bit tired, as probably our readers are, of these "remarkable" faith cures. We will take them up again when we have recovered. Pleased that you regard the *Freethinker* as "the one paper for fruitfulness and intelligence." We think your opinion of the "Acid Drops" is widely shared.

WILLIAM STOKES.—Accept our best thanks.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. DAVIDSON.—Glad you heckled the St. Pancras candidates so effectively.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, *January, 1913.*

We the undersigned renew our appeal on behalf of the above Fund.

Its object is to relieve Mr. G. W. Foote—President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society, Ltd., and Editor of the *Freethinker*—from financial worries that would prevent his devoting himself entirely to his work as leader of the militant Freethought movement in this country.

During previous years Mr. Foote has actually had to pay money out of his own pocket to sustain the *Freethinker*, besides doing all his own work on the paper without any remuneration whatever. We are happy to have his assurance that this state of things has improved. He has no longer to make up a deficit, but the slight profit from the increased circulation of the *Freethinker* is only sufficient as yet to treat the contributors a little more liberally.

This is the sixth year of the President's Honorarium Fund. We suggested that £300 might be raised in this way annually. During the first two years it was nearly raised, the third year it was fully raised, the fourth year it was exceeded, owing to a special donation of £50 from Mr. John Helm, of Canada, since deceased. Death has, indeed, been busy with the larger subscribers during the last year or two—such as Major Harris, Mrs. Donaldson, Mr. George Payne, Mr. F. Smallman, and Mr. Horace W. Parsons. Nevertheless, the Fund for 1912 only lacked some £20 of the total, which has been made up by a generous American supporter. It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Foote must have gained new friends to balance the (financial) loss of old ones.

All subscriptions received have been acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*, and will continue to be acknowledged in that way.

Subscriptions for 1913 can be forwarded to the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear in print should state how they wish their subscriptions to be acknowledged.

It would be pleasant if the bulk of the £300 could be raised in the first few months and the balance before the close of the summer.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road, Gt. Yarmouth,

R. T. NICHOLS, M.D.,
28 Park-road, Ilford,

A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount Grove-road, Highbury, London, N.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's subject at Queen's Hall this evening (Feb. 23) will be "Captain Scott and Providence." It will enable him to say many things on Christian efforts to "justify the ways of God to men."

Mr. Foote was suffering from a bad cold last week end, contracted no doubt during the wretched foggy weather of the previous week. He was unable to fulfil his engagement at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, but Mr. J. T. Lloyd kindly came to the rescue and delivered a fine lecture on the same subject, though with a different title, to a very appreciative audience, which was an improvement on the previous Sunday's. Mr. Lloyd was much applauded, being in his very best form.

The Secular Education League's annual meeting takes place on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30 in Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster. It is hoped there will be a good attendance of members. A public meeting will follow at 8.15, with Mr. Halley Stewart in the chair, and Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, and the Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., in the list of speakers.

The Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws is organising a demonstration in favor of its objects, which will take place at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Friday evening, March 14. The chair will be occupied by the Rev. S. D. Headlam, if the County Council elections do not interfere with the arrangement. The list of speakers includes Mr. S. W. P. Byles, M.P., Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Lord Harberton, Rev. Copeland Bowie, Sir Hiram Maxim, and Mr. G. W. Foote. We invite our London readers to help make the gathering a great success.

London Freethinkers should heckle their London County Council candidates on the question of the attempted new

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policy of refusing permits to *bonâ-fide* Societies to make collections, as of old, in connection with meetings conducted by them in the Parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. A number of advanced bodies, including the London Trades Council, the National Secular Society, and several Socialist organisations, are resolved to maintain the old right of collection if possible. The Parks Committee has evaded this question for months, and declares now that the matter must be left for the new Committee to settle. The fight, therefore—if it *must* be a fight—has to wait till the new Committee meets.

The Bethnal Green Branch holds its "Tea and Social Evening" at the King's Assembly Hall, Cottage Grove, Mile End, on Sunday evening, March 2, with Mr. C. Quinton as M.C. Tickets, 1s. each, are obtainable of Mr. James Neate, 385 Bethnal Green-road. District Freethinkers are invited to patronise this function. They will enjoy it. By the way, the tickets for the dance are only 6d. each.

The Birmingham N. S. S. Branch is going to present a token of appreciation to Mr. James Partridge, its honorary secretary, who has held the office for a quarter of a century. "He has managed our affairs," the Committee say, "for that long period in such an effective yet unassuming manner, that he has won, and retained, the goodwill and respect of all members and friends." Subscriptions are invited and should be sent to Mrs. Annie Bolt, 68 Brougham-street, Lozells, Birmingham. Mr. Partridge must have many frinds outside the Midlands capital who would like to share in this tribute to his character and services to the Freethought movement. We are having our own name entered on the roll.

The Rationalist Peace Society's annual meeting passed the following resolution: "This meeting of the Rationalist Peace Society has noted with grave apprehension the recent speech of Lord Herschell in the House of Lords, in which, speaking as a representative of the Government, he favored the idea of compulsory military training in secondary schools; the meeting strongly condemns any attempt to introduce any form of compulsory military training, or service, of men, or youths, into this country, and trusts that public opinion will be strongly expressed against such a proposal."

The Edinburgh free-speech case reported at length in a late issue, has attracted a good deal of attention in the Scottish press. The *Daily Record* leading article is particularly outspoken. The heading of "Bumbledom in Scotland" is itself striking. We quote the following passage with pleasure:—

> "The Bumbledom that exists in Scotland is one of the most depressing features of the national life. Pettifogging authorities are everlastingly issuing proclamations interdicting people from obtaining refreshment on Sundays, however much they may need it, or invading other public amenities in the spirit of the days of the Inquisition. Scotland is bailie-ridden. Its people are shepherded and driven by magistrates, police, and presbytery. They hardly dare open their mouths in the streets, and it seems to be a criminal offence to be hungry on the Lord's Day. Public places seem to be no longer the possession of the people. They appear to have passed into the hands of the magistracy. In the eyes of the magistrates, the average citizen is a potential criminal, a trespasser upon the public thoroughfare, and if the estimable gentlemen who write J.P. after their names had their way we should not be allowed out after dark unless furnished with a police pass. And if we had the misfortune to be hungry we should be put into a police cell and admonished. It is very singular that the people of Scotland do not rebel against the magisterial and presbyterial tyranny. These juntas appear to be perpetually conspiring to diminish the sum of human enjoyment, and where it will end nobody knows. We have passed from the domination of the Kirk under the joint domination of Kirk and Justice of the Peace, and the change does not seem to be for the better."

We should like to see a good deal more of such plain speaking. It is as much wanted in England as it is in Scotland. The press is the slave of the authorities.

Would we have known that a man existed in the world if we had not seen his body? Have we any knowledge of man except that which has come through man's existence on the earth? Has a man any experience which he acquired in some other sphere prior to his advent on earth? If human souls exist independent of human bodies, where and how do they exist?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Jesus Legend.

La Légende Chrétienne, Auguste Dide. (Paris: 1912. Ernest Flammarion; pp. 254; 1 franc).

IN this useful book, so admirably adapted for propagandist purposes by reason of its short, crisp chapters and the simple ease with which the exposition of the Christ Legend is expounded, M. Auguste Dide delivers a frontal attack upon the religion which has Jesus as its central figure, and the obfuscation of the human intellect as its prime object. Courage, thoroughness, and deep erudition are the characteristic traits of this wise and wholesome piece of drastic criticism of the creed that had for its origin the belief in the resurrection of a corpse and a childish faith in the early reappearance of a reanimated dead Jew as vengeful judge in the clouds of heaven. Leaving on one side the historicity of the resurrection, we know that Jesus has failed, during nearly two thousand years, to redeem "his" promise to revisit the glimpses of the moon. Illusion, imposture, or folly; these, apparently, have been the determining factors in the causation of the primitive Christian beliefs concerning the miraculous life and posthumous apotheosis of the pale, mysterious phantom that flits through the Gospels but escapes the verifying grasp of the historian. In M. Dide's view, the historic personality of Jesus remains a problem enveloped in impenetrable doubt, and the twenty brilliant chapters of this, his latest work*, review in detail the elements of mystery and incredibility that form the fabric of the Christian Legend.

Chapter I., entitled "Did Jesus Exist?" introduces the damning inquiry by recalling the hypocritical attitude towards Christianity of Chateaubriand, Napoleon, and the then contemporary Pope, Pius VII. A few years before Chateaubriand wrote his pietistic *Genié du Christianisme*, he was, if not an Atheist, a pronounced anti-Christian. This fact is clear from what he wrote about God, the soul, and Jesus Christ at a time when religion was at low water in France:—

> "God, matter, and fatality [he said] are but one This is my system, and this is what I believe: All is chance and fatality in this world—reputation, honor, and virtue itself; how then can we believe that we are guided by an intelligent God?"

As to Jesus, he wrote "that it is by no means demonstrated that there ever existed a man called Jesus who was crucified at Jerusalem" (Dide, p. 12).

And yet it was this aristocratic unbeliever who subsequently dedicated his *Génie du Christianisme* to Napoleon, then First Consul of the Republic which, later, he strangled. Napoleon at that time had made his immoral peace with the Church, having brought her in in aid of his nefarious plans of empire and domination. For all that, the Corsican prodigy no more believed in Jesus than in Osiris, and he only reimported religion into the political life of France for the furtherance of his vast ambitions. His case is a striking illustration of the cynical attitude of rulers, statesmen, and tyrants generally towards religion. Usually without stable convictions, and ready at any time to barter them for dynastic ends or for the high purposes of statecraft, they are astute enough to enlist God into their service and to utilise his priests, their soporific doctrines, and their terroristic influences in aid of the army and the police.

M. Dide cites two characteristic views of Napoleon about the historicity of the Jewish peasant whose religion he re-established in France by means of the Concordat. First, we have this revelation, culled from the *Journal de Saint-Hélène*, in which General Gourgaud kept a record of the religious and philosophic opinions of the great conqueror: "As for me," he says, "my mind is made up; I do not

* I dealt with M. Dide's great book on Servetus in the *Freethinker* of December 27, 1908, and January 24, 1909.

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believe that Jesus ever existed." And then, this other jewel:—

> "At Milan [said Napoleon] I took an original manuscript of Josephus' History of the Jews, in which one could see between the lines some words speaking of Jesus, for Josephus makes no mention of him. The Pope worried me a good deal in order to get possession of this manuscript" (*Ibid.*, p. 17).

Evidently the Pope believed in Christ—as a profitable fable not to be endangered by the publication of a compromising manuscript.

When we pass from the dark region of historic doubt which surrounds the alleged personality of Jesus to the evangelic records themselves, the obscurity that envelops the misty figure of the Nazarene becomes deeper and more perplexing than ever. The Gospels are not the biographies of a real Jesus, but apologies for, and glorifications of, a supernatural and miraculously divine ideal God-man. They are but the echo of various oral traditions—"the tradition of many traditions." It is evident from the discrepancies, omissions, and additions appearing in the evangelic documents that fresh biographic supplements, new hypotheses, and legends transformed by faith into realities, sprang into acceptance and became embodied in the growing text:—

> "Additions were introduced in conformity with the spirit of the time. The new facts were created by the process of affirming them. Thus the Church was engaged in a perpetual production of discourses, evangelical sentences, and miracles, until the time came when, all control being impossible and the prospect of serious verification having evaporated, the Church—that is to say, some anonymous reunion of the faithful—marked its preferences for the apologies which have come down to us, and brought about their acceptance to the exclusion of all the rest."

M. Dide very acutely remarks that if the facts that thus grew into the life of Christ escaped control, it is clear that the sayings were not likely to enjoy a more discriminating scrutiny. Who was at hand to gather the uttered words? There were no stenographers in those days to take down these improvised speeches. Some of the more important declarations of the Christ were made solely to one individual, who sometimes, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, is presented to us as a person devoid of intelligence. Where, then, are the guarantees of authenticity, or even of probability? No wonder the Holy Ghost was invented as the infallible sponsor for the veracity of these astonishing documents.

This very story of the Samaritan woman only appears in the neo-platonic Gospel attributed to John. The fourth Gospel quite evidently represents in literary form the new departure impressed upon the narrow exclusivism of the early Christians by the universalistic movement typified or represented by the Apostle Paul—Paul, who seems to know surprisingly little about the Synoptic Jesus, and, indeed, only presents him to us as a resurrected man who had lately ascended to God and was soon about to appear with glory in the clouds of heaven. The opening words of the Johannine romance creates a new Christ. John knows nothing of the Holy Child, the lowly stable, the sordid environments of the early poverty which invested the Synoptic Jesus; he takes his hero—Christ—back to the beginning of time; locates him at the dawn of creation with God himself, and makes him, indeed, the fountain of life and light at the beginning of all things. As we witness "this fog of phrases" which settles on the opening verses of John, and as we notice how the haze and obscurity continue right through the theological romance, till the closing verses speak to us of Christ's inexhaustible verbosity and of his rich full life which all the books that ever were written could not contain or record, it is abundantly clear that fiction and not fact forms the substance of the Johannine story. The extravagant chemistry involved in the miracle by which water was instantaneously converted into 480 litres of wine—better stuff than the original tipple on tap when the wedding feast first began—should quite suffice to put this Gospel into the category of religious romance.

Dide's chapter on the "Sermon on the Mount" is valuable as showing that the maxims and sentences of which the alleged Sermon is composed are the result of diverse influences anterior to the date ascribed to Jesus. Nothing essential is to be found in the Sermon that may not be discovered in the ancient Biblical writings. M. Dide tells us that the historian, Joseph Salvador,* in his book, *Jesus-Christ et sa doctrine;* H. Rodrigues,† in his study on *Les Origines du Sermon sur le montagne;* Leopold Dukes,‡ in his dissertation, *Qu'est ce que le Christianisme a pris du judaïsme?* and Joseph Cohen,§ in his *Deicides*, have shown by incontestable citations that the commands of charity, meekness, and religious submission—the *tout ensemble* and all the details of the moral teaching of the New Testament—are nothing more than the transcription of certain parts of Jewish teaching. The saying which Rousseau places in the mouth of the *Vicaire Savoyard:* "Never man spake like this man," is thus nothing more than a phrase mouthed by an ignorant rhetorician.

If any reliance is to be placed upon the evangelical portraiture of Jesus, it is clear, amidst much that is doubtful and uncertain, that he held the belief that the end of the world was at hand, that it would happen in the lifetime of his generation, that he would come from heaven with angels blowing loud trumpets in order to plunge the wicked into a fiery furnace, and that the normal functions of sun, moon, and stars would be deranged and the cosmos generally upset as the theatrical accompaniment of the dire event. The existence, then, of Jesus can only be admitted, as M. Dide very properly insists, on the condition that we accept him as the deluded victim of a self-glorifying hallucination. Strauss has already remarked that there would never have been a Christian Church without the belief that the return of Christ to judge the earth was imminent. M. Dide justly insists that the peculiar morality taught by Jesus can only be understood in the light of that fantastic belief. In fact, Christ's ultra-mystic doctrines find their appropriate and logical explanation in an absolute contempt of every sane rule of life, framed on the principle of the perpetuity of social existence and based on the humane as apart from the divine organisation of communities. Here, too, is the key to the self-renunciatory position occupied by Jesus and his disciples, with their rejection of the family and personal property, and their insistence upon religious contemplation, celibacy and poverty, together with their detachment from all considerations as to labor, marriage, or the political and social organisation of society. The chapter dealing with this crucial aspect of the Jesus Legend is a very full and convincing exposure of the fallacies of ethical infallibility that cluster around the hazy figure of the Gospel hero.

Step by step, and chapter after chapter, M. Dide takes the reader through legend after legend woven around the mystic miracle-worker of Roman Palestine. He makes it clear that Messianic textual suggestions in the Jewish writings and the doctrinal necessities arising out of new controversies with Jews and heretics, created the ideal figure that looms so mysteriously in the Christian conscience throughout the ages. A trifling, but suggestive instance of the growth of ideas concerning Christ is set forth in the chapter on the transformations during many centuries of the physical personality of Jesus. The Messianic declaration in Isaiah xliii. having stated that the Christ would be ugly—like a leper, without grace and without beauty, as the Vulgate puts it—Jesus began his legendary career as a man void of beauty, of diminished stature, and with vulgar mien. The idea is traced through Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and all the old ecclesiastical writers. Later on, the Byzantine Church insisted

* Born at Montpellier, 1796; died at Versailles, 1873.
† Born at Bordeaux, 1812; died at Paris, 1898.
‡ Born at Presbourg (Hungary), 1810; died at Vienna, 1891.
§ Born at Marseilles, 1817; died at Paris, 1899.

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on the material ugliness of the Christ. Ages passed, and then a new physical ideal was formed; Jesus became the *beau ideal* of human beauty, and artists and writers completed and fixed the metamorphosis

But I must linger no longer over these delightful pages, and plunder no more from the rich stores of criticism and learning with which these chapters teem. This conscientious study has already been translated,* together with others of M. Dide's works, into Spanish, and I should be glad to see an English translation spreading the light far and wide in the dark places. M. Dide is a fine writer, a staunch and cultured Freethinker, who has labored in many fields of historic investigation on behalf of Rationalist ideas, and has won a high position amongst contemporary exponents of advanced philosophic ideas.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Senor Moret.—In Memoriam.

THE death of Senor Segismundo Moret removes from Spanish politics a respectable and respected statesman. He had filled the highest positions in the State, having been Prime Minister, Leader of the Liberal Party, Leader of the Spanish Bar, President of the Ateneo (Madrid), and, at his death, President of the Cortes. He replaced Sagasta as chief of the Liberal Party, and, in that capacity, alternated with the now execrated Maura in the enjoyment of the pride and profits of political power according to the see-saw system in Spain, under which, the Conservatives went out after a time to let the Liberals in, the Liberals in their turn vacating the reins of power in favor of the Conservatives. Moret succeeded Maura when the indignation of Europe hurled that religious hyena from power. In the ordinary course of Spanish affairs, the death of Canalejas would have paved the way for a new lease of Maura and murder for religion's sake; but the Ferrer case and a dread of the revolution that would have supervened on the resumption of power by the Chueta of Majorca†, has closed for ever the evil system under which the two orthodox political parties divided the spoils of the nation. From that point of view, if from no other, Ferrer's blood was not shed in vain.

My friend Lorand has paid a tribute of homage to Moret's memory, a note of which deserves to be recorded. Lorand declares that before Moret's resignation — brought about by a Court intrigue planned and carried out by Maura—Moret was on the eve of bringing about the restitution of Ferrer's property. During the remainder of his political career he not only supported Canalejas, known to be favorable to Ferrer's cause, but interested himself in Lorand's efforts to obtain the restoration of the confiscated property, and aided and assisted towards that end to a considerable extent. No one knows better than M. Lorand how deep is the debt of gratitude due from Ferrer's friends to the late Spanish statesman. To have wrought service for justice in the company of such a distinguished and capable man is not the least amongst the compensations with which one's sacrifices for right and truth are sweetened.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

To live is like to love—all reason is against it, and all healthy instinct for it.—*S. Butler.*

* Sempere & Cia (Valencia).

† The *Chuetas* (numerous in Majorca) are the descendants of the *converted Jews* in Spain, and were hated and despised by the Spaniards of reputedly pure race. The *Chuetas* were compelled annually, on various occasions, publicly to eat pork. Maura's gastronomic preferences are not known except that, unmindful of the persecutions and outrages suffered by his race, he meanly prefers to herd with the Catholics with wolfish appetites for the flesh and the blood of unbelievers.

A Pioneer Schoolmaster.

"Lofty designs must close in like effects."
—ROBERT BROWNING.

A SCHOOL in which Ingersoll's works and other Freethought publications are used, and on the walls of which hang portraits of Bradlaugh, Foote, Ingersoll, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Whitman, and other Freethought worthies, suggests an educational establishment of the future rather than one of to-day. Yet, about an hour's journey from London, such a school has existed for the past ten years, and the constantly increasing number of scholars testifies to the efficiency of the education imparted. The principal of the school is a man in the full prime of life. He is an ardent and enthusiastic Freethinker, and an earnest social reformer, and is full of a high and unflinching courage. As a schoolmaster, he may have his peers; he can scarcely have any superiors. He is among schoolmasters of to-day what Dr. Arnold was at Rugby in the schooldays of Judge Hughes. Animated with the idea of the high nature of his calling, he throws himself into forwarding the physical, mental, and ethical development of the boys and girls under his charge; and the growing popularity of this centre of education gives evidence of his success, and of the coming triumph of Freethought. Like his famous prototype, he aims at training the children so that they are a credit to his system and a gain to the country in which they live.

In the course of an interview with the principal some interesting details of the work at this unique school were gleaned. "Nature studies," said the head-master, "are a feature. During the summer months weekly rambles are arranged, and the scholars journey to the heart of the country or to the seashore, and learn to read directly from Nature's 'infinite book of secrecy.' A short walk or train journey is usually sufficient; but once a year we go to London and visit the Zoological Gardens and the Natural History Museum. On our last trip Sir E. Ray Lankester, F.R.S., was interested in the young visitors to the museum. Daily talks form another part of our educational program. These range over a variety of subjects, principally scientific, historic, and biographic. Birthdays of great or famous men and women are honored. Quite recently Darwin formed the subject of an address; and a host of well-known names have been used in this connection, from Bruno to Bradlaugh. Ingersoll's works are largely used for dictation, especially his oration on *Shakespeare* and the famous address on *Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child.* Other books used are F. G. Gould's *Children's Plutarch* and *Brave Citizens.* Dennis Hird's volumes on *Evolution* are also favorites; but Ingersoll is easily first in the children's affection."

In reply to the question as to mixed classes, the principal continued: "Yes! boys and girls sit together, and the tuition is precisely the same for both. So far as physical culture is concerned, the Sandow system is in use. We have succeeded with the mixed classes, for experience has shown us that the girls become more self-reliant and the boys more amenable and courteous. Science is taught to all, and every scholar has a sound knowledge. Even the youngest children know the star groups and the fundamentals of science."

The school itself is a model one, and most pleasantly situated close to the sea and the open country. The class-rooms are examples of neatness and order, and the dining-room and dormitories well in keeping with the general order that reigned throughout. There are day-scholars and boarders, and the relationship between the principal and the pupils is of the happiest. Indeed, the prevalent impression is the absence of restraint; the whole school is simply one happy family of boys and girls, and the teaching staff foster parents. Questions are freely invited, and every opportunity is given for the development of individuality in the scholars. The critical faculties are kept alert. One day the scholars will be told the story of Richard III., and maybe on the next day that

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of Socrates. Then they will be asked to contrast the two personalities. This is but an instance of how unconventional is the work at this school. Another point worth emphasising is the absence of corporal punishment. Discipline is maintained by moral suasion, and the radiant happiness of the pupils is a perpetual proof that the newer and higher methods are so far an improvement on the barbaric methods of Wackford Squeers and Dotheboys Hall as the Himalayas are superior to Highgate Hill.

In a wholesome world the boy must always throw back to his barbaric ancestors; there should be a touch of barbarism left in the young man. There is not much to be said for the little boy who does not admire sport and physical culture. With this idea, manly exercises are encouraged among the pupils, and in the eager air surrounding the salt gates of the sea the scholars grow famously. Illness is unknown among the pupils, and not a single case of serious sickness has taken place in the school since its foundation. The girls take a lesser amount of exercise and play the pleasantest games. Above all, both sexes have a proper amount of that social and literary activity which is delightfully necessary to the complete life of cultivated young citizens, who are destined to herald the dawn of a new era, and who are responding to the calling bugles of Liberty.

As we left the building, the fresh, young, childish voices were repeating in unison, "The time to be happy is now; the place to be happy is here; and the way to be happy is to make others happy," and we fancied that the large portrait of Ingersoll upon the walls smiled approval. Certainly, the great American's influence is not waning when his winged words lend inspiration to budding manhood and womanhood. Dead, he remains a living force by the nobility of his writing and the consistency of his example. Freethought, too, is undeniably spreading when parents can be found in sufficient numbers to entrust their children to the charge of a schoolmaster whose teaching ignores the "lie at the lips of the priest." In the ripe years when Freethinkers will get their rightful share of the inheritance of the world's wisdom, such schools will be multiplied through the length and breadth of the land. It will form a fitting sequel to the work of such men as the principal of this school, modest as he is brave, whose quiet but unshakable adherence to his own high ideals of liberty is typical of the best of the race of Freethinkers. It may be only in little ways or obscure that we may perform our part, our efforts may never be recognised, but such action forms the highest and most perfect tribute to the ennobling ideals of Freethought.

MIMNERMUS.

A Renegade Parson.

IF Laurence Sterne lived in the present day, his writings would probably adorn the pages of this journal.

Like the poor, he is always with us, either in the form of fresh biographies or new editions; in whatever manner he is presented, we find that his little excursions in the broad fields of humanity are ever marked with success.

Although his sentiment may ring false occasionally, we can readily forgive him, and, as Freethinkers on the lookout for good in everything, we can enjoy and appreciate the graceful writings of one whose heart was in the right place.

A keen student of emotions and an observer of mankind's faults, it was only natural that his generous judgment should fail to find a congenial reception in the narrow purview of the Church.

Most of his sermons seem to undervalue the worth of religion—for a parson; and this, along with a defect in speech, did not win for him the approbation of his brother clerics.

To judge from his exquisite effusions, a terrible God and a fiery hell would be as superfluous as stage thunder to a Garrick. He could well afford to dispense with theatrical matter of that kind.

Well do we remember the painful pilgrimages to church two or three times each Sunday as a boy; better still do we recall the wondrous inspiration which our worthy vicar received from those three sources—God, Death, and Hell. By a priestly Prospero these were the spirits summoned; and, with the exception of one or two hardened churchgoers, they would never fail to keep the congregation awake. We have too much respect for Sterne to compare him with the ordinary modern country vicar, hated and despised by the intelligent few and worshiped in ignorant awe by the feeble-minded many.

But it certainly stands to his credit that, despite position, he refused to rattle the dry bones of superstition, and chose instead to embellish his books with those human touches which make him so lovable.

In reading his numerous works we cannot fail to be struck by the rich fund of secular philosophy they contain.

Dealing with such diverse subjects as Death, Slander, Enmity, and Wisdom, he discards the Divinity, and chooses to speak of the philosophy of life rather than speculate about man's relation to God.

In *A Sentimental Journey* the description of his encounter with a monk soliciting alms is delightful in its self-analysis.

With an absence of acrimony, although the monk's religion differ from his own, he refuses to give, but not without serious after-thought that he had used the votary of St. Francis unkindly.

Later on Sterne has ample opportunities to make amends; the pair exchange snuff-boxes, and all's well that ends well.

Such small acts of courtesy well became this agreeable author's character.

His individuality was too powerful to be imprisoned by the Church; and in choosing the world as his parish, through the medium of his books, none will regret that he preferred this to the obscurity of a country vicarage.

Whilst not being openly a sceptic, his works have more of an earthly flavor than otherwise, and contain much that is now advocated by Freethought.

He died in poverty at the age of fifty-five. Perhaps if hypocrisy, that sure talisman to wealth, had been ingrained in him, affluence might have robbed us of one who can be read and appreciated by anyone, whatever their creed may be.

Shakespeare's luminous remarks in *Hamlet* truthfully apply to the gayer side of Sterne's life. The gadflies of slander were busy before and after his death; but, considering that this treatment is always meted out to any souls who dare defy the conventions, we are not surprised.

That a lesser light such as the "son of Yorick" should miss what befell Shelley at a later period is inconsistent with the history of those salacious-minded gentry whose loftiest ambition is that of pointing out spots on the sun. If Laurence Sterne hovered in the twilight between scepticism and expedient orthodoxy, we, as Freethinkers, regard him no less as a man who gave the world his best, and bequeathed to us some of the noble qualities which enlarge the vision of Humanity.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The parable of the Prodigal Son has made prodigals. It has made a lot of dead-beats think themselves better than honest, respectable people. If life's rewards are to be given to those who have wasted life's gifts, what is there for those who have kept themselves clean and moral? A story of a prodigal's career without a prodigal's shame is a poor lesson for humanity. But the truth is greater than parables, and the moral son is the only one to get the reward of clean living.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Captain Scott and Providence."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Labor and the Churches."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, Debate between Bernard Alderson and F. E. Willis, "That Religion is Essential to Human Progress."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "Modern Materialism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Fred Morgan, Miscellaneous and Dramatic Recital.

OUTDOOR.

ROTHERHAM (Town Centre): Geo. Berrisford, 3, "Science and the Bible"; 7, "Why I am a Secularist."

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AT

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BY

Mr. G. W. FOOTE.

February 23:

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Abstinence from low pleasures is the only means of meriting or obtaining the higher.—LANDOR.

Captain Scott and Providence.

CAPTAIN SCOTT'S manly message to the world in general, and his own country in particular, was worthy of himself, his companions, and the cause in which he died; although there is no need to go into hysterics over it as so many clergymen and journalists have done, as if nothing worthy to be set in comparison with it existed in human literature. Had the hired speakers and writers been less sentimental and more sagacious they would have noticed that Captain Scott himself avoided all sentimentalism. There is no spontaneous religious expression in the whole of the document. The reference to "Providence" is merely formal. The dying explorer admitted that they would have to bow to the will of Providence, but he added that they would still struggle to the last—which is not exactly what a Mohammedan understands by "Kismet." It seems pretty clear that "Providence" meant little more to Captain Scott than the course of events.

There was far more piety in the address of Lord Curzon as president of the Royal Geographical Society on Monday. His lordship said that Captain Scott's "last thoughts were of his comrades, his last praise for them, his dying wish to impute no human blame, but to accept without a murmur the inscrutable decrees of Providence." This is a rhetorical elaboration of Captain Scott's words. But his lordship improved even on that. He expressed a personal hope that the explorers' remains might rest where they are, that "their bodies may be left where they lie, with the snow as their winding sheet, the eternal ice as their tomb, and the solemn Antarctic waste as the graveyard in which it had pleased God that they should sleep." Lord Curzon's rhetoric is good in its way, but it is still rhetoric. It does not represent the frame of mind of the dying explorers. Their thoughts were naturally about their honor in the eyes of their countrymen, and the future of those who were nearest and dearest to them at home. We do not suppose that they troubled themselves for a single moment as to what would become of their dead bodies. Men in such a situation would be quite careless of that problem. It would only exercise minds at leisure, with no personal interest in the matter. Lord Curzon was, to some extent, talking to shine; otherwise he would never have thought that the explorers' dead bodies *could* be removed if God had settled that they should sleep amidst the desolate scenes where they died. Captain Scott made but one formal reference to the Deity in the presence of death. Lord Curzon, as a comfortable spectator of the tragedy, plays with the subject in the most approved style of "eloquence."

One is bound to ask why there is so much talk about the tragedy of Captain Scott's death if "Providence" settled it—if it happened as it "pleased God." If it was settled by "Providence" there was no accident whatever, and a great deal of Captain Scott's last message, as well as of Lord Curzon's speech, was a waste of paper and breath. What is the use of talking about adverse conditions, unforeseeable difficulties, and incalculable dangers, if the circumstances were the details of a divine design? Napoleon was beaten by the armies of the wind and snow. Captain Scott, though on a different expedition, was beaten in the same way. There is no luck in nature, but there is luck to man, whose mind cannot read the secrets of futurity—and the luck was against the gallant explorers. That is why they perished.

Some religious people assert the principle of general Providence, and deny the doctrine of particular Providence. They ask us to believe that God arranges everything in general but nothing in particular. But this is incredible. It is even absurd. It is a self-contradiction. We hold with John Wesley that there cannot be a general Providence without a particular Providence. Generals do not exist of themselves. They are the sum total of particulars, which alone have any real existence. Whiteness is only the name of a quality in which all white objects agree; whiteness is only their common characteristic. And the general providence of God on earth is made up of, and is another word for, the particular providence of God on earth. Providence, in short, must be particular, or it is no Providence at all. Limiting providence is like explaining a miracle. Both disappear the moment they are rationalised.

A particular Providence seems to have been in the minds of the search party who found the dead bodies of Captain Scott, Dr. E. A. Wilson, and Lieutenant H. R. Bowers in the tent where they drew their last breath through half-frozen lips—and erected a Cross and Cairn over their remains, with an honorable mention of another member of the South Pole party Petty Officer Edgar Evans; the memorial to Captain Oates, that "very gallant gentleman," being erected some twenty miles further south. After the record on the larger memorial the burial party added a Bible quotation: "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Evidently they had no Bible with them, in spite of their piety, or they might have turned to the text and got it right in the inscription. Job was the speaker; his wealth had gone, his children were all killed,—it was a particular providence by which he was afflicted. He was not thinking of religious theorems but of his own dread loss. His resignation to the divine hand was also particular. "The Lord gave," he said, and "the Lord *hath taken* away"—not "the Lord *taketh* away." "Blessed be the name of the Lord" came after *that*. It was all leading up to the "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Not even the clergy, who were in such haste to do a stroke of business for themselves in the memorial service at St. Paul's, have the courage to present the old doctrine of Providence in its naked horror. They dare not say that God deliberately killed Captain Scott and his companions. Ill luck did it, and God only permitted it—just as he permits everything else that happens. It suffices nowadays if God has a look in. His functions are uncertain but he must not be omitted. He is to be praised when things happen favorably, and not blamed when they happen unfavorably. But what a God is this!

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Religion of Disease.—III.

(*Concluded from p. 115.*)

FASTING, as a religious practice, is too well known for it to be necessary to do more than call attention to its widespread character. The significance of the practice is well expressed by Tylor:—

> "So long as fasting is continued as a religious rite, so long its consequences in morbid mental exaltation will continue the old savage doctrine that morbid phantasy is supernatural experience. Bread and meat would have robbed the ascetic of many an angel's visit; the opening of the refectory door must many a time have closed the gate of heaven to his gaze."

So long as we are dealing with the lower races this will be questioned by neither the serious investigator nor the fervent Christian. It is when we approach the religious beliefs and practices of later times, and attempt to apply the same principle of interpretation throughout, that a different theory is advanced. Thus, a missionary, contemplating the methods of a medicine-man, remarks:—

> "It always appeared probable to me that these rogues, from long fasting, contract a weakness of brain, a giddiness, and kind of delirium, which makes them imagine that they are gifted with superior wisdom, and give themselves out for physicians. They impose upon themselves first, and afterwards upon others."*

This is shrewdly said, and is a good example of the readiness with which religionists recognise the obvious when recognition does not clash with their own prepossessions. The difficulty for outsiders is to discern any line of demarcation between ascetic practices as causes of spiritual illumination among savages and these among religious devotees in civilised countries. So far as one can see, the only distinction is that among savages the method is simple and open. With people who are in other respects on a higher level of culture the method is concealed among a number of attendant circumstances.

As a means of intensifying the sense of religious illumination, fasting is only one of many kinds of self-torture. Professor James confesses that:—

> "Even more perhaps than other kinds of genius, religious leaders have been subject to abnormal psychical visitations. Invariably they have been creatures of exalted emotional sensibility. Often they have led a discordant inner life, and had melancholy during a part of their career. They have known no measure, been liable to obsessions and fixed ideas; and frequently they have fallen into trances, heard voices, seen visions, and presented all sorts of peculiarities which are ordinarily classed as pathological. Often, moreover, these pathological features in their career have helped to give them their religious authority and influence."†

Here, at all events, is a plain admission of the truth for which these articles are contending—that a large part of what has passed, historically, for proof of the truth of religion, and which has served to an enormous extent to perpetuate religion, has been nothing more than disease misunderstood. It is an admission that in religious ecstasy we have, to quote Dr. Maudesley's phrase, neither theolepsy nor diabolepsy, nor any other lepsy, in the sense of the possession of the individual by an external power. All that is there is a psycholepsy. Dr. Granger, dealing with this aspect of the question, says that "the religious genius is not proved to be morbid by the extent to which he diverges from the average type."‡ Quite so; but the reply quite misses the point. For it is not a mere divergence from the average type that warrants one in saying that much that passes for religious illumination is pathological in character, but the degree to which it is possible to affiliate certain types of religious exaltation with what are admittedly cases of disease when they occur out of connection with religious belief. Both Dr. Granger and Professor James simply stand as examples of how completely men will overlook the obvious in their desire to find a footing for religion. Thus, had Professor James applied his scientific knowledge to religious experience, he would have been compelled to interpret the cases cited in his volume in terms of the "Medical Materialism" he is continually jibing at. Instead of this, he devotes best part of his book to an endeavor to discover the point at which these abnormal experiences impinge on a "hidden reality." And to all these attempts one need only put the decisive query, "In what way are the visions of a religious person, admittedly of an abnormal disposition, subject to fits of melancholy, to hearing voices, seeing visions, and presenting 'all sorts of peculiarities ordinarily classed as pathological,' in what way are the experiences of such a person differentiated from those hallucinations that are admittedly due to the influence of disease?"

Let us take as an example one of James' own cases, which he admits is "distinctly pathological," but without allowing this admission to disturb his belief that he, too, came into touch with a supersensual world. The case is that of Suso, a fourteenth century mystic. As a young man he wore a hair shirt and an iron chain. Later, he had a leathern undergarment studded with 150 brass nails, points inward. To prevent himself throwing off this dress at night he had made a pair of leather gloves studded with tacks, so that if he attempted to unclothe the tacks would penetrate the flesh. Next, he had made a wooden cross, with thirty protruding nails, to emulate the sufferings of Jesus. He procured an old door, and without covering, slept upon it. His feet became full of sores, his knees were dropsical, his body scarred with the horsehair, his hands trembled. During twenty years he fed scantily upon the coarsest food, slept in the most uncomfortable places, and during the whole of the time never once took a bath. One is not suprised to learn that as a result of these practices visions were vouchsafed him. No "Medical Materialist" would be suprised at that—he would only be surprised were it otherwise. He would only ask, in what respect does this case differ from those which can be frequently met with amongst savage races? Surely the sight of the Virgin or Jesus in the one case, and of the tribal ghost in the other, does not amount to a substantial difference.

In the case of Catherine of Siena the austerities began still earlier. At six years of age she flogged herself and saw visions. At seven she practised fasting. For years she slept but an hour or two every day. Santa Teresa, as a young woman, prayed to God for an illness, and describes how she remained for days in a trance, during which her tongue was bitten in many places. She was also subject to sudden attacks, during which, she would remain in the same attitude in which she was overtaken. All was, of course, due to the direct action of God.* St. Paul, Professor James admits, "certainly had once an epileptoid, if not an epileptic, seizure." All that one need add is, that it was this once that gave him the experience which led to his conversion. Mary Magdalene, the first who brought tidings of the resurrection, had been delivered of seven devils—that is, was either an epileptic or an insane subject. Martin Luther's visions, etc., may, on the strength of his own description of the symptoms, be traced to a neuropathic source. John Bunyan's nervous disorder is attested by the fearful dreams and visions he had while a boy, and by the voices heard in later years. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, describes how, in the middle of winter, when approaching Lichfield, "the word of the Lord was like a fire in me." And, as he went through the streets, "there seemed to me to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the marketplace appeared like a pool of blood." Reflecting on the meaning of the vision, he remembered that "in the Emperor Diocletian's time a thousand Christians were martyred in Lichfield. So I was to go without my shoes through the channel of their blood in the

* Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., pp. 412-13.
† *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 6-7.
‡ *The Soul of a Christian*, p. 13.

* *Santa Teresa*. H. Joli; pp. 25-6-9 and 58.

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market-place, that I might raise up the blood of those martyrs which had been shed above a thousand years before."

The classical example of the creation and strengthening of a sense of divine communion by the methods above noted is found in the annals of monasticism. For several centuries every conceivable torture of mind and body was practised in the name of religion. Ignorant, superstitious, believing that they were surrounded by demons, the monks by their habits and mode of life supplied all the conditions of hallucination; with the result that a large part of the annals of monasticism read more like the records of a lunatic asylum than a page from the history of civilised humanity. "Religious teachers," says Francis Galton, "by enforcing celibacy, fasting, and solitude have done their best towards making men mad, and they have always largely succeeded in in inducing morbid mental conditions among their followers." *

The important thing to remember is that the history of religion is continuous. From the savage onward there is no break. Commencing with a simple but inevitable blunder, the initial error is perpetuated throughout the ages. First, we have the observing of the conditions under which intercourse with the spiritual world is believed to occur, and then the re-creation of these conditions for the sake of resuming the assumed communication. And when increased knowledge has robbed actual disease of its supernatural character, we have the same plan of misinterpretation of normally healthy human qualities. In the main, this is the position to-day among the more advanced communities. It is the social and moral qualities that are now chiefly exploited in the interests of supernaturalism. Learning nothing from experience, our "mystical" and "advanced" theologians babble of the social and moral qualities of man in exactly the same strain as the primitive savage talked of actual disease. He does not, or will not, see that the same principle of explanation holds throughout. Just as research in pathology has tracked the supernatural into its most obscure retreat in the workings of the most complex mechanism in the world, so research in the general nature of man will detect beneath the modern consciousness of a spiritual world no more than the normal feelings, ideals, and aspirations of humanity. The scientific study of religion does not bring man into contact with God. Its effect is to bring man to an understanding of himself, and thus realise the conditions that gave all the gods their being.

C. COHEN.

* *Inquiries Into Human Faculty*; 1883; p. 68.

"The Four Toll-Bars."

IT sounds extremely blasphemous for a Christian to declare that, in his religion, God has reached the end of his tether; or in other words, that Christianity represents the utmost that the Almighty can do for the world; or, in the elegant language of the Bishop of London, that herein "God has shot his last bolt." The inference from this is, that in Christianity we find God at his highest and best, so that if he fails here, he fails absolutely and finally. Christianity makes heavier and costlier demands upon Deity than any other religion the world has ever seen. As a popular preacher once said, the Cross of Calvary presents the impressive spectacle of God with his coat off, at work on, giving the last, supreme touch to, the masterpiece of the Universe. But Christianity is unique, not only for its phenomenal demands upon Deity, but also in its exceptional exactions from man. Its very first order to the latter is to make an immediate and complete surrender of himself. He is solemnly summoned to hand himself over to the Lord Jesus Christ as his slave, or property, for the rest of his life. He is nevermore to do a single thing on his own initiative, but everything as commanded by his Lord and Master. He has neither intellect, will, nor heart of his own. He no longer lives; it is another that lives in him and uses him for his own purposes. The surrender is complete. Not only the *person* of a believer, but his *property* as well, is claimed by the Redeemer. Both he and his are holy unto the Lord. If we take the Sacraments of the Church we shall see this principle in full operation. This is how Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt, of the Inner Temple, puts the case:—

> "Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Interment are four stages in our career, where the ecclesiastical arm intervenes for our supposed good and salvation. It is a species of quadrilateral, of which the sides are betraying some signs of an inclination to yield. Baptism, which is an adroit step to secure us all in advance, before we can have a voice in the business, has itself produced a volume of controversial literature sufficient to form a lifelong study for anyone disposed to lay out his time in such a manner. The broad issue has always been of course between Infant and Adult baptism: but nothing can be more certain than that as a saving process one is as efficacious as the other—it is the certificate alone which possesses any practical or other value" (*Man in Relation to God and a Church*, p. 61).

As a matter of fact, infant baptism has been of incalculably greater service to the Church than adult, because from the moment of its christening the child belongs to the Church and is a citizen of heaven. When the parents and godparents appear before the font they are informed by the officiating clergyman that all men are conceived and born in sin; that our Savior Christ has said that none can enter into the kingdom of God except through the door of baptism and regeneration; and that God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is prepared to grant to their child "that thing which by nature he cannot have," which thing will be conferred upon him in the rite of baptism. The sooner baptism takes place the better in every way, because unbaptised children, if they die, go to hell, and are not entitled to Christian burial. It is impossible to overestimate the amount of worldly wisdom involved in the sacrament of infant baptism. If a child is to be secured for the Church, the earlier he is taken in hand the better. Though too young to take any vows upon himself, the first possible moment is seized to impress upon him the solemnity of the vows made on his behalf by others. In the Catechism he is taught to repeat day by day that his name was given him by his godfathers and godmothers in his baptism, wherein he was made "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Then he is instructed to describe what his godfathers and godmothers then did for him, thus:—

> "They did promise and vow three things in my name. First that I should renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life."

The next question put to the little one is, "Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?" And naturally the child answers in the affirmative. "I heartily thank our Heavenly Father," he is taught to add, "that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Savior. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." The system is so perfect that it would be difficult to suggest any improvement upon it.

"Confirmation," Mr. Hazlitt observes, "may be regarded as a sort of corollary to the christening formula." Until quite recently practically all schools were under the wing of the Church, and religious instruction filled a large portion of the curriculum. In addition confirmation classes are conducted by the clergy, at which the children learn to regard themselves as heaven's favorites, whom God has

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accepted and forgiven for Christ's sake, and who are now set apart for a distinctly Christian life. At confirmation they formally ratify and confirm the promises and vows of their godfathers and godmothers, and acknowledge themselves bound to believe and to do those things which were undertaken for them at their baptism.

Is it not incontrovertible that children thus brought up are almost sure to become loyal members of the Church? Would not something like a miracle be required to make them renounce the Christian Faith? A born Freethinker marvels greatly that anybody can be so simple as to believe in God, Christ, and the Church; but to a young man or maiden duly trained on ecclesiastical lines nothing is so inconceivable as unbelief. The recent formation of the League of Worshiping Children among the Free Churches is an acknowledgment of the truth that the future of Christianity is dependent upon its being crammed down the throats of little children before they acquire the art of thinking. The leaders of all the Churches are now fully aware that unless they win the children before they arrive at years of discretion their profession is doomed. They know that to think is to doubt, and that doubt naturally leads to denial.

After Confirmation, in most cases, comes marriage, which the Church declares to be a sacrament, "instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church, which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Gallilee." Mr. Hazlitt says:—

> "The assumption of control over the ceremony of marriage, and its admittance among the sacraments, by means of counter-balancing the civil plea, was a consummate piece of strategy on the part of the early hierarchy. The civil law said, and still says, 'This is a civil contract'; the canon law said, and says, 'But if you wish to appear *respectable*, and to be received into genteel society, you must subscribe to the dual form; we will accommodate you by allowing you to sign the book in the Vestry instead of going to the Registrar.' The latter demands a shilling; the clergyman looks rather sourly at you if you do not give him a good deal more—he is not shy or proud. Besides, it is an offering to the Church, and he is Cashier and Book-keeper, he says" (*Ibid.*, p. 63).

The attitude of the Church on the subject of marriage is perfectly scandalous; and must be held responsible for the major portion of the immorality that obtains in Christendom. She looks upon divorce, under any circumstances, as contrary to the law of God; and she resolutely sets her face against any reform of the marriage laws, with the result that in this country we have now two marriage laws, that of the Church, which the clergy call Divine, and that of the land, which the clergy denounce as being of the Devil. Of course, in the long run the law of the land will be so modified as to be recognised as the law of Nature, while the law of the Church will be remembered only as an unwholesome dream of the times of ignorance and superstition.

Equally irrational and degrading is the attitude of the Church on the subject of death. Believing in the resurrection of the body at the last day, she has persistently opposed the idea of cremation as an anti-Christian heresy. Consequently, our cities and towns are full of cemeteries which have been and are sources of corruption and infection; and within them is found something worse even than physical infection, namely, the accursed spirit of sectarianism, which has divided them into "consecrated" and "unconsecrated" sections. Was ever anything more ridiculous or more monstrously cruel and inhuman? Happily, however, to the non-religious, to the convinced unbeliever, "consecrated" and "unconsecrated" are unmeaning terms, terms of religion which he has left behind, while the multiplication of crematoriums enables him to dispose of his dead in a much saner, wholesomer, and less repulsive manner.

It is very gratifying to learn that the Church is steadily losing its hold of mankind. Thousands of children are now being brought up without any religious instruction whatsoever; and when they arrive at years of discretion the wonder of wonders for them is that there are any Christian believers in the world. In their estimation nothing can be more absurd than the popular belief in God and immortality. When they come to be married the services of the parson will be cheerfully dispensed with, the brief and simple ceremony at the Registry Office being amply sufficient for them. For them, too, death has lost its sting, being looked upon more as a friend and deliverer than an enemy. They are freed from the cramping prejudices and depressing superstitions of their ancestors and most of their neighbors. They are content with being the children of the earth, happy in their birthright, thinking only of life and how to utilise it to the best advantage, and being quite ready to die when the time comes. They can say, with Mr. Hazlitt:—

> "We happen to have educated ourselves up to a loftier standard of thought and knowledge than the bulk of those around us. The benevolent and worshipful representatives of Jesus Christ, titled and untitled, can, however, only at best intern us, point the invisible finger at us, send us to Coventry. Is it not something that they have had their wings clipped and their talons drawn to this extent?.....We stand on an equal footing with the most exalted in worldly station of our adversaries and deceivers, and can meet them everywhere in the field openly and securely" (*Ibid.*, p. 73).

J. T. LLOYD.

Missionaries and Mrs. Grundy.

SOME time ago I wrote an article in the *Freethinker* (July 14, 1912) on the awakening of Freethought ideas in the minds of the natives of Madagascar, and I pointed out that the Malagasy Rationalists were waging polemical warfare with the missionaries. I now learn of an excellent piece of propaganda by the Madagascar unbelievers in retaliation upon the Catholics, who, this time, are being hoist by their own petard. It appears that the Congregations had circulated the report that the well-known French work, *Voyage humouristique à travers les religions*, by a French judge, Monsieur N. Simon, is only made up of lies written for the special purpose of turning the Malagasy away from the Catholic religion. Of course, this is a Christian lie, which, luckily, is not likely to abound to the glory of God. For the missionaries had not taken into account the energy and determination of the valiant Freethinkers in Madagascar. In order to pulverise the mendacious tactics of the holy men of God, a Madagascar Freethinker, M. Razanamahery, the General Secretary of the Société mutuelle des Amis Laïques, has undertaken the translation into the Malagasy tongue of the wise and witty publications of M. Simon. The first volume of the *Voyage humouristique* has already appeared, and the translation, with its 125 pages, is on sale at the price of 30 centimes. Evidently the half-baked Christians in the great African island are going to have some fine fun at the expense of the Christians in general and the Catholics in particular. I also learn that another Madagascar Freethinker, M. Rajaona, a native inspector of primary education, and therefore a French Government official, has just translated the excellent pamphlet, *La Bible expliquée*, written by our good friend, Eugène Hins. Evidently the Madagascar Freethinkers are going to keep the paunch-bellied missionaries on the run.

M. Simon's useful book, which is now increasing the gaiety of the Malagasy, consists of two volumes, and forms part of the popular "Collection A. L. Guyot."* Every page of the volume is freely

* A. L. Guyot (Paris). Vol. i. consists of 191 pp.; vol. ii. contains 189 pp. Each volume costs 20 centimes, and, no doubt, has had an enormous circulation in France and its colonies.

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peppered with facts, arguments, and analogies drawn from the study of the non-Christian religions and philosophies. M. Simon, whose book has already been translated into Italian, makes no pretence to originality or profundity. His main idea is to present the case against Christianity in a light, bright, and amusing manner, without any of the ponderous affectations of solemnity that are so dear to the heart of many modern critics of Christianity. As he says, there is no need to dock one's language with crape when dealing with the death rattles of a decrepit religion.

The fact that in France a Judge, a Doctor of Law, and, consequently, a man of social position, like M. Simon, comes out boldly in the advanced ranks of Freethought advocates, and writes with unsparing pen against the whole doctrinal paraphernalia of Christianity, from the idea of God down to the most modern developments of sacerdotal puerility, is the sign (as our author declares) that the old beliefs are dying, and that the struggle between science and the religions that sprang out of the Bible is approaching its end. More than ever, the resistance offered to the modern spirit by religion is a matter, not of conviction, but of convention. What are the soul-throbs of Mrs. Grundy, the innermost religious certitudes nestling in the vacuous mind of the average middle-class paterfamilias? In both cases the manifestations of religion are, for the most part, only the social badges of a blighting—I had almost said, a blithering—respectability. Of all the false gods ever foisted upon human credulity the most empty-headed of them all is the god "Respectability." Before this shrine Judge Simon refuses to bow with the obsequious deference of the conventional flunkey, and by that *gran rifiuto* which some modern Dante will yet have to sing, he sets his compeers a good example.

But the good example is not only put before us by this witty but judicial writer: it is, perhaps, more daringly shown by the enterprising publisher. The two volumes of M. Simon's *Voyage humouristique* form respectively volumes 851 and 852 in the Guyot collection. In England, popular publishers who are out to make money on their publications and to maintain the capricious favor of the big crowd of their patrons, would never risk their popularity or the forfeiting of their "respectability" by including in their list such an audacious piece of flat and flagrant "blasphemy" as the *Voyage*. Such temerity would spell ruin in England; or, at any rate, the fear of commercial disaster would limit the publisher's opportunity for the exercise of an intelligent hospitality to the out-and-out heretical thinker.

I do not pretend that the *Voyage* is a work fully abreast of modern criticism, or that its erudition, as, for instance, its reliance upon the Christ and Chrishna theories of Jacolliot, is always well-founded. Nor do I claim that these volumes, sold at the cheap rate of twopence each, are models of typography. But I certainly claim that these little tomes of pungent Biblical criticism, with their twenty-seven chapters ranging through all the heights and depths of Christian dogma, form one of the most readable and entertaining samples of satire and refutation in the whole run of Freethought literature. In about 800 pages M. Simon writes an enormous number of witty epigrams at the expense of the doctrines and dogmas of Christianity. The puritanic severity of the English language, which no longer assumes the blunt directness of a Dean Swift, would shrink with terror from the winged shafts of satire which fly with such deadly force in some of these chapters, and our bashful Briton, with the fear of Mrs. Grundy before his eyes, would, perhaps, translate some of these daring but legitimate flashes of wit by blushes and asterisks. I understand that the Malagasy translator will not labor under these censorious conditions, but will render with unemasculated energy the virile thought of his author.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

That Wretched Goat.

"ONCE a year," said my host, as we sat in his bungalow at Poona, "a goat dies in my garden."

I waited inquiringly.

"You see a tree over there, with a few rough stones placed about its roots?"

I saw it.

"Well, it is sacred. Nobody knows why. Perhaps a Hindu saint was buried there generations ago, and the tree, or a tree that preceded it, was hallowed by his memory. The tree stands in my garden, but the pious souls hereabouts enjoy a prescriptive right to worship at this spot. Sometimes, I find at night a little earthenware lamp laid and lit under the tree. And, as I said, once a year a man comes with his friends, and they bring a goat as a sacrifice, and the wretched goat is killed in honor of the dead worthy."

The stones at the foot of the tree, I noticed, were daubed with red paint, as a symbol of the blood which gods and ghosts thankfully receive.

If an intelligent goat could write a book, he could put together a very interesting, though not very edifying, history of the connection between religion and the animal world. If he were descriptively and statistically inclined, he might portray a vast procession of oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and camels, over which hover immense swarms of birds. He would roughly calculate the number of sub-human creatures slaughtered for love or fear of Heaven, since the days of Primitive Man to the year 1918. He would then conclude his learned treatise:—

> "In the name of mercy, I ask, Why should this vast procession have been sacrificed? Were the worshipers any the better for the holocausts? Even supposing the gods existed (and from modern researches conducted by my literary and scientific colleagues in the human species, the question is a very open one), surely they could not be justified by seeing their own creations flung bleeding at their footstools? Nor could we goats be expected to become very willing subscribers to creeds which disembowelled us in the name of the just and holy Gods. If it should come to my turn to be offered up under the tree at Poona".....

The rest of the agonised reflections had better be omitted.

Christian apologists genially assure us that their religion abolished the sacrificial slaughter of lambs, doves, etc. But they will also affirm that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast"; and some of them speak of Christ's sacrifice as perpetual. Into such mysteries, I do not now pry. My present object is to put a very simple query,—Why should we enjoy any religion that renders other beings,—human or animals,—uncomfortable?

You come across singular people who discuss the beneficence of pain; who say tragedy is part of the Divine order; who portray God Almighty as smiling serenely amid scenes of wreck, fire, battle, plague, and famine; who sneer at a possible world where goats are no longer wretched, and men no longer die, praying with parched tongues for a drop of water. Such a world, they say, would be too horribly pleasant! We should all degenerate into gaiety and music.

Well, no profession likes to be snuffed out. These prophets of melancholy would never be employed by the merry nations. Even their voluntary services would be declined. Very naturally, therefore, they seek to stave off the evil day, and they try to convince us that the cure for misery is misery, and that their servile Gospel, which excuses suffering, is worth paying for.

I have often thought that one of the finest opponents of religious melancholy is the sanitarian. The sanitarian has one of the most joyous occupations under the sun. It is his business to kill mosquitoes, and so exterminate malaria and yellow fever; to get rid of venom, whether in snakes or rotten fruit or meat; to purify our water; to make the air crystal-clear; to render clothing efficient for the protection of our bodies; to promote—oh, most glorious of

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missions!—the spread of sunshine. Civilisation might well build a temple—at Paris, for example—to the genius of sanitation; and red-cheeked virgins, glowing emblems of health of physique and soul, should dance in its courts to the sound of the most magical drums, strings, pipes, and trumpets ever invented by human skill.

While the world was more or less insanitary, the priests and prophets had to do their best to justify its discomfort. But to-day, just as working men will positively not put up with bad wages, even though you crack their skulls by flinging volumes of political economy at them, so the world at large declines to accept dirt and disease and preventible accidents as necessary items in the cosmic program. As the world becomes healthier, its spirits rise, its temper sweetens, and its theology diminishes. It has had bad dreams. It refuses to be wretched any longer.

If we are to retain the term "religion" (and, in spite of the nervous protests of some of my Freethought friends, I stoutly desire to retain it), let it stand for strength, for health, for cheerful households, for industry that sings, for capital that exploits not, for painless childbirth, for love that never knows prostitution, for a buoyant, agile, joyful human mind that discovers truth every day, and sleeps easily at night in smiling expectation of new discoveries and conquests to-morrow. Religion then will laugh, as naturally as waves leap, and winds blow, and snow whitens, and children play. Religion will reveal its splendor in expeditions to the far corners of the earth for the war against poverty and inhumanity. Religion will prove its sanity and its imperishable value in its capacity for joy and beauty. And Death itself, impelled by the abounding good companionship of the globe, will regard mankind with tranquil but no longer gloomy eyes, even as old men smile at the sports of little lads and lasses.

F. J. GOULD.

Karachi, India; February, 1913.

Acid Drops.

It is not surprising to find Mr. Frederic Harrison's books well noticed in the press. He is a rich man, and the worship of wealth is the national religion of England. Had he been a poor man his writings on Positivism would have been treated like—well, like the writings of other poor men on such subjects. The *Daily News* actually devoted a column to Mr. Harrison's last book, the *Positive Evolution of Religion*, but it should not have turned on an impudent ignoramus to write the review. The name of this creature is E. W. Sutton. In the whole of the column there is not a word from which the reader could get an inkling of the contents of Mr. Harrison's book. Incidentally, the silly scribbler says that "There is little of Comte's bitterness in the cultivated pages of Mr. Harrison." Strictly speaking, a "cultivated page" is sheer nonsense. A page in waiting might be cultivated, but not a page of printed matter. But letting that pass, what does the fool mean by "Comte's bitterness"? And what does he mean by the suggestion that Comte was not as "cultivated" as Mr. Harrison is. To mention Comte and Mr. Harrison in the same breath is like mentioning Mont Blanc with Primrose Hill. Mr. Harrison never had an original idea, or did an original thing, in his life. He is an elegant writer under the inspiration of his betters. Comte was a great and original thinker, one of the most seminal minds of modern times, from whom many sweet and "cultivated" philosophers have borrowed without acknowledgment. Comte has been dead nearly sixty years. Does anyone suppose that Mr. Frederic Harrison will be talked and written about sixty years after *his* death?

The Egregious ass who chatted in the *Daily News* in that way went one better still. "Comte," he said, "understands religion, that is, he is not without his religious experience, but because he understands the force of it, and can find no place for it in his system, he detests and mistrusts it." Comte finds no place for supernatural religion in his system; that is true enough, and hardly needs to be reiterated nowadays; but the whole of his philosophy was a preparation for the Religion of Humanity. It is indeed at this point that many Positivists break from him. They are grateful disciples of the great teacher, but they cannot stand his religion. They call it reactionary; he called it progressive. The *Daily News* reviewer doesn't know this. We should be astonished if he had read two pages of Comte. If he has done so he is a hopeless donkey.

Here is another of the hopeless donkey's exhibitions. "There is no means," he says, "of proving that two and two make four, so far as I am aware; the public must be good enough to accept the fact." There is no need for proof; there is no room for proof; it is a statement of fact, which can be demonstrated to the senses. Properly speaking, two and two do not *make* four; they *are* four; that is what we call them when we put them together. Such are the poor ninnies that religion now pays to defend it!

Spiritualists and other "occult" people are now explaining why they did not get news of the death of Captain Scott and his companions from the spirit-world. The only explanation is that all the "spirits" in the universe cannot tell any man (or woman either) what he does not know without their assistance. There is a lot of foolish gabble after the event, and never any knowledge before it.

A sailor on horseback is as much at home as a nautical gentleman engaged in spiritualistic research. The *Daily Mirror* has recently twitted the Spiritualists with ignorance of the death of Captain Scott, and asked Vice-Admiral Moore for corroboration as to Scott's name being mentioned at seances. The Admiral's reply was immense: "Have heard word Scott, also Smith, Jones, Robinson, nothing to connect with Robert Scott Antarctic. Thanks for kind advice. Don't care damn if world is convinced or not of telepathy. Everyone worth convincing knows truth."

After speeches in Latin, the Archdeacon of Leicester was elected Prolocutor of the Convocation of Canterbury. It is appropriate that the priests of a dying religion should use a dead language.

At a Southend Mission Hall soup is to be supplied to poor people two days weekly. Are they to be left to the "loving kindness" of Providence on the other five days?

An "indoor picnic" was held at Chalkwell Park Union Church, Westcliff-on-Sea, recently. We prayerfully hope that the refreshments did not include "communion port" at one-and-three a bottle.

The Wesleyans of Canada are making for themselves a tremendous reputation as heresy-hunters. Within the last few years they have run more than one dangerous heresiarch to earth and duly dealt with the same. The latest victim is the Rev. Dr. Workman, whom they summarily deposed from his chair in their Theological College at Montreal simply because he could not see eye to eye with the renowned John Wesley. The subjects on which he differed from the standards were the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the Atonement. On these questions no minister of the Wesleyan Church dares to think for himself, or to keep an open mind. All its teachers are compelled to bear the yoke of slavish submission to a mechanically constituted authority. To be tolerated at all they must be miserable, cowardly slaves, whose thinking was done for them more than a hundred years ago. And yet there are some who wonder why their Church fails to secure the allegiance of thoughtful people, and is visibly shrinking!

It is amazing with what thoughtless ease men of God often give their whole case away. Quite recently an eminent divine was urging Christians not to neglect family worship. It would better for you to omit the morning meal, he argued, rather than the morning prayers, because the omission of breakfast will never grow into a habit, whereas the omission of worship very soon will. But surely if a man has by nature a genuine appetite for worship, a real hunger for communion with God, his spiritual nature will be as clamorous for food as his physical nature, and it will be quite as impossible for him to go without family prayer as without breakfast. And yet the great preacher was right, because the need in the one case is *real*, and in other *artificial*.

How the truth leaks out! We all remember the boasts of Montenegro, at the outset of the war, that its object was the liberation of its fellow Christians in Albania, Macedonia, and other parts of European Turkey. That was only a

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pretence. The real object of Montenegro and its pious King has just been set forth more specifically. We beg our readers to pay careful attention to the following extract from the *Westminster Gazette* of Feb. 21 :—

"MONTENEGRO AND SCUTARI.

"Reuter's Agency is informed that, acting under telegraphic instructions from his Government, M. Popovitch, the Montenegrin delegate, yesterday afternoon visited the Foreign Office, and made a declaration in the following sense :

"'That in order to make clear the position of the Montenegrin Government, he was charged to explain the situation as it existed to-day. Montenegro had already lost much in the attack upon Scutari, the possession of which was for her the principal reason of the war, and in a short time her efforts would be successful and the town be taken. Under these circumstances he was charged categorically to inform the British Government that under no circumstances could Montenegro accept any transaction that might have in view Scutari not being Montenegrin, even if such were proposed by the Powers. Montenegro was determined never to evacuate Scutari, and if attacked was resolved to risk annihilation rather than give up the city.'"

There you are. It is written quite plainly. It was the acquisition of Scutari that was the "principal reason of the war" for Montenegro. The soldiers of the Cross are simply after plunder. We have said so all the time—and now they say so themselves.

"Hubert," of the *Sunday Chronicle*, can write an interesting and well-informed article, but he occasionally gets off his beat, and this happens, as is so often the case, when he is most certain of his absolute accuracy. Thus, writing on the death of Captain Scott and his companions, he asserts emphatically that the unappeasable desire of man for knowledge, quite irrespective of its making for comfort and convenience, "cannot be accounted for by the scientific evolutionist." "Hubert" is apparently under the impression that only those qualities of mind or body that are of obvious and immediate value can be accounted for by evolution. Evolution may thus account for the engineer, but not for the philosopher. It may account for the man who is seeking knowledge as the means to some utilitarian end, but it will not account for men seeking knowledge with no other end in view but its acquisition; and, above all, it will not explain men sacrificing themselves to acquire knowledge of this kind.

This is a very common form of reasoning, and its attractiveness is entirely due to inadequate understanding of all that scientific evolution involves. To begin with, is it quite certain that the pursuit of knowledge, as such, has no utilitarian value, that is, does not add "to the comforts and conveniences of life"? or that the desire for mere knowledge does not "help him to survive"? Living in a Christian country, and fighting against the incubus of a Christian ancestry, "Hubert" appears to be under the impression that useful things must come under the category of either cash, or food, or some material thing, or, if knowledge, then must be convertible into some material form. Scientific evolutionists know better than this. In the case of play, so long an unsolved problem, it has now been shown that this is the young animals' preparation for the more strenuous life of maturity. And, on similar lines, the craving for knowledge of all kinds, and at all costs, is ultimately based on the fact that not only does it strengthen mental qualities as a whole, but because on knowledge rests man's power of mastery over the forces that surround him. It is because of these two facts that social opinion has in all ages laid emphasis upon the value of knowledge as an end in itself. No one can say what knowledge will become of actual practical value; we can only say that all knowledge is of use under some condition or other. It is thus that, in the course of evolution, means become ends in themselves, and also that a quality not useful to survival in a given individual, or a given occasion, may yet have a survival value from the point of view of the life of the species.

If "Hubert" had asked himself, Is *any* knowledge of value? he might have saved himself from confusion. For if the answer is in the affirmative, then the mystery disappears. And a quality of mind, once existing, may well go on developing, provided it be not actually injurious. Moreover, the opinion of one's fellows counts naturally and properly for something. And although public opinion may have condemned, at times, certain forms of knowledge, it has never failed to pay homage to those who possessed it—if not individually, then in the mass. In brief, the place and function of the desire for knowledge in human evolution presents no difficulty to the really scientific evolutionist. He is not surprised at men forsaking home and comfort, and risking a lonely death, to gratify this craving. He would be surprised were it otherwise. The end of Captain Scott and his companions is only another illustration of how fundamental social forces will assert their supremacy over a conscious commercialism and religious teaching.

The Suffragettes seem to be improving in the gentle art of making enemies, and we are wondering what they are likely to do next. We hope that they will draw the line before imitating the Biblical heroine, Jael, who had considerable fame as the user of a hammer.

Nottingham Baptists have taken the bull by the horns. Some Christians may denounce picture palaces, but those responsible for the Baptist tabernacle in that town have decided that they are good enough to make money on. So the building has been let to a cinematograph company during the week, the services continuing as usual on Sunday. The tabernacle has a seating accommodation of 2,000, and a membership of 211. Evidently no danger of overcrowding.

Our readers will probably remember how the great Talmage demonstrated the truth of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by exhibiting a piece of pitch from the assumed place of their burial. At this game the Bishop of London is not to be beaten, and at the Brompton Parish Church, the other Sunday evening, he adduced his evidence in favor of the miracle of turning water into wine. He had been to Cana of Galilee, and had actually "seen the great water-pots, the successors of those very water-pots in which the water was placed before the miracle." That settles it. The actual pots were no longer there, but their successors were, and, presumably, there was something about them that carried conviction to what Bishop Ingram is pleased to call his intelligence. They looked as though they *would* be connected with a miracle of that description. What a pity the Bishop did not bring home one of the pots and exhibit it to his congregation. The curious thing is that Bishop Ingram regards himself as a civilised person.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has just received a gift of £10,000. It is a pity that the donor did not care for knowledge without the adjective.

A novel has recently been published with the title *The House of the Other World*. It is already a familiar object in theological fiction.

Of all the fantastic reasons why working men do not attend church, the one put forward by Canon Alexander, at St. Paul's Cathedral, takes the cake. This far-seeing, deep-thinking ecclesiastic has discovered that the reason why working men stay away from church—he means, of course, the Established Church—is that they have no part in the management of its affairs. We suggest that the working man is not quite such a fool as Canon Alexander seems to think him. We have heard of people leaving a church because they were not petted or praised, or were slighted in some way or the other; but in the main there is only one reason why people do not attend church, and that is because they have ceased to believe in the doctrines taught. While people believe in religion they will go to church somewhere. They may fall out with a particular preacher, but that only means that they will find another one, and so the number of church attendants is not materially affected. But the absence of church attendance affects all alike. Those which are managed by the congregation are no better off than the others. And the slump is not even confined to the working class. The clergy are more concerned with their abstention because, as they sometimes say, it is the business of the Church to keep the people in order. And if it cannot do this one of the principal reasons for subsidising the Church disappears.

The abuse of one's enemies is often a compliment, and what is intended as an indictment may in reality be a tribute to one's worth. It has been proposed by some members of the French Chamber of Deputies that there should be a national celebration of the second centenary of Diderot's birth. If the proposal realises itself, the French people will honor itself in showing national recognition of the principal editor of the famous *Encyclopædia*, a work that had such an enormous influence, not only on French, but on European thought. The *Catholic Times*, naturally, does not welcome such a proposal, and remarks that, while Diderot's ability was indisputable, the effects of the *Encyclopædia* were "deplorable." The *Encyclopædia* "encouraged the wildest speculation of immature minds and gave a vogue to Freethought. From the effects of the impulse then given to the conceptions of the most irreverent

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theorists France has never recovered." We readily overlook the "immature minds"—that is only what one would expect from a Catholic editor—for the sake of truth admitted. Not only France, but the whole civilised world benefited by the work of Diderot and his fellow-workers. France has never ceased to benefit from their labors, and the Christian Church has never recovered the vigor of their onslaught.

Even when a clergyman hits on the truth, he is unable, in nine cases out of ten, to express it plainly. Says the Rev. A. E. Garrie:—

> "I confront this vast physical universe, with all its wonder and world of being, and I ask myself, What does the physical universe tell me about God? and there is silence, and not a voice. And I turn my face to Jesus Christ, and he says to me that God is Father."

Now, in plain English, all this means that the familiar argument from design is all rubbish. Nature by itself bears no evidence of the existence of a God, and so far Atheism is fully justified. But if, after failing to find any reasonable proof of God, you will take a dose of theological soothing syrup and believe in Jesus, then you can believe in God. And with this the Atheist will agree. To have said this much quite plainly would have opened the eyes of Mr. Garrie's hearers. And it is just possible that by not saying it plainly he even prevented himself from recognising all that the statement involved.

Rev. Evan Edwards, the oldest Nonconformist minister, celebrated his ninety-eighth birthday at Torquay last week. Adam and Methuselah would have regarded the gentleman as a green youth.

Rev. E. T. Griffiths died suddenly while preaching in Cam Parish Church. He was referring to the death of Captain Scott and his party at the post of duty, when his voice failed, and he fell down the pulpit steps. The papers speak of "heart affection," and they are very likely right. But if a Secular lecturer were to fall down dead in similar circumstances it would certainly be a "judgment."

The Bishop of Chichister is courting danger. He has been complaining of the "church voice" among his clerical brethren. Many a time, he said, one came across a clergyman who spoke very nicely outside the church, but directly he got on his legs, or on his knees, in church he lost his natural voice, and spoke in "this miserable church voice." Quite true—and we venture to say the reverend gentlemen know what they are doing. They talk such nonsense in church that only artificial tones carry it off. If it were spoken in a natural voice everybody would laugh at it—and decline to hear it again.

The Bishop of Chichester, speaking at the House of Convocation at Canterbury, expressed the desire that "every young clergyman should have a pin with its point upwards just under his chin. It is a simple and safe cure for clergy who lower their heads when reading." He also said that "the reading of the lessons is the most melancholy thing in the church to-day." Does the Bishop imagine that any man could be very jolly whilst worshiping a Deity who is suspended to two pieces of wood with three tenpenny nails?

A priest was shot dead at St. Englebert Church, Mülheim, during the celebration of Mass. He was in one of the holy boxes confessing a young girl. But he was not the murderer's intended victim after all. The priest he meant to shoot had "stolen his guardian angel"—which we take to mean "his girl." Priests are not supposed to meddle with other men's "guardian angels." But they do sometimes. And sometimes other men's "guardian angels" meddle with them.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman has been interviewed by the *Daily Express* on "What is wrong with Socialism?" He says there is nothing wrong with Socialism, but there is ever so much wrong with England and the English people. Amongst the evils he notes is this. "I know of no country," Mr. Hyndman says, "in which a low type of supernatural religion is used so systematically to chloroform what little of intelligence is left to the wage-earning class." Why then do so many Socialists look askance at Freethought propaganda? Mr. Hyndman himself rarely opens his mouth on the subject. We thank him, however, for his straightforward utterance on this occasion. It justifies the policy of the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker*.

A few recent clerical wills, but none of them very large. Rev. John Matthews, of Rathmines, Dublin, left £9,240. Rev. Ernald Lane, Dean of Rochester, left £3,851. Rev. John Nixon, Roman Catholic priest, Great Crosby, left £5 985. Rev. Charles Watkin Lewis, Castle-street, Hereford, left £11,541. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Emperor William has been preaching again. He evidently loves it, and we are inclined to think he has missed his proper vocation. This time he has explained how and why Germany rose from the dust in 1813. Of course the failing health of Napoleon had nothing whatever to do with it, neither had the statecraft of the German leaders, such as Stein. No, the explanation is that Germany recovered her faith in God, and based her moral views of life on religion. God was with Germany, and God is still with her, and Germany will be all right while she carries the shield of faith. "Armed with such weapons," the Kaiser continued, "we will, untroubled from right or left, pursue our straight path, eyes upraised, hearts upraised, trusting in God." *Such* weapons! Germany would want something better than the shield of faith if Russia and France were to fall upon her together.

It is a pity that "Providence" cannot look after its own places. The recent disastrous fire at Tokyo, in which 3,990 houses were destroyed, and 15,000 people rendered homeless, broke out in the Salvation Army Hall at Kanda. We are not aware of any good the Salvation Army has done in Japan to balance this mischief.

A two-year-old baby boy was fatally burned at Millman-street, London, last week. The eagle eye of Providence only sees sparrows.

The question of heating an open-air swimming bath has arisen at a seaside resort, and the question of the cheapest method has been raised. Why not try placing a few Bibles around the edge? The sacred volume is "hot" enough to make a bronze statue blush. Or the local clergy might be induced to discuss Christian Unity. There would be sure to be plenty of hot water then.

Europe's bill for military purposes this year will be four hundred millions. Yet the people profess to worship "The Prince of Peace."

The question of the treatment of the Mohammedan inhabitants of Macedonia and Thrace came up lately in the House of Lords. We were glad to see the report of Lord Cromer's speech in particular.

> "Earl Cromer confessed that it was a very great disappointment to those of them who thought that the cause of Christianity was identified with that of progress and humanity that the massacres in Macedonia had not ceased. He acquitted the Government of any sort of indifference in the matter, but could not help contrasting the extreme indignation shown by certain classes in this country when it was a question of Turks massacring Christians with the apparent apathy which was shown when it was a question of Christians massacring Turks."

Lord Newton called attention to the Mussulman refugees in Asia Minor and other places. Some hundreds of thousands of these unfortunate people had been driven out of Bulgaria and were in a state of utter destitution, having literally lost everything they possessed. Lord Morley gave the usual polite assurance that "when the time came" the Government would do what it could on behalf of these refugees. Meanwhile ——! Ah, meanwhile!

Mr. Pankhurst, of Manchester, whose widow is now so famous, was a barrister by profession and a Freethinker by conviction. He once brought an action against a political opponent for charging him with having declared that the Holy Ghost was the foggy member of the Trinity—and lost the case. Mr. Pankhurst was a little man, with a sanguine temperament, and a peculiar voice somewhat suggestive of G. J. Holyoake's. It was something between a squeak and a shriek. Yet he possessed great knowledge and considerable ability, and ought to have made a much greater mark in the world than he did. Mrs. Pankhurst is a very religious woman, judging by her public utterances. According to a correspondent of the *Observer* she lately stated at Essex Hall that "there was only one General to this movement, and that General was God, and only God's methods were the telling ones in this big work." Mrs. Pankhurst may be right. She seems to have been reading the Bible, anyhow.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, March 2, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester, at 6.30, Address at Anniversary Meeting.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £42 5s. 10d. Received since:—F. Rose (S. Africa), 10s. 6d.; A. Phillips (S. Africa), 10s.; James Moffat, £1 1s.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; Fred Lucas, £1 1s.; W. Bean, 5s.; "Ernest," 5s.; D. Wright, 5s.; Robert Taylor, 2s.; J. Dunlop, £1; T. H. Elstob, 10s.; G. White, 10s.; Edward Oliver, £3 3s.; W. Bailey, £6 6s.; Wm. Feltrup, £5.

ANNIE BOLT.—We hardly want thanks for a pleasurable act.

ROBERT TAYLOR.—Will deal with it next week.

J. DUNLOP.—Shall be glad if your good wishes are realised.

R. YATES.—See the chapter on "Bible Animals" in our *Bible Romances*.

W. J. WILDES.—Next week.

"PAGANUS" writes: "Will 'Mimnermus' kindly give the name and address of 'a pioneer schoolmaster'? I am very anxious to place my children under the guidance of such a master."

R. CHAPMAN.—The South Shields effort commands our best wishes. We should very much like to see more Freethought work on the Tyneside.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

A. C.—What is "*Semper eadum*"? It is best to stick to the language one knows. You express yourself very well in English. Heaps of people can't do that. We read your tribute to your father with pleasure, and are glad to hear you are grateful to him for having introduced the *Freethinker* to you, or you to the paper, whichever expression is preferable. Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

A. PHILLIPS (S. Africa).—Subscription all the more valuable because accompanied by such good wishes.

JAMES MOFFAT.—Glad to see your letter to our old friend Mr. de Caux. Your name is familiar to us from of old. It is pleasant to note the good health and good spirits you still possess.

R. C.—Pastor Russell's opinion on Darwinism, for instance, is not of the slightest importance to any educated person. It is certainly not worthy of criticism in our columns. Pleased you thought Mr. Lloyd's lecture "very interesting."

EDWARD OLIVER, sending cheque towards the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I have increased my contribution this year by 50 per cent., and I trust others who can afford it will do likewise."

G. CADOKSON.—"Hard nuts" filled with sawdust. Wait till next week.

R. D. WEALANDS.—Passed over to N. S. S. Secretary. Glad the *Freethinker* has helped so much in your mental emancipation.

W. BAILEY.—Pleased to have your good wishes. We mean to hear them expressed—for we know we always have them.

W. FELTRUP.—Sorry to leave the Gypsy over till next week for want of space.

A good deal of correspondence stands over till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote visits Leicester to-day (March 2) to take part in the anniversary meeting in the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate. Mr. Foote's contribution will not be a lecture but a speech. It will include some of his reminiscences of the Freethought movement in Leicester. He lectured there before the Secular Hall was built.

"George Meredith: Freethinker" is the title of a long and outspoken article by Mr. G. W. Foote in the March number of the *English Review*. Mr. Foote did not press the article upon the editor of that magazine,—he was invited to contribute it—and that fact witnesses all the more to the courage of the editor and the proprietors. If for no other reason, our readers should patronise the *English Review* for this month. Many of them will probably continue to take it, for it is a live magazine and a wonderful shillingsworth.

Mr. Foote is allowed to tell the whole truth in the *English Review* about George Meredith's relations to Freethought. Not a single sentence was objected to by the management. This is very satisfactory. The article in such a magazine will gain the attention of a much larger public than it would have reached in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening on "Captain Scott and Providence" was much applauded by a further improved audience. Mr. Victor Roger, who occupied the chair, elicited some questions, but no formal opposition.

London "saints" are asked to note that the 1912-1913 course of Queen's Hall Sunday evening lectures is now over. We shall have something to say about the experiment very shortly, perhaps next week.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (March 2) for the Manchester Branch at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road. His subjects should prove attractive, and we hope to hear of good audiences.

Mr. Cohen had good audiences at Belfast, and they were very attentive and sympathetic. The questions asked after the lectures were more intelligent than the usual efforts of inquiring Christians. Good reports of the meetings appeared in the *Northern Whig* and the *Belfast News Letter*. Mr. Cohen unfortunately caught a cold at Belfast, and had a very rough passage back to England, and being a bad sailor he arrived home in a sad condition, having to take to his bed for some days. Such are the side pleasures of Freethought lecturing, in addition to the wealth in which Freethought advocates are known to be rolling.

Mr. Lloyd lectures this evening (March 2) for the West Ham Branch at the Workman's Hall, Stratford. District "saints" will please note.

The South Shields Branch is endeavoring to arrange a course of Sunday evening meetings in the Victoria Hall Buildings, Fowler-street, during March. Mr. J. Bryce, of Newcastle, well known to *Freethinker* readers, and always well worth listening to, has agreed to take the opening lecture this evening (March 2) The local "saints" are invited to do all they can for the success of this effort.

The Leeds Conference of the National Secular Society decided that a half-yearly meeting of the London members should be held. The first of these gatherings has been arranged to take place at the Chandos Hall, Maiden-lane, Charing-cross, on Tuesday evening, March 4, at 8 o'clock. Mr. Foote will preside and the Executive will be present. Cards of membership will have to be shown at the door to secure admission.

The Secular Education League's Annual Meeting will be held at Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30. Members are earnestly invited to attend. A public meeting will follow at 8.15. The list of speakers includes Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., and Mr. G. W. Foote. We hope there will be a really good attendance. There ought to be, considering that the Government promises or threatens to deal with the Education question again in the near future.

There should be a good attendance at the first public meeting organised by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which takes place at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Friday evening, March 14. The chair will be occupied by the Rev. Copeland-Bowie, and the list of speakers includes Sir W. P. Byles, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Lord Harberton, Mr. A. L. Atherley Jones, K.C., M.P., and Sir Hiram Maxim. We may add that Essex-street is on the south side of the extreme east end of the Strand.

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The Evolution of Wireless Telegraphy.

BOTH in its order of its discovery and in its method of application, wireless telegraphy furnishes a vivid illustration of the ubiquitous activities of evolution. Not to the genius of one, but of many men of science, are its triumphs to be attributed. Various writers have written volumes on this subject, but, from some points of view, Mr. A. Story, in his charming book, *The Story of Wireless Telegraphy*, and M. Lucien Poincaré, in his *The New Physics and its Evolution*, have presented us with the most lucid history of the genesis and development of this far-reaching discovery. The aim of this article is to prove that the numerous men who contributed their various mites towards the building up of one of the most wonderful modern scientific achievements, were all more or less necessary to its ultimate triumph. To chatter about priority, or to attempt to place in their exact position of importance, the innumerable theorists and investigators who were the instruments of the evolution of radio-telegraphy were utterly futile and vain. In this department of human effort, as in most others, some have perhaps obtained more praise than their merits deserve, but this in no way invalidates the contention that each pioneer has played a worthy part in the development of wave transmission.

In what may be regarded as early days in the life of electrical science, and shortly after the illustrious Ampère had conceived the idea of constructing a telegraph, and when Gauss and Weber had arranged a telegraphic line which carried communications between their respective houses at Göttingen, scientists began to speculate upon the possibility of the utilisation of the conducting properties of air and water for the transmission of messages.

While acting on certain suggestions of Gauss, Professor Steinheil, of Munich, in 1838 made the valuable discovery that it was possible to dispense with the return wire if the line wire was connected with the earth. This was a marked advance, as Steinheil's discovery enabled him to eliminate half the line of wire previously employed, thus solving half the problem. Even at this time Steinheil seems to have fully realised the importance of the earth's power as a conducting body.

Several physicists interested in telegraphy had by this time arrived at similar conclusions, and four years after Steinheil's discovery, the celebrated Morse, who then occupied the position of telegraph superintendent to the United States Government, performed a series of electrical experiments before a commission of experts and a numerous audience of the general public in New York. During his experimental demonstrations, he was struck by the happy idea of replacing,—

> "by the water of a canal, the length of about a mile of wire which had been suddenly and accidentally destroyed. This accident, which for the moment compromised the legitimate success the eminent engineer expected, thus suggested to him a fruitful idea which he did not forget. He subsequently repeated attempts to thus utilise the air and water, and obtained some very remarkable results."

Researches on similar lines were prosecuted by Wheatstone, Wilkins, Highton, Bonetti, and other investigators, with varying success.

Lucien Poincaré has recalled with emotion an occurrence connected with the siege of Paris in 1870-71. The famous physicist, M. d'Almeida escaped from the besieged capital in a balloon, and descended in the midst of the Prussian lines. After a hazardous journey, he arrived at Havre by way of Bordeaux and Lyons. He journeyed to England to purchase the apparatus necessary for his projected experiments, and then returned along the Seine as far as Poissy. Two scientific friends, relieving one another at intervals, watched and waited day and night on a wherry on the Seine at Paris for a message from D'Almeida. In this experiment the river water replaced the customary wire, but, unfortunately, no sooner was the communication received than Paris capitulated to the enemy, and D'Almeida's patriotic sacrifice was rendered useless.

Well worthy of remembrance are the experiments which were conducted by Melhuish and Johnson at the Indian Telegraph office. These led to the establishment, in 1899, of a service in which wire lines were replaced by the carrying power of the earth. Oceanic transmission was attempted, and at last accomplished, by means of the electric cable. But many efforts had previously been made, quite unsuccessfully, however, to transmit signals through the sea itself.

It seems but yesterday since wireless or radio-telegraphy secured its first practical success. The great engineer, Sir William Preece, successfully established clear and regular communications between certain stations. One of his earliest successes was the transmission of wireless messages over the Bristol Channel. These results, however, were soon overshadowed by the epoch-making experiments of the Italian, Marconi. Despite the dispraise with which the able efforts of Sir W. Preece have been rewarded in certain circles, it is undeniable that he generously welcomed the young Italian, and became his guide, philosopher, and friend.

The first philosophers who based their electrical inquiries on the properties of the lumiferous ether are probably numbered with the unhonored dead. The known practical workers, however, make up a formidable list of names. Lindsay, Smith, C. A. Stevenson, Bell, Edison, Henry, Rathenau, and Trowbridge may be mentioned as a few only out of a crowd of working scientists who obtained solid, practical results.

These practical scientists, however, did by no means evolve their concepts of electrical phenomena from their inner consciousness. They stood upon the shoulders of the theoretical physicists who went before:—

> "If we speak of the propagation of a current in a material medium, can we forget the names of Fourier and Ohm, who established by theoretical considerations the laws which preside over this propagation? When one looks at the phenomena of induction, would it not be just to remember that Arago foresaw them?.....The merit of an inventor like Edison and that of a theorist like Clerk Maxwell have no common measure, and mankind is indebted for its great progress to the one as much as to the other" *

Young, Fresnel, Foucault, Fizeau, and other illustrious natural philosophers have all played their part in the evolution of electrical science. But the man whose labors were most precious to radio-telegraphy was the great German physicist, Heinrich Hertz. He it was who demonstrated beyond dispute that an electric discharge generates undulatory motions in the ether contained in the insulating media in its neighborhood. And to him is due the discovery of the mechanism of the evolved product, as also of the laws of electro-magnetic waves. It appears that Hertz failed to grasp the possibilities revealed by his own discoveries. But what might have been a long life devoted to human service was prematurely closed in 1894 at the early age of thirty-five. Other physicists whose contributions to electrical science smoothed the way for their successors' triumphs were Branly, Hughes, and Dolbear.

After the experiments of Hertz were published to the world, the evolution of wireless telegraphy became indissolubly associated with research work bearing upon the phenomena presented by electrical waves. Hertz' discoveries were carefully tested by Lodge, Righi, M. H. Poincaré, and others. These were completely verified, while the test experiments themselves helped to elucidate various problems previously unsolved.

Professor Threlfall, in 1890, surmised that the Hertzian waves might be rendered available as media of communication. In 1892 Professor Crookes

* Poincaré, p. 221.

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stated the conditions in which this supposition could be put into practice. Tesla, Oliver Lodge, Rutherford, Popoff, and other electricians made fresh experiments with newly devised apparatus, and Threlfall's theory was proved correct in every particular.

It in no way detracts from the merits of Guglielmo Marconi to candidly acknowledge that his patented system of radio-telegraphy was immensely indebted to the pioneer work of his predecessors and contemporaries. Indeed, his obligations to his teacher, Professor Righi, were very considerable. Trained in the laboratory of Righi, the man of science who has probably done more than any other to confirm and elaborate the research work of Hertz, Marconi had been made thoroughly familiar with the properties of electric waves, as well as with the modes in which they could be manipulated most successfully. Some of Marconi's critics allege that his system is utterly devoid of originality; that his waves are generated by the oscillator of Righi; that his receiver was precisely that previously employed by Lodge and Bose, which in its turn was still earlier invented by the French scientist Branly, and that the entire arrangement of his system was that elaborated by Popoff.

Still, when all deductions demanded by legitimate criticism are adequately met, the fact remains that Marconi's contributions towards the establishment of his system were by no means inconsiderable. His combination far excelled anything previously contrived. He was ahead of all competitors in obtaining solid results, while he demonstrated that "electric waves could be transmitted and received at distances enormous compared with those obtained before his day."

The incidents which make up the historical development of this wonderful discovery prove that its practical triumphs are the outcome of the genius of generations of workers in Nature's elusive laboratories. What wireless telegraphy has so far accomplished is as dust in the balance compared with its coming achievements. Already, as Professor J. A. Fleming says,—

> "Electric wave telegraphy has revolutionised our means of communication from place to place on the surface of the earth, making it possible to communicate instantly and certainly between places separated by several thousand miles, while at the same time it has taken a position of the greatest importance in connection with naval strategy and communication between ships and ships and the shore in time of peace. It is now generally recognised that Hertzian wave telegraphy, or radio-telegraphy, as it is sometimes called, has a special field of operations of its own, and that the anticipations that were at one time excited.....that it would speedily annihilate all telegraphy conducted by wires have been dispersed by experience. Nevertheless, transoceanic wireless telegraphy over long distances such as those across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans is a matter to be reckoned with in the future."

Wireless, or as Oliver Lodge prefers to term it, electric space telegraphy, played a very decisive part in one of the greatest naval battles of the Russo-Japanese War. From the humanitarian side, it rendered signal service when the *Titanic* disaster occurred. In its absence the toll of life would have been far greater.

Signals first successfully spanned the Atlantic from Cornwall to St. John's, Newfoundland, in December, 1901. In the intervening years all the leading nations of the world have provided regulations for its use. Long-distance wireless stations to provide communication between New York and London are in course of erection. The Marconi Companies have arranged with the British Government a plan which will ultimately link up the Empire. At present the scheme embraces Egypt (from London), Aden, Pretoria, Bangalore, and Singapore. West Africa and Hong Kong remain to be included, while Australia and New Zealand have separate schemes of their own. Thus, in the course of a few years, a gigantic department of applied science has evolved from a few theories which were originally tested and confirmed by a few electrical experiments. The workers in electrical science are now legion, and we have every justification for believing that the immediate future will yield most amazing results.

T. F. PALMER.

"Vital Lies."—III.

(*Concluded from p. 118.*)

> "From the intellectual point of view I cannot advise you to restrain the spirit of investigation, which is the scientific spirit. It may lead you far, yet always to truth, ultimately,—you, or those after you, whose path you may be destined to prepare. Science requires a certain inward heat and heroism in her votories, notwithstanding the apparent coldness of her statements. Especially does she require that intellectual fearlessness which accepts a proved fact without reference to its personal or its social consequences."—P. G. HAMERTON, *The Intellectual Life;* 1911; p. 218.
>
> "What is the use of grounds of consolation and peacefulness over which is constantly hanging the Damocles' sword of deception? The truth, my friend, the truth alone holds good, and remains constant and faithful; it is the only solid consolation; it is the indestructible diamond."—SCHOPENHAUER, "Religion: a Dialogue," *Essays*, p. 121.
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> "To parley with science is fatal to theology."—EDWARD CLODD, *Pioneers of Evolution*, p. 108.

THE first volume of *Vital Lies* having dealt with Professor James' "Will to Believe" and with Father Tyrrell's "Will to Believe in the Roman Catholic Church," the second volume deals with Mr. Crawley, another type of latter-day obscurantist, who has written a book, entitled *The Tree of Life*, in which he attempts an apology for the beliefs and rites of the Church of England by a comparison of its mysteries to the religious notions of savage races! It also deals with "The Syndicalist Myth," and concludes with a general discussion of Truth and "Vital Lies." Our immediate interest centres more particularly upon the first and last part of the volume.

Of all the injuries inflicted by science upon Christianity in our time, none have been so deadly as those inflicted by the science of anthropology. Anthropology explains the origin of religious ideas; it shows that, instead of these religious ideas—such as the ideas of God and a future life—being supernaturally revealed—they have had a perfectly natural origin. Moreover, it teaches not only that these fundamental ideas have naturally evolved, but that the whole of the ideas of the Christian religion, including its rites and ceremonies, can also be traced back to their origin in the primitive beliefs, rites, and ceremonies of our savage ancestors who lived before the beginning of civilisation.

Now, Mr. Crawley's book, *The Tree of Life*, is a study in anthropology. Mr. Crawley traces the beliefs and practices of Christianity to their origin in what seems to us now very stupid, puerile, and often disgusting and indecent, beliefs and practices of the aforesaid savage ancestors. Mr. Crawley euphemistically speaks of these barbarous beliefs as "Elemental Views of Life." For example, he observes:—

> "The analogues from savage culture show that religion is a direct outcome of elemental human nature, and that this human elemental nature remains practically unchanged.....If a savage eats the flesh of a strong man or divine person, and a modern Christian partakes sacramentally of Christ's body and blood under the forms of bread and wine, there is evidently a human need behind both acts which prompts them and is responsible for their similarity."*

That is to say that the Christian rite of the sacramental partaking of the body and blood of the Lord symbolically, in the form of bread and wine, had its origin in the same ideas which cause a savage to eat the heart of a lion or of a warrior, that he may secure to himself the qualities of strength and courage of which they were possessed. Mr. Crawley goes even lower still, and holds that "the religious emotion springs from the same source as the sexual"!

* *The Tree of Life*, p. 261.

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Now, one would think that Mr. Crawley, having laid bare the origins of Christianity in these indecent and debasing superstitions, would give up, and recommend others to give up, belief in that faith. Nothing of the kind. In fact, Mr. Crawley founds an argument for keeping it in the very fact that it has such a human origin, and he quotes a writer in the *Church Times* to the effect that "These rites and beliefs"—that is, of savages and Christians—"declare eloquently that there are spiritual needs common to the whole of mankind." And Mr. Crawley finds in this "a new method of defence which is both positive and scientific." But, observes Vernon Lee, let us ask the Christians why they believe in the Savior and the sacraments?

> "I think they will answer that they believe in it all because it has been revealed by God, registered in the Holy Scriptures, and taught by the Church. They will refer us to a thousand texts, a million ecclesiastical authorities, and, if we press them further, to the consensus of Christianity as expressed in the Creed and the Catechism. In other words, they believe because they have been taught."*

And Mr. Crawley is very anxious that they shall remain undisturbed in their unintelligent belief.

> "Nor, to do him justice," says Vernon Lee, "have I found in all his book a single word suggesting that the truths of anthropology and comparative mythology (however much they justify those of Anglican Christianity) should be taught in the place of, or in addition to, the Catechism. This is one of those questions where modern philosophy has shown its superiority by recognising the existence of *different planes* of thought."

It will be seen that Vernon Lee brings a keen and trenchant wit to bear on the issue. But to continue: "These two planes—that of the believer and of the anthropological mythologist—do not conflict, because they do not come into contact: nothing even in the most empirical sense is rarer than that a Christian believer should be an anthropological mythologist, or *vice versâ*;.....the anthropological mythologist, as is shown by this very book, never dreams of addressing his scientific" remarks to believers, and Vernon Lee arrives at the "legitimate and inevitable" conclusion "that Mr. Crawley's book is written for persons who are on the plane of *not* believing in Anglican Christianity," and further observes: "My own remarks in answer exist also, be it well understood, on that merely scientific and positive plain, for I have no sort of hope that any genuine Christian believer will ever come across, or coming across, ever be influenced by, them."† Which, by the way, is far too modest an estimate of this keen and brilliant work; for no educated believer could read it without being influenced by it.

But in all this new method of defence there is, as Vernon Lee points out, a very curious oversight:—

> "In their anxiety to prove that religious beliefs, specified or unspecified, are desirable and indispensable, our apologists ignore that the essence of a religious belief is that it should be held to be true. They forget that although such beliefs may be quite wonderfully useful as long as they are held, they are not held except inasmuch as they are *held to be true*. And they will cease to be *held as true* so soon as it is understood that they originate not in Divine revelation but in the jumbled abortive thoughts and panic-ridden rituals of savage men."‡

Mr. Crawley also believes that we are in terrible danger from Socialism, and he observes, "It was no Socialist who died upon the cross"; upon which Vernon Lee caustically remarks:—

> "A solid historical fact extremely valuable after Mr. Crawley's masterly recapitulation of all the conflicting hypotheses of his fellow-anthropologists and mythologists as to whether any person *did* die upon that particular cross, which cross was itself a derivation from some primeval *Tree of Life*" (vol. ii., p. 54).

We cannot refrain from giving one more sample of Vernon Lee's mordant irony. It deals with Mr. Crawley's division of those who know all the secrets of mythology and anthropology—those for whom *The Tree of Life* was written, and those other simple souls who are to be left undisturbed in their innocence. The difference, says Vernon Lee, lies between *We* and *They*:—

> "*We*, Mr. Crawley, you the Reader, and I, who are discussing the matter, are free to believe in Higher Criticism, Anthropological Mythology, and Evolution .....to believe also in the Elemental View of Life and the close affinity of the religious and the sexual instincts; in the derivation of morality from taboos and the derivation of the Eucharist from eating of the '*flesh of a strong man or divine person*'; in short, we are free to believe in the theories expounded in the *Tree of Life*. But *they*, who are *not* Mr. Crawley, nor you, nor I, nor perhaps anyone with whom we should care to discuss these subjects—*they* who are likely to lose respect for the national religion.....*They* had better be left to the 'instincts'—'behind which' (says Mr. Crawley) 'there is sound human nature, which leads men to distrust an Atheist.' In fact, the perusal of the *Tree of Life* is to persuade *Us* that *They* had better not peruse that book, but stick to the Bible and the Catechism."*

We do not think there is any cause to fear that honest, truth-loving people will distrust the Atheist to place their confidence in Mr. Crawley, who advocates suppression of the truths of science to those who believe in the fairy tales of religion and the continued teaching of what is known to be false. What is this but the Jesuit doctrine that "the end justifies the means"; that it is allowable to act wickedly that good may come?—a doctrine so vehemently denounced by all the Protestant Churches.

Our thanks are due to Vernon Lee for stepping down into the arena, from those calm and serene heights of art and literature in which she has won name and fame among the choicest spirits of our time, to vindicate truth and right. And we hope that all truth-lovers who can afford it will buy a copy of this fine work—several chapters of which we have not dealt with—for themselves.

W. MANN.

* *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., p. 28.
† *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., pp. 31-33-34.
‡ *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., p. 39.

The First Modern Man.

A Lecture delivered before the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist), Chicago.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

WE celebrate again this morning the Festival of the Renaissance. It is hardly necessary to explain to this audience that the French word "Renaissance" means re-birth. After Athens and Rome, the two centres of ancient civilisation, had fallen, for over one thousand years Europe was left in darkness. Then the world slowly emerged from this long night, and the modern times were born. The birth of our world from the womb of the Dark Ages is the Renaissance.

If people only know how much they are indebted to that event, they would unite with us to make this festival, inaugurated by our Society, one of the happiest, as well as the proudest, in the calendar. July 4 celebrates the Declaration of Independence; Columbus Day commemorates the discovery of a continent; yet these are mere detail in comparison with the Renaissance, which helped us to discover ourselves. Moreover, July 4 in America and July 14 in France, celebrate events which would never have transpired but for the Renaissance.

There was a new humanity after the Renaissance. It was as if a slave and a beggar, dressed in tattered clothes and loaded down with chains, had suddenly discovered that he was of royal blood, and that the power and the glory ascribed to kings and gods belonged to him. This thought makes a new man of him. His fetters snap; his rags change into a robe of gold; his wail turns into a shout; and the stick he leaned upon for support becomes a magic wand in his hand.

* *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., pp. 56-7.

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But the Renaissance does not merely mean an epoch or a period in history. It means more than a date, and more even than a movement. The Renaissance is a mental attitude and a method. It is the consciousness of being awake. It is the sense of recovered powers. If you feel self-reliant, if you feel equal to the task of life, if you feel young despite the weight of years and cares, and if you feel confident that, for all the difficulties pitted against you, you are more than a match, why, *you* are the Renaissance!

Let us see if we cannot make the meaning of this charmed word a little clearer. The Renaissance is the man or the woman who can say—I. To dare say I, we must have faith in ourselves. It is the memory of past achievements that inspires self-respect. To feel capable we must have capital. Let me illustrate: Nature furnishes just enough brains to make the animal know what muscles to work in order to eat, drink, and perform the other necessary functions of the body—just enough brains to preside over the body and manage it. But in time we come to have more brains than we need for the immediate wants of the body. And out of that capital, or surplus, is born civilisation. He who can say, I think, I desire, I decide, is a new force, a new tendency, a new hope. His nativity ought to be celebrated as that of a savior. Who says, I think, or I will, creates the world anew. When he comes he brings with him the Renaissance.

During the period in history known as the Dark Ages, not a man could be found who could say I. The individual had not yet matured. In those times man was crowded out by the God of the king and the priest who filled heaven and earth. The Deity was purposely magnified to crowd out man. The only terms on which a man could live in the Europe of old was by repressing himself. His position in the world was very much like that of the man who attends a performance to which he has not been invited, and where no seat has been reserved for him. He manages to slip in, however; but the only condition on which he may witness the spectacle is that he shall take no part in it whatever—that he shall neither be seen nor heard. That describes the insignificant role of man during the ages of faith, when the stage was entirely in the hands of the gods. Then man was only a looker-on. He owned nothing in his own name. He borrowed his politics from the king, and his religion from the priest. He was no more than an echo, a copy, or better still, a beggar. Then came that most wonderful awakening we call the Renaissance; and as if by magic, the beggar, depending on crumbs for his existence, became a millionaire of the mind,—a lender to the gods out of his surplus! That is what the Renaissance did for man. It enabled him to say, This is my home; this is my country; this is my religion; this is my politics; this is—I.

But how explain the thousand years of night which preceded the rejuvenation of the world? I wonder if I could answer that question just in a few words. As a nation our biggest income is from the soil,—is it not? Our corn fields and cotton fields supply us with the bulk of our daily bread. Suppose, now, the cultivation of the soil is forbidden henceforth, and agriculture is condemned as a crime against God and man, and farmers wherever found are prosecuted and put to death. What would happen? I say, what would happen? Then suppose, after a long period of the reign of misery which would follow such a regime, some brave farmer would begin digging in his yard and planting once more his seed. The exquisite green returns to the browned face of the earth; the air recovers its fragrance; and the golden fruit in clusters is seen peeping at the sun again through the luxuriant foliage. His example becomes contagious. Other farmers begin cultivating their yards. The yards become farms; the farms expand into prairies; the whole land waves with wheat and corn and cotton again. That is the Renaissance!

In mediæval times the clergy actually did to the mind what I have imagined some misguided State doing to the soil; that is to say, while we can only suppose such a situation in which the cultivation of the soil would be denounced as a crime, the culture of the mind was actually prohibited as a crime by the Church. Men went about armed with fire and the sword to exterminate the thinker and to make a bonfire of his books. Well, what happened then? What happened, I say? A thousand of the best years of the world's life were blighted. Knowledge was the forbidden fruit. To be stupid became an ideal. Dirt was given a prize. Poverty became blessed; and men fondled their chains like bondsmen who had never been free. Then there was night. The Greek fire which had lighted the world and warmed its brain into fruition went out completely. Disease followed the darkness. In the fourteenth century, the black plague alone carried away in the course of six years twenty millions of people. And disease and darkness dethroned reason. The world was turned into a madmen's camp. Everybody was spellbound with the fear of hell. Its glare was in every eye; its pinch upon everything that bloomed. Neither commerce, nor science, nor song, interested anybody. No one felt either hunger or thirst, and this loss of intellectual appetite was the sure herald of approaching dissolution. The world touched its nadir, a point lower than the lowest ever before reached.

Then appeared the first modern man!

What did he do? He cultivated his yard. He turned up the soil. He replanted Greece and Rome for seed. He did to the mind what the farmer does to the land, and the mind, like the land, responded to the magic of cultivation. But who was the first man to cultivate his yard? It will be impossible to state the name, the age, or the place of birth of the first modern man, and it is not necessary that we should. As I intimated a moment ago, the Renaissance is not a date or an epoch. Ideas have little to do with time or place. An idea may be three thousand years old and still be quite modern. And an idea may be recent, and still be quite worthless. Whatever is adapted to its environment, whatever continues in vital relations with the progressive life of man, and is affected by it, and in turn affects it—is modern. We mean by modern the opposite of moribund or obsolete. Two trees, both planted at the same time, and both still standing—one keeping up its commerce with the sun and soil—receiving and returning the forces of life—while the other has severed all relations with the earth in which its roots are buried, or with the sun its head is reared in, illustrate the difference between the modern, or the living, and the old, or the dead.

That the modernity of any idea has nothing to do with the question of time, let me call your attention to two radically different conceptions of life, both of which, as far as years are concerned, are very ancient. The story of Adam and Eve, as given in the Bible, must be a very old composition; but so is the story of Prometheus, told by the Greek dramatist, Æschylus. But the author of *Prometheus Bound* is modern, because he is just as much *en rapport* with the facts of human experience and the laws of human evolution to-day as he was three thousand years ago; while for the author of the Adam and Eve allegory, it is impossible to make room in our world. The Bible story is archaic, not simply because it is not true to the conditions of to-day, but because it never was true to any conditions that existed at any time.

(To be continued.)

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW FROM US.

When into ancient forms of speech and ways I did inquire,
Grandparents then, I found, were known as "granddam" or "grandsire."
Whereat this problem puzzled me far more than any other:
What term, I wonder, would be used in mentioning godmother?

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

CHANDOS HALL (Maiden lane, Strand, W.C.): Tuesday, March 4, at 8, Half-Yearly Meeting of Members of the N. S. S. Admission by member's card *only*.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Ruskin House, opposite West Croydon Station): 7.30, Committee Meeting. New members are invited to be present.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington, N.): 7.30, Business—*Re* Meeting of the Branches, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Dying Gospel."

COUNTRY.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 6.30, G. W. Foote, Address at Anniversary Meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "Christianity and Woman."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen, 3, "Primitive Religion and the Subjection of Woman"; 6.30, "Religious Ideas in the Light of Science." Tea at 5.

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Every sect is a moral check on its neighbor. Competition is as wholesome in religion as in commerce.
—LANDOR.

Salvation.

SALVATION, oh the joyful sound! as the hymn says. Yes, it is a joyful sound, if you happen to be one of the elect; but how dreary, if you happen to be one of the unfortunate wretches predestined to be damned! In that case, your very righteousness is nothing but filthy rags, and will only assist your combustion when you go below. Salvation to such miserable wretches will only give a poignancy to their misery. The sound of it will be to them like the cooked meat in a shop window to the poor devils who are starving outside.

Salvation is a favorite word in the Bible. The Jews were very fond of it, and the Christians copied their taste. But the two parties resemble each other with a difference. The chosen people looked for salvation in this world. They expected a time when all their troubles would end, when the protracted family quarrel between themselves and Jehovah would cease, when they should be redeemed from bondage, when they should triumph over all their enemies and rule the world with a rod of iron, when Zion should be the seat of universal sovereignty, and when the desirable things of all nations, such as gold, silver, and precious stones, should flow into the pockets of the circumcised children of Israel. Their carnal minds were not distracted by fantastic dreams about the dim and distant courses of a heavenly future. They were a shrewd, business people, with a keen eye for the main chance; and, well knowing their practical character, their prophets always foretold a flourishing state of things on earth, a happy land of Canaan, if they faithfully worshiped Jehovah without sneaking after his rivals. Even holy Moses, whose power was unbounded, offered them temporal rewards for keeping the commandments. He held out the lure of long life in the land which the Lord their God gave them. They were sharp traders, and he knew they would refuse promissory notes payable forty days after death.

The Christians, on the other hand, being a simpler and more gullible set of people, were quite content with poverty, servitude, and suffering on earth, in consideration of the good things they were to enjoy in heaven. It was not in this world, says Gibbon, that they expected to be either useful or happy. They dwelt fondly on the splendors of a new Jerusalem, and looked forward to the glories of a kingdom not made with hands. Salvation was to them "some far-off divine event." It was to be realised in the sweet by-and-bye. No wonder they and the Jews soon parted company. And to this day they are as far apart as ever. While the Christian snaps at the shadow the Jew eats the meat. He cannot understand the delights of heaven without a good taste of them on earth. He believes in making the best of this world, and if you bore him with sermons on kingdom-come, he eats his victuals with a fresh zest, and says, Sufficient unto the day is the fortune thereof.

Ever since that unhappy young carpenter was crucified the Christians have talked of Salvation; but it seems as far off as ever. It is always coming, but it never comes. Nineteen centuries ago the Redeemer came. Yes, said Louis Blanc, but when may we expect the Redemption? Except for the advances made by Science and Freethought during the last three centuries, the modern world is no improvement on the ancient. Civilisation was higher, and human happiness greater, in the best days of Greece and Rome than in the Middle Ages when Christianity was supreme.

The reason is obvious. Christianity pursued a wrong path towards a false goal. It neglected this life for another, forsook the known for the unknown, and aspired to a problematical salvation in heaven instead of achieving a real salvation on earth. Greece and Rome had their mythologies, but they put this world first, and thoroughly believed in making the most of it. Hence their science, art, philosophy, and literature, their social customs and political institutions, infinitely excelled everything that Christianity produced. Modern civilisation dates from the Renaissance, when Europe, after the long, dark night of Christian superstition, turned its dim eyes backwards and kindled them anew by gazing on the immortal glories of Paganism.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved! The world tried it for a thousand years and it proved a flagrant failure. Belief is not, never was, and never can be, the method of salvation. Thinking and acting are the right way. Far better than Jesus preaching faith is Hercules wrestling with the hydras, slaying the monsters, and cleansing the Augean stables of the world.

A mighty change is coming over Europe. Faith is nearly played out, and priestcraft is discredited. Let us save ourselves! is the general cry. Children are being educated, science is regarded as man's providence, secular welfare is made the criterion of law; and not only statesmen, but the very clergy themselves, are driven to admit that the problem of problems is how to improve the material condition of the people. Schools are supplanting churches, and happy homes are superseding heaven.

Salvation of the Christian sort is more and more falling into the hands of the Boothites. The heroes of the Army of "Blood and Fire" are the true successors of the apostles. The last Salvation Army is twin-brother to the first. According to one of its shining lights, it is "God's last effort to convert the world." We are glad to hear it, and we hope it is true.

Converting the world to religion has always been folly or crime, and too often both. Progress heavenward is slow business. As *Punch* said, you never get any "forrarder." You are eternally occupied in marking time. But secular progress is certain and obvious. Schoolboys can perceive what advances we have made on our ancestors, and it is easy to see that our posterity will make great advances on ourselves. And this kind of Salvation is for the benefit of all, and is achieved without misery and strife, except when it is opposed by priests and kings; while the Salvation of Christianity has taught men, in the fine phrase of Landor, to "plant unthrifty thorns over wells of blood."

G. W. FOOTE.

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Religion and Sex.

THE relation between sexual and religious phenomena all over the world, and in all stages of culture, has impressed itself on many observers, although, for various reasons, the nature of that relation is ignored by most and dealt with in a very gingerly fashion by others. By professional writers on religion the relation is dismissed as merely accidental, or is treated as evidence of the way in which so sacred a subject as religion may be degraded in degenerate hands. By others, of a rather more scientific temper, there is still the tendency to treat the connection between erotic and religious feelings as illustrating a mere perversion. We know, for instance, that when strong feeling cannot find an outlet in one direction it will in another. The annals of Roman Catholicism contain numerous records of people who have taken refuge in a monastery or a nunnery solely as the result of disappointment in love. And while Protestantism is without this obvious mode of transference, it provides other outlets. Religious service is still there, and the feelings that cannot find an outlet in their normal channels may often find expression in intense religious devotion.

But the connection between religious and sexual feelings is both wider and deeper than that expressed by mere perversion. Of recent years the writings of Havelock Ellis, Kraft-Ebing, Forel, Iwan Bloch, Starbuck, and others have shown the relation to be more than accidental. The two sets of feelings—those associated with religious ideas and those associated with ideas of a sexual life—have been shown to be united at their source. One eminent writer has gone so far as to assert that "In a certain sense, the history of religion can be regarded as a peculiar mode of manifestation of the human sexual impulse."* And, at all events, it is highly significant that the language of religious devotion and of amatory passion is often identical, and may serve equally well for either purpose. This fact is often obscured by our having etherealised the conception of human love, and so lost sight of the physiological basis upon which it rests. And having hidden it from sight we have, not unnaturally, ceased to give it consideration. This is a fatal blunder. The sex life of men and women is too important and too pervasive to be ignored with safety. And one result has been that, owing to a combination of ignorance and prudery, the sexual life, in both its normal and abnormal manifestations, has been continuously exploited in the interests of religion.

The evidence for what has been said is vast and covers a wide range. As a merely historical study we encounter it in the close relation between primitive religious beliefs and the sexual life; and in the multiplication of sects of a markedly erotic character during periods of religious enthusiasm. As a study in psychology we have the connection between religious and sexual feelings—not always expressed through the comparatively harmless vehicle of language. And, finally, we have the purely pathological aspect in which what is taken for religious fervor is no more than a perverted sexuality.

I have pointed out in previous articles what are the conditions under which the primitive mind reaches that interpretation of things which gives birth to the religious idea. Religion is one of the very earliest forms of systematised thinking, and for a time dominates all other forms of mental activity. Above all, it is important to bear in mind the fact that no dividing line is drawn between the natural and the supernatural. Such a division in the external world is a reflection of a division in the world of thought, and the knowledge necessary to this has yet to be gained. What is afterwards recognised as the supernatural pervades everything. In a sense, it is everything, since whatever occurs does so by the agency or connivance of animistic forces.

It would, indeed, be strange if in such a world the phenomena that are connected with sex life escaped the prevailing method of interpretation. As a matter of fact, it does not. What are to the modern mind the plainest and most obvious consequences of sex life, are to the primitive mind compelling proofs of supernatural activity. Nothing, for example, would appear less likely to misconception than the connection between sexual relations and the birth of children. Yet, on this head, Mr. Sidney Hartland has produced a mass of evidence, gathered from all parts of the world, and leading to the conclusion that in the most primitive stages of human culture conception and birth are regarded as due directly to supernatural influence. The wide vogue of magical practices to obtain children, practices that still exist in many parts of Europe, the unconcern among primitive peoples as to the male parent, the ignorance of early man concerning the functions of his own organism, with the universality of animistic beliefs, all lead Mr. Hartland to conclude that, to the primitive mind, childbirth is due to a more or less chance connection between woman and a supernatural world.* The common saying that God sends children thus points to what was at one time more than a mere figure of speech. It is reminiscent of a time when conception was actually attributed to ghostly influence.

With some peoples such a belief is still actually operative. Most of the Australian tribes believe that there are certain places where the tribal spirits congregate, and from whence they pounce upon women, and so secure rebirth. The man who desires that his wife shall have a child prays to these spirits to look with favor upon the woman and reincarnate themselves through her. On the other hand, the young woman who does not desire a child avoids passing these places, or assumes the manner of an aged woman in order to escape unnoticed. The Awunas, of West Africa, definitely assert that a child owes nothing to its father; everything comes from the mother and the ancestral spirit. The Queenslanders also deny the father any part in the production of the child. Mr. Hartland, in the work already named, gives numerous instances of a similar kind, and concludes that—

> "for generations and æons the truth that a child is only born in consequence of an act of sexual union, that the birth of a child is the natural consequence of such an act performed in favoring circumstances, and that every child must be the result of such an act and of no other cause, was not realised by mankind, that down to the present day it is imperfectly realised by some peoples, and that there are still others among whom it is unknown."

It is not surprising, therefore, to find from the earliest times a number of religious ceremonies connected with significant sexual phenomena. First, there is the always important fact of puberty. Mr. Stanley Hall, in his elaborate work on *Adolescence* (vol. ii., chap. 13), has brought together a very large number of practices connected with puberty, commencing with purely savage life, and ending with the modern Christian practice of confirmation. Almost universally, amongst uncivilised people, there is at this period a separation of the sexes, accompanied with fasting and magical practices. With most of the North American Indians, for instance, the boy, after being prepared by the priest, fasts until he receives a vision from the "great spirit." In nearly all these cases, as Frazer has pointed out, the governing idea is that at puberty the boy is brought into special relationship with the tribal gods, and in some there is the distinct, and probably earlier, notion that he receives into himself a portion of the divine spirit. In the case of girls, where the advent of puberty is marked by phenomena of a more startling character than those which occur with boys, the magical and supernatural rites are of a much more elaborate character. With boys, once puberty is attained, the sexual development is established and orderly. With girls, certain recurring phenomena make the essential fact of sex much more impressive to the uncivilised mind. A very general explanation

* Dr. Iwan Bloch; *The Sexual Life of Our Time*; p. 97.

* *Primitive Paternity*, 2 vols., 1909-10.

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of menstrual phenomena is that the girl has been wounded by some spirit. This is the explanation given by some of the North American Indians, by the Siamese, and by many others.

But because the girl or the woman is brought into such close and frequent contact with the spirit world special precautions have to be taken concerning her. Contact with her at certain times is forbidden simply because she is spiritually infectious. Until the possessing spirit is cleared out, or has departed on its own account, the girl is dangerous. In Uganda, says Frazer, the pots which a woman touches while the impurity of childbirth or of menstruation is on her, must be destroyed. At similar times, with some of the North American tribes, women are forbidden to touch the weapons or utensils of men. No other person is so much dreaded amongst them as a woman enduring her periodic sickness. In Tahiti a woman is secluded for three weeks after childbirth, and must not touch food belonging to another. In the Island of Kadiah, off Alaska, a woman for twenty days after becoming a mother is so dangerous that even food is handed to her at the end of a stick.*

Among the Pueblo Indians it is believed that if a man touches a woman during certain seasons he will fall ill—that is, he will be attacked by an evil spirit. If a man touches her he becomes "taboo," as he may transmit the infection to others. So great is the possibility of infection that with some peoples women are prohibited from planting or preparing food. The spiritual germ might be conveyed from one to another in this way. And it is almost an inevitable extension of the same idea to conclude that, if a woman is highly dangerous at certain frequently recurring periods, she is more or less dangerous in between these times. Thus we find that the principles of "taboo" is made to cover many of the relations of woman to man. Kaffirs will not allow a woman to touch their cattle. In Tahiti, if a woman touches a man's weapons she robs them of their power. In New Guinea, for some days before fighting, warriors refrain from contact with women. A Hindoo wife does not eat with her husband. In New Zealand wives are not allowed to eat with even their male children lest their taboo should kill them.

It is needless to multiply instances; the same general idea governs all, and this is well expressed by Dr. Frazer:—

> "The object of secluding women at menstruation is to neutralise the dangerous influence which is supposed to emanate from them at such times. The general effect of these rules is to keep the women suspended, so to say, between heaven and earth. Whether enveloped in her hammock and slung up to the roof, as in South America, or elevated above the ground in a dark and narrow cage, as in New Zealand, she may be considered to be out of the way of doing mischief, since being shut off both from the earth and from the sun, she can poison neither of these great sources of life by her deadly contagion. The precautions thus taken to isolate and insulate the girl are dictated by regard for her own safety as well as for the safety of others..... In short, the girl is viewed as charged with a powerful force which, if not kept within bounds, may prove the destruction both of the girl herself and all with whom she comes in contact. To repress this force within the limits necessary for the safety of all concerned is the object of the taboos in question."†

(*To be continued.*) C. COHEN.

Knowledge.

IN the Fourth Gospel the knowledge of God and eternal life are treated as absolutely synonymous terms. "This is eternal life," it says, "that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." This is a perfectly safe statement, no one being competent to gainsay it. For all anybody knows, the knowledge of God does signify eternal life, because nobody has the slightest idea what either is. The only life that comes within the scope of our observation is this earthly life, which is not eternal; and all the beings of whom we possess any knowledge are denizens of this planet. Science informs us that space teems with solar systems which no man can number, and it can tell us of what material our sun is composed; but the only living beings known to it are to be found upon this earth. Far from us be the folly, of which scientists are so often falsely accused, "of putting aside as unverifiable everything which the senses cannot verify, everything beyond the bounds of physical science, everything which cannot be brought into the laboratory and dealt with chemically"; but we do make bold to affirm that no knowledge can be acquired except as the result of scientific investigation. Physical science is by no means the only science, but it must be admitted that all problems are, in the last analysis, problems of matter. The phenomena of consciousness are sometimes described as if they lay outside the legitimate limits of physical science, but in reality they are phenomena of the brain and nervous system; that is to say, phenomena of matter, and no knowledge of them is possible apart from matter. Even the feeling of music within us, from which many of us derive such exquisite delight, does not lie wholly outside the bounds of physical science, because it is dependent upon a specific condition of the nervous system, just as music itself is the outcome of a scientific combination of sounds. Now, as God is a being who is said to be "without body, parts, or passions," he is clearly not a subject that can be scientifically studied and known. Scientifically speaking, then, no knowledge of God is possible, a being "without body, parts, or passions" being simply unthinkable. Indeed, Mr. Bertrand Russell does not include God among the questions that can be intelligently discussed. In his admirable little book, entitled the *Problems of Philosophy*, in the Home University Library, God and immortality are coolly left out.

And yet we find the Chairman-elect of the Congregational Union, the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, of Stamford Hill, decrying science and its pretensions to knowledge. In a recent sermon, certain portions of which are published *verbatim* in the *British Congregationalist* for February 27, the reverend gentleman says:—

> "Along material lines what does anybody know? What are our definitions but our problems stated in different words? Who knows anything? Who *can* know along material lines? Science frankly deals with material things. What science tells us is of infinite value to industrial life. It is a magnificent gymnastic for the mind. But if you happen to have a sin eating like a corrosive acid into your consciousness, if you have a sorrow lying heavily upon your heart, if the dark camel comes to kneel at your door, if one of these days death should tap you on the shoulder with his wand, if the woe and wonder of this unintelligible world weigh upon you, if the deep-sea creatures of the soul should come to the surface crying for their food, that day you will utter a cry that will put to shame moon and stars, and the world, with all its wealth, will stand abashed and helpless, for you have asked for something it has not got."

No doubt, had it been permissible, most of Mr. Gibbon's hearers would have cheered that paragraph to the echo as irresistibly eloquent. We admit its eloquence, but deny its relevance. We maintain, in the first place, that if a man cries for something which this world cannot supply he is suffering from some serious disease and ought to be medically treated. All cries that are natural to a human being meet with satisfactory responses in Nature. The desire for knowledge, for sympathy, and for love finds complete fulfilment on earth. If a man falls into a bad habit, or is guilty of conducting himself to the injury of society, his "sin" can be satisfactorily dealt with only on scientific lines. All evil is, in itself, a curable disease; but whether or not it can be cured in any given case depends upon circum-

* *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 145-150.
† *Golden Bough*, chap. iv.

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stance. In the second place, to Mr. Gibbon's question, "Who *can* know on material lines?" we return the answer, "Who *can* know on any *but* material lines?" All other lines are purely imaginary. Mr. Gibbon makes the mistake of charging science with hinting at "a dark god"; but as a matter of fact science hints at no god at all. It is true that it has a good deal to say about physical and chemical forces; but does the reverend gentleman deny or doubt the existence of such forces? If he does, what are his grounds; if he does not, what does he know about them? It is very cheap rhetoric to say that his dog that rubs against him, or his cat that wishes to fondle him, is a better deity than they. It is true that they do not answer prayer, or serve as special Providence, or pay the least heed to the whims of certain people; but in these respects they are only like the God in whom Mr. Gibbon believes.

Now the moment this divine begins to talk about his God he becomes irrational. He says, half quoting Scripture:—

> "We know that we are of God. We know that the Son of God is true, and we are in him that is true. The God that loves this poor life, the God that helps the helpless world, is the true God, and the Christ who died for the world is the true Christ."

Having delivered himself of that intimate statement concerning God, a statement which nothing but very close and full knowledge could justify, Mr. Gibbon assures us that "the only possible way of knowing God is to live God's life." This admission deserves to be printed in large letters of gold. The idea is indescribably rich. Fancy, if you can, a man getting to know God by living God's life! Are God and his life separable, so that the one may be known while the other is unknown? The idea of knowing the life of an unknown God is so ridiculous that we can only laugh it to scorn. "Act the God," exclaims Mr. Gibbon; but how on earth can we act a person of whom we have no knowledge? "Wherever there is a heart and a conscience," he continues, "there is a complete apparatus for knowing God." We deny it point blank, and confidently challenge the reverend gentleman to substantiate his wild assertion. There are at least five hundred millions of people with thoroughly good hearts and sensitive consciences who are absolutely ignorant about God, and the overwhelming majority of them actually disbelieve in his existence. They do not believe in him because they do not need him. They get on well enough without him. They forgive those who have wronged them, and are as firm as as a rock in the face of temptation. One naturally admires "the tender humor and the fire of sense in their good eyes"; and one is irresistibly drawn to them by the knowledge that they are so "full of heart for all, and chiefly for the weaker by the wall"; but they are without God in the world. Such people give the lie direct to Mr. Gibbon's teaching; and common sense does the same. The knowledge of God is an illusion that is passing.

Of course, the belief in God is immensely profitable. It provides a comfortable living for hundreds of thousands of men and women who would be left destitute were it suddenly to die out; but that is the only thing that it does for the world. Morally, mankind is all the poorer for cherishing it. It is a relic of savagedom, a survival of the Age of Ignorance, and in the twentieth century must be pronounced a misfit. But how are we to get rid of it? By persuading people of its unreality, by pointing out its origin and tracing its evolution, by shedding upon it the light of modern knowledge and thus exposing its irrationality and absurdity. It is a hopeful sign of the times that so many teachers at our various seats of learning openly repudiate it. Mr. G. E. Moore, Lecturer in Moral Science in the University of Cambridge, for example, has published a volume on *Ethics*, in which he expresses his positive unbelief in a supernatural being, whether called "God," "Reason," "The Practical Reason," "The Pure Will," "The Universal Will," or "The True Self." He says:—

> "It may seem to many people that the most serious objection to views of this kind is that it is, to say the least, extremely doubtful whether there is any being, such as they suppose to exist—any being who never wills what is wrong but always only what is right; and I think myself that, in all probability, there is no such being—neither a God, nor any being such as philosophers have called by the names I have mentioned" (*Ethics*, p. 151).

"Knowledge," says Tennyson, "is of things we see." In relation to God, at the very best, "we have but faith; we cannot know"; and the faith is not justified by a single evidence, not even the shadow of an evidence. The contemplation of the facts of life often caused Tennyson's own faith seriously to waver. His knowledge of the things he saw could not be harmonised with his belief in things he could not see. Darwin's knowledge killed his faith altogether. In the spread of knowledge, then, lies our only real hope for the future of the race.

J. T. LLOYD.

The First Modern Man.—II.

A Lecture delivered before the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist), Chicago.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

(Concluded from p. 141.)

IN the Bible story, man finds the world a perfect paradise, which he spoils into a place of thorns and thistles. Was that ever true? In the Greek story, man finds the world a wilderness, which he cultivates into a garden. Can that idea ever become antiquated? The Bible represents the first man as wrecking his world; Æschylus represents the first man as mending his world. Adam robs the world of whatever beauty and loveliness it possessed; Prometheus, by stealing fire, gives to the world all that it possesses of goodness and beauty. The idea, then, that man is the maker of his world is a modern idea, though three thousand years old, because it is true to the facts; but the idea that man marred his world is a fiction, notwithstanding that many pulpits still proclaim it as the word of God.

Again, in the Bible story man's primary condition was one of innocence, and he owed his innocence to his ignorance. The moment he lost his ignorance he lost also his innocence. The Bible would have us believe that as long as man was ignorant he was happy. But is that true? In the Prometheus of Æschylus, man's primary condition was one of suffering and misery, due to his ignorance, which condition he changes into one of power and happiness through *knowledge*. Adam falls when he loses his ignorance; the Greek mounts through culture. Which of the two ideas is modern, in the sense of being true to the facts of experience?

There is still another difference to be noted between these two interpretations of life. The tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden is represented as a temptation to man. That is to say, the Bible view makes the opportunity to acquire knowledge a temptation. To seek knowledge is to fall into sin. "God is like a parent who, to keep his children out of temptation, refuses to send them to school." Hence, the acquisition of knowledge, the opening of their eyes, strikes Adam and Eve with remorse. They are ashamed of the light, and they hide themselves. Was such a view ever true to life? But Prometheus glories in his conquest of knowledge, and is willing to suffer any punishment the gods can inflict for having kindled a flame which will never be extinguished. Prometheus is as old as Adam, but Prometheus is a modern man, while Adam was as much out of date in his day as he is to-day. Prometheus belongs to our world. He can feel at home with us of the twentieth century, and we with him of three thousand years ago. But Adam would be

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an alien in our midst, and his spirit and view-point would simply prove fatal to everything we cherish.

I trust we understand now what is meant by the word "modern." In his book on *Averroes*, Renan thinks Petrarch, who lived in the fourteenth century and was a co-worker with Dante and Boccaccio, was the first modern man. Figuratively speaking, Petrarch was the first to raise and send to the market samples of the products of the soil of Europe when the Greeks and the Romans farmed the land. But Renan also suggested that the Moorish philosoper, Averroes himself, was a harbinger of the Renaissance. For his heresies Averroes was condemned to sit at the door of the mosque, to be spat upon by every passer-by. To those who spewed their rheum upon his face he said: "Let me die the death of the philosopher." The honor of being the first modern man has by others been given to Bruno, whose life was extinguished at the stake in Rome. Others, again, reserve that proud distinction to Montaigne, who, they say, was the first to apply common sense to life. I believe it is impossible to single out any one man as the exclusive owner of that enviable title. When the sun rises in the morning more than one mountain peak catches his early glow. I have already mentioned a few of the tall minds upon whom the sun shone first, but there are a hundred others.

The earliest clear traces of Rational thinking in modern times, according to J. M. Robertson, appeared in the thirteenth century, in remarks attributed to Emperor Frederick II., whom Pope Gregory IX. denounced as "that pestilential monarch who says the world was cheated by three impostors, of whom two died in the height of power, while the third was hanged." The Pope also condemns the remark attributed to the same Frederick that "only fools believed the universal Creator was born of an unmarried girl." The further idea that "Men should believe nothing contrary to the laws of nature and reason" has also been ascribed to this monarch. Such sayings prove conclusively that their author is beginning to use his mind. He is reflecting. He is becoming critical. He demands respect for his intellect. He says, I.

The most effective instrument of the Renaissance against the old order and in the service of the new was the laugh. It would not be amiss to say that the laugh was the Renaissance argument *par excellence*. The laugh rejuvenated the ageing world. The great authors laughed hell and the Devil out of the people's minds. One of the things the laugher seeks to do is to remove the allaring glamor which makes so many things not debatable. The laugh secularises the solemn and the mock-sacred. Where there are hearty laughers, their cant and hypocrisy are nipped in the bud. Voltaire and Rabelais, with their exquisite humor and superb sarcasm drove humbug under cover. There is less stupidity in the world to-day because there are more laughers. One of the earliest poets to discover that the dogmas of the Church could not afford to be laughed at, was Luigi Pulci, whom Leigh Hunt calls "the most lovable among the great poets of the Renaissance." He was the author of a wonderfully suggestive book called *Il Morgante Maggiore*, or "Morgante the Great." This epic really bubbles over and is effervescent with keenest humor—but of the unbittered sort (John Owen, *The Sceptics of the Italian Renaissance*). It smarts, too, but just as the physician's healing hand, when feeling for the stone in the wound. There is in this work the very qualities which make the modern man—a joyous, large-hearted humanity, a Promethean defiance and jealousy of everything that threatens to repress or coerce the mind. Morgante the Great is an unbeliever, or a misbeliever, and he is converted to Catholicism by Orlando, the Christian. But what converted him? It is the answer to that question which reveals the subtle and sparkling criticism of Pulci against the stiffened and sombre religion of his day; and it was just such criticism as his that made the Renaissance possible. It must be remembered that in the Middle Ages a direct attack upon the Catholic Church meant death; hence, only indirectly, by innuendo and suggestion, could the thinkers voice or print their comments. One of the devices frequently resorted to by the Renaissance writers was to place their criticisms in the mouth of a jester or a fool. Shakespeare does that when he makes his clown in the *Merchant of Venice*, for instance, riddle Christian and Jewish theology with his blunt but searching questions. After permitting their own thought thus to leak out, the writers, when called to account for their heresies, excused themselves by the plea that they were only showing "how our holy religion appeared to a fool." In fact, the disguise was sometimes so perfect that the Churches recommended books of this nature to the faithful, mistaking them for the work of some pious author.

In the epic of Pulci, Morgante owes his conversion to Christianity, not to argument, or evidence, but to a *dream*. This is a splendid blow at a religion which counts on dreams and visions, on feverish states of the mind and the body for converts. The dream occupies a leading place in the Bible. It was in a dream, for instance, that Joseph learned the truth about Mary and her child. One of the greatest doctrines of the Christian Church, the incarnation, has for its basis little more than the dream of Joseph. Nearly all the doctrines and many of the holy relics of the Catholic Church were born of some dream. Morgante, the infidel, dreamed that he was assailed by a serpent. He called upon the gods for help, but none could help him. The dragon minded not any of the gods whose names he heard invoked. Then Morgante called on Jesus Christ and immediately the serpent released him. The mere mention of the name of Christ was more than a match for the serpent's might. "I am, therefore," he says to Orlando, "ready to become a Christian." Could any conversion be more spasmodic, irrational, or shallow? And yet even St. Paul was converted by a dream on the way to Damascus. The Renaissance poet, Pulci, exposes with his satire this cheap and easy "transmutation" of unbelievers into Christians.

And when the poet proceeds to give the evidence of Morgante's conversion he exposes indirectly, but none the less effectively, the immorality of the Christian conception of salvation. The converted Morgante is represented at first as being solicitous of the whereabouts of his brothers who had been slain in battle, and his parents who had died before they had been converted. Orlando tells him that they have all gone to hell, and he argues with the newly made Christian not to worry about such trifles. God has so arranged things, he goes on to explain, that in heaven there will not be uttered a single sigh, nor shall a single tear be shed for those of our own flesh and blood who may be burning in hell-fire. How does Orlando happen to be so sure of this? The priests have so informed him, and it has never occurred to him to question for one moment the authority of the priests. In all this the gentle poet is indirectly appealing to the sense of humanity, yea, and of decency, in man against a brutal creed that would turn the heart into a stone. When the converted giant expresses the fear that the priests might be in error on this delicate point, his Christian teacher replies that one of the duties of converts is never to doubt what a priest says. It is here Pulci points his finger at the incurable plague of the centuries—blind faith.

In the next place, Pulci represents Orlando as unwilling to believe that Morgante is really converted until the latter shall consent to the damnation of his relatives. Is not that a penetrating thrust? Does it not make orthodoxy quaver? A sharp stab like that tears its way into the very vitals of supernaturalism and makes an incision large enough for modern thought to enter with a rush. Morgante, however, proves the genuineness of his conversion by assuring Orlando that he has made up his mind not to grieve the least bit over his lost parents or brothers, but

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that, on the contrary, when he goes to heaven "he will behave like an angel." Could there be a more terrible arraingment of a religion which contorts the natural affections and makes the love of God put out the love of one's own father or mother? I would like to see a Calvanist or a Catholic read the *Morgante Maggiore* without a shudder for his creed.

In the twenty-fifth canto of this same work Pulci introduces the Devil, whom he names Ashtaroth. This is one of the best devils ever staged. So mild and philosophic is he that the most fastidious people even would have no reason to object to his society. Pulci's Devil is worth a hundred of Dante's grotesque and clumsy fiends. Milton's Satan was really diabolical. Goethe's Mephistopheles is a tease. The Bible Devil is an unspeakable combination. But the Ashtaroth of Pulci has qualities that endear him to the very people he is supposed to be conspiring against.

One of Charlemagne's generals happens to be in Egypt when he is needed in Europe. His participation in an approaching military engagement is urgent. But how to cover the distance from Egypt to Europe in time for the important battle, is the question. Who will transport the Paladin and his horse through the air from Egypt to Europe? There is only one being who can—the Devil. Did he not fly with Jesus to the top of the highest mountains, and set him down on the pinnacle of the Temple in Jerusalem? The Devil was the first flyer. All great and daring feats were at first believed to be possible only to the powers of evil. What the Devil had only courage to do once is now the latest victory of man. But it was fear of the Church which made men accuse the Devil for the hopes and ambitions they themselves entertained.

During the flight in the air, over land and sea, the sociable Devil entertains his charge with a philosophic disertation on things sacred. He thus encroaches upon the domain of the priests. But his discourse is so sane and beautiful that the Paladin cannot but express admiration for his guide, though he is the being for whom his religion has neither pity nor pardon. As they near the pillars of Hercules the Devil explains that there is a continent beyond the seas; that the world is round; and that there are people on the other side of the globe who "walk on their feet opposed to yours and worship other gods." The author of *The Sceptics of the Renaissance*, John Owen, thinks that this statement of Ashtaroth about the sphericity of the world was really the first clear assertion of that scientific truth in modern times. Pulci's Devil was also the first to announce the existence of the antipodes. In self-protection the poet had to put his prophecy in the mouth of the Devil. When Rinaldo, greatly puzzled by this revelation, asks whether people living on the other side of the globe could be saved, Pulci's Devil makes a reply which should put the theologians to shame: "Do you think," he says, "that a god died only for *you?*" To which he adds this quite modern and eternally true reflection—a reflection which is the creed of Rationalism to-day: "All goodness is acceptable, whatever the belief may be." Is there a Church whose teaching is as daring as that? But it was just such criticism as Pulci's—subtle, shrewd, incisive, witty, irresistible, luminous, laughing—which has opened our eyes to the folly and the conceit of sectarian shibboleths. And when Rinaldo expressed surprise that a Devil should have a heart, or feel pity, or entertain great hopes, or take an interest in the salvation of mankind, which if effected would put him out of business, so to speak, the Devil's reply is in these wonderful words: "Do you suppose that nobleness of nature is lost among us denizens of the lower regions? You know what the proverb says," he adds, "that there is never a fruit, however degenerate, but will taste of its stock. I was of a different order of being once"—then a lump rises in his throat, his eyes moisten, his voice trembles—"but it is as well not to talk of happy times." The fanatic Rinaldo, as he takes his leave of the Devil, is compelled to admit that even among devils, *gentilleza, amicizia, et cortesia*—gentleness, friendship, and courtesy are not unknown. Is it any wonder that the Florence of Lorenzo the Medici welcomed this saner and more human song of Pulci with enthusiasm. The Italians, we are told, adore Ariosto and admire Tasso, but they love Pulci. It was his intellectual health that became contagious in mediæval Europe. It was his laugh that helped to rip open the darkness of superstition. It was his joyous common sense which made the sunshine pleasant again, the air refreshing, the water of the springs drinkable, and life endurable. His touch made even the Devil modern, and his smile lit up the underworld. When Pulci came to die, the Church, among whose many saints it would be difficult to find a saint so generous or enlightened as Pulci's Devil—refused him Christian burial. His remains are not to be found in what is called *consecrated* ground. I know not what is, and what is not, consecrated ground. Does a crucifix make a place holy? Is it the churchyard that is sacred? I am not a judge of land values. But unconsecrated is the *mind* that does not hold something of the hopes and aspirations which throbbed in Pulci's, and unconsecrated is the life that is not devoted to the high and generous aims which made Pulci's thought the smile, and his laugh the music of the Renaissance.

Acid Drops.

There is a British Anti-Mormon League, and it lately held a meeting at Caxton Hall. One of the speakers, the Rev. G. Ernest Thorne, said he "wanted to see a law in this country making it penal for a Mormon elder to be found proselytising servant girls and young women." Evidently the reverend gentleman wishes to keep the servant girls and young women for the Christian Churches already existing in England. But it is to be recollected that ladies are comparatively scarce in all parts of the United States, including Utah, while England has an overplus of a million or so of the fair sex. This state of things may satisfy the Rev. G. Ernest Thorne, but why should Mormon elders be prevented by law from redressing the balance of the sexes?

There were two lady speakers (at least) at that Anti-Mormon meeting. Both of them seemed to believe, with the clerical speaker, that polygamy still exists amongst the Mormons in America. This is a mistake. Utah is now included in the United States, and monogamy is the law all over the Stars and Stripes territory. Whatever polygamy exists in Salt Lake City is just like the polygamy which exists in London.

One of the lady speakers said that "Mormonism was a great money-making machine; converts in England contributed £42,000 annually to the coffers of their president" Well, why not? This sum is nothing to the Peter's Pence fund that goes off to dear old Papa Sarto at Rome. The Salvation Army General expects a lot more than that from one week's Self-Denial Fund. It is a flea-bite to the funds of the Church presided over by the Archbishop of Canterbury. If one is an imposture so are all the rest. The game is a wretched one, but why not play it fair? Why should one long firm call upon the police to stop another? Honor amongst —— ! The proverb is somewhat musty.

George Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, has held his pawky humor too much in subjection since the death of his brother, whom he succeeded in the editorial chair. We think he is mistaken in this, but of course he is the best judge of his own policy as a practical question in view of his own public. We are glad to see, however, that stern repression has not annihilated our far-off colleagues congenital taste for the humorous side of things. Here is a neat sample from the last number of the *Truthseeker* to hand:—"Professor Bergson, it is said, was first introduced to America by William James, the Harvard professor who gave us 'pragmatism,' which we understand to be the doctrine that a thing is true if it works, or in other words that *a bad half dollar is good if you can pass it.*" We are responsible for the italics. "George" is responsible for the wit.

A Little Tour in India, by the Hon. R. Palmer, is a book which we have not read, but we judge from a review of it in

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the *Observer* that the author takes a favorable view of missionary work in India. This is what the reviewer says:—

> "Few people who have not been in actual touch with the facts realise how rapidly some sections of the Indian people are being Christianised, or how genuine are the moral effects of conversion. It is true that progress is practically limited to the lower castes or 'outcastes,' but it is significant that a Christian witness is recognised as carrying more weight in a court of justice than a Hindoo, and that the honesty inculcated by the new faith is already becoming a commercial asset. If the missions are doing nothing else, they are raising up an alternative educated class whose superior morality may enable it to supplant the Brahmins in administrative work. If that prospect should be fulfilled, it would solve some notable difficulties in the Government of India. And the number of native Christians has increased by a million in the last ten years."

A military correspondent, who sent us this cutting, tells a very different tale. "My experience of forty years in India is diametrically opposed to the conclusions arrived at by the author of this book. The native of Southern India uncontaminated by the missionary is an infinitely more reliable man than the Christian convert." This is the general verdict of travellers. "Rice Christians" are known all through the East, where it is recognised that the missionaries have to keep the converts they make, in some way or other. What a world of meaning, too, there is in the statement that the Christian converts' word is accepted in preference to the Hindoo's in courts of law. The "acceptance," of course, is mere partisanship, and has no relation to truth or honor. Such acceptance obtains in all Christian countries. It is one of the privileges of belonging to the ruling faith.

The high-minded editors of the illustrated dailies have been publishing the portrait of a boy "hero" who swallowed a snail. Surely the record for this sort of thing is held by the Hebrew prophet who swallowed the whale. Or was it the whale who swallowed the prophet? One of them swallowed the other, anyhow.

In a political riot in Budapest revolvers and stones were used. These people make quite a religion of their politics.

A little mild profanity sometimes crops up in the daily papers. The *Evening News* recently, in an obituary notice of the late Sir William White, had a saucy headline, "Greatest Shipbuilder the World has ever Seen—not excepting Noah." But the old Bible shipbuilder's greatest speciality was not his vessel but his menagerie.

A very amusing discussion is now in progress in the *Christian Commonwealth* upon the subject, "Is Christianity the Final Religion?" Eminent scholars have already taken part in the debate; but the significant fact is that no two of them agree as to what Christianity is, or as to what is meant by finality. Professor Cheyne, of Oxford, expressed the opinion that "the religion of Jesus is not a final but an ever-expanding religion." It is the belief of this divine that Christianity is elastic enough to make room for "natural science, philosophy, and history, including the ancillary study of philology." Indeed, the Babai religion has an advantage over the Christian, in that it is more elastic still, and denies that any existing religion can be the final one. Professor Cheyne concludes in this heterodox fashion:—

> "At any rate, history is a son of God, and has, in the power of God, remade the religions of men. None of the great religions have grown up entirely from the original roots, and syncretism is largely responsible for the existing forms of the religions. And of none of the great religions can it be said that its expansion is complete. The only defensible position is that of the leaders of the Babai movement.....to adopt any good thing that other religions have .....As the sagacious critic, Professor Jowett, said, the Babai movement may not impossibly turn out to have the promise of the future. He, too, thought that Christianity was not the final religion."

Coming from a Christian minister, a dignitary of the Church of England, that is not at all bad.

The Rev. Dr. Walter Walsh, the present minister of the Theistic Church, is in substantial agreement with Professor Cheyne. To him, Christianity is "a conception compounded of the mythological notions of Mithraism, Greek hero-worship, and Platonism, Buddhism, Gnosticism, along with the political elements of Jewish Messianism"; and the improbability is, to his mind, "that such a conception will continue to satisfy the human soul throughout the future ages of expanding science, rationality, and democracy." Until a few months ago Dr. Walsh was a Christian minister at Dundee; and yet this is what he now says about the worship of Christ:—

> "I am well aware of the wealth of sentiment and affection lavished upon the 'Christ' ideal. That makes no difference to the fact that it is lavished not upon a supernatural person existing objectively to the mind, but upon an ideal conceived subjectively in the minds of passing generations, and therefore liable to change and elimination as humanity grows."

Dr. Lyman Abbott, however, though an admirer of the broad-minded Henry Ward Beecher, holds the orthodox view that Christianity, being the one perfect religion, is also of necessity the final. Unfortunately, his definition of Christianity is by no means orthodox; and Christianity, as he defines it, has never yet existed. What is beyond doubt is that historic Christianity is doomed; and our earnest hope is that it is the last religion to darken and confuse the mind of man.

Dr. Rigby, the chairman of the Health Committee of the Preston Town Council, has been arguing that smaller families give children a chance of being brought up properly. It appears that the Preston death-rate has been exceeding the birth-rate lately,—which rather astonishes us considering how strong the Roman Catholic Church is in that city. Dr. Rigg did not agree with Dr. Rigby. Small families, he said, meant moral rottenness. It was disobedience to God. Parents should have plenty of children, and God would help to keep them. That is what the Church parson said to the woman in the story. He told her that God never sent mouths without loaves to fill them. "Yes," she replied, "but he too often sends the mouths to one house and the loaves to another."

"It is absolutely essential," says the Bishop of Bristol, "that a clergyman should read the Word of God in a different way from any other book." Of course, the reading of the Bible may be performed in a capable or incapable manner; but why in a way different from any other book? If one really wants to appreciate whatever is of genuine literary value in the Bible, it should be read *exactly* as one reads other books. Really what the Bishop of Bristol means is that a clergyman should cultivate a special tone and manner when reading the Bible, and so supply the necessary element of hocus-pocus that will duly impress the unthinking and the credulous.

A religious contemporary warns English people that the natives of India do not understand the governmental attitude of neutrality in matters of religion. They can understand either patronage or oppression; but when the Government of India neither supports nor condemns, the conclusion they come to is that in its eyes the teaching of religion is of less importance than is he teaching of arithmetic. Well, but as a matter of fact, do not Christians, in practice, act as though they were of exactly this opinion? If it came to appointing a clerk in a bank or in an office, which would be considered of the greater importance—accuracy in arithmetic or correctness of doctrine? Whom would a Christian minister on his way to India sooner trust—an Atheistic captain but a skilled navigator, or a fervent Christian but a regular duffer at navigation? As a matter of fact, neutrality in religion *does* imply that religious belief is of subsidiary importance. It is practically saying that, while in the interests of the common welfare Government must insist upon certain duties, and see that the rising generation gets certain instruction, religion may be left alone, or left out altogether. This is the bottom reason why deeply religious people have so seldom been in favor of toleration.

In the *Modern Churchman*, the Rev. H. Northcote has an article on the mediæval hell, and in the course of his essay puts the question, "Did this awful doctrine of hell reinforce morality?" His reply is in the negative, and he adds that—

> "Many in desperation plunged into wild orgies which ended in intense misery. The effect of the doctrine was rather to drive men mad, and all Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries seemed on the verge of madness, so colossal were the social evils. The great deliverance from the mediæval notion of a geographical hell came from the discoveries of science. First, the old Greek conception of the roundness of the earth was recovered and substantiated by Copernicus and other thinkers; then Magellan, Columbus, and others verified the conclusions, and their voyages definitely proved that the earth was round."

There is nothing novel in what Mr. Northcote has to say. It has been part of elementary Freethought ever since there has been any sort of organised propaganda. What Mr. Northcote has to say is, however, true, even to the fact that it was secular science that acted as the great corrective to Christian barbarism and religious brutality.

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But when Mr. Northcote has said this much, he leaves unnoticed an equally important aspect of life. For our own part, we should not care to make the sweeping statement that in the sixteenth century all Europe was on the verge of collective madness. It would have been had everybody really felt all that the Christian doctrine of damnation involved. But in its more brutal, more honest form, Christianity could only be accepted by masses of people on condition that they either did not realise what it really meant, or that they gave it an interpretation which humanised it, or, finally, that people should have become so brutalised by it as to face with equanimity the prospect of the eternal damnation of millions of their fellows. As a matter of fact, all these things actually resulted. Some did go mad as a consequence of Christian teaching. The better minds suffered under it, the coarser ones became still coarser. The power of Christianity over the naturally better type of character has always been enormously exaggerated, and over the lower type its main influence has been to accentuate its worst features. And Mr. Northcote should remember that the period he is dealing with was the golden age of Christianity. It is the time when we see Christianity in the full strength of its teaching and influence. And a more barbarous and demoralising set of teachings never, either before or since, dominated the human mind.

When the Shoreditch Coroner asked a witness of what nationality he was, he received the bright answer, "Church of England." On further inquiry the "English Churchman" was found to be of German descent.

The *Daily Herald* has made the discovery that the "outside public hates scientific scepticism." The "outside public" do not read scientific works, and probably would not understand them if they tried to. Such people evidently prefer "literature" like the *Daily Herald*.

There are some Christians who appear to be under the impression that everything decent in the world began with the birth of Jesus Christ. There are others who count only from the Protestant reformation of the sixteenth century. And there are still others who date only from the beginnings of Wesleyan Methodism. To this latter class belongs, apparently, the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, the editor of the *Methodist Times*. In a recent issue, Mr. Lidgett informed his readers that in his belief and that of "competent historians," "the rise of Methodism is at the very centre of the humanitarian movement of modern times." We do not know who are the "competent historians," but in our opinion Methodism has about as much to do with the rise of the modern humanitarian movement as with the Copernican astronomy. Dr. Lidgett himself confesses that "the generations that immediately succeeded Wesley.....did not play the part that might have been expected of them in rousing the conscience of England to a sense of the hideous social conditions that then prevailed." So that evidently the humanitarian movement got along for a generation without the help of Methodism. Not only did it manage without help from organised Methodism, but many of the most glaring evils of English industrial life grew up side by side with the development of English evangelism. Children were being murdered in factories, and women degraded in mines. The land of the country was being stolen from those to whom it belonged, and laws passed for the deliberate purpose of driving the peasantry into the power of manufacturers. English prison laws were among the most brutal in Europe, and attack after attack was being made upon the liberty of press and public. During all this time Methodism, in the words of Dr. Lidgett, was "organising its resources as a rising Church." And as a consequence, to again quote our Methodist editor, it "was disabled from seeing and serving the social needs of the country." That is the truth, at last. When people's heads are filled with theology they have room in it for little else. And the real influence of organised Methodism was to so fill people's minds with "other-worldism" that they could be the more easily exploited.

Sir Harry Johnston, presiding at a lecture by Professor Henry Balfour on the "Earliest Inhabitants of South Africa," said that men like the lecturer were "trying to spell out an imperfect chapter in the latest and greatest Bible—the book of the earth itself." The mental horizon had widened during the past century, religion and science were now friendly, and we were "endeavoring to find out what was God's object in bringing the world and man into existence." We thought Sir Harry Johnston knew better than to talk in this way. "God's object" will be known when he discloses it. But *is there* a God? That is the first question.

According to an advertisement in the *Evening News*, 110 Municipal Reform candidates at the London County Council Election were in favor of the Sunday opening of cinematograph shows, whilst only 27 Progressives were so minded. Unfortunately, so many "Progressives" are illiberal Nonconformists.

The vicar of St. Paul's Church, Moseley-road, Birmingham, is of opinion that it is "unfair to churches to provide entertainments during hours of divine service." Oh, these clerical protectionists! When they take their shutters down they want everybody else's shutters up. They know they cannot stand against open competition; so they call for a close time for *their* entertainments, which have long been ceasing to entertain.

The *Christian World* says that "the invasion of Sunday rest is one of the most melancholy features of modern London life," and announces that the publicans will join the crusade against the Sunday opening of picture palaces. We are not surprised at this. The public-house and the church seem to be the only two places injured by Sunday entertainments, and we are not astonished that when their mutual interests are threatened they are ready to unite forces against a common danger.

It is not often the truth of the situation is put as openly as is done by the editor of the *Church Family Newspaper*. This gentleman calls on all religious people in the community to "put an end to these counter attractions to public worship." That is the gist of the situation. Everything else is a mere subterfuge.

"From Manger to Cross" was running at a moving-picture house at Pontefract. One evening, before the picture was thrown upon the screen, the vicar (the Rev. W. Gell) stepped upon the stage and conducted "a short service of prayer." "This created a marked effect," the report said. We should think so, indeed. The impudence of the average man of God is simply astounding. In this case it was particularly so. Mr. Gell took his trade out with him to a place of public amusement, and forced it upon the attention of the audience, and wound up by calling for "No smoking and no applause." We suggest that the next time he wants an advertisement at a picture show he should pay for it at the usual rates. It ought to go among the business advertisements thrown upon the screen during an interval.

Mr. Julian Grande has been telling the Camera Club that he succeeded in entering "Aaron's Tomb" on the top of Mount Hor. Did he find Aaron's blooming rod there and the recipe for his patent macassar?

Among the recent clerical wills were those of the Rev. Charles Elsee, of Rugby School, who left £41,485, and the Rev. Canon Degge Wilmot Sitwell, Vicar of Leamington Hastings, Warwickshire, who left £59,673.

Germany (says *Tit-Bits*) has an increasing number of persons without any religious profession. The number has grown from 17,000 in 1907 to nearly 206,000. We venture to say that even these figures are far from an accurate statement of the case. There are crowds of Freethinkers who don't and won't make any public declaration of the fact. The great bulk of the Social Democrats, for instance, are known to be Anti-Christian.

A strike of bakers is feared in London. Christians had better find the present address of the individual who fed five thousand people with two sardines and three bath buns.

In a recent number of the *Daily Herald*, a writer on "Current Literature" says that "Gone is defiant materialism or anti-theologism." It is this sort of nonsense that makes people complain that the halfpenny papers are edited by office boys for errand boys.

A street-corner mission which was eternally collecting money had its banner altered by a humorist who did not leave his address behind. On the following Sunday the procession started, preceded by the amusing text suspended on a pole, "In the midst of life we are in debt."

A favorite hymn of the Brotherhood movement is Ebenezer Elliott's "God Save the People." Unfortunately, as Carlyle long ago pointed out, "God does nothing." In other words, is "good for nothing."

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £62 16s. 10d. Received since:—Robert Avis, £1; S. M. Peacock, 10s. 6d.; W. Palmer, 2s. 6d.; V. Phelips, 10s. 6d.; R. D. Voss (S. Africa), £2 2s.; H. S. Salt, £1 1s.; G. Smith, 10s.; G. R. Harker, £2 2s.; R. Stirton and Friends, Dundee (quarterly), £1 10s.; E. Kirton, 5s.

"HOMELESS."—An excellent letter, especially the parts relating to the Sunday question and the Blasphemy Laws. This is not a reflection on the other parts; it only means that they do not specially concern us in these pages. We wish Freethinkers would use the local press much more liberally than they do.

R. BELL.—We don't see that we can make copy out of it for this journal.

J. W. HACKETT.—This year, probably; but not this winter. Thanks for cuttings: see paragraph.

C. C.—The *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, by his daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, and Mr. J. M. Robertson, is what you want. There is a half-crown edition of it published by Fisher Unwin. Glad you found our *Reminiscences of Bradlaugh* "very interesting," leading you to desire "a fuller record."

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. PALMER.—We also wish your purse were larger and better furnished.

A. MILLAR.—We have informed Mr. Cohen that you find his book on Determinism "very effective in debate." Mr. Foote will probably be visiting Glasgow in the fall if the Branch can find a hall by then for his lectures.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

G. CROOKSON.—Very well; there is no particular hurry.

S. M. PEACOCK.—Let us hope for better times.

R. D. VOSS.—Good wishes reciprocated.

G. SMITH hopes the P. H. Fund "will not lag this year as it did last."

A. MANN.—Even if we did answer such letters by post we should have to decline substantiating other persons' statements, either from the platform or otherwise.

J. W. H. DAVIS.—If you derive so much benefit and pleasure from the *Freethinker* we can understand your regret at not having met with it many years earlier. Thanks for your encouraging letter.

G. R. HARKER.—Glad you are taking the *English Review* for March; hope many of our readers will do so.

ROBERT TAYLOR.—Milman's *History of the Jews* is good in its way, and also cheap. Renan's great book is expensive, but you might find it in a Manchester library.

R. STIRTON.—Many thanks.

R. CHAPMAN.—Shall be carefully considered.

J. B.—Tuesday is too late for this week; must wait till next. We note your praise of the *English Review* for "beaking down the long and shameful press boycott of Mr. Foote."

J. W. DE CAUX.—Pleased you think the last week's front article "splendid"—for there are few, if any, better judges.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

There was a fine meeting at the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday evening, in connection with the celebration of the thirty-second anniversary of the opening of the Hall. Mr. Sidney A. Gimson, the Secular Society's president, opened the proceedings with a gratifying statement of the recent work and progress of the Society. It was pleasant to see the good terms that he and the audience were on with each other. Mr. Mentor Gimson was present also—as a listener, smiling benevolently at every good thing that was said. The chairman's speech was deservedly applauded. Mr. Foote was the next speaker. He delivered no formal address, but just spoke for three quarters of an hour without a note, suitably to the occasion, and with particular reference to the late Mr. Josiah Gimson, Mr. Michael Wright, and other stalwarts who founded the Leicester Secular Society. Mrs. Adams spoke a few words for the lady members, Mr. A. C. Brant for the Sunday School, and Mr. Ronald Eagle for the Young People's Secular Society. This was a very agreeable feature of the proceedings. Another agreeable feature was the singing, in which Miss Burford, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Ligo acquitted themselves finely. Altogether it was a most enjoyable function. We wish a similar one could take place in every fair-sized town in England.

The Secular Education League's Annual Meeting will be held at Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30. Members are earnestly invited to attend. A public meeting will follow at 8.15. The list of speakers includes Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., and Mr. G. W. Foote. We hope there will be a really good attendance. There ought to be, considering that the Government promises or threatens to deal with the Education question again in the near future.

There should be a good attendance at the first public meeting organised by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which takes place at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Friday evening, March 14. The chair will be occupied by the Rev. Copeland Bowie, and the list of speakers includes Sir W. P. Byles, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Lord Harberton, Mr. A. L. Atherley Jones, K.C., M.P., and Sir Hiram Maxim. We may add that Essex-street is on the south side of the extreme east end of the Strand.

Mr. Cohen was really suffering from a bad attack of influenza. We are glad to hear he is well on the way to recovery, but the road is rather longer than was expected. Mr. Cohen had to forego his Manchester visit on Sunday. We have strongly urged him to take no risks at all until he is thoroughly recovered. We begin to shiver ourselves when any one of our co-workers is ill. There are so few of us in this enterprise. And man is mortal. And nature, or "providence," or whatever it is, knocks out the useful just as readily as the useless.

The author of that very able and useful book, *The Churches and Modern Thought*, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes:—"I take this opportunity of saying how much I appreciate the *Freethinker*; the articles always excellent and the 'Acid Drops' amusing and to the point. I only wish it had a larger circulation and could be seen by those who are less confirmed than myself in the need for militant Freethought."

Mr. H. S. Salt, writing to Mr. J. W. de Caux, with a contribution to the President's Honorarium Fund, says it is from "one who has long admired Mr. Foote's high abilities and devotion to a great cause."

The advertisement of the March number of the *English Review* in the *Times* tickled us a good deal. It was a boldly displayed advertisement, the conspicuous lines being "The Lesson of the Balkan War, by F.M. Lord Roberts," and "George Meredith—Freethinker," by G. W. Foote"—all the other contents being briefly indicated in a sort of footnote. We can guess Lord Roberts's feelings on seeing himself in such company. Our own feeling is simply one of amusement. The serious side of the matter is the courage of the *English Review* management. They have broken "the boycott of Foote" with a vengeance.

Mr. W. Bailey, a Manchester veteran, and a generous supporter of the *Freethinker* and other advanced efforts, writes us:—

> "I have read your Meredith article four times. It is a magnificent piece of work. You have laid the Freethought party under a deep obligation to you. Freethinkers should not fail to get, read, and pass on the *English Review* for March. There is no doubt of where Meredith stood."

Mr. Bailey would like to pay for some copies to be sent by us to persons who would like to have the magazine but cannot buy it. He shall be gratified.

Mr. Walter Stewart, who read the first number of the *Freethinker* and every number since, is seventy-two years of age. He is a candidate for the 1913 Pension Election in connection with the Printers' Pension and Almshouse Corporation. His address is 52 Hampden-road, Hornsey, N. Can any of our readers give him a vote? We hope so.

Mr. Elijah Copeland, who has been identified with the Freethought movement in the North of England for more than half a century, takes the chair this evening (March 9) at the address by Mr. D. R. Bowe to the South Shields N. S. S. Branch. Further particulars appear in our "Lecture Notices."

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The Lisbon Freethought Congress, 1913.

THE International Freethought Federation has now issued its Manifesto in reference to the forthcoming Freethought Congress at Lisbon. The date of the Congress is fixed for October 6, 7, and 8, 1913, and the opening ceremonies, which will be on an imposing scale of magnificence, will coincide with the third celebration of the foundation of the Portuguese Republic (October 5, 1910). From every sentimental and historic point of view, the Lisbon Congress will be an unique international assembly, so far as Portugal is concerned. It will be graced by all that is most distinguished in the political and literary life of the country, and the duty of securing its success should, therefore, appeal with especial force to the Freethinkers of all shades and complexions in every civilised country. The Congress will, moreover, rally to its support a large number of Freethinkers and Republicans from Spain, who will doubtless derive fresh inspiration as they witness the brilliant achievements in social and political emancipation of the victorious Republicans and Freethinkers of Portugal. Success for the forthcoming Congress is thus all the more necessary in order that a definite set-back may be given, by the combined efforts of organised international Freethought, to the inroads of reaction and clericalism in Portugal and elsewhere. Portugal, since the establishment of the Republic, has secularised all its institutions, and, although the Augean stable of monarchical and ecclesiastical impurities requires much labor and time before the crimes and neglect of the past can be obliterated, Portugal's achievements in the secularisation of education and of the public services of the State will stand honorable comparison with the labors of the French Republic, which—be it remembered—had over forty years during which to operate, and longer years of liberty in which to learn the salutary lessons of freedom.

The foreign delegates to the Congress will be invited to the great Fêtes which the Portuguese Government will organise in October to celebrate the third anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic. The heartiness of the welcome which on this momentous occasion will be accorded to the international delegates will astound and gratify the hosts of Freethought assembled in Portugal's beautiful capital. The head of the Government, Senhor Affonso Costa, one of the chief glories of Portuguese Freethought, will attend the inaugural ceremony of the Congress, a fitting corollary to the splendid example of Dr. Theophilo Braga, who, a few days after his instalment as Provisional President of the new Republic, presided over the National Freethought Congress. The subjects appointed for discussion at the Congress in October are as follows:—

1. The Portuguese law separating Church and State; its political results, and the modifications that should be made therein.
2. By what method can we realise a system of Rationalist Education that shall be solely compatible with Freethought?
3. Freethought and the Social Question.

It is anticipated that a large number of delegates will attend the discussions on these interesting themes, and that the ripened experiences of the most capable specialists in the treatment of these questions will contribute a valued quota of facts and conclusions to the elucidation of these problems, which are living problems of universal application, and fraught with intense practical issues in the evolution of the modern State. The representatives of English Freethought must not be unseen and unheard during these deliberations.

Lisbon—to cite the words of our friend Magalhaes Lima—is one of the most Freethinking cities of the world. In expelling the Jesuits, and suppressing the religious congregations, in promulgating the law of divorce, the law of civil registration, and the law separating the Church and the State, little Portugal, small territorially, but great by its Republic, deserves, as it were, by right of its secular conquests, the visit of every Freethinker and Freemason. The proposition which Magalhaes Lima made at the Munich Congress last year to hold the next International Freethought Congress at Lisbon was hailed with delight and voted by acclamation. The Congress, which will be held practically under the auspices of the Portuguese Republic, will be the answer of organised international Freethought to the insolence of the Catholic Church, which, in its recent Eucharistic Congresses, has flung defiance at human reason and Freethought. At the recent Eucharistic Congress at Vienna, the reactionary Government in Austria armed every soldier with twenty ball cartridges, and ordered the troops not to fire in the air or on the ground, but to aim straight. As Magalhaes Lima remarks, this blustering exhibition of the most secret mystery of the Christian religion, which was thus invested with the brutal machinery of coercion proper to the Middle Ages, took us back to the time of Charlemagne; incidentally, it offered one more proof of the undying hostility of Christianity to the Rationalist spirit of the twentieth century.

Concurrently with the International Freethought Congress, there will be held, also at Lisbon, an International Congress of Freemasonry. As everybody knows, Freemasonry on the continent of Europe is practically Freethought organised on special lines of permeation and political activity, and the consequence will be that next October two convergent streams of international Rationalism will be poured from all parts of the world into the Portuguese capital. These two Congresses will have the inestimable advantage of uniting in one and the same "spiritual" communion the Masons and Freethinkers of Latin America (Brazil, Argentine, Chili, Mexico, Uruguay, etc.); of the Grand Orient de France, Italy, and Spain, and last, but not least in intellectual significance, it will bring the new thought of Republican China into fructifying contact with the Freethinkers and Masons of our Western civilisation. Like Rome, Lisbon is seated upon seven hills, but, unlike Rome, this beautiful city represents the modern revolt of the human intellect against the monstrous superstition begotten in the brains of Christian fanatics. Her hospitality to the Freethought delegates will, I am assured, be as broad and majestic as the unrivalled glories of its spacious Tagus.

Magalhaes Lima, from whose magnificent address at Lausanne I have already culled,* will be one of the leading spirits of the Lisbon Congress. For many years he was the untiring apostle of Freethought, the staunch enemy of the Braganza monarchy, and one of the chief heralds of the Portuguese Republic. For years an exile from Portugal, he familiarised his mind with all the advanced movements of political thought and mental emancipation throughout the world. He has suffered much and labored titanically for liberty of thought and for social freedom in his beloved country. The success of the forthcoming International Congress at Lisbon will be the fitting crown and reward of his splendid devotion to the noblest of all causes—the cause of Freethought and international peace. As Senator of the new Republic and Grand Master of the Portuguese Freemasons, his eyes have been gladdened by the recent inauguration of the Portuguese Republic and the Republic of China, "the two greatest events of this beginning of a new century." He is now on the eve of his departure for China, with the members of the different parliamentary groups, and, as the artisan and prime creator of the Portuguese Republic, will take with him to China the message of sympathy and solidarity of all those in Europe or elsewhere who want to see a peaceful and a progressive Chinese Republic established on a basis of Rationalism and humanity. He will tell the

* *Congress de Lisbonne*, par Magalhaes Lima. (1912: Paris. Muller, 29 Faubourg Montmartre. Pp. 32.).

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Chinese people that the Europeans are not all cretinised, *à la Chrétienne*, and that the true interests of the Yellow Race are bound up with industry, science, and Freethought. Not the least amongst his services to Rationalism will be the stimulation, through his commanding influence, of an active participation of the Chinese intellectuals in the Freethought trend of ideas in the Western world. As Magalhaes Lima himself remarks, in his Lausanne lecture:—

> "Of the Chinese revolution, it may be said that it was a more formidable event than any of the conquests of Alexander or the campaigns of Napoleon. It was the destruction of the old wall, supposed to be eternally guarded by immemorial dragons and favored by Heaven; as if the children of Heaven could resist the sledge-hammer blows of the demolishers of Gods and idols! There are no longer any more mysteries on earth than there are in Heaven. The telescope has unbared the latter to our eyes and put them into the category of astronomic phenomena. Heaven and Hell are unable to resist the scalpel of Science."

It is this splendid faith in progress and humanity, this enlightened idealism, that enabled our friend Magalhaes Lima to build the Republic of his ardent dreams and establish in the hearts of many thousands of Portuguese people a glowing enthusiasm for Freethought. On his return from China, his admirers, gathered from all parts of the world at Lisbon, will witness in the great Congress, with its touching enthusiasms for splendid ideals, the fruit of his long and incessant labors for Freethought and humanity.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Golden Rule.

THE injunction, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets," has been extolled as the very pith of Christian ethics. It has been emphatically denominated "the golden rule," and it has been supposed that nothing less than a divine revelation could have imparted to humanity the knowledge of so important a standard of conduct. This position, however, has been modified somewhat since evidence has been forthcoming that the rule is neither peculiar nor original to Christianity, but is found in authors anterior to the Christian era.

The sentiment of reciprocity in truth is one that is early developed in humanity. It springs from the notion of right evolved from the sense of special possession, and is even seen in animals, who find a *modus vivendi* in recognition of mutual rights. "The germ of conscience," it has been said, "lies in the struggle for existence having become aware of itself in the mind of a thinking person." When once a savage felt that it was wrong to take his life and the means whereby he lived, and saw the same feelings manifested by others, the transferring of the sense of wrong, and the contrasted sense of right, to others, would only be a work of time depending on the development of the reflective faculties and the social instincts by the ever constant action of natural selection weeding out the socially unfit.

No great mental effort would be needed for the savage, who feels it is wrong for another to deprive him of his property on a particular occasion, to infer that it is wrong for anyone else, at any time, so to act. No doubt there was a difficulty in recognising the equivalence of duties by and to the self, for, as Schopenhauer says, pure egoism would kill a man for the fat wherewith to grease its own boots; but mutual dependence and tribal living in common unfailingly bring the sense of identity of interests. "Do not wrong me, and I will not wrong you; I do not hurt you, why do you hurt me?" are the natural and spontaneous utterances of the sense of right as seen alike in savages and children. The rule of reciprocity beginning among friends extends itself as relationships of interests are extended.

Unsocial instincts also develop on the lines of reciprocity. The wild feeling of revenge for injury inflicted grows into a principle of returning a similar injury. The *lex talionis*, a life for a life, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," is the primitive rule. "Tit for tat" is the justice of the savage, and is not without its relics in the criminal codes of the civilised world. Yet this is the germ of reciprocity, and "the golden rule."

Professor Max Müller has already cited instances of this feeling directed towards the gods, from what is probably the oldest writing in the world, the Rig-Veda of the Hindus. In the notes to his translation of the "Hymns of the Marats," or "Storm Gods," he says:—

> "I think it best to connect the fourth and fifth verses, and I feel justified in so doing, and by other passages where the same or a similar idea is expressed—viz., that if the god were the poet, and the poet the god, then the poet would be more liberal to the god than the god is to him. Thus I translated a passage (vii., 31, 18) in my *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 565: 'If I were lord of as much as thou, I should support the sacred bard, thou scatterer of wealth; I should not abandon him to misery, I should award wealth day by day to him who magnifies, I should award it to whosoever it be.' Another parallel passage is pointed out by Mr. J. Muir (on the interpretation of the Veda, p. 79, viii., 19-25); 'If Agni thou wert a mortal, and I were an immortal, I should not abandon thee to malediction or to wretchedness; my worshipers should not be miserable or distressed.' Still more to the point is another passage, viii., 44, 23: 'If I wert thou, and thou wert I, thy wishes should be fulfilled.'"

The Rev. J. Stevenson, in his translation of the Sama Veda (p. 276), puts the following in the mouth of the singer: "When I, O Indra, shall become a possessor of wealth like thee, then assuredly my singer of sacred hymns shall possess abundance of cows." In the Odyssey, Calypso tells Ulysses she acts as she would wish to be done to were her fate the same. Hesiod enjoins "To all a love for love return." Herodotus relates how, when Mæandrius yielded up the supreme power to the citizens of Samos, he said: "I shall certainly avoid doing that myself which I deem reprehensible in another." The same historian tells how, when the Spartans, who went to Xerxes as a voluntary atonement for their country, were asked by the Persian Hydarnes to enter the service of the king, they replied: "To you servitude is familiar; but how sweet a thing liberty is you have never known; if you had, you yourself would advise us to make all possible exertions to preserve it." So, in Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, Cyaxares says to Cyrus: "If I appear to you to think unreasonably in this, do not consider these things as in my case, but turn the tables and make the case your own." Diogenes Laertius relates of the Greek sage Thales that when asked how we might live virtuously, he replied: "If we never do ourselves what we blame in others." Isocrates, in one of his orations, tells the Athenians: "You err against the first principles of wisdom, condemning in others what you yourself pursue." In his admonition to Nicocles, Isocrates says: "Do not those things to other people which you dislike when others do." "Put yourself in my place," says Scipio to Hannibal, as recorded by Polybius. A similar idea occurs in the precepts of Buddha (Dhammapada, 159): "Let each man make himself as he teaches others to be." "All men tremble at punishment; all men fear death; remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill nor cause slaughter." Max Müller cites in a note to this passage from the Ramayana, v., 23, 5: "Making oneself a likeness—*i.e.*, putting oneself in the position of other people, it is right to love none but one's own wife." The sentiment is also found in the ancient Hindu book of fables and counsels, the Hitopadesa: "Good people show mercy unto all beings, considering how like they are to themselves."

Confucius, in China, distinctly enunciated the so-called golden rule. In Dr. Legge's translation of the Confucian Analects we read, p. 266: "Tsze-kung

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asked, saying, 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?' The master said: 'Is not *reciprocity* [in Chinese *chou*] such a word? What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others.'" In his article upon Confucius, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Dr. Legge—who, as a missionary, shows little disposition to accord bare justice to the Chinese sage—admits: "It has been said that he only gave the rule in its negative form, but he understood it also in its positive and most comprehensive force."

As reported by his grandson, Tsze-sze, in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (in Chinese Chung-Yung), chap. viii., sec. 3, Confucius taught that "when one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature, and exercises them on the principle of reciprocity, he is not far from the path." And again, in the *Ta Hio, or Great Learning*, chap. x., section 2: "What a man dislikes in his superiors let him not display in the treatment of his inferiors; what he dislikes in inferiors let him not display in the service of his superiors; what he hates in those who are before him let him not therewith precede those who are behind him; what he hates in those who are behind him let him not therewith follow those who are before him; what he hates to receive on the right let him not bestow on the left; what he hates to receive on the left let him not bestow on the right. This is what is called *the principle with which, as with a measuring square, to regulate one's conscience.*"

In his translation of the Chinese sage, Mencius, p. 327, Dr. Legge gives the following passage: "If one acts with a vigorous effort at the law of reciprocity when he seeks for the realisation of perfect virtue, nothing can be closer than his approximation to it"; and in a note on the word translated "reciprocity" he says it is "the judging of others by oneself, and acting accordingly." Panthier translates the passage: "*Si on fait tout ses efforts pour agir envers les autres comme on voudrait les agir envers nous, rien ne fait plus approche de l'humanité que cette conduite.*"

The sentiment was not new to the Jews. The Book of Leviticus ordained: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Do that to no man which thou hatest" appears in the apocryphal book of Tobit (iv. 15). "Judge of thy neighbor by thyself," says Jesus, the son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 15). Emanuel Deutsch says that the maxim, "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by," was quoted by Hillel the President—at whose death Jesus was ten years of age—"not as anything new, but as an old and well-known dictum, 'that comprised the whole law'" (*Literary Remains*, p. 27). It is also found in Philo Judæus.

The wide spread of the sentiment, of which we could give further evidence, doubtless shows that it has been an important factor in the evolution of morals. As a sort of ready, general guide to conduct, it has contributed towards the repression of actions which, being noxious to the individual, are at the same time hurtful to society, and it has tended to encourage actions promoting the welfare of both. But we deny that it is an infallible criterion of morals. It does not, indeed, appear to us a golden rule at all, but at the best only silver-gilt. Its essential principle does not ring true. It appeals primarily to self-interest, and assumes that what one wishes to be done to oneself is right. But it is not true that we wish for ourselves what would be best for the general welfare. The Christian who molests the last hours of a Freethinker excuses himself on the plea that he is doing as he would be done by. He would like his mind directed to thoughts of God and heaven in his last moments. Perhaps the strongest instance of the exhibition of the golden rule is to be found among those numerous savage tribes who, when they have a visitor, offer him a wife or sister by way of hospitality. If the formula is supposed to mean, "Do unto others as ye would they should do, providing it is right," this is at once conceding it to be useless; since, if the person already knows what is right to do, the rule is superfluous. If he does not know, the rule supplies no adequate criterion. My child wishes for ice cream. In its place I should desire the same. Must I, then, supply it? Evidently to decide so simple a question other considerations must be imported. A man can no more be sure of doing the right thing simply by putting himself in another man's place than he can learn to box by sparring at himself in the looking-glass. It may sometimes give a useful hint as to what he must not do, but it will not help him much as to what he should actually do. Brown, who is fond of a drink, stands Robinson a glass because he would like one himself. Jones, a teetotaler, persuades Robinson not to drink because he would wish to be deterred in the like circumstances. Smith, doing as he would be done by, gives Jones, who is hard up, a sovereign, which perhaps he spends foolishly; Robinson, who likes hard work, gives him a stiff job for which he is perhaps unfit, and Brown gives him brandy, which perhaps kills him. Yet each acts on the golden rule. The principle enunciated by Kant is evidently safer. Only those maxims must be adopted as ruling motives which are susceptible of being made universal. But the golden rule, so far from affording a universal law, varies in its application according to the subjective idiosyncrasies of each person. It may suffice to deter from evident wrong and injury, but in the minutiæ of conduct, which, after all, make up the important affairs of life, if weighed in the balance, it is often found wanting.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

—Sub-Editor of the "Freethinker" and Author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers," etc.

A Grave Subject.

"Death, not armed with any dart,
But crowned with poppies."
—JULIAN FANE.

FROM the earliest times men have sought to express their loves and joys, their sorrows and hatreds, in epitaphs and epigrams, and to inscribe them on sepulchral urns, tablets, or gravestones, as memorials of their pleasure or their pain. It is certain that such inscriptions were in use many centuries before the alleged birth of the mythical Christ. One of the most ancient epitaphs is that which Assyria's last king, Sardanapalus, ordered to be engraved on his tomb: "Sardanapalus built Anchiale and Tarsus in one day. Go, passenger, eat, drink, and rejoice, for the rest is nothing."

It is, however, among the Greeks that we find epitaphs properly so-called. Among the most famous is the inscription for the heroes of Thermopylæ: "Stranger, tell the Lacedemonians that we lie here, in obedience to their commands."

The propensity for writing punning epitaphs also existed at an early period. The inscription on the tombstone of Pausanius, the Greek physician, contains a pun on his name. The first two lines have been thus translated:—

"Pausanias, not so named without a cause,
Who oft to pain has given a pause."

The more serious Romans do not appear to have indulged much in epitaphs of this description. They preferred a more solemn note. Who ever wearies of Martial's "Erotion," so prettily Englished by Leigh Hunt:—

"Underneath this greedy stone
Lies little, sweet Erotion,
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,
Nipped away at six years old.
Those, whoever thou may'st be,
That hast this small field after me,
Let the yearly rites be paid
To her little slender shade,
So shall no disease or jar
Hurt thy house or chill thy lar,
But this tomb be here alone
The only melancholy stone."

Catullus has written one of the finest epitaphs.

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The lines are in memory of his brother:—

"O'er many a realm, o'er many an ocean tost,
I come, my brother, to salute thy ghost!
Thus on thy tomb sad honor to bestow,
And vainly call the silent dust below.
Thou, too, art gone! Yes, thee I must resign,
My more than brother—ah! no longer mine,
The funeral rites to ancient Romans paid,
Duly I pay to thy lamented shade.
Take them—these tears their heart-felt homage tell;
And now—all hail for ever, and farewell."

In England, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, tombs were thought to be the proper place, not only for puns, but for anagrams, acrostics, chronograms, and similar curiosities. For example:—

"On Archbishop Potter. Ob. 1747.

"Alack, and well-a-day,
Potter himself is turned to clay."

"On Mrs. Death.

"Here lies Death's wife; when this way next you tread,
Be not surprised should Death himself be dead."

"On Mr. Fish.

"Worms bait for Fish; but here's a sudden change,
Fish's bait for worms—is not that passing strange?"

"On Mr. Button.

"Oh! sun, moon, stars, and ye celestial poles!
Are graves, then, dwindled into button holes?"

"On John Penny.

"Reader! Of cash, if thou'rt in want of any,
Dig four feet deep, and thou shalt find a penny."

The complimentary epitaph seldom pleases. To lie like a tombstone has become a proverb. Pope's famous epitaph on Newton,

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night;
God said, Let Newton be! and all was light,"

is a typical example. It is hyperbolical, and entirely out of character with the man it was intended to honor.

The tender and emotional epitaphs have a tendency to become insipid or silly. But Herrick, the most Pagan of Christians, has shown us how to rival the old-world Martial. The lines are upon a little girl:—

"Here she lies a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood,
Who, as soon fell fast asleep,
As her little eyes did peep.
Give her strewings, but not stir
The earth that lightly covers her."

Ben Jonson's exquisite epitaph on a child, beginning—

"Weep with me all you that read
This little story;
And know for whom the tear you shed
Death's self is sorry,"

is fine poetry; but it is not death as known by mourners.

Byron mentions two touching epitaphs which he saw at Ferrara. "Martini Luigi implores peace," and "Lucrezia Picini asks for eternal rest." Small wonder they struck a responsive chord in the world-worn heart af the English Catullus.

Keats desired that on his grave should be written:—

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Water! Say, rather, in fire. In place of Keats' modest epitaph we have that glorious elegy, "Adonais," written by the Atheist Shelley, the finest elegiac poem in the English language. A few years later, in the same burying-ground was placed another stone, recording that below rested the passionate heart of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Shakespeare's lines on the dead Duncan are perfect. They contain the oft-quoted—

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

The tendency of the present day seems to be to do away with epitaphs, and merely to inscribe on the gravestone the name and age of the deceased, with the addition of a tag from the Bible, or a verse from a hymn, which may or not be poetry. But, apart from the purely conventional texts, the note of Christianity is seldom struck in these inscriptions. There is a deep-rooted Secularism in people which is for ever bubbling up and asserting itself in the most unexpected ways. That there are few inscriptions other than religious is to be attributed to the prejudices of the clergy, who object strongly to anything which clashes with their own views. Literary inscriptions are rare. We have noticed a tombstone in Nunhead Cemetery with the dying words of Hamlet, "The rest is silence," and a gravestone in Lee Cemetery with an entire poem by Longfellow. Personal inscriptions are to be found scattered up and down our churchyards and cemeteries. On a tombstone in Norwood Cemetery one reads, "Poor old Granny," and on another, "She was what a woman ought to be."

So do customs change, funeral fashions, too, and with them the salutation of the dead.

Mimnermus.

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on Feb. 27.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cowell, Davey, Davidson, Gorniot, Greyton, Heaford, Leat, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Wood, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for Croydon, West Ham, and the Parent Society.

The report of the Board of Management of the N. S. S. Scholarship Scheme was presented by Mr. Roger, and, after a lengthy discussion, in which Messrs. Cowell, Davidson, Rosetti, Gorniot, Moss, Lloyd, and Quinton took part, a slight addition was made and the report adopted. It was resolved that the fixing of the date of the examination should be deferred until further applications had been received from intending candidates, the Management Committee undertaking to have the syllabus ready by the next meeting.

The Secretary reported that a communication had been received from the Sheffield Branch inviting the Conference. After some explanation from the President as to the financial position of the Society, Mr. Quinton moved that the Conference be held in London this year.

The Secretary was authorised to make certain arrangements in regard to out-of-door propaganda.

E. M. Vance, *Secretary*.

ADRIANOPLE.

There falls perpetual snow upon a broken plain,
And through the twilight filled with flakes, the white
earth joins the sky;
Grim as a famished, wounded wolf, his lean neck in a chain,
The Turk stands up to die.

Intrigues within, intrigues without, no man to trust,
He feeds street-dogs that starve with him; to friends who
who are his foe,
To Greeks and Bulgars in his lines, he flings a soddened
crust—
The Turk who has to go.

By infamous, unbridled tongues and dumb deceit,
Through pulpits and the Stock Exchange the Balkans do
their work,
The preacher in the chapel and the hawker in the street,
Feed on the dying Turk.

The Turk worked in the vineyard; others drank the wine,
The Jew who sold him plough-shares, kept an interest in
his plough.
The Serb and Bulgar waited till King and Priest should
sign,
Till Kings said: kill—kill now.

So while the twilight falls upon the twice betrayed,
The *Daily Mail* tells England the *Daily News* tells God.
That God and British statesmen should make the Turks
afraid—
Who fight unfed, unshod.

—"*B. K.*," *Saturday Review*.

EFFICIENT.

The train robber suddenly appeared as many of the passengers were preparing to retire for the night.

"Come, shell out!" he demanded, as he stood towering above an Eastern clergyman, who had just finished a devout prayer.

The minister looked at him sadly for a moment, and then said:—

"If I had such energetic fellows as you to pass the plate now and then, I might have something to give you."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

CAXTON HALL (Room 18, Victoria street, W.C.): Tuesday, March 11, at 8.15, Annual General Meeting of the Secular Education League.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, Mrs. Emma Boyce, "Woman and Religion."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mrs. Bamber, "The White Slave Traffic."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): Joseph A. E. Bates, 3, "The Moon in Fact, Folk-lore, and Religion"; 6.30, "New Light on an Old Myth." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler-street): D. R. Bowe, an Address. Chairman, Mr. E. Copeland.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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There can be no consistence in feelings which are not supported by convictions.—AUGUSTE COMTE.

The Dismal Failure.

THE worst of Christianity is that it is such a dismal failure. Jesus is reputed to have said that the tree must be judged by its fruit. Apply that test to the religion which bears his name, and what is the result? We may settle the point by taking a single fact. Not a great many years ago the Japanese had an official report presented to them as to the advisability of their accepting the Christian religion—and the report was unfavorable. The social and moral state of Christian nations was such as to condemn Christianity. The commission recommended the Japanese not to plant a shoot in their own country from so rotten a tree. So they accepted Western science and declined Western religion.

What reader of Newman's *Apologia* does not remember the magnificent and pathetic passage in which he describes the contradiction between the idea of God within him and what he beheld when he looked into the world and human society? Amongst the miserable things he enumerated were "the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion." All which, apparently, ought to have been banished from the world, or hopelessly subdued, in the course of nearly two thousand years.

A very different writer from Newman preached a powerful sermon from the same text forty years afterwards. James Cotter Morison, the Positivist, in his *Service of Man*, had a chapter on "What Christianity Has Done." He argued that it had done very little for men in this world, whatever it had (or had not) done for them in the next world; and he quoted Spurgeon, the famous Baptist, as declaring that the world was a bad in his day as it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Coventry Patmore, the poet, saw that Christianity could not be defended on the ground of its temporal benefit to mankind; so he took this difficulty by the horns and tried to turn it out of the way. Speaking as a Christian (he was a Roman Catholic), he admitted with regard to Christianity that "it is open to question whether the race, as a race, has been much affected by it, and whether the external and visible evil and good which have come of it do not pretty nearly balance one another." But what of that? Christianity was not meant to give people food and drink, comfortable houses, and easy work; nor to improve bad or even indifferently good people. Christ came for the sake of those who are called "the elect." He lived and died to give all a chance of salvation, but he knew and said that "the number of individuals to be actually benefited by his having done so would be few; so that it was practically for those few only that he lived and died." Judging Christianity, therefore, by the common standards of progress was judging it unfairly. It was asking whether it had done what it never professed to do. The real question was, had it done what it did profess to do? And the answer to that question could only be supplied by "the elect" themselves.

This was not meant to be clever. Coventry Patmore meant it seriously. But it *was* clever, all the same. His admission, however, remains; namely, that, as far as human reason and common evidence are concerned, Christianity is decidedly not a success.

The very reverse of this is maintained by the general crowd of Christian apologists, who pretend that all the good—even the *secular* good—in modern society is due to their religion. They are the salt of the earth, and they keep it from stinking. They do even more than that. They are gradually "curing" the whole mass. Such is their contention, and they satisfy the ignorant believers who listen to them; while those who are better informed smile at the latest arts of successful priestcraft, and recognise that a religion founded upon ignorance and credulity must preserve itself by a continuance of the same agencies.

Murder will out, and so will truth. The most plausible deceivers have their lucid intervals of sincerity. General William Booth let the cat out of the bag in one of his addresses to the Salvation Army Congress. This is what he said:—

> "Those who followed the Master two thousand years ago turned the world upside down. Go and turn it upside down again. There is as much sin, as much wickedness, and as much devilry in the world as there was then—ay! and more."

Here we have a corroboration of Newman and Spurgeon. We were told by one who was supposed to know that the world is positively worse than it was nineteen hundred years ago. Not the *heathen* world, be it noticed, but the *Christian* world, for it is chiefly within Christendom that the Salvation Army operates, and General Booth had not then visited any heathen country in his circumnavigations of salvation.

Jesus Christ is said to have come from heaven to save the world. According to the New Testament there is no other name by which men *can* be saved. It is Jesus Christ or nobody. He lived a troubled life, died an ignominious death, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. But before leaving this world he commissioned his apostles (the first Salvation Army) to found his Church and preach his gospel to every creature. They did their best, though they did not quite "turn the world upside down." For three hundred years Christianity made its way by persuasion, and converted about a twentieth of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Then it secured the patronage of Constantine, and was made the State religion; and by means of bribery, ostracism, and bitter persecution it overcame all opposition in a century or so, and afterwards had the Western world to itself. From that time until quite recently it tolerated no rival, and wielded an absolute power. Its income runs into scores of millions, it has hundreds of thousands of churches and preachers, it has all the power of respectability on its side, and in some countries it still controls education. It does so in Great Britain, for instance; yet it was in the capital of Great Britain, the biggest Christian city on earth, and the birthplace of this very Salvation Army, that General Booth unhesitatingly declared that there is more sin, wickedness, and devilry in the world now than there was before Christianity was introduced.

Did any Freethinker ever frame a more terrible indictment of Christianity than this?

G. W. FOOTE.

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Religion and Sex.—II.

(*Continued from p. 147.*)

THIS connection of the sexual life of woman, including childbirth, with supernatural powers, seems to lie at the root of the widespread religious belief in the "uncleanness" of women. Modern apologists have obscured the real significance of the meaning of "unclean" in religious ritual by giving the word a hygienic or sanitary significance. In reality it is no more than an example of the principle of "taboo." Thus, it is an universal rule that when a particular animal is the totem of a tribe it becomes, so far as that tribe is concerned, "sacred." Members of the tribe will neither eat its flesh nor kill it, except under pressure of necessity, and then only with due religious ceremony. A tribe of American Indians whose totem is the bear will not eat bear flesh except as a religious function, and, as far as is possible, will abstain altogether. Or, to take a more familiar example, swine's flesh was not eaten by the Jews—not because they thought it to be undesirable from the point of view of dietetics, but because, as Robertson Smith showed, the pig was a totem with many of the Semitic tribes. It was not an unclean animal in the modern sense of the word; it was a holy animal. So with the Syrians, the dove was so holy that to touch it made one unclean for a whole day. Even contact with avowedly "holy" things by unauthorised hands rendered one unclean, and demanded a special process of purification.*

The real significance of "unclean," when used in connection with religious ceremonies, is, then, "holy." Havelock Ellis properly ascribes non-recognition of this truth to "ignorance of primitive religious ideas."† And Robertson Smith says:—

> "Holiness and uncleanness.....are in their origin indistinguishable.....The acts that cause uncleanness are exactly the same that among savage nations place a man under taboo, and these acts are often involuntary, and often innocent, or even necessary to society. The savage, accordingly, imposes a taboo on a woman in childbed or during her courses.....simply because birth and everything connected with the propagation of the species on the one hand, and disease and death on the other, seem to him to involve the action of superhuman agencies of a different kind. If he attempts to explain, he does so by supposing that on these occasions spirits of deadly power are present; at all events, the persons involved seem to him to be sources of mysterious danger, which has all the character of an infection, and may extend to other people unless due precautions are observed."‡

The sacramentally "unclean" nature of women is brought out very clearly in the regulations which debar women from religious ceremonies. Among the Australians, women are shut out from any part in the religious mysteries. In Fiji, women are excluded from the temples. In the Sandwich Isles, if a woman touches offerings to the gods they are made "unclean." The same regulation obtains in the Society Islands; and we have a parallel in the Church Council of Auxerre, which forebade a woman approaching the altar during the celebration of Mass, or to touch the Eucharist with bare hands. In Melanesia, women are excluded from religious ceremonies. The Ainos of Japan allow a woman to prepare the sacrifice, but not to offer it. In India, if a woman or a dog touch a consecrated image it is unclean. It will be remembered that in the Gospels, Jesus, after his resurrection, forbids the woman to touch him, while allowing Thomas to feel his flesh. Among the Jews, up to the present time, women have no part in the religious ritual. In the Christian Church the general exclusion of women from the priestly office had its roots in the same primitive view of the nature of women. During the Middle Ages, the Church supplied itself with sopranos by providing eunuchs rather than employ women.* The "churching" of women not improbably had its origin in the desire to exorcise the supernatural influence contracted by childbirth.

The persistence of this primitive view of woman's nature is mainly responsible for the fierce invective against women by early Christian writers. In their case we are observing the play of primitive ideas expressed in forms determined by changed conditions. But it needs little study to show that animating their invective is the original conviction that has been described. The ruling idea was that woman was charged, so to speak, with a dangerous supernatural influence. In this connection it may be recorded that Westermarck, during his stay among the country people of Morocco, was often struck by the superstitious fear men had of women. They were believed to be much better versed in magic than were men, and were, consequently, more dangerous. In Dahomey, also, no man will interfere with his wife while her "fetish" is upon her. Here, also, the curses of women are greatly feared, being much more powerful than those of men. Again we have a parallel in the case of Christianity, which so frequently revived and strengthened the lower and more primitive religious beliefs. During the witch mania, the overwhelming proportion of those who were punished or put to death for intercourse with Satan, were women. As a matter of fact, more women than men did believe themselves capable of such intercourse. But the Christian's explanation was that it was due to the Devil having more power over women than men.

It would take me too far out of my course to dwell upon the influence that this belief in the relation of woman to dangerous supernatural powers has had in determining her social position. Whatever the nature of the subsequent social and economic forces that gave rise to the notion of female inferiority, it may be taken as certain that these rested upon the primitive ideas I have been describing. For with the savage, woman is not really thought of as inferior to man—she is different from him. And she is different in a sense that calls for regulations concerning her actions. Many things are "taboo" to her in her own interest and in the interest of society at large. She is spiritually infectious, very much so at certain times, but more or less so at all times. Later, when other forces begin to operate, the ground is prepared for the growth of a belief in the inferiority of women. And thus, upon the primitive basis of the greater spiritual malignancy of women, there is reared social and political regulations that seek justification by arguments more or less specious, and by methods more or less blameworthy. "Our resemblances to the savage," says Frazer, "are still more numerous than our differences from him," and it is certain that due comprehension of the workings of the savage mind is essential to the proper understanding of "civilised" society.

It is, perhaps, necessary to point out another way in which sexual matters have, in early times, a close connection with religious worship. This is the very widely spread worship of phallic objects. The worship of the generative powers in the form of stones, pillars, and carved representations of male and female organs plays an unquestionably important part in early religions, although it has naturally been too hardly pressed by some theorisers. Still, it is met with practically all over the world. The stone set up by Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 18-19) is of this character. So were the stones set up in the Temple itself, and against which some of the prophets protested. Major-General Forlong has also argued that the God of the Jewish Ark was a sexual symbol. In India, phallic worship is widely scattered. In Mohammedanism, it is met with in the famous "Black Stone" of Mecca. In Greece, it was associated with the cult of Dionysius. In Egypt, the phallus was carried in religious processions by women,

* Dr. Robertson Smith has compiled an interesting list of animals that were sacred to various Semitic tribes, and which were forbidden as food. *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 194-201.

† *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*; 1901; pp. 208-9.

‡ *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 427-8.

* Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, vol. i., p. 666.

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as also in Greece during the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries. In Rome, the worship of Priapus was well established. It is met with even in America among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians, and also among North American tribes. The sale of phalli was common in parts of Italy certainly as late as the early part of the nineteenth century. Phallic figures existed in some Christian churches down to the end of the eighteenth century, and women, to obtain children, either placed themselves on the figure of the saint, or scraped the appropriate part of the effigy, and drank the scrapings in water.

There is no need to multiply details.* Nor is there any necessity for dwelling at any length upon the origin of the practice. In all probability, it is originally a form of magic intended to have a productive influence upon the crops. It is at least significant that the periods of licentiousness allowed by many tribes have the nature of a religious ceremony, and usually takes place during the festival of sowing. And from this to the practice of religious prostitution would be an easy step. It only needs adding that, to the primitive intelligence, phalli are not symbols, but actualities. They are regarded as the dwelling-place of the power that causes reproduction. Thus, in India, "The lingam, issuing from the hands of the workman, is deemed an instrument without virtue; it acquires it only by consecration—that is, when a Brahmin has blessed it, and has rendered incarnate in it the Deity by religious ceremonies." †

A survey of the facts thus serves to make plain how, from the very earliest times, religious ideas have been closely interwoven with the sexual life. In this respect, sexual phenomena are on all fours with phenomena in general; for the primitive mind, as we have seen, associates supernatural or supernormal activities with practically everything. But this general attitude is accentuated and prolonged by the strange and unaccountable facts of sexual development; and there is, consequently, perpetuated a very close and intimate alliance between sexual and religious feelings. The connection is so intimate that it is not surprising to find the two sets of feelings to be frequently interchangeable, and for the association to have persisted down to the present day. In future articles I hope to show how outbursts of religious zeal have been almost invariably, if not invariably, accompanied by displays of sexual extravagance, and that very much of what is taken in modern times to be the expression of fervent belief is little more than normal or abnormal sexual feeling. It is not pretended that religion is no more than sexual feeling. The religious ideas has a quite independent origin. But once it exists, it lives by feeding upon aspects of life that are in no genuine sense of the word religious. And by studying religion along these lines, it is possible to make plain much that would otherwise be wrapped in obsurity.

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

"The Godless Good."

THE Thirty-Nine Articles were agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both Provinces, and the whole clergy in the Convocation held in the year 1562, "for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion." They were adopted by the Irish Church in 1635, by the Episcopal Church in America in 1801, and in Scotland in 1804. These Articles of Religion contain the public standard of belief for all Episcopalians; and upon the whole clergy they are supposed to be absolutely binding, although a large amount of liberty is generally allowed in their interpretation. It is to one of them only that we wish to draw attention on the present occasion, namely the Thirteenth, which is entitled "Of Works before Justification," and reads thus:—

> "Works done before the grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, nor (as the School authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

This Article is not more irrational than many of the others; and it must be frankly admitted that it expresses a conviction which the Christian Church has consistently held from the beginning, and which it must always hold or cease to be Christian. To say that salvation is by faith is tantamount to asserting that unbelievers in Christ cannot be good. Even so progressive a theologian as Professor Peake declares that faith implies a sense of guilt and the impossibility of self-salvation. The sinner must renounce all other grounds of salvation and cast himself upon Christ alone. No orthodox divine can hold the view that moral goodness is attainable except through faith in and reliance upon the Atonement.

We know how utterly ridiculous and how absolutely false such teaching is; but its being thoroughly Christian is beyond all doubt. Unbelievers may seem to have virtues, but in heaven's sight they have nothing but splendid vices. They may and often do appear to be good, but at heart they are desperately wicked and full of all vileness. The apparent goodness which many of them exhibit is "the effect of hereditary Christianity—of the impetus towards good given by a religious upbringing, which lasts on after belief has faded." Even Professor Sanday, of Oxford, "fails to see what solid foundation for any system of morals" there can be apart from the Christian religion. When a man parts with his faith he loses every substantial ground or motive for the least remnant of morality. Of course, a man may be better than his creed. "This is what constantly happens," Dr. Sanday continues; "a Christian upbringing tells, and the effects of it survive after it has been given up as theoretically untenable" (*A New Marcion*, p. 16). It is also maintained that many good people who imagine that they are Sceptics are in reality genuine believers. "To all intents and purposes they are convinced Christians.....Their doubts belong to the hour, or even to what we might call 'the accident of birth.' Had they lived a hundred years ago they would have been evangelicals."

Now, an interesting article appeared in the *Spectator* for February 22, entitled "The Problem of the Godless Good," in which it is frankly admitted that multitudes of even militant Secularists are capable of thoughts, words, and deeds of highest excellence. The writer believes that such excellence exists without being the effect of "hereditary Christianity," or of a definitely Christian upbringing. In thus thinking, he shows plainly that he is not a good Christian. The curious thing, however, is that he gives many godless people the credit of showing forth what he calls "the Christian virtues." Is he not aware that there are no "Christian virtues"? The alleged virtues Jesus is supposed to have insisted upon most firmly are never shown forth by anybody, while the virtues which many Christians do show forth are not Christian but common human virtues. But we sincerely thank him for his unequivocal acknowledgment of the actual existence of "a vast and increasing number of good people who are not religious." He says:—

> "It may have been our privilege to have seen a man sacrifice his life for scientific research or for the deliverance of his neighbors from the cruel bondage of disease, and we may know that he professed to be a Materialist. We may have received such kindness and sympathy as we can never forget or repay from a man—and we

* Those who wish further information may consult General Forlong's great work *The Rivers of Life*; Brown's *Dionysiak Myth*; Forlong's *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religion*, pp. 339-40, 352-6, 538-42; Payne Knight's *Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, pp. 10-12, 142, and 172; Westropp's *Primitive Symbolism*; Wake's *Phallism in Early Religions*; Payne Knight's *Worship of Priapus*, etc.

† Delafosse, cited by Westropp, *Primitive Symbolism*, p. 52.

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might even say nowadays, though the case is rarer, from a woman—in whom the ordinarily received doctrines of religion produced nothing but a bitter irritation. And more than this is true: we have not only seen such people produce what we call, and rightly call, 'the fruits of the spirit,' but we have seen them the recipients of such help and consolation as our fathers believed to be reserved for what old-fashioned people called 'the servants of God,' and reserved for them alone. For instance, who has not felt his heart sink on hearing of some misfortune which threatens a friend who has no belief in the sustaining power of God? The misfortune has fallen, and we dare hardly turn our eyes towards our friend. The blow, we feel, will distract, agonise, humiliate him. On the contrary, when we see him we are amazed. He is calm, self-possessed, anxious not to distress those near and dear to him. Such courage seems possible enough in one who can resign himself to the will of God, but almost miraculous in him who trusts to nothing outside himself."

That is very touchingly said, and one feels that it is so entirely true. The writer of it has no patience whatever with those religious people who will not look at the goodness of Sceptics, and who "in their terror of mental confusion declared first that such goodness was but self-interest, and then in their rage at being unable wholly to shut their eyes to the goodness of the godless, cursed such goodness and ventured to declare that 'works done before the grace of Christ.....have the nature of sin.'" We do not blame religious people for such an attitude to unbelievers. Being Christians, they cannot cherish any other attitude. Their religion renders any other attitude quite impossible. As an Article in the Christian Creed we can find no fault with the Thirteenth in the Book of Common Prayer. To improve such a creed is impracticable: the only thing it needs is annihilation, not expurgation. Our writer advocates the pruning of the credal tree, but we recommend its being completely uprooted from the soil of humanity. As long as Articles I., II., III., and IV. remain, Article XIII. must be retained as an essential part of a whole that deserves nothing but unqualified condemnation.

At this point our agreement with the writer of the article under consideration comes to an end. His admission of the real goodness of many godless people is made, not in the interest of Freethought, but in that of his belief in what he calls the magnanimity of God. Magnanimity is a new attribute of God, discovered, we fancy, for the first time by the writer of the *Spectator* discourse. How does the Almighty use this his latest discovered attribute? By not repaying the godless good in their own coin. Whilst they deny him he graciously recognises them by conferring the gift of goodness upon them without their knowing it. "To believe—to have even a lurking suspicion—that God takes no thought for those who pay him no homage," we are told, "is to sacrifice the character of God in order to exalt the duty of godliness." The godless good, we are further assured, "are the recipients of the direct grace of God, a gift which he still bestows upon the unthankful who render him no service but the sweet-smelling odor of their good deeds." For ourselves, we must sadly confess our total inability to see how this unbiblical, untheological, and astounding idea reveals the magnanimity of God. In our judgment, it is an idea that lands its author in hopeless confusion. Why are some godless people the recipients of the direct grace of God while others are not? Why does he withhold his direct grace, the grace that bears the fruit of good deeds, from some of the godly, who acknowledge him in all their ways and sing his praises day and night, and grant it to others? Can it be a good God who is guilty of such shocking partiality? Then, again, if God exists, why are there good and bad people, and why are even the very best so far short of perfection? These are awkward questions which no believer in God can satisfactorily answer. On this writer's own showing, goodness yields no advantages. He represents the religious man as not unnaturally saying, "Why should I have borne the burden and heat of the day, and tried all my life to honor God, and then get no more benefits than a man who has done so much less?" Our author meets that objection thus:—

"To say this, however, is only to insist that 'godliness' should be 'a way of gain.' As to the value of faith, it is not a thing which can be computed by adding up advantages. It is known to those who have faith and to those who desire to have it alike, it is a thing for which many men would sell all that they have, but it is not 'a way of gain.'"

That is bad exegesis and worse reasoning. Paul says that "godliness with contentment is great gain." If it is not a gain, if it yields no advantages, what in the name of wonder is the good of it? The object of the article under discussion is to show that godliness is not a gain, that the people who have it are no better, and many of them not as good, as many of those who have it not. We agree, and beg to submit that this admission furnishes an irrefutable argument not simply for the valuelessness of godliness, but for the non-existence of the God in whom the author of the article seems to believe. A play-acting Deity, such as we have here, is wholly unworthy of the allegiance of mankind.

Men are just exactly what heredity and environment have made them, and their power over either is extremely small, and works with exceeding slowness. Many ages of the best education could effect but slight changes. And yet it is in individual and collective effort that the only hope of real improvement lies. It is the godless good who will be the saviors of the world, while the godly good and bad alike are doomed to disappear.

J. T. LLOYD.

Dr. Saleeby on Materialism.

"The myth of a First Cause obviously originated in that confusion of ideas, common to past ignorance and perpetuated by present pedantry, which confounds the philosophical first cause with the scientific or cosmical first causes; the linear hypotheses of beginnings and ends with the true cyclic facts of unending evolution and devolution. What man is really anxious to ascertain is, not who the Causer of the laws of the universe is, *for the Causer would have to explain his own origin and existence*, but what the laws themselves are."—REDCOTE DAWAR, *From Matter to Man*, 1898, p. 12.

"Man is free when 'Man is to man the supreme being.' So it belongs to the completion of liberalism that every other supreme being be annulled, theology overturned by anthropology, God and his grace laughed down, 'Atheism' universal.....Therefore the individual's God, 'my God,' must be put an end to."—MAX STIRNER, *The Ego and his Own*, 1912, p. 189.

"When Zarathustra was alone, however, he spake thus unto his heart: 'Can it actually be possible! This old saint in his forest hath not heard aught of *God being dead*."—NIETZSCHE, *Thus spake Zarathustra*, 1896, p. 4.

OUR readers will regret to learn, on the authority of Dr. Saleeby, that nemesis has at last overtaken Materialism.

When we opened our *Daily Chronicle* on Feb. 11, and read Dr. Saleeby's announcement, we shuddered at the gloomy prospect. A dreadful foreboding filled us with despair. Should we, indeed, have to return to the hideous chapel of our childhood? Must we seek out an official agent of religion—a Methodist parson, for instance—to make our peace with God?

But, upon second thoughts, we fancied we had heard similar reports before. In fact, now we come to think of it, there is scarcely a day passes but what some paper or parson reports Materialism as dead or discredited. When they are slack in the *Daily Mail* office, they put the office boy on to do a column on the death of Materialism; like Paul, it dies daily. Jesus Christ is said to have risen from the dead once; this is a trifle, for Materialism has risen from the dead thousands of times, and, like Hercules after his falls to mother earth, arises more vigorous than ever.

But let us see what Dr. Saleeby's nemesis consists of. He first calls attention to the fact that several years ago Sir William Ramsay made the sensational

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discovery that the atom, so far from being indivisible, as it name implies, was really of a complex nature and could be split up into simpler atoms. Yes; and we can remember there was great jubilation over the splitting of "the mighty atom" in pious circles—Materialism being regarded as now doubly dead. Whereas the truth was, that the theory—expounded by Clerk Maxwell and endorsed by Professor Tait and Balfour Stewart—that the atoms were indivisible, indestructible, and all of exactly the same size, therefore they bore the stamp of the manufactured article, and so bore testimony to the existence of a manufacturer or creator of atoms—that is, to a God—was completely demolished by the new discovery. Strange to say, Dr. Saleeby overlooked—no doubt inadvertently—this phase of the discovery of the divisibility of the atom in his *Chronicle* article.

After telling us of the splitting of the atom, Dr. Saleeby goes on to report that Sir William Ramsay, Professor Collie, and Mr. Patterson have now succeeded, or claim to have succeeded, in manufacturing atoms themselves from energy. Upon this Dr. Saleeby remarks:—

> "It is the very nemesis of Materialism to discover that the solid atoms on which it built are not material at all. If there should be no such thing as matter, Materialism would appear to be only the latest of many superstitions. That which we call energy is seen to be the ultimate reality of the physical universe, a reality which takes many forms, including those which we call the atoms of the elements. And what, then, is energy? the puzzled philosopher may ask; and I know no better answer than has been left us by all the honest and profound thinkers of the past—that they only know what energy does, not what it is; but that it makes manifest the Universal Being,—
>
> 'Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.'"

So Materialists like Buchner, Helmholtz, Berthelot, Clifford, and Sir Ray Lankester are the really superstitious people, while "all the honest and profound thinkers"—like Dr. Saleeby, for instance—believe in the "Universal Being" who dwells in the light of the setting suns, etc.

It would have been much more to the purpose if the honest and profound Doctor had condescended to explain *how* energy, any more than matter, "makes manifest the Universal Being," instead of discharging Wordsworth's poetry at us and leaving the field. Apparently, Dr. Saleeby keeps this quotation constantly by him, ready for his hour of need, for we find it quoted in his *Cycle of Life*; 1904; p. 260; where it is described as the belief of modern philosophy and of "the greatest minds of the past."

Now, let us consider the real facts upon which this diatribe against Materialism is founded—for Dr. Saleeby is in too great a hurry to reach his conclusions to give a clear statement of them—the facts are these: Sir William Ramsay, Professor Collie, and Mr. Patterson, during a series of experiments, came to the conclusion that when cathode rays are passed through pure hydrogen gas in a certain manner, there appears in the hydrogen tube considerable quantities of neon, one of the rarer elements of the atmosphere; and further, by some changes of conditions, the element helium is substituted for neon. There are, Sir William Ramsay observes, three explanations for this phenomena: (1) The gases may be derived from the aluminium cathode or from the numerous elements present in the glass. (2) Or, that hydrogen is converted into these gases. (3) Or, that electricity itself is responsible for the birth of these elements. Of these three explanations Sir William believes the last to be the correct one.

However, Professor J. J. Thompson and Mr. Frederick Soddy, who have themselves experimented in the same direction, deny that these gases are the result of transmutation of hydrogen, or the product of electricity.

Sir J. J. Thompson has himself observed that the gases neon and helium appear in the tube at the commencement of the experiment; but that, after the experiment had been in progress for four days and the apparatus pumped out, none of the gases neon and helium could be detected. But upon replacing the old iron electrodes with new ones, they reappeared; and he comes to the conclusion that the gases are present in the metal, and are liberated by the action of the cathode rays.*

Mr. Soddy also states that other investigators have also obtained exactly similar results when using aluminium electrodes. Sir Oliver Lodge is of a similar opinion.

So much for Dr. Saleeby's mare's-nest. But suppose that it could be proved that matter was a product of electricity, how would it affect the position of the opponents of Materialism? When it was thought that proof had been found of the indestructibility and conformity to size of the atom, that was a proof of a Creator and the downfall of Materialism. Now, when it has been demonstrated that the atoms are not indestructible, and it is claimed that atoms can be manufactured by man, that also proves—according to Dr. Saleeby—the existence of a Creator and the nemesis of Materialism. With Dr. Saleeby it is "heads I win, tails you lose." No doubt, if it were possible to prove that atoms were neither created, evolved, or indestructible, Dr. Saleeby would detect—with the help of Wordsworth—still stronger proof of creative power.

As for Dr. Saleeby's idea, that if matter is a product of energy that would prove the nemesis of Materialism, this only proves his incompetence to deal with the subject. He evidently looks upon matter as something distinct from energy. That energy is harnessed to matter something like a horse to a cart, or, rather, in the same manner that he believes the body is inhabited by a soul; which shows that he has never taken the trouble to find out what Materialism really means.

Buchner devotes the whole of the first chapter of his *Force and Matter* to the demonstration that matter and force are indivisible; that there is no matter without force, and no force without matter. And when Dr. Saleeby talks about the production of matter from electricity being the nemesis of Materialism, he merely demonstrates his utter lack of knowledge of the subject. For, look you! Sir William Ramsay himself has declared that "it is almost certain that negative electricity is a particular form of matter; and positive electricity is matter deprived of negative electricity—that is, minus this electric matter." And again:—

> "Recent researches make it probable that what used to be called negative electricity is really a substance. Indeed, the relative weight of its particles has been measured; each is about one seven-hundredth of the mass of an atom of hydrogen; and the mass of an atom of hydrogen is the smallest of all masses of what we have been used to call matter." †

So that electricity itself is really a form of matter—not even a quotation from Wordsworth will alter that fact. No nemesis is required to deal with Dr. Saleeby; he rambles on to his own destruction. The *Athenæum* (March 30, 1912), in noting his *Natural Ethics in Theory and Practice*, observes: "These three short lectures cannot be said to be enlightening. Dr. Saleeby touches great subjects lightly and without sufficient knowledge. The lectures sound like sermons which might have been delivered from a pulpit." His religiosity entitles him to be termed the Marie Corelli of science.

W. MANN.

It was no part of God's primitive design that the race should be continued by sexual union. Marriage is the outcome of sin.—*St. Gregory of Nyssa.*

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* See *Nature*, February 20; and *English Mechanic and World of Science*, February 14 and 21.

† Sir William Ramsay, *Essays Biographical and Chemical*, 1908, pp. 176-196.

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Acid Drops.

Lord Roberts appealed the other day to the Churches to help dissipate the view that there is anything unchristian in preparing for war. The *Guardian* readily responds to the appeal, and puts in a couple of columns of editorial in favor of conscription—under the name of compulsory service. For our part, we quite agree with Lord Roberts and the editor of the *Guardian* that there is nothing—certainly so far as historic Christianity is concerned—unchristian about war. Quite the contrary; for Christianity has done more to consecrate war, to foment war, and to perpetuate warfare than any other religion in the world. Look at the present situation. The peace of the world is not threatened by any non-Christian nation. Our huge armaments, and the armaments of other countries, are all piled up—to put the matter in its most favorable light—against the aggressive cupidity of Christian nations. And no one ever looks to the Churches to alter this state of things. They will continue to pipe the tune that is popular for the moment, whatever it may be. The *Guardian* says the one thing certain is that compulsory service will be imposed upon us by adversity if we do not adopt it voluntarily. Well, all things are possible with a people ready to go into hysteria over a few fire-balloons, mistaken for airships, and who are crazy enough to picture an enemy's airship secretly spying out the land with flaming searchlights hung fore and aft; but we hope that there are yet enough level-headed people in the country to prevent our taking that step.

The Albanian Committee, writing under a full sense of responsibility, endorses the reports of the massacres by the Balkan Allies, and especially the Bulgars, in Albania—for whose freedom they pretend to be fighting. We take the following passage from the Committee's manifesto:—

> "Behind the veil that hides so many Balkan truths, a desperate effort has been made from Belgrade to limit Albania's right by reducing the number of Albanians competent to urge it. Wholesale massacre of unarmed men, together with women and children, has been resorted to as a deliberate policy, especially in Prizrend, Uskub, Mitrovitza, Luma, Prishtina, and Djakova; a part of the terrible story has been told by the *Daily Telegraph*, but what has been told is insignificant in measure to what remains. Political massacre has been one of the most formidable weapons in the armory of the Allies and has been used with terrible effect against the Albanians, whose sole offence is that they exist, and being in existence, need a place on the earth."

The Turk massacres in hot blood. The Bulgar massacres on a cool calculation.

"Sunday is being lost," sadly says the *Church Times*, "and churchgoing is a decaying habit." This is only too true, in spite of the offer of a great reward—in heaven.

Canon Ottley says that a telegram received from Harry Lauder, "With you safeguarding Sunday. Wish you all success," was "worth more than half-a-dozen messages from great ecclesiastics." How have the mighty fallen! Consider, a message from a music-hall singer of the mental calibre of Harry Lauder being worth more than half-a-dozen messages from great ecclesiastics! We have a poor opinion of great ecclesiastics of to-day, but we were inclined to think better of them than this. Even if Canon Ottley means that it impresses the Christian portion of the populace more than would a message from leading Churchmen, it merely changes the issue without materially altering it. We are left wondering at the mental quality of the people affected by the message. Still, it is a sign of the times when a dignitary of the National Church finds the word of a singer of comic songs more powerful that half-a-dozen bishops.

At Middlesbrough, the other day, the County Magistrates granted a seven-day license to a new picture palace. Presumably, this means that the Bench did not extract from the proprietors a promise not to open on Sunday. The police superintendent supported the Sunday opening on the ground that they took young people off the streets, and kept others out of the publichouse. Since the halls had opened, he said, the streets were much quieter than they used to be. Clergymen, who are always protesting their desire to keep people moral and well-behaved, ought to have endorsed the police superintendent's support. What several ministers did was to object to the seven-day license. One of these clerical objectors said there was a rush from churches to the halls after evening service, which was unseemly. Well, if people only went to the picture palaces *after* going to church, most clergymen would think themselves very fortunate. Their trouble is that people go *before* the service, and stay during the time that they are preaching the gospel to empty benches. This particular parson will be the envy of his brethren if his people only rush for the picture palace after they have had their dose of theology.

Rev. F. B. Meyer did his best to spoil the chance of the Progressives in the London County Council elections. On the eve of the poll this clerical busybody wrote a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* hoping that the London ratepayers would vote for the Progressives because they were opposed to the Sunday picture shows, which he regarded as "the all-important issue in the forthcoming election." So it may have been to Mr. Meyer and the profession he belongs to. But how much good that view of the matter is to the Progressives is shown by the result. They are seven fewer than they were. We strongly advise them to let Mr. Meyer and his fellow professionals go their own way. At present these gentlemen talk as if they *were* the Progressive party.

Rev. R. J. Campbell reminds us of the clerical gentlemen who always go to see anything very naughty at the theatre in order to be able to warn their congregations against it with all the power of knowledge and experience. Being in Spain, Mr. Campbell went to see a bull-fight. He says it was a cruel spectacle—but we believe that is generally known and needs no further testimony. The reverend gentleman says that he never wants to see another bull-fight. Our puzzle is, why did he see that one?

Rev. Gilbert Allen Grace, clergyman of the Almshouses, Waddington, Yorkshire, appears to be a good Bible Christian. He has been fined ten shillings and costs for beating a naked choir-boy with a stick, and leaving the marks of ten strokes on the lad's body. According to the evidence given in court the reverend gentleman has a taste for taking the law into his own hands in this way. It must be admitted that there is something clerical about it. But we dare say that this offender will be more careful in future.

The mad monk Innocentius has been arrested in Russia. He led a lot of people as mad as himself—mostly women and children—out into the snow to seek the New Zion somewhere. They were soon frostbitten and starving, and many of them died during the pilgrimage. It is alleged that Innocentius is not only mad but immoral. This may be a slander; but there has generally been a close connection between religious fanaticism and sensuality.

Rev. Dr. Orchard says, "You will find that the men who are sucking England lifeless to-day do not go to church." We do not know on what Dr. Orchard bases this statement, or how he can possibly know that it is true. We think that if an inquisition could be made it would be found that the vast majority of those referred to are upholders of some Church or other. Certainly great landowners like the Dukes of Westminster, Bedford, or Norfolk cannot be accused of being enemies of the Church. But the main point is that, whether they go to church or not, they believe in the people going to church. Funds are always forthcoming to build churches and to induce people to attend them. They believe in keeping the mass of the people religious because they know that in religion they have the most valuable instrument for keeping them in order—that is, for preventing improvements that would strike at their own privileged position.

The *Westminster Gazette* devoted a paragraph announcement to the Essex Hall meeting called by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. It gave a list of the speakers "expected"—including everybody but Mr. Foote. This is really *too* silly—even for Christians.

Professor Denny discovers two things that mark off the Jesus of the New Testament from such gods as Osiris, Attis, and Adonis. The first is that Jesus died once for all, and death had no more power over him. But, as a matter of fact, Osiris and Attis and Adonis also died once for all. The annual festival commemorated their death, exactly as the annual festival of Easter commemorated the death and resurrection of Jesus. The second point of difference is that Osiris and Attis and the rest of the nature-gods were ideas, while Jesus was a character. This is one of the distinctions that Christians are very fond of drawing, with complete indifference to the facts of the situation. The Christian Jesus is as much an idea—that is, a subjective creation—as any of the nature-gods named. It almost passes comprehension that sane men, at this time of day, should question the statement. Suppose Professor Denny had, for the first time in his life, come across the Christ

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legend; would he have hesitated at dismissing it as pure myth? Years of religious training and apologising simply prevent him, with thousands of others, from facing the question in a sane manner. It almost passes comprehension that educated people, claiming to be called civilised, should be found seriously discussing whether the miraculously born, miracle-working, resurrected Savior of the New Testament is an historical character or not. Amongst really civilised people there should be no room for discussion on such a topic. The whole set of ideas belong to savagery, and one might as reasonably discuss whether the fairies and witches of mediæval Europe actually existed.

After all, the discussion concerning the New Testament is only following the usual lines. There are plenty of people old enough to remember when the discussion concerning the Old Testament was in the same stage as is the present discussion concerning the New Testament. First of all people were discussing whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and whether its stories were veritable history or not. Theologians were up in arms, and discovered many elaborate reasons for placing the Jewish religious legends in a class by themselves. Eventually criticism told. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was exploded, Moses himself was reduced to a myth, and no scholar of repute would venture to champion the views that obtained in the Churches fifty or sixty years ago. So far as the Old Bible is concerned, the work has been done once for all. But the New Testament rests on no better foundation than the Old. Essentially, it is a product of the same type of mind—the mind that sees the supernatural everywhere, that finds miracles as a matter of course, and which moves on the level of sheer savagery so far as religious belief is concerned. And this, we repeat, leaves no room for discussion as to the veracity of the story. There is room only for discussion as to the nature of the conditions that create such legends and lead to their perpetuation.

A new religious journal, the *Constructive Quarterly*, has just made its appearance. The object is to bring together all sorts of religious views, Roman, Protestant, Greek Church, etc., etc., in order to discover and establish a common basis of agreement. It is a fool's dream, for the simple reason that there is no common ground on which religious people can meet, unless it be hatred of someone outside their ranks. There is no common ground in religion, because there is no common basis in fact to which each may appeal, irrespective of personal speculations. Religious people only agree together on the tacit understanding that little shall be said about their religious beliefs. A full and frank expression of personal religious opinions would break up every Church in Christendom. And when religious people appeal for unity of action, it will usually be found that what they agree upon is not the really religious items in their program, but the secular items that have been incorporated with it. It is the common social or secular life that provides the ground of unity; religion merely provides occasion for division. The proof of this is seen in the fact that when religious people of different sects are found working together it is always in connection with some social object that lies quite outside their creed.

A writer in the *Southend Telegraph* speaks of the "stock objections on pseudo-moral grounds to the story of Sisera and Jael." The journalist would have seen things in a different light had Jael caught him bending.

The Lord, we are told, counts the hairs of our heads and watches the tumbling of sparrows. If he had left those pleasing pastimes alone for a short time, and paid some attention to John Norton, of Grays, the newspapers would not now be telling of the man's terrible death by falling into a boiling vat.

A religious revival is being carried out at Johannesburg. The principal feature is street processions, with the clergy togged up professionally. The Bishop of Pretoria opened the ball in what is called "full fig." "Fellow citizens," he cried out at the corner of a street, "we are out to-night for God." But he did not produce his credentials, and the crowd doesn't appear to have taken him at his own valuation.

Dr. Mawson, another Antarctic explorer, has been in great straits. He lost his companions, his dogs, and most of the food on the way back to winter quarters. "I alone arrived at the hut," he says, "having travelled through snow and fogs, miraculously guided by Providence, through heavily crevassed areas." Providence allowed Lieutenant Ninnis to disappear down one of those crevasses, with a dog-team and the bulk of the provisions. According to Dr. Mawson's logic, Providence was having a game with that expedition.

They can't sell the Jezreel Temple on the top of Chatham Hill. It was built for the 144,000 of the elect who are referred to in the book of Revelation, who were to be gathered together there, and, under the shelter of its massive walls, survive the ruin of the rest of the world. But the end of the world did not arrive; and the Jezreelite founder, John White, ex-Royal Marine, who was never to die, did die, and the Jezreelites mostly dispersed; but a remnant of them still stuck to the wonderful building—which is of no use for any other purpose, and is too solidly built to be demolished without great expense. So there it stands, and is likely to stand—one of the many monuments of human folly.

"With God's help" the King of Montenegro has made a fresh promise to capture Scutari. God hasn't helped him to capture it yet. The Montenegrin Deity may be sure; he certainly is slow.

Why does the Rev. E. J. Houghton, of St. Stephen's, Bristol, cry stinking fish so loudly? Instead of showing the moral influence of religion, he does his best to prove the opposite. He represents the ladies of his congregation as inveterate thieves. They will even steal a parish magazine or a powder-puff. And the poor parson suggests that he will be obliged to have plain-clothes detectives as well as church officials.

Rev. Sir William Macdonald Honyman, of Coton Hall, Whitchurch, Shropshire, left £80 571. Rev. Arthur Brinckman, Chaplain of St. Savior's Hospital, Osnaburgh-street, left £20,516. Rev. Prebendary Edmund Ironside Gregory, of Exmouth, Devon, left £9,731. Poor Christites!

One of the London halfpenny papers recently organised a doll show. We wonder if it included the dolls used in Catholic churches.

The newspapers have published a lot of delirious nonsense concerning foreign aircraft. It would be better if they devoted their columns to the more deadly dangers of priestcraft.

The Kaiser follows the footsteps of his pious grandfather, who praised God so lustily for the crowning victory of Sedan. A parodist of the time represented the old monarch as singing to his wife:—

> "My dear Augusta,
> We've been and gone a regular buster:
> Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below!
> Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

The new William has just been reminding the inhabitants of Bremen of the "Divine Providence" of 1870. He prophesies that God will enable them to be at the French again. But the divine assistance will have to be supplemented by £50,000,000 fresh war taxation. The divine assistance generally works out in that way.

The German Emperor has been harking back to 1813 again. What on earth does he think the world cares for 1813 now? Who wants to live backward—in ancient history? The forward view is wanted to-day. We are al sick of the constant cries of "Back to this" and "Back to that." Prussia won back her independence in 1813. What on earth is it she, and the rest of Germany, want to win back in the twentieth century? The whole of Europe was overrun by Napoleon. There was no peculiarity in the case of Germany. He would have overrun Great Britain, too, if it had not been for that strip of silver sea (with Nelson on it) that kept him back. And the Kaiser may take it that if another Napoleon were to turn up, at the head of victorious armies, all the military pedantry and bloated armaments of Germany would go down before his genius. On the whole it is about time that the Kaiser stopped his annual heroics. But if he must "keep on doing it" he might go back further than Napoleon and come to Frederick the Great of Prussia, who was as much a conqueror, in his own degree, as Napoleon was. Somehow or other, the Kaiser never gets beyond the wicked French. How about the wicked Germans—the Germans of Frederick's conquests, the Germans of Bismarck and Moltke, the Germans of the attack on Denmark, the Germans of the attack on Austria, the Germans of the attack on France—for although Napoleon the Little declared war it was Bismarck who manœuvred him into doing it, and by all sorts of means, including a forged telegram? Emperor William might lay to heart a

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text from the Bible he is always praising. "*All* have sinned"—it says—Germany included as well as France.

The Kaiser was bound to end his "patriotic" speech by appealing to God. "God be with us," he prays. But it is easy to see he has no doubt about it. He is unable to conceive the possibility of God having any other favorite.

Some imaginative person invented the story of Queen Victoria having styled the Bible "the source of England's greatness." So far as we know, the only reference to the English in the sacred volume is the text. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Mark Twain identified that text.

Christians do not like too much religion. Even the ladies get tired carrying complete church services, and abbreviated editions are much in favor. A few more years and the dear creatures will feel too tired to carry books at all.

How they love one another! It was thought necessary to announce that the Bishop of Newcastle would extend a welcome to the Free Church Council Conference. Good fellowship of that sort couldn't be taken for granted—amongst Christians.

Some of the *Daily Citizen's* readers, we fear, must have squirmed on Tuesday when they saw a letter from Mr. H. B. Dodds, of Newcastle, calling attention to Mr. Foote's article in the *English Review* on "George Meredith—Freethinker." Fancy being told that the article was "written with all the vigor and ability of that arch-enemy of Christianity," and that Meredith not only believed that the cause Mr. Foote was fighting for was "the best of causes" and "destined to victory," but actually had more sympathy with the *Freethinker* methods than with the methods of the more "respectable" heretics.

We invite special attention to the following extract from Monday's *Daily Chronicle*:—

> "After spending three years interned in the Ghebbi, the Empress Taitu, Menelik's Consort, has been granted her freedom, says a telegram from Addis Abeba. Lidj Jeassu, the heir to the throne, has also restored her domains in the vicinity of Addis Abeba.
>
> "It is just three years since the Empress was deprived of all authority and made a prisoner. It was stated at the time that she was suspected of having plotted to prevent the young prince Lidj Jeassu from coming to the throne.
>
> "The Empress Taitu is in many respects a remarkable woman. She is without fear, as she showed by leading a regiment of cavalry against Italian infantry at Adowa.
>
> "She has had more than her share of husbands. Born in 1853, she was married at an early age to a General in Theodore's army, but the couple were caught conspiring against the Emperor John. As a punishment Taitu was given a common soldier as her husband. After Theodore's death she married another fighting man, whom she divorced in order to wed the governor of a province.
>
> "When the governor died she entered a convent, but tiring of this seclusion she left to marry the chief Zekargatcho. In 1883 she won the affections of Menelik, who, after repudiating his first wife, and ordering the assassination of the husband of his enchantress, raised her to the throne. The goal of her ambition was in sight, and in order to secure the succession of her own family, she married her widowed daughter to Ras Michael, a scion of the house of the late Emperor John. She also secured high appointments for her relatives, and built up a political machine, selecting with great astuteness those ras who represented the old dynasty.
>
> "Since Menelik, owing to ill-health, receded to the background, the Empress schemed to secure full control of Abyssinia's destinies, and plotted against Menelik's grandson, Lidj Jeassu (but no relation of the Empress), whom the Emperor had designated as his successor."

The country referred to is Abyssinia. Most readers would regard it as a "heathen" country. It is, however, one of the oldest—perhaps *the* oldest—Christian countries in the world. Its kings boast of being descended from Menelik, the son of the Queen of Sheba in co-operation with Solomon. Abyssinia has no literature and no education. But it has a superabundance of the most orthodox Christianity. Which shows that Christianity is not the secret of civilisation, which is due to other influences of a purely secular character.

Parsons don't like losing their trade perquisites. We cannot be angry with the Rev. H. W. Bradley, vicar of Wenbury, for resenting the provision, through the will of the late Mr. A. Starkey, of a burial-ground near the parish churchyard, to be under the control of no clerical authority but only that of the local Parish Council. The reverend gentleman pities the dead who will not be buried "in the time-honored and consecrated burying-place of their forefathers" (good old forefathers!) but "buried in a Parish Council back garden." Not even a *front* garden, observe! All this means, of course, that a rival cemetery means the loss of burial fees to the vicar of the churchyard. Still, we can't be angry—as we said. Clergymen, as well as other men, must be expected to fight for their livings.

Lieutenant Clark and Mrs. Fulham, the Agra murderers, have been sentenced, the former to death, and the latter to penal servitude for life. They were equally guilty, but the woman is about to become a mother. They were also equally religious. Pious expressions abounded in the letters they wrote to each other while they were poisoning the woman's unhappy husband. "God," said the woman, "is bringing us together." Such is the way in which religion and criminality can get on very amicably together.

A new piece of music bears the title, "Always Gay." Evidently not "sacred music."

A contortionist at Glamorgan Assizes stated that his antics affected his memory. This may account for the clergy being such slow-witted folk.

RIBALD SOCIALIST.

Capitalist: "Well, Parson, have you spoken to the brethren about supporting me at the next election?"

Parson: "Kind and glorious sir, but there are a lot of Socialists among my congregation now."

Capitalist: "What! Don't you tell 'em regularly about 'Blessed be ye poor,' and about obeying those who have rule over you?"

Parson: "Yes, I told them that, and a lot more. I told them about envying not the rich their great estate, and about the perishable nature of gold, and about the virtues of contentment, and about the meek inheriting the earth, and about Lazarus getting to heaven!"

Capitalist: "Yes!"

Parson: "But they only laughed."

Capitalist: "Great snakes! Then am I undone."

"THE YUKONER."

He burned a hole in the frozen muck,
He scratched the icy mould,
And there in six-foot dirt he struck
A sack or so of gold.

He burned a hole in the Decalogue,
And then it came about—
Fortune's only a lousy rogue—
His "pocket" petered out.

And lo! it was but a year all told,
When there in the shadow grim,
But six foot deep in the icy mould,
They burned a hole for him.

REASONS FOR NOT IMBIBING.

The Rev. John K. Sawyer met abroad an acquaintance who said to him: "Wouldn't you like to join me in a little drink?"

"No," answered Sawyer; "I'm sorry, but there are two good reasons why I cannot take a drink with you. The first one is that I don't drink. The second reason is that I have signed the pledge. A third and most important reason is that I have just had one."

ON ROOSEVELT.

Another true story has been told about "Ananias Ted."

He approached the heavenly gate.

George Washington asked admission.

Saint Peter said: "What have you done to earn heaven?"

"I freed America from English rule. I am the father of my country."

"You may enter," was the immediate command.

Abraham Lincoln stepped up, and upon stating that he had freed the negro, secured admission.

"Ananias Ted" then pushed his way up.

The saint again said: "Who are you, and what have you done to earn a heavenly reward?"

"None of your damned business! Where is God?"

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £72 10s. 4d. Received since:—Dr. Martin, £3 3s.; A. H. Smith, 10s.; S. Hudson, £1; Mr. and Mrs. Riglin, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 5s.; M. P., 5s.; J. P., 5s.

A. H. SMITH.—Pleased to have your good wishes and your "congratulations on the fine Captain Scott article."

EDWARD LINDLEY.—We wish you success at the antipodes. Glad to hear that the *Freethinker* has influenced your mind "more than we could imagine," and that you are grateful to Mr. B. H. Tubbs, of Sheffield, who introduced it to you. Our shop manager is writing you about obtaining this journal at Melbourne.

S. L. PAGE.—We have read your appreciative letter with much interest. It is always pleasant to us to hear from lady readers.

J. H. GARTRELL.—Glad to see the letters in the *Cornishman* against the stoppage of Sunday concerts at Penzance. Your own letter is a model one. We wish Freethinkers would make use of the press in this way in all parts of the country.

S. HUDSON, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, "sincerely hopes it will grow larger than ever."

H. DE BIRKETT.—May be useful when the subject crops up again. The Christian public is too busy just now in discussing war and armaments. Delighted to hear of "the pleasure and profit" you and your wife "derive from the *Freethinker* week by week."

G. CROOKSON.—We are too busy to deal with the "Baconian Heresy," as Mr. J. M. Robertson calls it, again at present. It will be dealt with in our book on Shakespeare, which we shall try to finish this summer. Suffice it to say, at present, that every Baconian argument is founded on ignorance. For instance, the argument so labored by G. E. Sternbridge in the *Sheffield Telegraph*, that Shakespeare was illiterate because he signed his name in different ways, could be extended to Sir Walter Raleigh, who wrote his name at least twelve different ways, though he was a scholar and a gentleman. The fact is that the idea of regular spelling had not entered men's minds then. The same word was often printed in different ways on the same page even in learned volumes. The American millionaire who set the office safe to "door" and spelt it "dore," so that the chief clerk couldn't open it, wouldn't have suggested any fun whatever to the most learned men of Shakespeare's age. That one Baconian argument is typical of the whole lot.

W. J. KING writes: "I much enjoyed your *English Review* article. It is to be hoped it is only the beginning of a wider ventilation of much-needed truth on such matters."

J. A. GREENWOOD thanks us for thirteen years' *Freethinkers*. "I ceased to be a Christian," he writes, "at seventeen years of age, when I had endeavored to qualify myself for a defender of the faith; but it was not until I met with the *Freethinker* some twelve years later that I realised that I was an Atheist. I have taken it ever since; and while I have been unable to help much financially I have secured several new readers."

"A THORNTON HEATHEN."—Your useful letter in the *Star* nails down another Bradlaugh fable. There is something unspeakably funny, to anyone who knew Bradlaugh, in the idea of his "climbing Snowdon" and calling upon his companion in the ascent to "hold on, Jack" to the idea of God. According to these fables Bradlaugh spent most of his time in opposing his own opinions. But the Christians were always deficient in humor.

W. M. HARDIE.—Thanks for the reference.

E. A. WYKES.—Pleased to hear that your father, your brother, and yourself enjoyed our speech at the Leicester Secular Hall. It is interesting to know that your father attended the opening meetings thirty-two years ago.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

VAUGHAN GREY.—No more colds up to now. Thanks for the picture postcard of "Galileo's lamp" which stands for more than "Dreadnoughts" and Creusot guns.

J. B.—Your generous offer to pay for fifty copies of the *English Review* is appreciated, but the magazine was sold out within a few days of publication.

RATIONALIST (Johannesburg).—Your advice is very good, but why not tender it to the assailant instead of the self-defender? We never pretended to the Christian virtue of answering a gratuitous blow by inviting another to keep it company. Insults and injuries behind the scenes we disdain to notice, but when they pass the curtain and face the footlights they must be dealt with. Some good things may be found even in the Bible, and there is a great deal of truth in Matthew xviii. 7 and Luke xvii. 1. We can't throw any light on the pamphlet you send us. It reads as if it ought to be dated from a lunatic asylum.

E. B., to whom we are obliged for cuttings, etc., writes: "Your George Meredith article is excellent, and ought to be the means of removing much misapprehension regarding his real views; for it seems to be a point of honor with the ordinary reviewer and journalist to burke any and every incident which goes to show that a man of note was a Freethinker. I congratulate you upon your triumph in breaking down, by the help of the *English Review*, the contemptible and malicious boycott which has existed so long against your courageous and outspoken demands that we must have the truth, and nothing but the truth, when dealing either with public men or public matters."

S. E. BEARDALE.—Both your cuttings have been dealt with already in our columns.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of most of our London readers before Friday evening (March 14), when the public meeting, convened by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, will be held at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand. The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock by the Rev. Copeland Bowie, and the list of speakers includes Sir W. P. Byles, M.P., Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Lord Harberton, Mr. A. L. Atherley-Jones, K.C., M.P., Sir Hiram Maxim, and Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. We appeal to our London readers to make this meeting a great success in point of numbers. We should like to see the Hall crowded.

Mr. Cohen pays Liverpool another visit to-day (March 16), delivering two lectures, afternoon and evening, at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square. District "saints" will please note.

Mr. Lloyd closes the winter season at the Manchester Secular Hall to-day (March 16) with two lectures, afternoon and evening, on subjects that should prove attractive.

Mr. F. J. Gould is expected back in London a few days after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press. We hope he has had a good time in India. We know he has been busy during his absence from home, and we are pleased at his finding (or making) time to contribute three articles to our columns during that comparatively brief period.

The March number of the *Positivist Review* contains some interesting articles, including some well-written contributions by the editor, Mr. S. H. Swinny. There is an important note by Professor Beesly on "The Situation in Mexico." We hope this little magazine has an improving circulation.

Mr. H. S. Salt has added to the list of useful publications issued by the Humanitarian League. *Fallacies of Flagellants* is a brilliantly written and unanswerable reply to the champions of flogging as a remedy for social evil. Mr. Salt has no difficulty in showing that flogging is a social evil in itself. It is not a deterrent from crime; if it were it should be extended to women, for procuresses are even worse than procurers, and the bawd is indispensable to the whole business in what is called the White Slave traffic. We wish this powerful pamphlet (it is only a penny) could be circulated by the myriad—or the million.

A devoted admirer of George Meredith, a scholar, and a powerful writer himself, says:—"Your Meredith article is a

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perfect gem, nothing so good on the subject having appeared before."

Occasional extracts from correspondents' letters have appeared in this department of the *Freethinker* with much acceptance on the part of our readers. We venture to make the following extract from a recent letter:—

> "Though a stranger to you, I feel I have known you since boyhood in the columns of the *Freethinker* and on public platforms. In my teens (1883 and onwards) what delightful Sunday evenings the old Hall of Science furnished! I recall (if I may) a debate of yours with (I believe) the Rev. Fleming Williams, in which you traversed the idea of man's duality—body and soul—in an extraordinarily vivid and scholarly way. The effect of that debate has been ineffaceable. Then, too, the stirring days of 'The Lie in Five Chapters,' when the alleged Atheist's family appeared to refute the West London Missioner's fibbing. That grand evening after the opening of the Shelley museum remains in my memory—when Shaw spoke, and when (thanks to you) I heard 'The Ode to the West Wind' as I have never heard it since. I mention these recollections to indicate what a large part you and your message have played in my life, and I feel that my case must be one of many hundreds."

"Finally," this correspondent adds, "let me thank you for your outspoken article on George Meredith. It was badly needed. I read with delight your further evidences of the nobility of one of my heroes." This interesting letter closes with a reference to Frank Cole, who was Meredith's "man" for thirty years and who "has many a relic and many a reminiscence of the Master."

"M. M. Mangasarian, the lecturer of the Independent Religious Society of Chicago, is a man of remarkable character and power. He passed from the orthodox pulpit through the liberal churches and Ethical Culture to complete Rationalism, growing in influence and popularity as he progressed. His success in Chicago is unprecedented in the history of the Rationalist platform. For many years he has crowded a theatre every Sunday, and interest in his lectures has never ceased to grow. And to us the gratifying feature of this is that he has adhered to Rationalism, to Freethought, made no other appeal, and conducted no mixed propaganda. Not that mixed propaganda is necessarily to be discouraged, but Mr. Mangasarian's success is proof of the vitality of the cause of Freethought."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

We beg to call attention to the N. S. S. scholarship scheme, of which an announcement appears on another page. It should specially concern the younger lecturers in the Freethought movement.

The Transformation of Matter.

THE most refined methods of inquiry utilised by modern science render imperative the conclusion that ponderable matter and the attenuated ether represent the extreme limits of the phenomena which constitute the universe. These limits are connected by intermediate modes of matter which have been recently studied with almost incredible patience by our leading physicists. As yet, we possess no positive evidence of the evolution of matter out of ether, but the converse transformation of matter into ether is regarded as a highly probable phenomenon by a steadily increasing number of men of science. The discovery of the cathode rays, in the first instance, and of the X rays in the second, led the way to the eagerly prosecuted research work which is now proceeding in innumerable laboratories in connection with radio-activity.

That bold and incisive philosopher, Gustave Le Bon, conducted an elaborate and extensive series of experiments which he unhesitatingly claims as clearly establishing the dissociation of ponderable matter. It is undeniably difficult to escape the main conclusions of Le Bon when the facts are carefully considered. The phenomena of radio-activity can no longer be confined to the generally recognised radio-active substances, such as radium, thorium, actinium, etc. These substances merely manifest in a high degree a power which all matter possesses in a minor degree. Professor J. J. Thomson, a physicist of world-wide fame, has demonstrated that water, clay, brick, sand, and numerous other substances are all capable of radio-activity.

The atom is, of course, the unit of matter, and when, writes Le Bon,—

> "We study the structure of the atom, we shall arrive at the conclusion that it is an immense reservoir of energy solely constituted by a system of imponderable elements maintained in equilibrium by the rotations, attractions, and repulsions of its component parts. From this equilibrium results the material properties of bodies, such as weight, form, and apparent permanence. Matter also represents movement, but the movements of its component elements are confined within a very restricted sphere." *

Viewed from this standpoint, matter must be interpreted in terms of energy. To the recognised modes of energy—heat, light, etc.—another must be added—material, or intra-atomic energy. This is distinguished by its immense force power; by the emission by all material bodies of particles endowed with an enormous velocity, and these particles are capable of making the air a conductor of electricity, and possess the power to pass through material obstacles, but are deflected from their paths by a magnetic field.

If the foregoing be regarded as established scientific truths, then matter must be pictured as one, or many, modes of energy which manifest themselves under certain conditions in the form of electricity, light, or other semi-material states. All aspects of existence are in constant process of transformation. When these changes proceed slowly, they appeal to our senses as material bodies which present the attributes of weight and mass. When rapid transformation is in progress, the existences which display this rapid change stamp themselves upon our consciousness as light, heat, or electricity. In each and every instance we become conscious of the existence of natural phenomena in terms of force or energy. It is a necessity of thought that the multitudinous sensations of which our waking lives are made up have an answering reality in the objective universe. The material universe builds up the consciousness, the consciousness does not create the material universe.

The atoms, so long pictured as the immutable corner stones of the material universe, are now more and more realised as the seat of activities previously unsuspected. Whatever the precise architectural arrangement of the atom may turn out to be, no physicist doubts that its structure is marvellously complex. The structural unit of biology—the cell—from which all plants and animals are developed was, in the early days of cytological science, regarded as a comparatively simple phenomenon. But, with the progress of microscopical research, the vastly increased power of the microscope itself, and with the employment of various chemical re-agents in cytological inquiry, it is now quite obvious that the biological cell is a structure of profound complexity. And with the unit of inorganic existence it is the same. Physicists differ widely in opinion concerning the precise structure of the atom, but all are agreed that its architecture is almost inconceivably complex. Scientists, gifted in a high degree with the noble power of disciplined imagination, picture the atom as a miniature solar system, made up of, and moving with immense velocity around, a centre of force. According to the theory of Le Bon, and of those who are reluctantly following him, the elements, which in their aggregate constitute the atom, continue to revolve in their appointed paths until their courses are stayed by the retarding influences of antagonistic forces. At this point, radio-activity, or intra-atomic energy is manifested, and the atom proceeds to radiate its particles into space. It is also inferred that when highly radio-active bodies, for reasons so far unexplained,—

> "have reached a certain degree of instability, or artificiality, as in ordinary bodies when brought under the influence of various excitants—heat, light, etc.—excitants act in such cases like a spark on a mass of powder—that is to say, by freeing quantities of energy greatly in excess of the very slight cause which has determined their liberation. And as the energy con-

* *Evolution of Matter*, p. 10.

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> densed in the atom is immense in quantity, it results from this that to an extremely slight loss in matter there corresponds the creation of an enormous quantity of energy."

Although all forms of matter appear to some extent radio-active, the particles they discharge make no appreciable difference to the weight of the bodies in question. In almost all instances, no differences can be detected by the most delicate chemical balance in the periods over which the observations extend. Nevertheless, it must be realised that under these conditions *ponderable* matter slowly dematerialises, and, therefore, must ultimately cease to exist in that special form. The atoms, as atoms, are not eternal, and the spirit of inquiry craves an understanding of the processes which led to their evolution, and which are also involved in their dissolution. What, for instance, were the former states of what are now lead, silver, or gold? In our quest for a solution of this imposing problem, we instinctively turn to astronomy for guidance. The spectroscope has strongly corroborated the conclusions of the supporters of the nebular hypotheses of Kant and Laplace. Those nebulæ which present the spectra of permanent gases, such as hydrogen, or the products of carbon, are regarded by many eminent astronomers as representing the initial stage in the evolution of celestial matter. Through condensation these pass into more complex conditions of matter, which give rise to the evolution of stars. The starry orbs themselves vary in age and constitution. The dazzlingly white stars are the hottest, and spectrum analysis proves that they are composed of chemical elements, small in number. The less youthful red and yellow stars betray a lower temperature, and in them other chemical elements appear. In the still older stars, which have radiated the larger part of their initial heat into surrounding space, bodies may be detected which are absent in the white, red, and yellow stars. Heat and pressure probably suffice to account for these phenomena. In any case, the observations of astrophysicists have made clear the evolution of the "atoms" and the genesis of numerous simple bodies as a consequence of this evolution. Le Bon writes:—

> "Our nebula, like all those shining by night, must perforce have come from something. In the present state of science there is only, as far as we can see, the ether which can have constituted this starting point; and this is why all investigators always bring us back to consider it as the fundamental element of the universe. Worlds are born there and return thither to die."

But, surely, the theory of the collision of two dead or dying suns in space furnishes a more reasonable explanation of the origin of the present phase of nebulous masses, from which celestial systems are born, than the one above set forth.

One of Le Bon's leading contentions is that all ponderable matter is constantly dematerialising, and that the products of this dissociation are intermediate in character to solid matter at one end of the series of natural phenomena, and to that most attenuated of all existences, the ether, at the other end of the series.

What are the modes of this dissolution of ponderable substances? When inquiring into the evolution of electricity, Le Bon conjectured that this was probably one of the most usual forms of the disintegration of matter. This surmise was supported by the fact "that the final products of the dissociation of the radio-active bodies were formed of atoms of electricity." It is thought that these disengaged electrical atoms are ephemeral in their nature:—

> "If the existence of those elements [the electrical atoms] had persisted, since their formation, under the influence of the various causes which produce the slow dissociation of matter, they would finally have accumulated to the extent of forming a new universe, or, at least, a kind of nebula."

It is therefore argued that the electric atom gradually parts with all its energy, and when this stage is reached it vanishes into the ether. It seems established that electrical atoms in motion are invariably accompanied by ethereal vibrations. These vibrations—the inseparable companions of the electric atoms—very probably "represent the form under which they vanish by the radiation of all their energy." Thus it is that these vibrations constitute the final stages of matter before it plunges into the ether. When the vibrations cease, matter has been re-absorbed into the bosom of its ethereal mother,—

> "from which, hundreds of millions of ages, and forces unknown to us can alone cause it to emerge, as it emerged in the far-off ages when the first traces of our universe were outlined on the chaos. The beginning of things was, doubtless, nothing else than a re-beginning. Nothing leads to the belief that they had a real beginning, or that they can have an end."*

The evolution of the starry systems, of which the material universe is made up, presents two widely dissimilar phases. Giant energies are condensed to form atomic existences in the first phase, which are broken down through the expenditure of these energies in the second. It is sometimes said that the new physical concepts which contemporary investigation is forcing upon us, have overthrown the doctrine of the indestructibility of matter. This, superfluous to say, is ridiculously untrue. That mode of existence which we term matter, even if it slowly change—first, into radiations of an electrical nature, and ultimately into ether—does not, on that account, cease to exist. All modes of existence may undergo slow, but certain, transformations; but the hidden energies, which in static or dynamic states are presented by ponderable matter, imponderable matter, or by ether, abide for ever. These forces or energies, whether active or in repose, constitute the ultimate reality from which every aspect of the constantly changing, but never-ceasing, universe is evolved.

T. F. PALMER.

Hush!

RELIGION frequently has the effect of making people maudlin. We have had several instances of this in the press over the Antarctic disaster. The dear old *Times* marvels that in an age of "depressing materialism" men can be found to prove themselves heroes—the inference being that heroism is confined to the supernaturalists. The Christians are, of course, always thorough-paced heroes; though, so far as the accredited exponents of and apologists for Christianity are concerned, we usually find from experience that they are in the mass the veriest cravens. Orthodox speakers and writers speak and write sadly of the growing influence of "materialism" and "paganism," though they have very nebulous ideas as to the meaning of these terms. But their testimony to the decay of religion is something which Freethinkers must welcome as proving the growth in the minds of many of an atheistic instead of a theistic conception of the universe.

It is a pity that a man like Mr. Blatchford should make any concession to the enemies of free speech. Almost concurrently with his ill-advised counsel to Freethought speakers, we have an effusion from "Claudius Clear" in the *British Weekly*, commenting upon Freethought propaganda. In effect his observations amount to this: that the great bulk of anti-Christian propaganda is conducted by writing, and if there be any public speaking against religion, one hears very little of it. Still, however "Claudius Clear" may choose to blink the fact, there is a good deal of public speaking every week against Christianity and all forms of supernaturalism. But how is "Claudius Clear" or any other obscure citizen to hear of it—publicly announced, that is to say? Everybody knows that the whole orthodox press—and how small a part of it is heterodox!—is in league to boycott the utterances of all those who are hostile to religion. You don't find the *Times* or

* *Evolution of Matter*, p. 314.

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Standard or *Daily News* giving four or five columns of a verbatim report of an atheistic lecture at the Queen's Hall. And nobody would expect these eminent organs to be such "mugs." How would it *pay* them to alienate the sympathies—and subscriptions—of the mass of their constituents?

Militant Freethinkers know perfectly well that for one man that you can reach with the pen, you can reach ten with the tongue. Does Mr. Blatchford suggest that the great majority of speaking advocates of Freethought are other than tolerant, courteous, and calm? Surely a good many of us have listened to socialistic tirades that could not well be dignified with either of these adjectives. Street oratory, according to the *Clarion* oracle, is useless to the cause of truth. Mr. Blatchford, like a certain Dickens character, is a great stickler for "ter-ewth." But there is something antecedently more important even to the attainment of truth itself, and that is freedom of speech. Street speakers need all the latitude they can get in view of organised attempts on the part of local authorities to suppress free speech.

Yes, religion has a lot to do in making people maudlin. It makes no heroic appeal to men and women. A great many people are cowed and bullied into identification with religious organisations.

SIMPLE SANDY.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF HALF-YEARLY MEETING OF LONDON MEMBERS.

In accordance with the resolution passed at the last Conference, the first half-yearly meeting of the London members of the N. S. S. took place on Tuesday, March 4, at Chandos Hall, Strand.

The attendance was fair, though it was somewhat disappointing to find that very few members of the Branch originally responsible for the resolution were present.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in opening the meeting, remarked that personally he was not quite clear as to the object of this meeting, but he was willing to learn, and hoped that some ultimate good to the Society might result.

Mr. Rosetti, in moving the following resolution,—

> "That the attention of Branches be called to the feeble efforts employed in taking up collections, in order that the financial burden of Branches may be lessened by a more thorough canvass of audiences at outdoor meetings,"—

called attention to the half-hearted methods usually employed by collectors, resulting, in some cases, in nearly half the audience being passed over, and suggested a more thorough canvass of audiences. He somewhat deprecated the system of "throwing in" the collection practised in some of the Parks, and thought a personal and polite request more effective.

Miss Pankhurst, who seconded, related the experiences of herself and her sister as collectors, stating that she found the audience invariably polite and responsive.

Mr. Neate explained that the system of "throwing in" had been practised by his Branch for many years, where, unfortunately, there was a dearth of lady collectors.

Mr. Wood thought that the success of a collection depended largely upon the appeal from the lecturer.

Mr. Hecht considered that in poor districts the pushing of the sale of literature, which was in the nature of a *quid pro quo*, was perhaps more important.

After further discussion, in which Messrs. Barry, Davey, and Lawrence took part, the resolution was carried.

Mr. Stewart inquired if the meeting had been properly convened, seeing that members had not received individual notices, and was informed that adequate notice had appeared in the *Freethinker* and in the Guide Notice, and that each Branch delegate had been specially written to, requesting him to advise his Branch of the meeting, and that it would be necessary to show membership cards. Those present agreed that due notice had been given.

Mr. W. Davidson suggested a method of extending the outdoor propaganda and finding fresh material by existing Branches widening the present area of their work by trial meetings held in such places as Hackney, Kingsland, Enfield Chase, Walthamstow, Watford, Ealing Broadway, etc., and finally moved the following resolution:—

> "That, with a view to extending the Society's work, Branches be asked to break new ground by holding public meetings at least once during the coming outdoor season in likely places adjacent to their present stations."

Mr. Heaford, seconding this resolution, suggested that this work might be greatly helped by the formation of a cycling corps whose members, on their rides for pleasure, might hold impromptu meetings and distribute tracts, old numbers of the *Freethinker*, and other literature. Assistance in this matter could also be given by Sunday League and other excursionists leaving literature in waiting-rooms, trams, trains, etc.

Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Samuels also offered suggestions as to sale of literature, and the resolution was finally carried unanimously.

Mr. Horace Dawson then moved the following resolution:—

> "That this meeting of London members of the N. S. S. considers it imperative that the Executive appoint an Organiser to visit London Branches, and gather information and report to the Executive proposals for bringing the rank and file into closer touch with the Society; and further to suggest plans for the better development of the London organisation. For the experiment, the organiser to be engaged for whole or spare time, as circumstances suggest"—

entering fully into the reasons prompting it.

It was seconded by Mr. Greyton.

After some discussion, showing that the feeling of the meeting was somewhat against it, the President summarised some of the points raised, and remarked that the present environment was different from that of thirty or forty years ago. Though man was a social animal, he had only time for a limited number of societies and meetings. A large and continuous membership could scarcely be expected. He thought Mr. Dawson rather underestimated the progress made, and he was proud to know that vital propagandists in nearly all progressive bodies had passed through the ranks of the N. S. S., and retained their Freethought principles though now working in other channels of activity.

Mr. W. Davey supported this view, and remembered many leading Trade Unionist, Club, and Municipal officials who had graduated in the N. S. S. Many years ago work of this description was far more effective than a large and silent membership.

Messrs. Thurlow, Heaford, and Moss also spoke in support of the President's remarks, the latter indicating the lines upon which he hoped to see the propaganda of the future conducted.

The resolution was then put to the meeting, and lost, only six voting in favor of it.

Mr. Samuels suggested that the General Secretary should call, at an early date, a meeting of the London secretaries to discuss and arrange for a more equal distribution of the lectures for the season; and the Chairman promised that the suggestion should receive attention.

Other questions as to the action of the L. C. C. *re* permits for collections, and also outdoor demonstrations, were discussed, and the President, after giving the fullest opportunity for the discussion of all questions, closed the meeting, promising that the result of their deliberations should be placed before the Executive.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

N.B.—If the foregoing suggestions as to the giving of lectures at new stations and the distribution of literature, as suggested by Mr. Heaford, commend themselves to any individual members who were not present, and they could offer any assistance, I shall be pleased to hear from them.—E. M. V.

Inspiration.

THERE is a silence that is more eloquent than words. There is a lull in the noise of life when the mechanical heart-beats of the clock sound forth with solemn accuracy and distinctness. There is a turning point—if we will but wait for it—at the end of doubt, despondency, despair, when a man rises above common thought and common feeling. It is that moment when hope returns like the first faint flush of dawn. In a great sentence, in a great book, by a great man, perhaps, he catches that first sublime ray. Care is scattered to the winds. Real human greatness bursts upon his vision, to illumine like the sun, to lift his breast, and brace him for what may come. Life is full of joy and hope, unshaded by a future fear, and the wellsprings of truth sparkle in the risen orb of reason's day.

AVON DALE.

THE REMEDY.

An old lady, leaving church after a service which had been attended by a crowded congregation, was heard to say: "If everybody else would only do as I do, and stay quietly in their seats till everyone else has gone out, there would not be such a crush at the doors."

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An Emotional Orgy in Ohio.

As a silent swat at the advocates of Woman Suffrage who have been heard through the *Truthseeker*, Mrs. Helen M. Lucas, of Ohio, who is not a Suffragist, puts this clipping in an open envelope and addresses it to the editor:—

> "Columbus, O., Feb. 1.—Columbus women went the limit of wild frenzy in their desire to hear Rev. Billy Sunday, evangelist. They stormed about the tabernacle throughout most of the day and evening. It is estimated that 36,000 women heard him. He delivered the sermon for women only, 'Is It Well With Thee?' three times. At the first meeting the women, in their wild desire to gain entrance to the tabernacle, fought with hatpins, trampled upon one another, overran a cordon of police and 100 ushers, and rushed the doors."

We hear Mrs. Lucas say: "Imagine a lot of silly geese like these voting." But we can't imagine it. Women so brainless as to swarm about the "Rev. Bill Sunday" or any other preacher in that way do not know enough to want to vote.

The worst does not appear in the dispatch above quoted, which is from a Marietta paper. The *State Journal*, of Columbus, the home paper of the hysterics who debased themselves before the blackguard evangelist, thus describes the deplorable exhibition:—

> "Pushing, mauling, kicking, jostling, fussing and fuming, 20,000 women tried to fight their way into the Sunday tabernacle on Goodale-street, Friday morning. They beat upon the doors, they screamed, they yelled, they fainted, revived and fainted again. They put aside all those attributes that commonly clothe the sex—they were a fighting, howling mob, a riot of femininity, a crowd of 'Baahi Bazoukesses,' gathered there determined to hear Sunday's famous sermon to women only.
>
> "Hatpins flashed, were driven home in pressing elbows, furs were ripped from heaving shoulders and trampled in the mud, hats snatched off and flung wide of the crowd. A London Suffragette demonstration was as a Chautauqua salute, compared with this feminine gathering. Meanwhile thirteen thousand were crowded inside the building, occupying every available seat, hundreds squatted in the sawdust, pre-empted even the pulpit, and huddled under the choir platform where, if they couldn't see, they could at least hear. The women had begun to assemble at daylight, and the tabernacle was filled to overflowing shortly after 10 o'clock."

We should not think of connecting this degrading spectacle with Suffragism, for it does not show woman in the attitude in which she approaches the question of votes for her sex.

The orgy that took place at Columbus is altogether a religious manifestation, and one of the sort that only religious emotion produces. The occasion was unusual in its strength of appeal to the emotional females of Columbus. They tell us that woman is religious with the same faculties that she falls in love with; so that the call of the evangelist was of double force when it brought those faculties into exercise first by the religious touch and again by the erotic suggestion that inheres in a talk "for women only." Surrendering to these feelings, with their primitive curiosity played upon by the notoriety of the evangelist, the Columbus women were all in. There was no fencing them out of the tabernacle where Parson Sunday was yarded. Still, the fact that the Rev. Sunday professes to be a woman's rights advocate makes this exhibition in one view a serious blow to the cause.—*George Macdonald.* "*Truthseeker*" (New York).

NEITZSCHE ON CHRISTIANITY.

I condemn Christianity. I bring against it the most terrible accusations that ever an accuser put into words. It is to me the greatest of all imaginable corruptions. It has left nothing untouched by its depravity. It has made worthlessness of every value, a lie out of every truth, a sin out of everything straightforward, healthy, and honest. Let no man dare to speak to me of its humanitarian blessings. To do away with pain and woe is contrary to its principles. It lives by pain and woe, it has created pain and woe in order to perpetuate itself. It invented the idea of original sin. It has bred the art of self-violation—repugnance and contempt for all good and cleanly instincts. Parasitism is its praxis. It combats all good red blood, all love and all hope for life, with its anæmic ideal of holiness. It sets up "the other world" as a negation of every reality. The cross is the rallying post for a conspiracy against health, beauty, well-being, courage, intellect, benevolence—against life itself.

This eternal accusation I shall write on all walls. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, for which no expedient is sufficiently poisonous, secret, subterranean, mean. I call it the one immortal blemish upon the human race.

"After Life's Fitful Fever."

I ASK no other boon of you that love me
When comes the hour that Life and I must part;
But that, sometimes, a thought of me you'll cherish
Within some secret corner of your heart.

Grieve, if you must, yet grieve not you unduly;
The dead, who sleep in peace, need no lament
Their joys and pangs for evermore are over;
Their wealth of time is then forever spent.

Death has no terrors of itself to frighten;
Priests' lies no more need agonise men's hearts.
No hell awaits the erring sons of Nature,
When that, which brought to life, from Life departs.

Rest, perfect rest, within the grave awaits us:
Pain, envy, hatred, sorrow, come there not:
Back go we to the source whence came our being;
Forgetting, and, save by our works, forgot.

Meanwhile, oh friends, e'er sleep eternal claim us,
Something remains as debt all freed minds owe:—
The fruitful lies that brand Death's brow with horror,
We must refute where'er their reapers sow.

Then, when our end at length full time approaches,
Tho' we, maybe, would still prolong the fight;
We shall have left, as great hearts have before us,
The world more free and happy for Truth's light.

W. J. KING.

Correspondence.

ONE WAY TO HELP.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to make an earnest appeal in the *Freethinker* to all lovers of truth and intellectual honesty? This seems to be the season of the year for special self-denial on the part of the Churches in order to furnish the means for the perpetuation of the old superstitions. Cannot we Freethinkers make a special effort to show our love for "the best of causes"? I think we can, and we ought; so I suggest to all subscribers that the best way of showing their enthusiasm at this particular time is to forward a few pence for the purchase of one dozen copies of your pamphlet, *The Passing of Jesus*, and judiciously place same in the hands of Christians, who know absolutely nothing of the origin of the great superstition which forms the basis of their belief. The pamphlet is so *apropos* to the coming farce of the Churches, and is such an eye-opener, that I feel compelled to ask all the "saints" not to neglect this opportunity of sowing the good seed of OUR GOSPEL. As you know, I have started the ball rolling with an order for several dozen, and I sincerely hope that all Freethinkers who read this will respond to my appeal, and clear out every copy of *The Passing of Jesus*.

I feel I must most heartily congratulate you on at last having your talent recognised, and by a periodical of such standing as the *English Review*. I say Bravo! to the Editor for his pluck, and I sincerely hope it will prove the beginning of a new order of things—the breaking down of the shameful press boycott from which you have suffered so long

J. B

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INDOOR.

ESSEX HALL (Essex-street, Strand): Friday, March 14, at 8, Public Meeting for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. Rowney, "Bible Prophecies."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 3, "Primitive Beliefs and the Subjection of Women"; 7, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Religion and Morals"; 6.30, "The Lying Gospel." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall Buildings, first floor, Fowler-street): 7, a Lecture.

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Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 12 SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

The Christian nations are the warlike nations of the world. The most destructive weapons of war have been invented by Christians. The musket, the revolver, the rifled cannon, the bombshell, the torpedo, the explosive bullet, have been invented by Christian brains. Above all other arts the Christian world has placed the art of war.—R. G. INGERSOLL.

The Consumptive Churches.

As a rule consumptives are confident, almost to the last, that they are going to recover, though all their friends are fully aware that they are gradually dying. All who think are sensible of the fact that Christianity is far gone in consumption, that this most dreadful and fatal of diseases has been steadily developing within it for at least a hundred years, and that to-day the symptoms are more hopeless than they ever were before; but, strangely enough, the physicians who treat this unfortunate sufferer, and practically all its friends, firmly believe that its vitality, stimulated by the various remedies administered, is strong enough to win a glorious victory over the forces of death at work upon it. The Rev. F. B. Meyer recently predicted that before many months are past it shall have completely recovered its health and vigor. The Rev. R. J. Campbell reports that while attending a religious conference of two thousand men held a few weeks ago in Rouen Cathedral, he inferred that there is going on at present in France "a sort of reaction against the irreligion of a generation ago." "There is something like a revival of religion taking place," he assures us. Then he explains: "I do not mean, of course, a revival in the ordinary evangelical sense of the word, but a general quickening of interest in religion, an increased passion and vitality and power in religion; and there is also more attention to the observances of worship." Other visitors to France, notably the Rev. F. Hastings, confess, some of them sorrowfully, that they can see no sign of a revival of religion in that most interesting country. Mr. Hastings, speaking as chairman of the London Congregational Union, admitted that in France all interest in religion was practically a thing of the past, and that in this country also it was rapidly disappearing. Indeed, there seems to be a general conviction that just now religion everywhere is in a most deplorable state, though a strong hope is entertained that almost immediately a decided change for the better shall occur.

At the recent meeting of the Free Church Council, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the address from the Chair was almost throughout in the minor key. The Chairman is himself an exceptionably able and successful minister. Mr. Connell was for many years in charge of the Regent-square Presbyterian Church, London, where he proved himself to be a worker that needed not to be ashamed, and now is equally prosperous as successor to the late Ian Maclaren at Sefton Park, Liverpool, one of the strongest Presbyterian congregations in England. And yet, though personally he has achieved signal success, Mr. Connell is obliged to acknowledge that religion in this land is at a painfully low ebb. As reported in the *Daily News and Leader* for March 12, he said:—

> "We have somehow lost our grip of God. The Churches seem to have lost the old impressiveness of their appeal. Vital religion has suffered depression and decline in visible strength. The Christian testimony on great issues of morals and religion seems to lack something in depth of gravity and authority, and we do not seem able to command the energy, or the means, or the men, for the shouldering of urgent duties which yet we dare not refuse.....The fact seems to be that we have been caught in the undertow of a civilisation which, with all the material excellences it may rightly claim, is the product of forces that are largely non-Christian, and, in some cases, definitely anti-Christian. There is not a country in Europe to-day which does not, in its approved international policies, frankly lean its confidence on the arm of flesh, on human genius, and the assiduity of human enterprise. Civilisation has never yet acknowledged that it should serve a spiritual ideal. It has never admitted the need for reverence and submission to the will of God."

All that is perfectly true, and most illuminating. Nothing can be truer than that "we have somehow lost our grip of God"; but we wonder whether or not it occurred to Mr. Connell that, in making such a statement, he was exposing the fundamental and fatal weakness of the Theistic creed. We *have* lost our grip of God; but why? *Because God has never gripped us.* We have lost our grip of him because it lacked reality. The grip itself was always real enough, its one defect being that its object was purely fanciful. In other words, the loss of grip is due to a corresponding loss of faith. At one time in our lives we had a vice-like grip of ghosts; but to-day, with the majority of us, that grip is simply a thing of memory. Our grip of them ceased with our belief in them. To be permanent, grip must be mutual. Had ghosts existed their grip of us would have been so tight that we could never have released ourselves. So, likewise, had God existed as our Maker and Father, there would have been no danger of our ever losing our grip of him, for the initial and more potent grip would have been his of us. The infinite unreality of the Theistic creed appears the moment we look it in the face. A little while ago it was solemnly announced from a prominent London pulpit that "God's need of us is immeasurably greater than ours of him." That was said of a Being who is Biblically described as "doing according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." A similar statement is frequently made concerning God's love of man as compared with man's love of God. If God needs our love more than we need his, why has he not got it? The late Dr. George Matheson's famous hymn begins thus—

> "O love that wilt not let me go."

As a matter of fact, however, God's love not only lets go of many people who believe in him, but never once touches people who lack faith in him; and this is only another way of saying what we have often said before, namely, that God exists only to those who believe in his existence.

Another illuminating utterance that fell from Mr. Connell relates to the non-Christian character of civilisation. Formerly it was customary to boast of Western civilisation as a distinctly Christian product. Some twenty years ago, when Robert Buchanan made

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his dramatic attack upon the Christian religion, innumerable pulpits sneered at him, asserting that Christianity and civilisation were synonymous, so that if we renounced the former we would be compelled to part with the latter also. The present writer is ashamed to confess that, being in London at the time, he had the audacity to join in that irrational sneer. But even the pulpit, as represented by such men as the Chairman of the Free Church Council, is to-day wise enough to perceive that civilisation is, generally, non-Christian and, in particular cases, anti-Christian. And in this attitude to civilisation the modern pulpit is amply justified. For all its accomplishments civilisation depends upon human skill, human genius, and human enterprise. Civilisation, as such, does not recognise religion at all except as a factor that has hindered and retarded its progress. Guizot, who remained through life a deeply religious man, and who published a work entitled *Meditations on the Christian Religion*, will not be suspected of any anti-Christian prejudice in the following definition:—

> "It seems to me that, by general consent, civilisation consists essentially of two facts: the development of the social state and that of the intellectual state; the development of the exterior and general condition and that of the interior and personal nature of man; in a word, the perfection of society and of humanity" (*Histoire de la Civilisation en France*, vol. i., p. 6).

In studying the history of European civilisation we shall discover that it was for many centuries diverted from its natural channels, and consequently delayed in its forward movement, by the influence of the Church, and that its accelerated progress in modern times is traceable to the fact that it has succeeded in releasing itself, more or less thoroughly, from that baneful interference. "Spiritual ideals," "the will of God," and "Divine reverence" are elements which civilisation, as such, does not recognise, and which, if left to itself, it would ere long eliminate from the sphere of influence. It is this gradual emancipation of civilisation from the bondage of religion that is causing Christian leaders such depression of spirits and dark forebodings. They are not really opposed to human progress, but they cannot bear the idea of its taking place without their being its chief agents. They are not genuinely opposed to social reforms, but they cannot help denouncing all schemes for securing them from which their predominant co-operation is excluded. The only fault with Socialism is that it is not Christianised, and with civilisation that it no longer goes on its knees. When they shall have Christianised the former, and brought the latter to its knees, all will be well.

Now, the question is how the Church is going to perform that miracle, and after the Chairman's address, this was the first question to which the assembly addressed itself. Three well-known reverend gentlemen read papers on the subject; but if Christianity is true such papers were an insult of the deepest dye to its Founder and his Apostles. Mr. Connell had said that "we never can create save as we steep ourselves in the life-giving essences of New Testament revelation." On consulting the New Testament we learn that "spiritual power," or "power from on high," or "the Holy Ghost," is to be had merely for the asking, and in the ecclesiastical ceremony of clerical ordination we are informed that the Holy Ghost is infused into the ordained by the laying on of episcopal hands. According to the latter idea, properly ordained ministers have no need to ask for power, their only duty being to exercise it, while, according to the former notion, no clergyman has the power until he asks for it in faith; and we are assured that the prayer of the believer is heard and answered. In any case, merely talking about "spiritual power" does not bring it, and history teaches us that neither does praying for it. What then? The only indisputable fact is that whatever power the Church once possessed and wielded, it has now, on its own showing, almost entirely lost. At present Christianity is utterly unable to substantiate its own claims. "True," say its champions, "to-day it seems to be under eclipse, but to-morrow it will shine in superlative glory, and drive away for ever the darkness of unbelief and sin." We have heard that prophecy many times before, without once seeing any sign of its fulfilment. Mr. Meyer and others have uttered it again and again with amazing confidence, but as for the fulfilment we are quite content to "wait and see."

J. T. LLOYD.

Religion and Sex.—III.

(*Continued from p. 163.*)

IN the two preceding articles I have been concerned with tracing the close connection that existed with primitive peoples between religion and the manifestations of the sexual life. So far I have tried to fix attention on the normal expressions of the human sexual impulse, in order to show how inevitably it becomes associated with religious ideas and with religious ceremonies. So long as we restrict our survey to uncivilised life, the connection between the two is direct and obvious. As a force that arises in the life of each, and which intrudes, as it were, into consciousness, the phenomena of sex fills man with amazement and terror. As a supernatural force of unequalled intensity, it becomes inextricably bound up with his religious convictions. The connection is so close that the language and feelings peculiar to the sex life seems to serve equally as an outlet for religious feeling and conviction. And, paying religious honors to sexual impulse, man naturally comes to identify its manifestations as both an expression of the supernatural and as an act of worship towards it. To this we have to ascribe the widespread vogue of religious prostitution in India, Greece, Persia, Egypt, Judea,* and elsewhere. We have to seek along the same lines for an explanation of the religio-sexual festivals of Isis in Egypt, of Baal-Peor in Judea, and of Eleusis in Greece, to say nothing of the corresponding festivals that meet us all over the uncivilised world. In these cases, sexual self-surrender corresponds to the devotion with which the mediæval fanatic submits himself to torture, or tortures himself, in the fervor of his religious belief. Frankly accepted as an indication of the divine, the uncivilised mind sees an endorsement of the religious idea in every manifestation of sex life.

It is when we take man in a more advanced social state that obscurity gathers and difficulties thicken. Man no longer universally and frankly yields to sexual promptings as the voice of Deity. Symbolism and mysticism develop; a more complex social life provides disguised outlets for primitive and indestructible feelings. Sexualism, instead of being something to be glorified, and, so to say, annotated by religion, becomes something that must be hidden or denied. But man cannot escape the incidence of those forces upon which rest the perpetuation of the race. They may be ignored, but they cannot be denied. They will find expression in one form or another. Every attempt to suppress them only results in a more savage outburst. Every endeavor to disguise their operation only leads to their more unhealthy manifestation. The history of Christianity offers numerous illustrations of the truth of what has been said. Few religions have struggled harder to consciously suppress the power of the sexual life, and none have been more successful in producing unhealthy expressions of the force it strove to regulate or crush. With a great many of its leaders and teachers the consciousness of sex has been so strong as to become an obsession. Like the thirst-tormented traveller who is so apt to see visions of pools of clear, sparkling water, the Christian ascetic has been so obsessed with the idea of sex that he has often seen but little else. And the result has been that, instead of a developing social

* See 1 Samuel ii. 22.

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life providing a healthy outlet for the sexual impulse, and so minimising, by regularising, its strength, it has found expression in all sorts of unhealthy ways in connection with religion, which has thus ignorantly encouraged the force against which it proclaimed a crusade. So we find right through the history of Christianity the constant uprising of curious religio-erotic sects, the operations of a perverted sexuality in religious epidemics, and the distortion of normal sexual feelings in the interests of religious organisations.

Although there is an understandable disinclination, amounting with some to positive revulsion, to recognise the sexual origin of much that passes for religious fervor, the fact is well known to competent medical observers, as the following citations will show. More than a generation since a well-known medical authority said :—

> "I know of no fact in pathology more striking and more terrifying than the way in which the phenomena of the ecstatic—which have often been seized upon by sentimental theorisers as proofs of spiritual exaltation—may be plainly seen to bridge the gulf between the innocent foolery of ordinary hypnotic patients and the degraded and repulsive phenomena of nymphomania and satyriasis."*

Dr. C. Norman also observes :—

> "Ecstasy, as we see in cases of acute mental disease, is probably always connected with sexual excitement, if not with sexual depravity. The same association is seen in less extreme cases, and one of the commonest features in the conversation of acutely maniacal women is the intermingling of erotic and religious ideas."†

This opinion is fully endorsed by Dr. Francis Galton :—

> "It has been noticed that among the morbid organic conditions which accompany the show of excessive piety and religious rapture in the insane, none are so frequent as disorders of the sexual organism. Conversely, the frenzies of religious revivals have not unfrequently ended in gross profligacy."‡

A German authority remarks :—

> "I venture to express my conviction that we should rarely err if, in a case of religious melancholy, we assumed the sexual apparatus to be implicated."§

Dr. Beavan Lewis points out how frequently religious exaltation occurs with women at puberty, and religious melancholia at the period of sexual decline.‖ And Dr. Charles Mercier puts the interchangeability of sexual and religious feelings in the following passage :—

> "Religious observances provide an alternative, into which the amatory instinct can be easily and naturally diverted. The emotions and instinctive desires, which finds expression in courtship, is a vast body of vague feeling, which is at first undirected.....It is a voluminous state of exaltation that demands enthusiastic action. This is the state antecedent to falling in love, and if an object presents himself or herself, the torrent of emotion is directed into amatory passion. But if no object appears, or if the selected object is denied, then religious observances yield a very passable substitute for the expression of the emotion. Religious observances provide the sensuous atmosphere, the call for self-renunciation, the means of expressing powerful and voluminous feeling, that the potential or disappointed lover needs. The madrigal is transformed into the hymn; the adornment of the person that should have gone to allure the beloved now takes the shape of ecclesiastical vestments; the reverence that should have been paid to the loved one is transformed to a higher object; the enthusiasm that would have expanded in courtship is expressed in worship; the gifts that would have been made, the services that would have been rendered to the loved one, are transferred to the Church."¶

Dr. Auguste Forel, Professor of Morbid Psychology in the University of Zurich, also points out that—

> "When we study the religious sentiment profoundly, especially in the Christian religion, and Catholicism in particular, we find at each step its astonishing connection with eroticism."**

And Dr. Kraft-Ebing, after dwelling upon the substantial identity of sexual love and religious emotion, summarises his conclusion by saying :—

> "Religious and sexual hyperæsthesia at the acme of development show the same volume of intensity and the same quality of excitement, and may, therefore, under given circumstances interchange. Both will in certain pathologic states degenerate into cruelty."††

Even so orthodox a writer as the Rev. S. Baring-Gould points out that :—

> "The existence of that evil, which, knowing the constitution of man, we should expect to find prevalent in mysticism, the experience of all ages has shown following, dogging its steps inevitably. So slight as the film that separates religion from sensual passion, that uncontrolled spiritual fervor roars readily into a blaze of licentiousness."‡‡

No useful purpose would be served by lengthening this list of opinions—at least for the present. What has been said is enough to show that amongst those well qualified to express an opinion, there is a general, and one may add, growing recognition of the important truth that the religious and sexual emotions are not only interchangeable, but may actually spring from a common source; and, further, that the operation of one may be, and often is, mistaken for the operation of the other. It has also been pointed out that asceticism, which assumed so developed and so extravagant a form in the Christian Church, far from being a disproof of this, affords the strongest possible evidence of its truth. Very frequently the ascetic presents us with an unmistakable case of erotomania, expressing itself in terms of religion. It is highly significant that so many of the leading characters in early Christianity should have been persons of avowedly strong sensual passions, and that in the visions of the saints temptations by nude women should play so large a part. The care taken by the monks and by celebrated saintly characters to avoid contact with women, even with mothers and sisters, is equally significant.§§ We are obviously dealing in such cases with men who were obsessed with the fact of sex. And the result was that the early and mediæval Christian writers brought to the consideration of the subject a concentration of mind that resulted in detailed disquisitions of such a nature that it is impossible to more than merely refer to it. To the normal man, whose natural desires find their legitimate expression and satisfaction, a consciousness of sex is but one of the many phases of his conscious life. But with the ascetic it was constantly active. He dwelt upon it by day, it haunted his dreams by night. Sexual feeling, suppressed in one direction, broke out in another under disguised forms. Feelings that were perfectly normal, because of repression and misdirection, became pathologic; with the result that on the one side, among those to whom religious exhortation made no appeal, there ensued an increase of vice in its more coarse and brutal forms, while among those to whom religious exhortation did appeal a vast volume of sexual feeling was interpreted as supernatural illumination and communion.

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

* Article in the *Lancet* for January 11, 1873.
† Article in Tuke's *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*.
‡ *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, pp. 66-7.
§ Cited by Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, pp. 233-4.
‖ *Text Book of Mental Diseases*, p. 393.
¶ *Conduct and its Disorders*, pp. 368-9.

* *The Sexual Problem*, p. 354.
† *Psychopathia-Sexualis*, pp. 9-11.
‡ *Lost and Hostile Gospels*, Preface.
§ Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 120 136.

Sinai and Suez.

THE dark sea was smooth except for the soft roll made by our homeward-bound ship, and the night sky, all even of hue, was cloudless entire, and sprinkled with stars that gleamed as in our northern time of frost. Though only at the crescent, the moon traced a bright way over the waters. What apter phase than the crescent could the pilgrim see

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in this ocean-channel, guarded by two Moslem shores, Arabia and Egypt?

Yonder, those hills of the twilight were the peaks of Sinai, where once a God, now little else but a name gilded in church missals, flung the red bolts over the wilderness, and thundered a moral law for a nation of nomads. Then, Gods were in their valiant prime and bushes burned with their divine flames, and their bounteous hands dropped nourishing manna on the waste.

Gods pass with the circling years. After Yahveh of Sinai arose Allah of Mecca; that Allah whom the visionary camel-driver found behind veils innumerable. The Arabs of these barren valleys and table-lands still kneel at his footstool five times a day. A few decades will lapse, and Allah, too, will be ranked as a memory in a tomb as tranquil as the mummy-chambers of the Egypt which this sea laves.

"Wandering Arabs," I mused, "have lit a camp-fire behind the mountains."

But it was the foretoken of the dawn,—a faint, dull russet in the Arabian east, over the black horizon.

The north sky was yet a livid grey, as if with the smoke of a manufacturing town, half hiding its grime in the night; or as if a storm was creeping away by stealth, leaving a ghostly blur and shadow of death in its train. The sea was creased as gently as a lake in Westmorland, or a loch that slumbers amid the boulders of the Grampians.

"Gold," said I, "appear and match the red."

The gold did not hasten. The red paled slowly, and the end of the hesitation was a change to saffron. Self-effacing, the modest stars had slipped into nothingness. Like the million Yesterdays of history, they were no more. The crescent was fading. Meanwhile, black Sinai had crowned itself with a band of yet deeper crimson below the saffron. If color could shout, the Arabian crimson would have raised a pæan. But the silence of the glorious morn was superb; and the waters flushed red, and straight silver lines were ruled across them where the shadow of the mountains fell.

"Wordsworth, thou shouldst be living at this hour!" The poet who longed for Milton would have spoken nobly had he been here to-day to repeat the chronicle of this pageant of splendors.

As the light grew, the sable ridge resolved itself into a nearer range and a further range, and a misty vale lay between; and the sea glistened yellow and clear like the heaven, as if all secrets were ended, and lucidity was the watchword of the coming day.

"Come!" prayed I.

In a niche of the yet sombre horizon, the brightness of the sky brightened more, and it was for all the world as if a crowd of courtiers bent towards a door, and a curtain over it was about to lift, and the king would enter and salute the saluting court.

A dolphin suddenly broke from the limpid sea,—symbol of the living things that live their life by the sun.

Then a blazing star shot its unequalled ray across the rocks of Sinai, and, in two moments, the star had become the manifest lord of the cosmos; and the grey north was no longer grey, and creation had opened its daily evolution.

Glad am I, before the last dimness shall gather over my eyes, to have beheld this drama of the morning, prompting one to a gaiety such as no comedy of artist-genius could evoke, and to tears that purge more finely than the tragedies commended by ancient Aristotle.

I smiled when I suddenly recollected that this historic sea on which I sailed, and whence I had admired the rising sun, was the place of the Israelite emigration from Egypt, the terrors of the Ten Plagues, the terrors of the Pillar of Fire, the terrors of the broken chariots of the Egyptian pursuers, the terrors of the drowning of the armed hosts of Pharaoh. All these terrors had transformed themselves into innocent folk-lore. For such indeed is most of the narrative of the Bible, and, read as folk-lore, the stories have a message, a human interest, and a value. The sun in whose coming forth I had rejoiced is, to our age, the centre of an understood astronomical system, whose movements are predictable by science, and whose very origin is relatively known. We who study the story of the nebular unfolding of sun and planets need not deride the simple and natural folk-lore which saw in the sun the God of Fire and of Battles, and accounted the planets as mere lamps set in the crystal firmament to light our central world.

And the honor and praise once rendered to the Lord of Hosts may now be offered to the Heroes of Work who create the wonders of the human world. Here at Suez begins the grand canal which threads its way through the desert for ninety-nine miles, and links the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean. As I write, our ship glides along this marvellous passage. An hour or two ago, we floated past the bust of Waghorn, at Suez; Waghorn, the organiser of the Overland Route. In a few hours more, we shall emerge at Port Said, where the statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps points to his masterpiece, the Suez Canal.

Ere long, a cry of joy from civilisation will greet the inauguration of the canal at Panama.

Beyond that, there await yet other triumphs of humanity, outshining the achievements of to-day as the engineering of the Nineteenth Century outshone the efforts of Primitive Man.

F. J. GOULD.

Written near Suez, March, 1913.

Mr. Yoshio Markino and the Missionaries.

"Hankow itself swarms with missionaries 'who are unhappily divided into so many sects that even a foreigner is bewildered by their number, let alone the heathen to whom they are accredited' (Medhurst).....The Chinese 'Rice Christians,' those spurious Christians who become converted in return for being provided with rice, are just those who profit by these differences of opinion, and who, with timely lapses from grace, are said to succeed in being converted in turn by all the missions, from the Augustins to the Quakers."—DR. G. E. MORRISON, *An Australian in China*, 1902, pp. 5-6.

"So far as I can see, the tutor missionaries have succeeded in their enterprise of making scholars by the thousand, but then those scholars neither are nor will become Christians.....The educated natives (of India), so far from accepting Christianity, think it as much a fetter on the free movement of the intellect as Hindooism is, and are proud to be as much in advance of their tutors as they are of their countrymen. Christian ideas and Hindoo ideas are both to them ideas of the populace, and they have left them miles behind."—MEREDITH TOWNSEND, *Contemporary Review*, July, 1889.

THE testimony of travellers has often been cited in these pages to the fact that Christian missions to primitive and uncivilised races are, as a rule, productive of more harm than good; and that missions to the more civilised races, the Indians, Chinese, and Japanese are a failure. It is only the scum of these races—corresponding to the submerged tenth of our country—that they are able to lay hold of, and then only through a bribe in some form or another.

The apologists of the missionaries retort that these travellers are prejudiced; that they are infidels; that they have no intimate knowledge of the subject, but rely upon what is told them by the traders, who are prejudiced against the missionaries.

We have just been reading Mr. Yoshio Markino's book, *When I was a Child*, which confirms in every particular the charges made against Christian missions in the Far East. We can now see, thanks to the revelations of Mr. Markino, what goes on behind the scenes in the missionary world. We have here the testimony of one who has actually been through the missionary mill, and has figured as a convert in missionary statistics. We can see why he was attracted to the mission, and how it affected him.

But, to begin with, as our readers doubtless know, Mr. Markino is a Japanese. Born at a time when Japan was acquiring Western civilisation and pre-

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paring for the gigantic struggle through which we have seen it emerge so victoriously, the boy Markino was seized with an intense desire to become better acquainted with this marvellous Western civilisation. He first went to America, and endeavored to study art while acting as a house servant. Driven from America by hardship and ill-usage, he then came to London, where he came within an ace of starving to death while trying to earn a living as an artist; indeed, it was only the acceptance by Mr. Spielman of some of his work on the very day that he had determined to end the struggle, that saved him from a death by suicide. Mr. Markino is now famous; he has held an exhibition of his works at the West End. He is much sought after as an illustrator of books. He himself is an author whose books—*My Idealed John Bullesses—A Japanese Artist in London*, and *When I was a Child*—have had a phenomenal success, being universally reviewed and quoted wherever books are known. Mr. Markino has achieved a success very rarely attained even by English men of genius, and it is marvellous in an alien, speaking volumes for his courage, determination, energy, and resource—characteristics which many people regard as peculiarly British. If we consider the opposite possibility, of an English boy learning Japanese and going to make his fortune in Japan as an artist, the magnitude of Markino's achievement can be seen in its true perspective.

Yoshio Markino was the child of well-to-do parents living at a village nine miles from Nagoya in Japan. His desire for European travel, which we have noticed, was increased by the arrival at the village of Professor Ban, of the Japanese Educational Department, who had just returned from a tour of America and Europe, upon which he gave lectures, illustrated by lantern slides. "That," he says, "made me quite mad with my ambition to come out to America or Europe more than ever." *

The first step was to learn the English language, and for this purpose he used to walk to Nagoya, nine miles away, twice a week! The boy was at this time thirteen years of age. Unfortunately, his father, originally well-to-do, became financially embarrassed, and was unable to continue his education, whereupon his Japanese teacher, Mr. Iinuma, advised him to attend the Missionary College, where he himself was a teacher, and, as the American missionaries were in want of a boy to sweep the schoolrooms, he could have his tuition free. The offer was gladly accepted, and the boy used to get up at four o'clock in the morning, run to school in the dark, and sweep the schoolroom by lamplight.

During the morning he worked for another native Japanese teacher, in residence at the school, who paid him two shillings a month for his services:—

> "I was almost starving [he observes of these times], but I did not worry about my poverty. For I was too delighted with my post. They had the night school. I attended to it as well. It was always 12 p.m. when I went back to my inn."

After three or four months of this, an arrangement was made for him to sleep at the school and receive six shillings a month. He tells us:—

> "I lived entirely on the boiled rice and pickles. There were two couples and one old lady American missionaries. I used to look upon them as very civilised and very honorable people, because they were from such a great country. And I thought the Christianity must be the most superior ethic, because all the most civilised nations in this world belonged to it. So I decided to investigate the Christianity, notwithstanding the surrounding people used to hate it and call it 'Yaso.' The word 'Yaso' came from Jesuit (I think), but it had a double meaning—'mysterious and unpatriotic religion.' Many of my friends asked me seriously, 'Are you really going to be a "Yaso"?' I said 'Yes.' And they were shocked very much." †

However, Markino attended the meetings at the missionary's private house, held especially for those who desired to become "Yaso." There were fifteen altogether. Mr. Iinuma, his former friend and teacher, acted as interpreter. Now, Markino was so earnest to learn English, and so curious to hear how the interpreter translated each word out of English into Japanese, that he confesses his "mind was quite absent from the religious matter."

One evening the head missionary said: "Now, seeing all of you so earnest, I shall baptise you on next Sunday. But to-night I shall ask each of you to tell me exactly what you feel." Some of them flattered the missionary so unnaturally and so insincerely that Markino was disgusted with them. When the missionary came to him, Markino said:—

> "'Your honorable religion must be the best one in the world, but I am so miserably ignorant about it. Now I have only one fear, that your honorable God might not be pleased with my present mind.' He said, 'Excellent, splendid!' I said again, 'Is it not a wiser way for me to wait until I study the Bible thoroughly?' He said, 'Not necessarily at all. Your sincere faith is worthy to be baptised, and you see it is so much better to study the Bible after being a Christian. The Bible is most difficult to understand. Only God will help you when you have faith in Him.'"

On the following Sunday, after service, the missionary read a paper before each one of them, but, says Markino,—

> "His Japanese pronunciation was rather bad, and I could not catch the meaning well, but he whispered me that I ought to say 'Yes' each time. So I did, and he poured the water from the bowl upon my head. Thus I became a 'Yaso.'"

That throws a good deal of light upon missionary methods, but there is more to follow. A few days later he went to see his friend the Japanese teacher, Mr. Iinuma, who said:—

> "'Now you are a Christian, can you believe your future life?' I said, 'What? What do you mean by "Future Life"?' He smiled and said, 'I thought you did not quite understand the Christian's faith. You see, all those missionaries are so happy, because they think that when they do good deeds in this world, they shall be sent to Paradise in their next life as their reward!'.....'But tell me how they believe that.' 'Well, they believe they all shall meet each other in heaven and live for ever!'
>
> "I sighed deeply, and I was astonished beyond the words. Now I will tell the readers why. I thought in my boyish mind that all the civilised Westerners were scientific, and they treated every philosophical question with their own science. I was often afraid that the Westerners might laugh at our Buddhists, because they were quite superstitious enough to believe in the future. What a great surprise to me to hear the Christians believed in their future life too! 'Are the Christians so superstitious then?' I asked him. He said, 'You must not call them superstitious. They shall be offended!'
>
> "'And they do good deeds because they simply want to go to heaven?' This last question came into my mind so naturally, because it is the spirit of Samurai to think that if it were the will of God, we are perfectly willing to suffer in hell" (p. 82).

Then he put his final question to the teacher: "And have you yourself the Christian faith?" He said: "Yes, I have. But *very differently from that of the missionaries.*" And, upon Markino pressing for an explanation, Mr. Iinuma shook his head and replied, "No, my faith is only for myself," and advised him to study from the missionaries and read the Bible.

What he learned by this method we shall see in our next.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

* Yoshio Markino, *When I was a Child*, 1912, p. 65.
† *When I was a Child*, pp. 77-78.

The Pagan Poets of Persia.

> "What I write is not written on slate; and no finger, not that of Time himself, who dips it in the mist of years, can efface it."—LANDOR.

PERSIA itself is an interesting country, and has had a past history of varied fortune. Owing to her geographical position, she may also have an historical future. Even now European diplomats are keeping sharp eyes on Persia and her politics. Poetry and

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politics are sufficiently remote; but the life of a people is as much concerned with the one as with the other. Whilst the diplomatic relations of Europe and Asia are of immediate interest to but a small circle, the poetry of an old-world Power may claim more general attention.

The Golden Age of Persian poetry lasted five centuries, from the eleventh to the fifteenth, and includes such great poets as Firdausi, Sadi, Hafiz, Jalaluddin, and Omar Khayyam. Interest in Persian literature was never keen in England before the time of Fitzgerald, the Victorian poet. There are not many who have taken the trouble to ascertain for themselves that the pearls of translation are to be had for a small price. Omar is the best known to English readers. Seven hundred years after the astronomer-poet's death a manuscript of some of his incomparable quatrains came into the hands of an Englishman of genius who was pleasing his scholarly leisure with the study of Persian. Edward Fitzgerald's magnificent verses have made the thoughts of Omar Khayyam a possession for all time of English speech. No translation in the world, except the subsidised version of the Bible, has ever achieved such popularity.

But, among Persians, Hafiz is far and away the best-loved singer. In all lands where the beautiful Persian tongue is spoken he is loved and appreciated. Five hundred years after his death his verses are still chanted by the boatmen of the Ganges and discussed by the learned at Constantinople. They are copied in ornate manuscript for the wealthy noblemen of Delhi, and lithographed for the poorer lovers of literature in Calcutta and Alexandria. The poetry of Hafiz concerns itself, not only with praise of love and wine, but with sceptical speculations on religion. Indeed, the same may be said of nearly all Persian poetry. Hafiz was an Epicurean, and the way he enforces his opinions is, of course, by praising wine —a deadly breach of orthodoxy, for he was a Persian and a Mohammedan. Hafiz has been called the Anacreon of Persia, and some of his poems bear out the comparison. Here is a taste of his quality:—

"Boy, let yon liquid ruby flow,
And bid thy pensive heart be glad.
Whate'er the frowning zealots say,
Tell them their Eden cannot show
A stream so clear as Rukuabad,
A bower so sweet as Mosalay."

Small wonder the priests demurred to say prayers over the poet's dead body.

These old Persian poets were very ironical gentlemen, if their mysticism is to be taken seriously. Jalaluddin, one of the greatest of the mystic poets, makes a lover exclaim to his beloved:—

"With thee a prison would be a rose garden,
O thou ravisher of hearts! With thee Hell
Would be a Paradise, O thou cheerer of souls!"

This is pretty blasphemy, and, let us hope, pleased the lover as much as it pained the priests.

Omar Khayyam, after all, interests us most. He is the Voltaire of Persia. There is no doubt about his Freethought and his Materialism. He fails to find any Providence but Destiny, and any certain world but this, which he advises us to make the best of.

"Oh, threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain—This life flies.
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies:
The flower that once has bloomed for ever dies."

He voices with no uncertain sound the scepticism at the bottom of all thoughtful men's minds, and makes splendid music of it.

"The moving finger writes, and having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.
And that inverted bowl we call the sky,
Whereunder crawling coopt we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to it for help, for it
Rolls impotently on as thou or I."

Across more than half a millennium of time and thousands of miles of space, across the far deeper abyss of thought and faith, of inheritance and aim, of art and language, the golden-mouthed Persian nightingales sing to our ears. Under the witchery of their genius we scent in our western winds the aroma from the lovely Eastern gardens. We gaze on the brilliant colors of the roses, the perfect flame of the tulips. We taste the Persian wine, and wind our longing fingers in the tresses of the beloved. Oh, immortals of literature! The old Persian poets saw their visions and their dreams, and wrote them, and many centuries after the tired merchant, forgetting for a little space his counting-house and ledgers, lives a freer and a fuller life in the wonderland of the poets' genius. Here are nymphs and roses, grotesque imaginings and human memories. This is immortality indeed! Under the poets' opiate wands he dreams their dreams for one little hour, and is refreshed.

MIMNERMUS.

A Dumb Lie.

"IT'S all a dumb lie; God's dead."

I rubbed my eyes. Phew! How could God die? Who would bury him? What a tremendous funeral it would be! What would happen to heaven, and the angels, and the never-ceasing psalms? Where would the Holy Ghost discover a headstone big enough and grand enough for God? And my young mind gaped at the thoughts.

The words first reached my eyes many years ago, when I was a boy, nine or ten years old. They were spoken by Cleg Kelly in a tale of the same name by S. R. Crockett. Only the incident, of which the words form the climax, comes back to me; the rest of the story is lost.

Cleg was an Edinburgh urchin, a city waif, who had, in some way or other, found himself in a Sunday-school. It is, or was, the custom in Scottish Sunday-schools for the superintendent to address the children either before or after their class lesson; and Cleg had perforce to listen to a sermonette on the living God's great goodness, or something similar. But Cleg Kelly was "gleg i' the uptak." Besides, he knew what it was to be hungry and homeless and forsaken. The little fellow's restraint gave out; and he leapt to his feet and yelled, "It's all a dumb lie; God's dead."

In half a minute the little, impudent Atheist was at the other side of the holy door.

Cleg and his adventures disappeared in the oncoming waves of yarns; but sometimes, looking back to the blurr of white surf that lies, for me, on the eastern horizon of literature, the ever-moving waste of episode, adventure, and wild excitement, with their crowds of conquering heroes, I think I can see the dim upright figure of a street wayfarer, in a Sunday-school, facing the superintendent and telling him his fairy-tale was a dumb lie. If the form of my youthful friend cannot clearly be determined through the distance of years, there still remain for me his brave words, as sharply decisive now as then; and my regret is I cannot trace this influence upon my mental life.

It was my introduction to Freethought—or so I like to name it. There was a fascination in the words that rooted them deeply in my mind. They rang out often at the most inopportune times; and, as a consequence, they frequently got me into trouble. When saying my prayers at night the concluding phrase, "for Jesus' sake, Amen," would extend itself into, "it's all a dumb lie; God's dead." During prayer spasms in church restlessness would seize me, to my discomfiture later, when I discovered that a parental reprimand did not come within the minister's advice, to be forgiving in all things. Often, too, the words served me as a source of extenuation. We got ha'pennies to put into the Sunday-school mission-box. Very solemnly we were told we were giving them to God (which was not *quite* true). But if God were dead he would not miss them. And we fairly enjoyed the toffee we bought with those ha'pennies.

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When I became older, and learned to appreciate fine words and eloquence, Cleg Kelly's verdict would pop into what seemed a glorious piece of pulpit oratory, and take the shine out of it. I began to have boyish suspicions that many things were off the straight; that the teachings on Sunday were too absurd to be crystallised in conduct on the Monday; that our Sunday-school superintendent was a funny fellow, because he helped to send his brother Christians to hell on Saturday by making drunken brutes of them, while he instructed their children, on Sunday, in the gentle art of getting to heaven; that because a man was a Christian was no guarantee he would be considerate and just to us, his pupils. These wavering suspicions gradually massed themselves around Cleg's words, giving them firmer support; and when, every Sunday, I saw a man, dressed in a black silk night-shirt, trying to convert Christians to Christianity, the farce of the whole thing often tickled my boyish mind to such an extent that I could hardly contain myself. When my mind became illumed with the flash of the words, the inclination to laugh aloud invariably possessed me, the whole affair seemed to be so ludicrously funny.

But, as Time marked me, Cleg Kelly's condemnation deepened in its significance. It came to mean something that demanded serious thought. The words became the springs of many long rivers of reflection. When I was forced to study the stained pages of the book of man, the words became bitterly sad in their relationship to the sufferings of the past and present. When the cry of anguish tore the night in twain, and the pain-prayer, ascending to empty skies, rejoined the aching, ragged parts, at the back of my mind were the words, "It's all a dumb lie; God's dead." When the mother's sorrow was intensified by her appeal to the great wound-healer, Christ, to pardon her erring daughter, and guide her feet from the miry clay, the words, "It's all a dumb lie: God's dead," throbbed and heaved in my mind.

When I understood that Religion was no friend in need, but a foe in disguise; that it contorted minds with its insistent repetition of dull dogma, and poisoned thought with its mirage "to-be," and drained the body social of much courage, strength, and effort, that might have gone to purify it; that instead of hastening the increasing wellbeing of society, it delayed and hampered by consorting with lower life; that it was, in short, a social evil, Cleg's words took a harder and sterner meaning. I changed the adjective, making it, too, harder and sterner, and felt justified.

A *dumb* lie! Perhaps; but with a million tongues whose power for evil has outweighed their power for good in the history of mankind. They have poured the vitriol of hate on progress in the past; in the present they seem to be dropping honey. But their fawning suavity can only be understood by their conscienceless malignity. That was too successful then; and it would seem as if their detestable sycophantic sophistry, so soft and sweet, to-day, were to be equally successful. So remarkable is the sway of the dumb lie that even professed Agnostics, with sober face and omniscient counsel, bid us bear patiently the constant wagging of those lying tongues, and advise us not to irritate the poor, irresponsible waggers of them by publicly voicing our condemnation of a lie.

Lying creeds, whose influence upon society is in every respect evil, demand public chastisement; and will get it. The wellbeing of society must rest upon recognition of truth. A lie is corruption and contamination; and no lie was ever dumb until it was dead and forgotten. Falsehood simply asks honest minds to whip it. It seems that Freethought has much work to do yet.

ROBERT MORELAND.

ADVANCED STUDY.

"What has become of Miss Snooks? She was going in for Theosophy when I saw her last."

"She married a restaurant man and is studying dishpantheism."

Acid Drops.

"The fact that they had to face to-day was that what they called civilisation was not the handmaid or the ally of Christianity, that it rejected Christian principle largely in practice, and some thought wholly in spirit." So says the new President of the Free Church Council, and, so far as genuine civilisation is concerned, it is only what we are always saying. All the same, we quite expect to find the same preacher pointing out, when occasion serves, that civilisation owes all that is good in it to Christian influence. Indeed, the President goes on to indicate the directions in which civilisation fails. Thus, civilisation leaves men careless how dividends are derived so long as they get them, social economists are in despair how to enlist the youth of the country in desirable pursuits, etc. Quite so; but the question is not whether the secular civilising forces can at present do all that is desired, but whether religion can do it more effectively. And religious organisations have had every opportunity to show what they can do. They have had charge of people from childhood to old age, and have consciously manipulated social forces to their own advantage. The evils deplored are not products of civilisation at all; they are the products rather of religious interference with normally civilising forces. The conscious control of social life in the interests of a rational secular civilisation has never yet obtained. The conscious control of social forces in the interests of religion has; and the result is seen in the evils deplored by the Rev. Mr. Connell.

Rev. Charles Brown, also addressing the Free Church Council, rejoiced in the provision of better salaries for ministers, since it would put an end to ignorance in the pulpit. Not a bit of it. Ignorance in the pulpit is not created by low salaries, and will not be destroyed by high ones. It is part of the inevitable character of the situation. The ministry becomes more ignorant—in the deeper and wider sense of the word—with each generation. Look at the leaders in any of the Churches, and see what one discovers. How many of them are of real and unquestionable capacity? Where else but in the pulpit would men like Bishop Ingram, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Campbell, F. B. Meyer, etc., occupy positions of eminence? Higher salaries cannot create capacity; they can only decorate native incapacity. Men of real ability do not go into the pulpit; they find occupations in other directions. The proof of this is that there is not a Church in Europe that is not raising the same complaint as to the lower mental calibre of such as present themselves for ordination. A religion that is not intellectually respectable cannot hope to command the support of intellectually respectable men.

Dr. F. B. Jevons says that thousands of people will buy a shilling handbook on Comparative Religion because they feel that science could tell them something about religion. Exactly; science is the only thing that can tell them anything about religion. Preachers of religion are, of all people, the most ignorant of this subject. They can tell you all about the difference between partial and total immersion, or the right kind of dress to wear, or candles to burn, or formulæ to use. But when it comes to giving any real knowledge about religion, they are quite at sea. One goes to ministers of religion to find out what religious people believe; but when one wants to find out what religion *is*, how it began, and how it developed, then one turns to the scientific investigator, whose religion is usually a minus quantity. In fact, you cannot at the same time understand and believe in religion.

Dr. Jevons himself illustrates how his own belief interferes with a complete understanding of religion. He says: "The great reassuring and comforting fact that emerged was that all men, however low they stood in point of culture or civilisation, were without exception seeking after God." Now, to commence with, the use of the words "reassuring" and "comforting" betokens anything but a scientific turn of mind. A scientific inquiry is concerned, not with what is comforting, but with what is true. Nor is there anything really comforting in finding that certain of our own beliefs are shared by savages. This is far more frequently an indication of error than of accuracy. And, in the next place, we altogether deny that men in a low culture stage are "seeking after God." Savages do not seek gods any more than they seek a pestilence. The gods find them, and the savage seems to spend no small part of his energies in dodging them. This is really one of the vital facts of the situation, and without an appreciation of its significance, one's study of religion is robbed of a deal of its value. The search for God only commences at a later date, when people

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are taught to express their feelings in terms of religion, and also to believe they cannot get along without God. And Dr. Jevons might pay some attention to the fact that if people are looking for God, a large number lose him, and those who lose him are amongst the most thoughtful and the most educated in the civilised world.

The last sentence is, perhaps, open to misapprehension. Its truth and its significance is often lost because religious people make contrasts in a quite unjustifiable manner. Freethinkers with small opportunities are contrasted with religionists who have had social and financial opportunities that others lack. This does not affect the expression of capacity, but it does affect the form in which it is cast, and form counts for much with superficial observers. But we say boldly and plainly, that class for class, the Freethinkers of any country are markedly superior to their religious fellow countrymen. Take a hundred Freethinkers, haphazard, from any class, and contrast them with a hundred Christians from the same class, and taken in the same manner, and their general superiority will be evident. Class for class, Freethinkers do actually represent the better type. It may sound conceited to say this, but it needs saying, and it is easy to test its truth by actual observation.

What a pretty lot the native Christians in the Balkans are! First of all their war of liberation resolved itself into a mere struggle for more territory. Then their crusade for religious freedom manifested the usual characteristic of religious crusades—wholesale butchery. Then their brotherly love for each other was shown by the Greeks and Bulgarians going for each other before the common enemy was out of the way. And now Mr. Claude G. Montefiore and Mr. D. L. Alexander, in a lengthy communication to the *Daily Telegraph*, calls attention to what Christian Roumania understands by religious freedom. A condition of Roumanian independence, as guaranteed by the Berlin Treaty, was that religious freedom should be permitted, and that "the difference of religious creeds and confessions shall not be alleged against any person as a ground for exclusion or incapacity in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil and political rights, admission to public employments," etc. In spite of this, practically all Jews are to this day unemancipated. They are not even admitted to belong to the land of their birth, and in various ways are insulted and persecuted. First of all, the Roumanian Government tried to evade its treaty obligations by pleading that the Jews were illiterate—this in a country where 88 per cent. of the Gentile population cannot read or write. Further, as aliens could not claim political rights, the Jews were declared aliens—although the vast majority of the Jewish population are native born. They were thus in the position of unprotected aliens, as they had no country to which they could appeal for protection. Finally, the Roumanian Government agreed to treat the Jews as natives where letters of naturalisation were taken out. That this was a mere subterfuge is shown by the fact that in thirty-five years, with a Jewish population of nearly 300,000 only 200 have been granted naturalisation.

Thus the operation of Christian bigotry was made easy. Under the laws that dealt ostensibly with aliens in general, regulations were framed that were intended to harass the Jews in all directions. They were affected in their rights of residence, their trading rights, their access to schools, professions, and the public services. In 1902, it was actually proposed that all foreigners should be prohibited exercising handicrafts in Roumania unless they could show reciprocity in their own country. But the Roumanian Jews had no other country, and the Roumanian law declared them aliens. This measure would have brought about 200 000 Jews to face starvation had not European intervention brought about its withdrawal. Still, an attempt was made to reintroduce the same law last year, and there is hardly another country, except Russia, where Jews are persecuted as they are in Roumania. So stands the record of the sleeping partner in the Balkan confederation of Christian peoples. And one can only say that Roumania is worthy of her confederates.

The question of the moment, says Professor Gardner, is, whether Christianity can survive the immense increase of our knowledge of man and society? Professor Gardner thinks it can; because, when faced with changes of knowledge in the past, "In every case Christianity showed itself capable of such changes as enabled it to escape what looked like irresistible forces of destruction." This is the kind of statement often made by Christian apologists, and it is wholly false. We are told that Christianity survived the attack of Voltaire, and of Paine, and of many others. And this also is false. The Christianity against which Voltaire and Paine fought is substantially defunct. What has become of the Christianity of the sixteenth century, or of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? It is the same with all that we have left; but the doctrines against which the older Freethinkers fought are now discarded by educated believers. Professor Gardner himself would be more at one with an educated Freethinker of to-day than with a staunch believer of two hundred years ago. Christianity itself is not capable of great changes, but Christians have shown themselves first of all capable of imprisoning, and even killing, men and women for attacking Christian doctrines, and afterwards of preaching the very things that were denounced. The advanced thought of the Christian world to-day is only the alphabet of the Freethought of fifty years ago. A religion of greater intellectual strength and sense of rectitude than Christianity would have died defending its doctrines. But religious organisations that are capable, under pressure, of swallowing anything and of teaching anything, may drag on a more or less dishonorable career until such time as outraged decency drives it finally from the field.

A religious census of the prison population of South Africa is included in a Blue-book just issued by the Department of Justice. The *East London Daily Dispatch* tells us that "the Church of England produced the largest number of criminals, the Wesleyans being a fair second, and the Dutch Reformed Church third. Among the 'also ran' is the Free Church of Scotland, which is credited with ten offenders; but it is not clear whether the 'Wee Frees' or the 'United Frees' are entitled to this doubtful honor." The clergy are always prating of the ethical value of religious teaching; but their statements are rarely put to the test.

The clergy of Peterborough have issued a public protest against Good Friday football. It is this sort of mediævalism which so endears the parsons to the general public.

Le Revue, the French newspaper, has been collecting the opinions of public men on deforestation in France. President Poincaré, in his reply, said "I am frantically fond of trees, and should like to have the power to behead those who cut them down." This is almost as bad as the sentence passed on Adam and Eve for meddling with the tree in Eden.

"Serpent in the Garden," read a headline in the *Evening News* recently. It referred to a proposed railway across Hampstead, and not to the devilish reptile of Eden.

An American minister, writing in *Faith and Doubt*, the new theological magazine, pleads for a restatement of Christianity. In the land of the almighty dollar this means flattering the Rockefellers and ignoring the fellows on the rocks.

The Rev. Mr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, charges preachers with holding and expressing uncertain views on religion. The charge is doubtless true, and may be held partly responsible for the decay of interest in religion; but the Principal forgets that religion deals with subjects concerning which nobody possesses any knowledge whatever. Even he, though a trainer of young preachers, is as ignorant as all the rest. Who knows anything about God, Christ, the soul, and immortality? It is easy enough for wholly ignorant men to *dogmatise*, but they cannot *teach*. Such is the case with all *parsons*, Principal Selbie included. Their "messages" are myths manufactured by themselves.

An attractive bioscope poster on the London hoardings reads, "Satan, at enormous expense." The Ecclesiastical Commissioners might be able to supply some idea of the cost of exploiting his Satanic Majesty.

Dr. W. E. Barton, writing in the magazine, *Faith and Doubt*, on "Christian Claims," says he has "gone to the edge of the precipice and looked over, to discover if I might, into what abyss I might be plunged by any discovery of modern science or Biblical criticism to-morrow or the day after. I have looked unterrified, and have returned to find my feet upon a rock and a song in my heart." Evidently that song was not "Let me like a soldier fall."

A Bill to establish fishing as a legal Sunday pastime has recently been introduced into the Pennsylvania Senate on the grounds that angling affords opportunity of rest and relaxation. Fishing for money is already extensively practised by the clergy on that day.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £78 0s. 10d. Received since:—N. M. X., £1; George Taylor, 10s.; John Grange, £2 2s. *Per Miss Vance:* J. Carruthers, 2s. 6d.; Manchester, 5s.; Chas. E. Hearson, £1 1s.

A. M.—We quite understand your indignation at the ordinary press boycott of Mr. Foote. He, however, feels no indignation, but only contempt. The creature you bring to our notice, after mentioning every article in the *English Review* except Mr. Foote's, has the pious effrontery to say there is no boycott in that. When he says that Meredith's letters don't amount to much he simply speaks like a—Christian. It is because the letters do amount to a great deal that he was silent on the subject. Meredith praised Mr. Foote for "fighting for the best of causes," told him that the said cause was "destined to victory," and sent him a cheque (with his name) in support of the *Freethinker* in the very last letter he ever wrote—and all that amounts to nothing! If that is all it amounts to, why not draw attention to "harmless facts"? The reference to the feelings of the Meredith family is hypocritical—and Scotch at that. He was a public man, as poet and novelist, he does not belong to any family, but to the world. The family represent him legally; they may be the natural guardians of his honor, but not of his genius and convictions. They had and have, apparently, no share in either.

H. D. WOOLLEY.—"My earnest and sincere desire," you say, "is that you may discover your awful mistake ere it is too late." Thanks. We believe you mean well. But what a God you worship! Fancy a Deity damning us for differing from you! The comedy overwhelms the tragedy.

J. TOMKINS.—Thanks for the *Daily Herald* cutting. We have a very small opinion, as you have, of the brains and style of Free Church "literature." Heaven save the mark!

VAUGHAN GRAY.—Thanks for the Bruno postcard and the stamp upon it of the Giordano Bruno Associazione at Rome as a message of friendship to the President of the N. S. S. We had a picture of the Bruno statue already; a photograph taken on the spot, with the N. S. S. delegates to the great World's Freethought Congress, some ten years ago.

AFTER reading the Editor's "Personal" it will be easy to understand why the bulk of this week's correspondence has to stand over till next week. This applies to subscriptions as well.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Personal.

ON Tuesday evening, March 11, I attended the Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League. There was an excellent gathering, and a really good audience when the time for the public meeting arrived. Mr. Halley Stewart, whose health had broken down, was compelled to resign the Presidency of the League; and, with many warm thanks for Mr. Stewart's devoted service, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., was elected as Mr. Stewart's successor.

I should have strained a point to be present at that meeting, and I did strain it. I had a cold upon me, but I was in London on the Tuesday on the paper, and I stopped for the League meeting while I was there. I was grieved to see my younger colleague, Mr. Cohen, showing traces of his recent illness, and I gave him some fatherly advice about taking greater care of himself. By this time, I suppose, he is thinking that I need some such advice myself.

I went up on Friday evening to London again, in order to speak the distinctive note of the Freethought party at the meeting convened by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. It was a grand meeting, with a curious variety of view represented on the platform. When my turn arrived to speak, I received a very striking reception. I told the meeting that I had almost left my bed to attend, and I threw myself upon their indulgence. But I forgot my indisposition as I went along, I threw myself into the work, and the audience was unstinting in its applause. It was a great effort, in the state in which I then was; and the weather was wretched, and by an odd series of accidents things were made worse than they might have been, and I was completely upset when I arrived home at one o'clock in the morning. I had to put myself into the doctor's hands on Saturday, and there I am still. I am getting a bit better, but serious work or going up to London is out of the question.

On former occasions I have called Mr. Cohen in to sit in the editorial chair in my absence. I could hardly have done so this time; partly because of his own recent illness, and partly because of his lecturing on Sunday at Liverpool. "Mimnermus" happens to be living near me. He promptly went to London at my request, and did his best on Monday,—hoping on Tuesday to be assisted by Mr. Lloyd. This hurried arrangement leaves the *Freethinker*—and *naturally* leaves it—somewhat short of its usual attractions. Beyond this "Personal" and a few small items that were in type beforehand, my hand on the paper is paralysed this week. But I must be careful. The doctor says I have been overdoing it, and warns me to get rest and change as soon as possible.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The annual meeting of the Secular Education League was held on March 11 at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London. Excellent speeches were delivered by Mr. G. Greenwood, M.P., who presided, and by Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. F. S. Swinny, and the Rev. W. Bell. Sir H. Cotton moved a vote of thanks to the chairman. The Rev. W. Bell, who is a Nonconformist minister, pointed out the disloyalty of the Free Churches to their own principles in opposing Secular Education.

Mr. John Grange, sending his annual cheque to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes:—

> "As years roll by, it is a joy to behold the tenacious loyalty and devotion and vitality that always characterise your advocacy of Freethought. The perennial freshness of the *Freethinker* is, in my judgment, incomparable. Its brainy breeziness is a mental tonic indeed. The frothy nature of current literature impels one to relish it all the more in this regard. I fondly hope its publication will outlast my life's span, otherwise lament and gloom would possess my being. May you live long as the bearer of the Torch of Reason."

We promise our old friend—who is not old in years though—that we shall try to keep alive as long as possible, if only for the sake of the cause which we have already been serving for more years than we care to count.

Here is an extract from another letter that may interest our readers—especially the older ones:—

> "I hope your article in the *English Review* on George Meredith will be followed by others from your pen on Freethought topics in the same or similar quarters. They are badly needed. I think I remember seeing some years ago in one of your articles that your appreciation of Cardinal Newman had been included in a collection of tributes to his memory published by the Roman Catholics. If my memory is not at fault, I should be glad to know the name and price of this book. I have read your tribute to Newman many times, and have also lent it to friends. This, the tribute of the 'batant' Atheist to the great Cardinal, is one of the few fine things in literature."

We regret that we are unable to give the title and price of the Catholic collection of tributes to Newman in which our own was included. The book was in our possession once, but we have missed it of late years. It is curious how books can go missing, but they do. Perhaps it will turn up again some day.

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Richard Carlile.

[We have often been asked for a brief biography of Richard Carlile, the bravest and hardiest of the fighters for a free press in England. The following may supply the need. It was written by Mr. Foote some thirty-seven years ago. He has no time to rewrite it or revise it. It tells, at least, the story of Carlile's great fight, as it stands.—Editor.]

In proportion as we value a free press, so ought we to be grateful to those who achieved it for us at the cost of personal comfort and public repute. Their number is great, and the memory of most must perish; but others will never be forgotten; their splendid championship or loyal devotion being their passport to deathless fame. These memorable ones are of two kinds—those who have adduced impregnable arguments for the cause, adorned with the eloquence of conviction, and those who have practically striven for it in actual warfare. Of the former John Milton is the supreme English type, of the latter Richard Carlile.

In England the ruling classes always dreaded freedom of discussion and criticism, and were ever ready to exercise a rigid censorship over the press. When arbitrary suppression was possible it was invariably employed; since then, until quite recently, invidious legislation has been resorted to. The nineteenth century witnessed the trial of each method and the final extinguishment of both. During the first twenty years of it high-handed acts of power were levelled against authors and publishers; during the second twenty years stamp duties on newspapers were imposed to obstruct their sale among the poorer classes. Fortunately, both evils were broken down by the resolute opposition of noble-minded men, who valued "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all liberties"; of whom Richard Carlile was the noblest, the most sincere, the most intrepid.

Richard Carlile was born at Ashburton, in Devonshire, on December 8, 1790. Of his parents not much is known. His father possessed some talent as an arithmetician, and published a collection of arithmetical, mathematical, and algebraical questions. His trade was shoemaking, but he early quitted it to become an exciseman. Intoxication beset him in that profession, and he betook himself to teaching as a schoolmaster. Subsequently he became a soldier, and died at the age of thirty-four, "nobody's enemy but his own," leaving his wife with three infant children, Richard and two sisters. The widow was for several years in a flourishing business, but the hard times about 1800 greatly diminished it, and alternate sickness and poverty afflicted her. She was through all changes an indulgent mother and a virtuous woman. At the age of sixty she died, being supported by her son until then, from the time when he was able to earn a living for them.

Carlile's education was but scant; it comprised reading, writing, arithmetic, and sufficient Latin to read a physician's prescription. On leaving school he engaged in the service of Mr. Lee, chemist and druggist, in Exeter; but he soon left it on account of being put to do things deemed derogatory to his office. Following that he idled away three months at home, where he amused himself with coloring pictures to sell in his mother's shop. His mother's principal customers, says Mr. Holyoake, were the firm of Gifford & Co., which consisted of the brothers of that Attorney-General who had such extensive dealings with the son afterwards, in a different line. Carlile was then apprenticed to the tin-plate business, and, although he never liked it, he continued to work at it for many years. His apprenticeship lasted seven years and three months, and was marked by great hardships, and consequent conspiracies and rebellions. His master, a Mr. Cummings, allowed five or six hours for sleep, but no leisure for recreation. On being released from this galling bondage, he determined to forsake the trade as soon as possible; but for a long time he was compelled to follow it, and thereby earn his subsistence. After travelling in various parts as a journeyman tinman, he came to London in 1811, but he returned to Exeter the same year. In 1813 he was in London again, working at Benham & Sons, Blackfriars-road. During the interval he had formed an acquaintance with a lady who, after two months' courtship, became his wife, she being then thirty years of age and he twenty-three. This union does not seem to have been productive of great happiness. Mrs. Carlile was a woman of considerable personal attractions, and possessed all the business qualities necessary to a tradesman's wife. In after years of persecution she bravely stood by her husband's side and shared his imprisonment. But their tempers were ill-matched, their ages disparate, their mental characters irreconcilably diverse. By mutual consent they parted in 1832. No blame is legitimately ascribable to either; their conflicting idiosyncrasies were their misfortune, and not their fault.

During the years of his labor as a tinman, Carlile had not been mentally quiescent. He was ambitious to win a public reputation and to earn his living by his pen. Very early in life he had dreams of purifying the Church, which certainly needed purging. Heresy had not found a home in his mind, and necessarily his reforming tendencies concerned themselves with what he was acquainted with. He relates how, in his youth, he gathered faggots to burn "Old Tom Paine," instead of Guy Fawkes, being then totally ignorant of Paine's writings, and, like other people, incensed against him by irrational prejudice. Not until 1810, in his twentieth year, did he even see a copy of the *Rights of Man*. But towards 1816 he read Paine's works and the writings of other reformers; his mind became excited by his newly acquired ideas, and he essayed public life. Cobbett and other editors were plagued at first by his literary scraps, which were uniformly refused. But in the following year, 1817, Wooller's *Black Dwarf* made its appearance, and, being more to Carlile's taste than Cobbett's *Register*, which did not go far enough for him, he determined to push it amongst the newsvendors, as the sale was very low. "The Habeas Corpus Act," says Mr. Holyoake, "was suspended, and Sidmouth had sent forth his circular; there was a damp amongst the newsvendors, and few would sell. This excited Carlile with a desire to become a bookseller. The story of Lackington beginning with a stall encouraged him. He resolved to set a good example in the trade of political pamphlets. Finding the sale of the *Black Dwarf* very low, he borrowed £1 from his employer, and invested it in one hundred *Dwarfs*, and on the 9th of March, 1817, he sallied forth from the manufactory, with his stock in his handkerchief, to commence the trade of bookselling. He traversed the metropolis in every direction to get newsvendors to sell the *Dwarf*, and called every day to see how they sold. He inquired also after Cobbett's *Register* and Sherwin's *Republican*, but, finding that they did not want pushing, he took none of those round. Indeed, he refused to avail himself of the profit he could have made by taking Cobbett's *Register*, because it did not go far enough. He carried the *Dwarf* round several weeks, walking thirty miles a day, for a profit of fifteen or eighteen pence. At length an information was lodged against the publisher, and Mr. Steill was arrested. Carlile at once offered to take his place. Mr. Wooller, however, arranged the matter, and Carlile's offer was declined. Mr. Sherwin, then a young man editing the *Republican*, perceived Carlile's value, and offered him the publishing of his paper, which he accepted. Carlile guaranteed Mr. Sherwin against arrest, which left him free to be bold without danger. The shop on which he now entered was 183 Fleet-street, which Mr. Cobbett afterwards occupied. Carlile's first ideas of politics were, that neither writers, printers, nor publishers were bold enough; and he now commenced to set the example he thought wanted."

Those were stirring times, and Carlile stepped into the ranks of publishers just at the moment when his sturdy independence and resolute will were needed to stem the torrent of Government prosecutions.

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The Tory Government made war upon the press, and to effect its designs furbished up every rusty instrument of tyranny. "It is difficult," says Knight, "to imagine a more degraded and dangerous position than that in which every political writer was placed during the year 1817. In the first place, he was subject, by a Secretary of State's warrant, to be imprisoned upon suspicion, under the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Secondly, he was open to an *ex-officio* information, under which he would be compelled to find bail, or be imprisoned. The power of *ex-officio* information had been extended, so as to compel bail, by an Act of 1808; but from 1808 to 1811, during which three years forty such informations were laid, only one person was held to bail. In 1817 numerous *ex officio* informations were filed, and the almost invariable practice then was to hold the alleged offender to bail, or, in default, to commit to prison. Under this Act Mr. Hone, and others, were committed to prison during this year. To complete a triple cord with which the ministers believed they could bind down the 'man mountain' of the press, came forth Lord Sidmouth's Circular." Sidmouth's famous Circular to the Lords-Lieutenants of Counties, urging the importance of preventing the circulation of blasphemous and seditious pamphlets, stated that he had obtained the opinion of the law officers, "that a justice of the peace may issue a warrant to apprehend a person charged before him, on oath, with the publication of libels of the nature in question, and compel him to give bail to answer the charge." This was practically a deprivation of every particle of liberty, and placed every writer at the mercy of informers and unpaid magistrates. It did away with trial by jury, and substituted for it the arbitrary caprice of judges. Earl Grey, in the House of Lords, asked: "If such be the power of the magistrate, and if this be the law, where are all the boasted securities of our independence and freedom?" These proceedings were the most daring invasion of public liberty that had been attempted since the time of the Stuarts. The reformers, however, stood firm; only one fled—William Cobbett. But no cowardice dictated his movement. He sacrificed an incredibly profitable business, and departed with his family to America, being determined not to be gagged by judges, or magistrates, or Secretaries of State. There he continued to write his *Register*, the first numbers of which, dated from Long Island, preserve as an indelible brand on the oligarchy the story of the Last Hundred Days of English Freedom.

Carlile vigorously set to work at printing and publishing works under the ban of legal prohibition. He was determined, at whatever cost, to defy the Government, and resolved to publish, on principle, every forbidden book. His first step was to resist Southey's attempt to suppress his early poem, *Wat Tyler*, composed in former days of Republican and Communistic convictions, when, with Coleridge, he fondly contemplated the progress of extreme principles, and longed to see them put into practice. Of that poem Carlile sold twenty-five thousand copies in 1817. His next publication was the prosecution and defence of Wooller, of the *Black Dwarf*. Next came a reprint of Paine's political works, edited by Carlile and Sherwin conjointly. Immediately afterwards he reprinted William Hone's suppressed political squibs, called *The Parodies on the Book of Common Prayer*. This forced on the trial of Hone for blasphemy; but happily the old book-worm, after making one of the most remarkable defences on record, was acquitted. The publication, however, of the *Parodies* cost Carlile eighteen weeks' imprisonment in the King's Bench Prison, from which he was liberated on the acquittal of Hone.

By the end of 1818 Carlile had published the theological works of Paine, which, with the political writings and miscellaneous pieces, were collected in two handsomely printed volumes, forming the only complete edition of Paine ever published. No expense was spared to render the collection as complete as possible. The prosecutions set on foot against him gave to these works an unprecedented sale; and other publications of a similar character were proceeded with, such as the *Doubts of Infidels*, *Watson Refuted*, *Palmer's Principles of Nature*, and the *God of the Jews*. By the month of October, 1819, six indictments were pending against him, two of which were tried from the 12th to the 16th of that month. "When he came to trial," says Mr. Holyoake, "he had no clear understanding of the subject of his defence; it was compiled from the pleadings of others for toleration and free discussion." His defence, however, so alarmed the Emperor Alexander of Russia that he issued a Ukase, forbidding any printed report of it from being brought into his territory. The verdict was gained against him, and he was sentenced to fifteen hundred pounds fine, and three years' imprisonment in Dorchester Gaol, whither he was driven off, handcuffed, in the middle of the night. This imprisonment was, of course, endured with no grateful feelings, but it produced a good result in affording opportunity for patient study of religious questions. "He had taken the impression," says Mr. Holyoake, "from the hint of an aged political friend, that all the evils of mankind rooted in the superstition and consequent priestcraft practised upon them, and was resolved to devote the solitude of his imprisonment to the study of religious mysteries, and fearlessly and faithfully to make the revelation for the common good of man." The brave man was true to his resolve. He did study those questions, and very speedily saw reason to disclaim all belief in dogmas and creeds based on revelation.

The first thing he did after the close of his trial was to publish a report of his defence, in which he had taken care to read the whole of Paine's *Age of Reason*. The sale was immense, and to stay it a prosecution was begun against Mrs. Carlile, but was dropped on her declining the sale. She was not, however, long unmolested. "Under pretence of seizing for Mr. Carlile's fines," says Mr. Holyoake, "the sheriff, with a writ of *levari facias* from the Court of King's Bench, took possession of his house, furniture, and stock-in-trade, and closed the shop. It was thus held from November 16 to December 24. Rent became due, and it was then emptied. Under Mr. Carlile's desire, Mrs. Carlile renewed a business, in January, 1820, with what could be scraped together from the unseized wreck of their property. In February she was arrested; but the first indictment failed through a flaw in its construction. She was immediately proceeded against by the Attorney-General, and became her husband's fellow-prisoner in Dorchester Gaol in February, 1821." The sentence passed upon her was two years' imprisonment, not one jot of which was abated, although her accouchement in gaol without proper attendance seemed so terrible to her husband that he did for her what he never did for himself, and begged of Peel to grant her a release.

Carlile's sister Mary Ann carried on the business after Mrs. Carlile's imprisonment. She, likewise, was prosecuted by the relentless Government, and in November, 1821, found herself a fellow-prisoner with her brother, under a fine of five hundred pounds. The business was continued by Mrs. Wright, and a troop of other assistants, whose names should be put on record: George Beer, John Barkley, Humphrey Boyle, Joseph Rhodes, William Holmes, John Jones, Joseph Trust, Charles Sanderson, Thomas Jeffries, William Haley, William Campion, Richard Hassell, Michael O'Connor, William Cochrane, John Clarke, John Christopher, and Thomas Riley Perry. All of these were imprisoned for terms varying from six months to three years. A second seizure of house and stock was made, on pretence of satisfying the fines. But no abatement was made from the amount of fines, and, notwithstanding Carlile's persistent application to "Christian Judge Bailey," he was obliged to serve out the extra three years' imprisonment in lieu thereof.

Carlile's imprisonment was rendered as irksome to him as possible. Inside the gaol the utmost indignities were practised upon him, his wife, and his

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sister. The chaplain laughed at their complaints, and more than hinted that no degradation could exceed their deserts. He even professed a fear that the thieves confined there might be contaminated by communication with a heretic and Republican, and suggested precautions against such a deplorable contingency. The prisoner's opportunities of exercise in fresh air depended on the caprice of the gaoler; and even when permitted that luxury he was led out as a caged animal, and exhibited to the gaze of the passing curious. In consequence of this he passed two years and a half in his own chamber, for which he paid two guineas and a half a week, without going into the open air. During the whole period he continued to edit the *Republican* as vigorously as before, and made it more decided on theological questions. To spite his persecutors, he dated it in the era of "the Carpenter's Wife's Son." None of his publications had been suppressed, and the Cabinet was reported to have acknowledged Carlile invincible in his course of moral resistance. When he was liberated from Dorchester Gaol in 1825, the freedom of the press was virtually complete so far as Government was concerned. His incarcerated shopmen had still to finish their terms of imprisonment, but no fresh arrests were made. One brave, unflinching man had done battle against the power and wealth of the oligarchy, and issued from the contest victor. His practical sagacity, even while imprisoned, provided against every unfavorable contingency, and devised means to surmount every obstacle. When he found that the Government could not be beaten by straightforward means, he adopted others; laws which could not be broken he eluded. The intention of Government to exhaust his means of resistance by repeated arrests of his shopmen he frustrated by providing a mechanical process of sale. Books were sold through an aperture, so that the buyer was unable to identify the seller. Afterwards they were sold by clockwork. On a dial was written the name of every publication for sale; the purchaser entered, and turned the hand of the dial to the book he wanted, which, on depositing his money, dropped down before him without the necessity of anyone speaking. The circulation of his books was quadrupled, and cheering crowds assembled daily around his shop windows. In the provinces, at public dinners, the health was drunk of "Carlile's invisible shopman." The number of copies of Paine's works sold was amazing; from December, 1818, to December, 1822, 20,000 copies were sent into circulation. While in prison his friends liberally supported him; subscriptions to the amount of £500 a year were acknowledged in the *Republican*. The profits of the business also amounted to about £50 per week. Occasionally the trade was prodigious; in one week, while a trial was pending, Mrs. Carlile took £500 over the counter. On his leaving Dorchester Gaol, one friend lent him £1,000 to extend his business in the new shop at 62 Fleet-street. The triumph was on the side of Right against Might; the war had lasted six years, and Might was worn out and obliged to retreat. Henceforth, although newspaper duties, or "taxes on knowledge," still continued to impede the sale of literature amongst the working classes, Bourbon misrule was absolutely impossible. Editors and publishers enjoyed a pleasant peace, won for them mainly by Carlile's invincible hostility to oppression.

(*To be continued.*)

Love your parents. Do not let the family which springs from you make you ever forget the family from which you sprang. Too often indeed the new ties relax the old, whereas they ought only to be a new link in the chain of love which should bind together the three generations of a family. Surround the white heads of the mother and of the father with tender and respectful affection till their last day. Strew their way to the grave with flowers. Breathe over their weary souls a fragrance of faith and immortality with the constancy of your love. And may the affection which you keep inviolate for your parents be a pledge of that which your children will keep for you.—*Joseph Mazzini.*

To End the Blasphemy Laws.

CROWDED MEETING FOR REPEAL.

A STRONGLY worded resolution, urging that immediate steps be taken to secure the early repeal of the ferocious and inhuman Blasphemy Laws, was carried unanimously at a crowded and enthusiastic meeting held at the Essex Hall, Strand, London, on Friday evening. The Rev. W. Copeland Bowie presided, and was supported by an imposing array of speakers, including Lord Harberton, Sir W. P. Byles, M.P., Sir Hiram Maxim, Mr. G. G. Greenwood, M.P., Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. G. W. Foote, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, and the Rev. Stewart Headlam.

Mr. Herbert Burrows also occupied a seat upon the platform, and letters of sympathy with the objects of the meeting were read by Mrs. Bonner from the Rt. Hon. Thomas Burt, Mr. Joseph King, M.P., Mr. Athelstan Rendall, M.P., Mr. Holt, M.P., Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., Mr. H. Verinder, and others, together with resolutions of sympathy from a number of Secular, Ethical, and Socialist societies.

The Rev. Copeland Bowie opened with a vigorous speech, in which he pointed out that the gravest matter in the administration of the Blasphemy Laws was the discrimination exercised. There was small chance of a scholar being sent to prison for profanity; but a speaker at an open-air meeting would be promptly sentenced. This was not only unjustifiable, but it was iniquitous.

The Rev. Stewart Headlam, white-haired and dignified, moved the resolution, and recalled the stormy days of "the 'seventies," when Charles Bradlaugh was in the forefront of the battle for free speech. It was, he said, the treatment of Bradlaugh by Christians that caused him (Headlam) to support the abolition of these odious laws. Unfortunately, legislation was delayed because members of Parliament were greater cowards than members of the County Council. For forty years he had advocated the abolition of these laws, and before he died he hoped to see them abolished.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, who followed, was clever and cynical. He immediately raised a laugh by saying that he had himself given satisfaction all round. He was received at the City Temple as the last refuge of Christianity, and was applauded by Secularists as a super-Atheist. The Blasphemy Laws were out of date. When England was a Christian country these laws were not undemocratic; but Christians were now in an insignificant minority in the British Empire. There was something worse than uproarious blasphemy, and that was a dead and terrified silence. Hardly any public man would to-day tell the truth on any subject whatever. At present he or any other dramatist would be prevented from producing a play upon the subject of Mohammed. The Blasphemy Laws should be uncompromisingly abolished.

Mr. G. G. Greenwood, M.P., was unusually grave, and he referred in detail to the legal aspects of the Blasphemy Laws. He said that judges had ruled that if the decencies of controversy were observed, the fundamentals of religion may be attacked. But a British jury would be scared by a lively song of Beranger's, and who was to judge as to what were the decencies of controversy?

Mr. Foote's rising was received with prolonged applause. His speech, which was in his happiest vein, was a sustained piece of oratory, and bristled with good things. Very happy was his reminder to Mr. Shaw that Voltaire had written a play on Mohammed. He hoped to see Mr. Shaw's production, for the two might be bound together, and the wit of the eighteenth century compared with the wit of the twentieth. He himself stood for absolute freedom of thought and speech. Mr. Stead had pointed out that the editor of the *Freethinker* was the only English journalist who had protested against the extreme treatment of the Church in France under the Separation Law. He had also used his pen in favor of the Peculiar People. He remembered a rosy-faced man named Senior introducing himself in a tramcar at Stratford and thanking him for his efforts on behalf of the Peculiars. Senior said, "We ought to know one another. You have been imprisoned for not believing in the Bible and I for believing it." The Blasphemy Laws simply meant the prosecution of dissidents. Such prosecutions never fail, because the Freethinker stands in such a position that brains cannot save him. If, for example, Mr. Greenwood were tried by a jury of Tariff Reformers, he would get twelve months. What right has a man to feelings if he is afraid of honest controversy? The only restrictions needed were the restrictions placed on the discussion of every other subject. Freethinkers asked for equal rights with other citizens. They asked for no more and would be satisfied with no less.

Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., said that the Blasphemy Laws were a survival of barbarism, which had disgraced the statute book for three hundred years. Only Atheists were now punished.

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Sir Hiram Maxim followed with a witty speech, which he humorously said he had had type-written in case of a Government spy being present.

Sir William P. Byles, M.P., said that the right to express thought was the greatest of all causes. Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley had utterly destroyed the faith of millions. It was high time the statute book was cleansed of the intolerable Blasphemy Laws.

Lord Harberton stated that he supported the resolution with a whole heart. The function of government should be to protect the individual and not to imprison him. Ridicule was an extremely effective weapon, and the Blasphemy Laws simply deprived Freethinkers of the use of that weapon.

The resolution was then put, every hand being held up in favor. So ended a memorable meeting, noteworthy for the enthusiasm and number of the audience, and also for the very representative character of the speakers.

C. E. S.

Sir Hiram Maxim's Protest.

SPEECH AT ESSEX HALL, MARCH 14.

IT is certainly a most extraordinary fact that right here in England and to-day the wisest and best among us are liable to be arrested and imprisoned with hard labor for long terms for expressing our honest opinions regarding certain impossible and silly fables invented by depraved and ignorant barbarians in the very childhood of the world. We cannot control our own beliefs. To many of us it is absolutely impossible to believe in talking snakes and jackasses. We could not torture our minds into believing that a barbarian general stopped the rotation of the earth for a whole day in order to give him time to murder the whole of another barbarian race—all except the young women. To us it is not a question of belief at all; we know that these ancient stories cannot be true. Still, in England, and in the high civilisation of the twentieth century, we have on our Statute-books laws which make it possible for foolish and superstitious bigots, and some other evil-minded persons, to persecute and imprison those of us who are wise and honest enough to express doubts as to the truth of the most extraordinary fables that were ever invented by a diseased imagination.

For many ages attempts have been made to enforce uniformity in religious belief. Every possible form of torture has been tried, and still there are more heretics in the world than ever before. Dogmatic Christianity, as we know it to-day, did not originate in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago, as many suppose. It was manufactured at Rome at a much later date, and consists for the most part of a crazy mosaic, or rather a patchwork of many colors. When the priests and monks who had produced this remarkable new religion presented it to the people, it was found to be a misfit religion; many were quite unable to believe such extraordinary tales relating to devils, demons, fish, and snakes; but the priests, instead of remodelling their religion to make it fit the intelligence of the people, sought rather to reduce the intelligence of the people to fit their new religion, and this was accomplished by killing off all unbelievers. Hundreds of thousands were tortured to death, generally by being burnt alive over a slow fire; and this went on for more than a thousand years.

The article in the Christian faith that led to the greatest number of burnings was the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Many people were unable to believe that a priest could hold up a bit of bread, and, by repeating certain hocus-pocus, transform it into the flesh of someone who had long been dead. If one killed his father or mother, and murdered innocent children, there was yet hope for him if, at the eleventh hour, the priest was able to give him a through ticket, a golden harp, and a halo; but to disbelieve this utterly absurd and impossible priestly hocus pocus was regarded as the crime of crimes, and for such a sinner there was no hope—he was doomed to spend an eternity in fire and brimstone.

If the Blasphemy Laws that were in force in England in the time of Henry VIII. were put in force to-day, every member of the Established Church of England would be burnt alive to-morrow. From this it will be evident that, though we are a slow-moving people, we are really making some progress. Religion is, and always has been, in a constant state of transition. We have already modified the interpretation of the Blasphemy Laws in England, and in some of the very highly civilised countries like France they have disappeared altogether. It is only a question of time when the last vestige of these old, cruel, and barbarous laws will disappear from our Statute-books.

The changes in religion are slow when considered in terms of a human life, but when considered in terms of geological epochs they are rapid indeed. It is the duty of every honest thinking man and woman to put their shoulder to the wheel and do their utmost to have these old and disgraceful laws repealed—modern civilisation demands it. Many laws have been made and millions of mankind have been tortured and put to death for not believing manifest falsehood. But no laws have ever been made and no one has ever been tortured for not believing a manifest truth. It requires no faith to believe a fact. Truth does not have to be protected by law. All our Blasphemy Laws are for the protection of what is known to be untrue.

I approve of the resolution.

"George Meredith—Freethinker."

THE claim made by orthodox religious people that Meredith was a sort of Christian philosopher, a "Defender of the Faith," is a pretty impudent one. How often he is quoted in the interests of a discredited creed! Every allusion to religion which he puts upon the lips of his characters is heralded as an item in Meredith's own dogmatic faith. This game or pretence is just splendidly exposed by G. W. Foote in the March number of the *English Review*. The article is of great significance on the subject of the novelist's religion. It is wonderful how anxious Church ministers are to nobble Meredith. They are so thankful for the support of big personalities, especially now when the drift from the Churches is generally admitted (not at all frankly by those who run orthodoxy). By hook or crook every possible genius must be roped in.

MEREDITH AND BRADLAUGH.

Mr. Foote shows that Meredith, up to the end of his life, was a courageous helper of the Freethought movement. That means a great deal. It is a sign of intellectual weakness and of cowardice, of a diseased spirituality and of ecclesiastical snobbery, to ignore or depreciate the movement for a humanist religion. And militant Rationalism has done a considerable work in opening the eyes of the people to the tyranny and falsehood of Christian dogma.

Incident after incident is given of Meredith's position. In 1869, he writes to John Morley, "You see how they dealt with Bradlaugh. I spoke to Greenwood about him, insisting that he was a man of power, and was not to be sneered down." Writing to Maxse in 1870, he says, "The Parsonry are irritating me fearfully, but a non-celibate clergy are a terrific power. They are interwound with the whole of the Middle Class like the poisonous ivy." Mr. Foote quotes from the poems of Meredith in support of his case.

LETTERS TO FOOTE.

The personal testimony of Mr. Foote is of peculiar interest. "My own correspondence with Meredith—I should rather say his correspondence with me—did not run to many letters, but they cover some thirty years of time. I was far from forcing myself upon his attention. Words of encouragement that he sent me from time to time were never solicited, but always spontaneous." In the middle seventies, when Foote was fighting for Freethought, Meredith was watching him, and later on promised to write for his new magazine. He sent a cheque to assist the propagandist in his work. He was "not frightened with me because of the evil reputation fixed upon me by orthodoxy." "'I admire the fight you are making,' Meredith wrote in his first letter to me. 'You carry on a brave battle for the best of causes, personally profitless, as you must know it to be, and my good wishes are with you.'"

MEREDITH'S LAST CHEQUE.

In April, 1909, Meredith sent a cheque "as a contribution to the *Freethinker*." On being asked whether he wished his name to appear, he wrote, on April 23, "As a question of supporting your paper, my name is at your disposal." This was the last letter he ever wrote, but it was omitted by the editor in the official collection. These facts deserve to be recorded.

This article should be widely read.

—*Daily Herald*, March 9.

UNSOCIALISED WEATHER.

Lambert Caspers, a Chicago attorney, told this story at a recent Y. M. C. A. banquet:—

A Kansas farmer, a Dane, applied for naturalisation papers. The judge asked him:—

"Are you satisfied with the general conditions of the country?"

"Yas," drawled the Dane.

"Does the government suit you?" queried the judge.

"Yas, yas; only I would like to see more rain," replied the farmer.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, E. C. Saphin, Lantern Lecture, "Proofs that Christianity is Sun-Worship."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

HANLEY, STAFFS (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Thursday, March 20, at 7.45, "Materialism in the Nineteenth Century"; 21, at 7.30, "Good Friday!" 23, at 7, "Easter and a Shattered Idol"; 24, at 7.30, "Rationalism and Monarchy"; 25, at 7.30, "Death—and Beyond."

STOKE-ON-TRENT (near Monument): Joseph A. E. Bates, Wednesday, March 26, at 8, "Strange Gods."

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Among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous.—GEORGE ELIOT.

The Waiting World.

DR. PARKER was in the habit of saying, in his own extravagant style, that he saw Christ, and nothing but Christ, in every page of the Old Testament. One is not surprised at such a statement by a man whose boast it was that he could see and commune with the Invisible. To ordinary people there is no trace of Jesus in the Old Testament, and present-day apologists do not speak of its Typology, its Messianic Prophecy, and the argument it yields for the Savior's divinity. What these discover in it is the spirit of Christ. Principal Smith, of Aberdeen, admits that "the fancy that to discover some type or prediction of Christ where nobody else had seen one before was to honor Christ and confound his enemies, has been the besetting sin both of mediæval and of Protestant styles of exegesis" and that "nothing has been more guilty of rendering sermons on the Old Testament artificial and unreal." Dr. Orchard, however, excelling even Dr. Parker in the art of exaggeration, informs us that the entire ancient world "called out for Christ." In a sermon that appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for March 19, he defines history as "a garment woven from the will of man on the loom of time by God." Unfortunately, the weaving is being done so very badly that it is "not always easy to discern the pattern or read the meaning," which is not exactly a compliment to the Divine Weaver. And yet Dr. Orchard describes the process as if he knew all about it. With an air of omniscience he sets both the scientific and the theological students of history right:—

> "The one neglects to look for the increasing purpose, and so presents us with a confused tangle; the other fails to remember the nature of the task, and so often falls into despair at the long delayed consummation. For the task is to weave the will of men and the will of God into one perfect pattern without breaking the one or bending the other."

With all due deference to the reverend gentleman, we venture to suggest that he has overstepped the bounds of knowledge. He cannot discern the Divine elements in history, because, for one thing, he has no means of ascertaining what the Divine is, or even that there is a Divine.

Paul says that "when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. iv. 4), and Dr. Orchard observes that this statement is "an intuition which history wonderfully confirms." We fail to see where the "intuition" comes in, and certainly history does not confirm the sending of God's Son. History knows neither God nor his Son, any more than it knows Osiris, Adonis, Attis, and Mithra, except as mythical beings. The Christian Father and Son belong to precisely the same category as the Pagan deities just named. Dr. Orchard alludes to what he terms the "entanglement" of Christianity in history, which is felt to be one of its "difficulties." Whatever the reverend gentleman means by "entanglement," nothing is more indubitable than that history is Christianity's chief discreditor. History is judge and jury in one, the verdict is Guilty, and the sentence Death. Now, this religion which history condemns for its incompetency is the religion for which, according to Dr. Orchard, the ancient world loudly called out. Here are his own words:—

> "Purely literary criticism and purely historical criticism may reduce the teaching of Jesus Christ to uncertainty and his personality to a myth. The corrective for that is to study history as a living thing, a chain of experience, a growing institution, a new kind of life. Not only does the study of history show that Christianity is an Idealism rooted in reality, a philosophy which springs from personal experience, but it is the greatest help to the interpretation of our times. For there is a sense in which history repeats itself."

Let us now see what history yields to the investigator when it is taken as "a living thing." According to Dr. Orchard, pre-Christian history was a preparation for Christ. All the religions of antiquity, each in its degree, made ready the way of the Lord Jesus. Their gods were false, it is true; but their worship created an appetite for the "one living and true God," revealed by Jesus Christ. The curious thing is that the Governor of the Universe is supposed to have led mankind to the knowledge and worship of himself through corrupt and corrupting heathen cults. Professor Gilbert Murray tells us that Greek religion passed through four stages in its evolution, and was a failure in each. Then the Græco-Roman world was inundated by several Eastern religions which nearly destroyed the old national faiths. Does Dr. Orchard imagine that the four stages of Greek religion and the introduction of the Oriental cults into the West were ordained in order to show how keenly the world hungered and thirsted for Jesus of Nazareth? The truth is that the Greeks and Romans were always in the process of outliving their religions. The Stoics had scarcely any theology at all, but their system of ethics was exceedingly fine. Dr. Orchard admits that Stoicism was "what to-day we should call Ethicism," and then adds:—

> "Its failure was its inability to commend itself to men or produce character in the common people. It produced Seneca, who was insincere; Epictetus, who was too hard; and Marcus Aurelius, who was a Pharisee; and for all its high doctrines it did nothing for the world."

In that extract Stoicism is unfairly criticised, and some of its chief champions are misrepresented. Seneca, like all men, had his weaknesses; but he was not a hypocrite. To call him insincere is to do him gross injustice. According to all accounts, Epictetus was one of the most beautiful characters the world has ever seen. Marcus Aurelius is not to be compared with Epictetus either as a thinker or a character; but there is no justification for sneering at him as a Pharisee. Stoicism was not a failure. It *did* commend itself to thousands, and it did produce beautiful and noble characters not a few. Only inveterate prejudice can describe it as having done nothing for the world. Why, it is doing a great deal for the world still through the immortal writings of its best representatives. Professor Gilbert Murray, who is quite as competent to judge as Dr. Orchard, to say the least, advocates a revival of the ideals of the Greeks, of their sane and cheerful outlook upon life, of their love of poetry and art and philosophy. Instead of being a preparation for Christianity, the Greek ideals rendered life abundantly worth living. They insisted upon freedom, virtue, generosity, kind-

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liness, and a disciplined spirit; and it is safe to assert that the Greek Golden Age in the fifth century B.C. has never been surpassed, if equalled, under Christianity.

The truth is that Christ is not, has never been, and is never likely to become, the desire of all nations. It is overweening egotism alone that enables Christians to represent the Heathen as profoundly yearning for a saving knowledge of him. Not only mankind did not eagerly wait for his coming, they emphatically rejected him when he came; and "he is despised and rejected of men" to this day. In John's Gospel we are told that "he came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not," and we venture to think that John is a safer guide in this matter than our reverend friend. Instead of finding the world anxious to embrace it, Christianity had to fight its way to the front with carnal weapons. Its deadliest opponents were Neo-Platonism and Manichæism. These three religions had many ideas in common — revelation, redemption, ascetic virtue, and immortality; and for a long time it was highly problematic which of the three would win the victory. Dr. Orchard seems to be under the impression that the outside world was partial to Christianity, that God had prepared the way for his Son by inspiring the Romans to make roads everywhere, to cultivate the Greek language, and to establish an empire that was co-extensive with the Western world; but he shrewdly forgets that all these facilities were equally at the service of the other religions. The three religions were very much alike, and they had alike borrowed largely from older cults, and were constantly borrowing from one another. As a borrower Christianity surpassed the other two. Harnack says that "unconsciously it learned and borrowed from many quarters," and that "indeed it would be impossible to imagine it existing amid all the wealth and vigor of these religions had it not drawn pith and flavor even from them." It was its alliance with Hellenism and its skill in accommodation that helped to turn the scales in its favor. Of Gregory Thaumaturgus we read that he excelled his master, Origen, as a Hellenist, and "accommodated himself as a bishop in a truly surprising way to the Pagan tendencies of those whom he converted." It was worldly wisdom, not Divine guidance, that carried Christianity to the throne.

What has Christianity done to justify its existence? Dr. Orchard tacitly admits that it has done nothing. "The conditions are wonderfully parallel," he says, "with those when Christ first came." Listen:—

> "There is a tremendous decline in definite religious beliefs. The great theological systems constructed under different conceptions of the Universe and society no longer win acceptance. They no longer hold the imagination, or suffice to direct conduct in the new conditions and problems of industrial life, and the ethic that they enshrine is either not comprehended or is challenged as inadequate.....Meanwhile the people are either genuinely perplexed at existence or dimly aware that somehow human life has lost its sense of purpose and its possession of inward peace."

A more humiliating confession a Christian minister could never make. By making it Dr. Orchard plays into the hands of his opponents with a vengeance. Fancy a preacher seriously asking in the twentieth Christian century, "Can Christ meet these new conditions?" and not being quite sure what the answer is. We exhort him to face the facts honestly, and ask himself whether or not they are such as to justify his hope that Christ shall come and set the world right. We are convinced that Christ and the world are perfect strangers to each other, have never once met, and are never likely to make each other's acquaintance.

J. T. LLOYD.

Dreams you be dreaming. 'Tis only God who harbors these high opinions nowadays—and maybe a few broken, high-born, poverty-ridden folk such as yourself. — *Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

Religion and Sex.—IV.

(*Continued from p. 179.*)

BEFORE pursuing the subject further, it may be as well to utter a word of caution; it is not unlikely that some who have read what has been said may jump to the conclusion that I am seeking to prove religion to be no more than a study in pathology or in perverted sexuality. This, however, is not the case. Neither could have given rise to religious belief, which, as I have tried to show, has a perfectly natural origin in conditions that normally accompany uninstructed primitive intelligence. But once the religious idea is established, it derives nutriment from numerous sources. Its fundamental characteristic—the belief that phenomena are determined by superhuman intelligences—finds support, not alone in normal natural processes, but also in abnormal nervous states, and again in the mysterious and ill-understood phenomena of sexual life. Here, as elsewhere, current experience is interpreted in terms of established ideas. And being so interpreted, these ideas are apparently confirmed by the recurrence of these experiences. Thus it is common to find religious people treating an attack on the validity of their religious beliefs as the equivalent of an attack upon the existence of certain emotional and intellectual states. But the emotional states of a religionist no one disputes. The ecstatic state of a mediæval monk or nun, or the exalted feeling of the modern convert, are facts, however we may interpret them. It is in the interpretation that issue is joined.

Consequently, we are not concerned with an inquiry as to the origin of religion, or of the nature of religion, as such. What we are concerned with is the nature of those conditions and forces that have served to keep religion alive and to strengthen man's sense of communion with spiritual powers. And I think it has been shown that the recurrence of abnormal or pathologic nervous states, at first accidentally occurring, then deliberately induced, has been a powerful factor in this direction. One has only to eliminate in thought the part played in the history of religion by visions, trances, and various forms of natural or induced hallucination, to realise how materially they have contributed to this end. And, further, when we examine the sexual life of the race, we find that in exactly the same manner the characteristic phenomena met with here has again been ignorantly used to bolster up religious belief. My main thesis is, then, that religion has been maintained largely by claiming as its own states of mind that have no connection with it. Whether these states be of a normal or abnormal character makes no material difference to the issue. The fact remains that all upon which religion lives and has lived, from the physical universe of primitive man to the more obscure and more complex actions and reactions of the nervous system, can be, and is, being explained without any reference whatever to religion.

We can now return to the point at which my last article concluded. It was there shown that many reliable medical authorities were at one in recognising the close connection between sexual and religious feeling, and that not infrequently the two were positively interchangeable. When we come to deal with the phenomena of conversion we shall be able to see that the time of life at which this occurs is practically coincident with the period of adolescence. This fact has been established by numerous statistical inquiries during the last twelve or fifteen years, and may be taken as authoritative. And what is true of present-day converts is equally true of famous cases of conversion in the past. Thus Mr. G. S. Hall has compiled a lengthy list of noted characters, with the ages at which strong religious conviction was experienced. From his list I take the following examples. Religious conviction came to St. Thekla at the age of 18, to St. Agnes at 13, St. Antony at 18, Martin of Tours at 18, Euphrasia at 12,

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Benedict at 14, Cuthbert at 15, St. Bernard at 12, St. Dominic at 15, St. Collette at 20, St. Catherine at 7, St. Teresa at 12, St. Francis of Sales at 11.* The significance of these ages is that they represent a period during which not only is the organism extremely plastic and open to suggestion, but they are the years during which the nature of the individual reaches sexual and social maturity. The development of new organs, functions, and feelings is taking place, and there can be little doubt to those who study the facts closely that the proneness of the individual, under suitable suggestion, to profess religious conviction is very frequently no more than a misinterpretation, and often a perversion, of a developing sexual life.

A study of religious autobiographies, from the earliest times to the latest revivalistic mission, makes this very clear. Thus of St. Gertrude, a Benedictine nun of the thirteenth century, we are told:—

> "One day at chapel she heard supernaturally sung the words, '*Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.*' The Son of God, leaning towards her like a sweet lover, and giving to her soul the softest kiss, said to her at the second *Sanctus*, 'In the *Sanctus* addressed to my person, receive with this all the sanctity of my divinity and of my humanity.'.....And the following Sunday, while she was thanking God for this favor, behold the Son of God, more beauteous than thousands of angels, takes her to his arms as if he were proud of her, and presents her to God the Father, and in that perfection of sanctity with which he had endowed her."†

Of Juliana of Norwich, who was granted a revelation in 1373, we are told that she had for long "ardently desired" a bodily sight of the Lord upon the cross; and, again, that Jesus appeared to her and said, "I love thee and thou lovest me, and our love shall never be disparted in two."‡ So, again, in the case of Sister Jeanne des Anges, Superior of the Convent of Ursulines of Loudon, and the principal character in the famous Grandier witchcraft case, we have a detailed account, in her own words, of the lascivious dreams, unclean suggestions, etc.—all attributed to Satan—and alternated with impressions of bodily union with Jesus.§ Marie de L'Incarnation addresses Jesus as follows:—

> "Oh, my love, when shall I embrace you? Have you no pity on the torments that I suffer? Alas! alas! My love! My beauty! My life! Instead of healing my pain, you take pleasure in it. Come, let me embrace you, and die in your sacred arms."‖

Veronica Juliani, beatified by Pope Pius II. took a real lamb to bed with her, kissed it, and suckled it at her breasts. St. Catherine of Genoa threw herself on the ground to cool herself, crying out, "Love, love, I can bear it no longer." She also confessed to a peculiar longing towards her confessor.¶ Santa Teresa, who died at the early age of thirty-three, and whose family presented more than one case of developed neurasthenia, was troubled by "messages" at an early age. These she believed were temptations from the Devil suggesting an "honorable alliance." At the age of twenty she entered a convent, was subject to fainting fits, and aggravated her illnesses by her longing for them as proofs of the divine favor. And one need only add that, with all her reading and longing for personal communion with Jesus, her first conviction of having attained the ecstasy of divine love was experienced after discovering and dwelling upon "a very realistic picture" of a martyred saint—St. Joseph. Medical men who have studied the subject would be the first to perceive the significance of this contemplation of a tortured body—possibly nude—by one whose sexual nature was undergoing a process of suppression.

It is idle to attempt to evade the significance of these cases by sneering, as does Professor James, at "medical materialism." It is not a question of materialism, medical or non-medical. It is a question of the application of knowledge and common sense to the cases before us. And a rational analysis of the circumstances will take notice of the nature of the feelings excited and expressed, rather than the object towards which they are directed. As a matter of fact, if we were to eliminate the name of Jesus from the effusions cited, no one would have the least doubt as to their real nature. Nor can there be any doubt among competent students that had the women cited, with thousands of others unnamed, lived under conditions that would have favored their finding an outlet for their feelings in rational social activity and in the company of the opposite sex, culminating in marriage and motherhood, their religious ecstacies would have been non-existent, and society would have been the better for their absence. What we really observe in these outbursts is the perverted expression of feelings that are denied their legitimate outlet. The case has been well summed up by Dr. Henry Maudesley:—

> "The ecstatic trances of such saintly women as Catherine Sienne and St. Theresa, in which they believed themselves to be visited by their Savior and to be received as veritable spouses into his bosom, were, though they knew it not, little better than vicarious sexual orgasm; a condition of things which the intense contemplation of the naked male figure, carved or sculptured in all its proportions on a cross, is more fitted to produce in young women of susceptible nervous temperament than people are apt to consider. Every experienced physician must have met with instances of single and childless women who have devoted themselves with extraordinary zeal to habitual religious exercises, and who, having gone insane as a culmination of their emotional fervor, have straightway exhibited the saddest mixture of religious and erotic symptoms—a boiling over of lust in voice, face, gestures, under the pitiful degradation of disease.....The fanatical religious sects, such as the Shakers and the like, which spring up from time to time in communities and disgust them by the offensive way in which they mingle love and religion, are inspired in great measure by sexual feeling; on the one hand, there is probably the cunning of a hypocritical knave, or the self-deception of a half-insane one, using the weaknesses of weak women to minister to his vanity or his lust under a religious guise; on the other hand, there is an exaggerated self-feeling, often rooted in the sexual passion, which is unwittingly fostered under the cloak of religious emotion, and which is apt to conduct to madness or to sin. In such cases the holy kiss owes its warmth to the sexual impulse, which inspires it consciously or unconsciously, and the mystical religious union of the sexes is fitted to issue in a less spiritual union."*

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

* *Adolescence*, vol. i., p. 528.
† Cited by James, *Varieties of Religious Experiences*, pp. 346-7.
‡ Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 201-9.
§ See Ellis, *Psychology of Sex*, pp. 240-2.
‖ Parkman's *Jesuits of America*, p. 175.
¶ Kraft-Ebing, *Psychopathia-Sexualis*, p. 8.

* *The Pathology of Mind*, p. 144. See also Dr. Mercier's *Sanity and Insanity*, pp. 223-4.

Mr. Yoshio Markino and the Missionaries.—II.

(Continued from p. 181.)

"Nations are poor judges of one another; each looks upon itself as an exemplar to the world, and vents its philanthropy by forcing its infallible system or systems upon its neighbors. How long is it since popular literature has began to confess that the British Constitution is not quite fit for the whole human race, and that the Anglo Saxon has much to do at home before he sets out a colonelling to regenerate mankind?"—SIR RICHARD BURTON, *Mission to Gelele*; 1864; vol. ii., p. 207.

"We spend millions of pounds in the vain endeavor to Christianise remote savages of all kinds; human beings to whom the elements of Christianity are incomprehensible. We have millions of people in Europe in want of the necessaries of life, of education, and of all that makes life endurable."—W. KNIGHTON, *Struggles for Life*; 1888; p. 13.

"The missionaries, though good and devoted, do not succeed. The best among them would be the first to acknowledge the fact. Those who preach 'conversion' get perhaps the adhesion of outcasts, who adopt Christianity as a last resort, while their doctrines and their methods win the contempt of the thoughtful and dignified majority."—REV. S. A. BARNETT, *Contemporary Review*, April, 1892.

MARKINO now began to diligently study the Bible, and immediately many doubts and questions began

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to arise; but he kept silence until he had been right through the book.

Then there came a "Revival" in one of the churches, and one of the members called on him at one o'clock in the morning, arousing him from sleep, and exhorting him to be converted.

Markino, at this time, had come to the conclusion that it was quite impossible to understand the Bible by means of his own common sense, and the only way to get the Christian faith would be in some such fashion as St. Paul is recorded to have received it; so he attended the revival meetings, which were of the same type with which we are familiar in our own country. He describes the proceedings as follows:—

> "The missionaries had tears flowing so freely, and they were singing the hymns loudly. Some Japanese were crying and praying, while some were exclaiming that their souls were saved! It was such a hysterical meeting. One evening they all came to me and said, 'You always say you are very sincere to become a Christian. Now, God is in this room, pray him to save you.'
>
> "I earnestly prayed. They asked me if I felt that I was saved. I said 'No.' Then they surrounded me and said, 'You are an evil. You are not sincere at all.'
>
> "Although I had certain philosophical brain in my early life, I was only a little boy after all. I did not know what to do, and I cried. Some of them shouted, 'This boy is saved, because he is crying!'"*

But the boy's keen intelligence was very far from being drugged by such crude means as these, and his interest in the "revival" turned to disgust when, as he tells us,—

> "To my surprise, I found out many dirty immoralities among them. One school-teacher was a 'revivalist' because he wanted a higher salary from the missionary, and some had improper behavior with other's wife, etc. I got sick of them after all" (p. 90).

The boy then fell back upon the study of the Bible, of which he tells us his first impressions. He enjoyed Genesis and Exodus, not for any religious sentiment, but "because they are so primitive" and resemble the Japanese Kojiki, the primitive history of Japan. About Solomon's judgment, he observes they have a similar story in their own legends. He enjoyed the Book of Job immensely; and observes: "Perhaps we all Japanese boys like Ecclesiastes most because it is very like our philosophy, and, from the literature point of view, it is nearest to our own way." This is because, as Dr. Dillon has shown in his *Sceptics of the Old Testament*, Job and the author of Ecclesiastes are—in spite of the orthodox tampering with the text—seen to be thoroughgoing sceptics, or, as we should call them to-day, Agnostics.

But the character who made the greatest impression was that of Ruth. "Even now," says Mr. Markino,—

> "her sweetness and loyalty to her mother-in-law is one of the great revelations to my ethical mind. By the way, Japan has had many wonderful histories of the loyal wives, when the latter performed the Bushido beautifully; and, indeed, Ruth was a real Bushido too."

Bushido, which has been called "the soul of Japan," corresponds to what we mean by altruism, courage, and self-sacrifice.

Here we touch upon one of the great fundamental differences between the ideas of the East and the West. What English woman would sacrifice everything, including her religion, for the sake of her mother-in-law, who is the butt of the music halls and the so-called comic papers in this country? but who, in Japan, is held in the highest respect. Reverence for authority as exemplified in the head of the family, is the leading motive, the pivot of the national life in the far East. The ancestor worship of the Japanese and Chinese is merely an extension or continuance of this reverence from the living to the dead.†

With the Psalms he was frankly disappointed, and observes:—

> "I heard a great deal of it as 'the most beautiful writing.' If one reads it with full religious faith, it may sound sweet and beautiful to him. To me the literature value of Shi-kyo (the ancient Chinese Odes) seemed far above the Psalms" (p. 92).

From the Old Testament he proceeded to study the New. Here, again, he was greatly disappointed, especially with the Sermon on the Mount, which Christians regard as the priceless pearl of the New Testament. He points out, as Freethinkers have pointed out times without number, that there is nothing in the ethical teachings of Jesus Christ that was new. He observes: "Of course, the Sermon the Mountain is very high ethic, but these were not new lessons to me. Many Oriental philosophers have talked about the ethics equal to that sermon long, long ages before" (p. 93). And Mr. Markino gives a translation of some passages in proof.

Further study of the New Testament gave rise to many questions. The more he learned of the Christian faith the more outrageously absurd it appeared to be. "Why," he asks, "was the blood of Jesus Christ needed for the salvation of our souls?..... here in the New Testament Christ talks of saving the souls by His own blood! And what? He calls himself God!"

From a careful study of the marginal references in the Bible, Markino discovered that the Jews used to sacrifice animals to worship God and obtain forgiveness for their sins, and that Christ came to take the place of the animals. But, he objects:—

> "Buddha himself hated to kill even a small insect. Then why should a precious human be sacrificed to save our souls? I felt that the Christian God who needed the blood sounded rather savage! At least I thought it was savage to imagine the God in that way" (p. 96).

Then he came to the conclusion to ask this question, among many others, of the missionary:—

> "If the blood of Christ was so necessary for the salvation, why has the Almighty God sent Christ in such a small district alone? Don't you see, we, the Eastern nations, have had quite thick population long time before Christ? Were those souls not saved then? And why?
>
> "But now, admitting the salvation of Christ, hadn't Judas Iscariot and those soldiers who crucified Christ fulfilled the will of God to kill Christ? You say the crucifixion of Christ was necessary, and yet do you say those who killed Christ were sinners? Don't you think you are contradicting your own logic? Some [of the] missionaries were going to 'pray.' I said, 'No, no, no. Don't make such an awful artificially trembling voice in front of me. But kindly teach me!' Some missionary said, 'You have read too many bad books. That has made you an evil. Give up all those horrible philosophical books and read only the Bible.'
>
> "One of them expressed his suspicion that some 'bad' Buddhist priest or philosopher was backing me and persuading me to put them into a great trouble. One old lady missionary called me 'very insincere' boy, and she said, 'Perhaps you believe Darwin's theory too much. You know Darwin said we, the humans, are the descendants of animals. I think you are a descendant of pigs or donkeys, but we Americans are the children of God.' I never forgot her insincerely sneering face. I was almost crying. I said, 'Why are all you honorable missionaries suspecting me in that way? Can't you see how sincere I am? Have I ever tried to oppose against the Christianity? Nay, I am studying the Bible with all my heart and soul. I am trying to make myself a Christian. Only I cannot understand the Bible, and I am asking what I could not understand with my own knowledge.'"

One missionary advised him to pray to God to show him the way. Another one seemed rather angry and said, "The best way for this sickening

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* Yoshio Markino, *When I was a Child*, p. 89.

† As Mr. George Lynch observes: "The central idea, the social pivot, the focus of the life of the civilisation of the East is to be found in their idea of the home. The home is the centre of gravity of their existence round which everything else revolves. In China it is the all-vivifying, all pervading idea of social life, of religion, and of government. The life of the family is not only of to-day, but extends back into a venerable past, and is the hope and the care of the future" (*The War of the Civilisations*; 1901 p. 291). And the same applies to Japan.

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boy is to send for the doctor. He is not quite right." Then Mr. Iinuma, the Japanese teacher, came to the rescue, and asked them to treat the boy more kindly, as he was so young and so much in earnest, and he might become a useful evangelist later on. Then, taking Markino to his house, he observed: "Such are those ignorant missionaries," and confessed that his version of Christianity was really Buddhism.

After this, although Markino often wanted to put questions to the missionaries, he kept silence; something seemed to whisper to him, "No, no; wait until you grow up." And the missionaries seemed very pleased because he gave them no more trouble. "At the same time," he says, "I studied my English lessons very hard."

What a revelation of missionary enterprise! What a different tale to the enthusiastic reports of the missionary magazines! We see here how the boy was attracted to the mission in the first place by the desire to learn the English language. How he was made into a convert and baptised while he was yet utterly in the dark as to what the religion really was. And in the background is the sinister figure of the Japanese teacher, paid to teach the new religion while secretly remaining a Buddhist, and discussing the ignorance and stupidity of the missionaries with his pupil behind their back.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Richard Carlile.—II.

"THOUGH the freedom of the press," says Mr. Holyoake, "was accomplished in 1829, something more remained to be accomplished, which was the freedom of public oral discussion; and on this subject Carlile set his thought. When Mr. Taylor was prosecuted and imprisoned, in 1828, Carlile was called into action in his new character. He immediately converted a large room in his house, 62 Fleet-street, into a Sunday-school of Free Discussion, and introduced a public debate on all useful and political subjects on the Sabbath Day. This had not been done before by anyone anywhere. By a subscription he got Mr. Taylor well supported in prison, and on his liberation accompanied him to Cambridge, as an Infidel missionary, to challenge the University to public discussion. They passed from Cambridge to Liverpool, presenting a printed circular of public challenge to every priest on the road. Only one accepted it, the Rev. David Thom, of Liverpool, who quailed at the very onset and withdrew. This was done in 1829. In 1830 he sought a larger sphere of action for public meetings than his own dwelling house, and engaged a series of buildings and theatres called the Rotunda, in Blackfriars-road. Soon after he gained possession of this building the second French Revolution broke out, which gave a new impetus to political feeling in London. Giving to every man liberty of speech in his theatres, the Rotunda was attended by all the public men of note out of Parliament; and the public meetings there became so frequent and so large that the Government took alarm, and the prophecy of the day was that the Rotunda would cause a Revolution in England. While the Tories remained in office they did not molest him [*probably they were sick of former fruitless attempts*], but the Whigs no sooner took office than they very foully made war on him, and caused him thirty-two months' imprisonment in the Compter of the City of London. The Rev. Robert Taylor [author of *Diegesis* and *Devil's Pulpit*] was also prosecuted under the Whig Administration, and filled out two years in Horsemonger Lane Gaol, for his preaching in the Rotunda."

Those were the days of Church and State tyranny, and Carlile was destined to feel the claws of the ecclesiastical part of that bifold monster. In 1834 and 1835 he passed ten weeks more in the Compter for refusing to pay Church Rates assessed upon his house in Fleet-street. When his goods were seized he retaliated by putting into his window two effigies —one of a bishop, and the other of a distraining officer. Subsequently the trinity was completed by the addition of a devil, who was jovially linked arm-in-arm with the bishop. This curious sight naturally attracted the attention of large crowds, which led to Carlile's being indicted as a nuisance. He was sentenced to pay a fine of 40s. to the King, and give sureties in £200 (himself in £100, and two others in £50 each) for good behavior for three years. He refused, however, to involve anyone in his troubles; no security would be give, neither would be truckle to the minions of power. "They have sentenced me," said he, "to three years' imprisonment. So much for their leniency! It is a mockery to say that I may, if I please, purchase my liberty. I cannot do it. I shall have more liberty in prison than in walking the streets at the discretion of one set of men, and at the hazard of £100 penalty to two others. It is a case in which I will not interfere to abate one hour of my imprisonment. When the gates are open to me I will walk out, but I will not pay or do anything to procure release." Carlile's total of imprisonment amounted to nine years and four months.

Carlile had always been Republican; even at the outset of his career, when traversing London to find customers for the *Black Dwarf*, he had disliked Cobbett's *Register* because "it did not go far enough." Before his imprisonment he had identified himself with the extreme party of reformers. He was present at the Manchester Massacre (Peterloo), and narrowly escaped being captured. The ignorance of his person on the part of the soldiers and police secured his safety. He was threatened with dangers from other quarters also. Edwards, the Government spy, the main instrument in hatching the Cato-street conspiracy, attempted to inveigle him into secret illegal practices, which, however, his native good sense rejected. Edwards took a shop next door to Carlile, where William Hone had published his famous *Parodies*, and under various pretences courted Carlile's society. He talked to him about meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury in Windsor Castle, as a modeller, and undertook for him a bust of Paine. Speaking of this, Carlile says: "I revere the name of Thomas Paine; the image of his honest countenance is constantly before me. I have him in bust in whole length figure; for which I have to thank the late Government of Liverpool, Castlereagh, and Sidmouth, who appointed Edwards the spy to this task—he who, when he failed to get me hanged, caused the death of Thistlewood and others." Secret practices had no attraction for Carlile; he preferred to do everything openly in the light of day. Not, indeed, that there was any tincture of timidity in his composition; no more resolute, intrepid man ever breathed. When other reformers shrank back he always pushed forward. Said he: "Timidity may be seen sitting on the countenance of almost every politician. He speaks and speculates with a trembling which generates a prejudice in others. As it is the slave who makes the tyrant, so it is timidity in the politician which creates the prejudice of the persecutor." Even a resort to physical force he would have approved and assisted in, if no other method of remedying abuses had been possible, although he never did see reason to sanction any particular act of violence. "In the beginning of my political career," he wrote, "I had those common notions which the enthusiasm of youth and inexperience produces, that all reforms must be the work of physical force. The heat of my imagination showed me everything about to be done at once. I am now enthusiastic, but it is in *working* where I can work *practically* rather than theoretically; and though I would be the last to oppose a well-applied physical force, in bringing about reforms or revolutions, I would be the last in advising others to rush into useless dangers that I would shun, or where I would not lead. I have long formed the idea that an insurrection against grievances in this country must, to be successful, be spontaneous and not plotted, and

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that all political conspiracies may be local and even individual evils. I challenge the omniscience of the Home Office to say whether I have ever countenanced anything of the kind in word or deed. I will do nothing in a political point of view which cannot be done openly." These surely are wise words, and evince that Carlile had learnt a lesson of political wisdom a whole generation before many more ardent but less sagacious reformers.

Carlile's Republicanism was of a purely practical type. "Liberty," says he, "is the property of man: a Republic only can protect it"; and on behalf of that Republic he ever faithfully labored. Even against the powerful disparagement of William Cobbett he boldly championed it. Yet he would never listen to Socialistic schemes, no matter by whom propounded. "Equality," said he, "means not an equality of *riches* but of *rights* merely." He once discussed Socialism with Mr. Lloyd Jones, and, as might be expected, treated it as chimerical in the present stage of human progress, and probably of but little advantage in any.

As an editor Carlile was industrious and indefatigable. His literary ability was never transcendent, but he wrote nervous terse English, and always showed a thorough knowledge of his subject. Thomas Paine was his model; for Paine's practical spirit much resembled his own. But he depreciated other writers with unjustifiable severity: their impassioned prose seemed to him flighty, because he was not a man of passionate nature. Of Milton he wrote with graceless asperity, apparently forgetting that it was nothing wonderful that the great Republican should be ignorant of political reforms deemed advisable by people who had the advantage of living nearly two centuries later.

Carlile's deficient education was at first a deplorable detraction from his editorial efficiency, but he gradually remedied the defect by dint of assiduous self-culture. During his long imprisonment in Dorchester Gaol he continued to edit the *Republican* with increasing success. The circulation reached as high as 15,000; and in all fourteen volumes were issued. After its discontinuance he edited other periodicals, the *Lion* and the *Christian Warrior;* and each of them with ability and success.

In theological matters Carlile professed various shades of belief. Indeed, he graduated from Deism to Atheism insensibly. In his first controversy with Cobbett he avowed himself a believer in a great controlling power in nature; but not long afterwards he observed: "I may have said that changes observed in phenomena argue the existence of an active power in the universe, but I have again and again renounced the notion of that power being intelligent or designing." By that time he had reached the stage of thought of our great modern philosopher, Herbert Spencer, who declares that "the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable." After his imprisonment he boldly avowed himself an Atheist. He reached the climax of his Atheism, as Mr. Holyoake remarks, on the title-page to his tenth volume of the *Republican*, where he declared "There is no such God in existence as any man has preached; nor any kind of God"; and this declaration was so far carried out in detail as to exclude from the *Republican* the terms *God, nature, mind, soul,* and *spirit* as words without prototypes.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

A Scottish paper complains that the Scots are within a measurable distance of the time when they will be unable to read Burns. The writer forgot to add that when they did read the great Freethinking poet many failed to understand him.

The *Co-operative News* tells a good story about the Insurance Act. A woman asked for an "eternity benefit form." The clerk explained that the benefit applied to the incoming and not the outgoing generation. "Aye well," replied the woman, "my husband said the Act doesn't go far enough."

Acid Drops.

Rev. F. B. Meyer has been giving his opinions on "The Church and the Stage," and these are exactly what one might expect from Mr. Meyer. Their only significance is that they embody common opinions among a certain type of Christians. For example, Mr. Meyer repeats the common falsehood that the Puritan opposition to the stage arose out of disgust at the "debauchery" of the theatre in Charles II.'s reign. This is simply false. The Puritan opposition had little or no relation to the *moral* character of the theatre, and it commenced long before the reign of Charles II. It began as early as 1577, and quite a number of books and pamphlets were written against the theatre by Puritans during the next thirty years. And the attack was only part of a general assault on all sorts of enjoyment—hunting, maypole games, sports, and general amusements. The Puritan attack was not essentially on the ground of morality, it was against what was called "worldly indulgences," in the interests of a form of religion so repulsive that even modern Puritans are ashamed of it.

When the Puritans said "immoral" they really meant "sinful," and anything was sinful that disagreed with their religious prejudices. Mr. Meyer does not believe the theatre is sinful; that, he says, would be a mistake; but he believes the theatre has a bad effect on character. When a man is attracted by the spectacular, his soul "forfeits the power of its subliminal consciousness." We wonder what on earth Mr. Meyer imagines the subliminal consciousness to be. Probably he uses it as a phrase likely to overawe those among his readers whose knowledge of a scientific psychology is on the same level as his own. Or perhaps he imagines that he is preaching that religiously fashionable thing, mysticism, when all his language really represents is mistyism. And the cream of the joke is, that Mr. Meyer knows nothing whatever about theatres. He judges them from the standpoint of the Bible-banging, non-theatre attending Puritan. Most people would be ashamed to express opinions on subjects of which they confessedly know nothing. But parsons are not as other men—for which the other men ought to be duly thankful. For identity works the same from either side.

We have seen plays that we thought highly of, and plays we thought little of. We have seen plays that dealt with unsavory subjects, and plays of a quite opposite character. And, making full allowance for all that may be said about objectionable plays, we beg to say very deliberately that the harm done by the worst play does not approach in virulence the harm done by clergymen gloating on their favorite topic of sexual vice, and their indiscriminate denunciation of things of no real harm in themselves. The most indecent of plays or exhibitions would be limited in its power for evil. If evil is there, it is very thinly disguised. If it appeals to the vicious, it only affects the vicious. Opposite types remain untouched. But your crusading clergyman does not appeal to the vicious in his campaign against a special vice; he appeals to the opposite class. He preaches to the simple and to the ignorant; he gives them a false and jaundiced views of life. He teaches them to see vice and temptation where the first does not, and the second need not, exist. He saturates the mind with vice in his professed endeavor to permeate it with purity. He rarely succeeds in making the vicious less vicious; he frequently succeeds in creating a dangerous consciousness of vice in those who are affected by his preaching. Influence for influence, we scarcely think that the stage need fear comparison with the pulpit, nor the bulk of our actors with the mass of clergymen.

A clergyman was explaining to a lady that in certain savage regions there was only one missionary to 15,000 natives. "Dear me," replied the lady, "the missionaries must be very large men, or the savages must have poor appetites."

Mr. G. B. Dibblee, writing of journalistic work in the *Newspaper*, says, "The practical task of the editors and sub-editors in making up their daily issues consists not in scraping together material for the printer but in rejecting it." Unfortunately, the practical result is that all the unsavory details of divorce and criminal cases are given at length and an important meeting such as that at Essex Hall for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws left out. It is not that editors are religious men. Sensationalism means circulation; and that means £ s. d., the only trinity the newspaper proprietors care for.

"Cleanliness," according to the popular proverb, "is next to godliness," but gluttony is not far behind. The hot-cross

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bun trade is as much an integral portion of Easter as turkeys are associated with Christmas. Indeed, the merry festivals of the "Man of Sorrows" show that twenty centuries of Christianity have failed to eradicate the light-hearted features of the older superstitions.

Mr. Hector Macpherson has a rare capacity for misunderstanding many of the subjects with which he deals. We have before now commented on his flounderings in the realms of both biology and history; and when he sets out to champion Christianity there is every inducement for him to be more than usually inaccurate. In a recent issue of *Everyman*, Mr. Macpherson spent a couple of columns in contrasting what he called the Pagan ideal with the Christian ideal. Paganism, he says, "reduced to its last analysis"—an expression which often covers the fact that there has been an utter absence of analysis—"stands for the self-assertiveness and self-sufficiency of humanity, on the basis of sensuous enjoyment." Imagine anyone with any appreciation of the writings of Æschylus or Euripides, to say nothing of the various schools of philosophy, writing the last clause in the sentence cited. Half an hour with Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius would be enough to teach one better than this. And Mr. Macpherson thinks so little of what he is writing that a little further on he can quote approvingly from a writer, that among the Greeks "we find the finest spirituality with the crudest Paganism," and later, that Paganism "has another ideal besides that of sensuous pleasure—the ideal of beauty." What, then, becomes of the "last analysis"? It is a purely parsonic trick, this saying that Paganism thought of nothing but sensuous enjoyment, while Christianity, for the first time, gave scope to the higher and finer qualities of man; but it is wholly false. Combined with a frank and healthy delight in human strength and beauty, Paganism, in its best expression, gave scope to the highest qualities of the human mind. Pagan literature and philosophy proves this to the hilt. For those who read neither, let them visit a museum, study the type of face depicted in Greek statuary, and then consider whether a people who could even conceive these types had anything to learn from a religion such as Christianity.

The new President of the Free Church Council doubtless considers himself as very keen on social affairs. He takes a warm interest in social betterment. Thus:—

> "Poverty is a dreadful evil. Gloss it over as you will, lend the romance sentiment to its voiceless suffering..... In spite of all, poverty is a living hell, and the man who has looked into the abyss can never forget what he has seen."

This is doubtless what the clergy will call the deliverance of a man with a "vision." And the conclusion is the query, "Where are the just hopes of depressed humanity safe, except as they lie on the bosom of God?" And that is where the President's message ends. They are to rest their hope on God. But as "God" hasn't prevented their becoming poor and sinking into the abyss, there doesn't seem any special reason why one should expect him to pull people out again.

A Dartmouth vicar, as reported in the *Exeter Flying Post*, expresses thanks that farthings don't circulate in his town. He says that on a recent Sunday there were no less than 72 halfpennies in the collection, and he is evidently thankful that there is no chance of still smaller coins being contributed. The Bishop of London said once that people were content to put threepence in the plate, and consider their duty done. Our Dartmouth vicar envies the Bishop. His church possesses a vicar, two good-looking curates, and a peal of bells. He will be delighted, he says, to supply these at a contribution of threepence per head from the congregation, and throw in an organist, fire, and light. But he adds he is a Tory, and he won't give 9d. for 4d. In other words, the gospel business, at a halfpenny per head can't be run.

David Livingstone, the missionary, whose centenary has just been celebrated, was an intrepid explorer. On one occasion he entered a native settlement at the peril of his life. Tired by a long day's march, he lay down in the midst of the savages and fell asleep. That saved him. "He has trusted us," said the chief; "no harm shall come to him." The chief kept his word, and Livingstone left that camp unharmed. The story has been quoted as an example of Livingstone's courage; but it is also an instance of "heathen" chivalry.

The medicine-chest was as much in evidence as the Bible throughout the course of Livingstone's travels in Africa, and there can be no doubt that his medical knowledge was a most important factor in his success as an explorer. Christians are to-day buying apostates all over the heathen world by means of medical missionaries. Such secularistic aids as coals and blankets are not unknown in work among the heathen at home.

According to the British and Foreign Bible Society's reports, the Gospels have been published in "cannibal dialects." Were those portions of the sacred Word selected because of the text, "Except ye drink of my blood and eat of my flesh"? This seems to be acceptable doctrine for a "cannibal" brother.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton is a true-blue Catholic, and in his latest book, *The Victorian Age in Literature* (Home University Library), he displays a considerable amount of theological venom. Swinburne is accused of writing "a learned and sympathetic and indecent parody on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin," Malthus is described as "a thing," and Thomas Hardy as "a sort of village atheist brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." Queen Elizabeth is called a "highly cultivated and complicated liar." Pessimism is described as "a thing unfit for a white man." It is only fair to add that the editors state that the book is not put forward as "authoritative," and is a "free and personal statement of views and impressions." We quite agree that the views are very free and very personal; but let us hope that the readers do not neglect other and less homely universities in their search for knowledge.

The Rev. D. Ewart James, one of the most distinguished Essex Congregational preachers, in the course of a recent address, admitted that churches were no longer filled. He reckoned the Anglican and Roman Churches were dying, and the Free Churches were not crowded. He gave a number of reasons for this state of affairs, including theological unrest, love of ease, the pursuit of sport, and the absence of the spirit of Jesus. Surely, if Christ has left the Churches, it is time for the congregations to file out.

The present Government has had no less than four Ministers of Education, and the present one, Mr. Pease, has announced that he is to try his hand at an Education measure. We are concerned at present only with one aspect of it. When a man finds a problem insoluble, the only sensible plan seems to give it up. Instead of doing this, Mr. Pease announces that the forthcoming Bill will deal with what he regards as an "insoluble problem"—the religious difficulty. We quite agree with him that so long as it is taken for granted that the State must make some provision for religious instruction, the problem before legislators is insoluble. This is because you cannot satisfy one religious party without dissatisfying its religious rivals, and, even if you could satisfy both, it would only be by inflicting an injustice upon a large and growing party in the State. We agree with the *Schoolmaster* that to allow religious education in denominational schools, to pay for these schools out of public funds, and yet prevent ratepayers contributing to denominational religion, is impossible. "It involves a flat contradiction in terms and in facts." All we need add is that the position remains essentially the same, whether it is denominational religion in certain non-provided schools, or what is called undenominational religion in provided schools.

We admit that the problem is hopeless. So is the problem of finding the philosopher's stone or the search for perpetual motion. So is the problem of forecasting what would happen if an irresistible force encountered an immovable object. But sensible men no longer discuss these topics. And the so-called Education difficulty is only insoluble because its very nature involves injustice to a smaller or greater number, and goes beyond the legitimate duties of the modern State. The Congregational Union said the other day that "given adequate supply of civil schools, the religious difficulty will to a considerable degree solve itself." This only means that if Councils supply enough schools in every district, there will be no need to use other schools, and no need to subsidise them. Quite so; but these provided schools will be also giving a religious instruction, with which Nonconformists agree, and so all that is changed is the incidence of the injustice. The *Christian World* says: "It looks as if we were on the eve of a great betrayal." In the mouth of Nonconformists this is the language of conspirators. *We* are betrayed, because the Government does not promise to subsidise the sectarian interests of dissenters. It is the lament of a party of freebooters that the result of their labor is not being awarded them. The great betrayal is really that of the rights of citizenship, and, above all, the rights of the child.

The *Christian World* adds the usual hypocritical comment that things can "never be satisfactory so long as so many

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thousands of appointments of teachers are in the hands of Denominationalists." The *Christian World* must know quite as well as we do that so long as there is any religion in the schools sectarian tests cannot be abolished. Teachers who are known to be Freethinkers are denied promotion in the vast majority of cases. And there is not a Council in the country under which teachers feel at liberty to say what they think about religion—so long as their opinions differ from the Councils under which they serve. With the teachers it is at present only a question of a change of tyrants. Large numbers of teachers are forced into playing the hypocrite, and neither Nonconformist nor Churchmen complain so long as they stand to profit from the situation.

When children are not religious, says Rev. J. G. Stevenson, it is nearly always the fault of the adults. This is not quite true. Children very often outgrow religion in spite of all that adults may do to stunt their growth. We should prefer to put the matter the other way about, and say that when children are religious it is nearly always the fault of the adults. And the proof of this is that if children are cared for in other directions, but left alone in matters of religion they do not grow up religious. Mr. Stevenson says that the "little people turn to God as naturally as flowers turn to the sun." Rubbish! If that is so, why all this concern that adults shall surround them with a religious atmosphere, give them religious instruction, and keep them clear of anti-religious influences? The truth is that childhood is the mythologising age. Children are all more or less animistic, but let alone they advance beyond it in the same way as they outgrow fairy tales. When the environment was different the fairy tale stage persisted right through life. And the fact that some children carry religion into maturity is evidence only that the social environment is not yet as rational and as civilised as it might be. The Churches dare not leave the children alone for a single generation—for that would mean a generation of parents disinclined to misdirect the mental life of *their* offspring in the interests of either Church or Chapel.

"What to do with the *Freethinker*" is the heading of a paragraph in the *Methodist Times* for March 20. The paragraph is concerned with the alleged conversion of a Wigan Atheist who was "converted by a vision," and who has since presented the Rev. W. Rushby, the author of the paragraph, with twelve years' issues of the *Freethinker*, with the suggestion that they might be pulped up again "to print this report upon." All we can say is that if another miracle could be worked, and the articles in the *Freethinkers* be made to reappear on the new paper, Methodist readers would have more common sense put before them than they ever had before in their lives. At any rate, Mr. Rushby might do worse than read the *Freethinkers*' before he destroys them.

We quote the report with all reservation, as we have no means of knowing, at present, whether it is true or false. In either case it will affect us, and other Freethinkers, very little. If the conversion of a Christian to Freethought were as rare as the conversion of a Freethinker to Christianity, we would also write a special paragraph when it occurred. As it is, if we chronicled every case at length, we should have room for nothing else. Moreover, we observe that this particular Freethinker was converted by a vision; so that it is more a case for a doctor than anyone else. We sincerely pity the poor fellow, whoever he is; and hardly anyone but a parson would be in such a hurry to make capital out of a fellow-creature's mental affliction. Seeing visions is as good a way as any we know of to make a Freethinker believe in Christianity. Our consolation is that while they remain sane they continue Freethinkers. When a man begins to see visions, all things are possible. And we have never claimed that Freethought makes a man immune to those mental afflictions that beset ordinary humanity.

The *Daily Mail* has been suggesting a remedy for too early Easters, and proposes that the holiday should be fixed by law at a later season of the year, when more kindly weather conditions might be reasonably anticipated. It is highly significant that this suggestion for the disassociation of Easter from ecclesiastical precedents should come from such a source.

The *Daily Telegraph* on Saturday traced a curious parallel between the fanaticism of the Suffragettes and that of the early Christians. Our contemporary pointed out that Origen was driven to declare from the pulpit that it was wrong to insult or box the ears of idols, and that it was no merit to throw statues to the ground. The mentality of those who disregarded this rule must have been very similar to that of the militant women of to-day. The young Suffragette who hurled a book at the magistrate had her prototype in St. Eulalia, who spat in the judge's face. When devotion to a great cause leads to firing buildings, and to the vulgar conduct of the "drunk and disorderly," it shows that spiritual and spirituous intoxication may sometimes be nearly allied.

While the evangelist "Billy" Sunday was holding a revival meeting in Columbus, the capital of Ohio, he was brought into the House of Representatives to offer prayer. Thereupon, twelve members of the Cuyahoga County delegation got up and walked out. The members who thus protested against the presence of the evangelist are described as "Baker men." Baker, who is called "Newt," is Mayor of Columbus, and appears to be a Secularist. A while ago a body of citizens, styling themselves Baptists, came to the City Hall to make some kind of representations, and were told by the Mayor that he could have nothing to say to them as Baptists, but could receive them only as citizens. Mr. Baker is not in good standing with the religio-political people, who seem to have got Sunday and his lieutenant, evangelist Milford Lyon, in Columbus for the purpose of attacking the Baker administration. — *Truthseeker* (New York).

The *Age* (Melbourne) relates the following illuminating incident illustrating the real opinion which their flocks entertain of the priests when temper gives them courage to express it:—

> "A wild scene disturbed the ordinarily peaceful serenity of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Fitzgerald-street, South Yarra, yesterday morning. The parish priest, Rev. Father Benson, took occasion to admonish a female member of his flock, an old aged pensioner, for some alleged dereliction of spiritual duty, when the old woman, stubborn and rebellious, though perfectly sober, became defiant, and exceedingly offensive. She was thereupon run out to the street by her spiritual adviser, and was told that if she came there again she would be given in charge. 'Go to h——!' Go to h——!' cried the old woman, greatly enraged; adding, 'I can kneel to Almighty God without coming here.'
>
> "Taking up a position in front of the church, she indulged without the least restraint an infinite capacity for vituperation, and abused the priest with extraordinary vehemence, telling him that he 'only wanted her there for her pension money,' and also openly declaring that the good priest would be better if he abstained himself before accusing her of 'spending her money in drink.' As a last shot she declared that in future 'she would confess her sins to God, not to him.'"

The *Times* refers to a hunger-strike as carried out by a bishop in Palestine 1900 years ago. The English bishops of to-day are not likely to starve, or even to go on strike.

The new theological magazine, *Faith and Doubt*, quotes a telling paragraph from a recent *Freethinker* article written by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. If Freethought is adequately represented in its pages, the champions of orthodoxy will have their work cut out.

"Dollar-diplomacy" is the policy of the new President of the United States. It seems strangely like the policy of the Christian Churches.

Swinburne, according to Sir Robertson Nicoll, once described Kipling's "Recessional" as like Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," "but not so good." Atheists do not often indulge in psalm-smiting.

According to the Italian papers, the Pope is in a dying condition. The Holy Father's state is no worse than that of the religion of which he is the "corner stone."

"Science from an Easy Chair" reads a headline in a daily paper. In the ages of Faith the chair was of plain wood, and it was placed in a prison.

"A botanist," said the *Daily Mirror* recently, "has discovered that plants, shrubs, and trees are often emotional in the same way as women are." What agonies that tree in the Garden of Eden must have endured! Or the one to which "Omnipotence" was fastened with three tenpenny nails.

There are many ways of worshiping "God"; but the following suggestion, made by a contributor in the *Co-operative News*, strikes us as being novel. The writer is referring to Easter. "There was among us a new cap, or a new coat, or a new feather, or a bright ribbon, or even as much as a new sixpenny tie was enough to make us feel that we had done something to show our respect to all that Easter means and the God that makes it green."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £83 1s. 4d. Received since:—G. Backhouse Church, £1 1s.; H. T. C., £1 1s.; Mrs. C., £1 1s. *Per Miss Vance:* Arthur H. Sizer, 3s.; E. T. Jarvis, 5s.

G. BACKHOUSE CHURCH, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "Will you permit me to indulge myself by expressing my admiration for your great ability, your honesty, your perseverance, and above all your courage in the face of persistent and unscrupulous foes."

In reply to several applicants, under Mr. W. Bailey's kind offer, we can only repeat our statement that the *English Review* was sold out at the publishing office before we could apply for any.

A. D.—Thanks for your good wishes. The note has been handed to "Mimnermus."

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. HODGSON.—The story of the hymn-tune played on the *Titanic* when she sank has been denied by a number of people.

P.—Much obliged for the reference.

W. E. PAGE.—Sorry to hear of your bereavement.

T. P. W.—Thanks for list of addresses. The papers will be sent as desired.

G. BAZIN.—We understand that the statement did appear in the *Freethinker* in common with other papers; but cannot give the date at this distance of time. At the function you refer to the collection boxes were busy.

A. G. VAN ELDEN.—Accept our thanks for newspaper clipping.

J. W. RAPTON.—Thanks for MS. which we will read. In writing for publication, please remember to write on one side of the paper only.

G. R. BALLARD.—Much obliged. The Meredith article has been widely noticed.

MISS VANCE wishes to obtain copies of the *Freethinker* during its earlier years, preferably unbound, for office purposes. No. 1 is particularly needed. Those who have them for disposal will oblige by writing as soon as possible.

J. W. GOIT.—Pleased to hear of your success in distributing *Freethinker* at Manchester. Your subsequent experience is not surprising. We are not astonished at "Christian Socialists" keeping their Christianity well to the front. Our surprise is that Freethinking Socialists are not equally keen in circumventing them instead of playing into their hands by a policy of passive acquiescence.

S. SMITH.—Mr. Foote is quite unable, even when in working trim, to undertake outside newspaper correspondence, except under special circumstances. At present, as you will see, he is unable to attend to the work that falls within his proper sphere.

R. MCNAIRN.—Order handed to shop manager. We hope that your desire to hear Mr. Foote will be gratified when he resumes platform work, who will be as pleased to find you among his audience.

E. HOLLIDAY.—Thanks for "best wishes for the Freethought movement." One cannot expect to convert the world suddenly, nor would such a conversion really be worth much, were it possible. The progress of the movement is, however, steady and continuous, and that is the all-important and gratifying fact.

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Personal.

WRITING to me with reference to the Essex Hall meeting in favor of the total abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, my valued friend, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, says:—

> "I am extremely sorry that you have been so very ill, and trust that your recovery will be expeditious and complete. It would have been an infinite loss if your speech had not been given, for it was far and away *the* speech of the evening; but the penalty inflicted has been much too severe."

I hope my recovery may be complete; I am afraid it will not be expeditious. The blow was heavier than I realised at first. I have a pretty stiff battle to fight. And the weather is all against me.

I thank Mr. Cohen for taking the editorial responsibility in my absence—and "Mimnermus" and Mr. Lloyd for rendering valuable assistance.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The Annual Conference of the N. S. S. will be held at Queen's Hall, Langham-place, London, W., on Whit-Sunday, May 11. Secretaries of N. S. S. Branches are reminded that the books close for 1912-13 on April 12, and that all notices of motion for the Conference Agenda must reach the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, by April 7, and will be published in the *Freethinker* a fortnight prior to the meeting.

A course of three lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., has been arranged to take place in the Stratford Town Hall. Mr. Cohen opens on April 6, to be followed by Mr. Lloyd and Miss Kough. It is hoped that local Freethinkers will do their best to make these meetings successful. Small slips, giving titles of lectures, etc., have been printed, and Miss Vance will be happy to supply them to all who will undertake their circulation.

The N. S. S. has just issued two tracts, entitled *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, by J. T. Lloyd, and *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. The latter is an extract from Mr. G. W. Foote's writings, specially selected by the late Dr. E. B. Foote for publication in tract form by the New York Truthseeker Co. The distribution of these tracts will be found to be one of the most effectual forms of propaganda.

Steady progress is being made with the National Secular Society's Scholarship Scheme, as announced in the *Freethinker* for March 16. Several meetings have been held by the Committee appointed by the Executive to consider details of the scheme, and a number of applications from intending candidates received. To all of these forms of application have been sent. Those who propose entering themselves for the necessary study and examination should apply to Miss Vance at once.

Councillor A. B. Moss, who is a stalwart Freethinker asked the Camberwell Borough Council recently to erect a hall or temple at the cemetery for burial services for unbelievers. In supporting the motion, Councillor Moss pointed out that the National Secular Society and the Ethical Societies used beautiful funeral services; but when a Freethinker was buried the service had to be conducted at the graveside, no matter what the weather conditions might be. He asked for the erection of a temple in which the Jew, the Unitarian, the Deist, the Positivist, and the Secularist might each conduct his funeral rites. Freethinkers were ratepayers and respectable citizens. Councillor Lucas, who seconded, urged that all considerable sections of the ratepayers should be considered. After discussion the motion was lost; but it is a happy augury for the future that such a matter should be discussed by a London Council.

Mr. Foote's article on George Meredith in the *English Review* is the subject of a critical paragraph in the *Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette* for March 15. The writer asks:—

> "Has Mr. Foote treated George Meredith quite worthily in his anxiety to claim him publicly for his sect? George Meredith sided generously with Mr. Foote against his enemies, because he himself was altogether in favor of freedom of thought and against bigotry and intolerance, especially against unintelligent and interested bigotry. So on more than one occasion he gave Mr. Foote assurance of his sympathy, and did, moreover, what not every sympathiser does, he sent money. Mr. Foote and his friends on each occasion asked in addition, for the advertisement of his name; and on each occasion George Meredith disdained to deny his name. But Meredith not being a sectary, but being gifted with a catholic insight into humanity, distrusted iconoclasm as much as he distrusted idolatry. Yet because he was a freethinker in the true sense of the word, Mr. Foote is bent on exhibiting him as a freethinker in his sense of the word. Meredith's generosity merited a more generous comprehension."

The obvious reply to this absurd criticism is that, although Meredith's correspondence with Mr. Foote extended over a period of thirty years, and much might have been made of Meredith's sympathy with the Freethought movement, Mr. Foote kept the correspondence private until after Meredith's death. Had Mr. Foote wished for publicity he need not have consulted Meredith. The writer of the paragraph admits that Meredith was "a freethinker in the true sense of the word"; but had it not been for Mr. Foote's article in the *English Review* few persons would have been aware that Meredith was a Freethinker at all.

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The Procreant Cradles of Feathered Bipeds.

As we near the vernal season of the year, thoughts of opening buds and leaves, sunshine and sweet flowers, and the melodies of feathered minstrels return to cheer us as the days increase. The starling has sung his simple song, and the thrush has heralded the dawn and made glad the eve through February's dull decline, and now that March has come, the blackbird has begun to pour forth his wondrous melodies from the shelter of evergreens, or even from the, as yet, bare boughs of oak, ash, chestnut, and elm. The house sparrows are gathering straws for their ragged nests in nooks and crannies provided by the habitations of man.

In our urban parks and gardens, the chief enemy of our feathered friends is the sly and stealthy cat. Of course, the bird-nesting boy must not forgotten, and the squirrel, which is an expert tree climber, and builds its own nest in trees, is very partial to the eggs and nestlings of birds. Indeed, as Professor Chalmers Mitchell pointed out quite recently, the American squirrels which have been set at liberty by the authorities in Regent's Park have in all probability seriously reduced the birds of that formerly favored spot. "Wood pigeons, thrushes, and blackbirds, and all the small songsters that build in shrubs and hedges have had their nests pulled to pieces and their eggs and young destroyed."*

This illustrates on a very minor scale the pitiless destruction of the eggs and fledglings of birds which is nature's everyday performance in regions where her steely coldness is unrelieved by those humane influences which protect these most beautiful and fascinating products of evolution. Various lizards and numerous snakes prey upon their eggs, and devour their helpless broods. No spot is sacred to the ravages of these rapacious reptiles, who penetrate the densest thickets and ascend the tallest trees. Rats, stoats, and weasels are never to be trusted in the company of eggs, and the writer has himself seen a rat descending from a thrush's nest which it had just plundered of its five eggs. Our near relations, the apes and monkeys, have a distinct weakness for eggs, and the same is true of ourselves. The human consumption of eggs throughout the world is stupendous. Then there is the civil war which rages among the feathered tribes themselves. Fish-eating and flesh-devouring birds plunder the nests, and destroy the broods of other feathered creatures without the slightest mercy.

If one were to permit oneself to speculate as to the forms of life which coming ages may bring to our planet, one would soon in all probability be driven to the lame and impotent conclusion that all conjecture is utterly vain. When the reptiles were the sovereigns of life the most philosophical among them were incapable of the faintest imagination of the fact that their order was destined to give rise to those reptilian birds who became the begetters of all that wondrous wealth of avarian life which has existed for many millions of years. Nevertheless, the descent of birds from reptile ancestors is one of the most firmly established conclusions of modern biology. The affinities between birds and reptiles are so strongly marked that comparative anatomists include them in a common class—the Sauropsida.

In the springtime the vast land areas of Northern Europe, Asia, and America become the cradling grounds of countless migrant birds. Those very notable visitants to the British Isles, the swallow and cuckoo, never fail to reappear with spring. In the South of England, any mild March will witness the nest-building operations of the hedge sparrow, chaffinch, blackbird, and thrush. The linnets, most finches, pigeons, starlings, pheasants, and partridges breed somewhat later in the season. The cuckoo appears to be the only bird that breeds in Britain which has lost the nest-building instinct. This bird drops her eggs in the nests of other birds. She usually chooses the nest of the hedge sparrow for this purpose, and, having laid an egg in it, leaves it for the unsophisticated sparrow to hatch out among her own clutch. The young intruder—a model of ugliness when newly hatched—never rests until he has evicted all of the four or five legitimate offspring of his foster-mother. A further phase of the loss of the nest-building aptitude is furnished by Mr. W. H. Hudson, who has watched the American starling unsuccessfully striving to erect a dwelling-place for its eggs. These starlings, or "cow-birds," wait about with the object of annexing the newly-built nests of other birds, and seize the first opportunity that presents itself. More impudent varieties of "cow-birds" coolly lay their eggs in the already occupied nests of other birds, and their nestlings, when hatched out, play the same ungrateful pranks as the sparrow-fostered cuckoo.

The breeding structures of birds betray all the evidences of gradual evolution. Reptiles pay scant attention to their eggs after they have been safely laid. In almost all extant birds, however, parental care and sacrifice are highly evolved. Primitive birds in all probability bestowed little attention upon their progeny. And wide differences are to be met with among contemporary species. Certain megapodes, or brush turkeys, merely lay their eggs, cover them with sand, and leave the rest to the chance warmth of the sun. The parrot of New Zealand prepares no nest, and merely places her eggs in any available hole or tunnel. Among ostriches, a number of females make a depression in the sand, in which they deposit their eggs. Auks and other seafowl lay their eggs on the bare ledges of rocks. Birds of the most diverse species in every part of the globe simply select unfrequented spots for the deposition of their eggs, and some place a few leaves or bits of soft material under or around their clutch, while others make no preparation of any kind. Nests and nurseries of the most primitive character seem to satisfy the requirements of puffins, petrels, owls, wild ducks, and most of the parrots.

Further progress is displayed by pheasants, partridges, and other game-birds, which collect dried ferns, leavee, soft sticks, etc., out of which they make a comfortable ground nest. The skilfully constructed nest of the moor-hen, which reposes among the pond reeds, perfectly warm and dry, indicates a still further advance. The nest of the wood pigeon, however, remains extremely rude, consisting, as it does, of a few black sticks, arranged platform-wise, on a forked tree branch or bough. The magpie's nest is raised on similar foundations, but it is surrounded by a fortification of thorns, and sometimes roofed over with a covering of twigs. In the Zoological Gardens two tufted umbres were observed constructing a nest which is more elaborate than that of the magpie. "They made a platform of sticks, cemented with mud, and then covered it with a huge dome of sticks nearly two feet in height, leaving a small entrance at the side." The structures erected by the European blackbirds and thrushes are cup-shaped, mud or dung being utilised to form the walls of the nest. The blackbird usually lines its nest with soft material before the eggs are laid, but the song thrush places her four or five eggs on the hardened mud of the nest's interior, and does not line her nursery with a carpet of comfortable moss or lichen until the young are hatched. Among our native birds the art of nidification attains its greatest perfection with our small songsters, warblers, and twitterers. The cradling edifices of the chaffinch and the linnets are marvels of woven ingenuity, as is also the remarkable dome-covered home of the tiny wren.

From the standpoint of nidification, the bird world may be broadly divided into two groups—the ground-builders and the tree-builders. It is among the latter that the most finished products are to be found. Taking the bird population of the globe as a whole, the small singing species erect the most elaborate nests. With them,—

> "the use of mud as a cement is discarded, and the whole nest is woven of the finest hairs, vegetable fibres,

* *Childhood of Animals*, p. 147.

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> and wool, softened during the process of building by saliva from the mouths of the builders.....The ingenuity and diversity of the various woven nests are endless, and allied species show all the traces between rude structures and exquisitely finished houses. There are so many instances of different formations of the nest according to the different environments in which the birds live, and so many cases where it seems plain that the instinct is partly degenerate, that it is impossible to arrange a parallel series between the complexity of the nest and the position of a particular species in its family. Types of construction run through the nests of allied species, but appear in all stages of perfection and degeneration." *

All leading ornithologists admit the justice of the foregoing generalisations. The innumerable modes of nest construction display such endless variety that no definite order of development can be established in the present fragmentary state of our knowledge. Birds possess considerable mental power, and their great plasticity is proved by their ready response to environmental change. It has frequently been noticed that the nests of the Baltimore oriole, when built near human dwellings, are very different to those of their kind which are erected in their native wilds. The nests vary both in shape and structure, and the birds that nest near towns and villages appear to realise that there is less need for concealment from hawks and snakes. Swallows and swifts everywhere promptly abandon hollow trees, cliffs, or caverns for the barns, cattle sheds, and chimneys in homestead or village. In a constant environment the form and texture of bird's nests vary very little. "Children and savages imitate before they originate; birds, as well as all other animals do the same."

Many transitions may be observed between nests constructed mainly of fibrous substances, both animal and vegetable, partly cemented, or mixed with clay and saliva, and nests which are formed out of mud and saliva almost entirely. Various nests, built with plastic materials, correspond in outline with shapes which arise naturally through the employment of fibrous material, and it has been most ingeniously suggested that birds which now use plastic materials in fashioning their nests, formerly employed fibrous materials such as stems, hair, and wool, instead. An interesting analogy is furnished by the course followed during the evolution of the potter's art. Wicker-work vessels were anterior to utensils compounded of clay. But so soon as early man discovered that he could strengthen his baskets by anointing them with clay, he began to realise that clay alone would meet his requirements better; and, as a result, the wood work was abandoned in favor of pottery. Primitive pottery is often seen to be ornamented with rude patterns which point to its origin from smeared fibres.

Another aspect of evolution resides in the circumstance that, where the receptacle for the eggs is simply a hole scratched in the soil, this preparation is made by the hen bird only. But whenever elaborate nests are constructed, both sexes participate in their building. In some instances, the communal spirit prevails, as in the case of rookeries and the massed nests of swallows and house sparrows. Sea and shore birds have general breeding stations, and will make a united attack upon enemies that threaten their eggs or young. One of the most remarkable breeding grounds in Britain is to be found along the shores of the Farne Islands. That eminent authority, Charles Dixon, has given us an animated description of these nurseries. Countless thousands of oyster-catchers, cormorants, guillemots, terns, gulls, plovers, eider-ducks, and puffins congregate on this favored spot every spring. Dixon writes:—

> "On approaching some of the islands, the first impression is that this gull [the lesser black-backed gull] monopolises the whole of the ground, as it occurs in such vast abundance. The air seems full of them, the ground and bare rocks are crowded; and, as our boat finally grates against the rough beach and we eagerly jump ashore, all becomes noisy excitement—a perfect babel of protesting cries that is persistently kept up until we leave the place." *

To sum up. The nests of birds are partly the result of environing circumstances, and largely the outcome of the comparative strength or weakness of the newly hatched broods. The brush turkey is the only bird which devotes no attention to its offspring. But the chicks are so well developed when they emerge from the egg that they can run about and get their own living. An elaborate nest is unnecessary to pheasants and partridges, lapwings, and other ground-breeding birds. With these, the young wander from the nesting spot as soon as they leave the egg. In the case of the lapwing, the eggshell may be seen adhering to the back of the newly hatched chick as it runs along the furrows.

The evolution of the nest proceeds, *pari passu*, with the initial immaturity of the young. Where nests are skilfully constructed, the nestlings are sometimes blind, frequently naked, and always quite helpless, at birth. The higher birds excel all other creatures in the art of cradling their progeny, and it is somewhat important to remember that, despite occasional departures here and there, the more advanced the species in structure and intelligence, the greater the necessity for parental guardianship and food provision for the defenceless broods.

T. F. PALMER.

* *Childhood of Animals*, pp. 150, 151.

* *Among the Birds in Northern Shires*, p. 219.

A Note on Religion in the Army.

IT appears from the King's Regulations that a soldier must "have some sort of religion." Paragraph 912 says: "A soldier will be classed under the following denominations:—Church of England; Presbyterian; Wesleyan; Baptist or Congregationalist; other Protestant denominations (name of denomination to be noted); Roman Catholic; Jew." Paragraph 1821 also says: "Every soldier, when not prevented by military duty, will attend divine service, but a soldier will not be obliged to attend the service of any other religious body than his own." Once a man enters the Army and is "sworn in" under one of these religious denominations, there is small hope, if he is a Freethinker, or becomes one afterwards, that he will ever be excused from divine service. I have not heard of a single instance of a soldier being attested as an Atheist, Agnostic, or Freethinker; neither have I heard of any soldier being permitted to drop his religion in favor of Freethought after his attestation. I speak on this matter with authority, having made special inquiries some three or four years ago at several large recruiting and regimental record offices, from officials who have dealt with hundreds of thousands of soldiers' attestation and discharge papers.

I am of opinion, however, that a Freethinker desiring to *join* the Army has a legal right not to have any of these religious denominations imposed upon him. I believe he could enforce this by taking advantage of the Oaths Act (1888) at his attestation. This Act distinctly lays down that "affirmation" is allowed for *every person* and in *all places*. That it is permissible to make an affirmation instead of taking the oath is even backed up by the Army Act (sec. 190, para. 28), which says: "The expression 'oath' and 'swear,' and other expressions relating thereto, include affirmation or declaration."

If a recruit is permitted to make an affirmation on the ground "that he has no religious belief" (*vide* Oaths Act), I do not see very well how the authorities can compel him to accept any of the religious denominations scheduled on his attestation papers, unless he goes down under the heading of "Other Protestants"; and when asked to specify the particular denomination, let him say he "protests" against all the others on the list.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

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How to Break the Boycott.

IT has been repeatedly pointed out in these columns that the Freethought movement suffers from the boycott which is applied in the press, booksellers' and newsagents' shops, and at the public and private libraries. With rare exceptions, Freethought publications are ignored in the former and kept out of the latter. Hence, it becomes incumbent upon every Freethinker to assist in breaking down this boycott and to assist actively in the propagation of the literature of the movement. With this idea, Freethinkers should ask for Freethought publications at the libraries which they use, and see that they are supplied. An excellent beginning could be made with Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free Will?* and with Vivian's *Churches and Modern Thought*. In extreme cases, the books might be presented to the library; but care must be taken that the volumes are not placed on a top shelf and forgotten. So far as pamphlets are concerned, it is, perhaps, better to hand or post them to likely readers. Orthodox persons are often interested in controversial literature, and such introduction often means that regular readers are obtained. Remembering that, in spite of a most rigorous boycott, many thousands of pamphlets are already in circulation, it must be apparent that, with the added publicity, these figures may be largely exceeded in the immediate future.

With regard to the *Freethinker*, it is useful to order the paper with other publications, so that the tradesman is faced with the dilemma of accepting or refusing a good customer. In posting copies to people, it is always desirable to use envelopes, for frequently, in these days of advertising circulars, newspapers receive scant attention. Another useful suggestion is for Freethinkers to join in any likely discussion in local papers. These organs often give more space to readers' opinions than the large London journals. Letters should be terse, strictly to the point, and courteous, and should be written on one side of the paper only. Back numbers of the *Freethinker* should never be wasted; but should be left in trams, trains, and 'buses, or otherwise distributed. In order to prevent an improper use being made of these copies, it is wise to clip a piece from one of the corners, so that they may not be used as newsagents' returns. If these few hints are acted upon by our readers, it should prove of permanent benefit to the movement. We should be pleased to hear from any readers who have any useful suggestions to offer in this connection.

MIMNERMUS.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

THE King and Queen of the loyal little kingdom of Adulatia were returning to their capital after a visit to a foreign Court. The railway journey had been long and tiring, and the king and queen were feeling and looking very weary as they drove through the streets to the palace, but this in no way damped the enthusiasm of their subjects. Every yard of the two miles or so between the railway station and the palace was thronged with a seething multitude, a continuous roar of cheering accompanied the royal equipage on its progress, the military escort could scarcely keep the roadways clear, and sometimes the carriage had to proceed almost at a walking place.

"What a fuss!" observed the King to the Queen as he leaned back in sheer weariness, and gave his right arm a little rest from the arduous work of raising his hat. "I wonder, really, why they do it."

"So do I," said the Queen, stifling a yawn and deftly turning it into a smile towards her loyal subjects. "I wish they would let us get along a little faster. I'm positively perishing for a cup of tea."

Before they reached the palace, their Majesties were so weary that they had almost ceased to notice the plaudits of the populace, and when eventually they did get there, they were so relieved at finding themselves at home that they quite forgot to carry out the customary formality of appearing on an upper balcony and giving their loving subjects a final bow and smile.

Next day the Prime Minister requested a special audience of the King, and was ushered into his presence wearing a very grave expression of face.

"I regret to inform your Majesty," he said, "that the people are making severe remarks on the apparent indifference with which your Majesties received their loyal welcome yesterday. Their disappointment and vexation are great, and have given rise to a feeling of disaffection which I fear will spread."

"Didn't take off my hat quite often enough, eh?" said the King airily. "Well, you can let it be known that I was abominably tired, and so was the Queen."

"I am afraid it is more serious than you think, sir," replied the Prime Minister. "If your Majesties could make it convenient to drive through the city this afternoon and —"

"Sorry that is impossible," said the King shortly. "Neither the Queen nor I feel inclined for a drive this afternoon."

Next morning, the leading Radical paper of Adulatia came out with a strong article on the King's growing arrogance and disregard of his people's wishes and feelings. Other Radical papers also commented severely on the King's behavior, and a Socialist paper let itself go in a most scathing and sarcastic leading article, which concluded as follows:—

> "Monarchs have always been notorious for their criminal neglect of the duties of their position, and even now, when their position in the modern State is that of mere ornamental puppets, their characteristics are the same. Even puppets on a mimic stage are expected to smile, and bow, and go through their appointed antics when the strings are pulled, but our royal puppets, in their hopeless inefficiency and laziness, fail even to do this. Away with them!"

The Prime Minister visited the palace again that evening with an even graver air than before.

"Your Majesty has no doubt seen the papers," he said. "The feeling of vexation is spreading rapidly and becoming more intense. Radical agitators are inflaming the minds of the people. When Parliament meets next week I fear the Left will make much of the incident for political purposes. If your Majesty and the Queen would graciously condescend to take a short State drive to-morrow morning —"

"No, we *won't*," said the King emphatically. "I am not to be intimidated by Radical newspapers and Radical agitators. After all, I suppose I have a right to share in the liberties of my country, so why should I be the only individual in the land who must go for a drive against his will, and take off his hat several hundreds of times on compulsion?"

As the King seemed so determined, the Prime Minister withdrew, and could only wait in some trepidation till the meeting of Parliament. Very soon after this took place, the leader of the Radical Opposition rose to call the attention of the House to a matter of grave public importance, and to move a resolution which practically amounted to a censure of the Throne. In the course of his speech, he described the royal drive from the railway station to the palace, and gave details showing how inappreciative their Majesties had been of the people's loyal welcome. Between the railway station and the Square of Nicholas IX., he declared, the King raised his hat only fourteen times and the Queen bowed only eleven times. Between the square Nicholas and the park of Ferdinand XV. the King looked at his watch twice, and once was distinctly seen to frown. He also raised his hat only nine times the whole way, while the Queen gave her devoted subjects only five rather listless smiles. Between the park and the palace both their Majesties leaned back in the carriage almost regardless of the cheering crowds, and on reaching the palace they failed to show themselves on the balcony to give the people a final opportunity of saluting them—an instance of royal neglect unprecedented in the history of Adulatia.

The Radical side of the House voted solidly for the resolution of censure, and, as many of the Conservatives were of the same opinion, it was carried by a large majority. But the Clericals voted on the other side, thus nobly maintaining their ancient reputation for supporting the Throne in every national crisis. They solemnly declared that to bow or not to bow, to smile, to frown, or to yawn were matters strictly within the divine rights of monarchs which should not be rudely interfered with by their subjects. The Socialists refrained from voting at all, their leader taking the view that it didn't matter a snap of the fingers whether kings and queens bowed and smiled to the populace or not, and that the people and Parliament of Adulatia were making egregious fools of themselves in raising such a fuss over it.

The Prime Minister was now in despair, and at his next interview with the King implored him to issue a conciliatory

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message to the people, dignified, yet gracious in tone, which would be certain to dispel all bitterness and bring his loyal subjects to their allegiance once again.

The King laughed. "In fact you want me to say I am sorry I was so naughty, and to promise to be a good boy in future. A pretty attitude for a King, forsooth! I will see my people in—well, a warmer climate than Adulatia before I do anything of the kind. Good morning."

But the punishment of this arrogant monarch was not long delayed. The people took the matter into their own hands, and their method of bringing their sovereign to a sense of his duty was as effective as it was novel. It simply consisted in entirely ignoring his existence. Whenever the King and Queen of Adulatia went out among the people, whether to view a military parade, to open an exhibition, to lay a foundation stone, or for any other purpose, no notice whatever was taken of them in the streets. People went about their business just as usual, no one ever turned to look at them, and many deliberately turned their backs on the royal carriage and pretended to examine the shop windows.

This was a quite impossible position for monarchs to exist in for long. It is a well-known aphorism that obsequious applause and servile flattery are the very life-breath of kings, and the King and Queen of Adulatia soon had bitter experience of its truth. There was nothing for it but to issue a Royal Proclamation in almost abject language, expressing their regret for the past and promising amendment for the future; so their humiliation was complete.

Thus did the spirited and resolute people of Adulatia impose their authority on their sovereigns, and thus too did they demonstrate a great principle which, had it been recognised in past ages and applied to all the despotic monarchs of history, might have obviated much violence and suffering. For instance, if our ancestors who had the misfortune to live under the rule of that pious "martyr" Charles I. had merely ignored him whenever he appeared amongst them, they might have been spared the disagreeable necessity of cutting off his head.

THE YELLOW-JACKETS GOT BUSY.

It was long before the Civil War that a man named Langham Brown, a Methodist preacher, lived in the little town of Edwardsville. The people of that time were not as dressy as they are now. In summer time they wore linen breeches and in winter time they wore buckskin breeches; that is, the men folk did. Springtime came, and the Rev. Mr. Brown took off his buckskin breeches and put on his linen ones. His good old wife took his buckskin breeches and hung them in the loft. During the summer the yellow-jackets built a nest in the seat of them. Fall came, and, like all good Methodist preachers, Brother Brown was to have a quarterly meeting. The time came for the meeting, this being in October. The weather was quite cool, so Brother Brown said to his wife, "I think I will put on my buckskin breeches." Mrs. Brown climbed up into the loft, got the preacher's buckskin breeches, and he put them on and went to church. A big crowd of people had come, and two or three brother preachers had taken seats on the platform before Brother Brown arrived.

He walked bravely up, took up a hymn-book, and lined a hymn, which the audience sang. Then one of the brothers led in prayer, after which Brother Brown gave out his text, the words of which were, "The wages of sin is death." "This, my hearers, is the word of God, spoken to the children of men, warning us of the price of sin. The soul that sins must surely die, for that is the price of sin. The nation that sins must pay the price." "Amen!" shouted Deacon Strong.

By this time Brother Brown got warmed up, and the little chaps in the seat of his pants got stirred up and became busy with their business end, which caused Brother Brown to step around pretty lively, at the same time proclaiming with a loud voice, "The wages of sin is death, saith the Lord," at the same time clapping the seat of his buckskin breeches with much force. This alarmed the brethren sitting with him, who rose up and said;

"Brethren, our good brother is crazy."

"I am not crazy," said Brother Brown. "The spirit of God is in my heart and the word of God is in my mouth, but I believe the very Devil has got in the seat of my breeches." "Amen!" shouted Deacon Strong.

Mr. Dunnybrig affected one book beside the Bible.....The full title of the book was the contents in a lurid sentence: "Horrors and Terrors of the Hour of Death and Day of Judgment that seize upon all Impenitent and Unbelieving Sinners, to which are added Sundry Examples of God's Dreadful Judgments against Violent Breakers of His Holy Commandments."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

The Bishop's Miracle.

The Bishop of London has added to his other attractions by becoming a worker of miracles. A little girl was ill, and the Bishop went to see her. She was unable to sleep, and was suffering from nervous breakdown. Bishop Ingram straightway knelt down at her bedside, anointed her forehead with oil, placed his hand on the girl's head, gave her his blessing, and the girl sank into a deep sleep that lasted for hours. And the Bishop was quite sure that Jesus was personally with him. This is not the first time we have heard of prayers as a cure for insomnia, and we quite believe the Bishop of London to be simple enough to honestly credit that a miracle was worked on this occasion. Other people will be at no loss to find a much simpler explanation of the occurrence.

The *Christian World* does not accept the Bishop's explanation of what occurred, which may be due to his belonging to another denomination than their own. Above all, it does not believe that the anointing with oil had anything to do with it. It says this is mere superstition on the Bishop's part. But we beg to point out that he was accurately following the New Testament prescription. It was the prayer of faith and the anointing with oil that was to save the sick. If it did it in apostolic times, why not now? If it cannot do it now, why believe it was done in apostolic times? And if it could not be done at any time, what becomes of the New Testament teaching on the subject? That is the worst of placing simple-minded men like F. W. Ingram in positions of prominence. They are silly enough to take their religion seriously, and so provide laughter for the ungodly.

Encouraged by his experience, the Bishop of London stood in the pulpit of St. Peter's, Eaton-square, offering prayers for cases that had been handed to him. He prayed for a schoolboy who was fighting temptation, young teachers with intellectual difficulties, ladies with nervous breakdowns, sick children, men in financial straits, etc., etc. All you had to do, apparently, was to send up a prayer about it. He was a kind of receiving agent for God Almighty, or a clearing house for Providence. It was a fine exhibition, a perfectly unique example of what a long way from real civilisation a large number of our fellow-citizens really are.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mrs. T. Goulding, of 10 Gordon-road, Manor Park, which occurred on Wednesday, March 12, after a long and painful illness. Like her husband, Mrs. Goulding was a convinced and outspoken Freethinker. She was an ardent admirer and follower of Charles Bradlaugh, and was on the active list at many of his meetings. She died in the faith wherein she had lived; and, as her bereaved husband testified, her death was beautiful. The interment took place in Manor Park Cemetery on March 19, when a Secular Service was conducted. We tender our sincere sympathy to Mr. Goulding and family in their loss.—J. T. L.

South-West London Freethinkers will regret to hear of the death of another veteran, Mr. L. D. Hewitt, formerly a constant attendant at the Hall of Science, for many years resident in Wimbledon. Over seventy years of age, and feeling that his end was near, some ten days before his death he wrote me a letter of sympathy, and assured me of his strong adherence to the principles he had held for more than forty years and his never-failing interest in the *Freethinker*. He passed away peacefully on February 28, and was buried at Brookwood on March 4, the funeral being a silent one, in accordance with his wishes.—E. M. Vance.

It is our sad duty to record the death of yet another London Freethinker, namely, that of Mr. Ezekiel Turkington, of 64 Bury-road, Noel Park, which took place on Sunday, March 16, in the fiftieth year of his age. He was one of the oldest supporters of the National Secular Society in Wood Green, and for years rendered the cause most valuable service. He was one of those who acted as Mr. Cohen's bodyguard many years ago when intolerance reigned supreme in the minds of the disciples of the meek and mild Redeemer. The burial occurred on March 22 at the Tottenham Cemetery, when a Secular Service was read. We extend to the widow and her children our heartiest condolence.—J. T. Lloyd.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Davidson, "What is Left when Christ has Gone?"

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Hyde, Lancs (Socialist Church): Joseph A. E. Bates, 3.15, "The Philosophic Necessity of Materialism"; 6.30, "The Religion of Ancient Egypt and its Survival in Modern Christianity." Pianoforte selections by Hans Raabe.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Annual Members' Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

Hanley, Staffs (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates, March 27, at 7.30, "Religion, Science, and the End of the World."

Stoke-on-Trent (near London-road Monument): Joseph A. E. Bates, March 28, at 8, "Man Crucified."

MARRIAGE.

At the Registry Office, Carlisle, on 6th inst., Thomas Riglin to Mary Armstrong.

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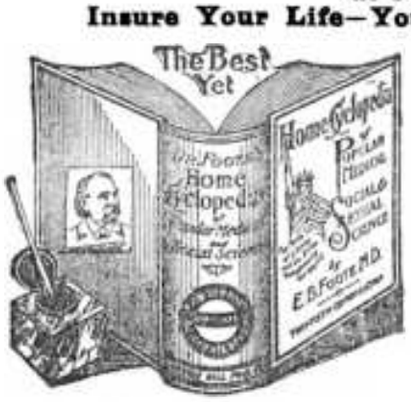
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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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To be wholly devoted to some intellectual exercise is to have succeeded in life.—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

M. Jean Dons.—In Memory of an International Freethinker.

THE cause of Freethought in Belgium and of international Freethought throughout the world have suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Monsieur Jean Dons. At all the International Freethought Congresses, from Madrid in 1892 to Munich in 1912, he was the central but silent figure of the organisation, a man with absolutely no pretensions as an orator, but with the mighty energy of a cheerful, untiring worker. Personally, I feel all but crushed under the discouragement of this unexpected blow, which has happened so soon after the lamentable death of that other great Belgian worker for Freethought, Professor Eugène Monseur, both of whom I loved and admired. The loss of two such men, happening within a few short months, might suffice to ruin any other national movement of Freethought; but, happily, the cause for which Dons labored so long, and to which Monseur gave his genius and splendid courage, is rich with men of first-rate capacity and unrivalled devotion amongst the sturdy Rationalists of Belgium.

At his death, at Saint-Gilles, Brussels, on March 2, our excellent friend Dons was 67 years of age. Born on December 30, 1845, he was barely 18 years of age at the foundation of the Brussels Freethought Society, which has just celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its glorious existence. Already, at that early age, he had made application for admission as a member of the Society, but in accordance with the rules as to terms of membership had to wait for his majority before his desire could be gratified. He waited, but worked for Freethought in the meantime in the junior section.

In 1880, acting on the initiative of Dr. César Paepe, the organised Freethinkers throughout the world founded at Brussels an International Federation. Jean Dons' name figures amongst those of other founders of that organisation, which ultimately achieved the great triumph of the Rome Congress and moved the conscience of modern civilisation when the Church and the bigots thought they could murder Ferrer with impunity. Jean Dons, who loved the international side of Freethought with all his strength, became the Treasurer of the International Bureau at Brussels, and occupied that position at his death.

Five years later, when at the National Congress held at Charleroi in 1885, it was decided to form the Belgian Freethought Societies into a National Federation, Dons was appointed General Secretary, and remained in the discharge of those important and onerous functions at the moment of his decease. According to the recent report presented by M. Dons on the state of the Freethought movement in Belgium, the number of federated Rationalist Societies now amount to 370, and the roll of membership of these several groups shows more than 26,000 personal adherents. These statistics, which are the silent witness to strenuous labor continuously pursued, and which compare so favorably with the figures of 25 years ago, when the federated groups amounted only to 35 and the total members to 2,000,* reflect in no small degree the embodied results of the energy and intelligence with which our friend Dons watched over the operations of Belgian Freethought.

In 1893 Jean Dons took part, with others, in founding the *Orphelinat Rationaliste*, and ultimately became the administrator, the Treasurer, and constant friend of that admirable institution. He loved the happy orphans more than most fathers love their natural offspring, and on his retirement in 1911 from his honored career as an official in the Railway Department of State in Belgium, spent the major part of his leisure in attending to the details of the Orphanage management The last time I saw Jean Dons was in November, 1911, at the Orphanage, where I spent some time discussing with him and the teachers the different educational and practical aspects of their eminently secular work. The smartness of the children (they are 70 in number), their general bearing, and especially their affection for M. Dons, were touching proofs of the humanitarian principles on which this well-kept, handsomely situated Rationalist Orphanage is conducted. Madame Dons, who survives her husband, identified herself with all his Freethought aspirations, and especially with the work of the Orphanage. English and American Freethinkers, on their visit to the beautiful Belgian capital, should not fail to make a pious pilgrimage of love to the white house in the Chaussée d'Alsemberg (at Forest-Uccle, just on the outskirts of Brussels) in order to see the Orphanage for themselves. They will receive a hearty welcome, and find that some of the teachers can speak to them in very good English.

Side by side with the pick-and-spade work of direct Freethought propaganda, our friend Dons recognised that the social, literary, musical, and artistic appeal has also to be made, perhaps, in certain cases, more effectively, by the indirect attack on the orthodox entrenchments of superstition. Many years ago he and other Freethinkers in Brussels founded the *Cercle des Soirées Populaires Rationalistes*, under the auspices of which the largest halls in Brussels were, and are, taken and crammed Sunday after Sunday during the winter months to hear the best artists, the finest singers, and the best orators in the capital. On one occasion the Cercle held a most successful gathering at the Theatre de la Monnaie—answering in Brussels to our Covent Garden Theatre. In this way the social influence of the movement spread, and gained fresh adherents, and among the signal achievements of the Cercle is the number of young people who become attached to Freethought and escape, by civil marriage and the secular recognition or naming of their children, from the entanglements of theology.

All these tasks and achievements during 46 years or more of devoted and disinterested attachment to Freethought won for Jean Dons a wide circle of friends and admirers at home and abroad. His name is known wherever organised Freethought forms its phalanx against superstition and stretches out its hands to kindred spirits who are fighting the same foe in other lands. To thousands of militants

* See *La Libre Pensée internationale* (ed. 1912), by M. Eugène Hins, p. 17.

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who remember that quiet and determined organiser at our periodical gatherings in different parts of the world, a sense of deep loss will come and a pang of bitter privation.

My first remembrance of Dons was at Paris in 1902 at the International Congress. In 1903 I travelled with him and Madame Dons—his invariable companion on these distant pilgrimages—from Brussels to Geneva, in order to attend the Congress held at the University. I had many, and pleasant, opportunities during our journey, first to Strasbourg, and during our visits over that fine old city, and later, on our way to Berne and thereafter for about a week at Chamounix, and in different parts of Switzerland, to appreciate his great goodness of heart and his keen, active intelligence as a Freethought worker. Pleasant memories of these forays for Freethought and in search of the curious and picturesque have in these last few days risen unsummoned in my mind, the ghost of the past rising, as it were, to admonish those who would mourn, that the emptiness of death is but a mirage as compared with the fullness of life when the fascinating beauty of high ideals and the imperishable glory of art and natural loveliness have poured forth their treasures for the enrichment of our experience of men and things.

If ever the funeral of Freethinker demanded and deserved pomp and circumstance to bespeak admiration of the honored dead, it was due in the case of Jean Dons. And right royally—and with deeper sincerity than most royalty can elicit—did Freethought in Brussels mark its appreciation of our friend Dons when the parting came and death paid its tribute to earth. At the mortuary Dr. Hector Denis read a moving discourse in the name of the International Bureau, and M. Emile Royer spoke a touching address on the Orphanage. The funeral cortège then started on its journey, led by the flags of the National Freethought Federation, followed by those of all the Rationalist Societies in Brussels, those of Liége, Mons, etc.; and then came the Orphans, who immediately preceded the funeral car, which was literally buried under floral crowns and wreaths. An immense crowd of delegates from provincial societies and a considerable number of deputés, senateurs, municipal officers, bourgemestres, town councillors, etc., followed the hearse. At the cemetery five addresses were delivered in honor of the deceased, depicting his life in summary.*

And so the procession moves on its way; the warriors of the good fight fall down, smitten in the battle; but the living follow after, and the wreaths and flowers, and the young generations; renewed hopes and fresh inspiration spring from the open grave; and death is swallowed up in victory.

William Heaford.

Religion and Sex.—V.

(*Concluded from p. 195.*)

If we turn from biographical narratives to manuals of devotion, we find the same kind of evidence. As examples of this I may cite, first of all, from a collection of old English Homilies, dating from the thirteenth century:—

> "Jesus my holy love, my sure sweetness! Jesus my heart, my joy, my soul-heal! Jesus, sweet Jesus, my darling, my life, my light, my balm, my honey-drop! .....Kindle me with the blaze of thy enlightening love. Let me be thy leman, and teach me to love thee..... Oh, that I might behold how thou stretchedst thyself for me on the cross. Oh, that I might cast myself between those same arms, so very wide outspread..... Oh, that I were in thy arms, in thy arms so stretchedst and outspread on the cross."†

Or this, from the same collection:—

> "Sweet Jesus, my love, my darling, my Lord, my Savior, my balm, sweeter is the remembrance of thee than honey in the mouth. Who is there that may not love thy lovely face? Whose heart is so hard that may not melt at the remembrance of thee? Oh! who may not love thee, lovely Jesus? Jesus my precious darling, my love, my life, my beloved, my most worthy of love, my heart's balm, thou art lovesome in countenance, thou art altogether bright. All angels' life is to look upon thy face, for thy cheer is so marvellously lovesome and pleasant to look upon.....Thou art so bright, and so white that the sun would be pale if compared to thy blissful countenance. If I, then, love any man for beauty, I will love thee, my dear life, my mother's fairest son" (p. 268).

Although this kind of language is more plentiful in Roman Catholic books of devotion than elsewhere, it is not peculiar to them. In illustration of this we may take the following outbursts from one of Wesley's female converts, as given by Southey in his *Life of Wesley*:—

> "Oh, mighty, powerful, happy change! The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and a flame kindled there with pains so violent, and yet so very ravishing that my body was almost torn asunder. I sweated, I trembled, I fainted, I sang. Oh, I thought my head was a fountain of water. I was dissolved in love. My beloved is mine, and I am his. He has all charms; he has ravished my heart; he is my comforter, my friend, my all. Oh, I am sick of love. He is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand. Oh, how Jesus fills, Jesus extends, Jesus overwhelms the soul in which he lives."

In the following canticle, composed by St. Francis of Assissi, it is simply impossible to distinguish any substantial difference between it and frankly erotic poetry:—

> "Into love's furnace I am cast,
> Into love's furnace I am cast,
> I burn, I languish, pine, and waste.
> Oh, love divine, how sharp thy dart!
> How deep the wound that galls my heart!
> As wax in heat, so, from above,
> My smitten soul dissolves in love.
> I live, yet languishing I die,
> While in thy furnace bound I lie." *

The erotic note is here clear and unmistakable. And it would be possible to furnish exact parallels from volumes of secular verse that would be strictly taboo among those who see no harm whatever in these verses when used in connection with religion, and who quite fail to recognise that their attractiveness really lies in their erotic character, as they owe their origin to the strong sexual feelings of the writers. Moreover, we are dealing here with more than language selected because of an artistic perception of its fitness to express strong feeling, and so far symbolic. It is the spontaneous expression of strong sexual feeling in its most natural form. That the object of devotion is a heavenly instead of an earthly person matters not. Psychologically, we are dealing with the same kind of feeling, springing from the same kind of organisation; and whether this feeling expends itself in the one direction or the other is a sheer environmental accident. How is it possible to resist the implications of the following from a French devotional work widely circulated amongst the women of France:—

> "Praise to Jesus, praise his power,
> Praise his sweet allurements,
> Praise to Jesus, when his goodness
> Reduces me to nakedness;
> Praise to Jesus when he says to me,
> My sister, my dove, my beautiful one!
> Praise to Jesus in all my steps,
> Praise to his amorous charms.
> Praise to Jesus when his loving mouth
> Touches mine in a loving kiss.
>
> Praise to Jesus when his gentle caresses
> Overwhelm me with chaste joys.
> Praise to Jesus when at his leisure
> He allows me to kiss him."†

As a parallel to this we may take the following hymn sung at an American camp meeting of some

* See *La Pensée* of March 15.

† From a collection published by the Early English Text Society; 1868; pp. 182-4.

* G. A. Coe, *The Spiritual Life*, p. 210.

† From *Les Perles de Saint Francois de Sales*; 1871. Cited by Bloch, p. 111.

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thousands of persons between the ages of fourteen and twenty-five :—

"Blessed Lily of the Valley, oh, how fair is He;
He is mine, I am His.
Sweeter than the angels' music is His voice to me;
He is mine, I am His.
Where the lilies fair are blooming by the waters calm
There He leads me and upholds me by His strong right arm.
All the air is love around me—I can feel no harm;
He is mine, I am His."*

The chief significance of this last quotation lies in the age of the congregation. Fourteen to twenty-five covers the years during which distinctive sexual qualities are developed; and in place of these receiving a quiet and regular direction into social and harmless channels, we have the contagious excitement of a revival meeting. It is no wonder that observer after observer have complained, sometimes with wonder, that instead of the religious gatherings being followed by a decrease of sensuality, the reverse has been the case. The whole atmosphere of such gatherings is sensual in the highest degree, and one ought not to be surprised if the normal consequences follow. It should be the most obvious of truths that the attractiveness of such, with the keen delight taken in the pictures suggested, lies in their yielding—all unknown, perhaps, to the singers—satisfaction to feelings that are frequently imperious in their demands, and are astonishingly pervasive in their influence.

Much light is thrown upon the subject by a study of human behavior in cases of actual disease. Of late years a flood of light has been thrown upon normal psychology by a study of abnormal mental states,† and in cases of unmistakable disorder it is possible to see very clearly how readily the sexual feelings find expression in religious phraseology. If the reader will turn to Sir T. S. Clouston's *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*, he will find on p. 584 of that work an example in point. The author quotes there a poem written by one of his patients, and which is reproduced in order to illustrate "the common mixture of religious and sexual emotion." I forbear reproducing it because of its grossly obscene character; and yet it is not, in its mingling of religion and eroticism, substantially different to many of the citations already given. In such cases disease helps to an understanding of human nature in its more normal aspects. We are able to trace the operation of tendencies and qualities unobscured by the disguises and restraints forced upon them by social convention and education.

Professor Granger, who at times very nearly hits on the truth, says :—

> "There is something profoundly philosophical in the use of *The Song of Songs* to typify the communion of the soul with its ideal. The passion which is expressed by the Shulamite for her earthly lover in such glowing phrases becomes the type of the love of the soul towards God."‡

One fails to see the profoundly philosophic nature of the selection. *The Song of Songs* is a frankly erotic love poem, and but for the accident of its being in the Bible, would never have been selected at all. There can be no question that, had it appeared in the religious books of a non-Christian people, we should have had it cited as evidence of the moral inferiority of their religious writings. And as a matter of fact, similar effusions have been cited by Christians from non-Christian writings to that end. But being in the Bible, its use has been sanctioned, not really because it typified the union of the soul with God, but because it gave expression to feelings that were diverted from their normal channels. The true lesson of the selection is that sexual feeling cannot be suppressed; it can only be diverted or disguised. Some expression it will find—here an open perversion in outbursts of vice, there an obsession that results in an insane asceticism, and elsewhere the creation of the unconsciously salacious, with an unhealthy fondness for dabbling in the question of the illicit relation of the sexes.

"One of the reasons why popular religion in England," says Professor Granger, "seems to be coming to the limits of its power, is that it has contented itself so largely with the commonplace motives which, after all, find sufficient exercise in the ordinary duties of life." Here, again, is a striking obtuseness to a plain but important truth. For the truth is that religion, whether of the popular or other variety, will always lose power as soon as the nature of the forces it utilises is recognised and the proper channels opened for their expression. This has been the case right through human history. We see it in the gradual emancipation of the physical sciences from religious control. We see it also in the growing liberation of sociology and morals. In each case human activity expressed itself in a religious form only so long as the religious idea was associated with a particular subject. If men think of the planets as living beings or as controlled by spiritual powers, their reasoning on astronomy cannot escape a religious form. While moral impulses are regarded as due to supernatural inspiration, ethics is a department of theology. Given more complete knowledge, both the scientific and the moral impulse find gratification apart from religion, which weakens accordingly. And I have tried to show in these articles that exactly the same principle holds true of the play of the sexual impulse, in both its normal and abnormal aspects, as well as in the case of obscure nervous diseases. Here also we find enlisted in the service of religion, phenomena that must admit of a thoroughly non-religious explanation. It is not a question of religion losing power because it has contented itself with commonplace motives, and because these find satisfaction in the ordinary duties of life. It is really a case of providing a scientific explanation of the whole of human nature, in its most complex as in its most simple phases, and a consequent dismissal of the religious theory as a mere survival of the most primitive savagery.

C. COHEN.

* Davenport's *Primitive Tracts in Religious Revivals*, p. 29.
† See, for instance, Coriat's *Abnormal Psychology* and Boris Sidis's *Psycho-Pathological Researches*.
‡ *The Soul of a Christian*, p. 178.

Fanatics.

WHEN we call anyone a fanatic what do we mean? Do we intend to bestow praise or blame upon the person so described? Etymologically a fanatic is one moved or inspired by a deity. In Rome there used to be people who attended the temples and fell into what we in modern times speak of as trances and became mediums through whom important predictions were supposed to be made. In Latin, *fanum* is the word for temple, and it naturally follows that *fanatics* is a term applied to people who are temple-mad. In the French *fanatique* is often used interchangeably with bigoted. Thomas Fuller, writing in 1660, says :

> "There is a new word, coined within a few months, called *fanatics*, which by the close stickling thereof, seemeth well cut out and proportioned to signify what is meant thereby, even the sectaries of our age."

Generally speaking, by fanatics we of to-day understand people who harbor and express wild, extravagant views on any subject, but chiefly on that of religion, or people who are governed by imagination, or emotion, rather than by judgment or reason. Moore says :—

> "But Faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast
> To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last."

Fanaticism denotes the sovereignty of unreason, the supremacy of superstition. You cannot argue with fanatics, the art being utterly unknown to them. If you ask them calm questions they fly into a passion and pelt you with vulgar abuse. If they had their way people who differ from them would never be permitted to open their lips. They are the only people who *know* because they are guided by right

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feelings. One of them addresses himself to a Sceptic, who has seen many sorrows, thus:—

> "Hold! I challenge you in the name of the Lord. I bid you listen in the name of the crucified, glorified Christ. And I tell you that your good will not stay in any tomb; you could not make it do so, no matter how hard you tried. I tell you that there will be a glorious resurrection. That which has been worthy to know a Calvary shall know an Easter morning. You may not believe me now, but you will believe me by and by."

Such an appeal can only issue from one whose intelligence is in slavish subjection to his religious emotion; and you can no more conduct an argument with him than with a house on fire.

In our judgment all Christians are fanatics, and cannot be anything else. When a telegram was handed to the President of the Duma announcing the fall of Adrianople there ensued a wonderful scene of wild rejoicing. According to Reuter's message from Petersburg, M. Krupensky stepped into the tribunal and cried out, "Adrianople has fallen! Hurrah!" "The deputies and the public rose as a man, and for a long time the hall echoed to their cheers. The sitting was then suspended." Here was an assembly of unreasoning fanatics beside itself with joy because the Cross was rapidly driving the Crescent out of Europe. The bloodshed had been horrible, but what mattered that when the victory was Christ's? To break faith with Infidels has ever been a Christian virtue, and this is what the Great European Powers have done with the Turks. They gave their solemn word that whatever the result of the war might be there would be no geographical changes, and that word they have conveniently ignored. Pierre Loti, in his admirable little book, *Turquie Agonisante*, expresses the strongest detestation of such conduct. Writing in December, he used these words:—

> "Alas, as the events precipitate themselves, which we contemplate with supreme emotion, the European nations, Prussia in particular, their ex-friend, show a facility in disowning the given word and an easiness in deceit which are more and more stupefying" (p. 60).

The wish to see Europe entirely Christian overmasters every other sentiment, and honesty and fidelity and truth are of only a secondary importance. What is this but fanaticism of the deepest dye?

Fanaticism blinds the eye of the mind so that its victims cannot see the truth. Christians never hesitate to put the Bible, with all its contradictions, absurdities, atrocities, immoralities, indecencies, and obscenities, into the hands of innocent, little children. The theatre is of the Devil, but the Bible is of God. The dance is indecent, and no genuine Christian can take part in it without injury to his piety, but the perusal of Bible stories tends to elevate and ennoble the moral sense. Everybody knows that there are chapters in God's Book which cannot be read in public; but that fact is no hindrance whatever to its being eulogised as Holy Writ. There are plenty of persons about still who boast of their ability to accept every sentence in it as God's truth. Is not this fanaticism at its lowest and worst? There are even men of learning who, while acknowledging that the volume contains much mythological and legendary stuff, still persist in declaring it to be a perfect revelation of the Supreme Being, and of the way of salvation through faith in Christ. Only the other day, a Vicar, preaching in Halifax Parish Church, Yorkshire, said that we owe a debt to the Bible which we can never pay, and part of this debt was indicated by the statement that this Book teaches us to look away from ourselves, even to despise our own faculties, and to glorify God by putting our entire reliance on him. According to this principle, self-reliance is the sin of sins, and any man who tries to find refuge in himself is utterly lost. For this glorious teaching, the good Vicar assured his hearers, we are indebted to the Bible alone. Then he added:—

> "In the writings of Buddha [*though it is well known that Buddha never wrote a line!*], for example, the central idea is to throw man back for all ultimate help on to Nature, or on to himself. Listen to the revelation given by Gotama many ages ago, 'Be ye lamps unto your own selves, be a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no other refuge, the Buddhas are only teachers, look not for refuge to any beside yourselves.' This is the heart of the Buddhist theology [*though it is well known that Gotama frowned upon all theologies*]—'no Divine love save the love of man for man, no All-Father, no Savior, no angel-guardians, no possible refuge save in ourselves.'"

We boldly avow a decided preference for the condemned but rational teaching of Gotama; nor are we ashamed to affirm that the world owes a much bigger debt to it than to the Bible.

Another instance of the blindness of fanaticism is furnished by the estimate which Christians form of and the attitude which they maintain towards all non-Christians. According to the New Testament, the sin that damns a man absolutely and for ever is unbelief. It was "an evil heart of unbelief" which kept the Israelites wandering aimlessly for forty years in the wilderness, concerning whom Jehovah said, "I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." Then the author of Hebrews concludes, "We see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief." With this fact in mind, we are not surprised to discover that Christian teachers are very fond of expatiating upon the evils that follow in the train of unbelief. The Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A., minister of Hillhead Baptist Church, Glasgow, describes unbelief as a sin for which there can be no justification, which is another way of saying that to differ from Christians is to be wicked. Mr. Forbes says:—

> "The inexcusableness of it comes from this, that at bottom, when you get to the true man, beneath all motives that temporarily sway the soul, there does remain in hearts a persuasion that Christ is right, that Christians have the best of it; that because Christ is right, he has right over lives, and that because he is the truth he is king."

We pass an exceedingly light censure upon that kind of talk when we characterise it as being essentially impudent and rude. What right has Mr. Forbes to think and publicly say that in his heart of hearts every man is convinced that Christ is right and that Christians have the best of it? We deliberately hold the opinion that Christ is wrong and that Christians have the worst of it, and we defy Mr. Forbes to disprove this conviction. Did not the Gospel Jesus discourse almost exclusively about God and our relations thereto, about heaven as the abode of post-mortem bliss, and about an impossible kingdom in which poverty, mourning, hatred of relations, non-resistance of evil, and the use of the sword would be accounted virtues? We venture to express the view that nobody, in any age or country, has ever spoken, with a single scrap of knowledge, of God and heaven and a future life, and that, therefore, only fanatics can possibly preach the Christian Gospel, and condemn those who refuse to believe it. Unbelief in such a Gospel, if at all intelligent, is a sign of mental strength and independence. As a rule, unbelievers are intellectually the superiors of believers, and morally at least their equals.

Our chief objection to Christian fanatics is that they are shameless busybodies. "We know you far better than you know yourself," they tell everybody; "and we are ready to prescribe for your malady, which otherwise is incurable. You try to make out that you are an Atheist and an opponent of Christ; but in reality you are only the victim of moral cowardice. You are afraid of your own conscience, and to silence it you attempt to banish the thought of God and hell-fire from your mind. Man, you are deplorably self-deceived; you are no more of an Atheist than we are; and in the central deeps of your being you reverence Christ." Holding such views, they officiously sit in judgment upon all who differ from them, and thrust themselves and their wares upon them. All heathen countries are perishing for lack of the special knowledge of which they claim to be the heaven-appointed custodians. But at last their day of reckoning is dawning; and instead

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of the Gospel of Christ, which history has long ago discredited, we are promised the Gospel of Humanity, which will concern itself with the Kingdom of Man and his righteousness. For the speedy and full coming of this Kingdom may we all faithfully and strenuously labor.

J. T. LLOYD.

Shakespeare and the Bible.

"Shakespeare was in the genuine sense, that is, in the best and highest and widest meaning of the term, a Freethinker."—SWINBURNE.

SHAKESPEARE is the supreme genius of literature. Compared with him, Homer nods and Dante stutters. And this man, who was "not of an age, but for all time," is England's greatest son. There is nothing new to be said of his genius. The whole world has acknowledged it for many generations. The most exhaustive criticism has been brought to bear upon his writings. The whole vocabulary of eulogy has been used in praising his work. But there is one point, which, though recognised by many of his ablest critics, has not been brought into sufficient prominence. Shakespeare was a Freethinker. A great moralist he is universally admitted to be; but the popular idea associates morality with the orthodoxy of the moment.

There have been many guesses, founded mainly on passages in his plays, concerning the speculative belief of Shakespeare. Credulity has represented him as an evangelical Christian; a Churchman of the type of that buffoon, James I.; as a Protestant bigot; as a Spiritualist; and even as a member of what Carlyle calls "the great lying Catholic Church." Shakespearean commentators are adepts in bringing startling meanings out of a Shakespeare text, as a conjurer brings eggs, ribbons, and rabbits from an empty hat. But these attempts to prove Shakespeare a bigot or a crank leave real students of the Master's work unconvinced.

Shakespeare was a world too wide for any theology. He never fretted and fussed about the salvation of his soul. He was no more a Christian than Lucretius or Omar Khayyam, Montaigne, or Rabelais. Indeed, Shakespeare never hesitated to make his characters jest as Biblical subjects, or to treat with indifference, and even irreverence, the most sacred features of the Christian faith. The sceptical note is not confined to raillery, it finally merges in iconoclasm. He puts plenty of Biblical allusion in the mouth of Sir John Falstaff. Listen! "In the state of innocency Adam fell, and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in a state of villainy." Bardolph's face reminds him of hell-fire and Dives that lived in purple, and of the devil's kitchen where he does nothing but roast malt worms. Then Sir John ridicules hell-fire, "I think the devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that is in me should set hell on fire." When Falstaff dies, trusty Bardolph exclaims, "Would I were with him, wheresome'er he is, either in heaven or hell," and Mistress Quickly replies, "Nay, sure he's not in hell; he's in Arthur's bosom," substituting, with subtle sarcasm, the legendary English hero for the mythical Jewish one.

Mrs. Page tells Mrs. Ford to dispense with such a trifle as going "to hell for an eternal moment or so," thus casting derision on the eternity of everlasting punishment. The clown in *Measure for Measure* burlesques St. Paul's ideas of the subordination of women:—

"Come hither, sirrah. Can you cut off a man's head?"

"If a man is a bachelor, sir, I can; but if he be a married man, he is his wife's head, and I can never cut off a woman's head."

King Richard compares himself to Christ, and even exalts his own misery above that sacred person. He has "three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas." So Judas did to Jesus, "he, in twelve, found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none." The Royal Hunchback in Henry VI. flippantly says, "For you shall sup with Jesus Christ to-night." In the same play the Duchess of Gloster remarks:—

"Could I come near your beauty with my nails,
I'd set my ten commandments in thy face."

In *Twelfth Night*, when Olivia says of her brother, "I know his soul is in heaven, fool," like a sword-thrust comes the rude answer, "The more fool you, madonna, to mourn for your brother being in heaven."

Shakespeare, like Huxley, ridicules miracles. In the scene in *Twelfth Night* between Malvolio and the Clown, he caricatures the idea that madness is occasioned by demoniacal possession, and is curable by exorcism. Not contented with iconoclasm, Shakespeare explains miracles:—

"No natural exhalation in the sky
No scope of Nature, no distempered day,
No common wind, no customed event,
But they will pluck away his natural cause,
And call them meteors, prodigies, and signs,
Abortives, presages, and tongues of heaven."

The explanation is the more forceful by being put in the mouth of a Cardinal of the Catholic Church.

Helena, in *All's Well*, says:—

"In religion
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text."

Timon tells us caustically that gold "will knit and break religions," and elsewhere Shakespeare warns us in lines of Lucretian bitterness:—

"Our remedies oft in themselves do lie
Which we ascribe to heaven."

The dying words of Hamlet, "The rest is silence"; the speech of the Duke in *Measure for Measure*," whilst silencing Claudio's imaginary fears of death,—

"Thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provokest,
Yet grosely fear'st
Thy death, which is no more."

—also indicate Shakespeare's heterodoxy.

The Master took the beliefs and superstitions around him as his material. Ghosts, fairies, witches, gods, and goddesses, the mythology of the Ancients, and the *dramatis personæ* of the Christian religion, are but the machinery for appealing to the popular sentiments. When they have served their turn they appear no more. The permanent direction of his thought was towards Secularism. On the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is most significant. Often as his questionings turn to the riddle of the universe, he leaves it an enigma to the last, disdaining the common theological solutions. He makes Prospero say:—

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

Sleep before birth, sleep after death! What Christian could have written it? Take *King Lear*, the tragedy "too deep for tears," touching the root-springs of human nature. The whole tragedy is an impeachment of Providence, and is summed up in the biting lines:—

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods—
They kill us for their sport."

The same iconoclastic note sounds in *The Tempest*, when Miranda says, while viewing the shipwreck:—

"Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The freighting souls within her."

Serenely the great dramatist leaves human nature to expound in its own being the mystery of existence. His philosophy is taken from the heart of life:—

"Nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean."

Had we only his plays to refer to, it were sufficient to prove Shakespeare's heterodoxy. Fortunately, we have another source from which his views may be drawn. In the sonnets the Master "unlocks his heart." Throughout the whole series, in which the subjects of love strong as death and the bitter irony of destiny are treated with fullness, allusions to the

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Christian mythology are absent. Orthodox dogmas are thrown to the winds. The Voltaire of Persia might have written the following lines:—

> "When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself and curse my fate."

It is in the very spirit of that "large infidel," Omar, and who but a Freethinker could have written "deaf" before "heaven"? No other immortality is suggested but that through offspring:—

> "And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
> Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence."

The epitaph on Shakespeare's eldest daughter clearly implies that the Master's life had not been one of piety:—

> "Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
> Wise to salvation was good mistris Hall;
> Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
> Wholly of Him with whom she's now in blisse."

Shakespeare deals in his masterpieces with the deepest issues of life and conduct, but he never points to the Cross as a solution. In an age when religious wars and schisms were convulsing Europe, and in England when the old faith was in its death-struggle with the reformed religion, it is remarkable that Shakespeare turned his back on Christianity.

When we compare Shakespeare's works with the Bible, the absurdity of supposing that the world's greatest poet drew literary inspiration from that Oriental medley is apparent. The Bible comes from the same Eastern background as the *Arabian Nights*, and the characters of the latter are mere puppets and their stories are a mere succession of incident and event, unbroken by any attempt at characterisation. This is true of the Bible. When the clergy boast of the unparalleled literary value of the Scriptures, it is well to remember this fact, and to enter a strenuous, and, if possible, a serious protest. Compared to the great master of literature, Shakespeare, the anonymous authors of the Bible are poor of resource, limited of range, commonplace in execution. These Orientals mostly pour out floods of lust, anger, and pietism; largely utter hoarse cries of fear, revenge, and worship. Wit and repartee were closed doors to them. From the first error in Genesis to the final absurdity in Revelation, there is not a spark of humor. Much of their best work is only mellifluous prurience presented in exotic forms of verse. At other times their verse is filled with the turmoil of battle, the champing of horses, the flashing of spears. Only on rare occasions does the still, sad voice of humanity make itself heard. Thus, in the last analysis, the Bible simply contains the ordinary stock-in-trade of almost all Oriental writers. Compare the elementary barbarisms of the Bible with the opulent originality of Shakespeare. Place side by side *Romeo and Juliet* with the Song of Songs; *Lear* with Job; and the songs and sonnets with the Psalms. Confronted further with the masterpieces of Homer, Sophocles, or Dante, the books of the Bible become merely the works of minor writers. If they had not been associated with a very heavily endowed system of religion, they would, centuries ago, have consumed to nothingness in the echoless temple of universal silence.

Mimnermus.

The late Mr. Clifton Bingham, the popular song writer, who died last week, wrote quite a number of lyrics about dying children and angels, which caught the public fancy. At length he tried the patience of Mr. Cowen, the composer, who, in a pleasant letter, asked the author if he did not think that between them they had killed enough little children. Mr. Bingham agreed and afterwards chose happier subjects.

The Bishop of Winchester, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral at the Livingstone Memorial Service, referred to such biographies as that of the famous missionary as being "the best shot in the Church's locker, the best tonic in her store." So one of the latter-day functions of the Church of Christ seems to be either to blow you up or buck you up.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Foote's *English Review* article on Meredith has roused the ire of an anonymous writer in the *Antidote*, a publication of the existence of which we have only just become aware. We can only guess the writer's personality, and, whether we are right or wrong in our surmise, we beg to congratulate him on having at least the grace to refrain from disclosing his name to the world. Had he pursued the same policy with his article, the public—or the small portion of it that reads it—would have been all the better for the suppression. The larger part of the article is taken up with Mr. Foote's contribution to the *Review*, and we may be pardoned suspecting that it is Mr. Harrison's publishing this that inspires the general attack on his editorial policy. The wisely anonymous writer in the *Antidote* does not deny that Meredith was a Freethinker; he does not challenge any of the facts stated about Meredith by Mr. Foote; he has not the wit, or knowledge enough of Meredith's work, to even suggest a different interpretation of the facts. His is an undisguised appeal to the snobbery, the pseudo-morality, and the intolerance of the British public. And after reading it, we feel that what we need is not an antidote, but an emetic.

The writer twice drags in the name of Lord Roberts, whom he assumes will not "be less disgusted than ourselves" at finding his contribution in the same issue as an article "by no less a literary luminary than Mr. G. W. Foote, who himself informs us that he was prosecuted under the Blasphemy Laws on account of the *Freethinker*, and that a Roman Catholic judge sentenced him to 12 months' imprisonment." We do not know whether Lord Roberts will be disgusted or not, and we can assure everybody concerned that we do not care. For Lord Roberts' own sake we hope that his character is less contemptible than the *Antidote* writer (who naturally sees the world reflected in the mirror of his own mind) imagines. We can hardly picture *him* risking imprisonment for the sake of an opinion; hence his inability to appreciate the character and conduct of those who do. Had Jesus Christ escaped from the hands of his captors after a term of imprisonment, we feel sure that people like the writer we are dealing with would have warmly protested against an ex-prisoner being tolerated by decent society.

The real offence of the *English Review* seems to lie in its being allowed to say in its pages that Swinburne and Meredith were Freethinkers. The *Antidote* quotes Mr. Foote's comments on the funerals of the two men, and then proceeds:—

> "Happily neither Swinburne nor Meredith will sleep the less soundly in consecrated ground.....It will take more than Swinburne's youthful blasphemies, and than Meredith's mature cheque for the *Freethinker*, to make reasonable people cry 'Scandalous!' because these great men were given Christian burial. There should be grace enough in the sweet heaven for both of them, and the *English Review* does an ill-service to letters when it allows them to be dubbed Freethinker and Anti-Theist."

We pass this cowardly falsification of facts with the bare comment that Meredith's favorable attitude to the *Freethinker* was not confined to a "mature cheque"—his endorsement of Freethought covered many years of his life; nor were Swinburne's "blasphemies" (if by that is meant his Anti-Theistic opinions) confined to his youth. Swinburne and Meredith will, indeed, sleep as soundly in consecrated ground as elsewhere—that lies beyond the control of even the bigotry of the *Antidote*. The issue is not one of the dead sleeping soundly, but of the living acting honestly. And Mr. Foote's protest was against the horrible and disgusting farce of reading over a man's dead body opinions and doctrines that he repudiated when living. We agree that it will take more than has been said to make *some* people ashamed of this practice of religious body-snatching; but we have good reason for believing that even among Christians many *are* ashamed of these tactics. In any case, Mr. Foote's protest was intended for those with some sense of honor and honest dealing with the memories of the dead, and from that category the *Antidote* writer stands self-excluded.

It is not an "ill-service to letters," but the best of all services to letters and to life, when an editor places within reach of his readers all sides of the character of those who worthily represented while living the higher life of man. It has always been one of the disgraceful features of English journalism that it has systematically suppressed the truth about the opinions of prominent men. For once in a way this cowardly game of silence, and dishonest work of misrepresentation, has been rudely broken in on by the more

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manly policy of the *English Review*. We welcome the change, quite apart from the fact that Mr. Foote happened to have written the particular article under notice. We should have been none the less pleased had the truth been told by someone else. We quite appreciate the alarm of characters such as the writer in the *Antidote* at this innovation. For with truth comes enlightenment, and with enlightenment comes breadth of view and sanity of vision. And with these comes not only the decay of worn-out institutions and baseless ideas, but the disappearance of that army of scribblers whose pens are always at the command of any interest that cares to purchase them directly or indirectly.

Dr. Orchard says, "That Jesus has been so entirely appropriated by the Western world, where animosity to the Jews is still only faintly concealed, is the measure of his triumph. The modern world has managed to forget that Jesus was a Jew." The reverend gentleman is entirely mistaken. To the Christian world Jesus has never been a Jew, but always the Son of God, or the God-man, and the Jews have been so violently hated and so cruelly persecuted throughout the centuries in Christendom because they rejected and secured the crucifixion of the Savior of the world. Until they disowned their own Redeemer and got him removed they were Heaven's Chosen People. Hatred of the Jews is a product of Christianity.

Mr. and Mrs. Carleton Wolsey Washburne, a young couple of Los Angeles, California, were married by a clergyman some seven months ago; but after the ceremony they published a contract they had entered into, in which they agreed to join together in a seven months' trial of matrimony, and to allow each other full liberty for other alliances the moment their love grew cold. It was an odd experiment, but it has turned out all right as far as the lady is concerned, as may be seen by her letter to the newspapers. "I am my husband's equal partner," she says. "I have my separate bank account and a half of all his earnings. I am in no way subject to my husband's will. Our love is absolutely without bonds. The result is that there has been no ripple on our married life." Was there ever a marriage founded on a less romantic basis? "I have half his earnings and a bank account of my own." How pretty! We might add how petty! And when offspring come, and the real basis of marriage asserts itself, what then? We are rather glad that these people are religious.

"I cannot conceive," writes a pious *Daily News* correspondent, "that Christian England will really agree to a decision which finally bars the Allies from Constantinople, and leaves Sophia a Moslem mosque." This reminds us of the reverend gentleman who, at the outset of the war, said that he was happy at the thought that the flag of Christ would soon be flying over Sophia. That was enough to compensate for all the bloodshed, suffering, and misery.

In reply to protests against the forcible conversion of Albanian Catholics to the Orthodox Greek Church, Montenegro replies that she has a right to do what she likes in conquered territory. Such are the soldiers of the Cross! And if anybody can point out how they are at all better than the soldiers of the Crescent we should be glad to see him do it.

At the recent meeting of the Free Church Council one speaker exclaimed, "Ours is not to reason, but to obey Christ." That is the pulpit style to perfection. If a man reasons he cannot possibly be a Christian. At the bar of reason Christianity completely breaks down. Leaving reason out of it altogether, who ever obeyed Christ? Who ever put the Sermon on the Mount into practice? Christians are notorious for their systematic disloyalty to what they believe to be Christ's teaching. Their obedience is an emotion which never materialises into deeds.

Two articles recently appeared on the Resurrection of Christ, one in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* and the other in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The former came from the pen of the Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Melbourne, and the latter from that of the Rev. J. Bruce Wallace, both Christian ministers; but the amazing fact is that Mr. Spurr believes that Jesus rose from the dead and Mr. Wallace does not. We can quite understand Mr. Spurr's position, though we could never occupy it; but to comprehend the New Theology doctrine of the Resurrection is absolutely impossible. The body of Jesus never left the tomb; and yet in some mysterious manner Jesus convinced his disciples that he was still alive; and it is upon that conviction, so produced, that the whole fabric of Christianity rests. Each of these ministers prides himself upon having within him the Holy Ghost, whose mission is to lead them into all truth concerning Christ; and yet there is a fundamental difference between them on so all-important a subject as the Resurrection of their Lord. Despite all this, the marvel of marvels is that there are people wicked enough not to be Christians.

The Rev. J. Phillip Rogers is an exceedingly knowing gentleman. He is able to tell us that "the whole material universe is brought into being, and prepared through countless ages, in order that it may be the habitation of man." This is an item of knowledge which the greatest scientist living does not possess, and we should very much like to be told when, where, and how Mr. Rogers acquired it. The reverend gentleman has made another startling discovery, namely, that the man for whose comfort the whole material universe was brought into being and so carefully prepared, "has a body, but is a spirit." Again, we ask him for his authority. What is a spirit? Has Mr. Rogers ever seen one? But the reverend gentleman's amazing store of rare knowledge is not exhausted yet. He is evidently exceptionally intimate with God and the animals, as well as with man. He informs us that "there is a kinship of being between God and man which does not exist between God and the brute creation." This is rather rough on the poor animals, and looks so utterly unfair that we must request the preacher to give us his authority, and inform him that until he does so we shall regard him as a barefaced quack, whose object is to bamboozle the public.

Mr. Harold Begbie, who has been busy of late making an exhibition of himself in a number of small volumes, perpetrates the following in his most recent effusion:—

> "Religion must sweep out of Parliament the wasteful, discredited, and now nearly exhausted system of party faction. She must organise the constituencies and send up to Parliament men whose one object is to realise in the national life those central facts of the Christian revelation, God's Fatherhood and Man's Brotherhood. She must not ask a man whether he is a member of the Carlton Club or the Reform Club; she must challenge him to say whether he believes the teaching of Christ. And when she has won the constituencies, as she could do at the first assault, she must go up and down the land, without cessation, proclaiming the existence of God and the peril of a life lived contrary to the Will of God. She must prepare a Christian nation for a Christian Parliament."

That is all! All candidates for Parliament, and we presume elsewhere, are to be asked, "Do you believe in Christ?" None but Christians need apply. Lord Morley, John Burns, and Mr. J. M. Robertson, not to mention others, must be pushed out. What a happy place England would be if men like Mr. Harold Begbie really had their way. That is, if Mr. Begbie really means what he writes. The probability is that he has not even troubled to think out what it means. He just writes it. And so long as such writing pays there will be no falling off in the supply.

"J. B.," of the *Christian World*, says that "there is neither priest nor sacerdotalism in the New Testament." As everybody knows, *priest* is but a contracted form of the Greek *presbuteros* and the Latin *presbyter*; and naturally *priesthood* simply means the office and character of a *priest*. It is unfortunate, however, that in the Authorised Version of the New Testament *presbuteros* is translated into *elder*, though *elder* is, etymologically, its English equivalent. In Acts xi. 30; xvi. 4; 1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 1, 17; Titus i. 1; 1 Peter v. 1-5; James v. 14; 2 John i. 1; 3 John i. 1, and numerous other passages that might be cited, where in English we have *elder* or *elders*, in the original it is *presbuteros*, or *presbuteroi*. Sacerdotalism, again, signifies the system or order of the priesthood, *sacerdos* being the usual Latin word for *priest*.

A truce to etymology. "J. B." will retort by claiming that he only intended to affirm that the Catholic and Anglican *conception* of priest and sacerdotalism is not found in the New Testament. But even on this point he is clearly wrong. The priestly and sacerdotal idea *is* in the New Testament with a vengeance. A preacher, according to Paul, is a specially appointed officer who *mediates* between God and mankind. The Gospel, that apostle tells us, is God's power to save the lost; but an essential condition of salvation is that the saving message must be heard and believed. To be heard it must be preached. For some unknown reason God cannot preach it himself; therefore he must have a vicar or vicegerent who will preach it for him. Is not this the essence of priesthood and sacerdotalism? We recommend "J. B." to read carefully and inwardly digest Romans x. 3-15.

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The Rev. Pulford Williams, B.A., of the Willesden Presbyterian Church, finds fault with Theosophy because it has no place for divine forgiveness. The funny thing is that just before blaming it for that omission, he had bestowed praise upon it for its doctrine of the *Karma*. "*Karma*," he said, "is an immutable law of Nature; it relates cause and effect in the actions of men. In the New Testament language, it asserts, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It seems never to have occurred to this man of God that *Karma* flatly *contradicts* the Gospel of forgiveness. If forgiveness means anything at all, it teaches that a forgiven sinner shall *not* reap what he has sown. His sins are remitted, the laws of cause and effect in his case set it aside, his evil past is blotted out, like a cloud from a morning sky; and though his repentance be delayed till the very last hour of a long and entirely bad life, he is assured of a free entrance into the bliss of Paradise straight away. This is the most detestable and damnable doctrine ever heard of; but it constitutes the very essence of Christianity. We will have none of it.

A number of more or less silly letters have been published in the *Daily Telegraph* on the subject of "Is London Pagan?" As usual, Christians are having a good innings, but nothing of any consequence appears on the other side. Those who say that London is Pagan, and those who say it isn't, are equally defenders of religion—mostly of the Christian variety. There is, in fact, a general expression of regret that London is not more Christian than it is. Now, we can hardly believe that this absence of letters from those who are Pagans—to use the *Telegraph's* own descriptive term—and who are proud of it, is due to their not having contributed to the correspondence. In fact, we *know* it is not. The correspondence is, as usual, carefully edited, and the letters selected so that the readers of the paper will get the impression that if London is losing its religion this is a thing greatly to be regretted, but that, after all, there is no clear proof that such is really the case. The correspondence is, in brief, as hollow as it is intellectually inept. The outstanding characteristic is the poverty of the religious intelligence.

The correspondence, useful enough if it were only sanely conducted and pursued, took its origin in an interview with a returned missionary. After twenty-three years' absence, this gentleman returned to find that "the Londoner has ceased to read his Bible," and that London "has become frankly a pagan city." On this the *Daily Telegraph* wrote a leading article in its most flatulent manner, and opened its columns to letters, and interviewed parsons and others. Of course, the parsons could not agree that London was non-Christian. To admit that would argue little for the effectiveness of their work. Rev. Richard Free offered two striking proofs of how religious London still was. He was preaching in the East End, and someone came along and attacked him for believing in God. The audience "confounded" the intruder by saying "Mr. Free is quite right. There is a God and we believe in 'im. You shut up." After that brilliant episode, no further proof was needed; but Mr. Free piles Pelion on Ossa by telling how, when he was passing some young men playing a lively tune on concertinas, so soon as they caught sight of him changed the tune to "There is a happy land." Sarcasm is evidently wasted on Mr. Free. Rev. J. T. Philips does not believe that there is a lack of interest in the Bible among "thoughtful men," but when a boy comes home from school and says, "Please, my teacher says the incarnation of our Lord is a debatable question," it is not surprising the Bible is not where it was. Mr. Philips probably thinks the incarnation beyond controversy.

Some of the clergy cited the largely attended Good Friday meetings as proof that London was not Pagan. This was very neatly capped by a correspondent who gave the Good Friday admissions at a few football grounds. These were:—

Chelsea'.....	70,000	West Ham ...	15,000
Tottenham ...	33,000	Watford	6,000
Clapton	13,000	Brentford	6,000

It should be added that these paid for admission.

Mr. Forbes Robertson, interviewed, said that in his opinion Atheism was not spreading. This opinion was endorsed by Rev. Watts-Ditchfield, who said that there "was decidedly less Atheism of the theoretical character than there was some years ago. The great mass of working men are not Atheistic." We really are at a loss to know on what ground Mr. Forbes Robertson asserts that Atheism is not spreading. We are not aware that he has any means of telling whether it is so or not. Playing in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* hardly gives one the right to express opinions on the subject. The statement of Mr. Watts-Ditchfield that there is less Atheism now than some years ago is simply not true. Atheism was never so prevalent as it is to-day, and we really have much better means of knowing this than either parsons or actors. That the mass of working men are not atheistic may be true; but we are not aware that they ever were. Atheists have always been in the minority, and are so still. And to both Mr. Forbes Robertson and others we would recall the words of Coleridge: "Little do these men know what Atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand either has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist."

The International Sunday School Lesson for to-day is exceedingly savory. It is found in Genesis xxvii. 22-34, and is entitled "Jacob and Esau." Judging by the expositions of it which have appeared in various religious journals, it is clear that the scholars will be instructed to regard Jacob and Esau as wholly historical characters. Even the violent struggle between the two prior to their birth is treated as a literal incident. It is well known that many Christian scholars look upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as eponymous names; that is, names of tribes rather than individuals; and most of the incidents related are depicted as mere traditions, or legends. On the supposition that the story of Jacob and Esau is true, what a sad picture it presents of Hebrew family life in primitive times, and also of the strange relation that existed between Jehovah and his people. Not one of the characters alluded to is worthy of imitation; and, on the whole, most readers would prefer the frank, straightforward, and generous, though profane, Esau to the very pious but deceitful Jacob of the narrative.

The Bible teems with contradictions. Here is one: "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23); "A good man shall be satisfied from himself" (Prov. xiv. 14). The one verse gives the lie direct to the other; and both cannot possibly be true. And yet no man of God will admit that there is any discrepancy between them at all. As a matter of fact, when a clergyman's attention is drawn to them, he will instantly say, "Is this a contradiction? On the contrary, we have here the two halves of a whole truth." Now, join these so-called two halves, and tell us what the whole truth is. No sane man can do it. But, says the preacher, if you only read the second verse properly—"A *good* man's way is from himself"—you will see how beautifully it harmonises with the first. "A *good* man. Now, the Master says, 'There is none good but one, that is God.' Then if a man is good, it is God who has made him so. The root meaning of 'good' is 'God.' A good man is God's man." How easily and beautifully the trick is done. Who will dare hint, after this, that there are contradictions in the Bible? Why, they exist alone in the uninstructed and unillumined imagination of wicked Atheists!

Some excellent stories are told of the late Father Stanton, who died last week after fifty years' service at St. Alban's, Holborn. He was an advanced Ritualist and had no sympathy with milk-and-water Christianity. A visitor to his church once complained of the stink of the incense. "I am sorry," said Stanton, "there will be only two stinks in the next world—incense and brimstone—and you must choose between them." Once, a bishop said "I don't like your incense, Father." "I regret that, my lord," replied Stanton, "it's the best I can get and costs 3s. 6d. a pound."

Amongst the recent wills of departed servants of the Lord we notice that of the Rev. W. West, London, who only held starvation at bay with a reserve of £5,650, and the Rev. R. S. Blacker, Northampton, better protected with £25,773. Canon Greenside, Carnforth, Lancs., ran this Mr. Blacker very close with £25,059, while the Rev. H. M. West, Wokingham, came in an easy first with £60,859.

The Rev. F. Dormer Pierce, the Vicar of Southend-on-Sea, speaking at the Easter vestry meeting, said he hoped that the church debt could be cleared without using "squalid methods of mendicity." One cannot call the clergy absent minded beggars.

Referring to the correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph* on "Is London Pagan?" the *Record*, the organ of the Evangelical party, says, "It is not the first time that this great journal has rendered distinct service to the cause of faith." Probably Lord Burnham does not wish to hear the sentence, "Burn 'em," when he goes to another place.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £86 12s. 4d. Received since :—A. D. Corrick, £1; William Stevens, £1 1s.; Blackheath, 5s.; J. Roeckel, £1 1s.; A. E. Maddock, £5; H. C. B., 6s.; S. C. Cudmore (Brazil), £1; P. H. F. Vincent, 5s.; J. Palphreyman, 5s.

WILLIAM STEVENS.—Thanks for good wishes. We want them just at present.

A. D. CORRICK, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "Any hint or rumor that you are ill gives me a personal shock. Personal because it was principally through you I gained my mental emancipation; and also because I realise your priceless value to the Freethought movement..... Many congratulations on your *English Review* article. I am looking forward to your book on Shakespeare. I sincerely trust the circulation of the *Freethinker* is increasing."

S. G. BEARDELL.—Thanks for cutting, which has been utilised. Far from "boring" us, correspondents who send serviceable items of local news render valuable assistance in our work.

H. R. WRIGHT.—The entrants for the examinations are confined to members of the N. S. S. The matter is under consideration, and each candidate will be communicated with as early as possible giving the course of reading recommended.

SPICER.—The words "as might be expected" refer solely to Carlile. We do not discuss Socialism or other politico-social theories in the *Freethinker*. Our work is a crusade against superstition—including the superstition that superstition is dead. We regret we cannot recommend a book dealing with "sex problems" as you desire.

A. E. MADDOCK (Ceylon), subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I hope the Fund will meet with fuller support this year than it did last. Anyhow, the distant and widely scattered addresses of some of its supporters show how widespread is the sympathy with the Freethought movement as represented by the N. S. S. and with yourself as its leader."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. H. ELSTON.—Pleased to have your very sympathetic and encouraging letter.

J. PARTRIDGE.—The Birmingham Branch's unanimous vote of sympathy is very welcome.

F. T. JONES.—Much obliged for the suggestions in your letter, which will receive our careful consideration. Pleased to hear that during the past year you have secured seven new readers and induced eleven friends to attend lectures. Such practical help as this is of the utmost value to the movement.

A. DAVIS.—Have handed your letter to the person you refer to. Doubtless he will write to you.

J. TOMKINS.—Thanks for cuttings.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Personal.

MY recent illness was almost as bad as it could be, and once or twice I wondered whether my work in the world for "the noblest of causes" (as George Meredith called it) was over. Happily that was not the writing of "the Moving Finger." My naturally strong constitution, with the aid of a sound doctor, asserted itself again to good purpose. I turned the corner, as Burns told the Scottish clergy he would, when they said the Devil was after him, and escaped. One can joke about it afterwards, but it was no joke then. I felt the truth of my doctor's verdict; I was dreadfully run down, for I had been overworked, and to some extent overworried, for a considerable time. I must heed that warning when I am once more myself. Meanwhile I must recover my strength to a great extent at home before I can go further afield. I sleep badly anywhere, but better in my own house than in any other; and hotels and lodging-houses at this time of the year, and in unpropitious weather, are sad resting-places for a sensitive invalid. My old friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, says "Come to us at Yarmouth, and drink in our life-giving breezes." He means it; he is as hospitable (to me, at any rate) as his body is broad and his heart is big. I have no mistrust of him, but I have of the Yarmouth breezes at this time of the year. There is too much "east" in them for my taste and requirements. In the summer, I grant you, Yarmouth air takes a lot of beating.

I was cheered on Sunday by a visit from Miss Vance. She came to talk over some matters of imperative business. But not for that only. She wanted to satisfy herself that I was really mending. I found her visit a tonic. There are few women like her, and not many men. Her coming added light to a sunshiny day.

I have again to thank Mr. Cohen for occupying the editorial chair in my absence, and Mr. Lloyd and "Mimnermus" for continued assistance.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

We hope that London Freethinkers—particularly those living in the East End—will do their best to make the present course of lectures at the Stratford Town Hall a complete success. The meetings are well advertised, but the best of all advertising is that which takes the shape of Freethinkers bringing along those who have never been in the habit of attending such meetings. Stratford Town Hall is easy of access; tram and 'bus both passing the door. Mr. Cohen opens the course on Sunday evening (April 6) and will be followed by Mr. Lloyd and Miss Kough. Admission is free, but there will be the usual collection. The chair will be taken at each meeting at 7.30.

We trust that N. S. S. Branches are making preparations to secure a good representation at the Whit-Sunday Conference. There are many reasons why a special effort should be made this year to secure a good gathering of delegates, and those who wish to combine pleasure with business might easily find a worse place than London at Whitsuntide. The business meetings will take place at the Clavier Hall, Princes-street, Regent-street. The evening (public) meeting will be held in the Queen's (Minor) Hall. Other arrangements in connection with the Conference will be announced later.

We are asked to state that the Partridge Testimonial Fund will close on Sunday, April 20. Those desirous of subscribing will oblige by kindly sending in before that date to Mrs. Annie Bolt, 68 Brougham-street, Lozells, Birmingham.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) of March 15, contains a reprint, with acknowledgment, of "Mimnermus's" article on "A Pioneer Schoolmaster," contributed to our columns.

Some 268,486 persons of British origin left this country during 1912, the larger part of this total coming under the head of emigrants. And one may safely assume that these emigrants include some of the best types of our industrial population. Indeed, emigration agencies assure us that only the better types are desired or sent. The idle, the drunken, the wastrel classes are left behind to recruit the home population. It is impossible that the full danger of this should not be seen by people at the head of affairs, and it is significant that little or nothing is said concerning it. Anyway, a country that goes on year after year denuding itself of the most desirable portion of its industrial population is really committing political suicide.

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Mr. Yoshio Markino and the Missionaries.—III.

(Concluded from p. 197.)

"My own conviction, and that of many impartial and more experienced observers of Japanese life, is that Japan has nothing whatever to gain by conversion to Christianity, either morally or otherwise, but very much to lose."—LAFCADIO HEARN, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, Preface.

"This question of missionaries is a delicate one. The most sensitive feelings of a large number of people in England and America are so liable to be hurt. I have seen the subject gag the mouths of diplomats, politicians, prominent army officers, and in all manner of high official positions. If the sympathisers and supporters of missionaries in America were not such a strong body as they are, some leading American politicians and diplomats I have met would not be afraid to ventilate the sentiments which I know they entertain on this subject. It is curiously interesting what different opinions you hear expressed in private by sensible men throughout the East compared with those which appear in any of their public utterances, printed or otherwise."—GEORGE LYNCH, *The War of the Civilisations*, 1901, pp. 254 4.

THERE are many different Christian missions in Japan—Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and many others—and Markino tells us "They were all mocking, fighting, and attacking each other. They often told us, the schoolboys, about some bad thing of their own brothers and sisters in the different sects. It was simply sickening."*

Then, in money matters, their behavior was still worse. For instance, a rickshaw ride, for which Japanese gentlemen paid 15 to 20 sens, and even the poor schoolboys paid 12 sens,—

"those missionaries always engaged rickshas without settling the payment, and when they got off they paid only 10 sens, and banged the door and went into their house. The ricksha men shouted 'Tarimasen, Tarimasen!' (Not enough, not enough!) They would knock the door. The missionaries never took any notice of that. I often heard some rough ricksha men shouting, 'O you Hon. Foreign thieves! Fancy you treat us like this, and then on Sundays you preach with crying voices in the Church! Who would believe you, the Hypocrites?'"†

Markino says it was unbearable for him to listen to, and he several times begged the missionaries to pay the proper fare, but it was quite hopeless. The only reply he got was "You too noisy."

Then the head missionary imported a wife from America. Now, the Japanese consider it very vulgar and rude for married people to display their affection in public. They are much more particular in these matters than the Western nations are. But the average missionary knows nothing of the manners and customs of the people he comes to teach, and Markino observes of the missionary and his wife:—

"Their awfully sticky behavior was too irritable to Japanese eyes. During the lesson hours in the classrooms the wife was always sitting on her husband's lap, and they embraced each other and were kissing all the time, so busy to kiss that the teacher could not answer to the questions by the students. Some schoolboys were very indignant They said, 'It is beyond the words. They must be thinking us, the Japanese, no more than cats or dogs, because before the humans they ought not to show such behavior.' Most of them began to strike, and left the school altogether.

"I said, 'Let them think we are cats and dogs if they like. At the present moment I myself find no other way to study the English lessons, so I shall persevere.'"‡

At last the missionary told them that he was going to close the school, as he came to Japan only to preach, and he could not find time to teach English. "That," says Markino, "was the end of everything, and I had to go back and join to my father and brother in a deep mountainous village" quite out of the world. But in two months' time he had a letter from Mr. Iinuma to say that they had decided to reopen the school, and Markino returned.

The missionary required a copy of his "preaching-book" in Japanese. It was a book of about ninety pages, and he suggested that Markino should do it for a few sens, and he wanted it done within a week. Says Markino:—

"I thought a whole week lessons were far more valuable than a few sens. But I could not refuse because my head was quite Japanese then, and I thought I must be very loyal to my Hon. teacher. Yet I could not waste a whole week. Therefore I decided to get rid of it in a night. I started my work at five or six in the evening, and I tried to write as quick as possible for all night. The whole book was done by eight o'clock next morning."

Mr. Iinuma was amazed, and said: "'My dear child, you must not kill yourself.' He took that book to the missionary. The missionary said quite thoughtlessly and heartlessly. 'If Markino could work so quickly, let him do more copies.'" But Iinuma was very indignant, and explained what the boy had done, saving him from another task. Notice, too, the unconscious irony of that line, "I could not refuse *because my head was quite Japanese then.*" What have the Japanese to gain from Western teaching?

A few months later they received the good news that some more American teachers were arriving. "But," says Markino, "those new American teachers were disappointing, for they were quite uneducated, ignorant people, as usual" (p. 117). They did not understand the books they had to teach from, and were the laughing-stock of the young Japanese.

Markino says that he always had a great objection to the prayer-meetings. He argued that if God is Almighty, he ought to know our wishes before we express them.

"Then why," he asks, "should we waste our precious time for such prayer-meetings so often? Nay, not only wasting time, but I found out most grievous fact in the prayer-meetings. Those so-called earnest Christians secluded themselves in the churches, and began to leak out loudly all their own private troubles. They started with these words, 'O Almighty God,' etc., etc., in their crying voices. But in fact they were not praying to God, but only to buy others' sympathies. Indeed, I heard more than once some of them talking thus, 'Did you hear Mr. So-and-so's prayers to-night? He must be suffering very much. Let us help him.'

"I said, 'Certainly not. He was praying to God only. That was all. If he needs our help he ought to come to us and beg our help.' How coward! How hypocrite! I was awfully angry. Our beautiful 'Bushido' teaches us to persevere all difficulties in silence. And now this Christian prayer-meeting was giving terrible injury to Bushido. I exclaimed, 'Surely the prayer-meeting will make our nation into weak-minded hypocrites who don't know the word 'shame.'"*

The missionaries also enjoined them never to touch alcohol or spend money on Sundays. But Markino discovered that they did not observe these rules themselves.

To these hypocricies must be added the vice of cowardice. For when the first shock of the great earthquake of October, 1891, occurred, a native Japanese teacher was reading the Lord's Prayer to the kneeling congregation; but he calmly continued, although the walls were falling. A young friend of Markino's, hearing someone moving about, lifted his head in time to see the cowardly missionary sneaking out, and leaving his flock to perish! Mr. Iinuma forbade him to repeat it for fear of bringing trouble upon the mission from the outside world.

What a different picture from that of the heroic martyrs, braving hardships, privations, danger, and death, we hear so much about at missionary meetings and in missionary magazines! Mr. Markino's revelations fully bear out the statement made by Sir Henry Norman in his *Peoples and Politics of the Far East* (1900), who says the Protestant missionary,

"in a majority of cases, looks upon his work as a career like another; he proposes to devote a certain amount of his life to it, and then to return home with the halo of the Christian pioneer. He has, in most cases, his comfortable house, his wife, his children, his servants, and his foreign food; and it is even stated

* Yoshio Markino, *When I was a Child*, p. 109.
† *Ibid*, p. 109-10.
‡ *Ibid*, pp. 111 2.

* *When I was a Child*, pp. 126-7.

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that his stipend increases with each addition to his family.....He is jealous of his Protestant rivals, between whom and himself there is a perpetual warfare of pious intrigue to secure converts. So far as education goes, both men and women among Protestant missionaries are often quite unfitted even to teach at home, where there would be little danger of serious misunderstanding; in their present sphere of work they are often not too hardly described by the phrase which has been applied to them, 'ignorant declaimers in bad Chinese.'" (Pp. 305-6.)

Mr. Markino's strictures on the Christian religion are "frequent and free." He does not mince matters. When the missionaries explained to him the parable of the Rock of Ages, "where one woman is climbing up the Cross of Rock, while her sister was washed away by the waves, simply because the former had faith while the latter had not," he says:—

"It sounded to me awfully selfish religion. For the Christianity is always persuading you to individual salvation. That is to say, you must save your soul, notwithstanding about your parents' or children's or wife's and husband's souls at all. It naturally sounds very selfish to the Japanese, whose heart is far too mutual to accept it.....The (Japanese) tradition says some filial son was sent to the Paradise after his death. He was eagerly searching his own mother there. But he was told that his mother was so wicked, and therefore she was sent to the Hell. He preferred the Hell with his mother than to stay in Paradise alone, and he went into the Hell. Such is the ordinary Japanese idea. To my childish mind, the Rock of Ages was simply shocking. I believe it was not only myself alone, but there were many Japanese who shrugged their shoulders about this parable. I believe this spirit makes us so patriotic." *

And so, he tells us,—

"I could not become a Christian at all. For I am keeping myself most sincere to my own conscience, which forbids me to call myself a Christian. I may be able to deceive my neighbors if I want to, but I cannot deceive my own conscience."

And, as he further remarks, Europe has been Christian such a long time that Christianity and reverence for the Bible has become an instinct with Europeans, it is bred into their flesh and bones. But to him who had never heard of the Bible until he went to the missionary school, it was different. He says:—

"The Bible to me is no more than Byron is to you. You cannot stop me putting many 'why's' to every page of the Bible. For it seems to me so many unnatural, illogical, and impossible things are written in it—especially about the salvation of our soul by the blood of 'Emmanuel,' and his resurrection," etc., etc. (p. 237).

Again, he says, he has carefully observed the conduct of Christians for the last eighteen years, and he asks, who really practises the Sermon on the Mount? As he points out, "Christians modify the words of Christ conveniently to themselves." And at church, he says, he has heard the clergyman—

"trying hard to explain all those superstitious words in the Bible in a 'scientific' way, saying that those miracles were merely allegorical. I was rather amused and curious about his cleverness. But there are many of this sort of man in Japan, too" (p. 239).

Christians, he observes, derive much comfort and consolation from their belief in the Bible and in religion, and in this respect he compares religion with chloroform as an anodyne for the pains of life, but adds:—

"I must say that the chloroform called religion does not suit my conscience; therefore I shall have to go through all my life in this world without it, even if I suffer more than those religious people. I cannot be intoxicated with any religion. I am always quite sober and ready to persevere any pain with the full sense" (p. 244).

So in the end Mr. Markino abandoned all religion, Eastern and Western, too. As Lafcadio Hearn has well said—and it should be remembered that Hearn became a naturalised Japanese, married a Japanese wife, and lived in Japanese style:—

"Those who hope to substitute their own Western creed in the room of one which they wreck by the aid of knowledge borrowed from modern science, do not imagine that the arguments used against ancient faith can be used with equal force against the new. Unable himself to reach the higher levels of modern thought, the average missionary cannot foresee the result of his small teaching of science upon an Oriental mind naturally more powerful than his own. He is therefore astonished and shocked to discover that the more intelligent the pupil, the briefer the term of that pupil's Christianity. To destroy personal faith in a fine mind previously satisfied with Buddhist cosmogony, because innocent of science, is not extremely difficult. But to substitute, in the same mind, Western religious notions for Oriental. Presbyterian or Baptist dogmatisms for Chinese and Buddhist ethics is not possible. The psychological difficulties in the way are never recognised by our modern evangelists."*

In conclusion, Mr. Markino observes that several years' travel among other Christian nations has shown him that some among them can lie and deceive no less than Orientals. Upon which he remarks, "I have come to the decisive conclusion that the honesty of the Anglo-Saxon race is not the merit of the Christianity, but it is the merit of their own race itself"; and concludes:—

"Suppose if the Christianity had not invaded into England, and suppose the Buddhism or any other religion had been in England for all those long ages, I feel quite confident that the Britons' simpleness, sincerity, and honesty would remain exactly the same to-day."†

We recommend Mr. Markino's book to all those who are in the habit of supporting Christian missions.

W. Mann.

* *When I was a Child*, p. 233.

Richard Carlile.—III.

Later in life Carlile degenerated into a kind of Swedenborgian mysticism. Not, indeed, that he discarded his Atheism; he was virtually an Atheist to the last; but he chose to veil it under a delusive nomenclature, and to employ, to express his own Naturalism, the very supernatural terms he had previously discarded. He professed to have discovered "that the names of the Old Testament, either apparently of persons or places, are not such names as the religious mistakes have constructed, but names of states of mind manifested in the human race, and that, in this sense, the Bible may be scientifically read as a treatise on spirit, soul, or mind, and not as a history of time, people, and place." In editing the *Christian Warrior* he professed himself a Christian, defining the appellation as "a man purged from error." His conduct scandalised his friends, who deplored his seeming departure from the old, clear ways, and when he proceeded so far as to take out his diploma as a preacher, their indignation and sorrow knew no bounds. Carlile, however, was not to be deterred from pursuing his own independent course; the same sturdy spirit which impelled him to resist the minions of power in former days induced him now to disregard the adverse representations and reproaches of his friends. And beneath his mystical phraseology there were undoubtedly concealed truths of vast importance. The following passage, for instance, is pregnant with meaning: "Science, thrown into the Church as a substitute for superstition in the education of the people, begins at once to regenerate the people, the institutions, and the throne. It is the substitution of the known for the unknown, the real for the unreal, the certain for the uncertain. Religion is the erroneous mind's chief direction. It must be corrected by and through the medium which it most respects. It rejects all other opposing conditions,

* Lafcadio Hearn. *Kokoro*, p. 191.
† *When I was a Child*, p. 250.

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and increases its tenacity for its errors. To reform religion by science is to regenerate fallen man, and to save a sinking country." In this passage he seems to have been straining after some positive conceptions as substitutes for the old negative notions of Freethought, and dimly to perceive that every system claiming human adherence and aiming at extensive, permanent success must satisfy the natural emotions of the human heart, and direct them to some ultimate purpose capable of being apprehended and aspired to.

It is a mistake to suppose that Carlile ever really departed from the Atheism of his maturity. Thirteen days before his death he penned these words: "*The enemy with whom I have to grapple is one with whom no peace can be made. Idolatry will not parley; superstition will not treat on covenant. They must be uprooted for public and individual safety.*" Neither is there any truth in the story of his recantation. He lost his power of speaking long before the near approach of death. The story is simply incredible, and could only have proceeded from the inventive charity of some over-zealous religionist.

"Carlile's habits," writes Mr. Holyoake, who can here speak with authority, "were marked by great abstemiousness. Seldom taking animal food, he refused wine when offered a dozen at Dorchester Gaol, preferring good milk. He was morally as well as physically particular. In the rules of the Deistical Society he provided that only persons of good character should be eligible. 'It is important to you Republicans,' wrote he from Dorchester Gaol, 'that, however humble the advocates of your principles may be, they should exhibit a clear, moral character to the world.' He never sold a copy of any work which he would hesitate to read to his children. He expressed a hope, when fairs were popular, that fairs would be put down all over the country. He was one of the first thus to oppose what the pious then approved." His large charity also was conspicuous. He would assist even a struggling and unfortunate foe, and stand by his friends to the last. When George Jacob Holyoake was tried at Gloucester, Carlile sat by his side for fourteen hours, and handed him notes for his guidance. After Mr. Holyoake's conviction, Carlile brought him the first provisions with his own hand. As a speaker, he was direct and perspicuous. Generally he was not eloquent, but occasionally he was as eloquent as the best speakers. Bold as a lion in fight, he quailed before a public audience, and only after long practice was he able to conquer his diffidence. At first his friends believed he never would make a speaker, but by dint of patient cultivation he contrived to falsify their unfavorable predictions.

A few words will be necessary respecting Carlile's domestic relations, and the publication of his *Every Woman's Book*. A tract issued by the Bible Institute charged him with having "exhibited his harlot on the public platform during the lifetime of his wife," and with "having made proposals concerning the thinning of the population, the most beastly that ever polluted paper." These charges, preferred before a public ignorant of Carlile's life and character, are calculated to mislead, as probably the malignant libeller who penned the tract well knew; but they are entirely groundless, and fall away before an impartial examination. Already we have alluded to the disparity of temper between Carlile and his wife. "Their difference in education, in age, in intellectual aspiration, and their opponency in disposition, early converted their union into an intimacy tolerated rather than prized." In 1819 their separation was arranged, but it did not actually take place till 1832, because until then an independent provision for Mrs. Carlile could not be made. They parted in 1832 with mutual consent, and, besides the separate maintenance for the wife, she took with her all the household furniture and £100 worth of books. Afterwards Carlile allied himself with a lady by whom he had two children, and doubtless would have married her if the holy laws of England had permitted him to do so by granting a divorce from his first wife. But the law refused, and still refuses, to grant a divorce on any ground except adultery; and Carlile very properly observed his own counsel without a legal sanction. He was not the man to *desert* his wife, but when they mutually desired separation he was just the man to burst through the cobwebs of ecclesiastico-political restraint, and even to defy worldly conventionalities. Herein he has the approval of one of the sternest moralists of any age or country—John Milton; who in his tractate on divorce censures the legislators who impose marriage bonds upon mutually rebellious souls, and pronounces the union unholy and desecrate when unsanctified by love. The legislation of England is not yet level with this teaching, which is two centuries old. The reader will now be in a position to estimate aright the accusation urged against Carlile by Christian scribes who are everlastingly maligning our sacred dead in order to bolster up their own creed.

The other charge concerning "beastly proposals" is equally groundless. It refers to Carlile's *Every Woman's Book*, which is a plain statement of his opinions on "the all-important question of population." He believed in Malthus's law of population, which, as Professor Huxley observes, has never been and never will be disproved; and he was anxious to induce his fellow men to adopt means to prevent the bringing of redundant children into life, so as to obviate the slaughter of them afterwards by nature's positive checks on numerical increase. Possessing the courage of his convictions, he set forth his views in print, and described preventive human checks on the growth of families. His intent was humane and pure, and, even if he were erroneous, he could not deserve to be stigmatised as immoral or beastly. He had as much moral right to publish his book as Dr. Acton had to publish a work on Prostitution, or Dr. Bull his Hints to Mothers. Dr. Acton and Dr. Bull were justified by the fact of their being physical physicians; and Richard Carlile was justified by being a moral physician. He had earned the right, by his courage on behalf of righteous causes, to address the public on any question he chose.

"Carlile's death," writes Mr. Holyoake, "took place on this wise. He had come up from Enfield to Bouverie-street, Fleet-street, to live on the field of war, and edit the *Christian Warrior*. While a van of goods was unpacking at the door, one of his boys strayed out and went away. Carlile was fond of his children, and he set out anxiously to seek his child. The excitement ended in death. On Carlile's return he was seized with a fatal illness. Bronchitis, which he was told by his medical advisers would soon destroy him if he came to live in the city, set in, and the power of speech soon left him. Dr. Lawrence, the author of the famous Lectures on Man, whom Carlile always preferred in his illness, was sent for. He promptly arrived, but pronounced recovery hopeless; and Richard Carlile expired February 10th, 1843, in his fifty-third year.

"Wishing to be useful in death as well as in life, Carlile devoted his body to dissection. Always above superstition, in practice as well as in theory, his wish had long been that his body, if he died first, should be given to Dr. Lawrence. At that time the prejudice against dissection was almost universal, and only superior persons rose above it. His wish was complied with by his family, and the post-mortem examination was published in the *Lancet* of that year.

"Carlile's burial took place at Kensal Green Cemetery. He was laid in the consecrated part of the ground, nearly opposite the Mausoleum of the Ducrow family. At the interment a clergyman appeared, and, with the usual want of feeling and delicacy, persisted in reading the Church Service over him. His eldest son, Richard, who represented his sentiments as well as his name, very properly protested against the proceeding as an outrage upon the principles of his father and the wishes of the family. Of course, the remonstrance was disregarded, and Richard, his brothers, and their friends left the ground. The clergyman then proceeded to call

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Carlile 'his dear departed brother,' and to declare that he 'had died in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection.'

"Carlile left six children—Richard, Alfred, and Thomas Paine, by his wife, Mrs. Jane Carlile; and Julian, Theophila, and Hypatia, by 'Isis,' the lady to whom he united himself after his separation from his wife. Mrs. Carlile survived him only four months. She died in the same house and was buried in the same grave."

Thus ended the life of this sturdy warrior for freedom of thought and speech. It cannot, of course, be pretended that Richard Carlile was a man of great genius, or that his writings are destined to survive; neither can we admit, with Mr. Holyoake, that such workers as journalists, orators, and politicians, who popularise ideas and principles, confer greater good on mankind and more powerfully promote progress, than the great creative minds; for if those minds did not originate ideas it is certain that the writers and speakers of smaller calibre could not popularise them. But this, at least, may be claimed for Carlile, that he spent one-fourth of his mature life in prison as the consequence of his manly persistence in the course of conduct which his conscience approved; that he never once flinched from danger, never temporised with the oppressor, never once looked back after putting his hand to the plough. There was no contemporary publicist who wrote so boldly as he, no one who shrank less from the freest expression of principles the most extreme. The example he set is worthy of emulation; and his courage and endurance, while they give fresh ardor to the wavering, ought also to shame those who are persuaded that superstitions abound, and yet will lift no finger to remove them, who perceive a great work of reformation to be performed, and yet never bestir themselves in any degree to assist it. When Carlile wrote and spoke and struggled he stood face to face with an almost implacable enemy that gave no quarter, showed no mercy. The blows of oppression rained upon his devoted head at every step of his march, and the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune constantly assailed him; but he never quailed before any danger, nor was deterred by any difficulty. His life of incessant warfare deprived him of the sense of literary taste, and occasionally he was guilty of a violence of expression which would be deemed unjustifiable by the present generation. But our censure need not, therefore, be severe. As Mr. Holyoake observes, Christians who persecute with relentless zeal have no right to demand of their victims a perennial delicacy of treatment in return. If Carlile dedicated a volume of the *Republican* to Castlereagh, "who did that for himself which millions wished some honest man would do for him—cut his throat," that statesman had given good cause for public execration. If he dated in the era of "the carpenter's wife's son," the professors of Christianity had done their best to induce in his mind the utmost contempt and hatred of their creed. Society has no right to require soft speech of a man whom it loses no opportunity to ill-use.

At the time when monuments are impartially reared to celebrate public benefactors one will be apportioned to Richard Carlile. The work he achieved for Freethought was impossible of accomplishment by any other man; no other possessed at once so dogged a courage and so clear a conception of principle. "I have accomplished," wrote he just before his death, "the liberty of the press in England, and oral discussion is now free. Nothing remains to be reformed but the ignorance and vices of the people, whose ignorance cannot be removed while their bodies are starved, and their Church remains a theatre of idolatry and superstition." These words both express his own achievement and indicate the reformatory method of those who were to follow him. Theirs is the task to spread knowledge, to uproot error, to destroy superstition, to feed men's bodies before canting about their souls; his was to prepare the field for such labors, to remove obstacles, to make straight and plain the paths. While we do battle with the noxious evils of society to-day without oppressive sense of personal danger, let us now and then remember the pioneers who went before, who toiled weary and footsore where we now travel so easily, who bore the first shattering brunt of war, and left for us the defeat of an already half-conquered foe.

G. W. FOOTE.

PROVIDENCE.

"It will be a surprising dispensation of Providence," says State Secretary Burke to the Governor of Ohio, "if there are not 10,000 dead." Mr. Burke is referring to the awful storm and floods in the United States, and is evidently under the impression that "Providence" will be easily satisfied if content with less than 10,000 corpses. We can make nothing else out of the statement. If there is a Providence, it must be responsible for the death of the 10,000; or if Providence is to be thanked for saving people after the 10,000 mark is reached, one would like to know what is to be said of the long array of corpses that were necessary for it to wake up and get to business. If the loss of life had been due to any State official, he would probably have been lynched. As it is due to "Providence," good Christians go down on their knees and thank it for its activity.

Look at this horror in the news from flooded and fire-scourged Dayton:—

> "There are many expectant mothers among the refugees, and their condition after the horrors and privations which they have gone through is critical. No fewer than five babies have been born in the Cash Register building during the past thirty-six hours."

It is enough to make a heart of stone bleed. The worst man on earth would stop this sort of thing if he could. Yet the theologians want us to believe that the Dayton catastrophe was all planned and carried through by a powerful, wise, and good being, who is (as usual) quite proud of his handiwork.

THE BISHOP EXPLAINS.

The Bishop of London is not pleased with the papers talking about his praying over the sick girl as "The Bishop's Miracle." He explains that it was not his miracle, but God's. Moreover, he only prayed and anointed the girl after the doctor and nurse had done their part. So the performance was after all a bit mixed, and one cannot be quite certain that it was a miracle. It may only have been the drugs working. Moreover, the Bishop explains that it would not be wise to lead people to depend upon prayer and anointing as a method of cure. He explains that if children were kneeling round a sick mother, and the mother died, it might shake their faith. Quite so. What the Bishop's counsel amounts to is this: Pray over the sick and anoint with oil, but have also a doctor and a nurse. If the patient recovers, proclaim a miracle, and never mind the doctor. If the patient dies, let the doctor take the credit, and say it was not God's will that a miracle should be worked. Heads I win, tails you lose. An old game, particularly in the religious world.

The Rev. Albert Knight, vicar of Christ Church, Hunslet, who disappeared with a lady of his congregation, has been formally deposed from Holy Orders. The pursuit of frocks has led to his own unfrocking.

Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen, writing in the March issue of the *Open Court* on "The Egyptian Element in the Birth Stories in the Gospels," makes some very significant admissions. Speaking with the authority of twenty years' study of the subject, the distinguished Egyptologist says, "I am convinced that not only these two Gospels (Matthew and Luke) are derived from Egypt; but the same is true of a large element in all Christian teaching." This is laying the axe at the root of the tree.

The Rev. J. Watts-Ditchfield has been unburdening his mind to a *Daily Telegraph* man, and he said that "an exceptionally low percentage of persons is buried without any religious ceremony." The clergy buried Darwin, Huxley, Swinburne, Burton, Buchanan, and a host of other Freethinkers; but they never convinced anybody that these men were Christians. The farcical funeral services only showed that the Christian relatives of the departed Freethinkers did not respect the dead.

A new book bears the curious title, *In God's Nursery*. Evidently we live in stirring times. The last "boy" must be two thousand years old by this time.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Grave."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Neary's, 94 Lordship-road, Church-street, Stoke Newington): Business Meeting—Election of Conference delegates, etc.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, James Rowney, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "What is Morality?"

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(Under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.)

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"The Cradle, the Altar and the Grave."

April 13.—Mr. J. T. LLOYD: "What Do We Know?"

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The immoral book is the book which hides Truth and creates a Fool's Paradise.

W. R. PATERSON (Benjamin Swift).

The Pathology of Conversion.

THE physician whom Voltaire described as knowing a little about everything—even about medicine, might be matched by clergymen who know a little about a variety of subjects, and who sometimes know a little about religion. Unfortunately, their number is very small. What the vast majority understand by a knowledge of religion is a certain familiarity with religious formulæ and doctrines. For a knowledge of religion, such as will help one to understand its real nature, one must forsake the professional theologian altogether, and turn to those who have pursued the study of religion in exactly the same way, and by use of the same methods, as they have pursued other studies. The professional theologian, and the professed apologist for religion, doom themselves to sterility from the outset. Instead of taking religious phenomena as a part of phenomena in general, and by seeking in what way and in what manner the part can be affiliated to the whole, religion is treated as a thing apart. It may affect other departments of life but it does not belong to them. The result is, that what are called religious studies move round and round the same circle of ideas, and a revolution is mistaken for progress.

What has just been said holds with peculiar force of the subject of conversion. While not peculiarly a Christian phenomenon, it is yet one that bulks very largely in the history of Christianity; so much so, that conversion is declared by some theologians to be essential to each individual's religious maturity. The result of this has been that conversion has been emphasised as a cataclysmal epoch in the life of an individual, and professional evangelists have cultivated the art of working upon the emotions of people—quite as ignorant as themselves of the real nature of the forces at work—in order to induce a desired state of mind in relation to religious beliefs. They have spent their lives in officiating at what was a veritable debauch of unreasoning and unreasonable emotion, and subjects more fit for the hands of the physician than for anyone else have been acclaimed as striking evidence of the "workings of the spirit," and in other cases qualities of the mind that should have found a harmless and natural outlet by participation in the larger social life, have been very often injuriously misdirected into religious channels.

During recent years the phenomena of conversion has been approached from a more scientific standpoint. Statistics have been compiled and analysed, with the result that the salient features are apparent to all those who care to study the matter.* One outstanding fact of these inquiries has been to demonstrate that what is called conversion is almost exclusively a phenomenon of puberty and adolescence. In a previous article it was pointed out that on taking the period at which illumination or conversion came to well known religious characters, the ages varied between childhood and just over twenty years of age. This list might be greatly lengthened, but it would be little more than repetition. It is worth noting, however, Keim's remark, that although some of the disciples may have been married, most of them were probably about twenty years of age.* That this coincidence is neither accidental nor spasmodic, more detailed inquiries prove. Thus, Prof. Starbuck made detailed investigations in the case of some 1,300 converts. The result of a scrutiny of the figures was to show that while conversions begin to occur as early as at eight years of age, their most rapid occurrence is between twelve and sixteen, they occur less rapidly after twenty, and very rarely found after thirty. In girls, the period of conversion antedate that of boys by about two years.† Starbuck's conclusion is the perfectly valid one that conversion "belongs almost exclusively to the years between ten and twenty-five," and is a distinctly adolescent phenomenon.

These figures, it may be added, are quite borne out by an examination of the ages of converts in almost any revivalistic mission. At the conclusion of a mission by the notorious American evangelist, Dr. Torrey, in this country in 1904, the *British Weekly* obtained an expression of opinion from a number of ministers in the towns visited, and published the results in its issue for October 27. The ages of all the alleged converts were not given, but one may safely assume that a large proportion of those not indicated fell within the ages stated. The striking feature of the reports was the number of cases in which the youthful nature of the converts were noted. Thus, Rev. T. Towers, Birmingham, records that sixteen out of twenty-five were children. Rev. A. Le Gros, Rugby, reported "a number of our youngest members, especially amongst the young girls, were amongst those who professed conversion." Rev. H. Singleton, Smethwick, says, "the bulk of the names sent to me were children, under thirteen years of age." Rev. W. G. Percival, Lozells Congregational Church, says of the "inquiry" meeting held after the preaching, "the dear little things followed one another for inquiry until the place was a scene of utter confusion." Other reports of a similar nature came from other places. The ages were pointed out quite incidentally, it should be noted; conversions of young men and young women of seventeen or eighteen years of age would not arouse comment in the case of these observers.

Professor James quite accepts Starbuck's conclusion, but accompanies it with the question-begging comment that "Conversion is, in its essence, a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider, intellectual, and spiritual life of humanity."‡ I hope to

* The most elaborate study of this character known to the writer is Mr. G. S. Hall's *Adolescence*, two volumes. But the bulk of the work is terrifying to some, and its cost prohibitive to many. For the general reader the main facts are well presented in Starbuck's smaller volume, the *Psychology of Religion*. It should be added, that the majority of writings on this and similar aspects of religion seem to originate in America, where—apart from the question of origins—the scientific study of religion appears to move with greater freedom than with ourselves.

* *Life of Jesus*, vol. iii., p. 279.

† *Psychology of Religion*, ch. iii. Hall's figures, which agree with Starbuck's, and are based on the reports of a number of investigators, are given in the second volume of his work, pp. 288-92.

‡ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 199.

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show that conversion is only normal in the sense that in an environment where religious influences are powerful human nature is normally exposed to it. In this sense, contracting a disease may be normal during the existence of an epidemic. In reality the abnormal character of conversion is indicated by the fact that a large number of people never experience it, and also that where human nature is allowed to develop without special direction from religious sources, conversion does not occur. The truth in James' comment is its association with the passage from "the child's small universe" to the wider life of humanity, but the nature of this association is quite ignored by him, as it is by his religious guides.

Apart from statistical inquiry, the connection between adolescence and religion has been noted from the earliest time. In later times this has been taken as the most favorable time to direct human energy into religious channels because the developing social and sexual life of the individual gave opportunity for a religious interpretation of feelings very inadequately understood. But in earlier times the connection was of a more genuinely religious nature. Puberty did not mark, as a modern religionist would say, the awakening of the religious consciousness, but the direct contact of the boy and the girl with supernatural influences. The consequence is that all over the world we meet with pubic ceremonies, commencing with the most primitive savages and ending with the modern practice of confirmation.* Amongst the North American Indians, for example, the following description seems characteristic:—

> "When a boy has attained the age of fourteen or fifteen years, he absents himself from his father's lodge, lying on the ground in some remote or secluded spot, crying to the Great Spirit, and fasting the whole time. During this period of peril and abstinence, when he falls asleep, the first animal, bird, or reptile, of which he dreams, he considers the Great Spirit has designated for his mysterious protector through life."†

Much the same ceremonies are described by Livingstone as existing among the South African tribes.‡ In nearly all cases there is an enforced separation of the sexes, much more elaborate in the case of girls than that of boys—the phenomena attaching to girls being of a more terrifying description. Frazer has brought together a very lengthy list of customs of this character, and has shown that in the case of girls the main idea is to guard the rest of the tribe from what is believed to be a most malignant supernatural influence.§ Although these ceremonies centre round the fact of sexual development, it would be quite a mistake to imagine that they are mainly concerned with initiation into what are called "the mysteries of sex." The governing idea is that puberty marks the direct association of the individual with a spiritual world, to the influence of which the functional changes are due. At a later date, when rational ideas concerning the nature of these functional changes exist, other interpretations of the utilisation by religion of the period of adolescence are given. But it may safely be assumed that these later interpretations would never have been fashioned had not the primitive basis been provided. Then we hear much of the development of a consciousness of religion, of the "soul's awareness of God," and similar nonsensical phrases. All of these only serve to disguise to careless or uninformed people the fact that religious agencies seize hold of the developing social nature of each, and give a religious explanation to what is taking place. In this respect all modern religious theories are upon precisely the same level as the more primitive ones. We have the same absence of a rational explanation—in the one case because no such explanation was possible, in the other because prejudice or self-interest prevents its use. At any rate, the connection of a developing sex nature with a "quickening" of the religious consciousness can no longer be denied by those who carefully study the facts.

The following opinions are worth noting:—

> "Passing over the fact that the period of adolescence is noticeably a period of susceptibility and personal vanity, we may take as an example of the intrusion or persistence of the sexual element in conditions of a non-sexual kind the frequent association of sexual with religious excitement. The appeal made during a religious revival to the unconverted has psychologically some resemblance to the attempt of the male to overcome the hesitancy of the female.....In the effort to make a moral adjustment, it consequently turns out that a technique is used which was derived originally from sexual life, and the use, so to speak, of the sexual machinery for a moral adjustment involves, in some cases, the carrying over into the general process of some sexual manifestations."‖

Dr. Mercier is still more explicit:—

> "In connection with normal development a large body of vague and formless feeling arises, and, until experience gives it shape, the possessor remains ignorant of the source and nature of the feeling. If the circumstances are appropriate for the natural outlet and expression of the activities, they are expressed in affection, and are a source of health and strength to the possessor. But if no such outlet exists, the vague, voluminous, formless feelings are referred to an occasion that is vague, voluminous, and wanting in definite form—they are ascribed to the direct influence of the Deity, and assume a place in religious emotion."†

(*To be continued.*) C. COHEN.

The Christian Religion.

A FEW weeks ago we discussed the first of the Rev. Dr. Orchard's "Modern Tracts on Religion." From our point of view the second called for no comment; but the third, which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for April 2, and was entitled "The Christian Religion," challenges the closest critical examination. The reverend gentleman starts off by making several candid admissions. One is that "the characteristic expressions" of Christianity, whether in the Catholic or in the Protestant Church, are difficult, if not impossible, to believe. It seems unreasonable to declare that a piece of bread is, or after certain words have been pronounced becomes, the body of Jesus Christ, or that a cup of wine is, or similarly becomes, his blood. It sounds incredible to assert that the man Christ Jesus is "very God of very God." Then comes the admitted difficulty of defining Christianity. Dr. Orchard says:—

> "It is the most difficult of all religions to define. After nineteen hundred years of exposition and experience we can still ask, What is Christianity? and get a variety of answers. Many efforts have been made to simplify Christianity into such statements as that it is a personal cleaving to Jesus Christ, or that it is sharing in the spirit of Christ, or that it is believing what Jesus taught about God; only to raise the objection that this is not what Christianity has been in the past. On the contrary, it will be replied, it is a great scheme of doctrine taught by the Apostles and developed by the Church."

Another admission is that "it is the most difficult religion to practise." Instead of "difficult," "impossible" would surely be the more appropriate adjective here. Many of the so-called virtues insisted upon in the Sermon on the Mount are contrary to invincible human instincts. We fail to practise them not because of "our own moral impotence," but because our humanity revolts from them. However, be the *cause* of the nonconformity what it may, the *fact* of it is beyond controversy. Says our divine:—

> "You stick at the first beatitude. And the efforts that have been made to incorporate Christianity in a

* Mr. Hall has compiled a lengthy list of these ceremonies, vol. ii., ch. xiii.

† Catlin, *North American Indians*, vol. i., p. 36; also vol. ii., p. 347.

‡ *Missionary Travels*, p. 146.

§ See *Golden Bough*, second edition, vol. iii.; also Hartland, *Primitive Paternity*, vol. i., pp. 90-98.

‖ Thomas, *Sex and Society*, pp. 11[illegible]16.

† *Sanity and Insanity*, p. 281.

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> society, whether you think of the Catholic Church, the monastic system, or our modern Christian civilisation, they are nothing so much as magnificent failures."

So far as the *facts* are concerned we are in complete agreement with Dr. Orchard. They are facts which we ourselves have emphasised and employed evidentially times out of number. We wish to call special attention to the following pregnant extract:—

> "Here, then, is a religion to present to a man in a hurry. It staggers his reason, it presents a vast complication, both in thought and history, which it is only a further complication to attempt to simplify or reform; and there is no guarantee that it is ever going to succeed. It cannot be put into a nutshell; it cannot be stated without dragging in all the controversies the mind of man has ever started, and it stands unwittingly alone as the one great religion that has failed. Who has ever met a Christian?"

Once more we express our entire concurrence. What we have here set before us is a number of undeniable truths; but having frankly stated them Dr. Orchard immediately proceeds to set them aside as if they were of no account, and to make the usual apologetic appeal to experience. First of all he gives a wholly imaginary description of the experience of Jesus. He tells us that Jesus was in the world to do a higher will than his own, and that the consciousness of this fact constituted his religious experience; but he also informs us that the higher will "could be done by discharging the most ordinary duties and obeying the commonest impulses of life." Then why speak of it as a higher will? If "human life in time is a fitting expression of the Divine life in eternity," on what grounds can any distinction be made between them, or how does anobody know that there is "a Divine life in eternity"? Is not human life the highest known to us, and is it not true that the highest will-power is man's? On the assumption that the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane actually happened, did it not consist in a conflict between the higher and lower in Jesus himself? He believed that he had a Father in heaven whose will he was doing and to whom he prayed for strength to conquer temptation; but it is not on record that he did anything he could not have done in his own strength, or that many a man before and since has not so done. The appeal to the experience of Jesus is therefore evidentially valueless. The talk about a higher will "moving behind our own" and presenting itself for our acceptance, is the merest religious cant, and at best can only be a misinterpretation of the conflict between the better and the worse in our own character. "Unless one knows something of this experience," Dr. Orchard asserts, "Christianity must remain sealed against all further understanding." The experience which the reverend gentleman so grossly misinterprets is an experience common to all mankind. In every man there are higher and lower tendencies, and the joy of life consists in the triumph of the former.

This is a point of enormous importance, and we feel bound to enlarge upon it. There are thousands of people who have seen the error of the Christian interpretation of the struggle between the higher and the lower in character. For thirty or forty years some of them advocated it as the only satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon. They had a vivid and joy-yielding experience of what is falsely called communion with God in Christ. They prayed in secret and in public, they gave themselves with much enjoyment to the devotional study of the Bible, they were by no means strangers to the consolations of religion, and their love for Christ was a glowing passion; but a time came when they discovered that they had been hugging illusions for realities, and that the whole of their religious experience was as completely a hallucination as any dream of the night. To say of such people that when they write about Christianity and urge their friends to give it up they know nothing whatever about it is to be guilty of bearing false witness against them. This is a charge which we must bring against Dr. Orchard. Some of his opponents do know right well, as the result of years of closest and most prayerful study and happy experience, what Christianity is, and what ardent faith in it can and cannot do. When doubt first assailed them, they strenuously fought against it, dreading above everything the loss of their faith. Doubt, however, turned out to be but the thin end of the wedge which reason was driving under both their creed and the experience to which it gave rise. The wedge did its work most thoroughly, reason won a glorious victory, and, believing themselves wide-awake at last, they make the solemn declaration, based upon knowledge and experience, that the Christian religion is utterly false, and that those who cherish it are but mental dreamers.

In justification of the last statement let us scrutinise a few of Dr. Orchard's utterances. He talks of "an experience of God which began in Jesus Christ," and then later on says that "God and Jesus Christ are of the same order of beings." The curious thing is that he comes to this conclusion concerning God and Jesus Christ on the testimony of the latter, whom he describes as "a peasant," "an unlearned man," and "one who owed little or nothing to birth, race, training, or singular endowment." How does Dr. Orchard know that Jesus Christ knew God and told the truth about him? He admits that "the attempt to explain why it [the revelation of God] came in Jesus Christ is as futile as the attempt to explain why two human beings fall in love." "Why in Jesus Christ?" he asks, and answers, "Why not?" This looks uncommonly like trifling with a great subject. "It is a case of love," he tells us; "not a matter of argument, but a matter of love." The testimony of the New Testament is entirely ignored, and systematic theology positively despised, the sole appeal being to feeling. Under the guidance of emotion the reverend gentleman imparts to us various items of information. For instance, he startles us by affirming that "the material universe and Jesus Christ are all of a piece; in fact, that to put it symbolically yet in the only adequate way, we do not live in the universe, but in Christ." What an infinite pity that it is all a case of love. A man in love has the reputation of seldom talking sensibly. We are perfectly willing to admit that Dr. Orchard loves Jesus Christ very sincerely; but his love for Christ does not prevent him from misrepresenting the effect of such love upon the lives of men. St. Bernard was one of the great figures of mediæval Christendom, and his love for Christ was an all-consuming flame; but he was the author and instigator of the most cruel persecutions for all that. With what insatiable spite he hunted down the great Abelard. Benvenuto Cellini was at once a wonderfully versatile genius and a passionate lover of Christ; but neither his genius nor his piety held his fiery temper in check; and his crimes were preceded and followed by the most ecstatic spiritual experience, as he himself unblushingly tells us. It is a sheer delusion to imagine that love for Christ transforms character. It creates piety; but piety and character are not necessarily associated. It is simply not true to say that a Christian life is not fortuitous but providential; not a perplexity but an opportunity. We have never known a Christian who did not try his best to be his own providence, or to whom life was not often a terrible perplexity. Dr. Orchard's usual retort is, "You know nothing about it"; but it is a cowardly retort, and quite unworthy of a serious-minded person. We do not doubt the reality and sincerity of the passion for Christ in numerous instances; but we do claim that it is merely a passion for a wholly imaginary person. It is very possible that Dr. Anderson, of Dundee, loves Christ quite as passionately as Dr. Orchard; but the former frankly acknowledges that the Christ he loves is not a historical character, but the creation of the religious imagination. What we maintain is that the Gospel Jesus is worthy of neither worship nor imitation, and that those who profess to love him love not him but a transformed and glorified image of him that lives alone in their fancy.

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Like all his brethren, Dr. Orchard cannot eulogise his own religion without vilifying all other cults. "Christianity," he says, "is the only religion which provides a basis for democracy, and secures the sanctity, permanence, and value of personality. Other religions have to get rid of man." Does he really believe that in his heart of hearts? When and in what country has democracy ever thriven, or even existed at all, under Christianity? Which religion tries to get rid of man, and what nation professes it? Has the reverend gentleman never read Professor Giles's *Chinese Sketches*, *China and the Chinese*, or *Historic China*? If he has, he knows that what he says is absolutely false; if he has not, he has no right to make such an assertion in the absence of knowledge. The claims he makes for Christianity have never been verified, and now Christianity is dying without ever doing a single thing to justify its existence.

J. T. Lloyd.

Notre Dame de la Garde.

On a hill at Marseilles rises a Catholic church, and on the tower of the church stands a gilded image of the Mother of Heaven, and the Marseillaise call her the Guardian Lady,—Notre Dame de la Garde. Now this Lady is the symbol, to us of the new age, of the genius of Humanity, which guards the evening and the morning and the hours of the night.

The lighthouses glow on the rocky capes, and the red and green lamps sentinel the harbors; and the searchlights throw their quivering rays over the midnight waters. Countless miles of streets in the cities of the world are illumined by the labor of the gasworks and electric power-stations, and, amid the shades of millions of lanes and squares and avenues the police maintain their patrol while whole nations slumber. Humanity watches in the gloom, shields the prone multitudes, and wearies not of her vigil.

When dawn blushes, she—Notre Dame de la Garde—quickens, and not slackens her care. She kindles the hearth-fires in hamlet and in city, and spreads the table in ten thousand times ten thousand households; and her ministers are the hands of women. Her spirit guides the ploughing of the furrow, the casting of the seed, the gathering of the crops, and the grinding of the mills. Where the wine is pressed, where the olives are shaken, where the mulberry trees feed the silk-worms, and where the cotton whitens in the plantations, she toils to provide.

The mean garments of the proletariat she bestows with regret and tears, for they are but the squalid tokens of the fair apparelling of the days to come. Through the factories she hurries, and weaves for entire communities; and with the business of her tanneries, and dyeworks, her cutting-out and her sewing, her laundering, and her mending (praise to the loyal fingers of the armies of menders!) the towns throb and hum from the rising of the sun to the mustering of the silver stars.

She chooses helpers from the immense kingdom of the animals; from these countless forms of life,—terrible, tender, uncouth, graceful, venomous, innocent,—she chooses the meek-eyed cow, the spirited horse, the sociable dog, the playful kitten, the homely ass, the milk-yielding goat, the sagacious elephant, the plodding camel; and the fowls peck in her compounds, and the doves fly in and out of her cots, and the bees murmur in her gardens and hives; and by the magnetism of her taming art she enlists these naïve tribes for companionship, for ornament, for the yoke, the burden, and the nourishing of her children. She knows the tragedy that often blots their speechless life, and she raises her maternal arms, and protectingly utters the holy words of mercy,—"for these living things," she says, "are part of my own soul."

Nor, for the sake of her children, does she disdain to delve in the crevasses and corridors of the underworld. Lamp in hand, and with words of sagacious warning against the perils of earth, air, fire, and water, she regulates the industry of the miners, the quarrymen, the sulphur-gatherers. But, as she surveys the wondrous piles of glittering metal and stone, and the treasuries of precious gems, torn from the rock by the energy of searchers in the dark or in solitary valleys, she sighs as only a mother can sigh. "Ah, my sons and daughters," she says, "reflect, whether you do not place too high a value on some of these jewels, which cost so dear in human life and health; reflect, whether you justly comprehend and justly requite the service rendered by the laboring hearts and arms in the caves of twilight and jeopardy."

How proudly she smiles over her works of forethought and thrift. On many a mountain slope and on many a mighty plain grow the forests which her sons conserve with scientific skill, and increase by wise plantation; and here is the womb to produce fleets for the sea, and houses without number, and the wealth of household furniture and amenities. These broad fields of rice, she has irrigated them with a network of channels. A massive barrage has been built by her engineers across this flooding stream, and the waters are retained for the blessing of the lands of a widespread peasantry. Carriers of fertility and grateful moisture are her vast canals cut in the arid waste; and her waterways through sand and stone bear the gliding ships from sea to sea.

And she glories in the swift passage of her trains on the steel roads that lie in green landscapes, and thread the depths of hills, and skirt the tide-beaten beaches, and roar through the crowded markets, and knit the far-sundered nations, and take and give the wares of the continents. By starlight and sunlight, her ships, with pulsing engines, convey an opulent commerce, and waft to remote shores the builders of new commonwealths. Aloft, in that crystal sphere whence she draws her vital breath, her venturous sons launch their air-boats, and gaily coast the heavens.

Health and fitness are in her keeping, and she,—Notre Dame de la Garde,—oversees the sanitation of the planet. She tunnels the soil with drains, spreads the sewage of cities on the sweetening earth, wars on minute vermin, arrests the consumption scourge, beats back the foul malaria and yellow fever, and makes league against alcohol and opium, and the ghastly ills of sex, and the sad lunacy which mocks her genius and her existence. Each century finds fresh purity in the food she draws from the abounding land and water, and more divine is the blood in her veins, and ever more and more she expands her passion for the gracious light, and the quickening air, and the activities of the sportive hour. Blow, winds of the world, upon her mantling cheeks; shine, sacred sun, upon her labors; and surround her, infinite skies, with a silent and harmonious presence.

"My children," she says (and never was song more wise, more melodious, more mystical), "I climb to the Highest only through you, therefore learn to serve me." Hence, at her bidding, the schools raise their turrets over the murmuring towns and the tranquil villages; the colleges invite the troops of serious men and women; the universities gleam amid their lawns, and offer a stately roof to the sciences. Youth cons the book, heeds the message of old experience, and scales the rugged and happy path of knowledge; and knowledge and the willing heart consecrate themselves to the service of Humanity. The arts also are summoned to crown the achievements of the craftsman and the scholar. Here is the grotto or the shady pine-wood for the poet; here is the great orchestra for the musician; here is the spacious area for the pile of the architect; here is the canvas spread for the painter; and here the marble awaits the sculptor's touch; and here she,—Mother imparadised by our homage,—presides over the eternal unfolding of truth and beauty.

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Here are the civic disciplines. She assembles the elected ones in the senate and the parliament, dignifies the judge on the bench, and whispers the command of the public law in the ears of citizens as they pursue the daily task, engage in strenuous trade, and mingle in the social throng. Where men and women associate for mutual aid, for the consolation of the suffering, for the strengthening of the weak, the uplifting of the depressed, the awakening of the ignorant and sordid, the establishment of peace, and the revealing of visions, there she lives and strives and hopes.

Noble is her history. She was born in the wilderness, and has been wounded in a thousand tragic ages, and imperilled by embattled hosts of savagery and lust. She is strong in the victories of the past; she is the inspiration of the present; she will pass on—in her children aiding, in her children co-operating, we her children one with her in purpose and ideal,—to the splendid era of love, order, and progress; she—Notre Dame de la Garde; she, the genius of Humanity.

F. J. GOULD.

Gibraltar, March 10, 1913.

The Voltaire of Germany.

1797—1856.

"The viewless arrows of his thought were headed
And winged with flame."

—TENNYSON.

HEINE'S genius almost defies analysis. He is, and must ever remain, a problem. He is multifarious, luminous, brilliant, like a diamond giving light from a hundred facets. He appears as a youthful champion tilting against the enemies of humanity; but it seems well-nigh impossible to reach the roots of the man's nature. He is a bundle of contradictions. A Jew who despised money; a convert without zeal; a model of resignation, and yet no Christian; a poet living amidst the sternest conditions of prose; a comedian whose life was a tragedy!

Heinrich Heine gathers in one vivid personality all those influences of his time which are the live forces to-day. He was born at a great crisis in European history. The long and terrible period during which the vampires of Church and State had sucked away the life-blood of the world was rapidly ending, and before his tenth year little Heinrich had lived through, and seen, great events. It was the day of Napoleon, and, as Heine puts it, "all boundaries were dislocated." As a boy, he found it hard to learn Latin declensions, which he was sure the Romans never did, "for if they had first to learn Latin they never would have had time to conquer the world." Young Heine was so troubled that he prayed an earnest but heterodox prayer, "O thou poor, once-persecuted God, do help me, if possible, to keep the irregular verbs in my head."

One memorable day the impressionable boy saw Napoleon ride through Dusseldorf on his famous white horse, and he never quite lost the glamor cast over him by the "Emperor." Republican as he afterwards became, Heine always had a tender place in his heart for the great despot. As he laughingly explained, he always had the gift of "loving both ways." Heinrich was a precocious child, and loved reading. His favorite books were, characteristically, *Don Quixote* and *Gulliver's Travels*. At the age of seventeen a rich uncle at Hamburg tried in vain to induce him to choose a business career; but it was useless. The young poet regarded money-grubbing as an accursed thing. Later he studied law at Bonn, Gottingen, and Berlin, and he fell under the influence of Hegel. Years afterwards he caustically referred to this period as that in which he "herded swine with the Hegelians."

With the appearance of his first volume of poems he began to take his true place. He still talked of becoming a lawyer, but his thoughts were on far other things.

"Red life boils in my veins. Every woman is to me the gift of a world. I hear a thousand nightingales. I could eat all the elephants of Hindustan and pick my teeth with the spire of Strasburg Cathedral. Life is the greatest of blessings."

His energies were devoted to writing and not to pleading. Instead of cultivating his clients he wrote his *Travel Pictures*, a book so full of word magic that it showed Heine to be as great an artist in prose as he was in poetry. Its irony was so mordant, so disrespectful, that it was at once placed on the Index Expurgatorius. As a writer, he never elected to dwell beside the still waters. To think of his career is to think of excursions and alarums, of church calling unto conventicle, of pamphlet answering pamphlet, of recriminations and vituperations manifold, and all the joys of literary battle. With all his love of fighting his enthusiasm ever burned for noble ends. The love of liberty shines through the mist of his dreams. And let a man love Freedom and live long enough, and there is no doubt with whom his place must be at the end.

In *The Romantic School* he lashed out at the literary chiefs of reaction in their tenderest spot. He compared their reversion to mediævalism to the hallucinations of Charenton, the Bedlam of Paris. This is how he ridicules Tieck: "He drank so deeply of the mediæval folk tales and ballads that he became almost a child again, and dropped into that juvenile lisping which it cost Mdme. de Stael so much effort to admire."

There came an inevitable stage in which the poet could no longer

"sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Nedera's hair";

but when the sad days arrived he never complained. For seven long years prior to his death he lay sick and solitary on a "mattress grave," his back bent, his legs paralysed, his hands powerless, his sight failing. His ungrudging nature found excuses for his friends' desertion of his sick chamber in the reflection that he was "unconsciously long a-dying." As Matthew Arnold sings in his fine dirge:—

"Oh! not little, when pain
Is most quelling, and man
Easily quelled, and the fine
Temper of genius so soon
Thrills at each smart, is the praise
Not to have yielded to pain."

"God's satire weighs heavily upon me," said Heine.

"The Great Author of the Universe, the Aristophanes of Heaven, was bent on demonstrating with crushing force to me, the little earthly so-called German Aristophanes, how my weightiest sarcasms are only pitiful attempts at jesting in comparison with His, and how miserably I am beneath Him in humor, in colossal mockery."

The untamable humorist kept his most wonderful jest for the last. "God will forgive me," he said; "it is his trade."

Such a nature as Heine's was bound to be misunderstood. The puritanical Carlyle called him a "blackguard"; the pious Kingsley thought him "a wicked man." Thackeray, on the other hand, admitted his "great genius"; and Matthew Arnold regarded him as the mouthpiece of his generation. These different estimates are typical of the general attitude. He kindled enthusiasm or roused repulsion wherever he was read.

If we would seek a comparison, we may find it in Voltaire. Both men championed Liberty, and produced the deepest effects on their generations, and left immortal legacies to posterity. The writings of both ring with a defiant note. They are both inspired by devotion to Freedom as true as ever burned in man's heart.

Heine, after all, was a poet. He is at his best in his verse. His melodies are as various as they are faultless. The cadences are now caressingly tender; now lulling, lingeringly mournful; now resonant as the blare of trumpets. The verse now rolls majestically, now dances airily, now rings like a peal of

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fairy bells, now sweeps along with the fury and clamor of a storm.

> "O lyric *voice*, half angel and half bird,
> And all a wonder and a wild desire."

Fundamentally, Heine was a Freethinker, and he hated priestcraft with every drop of his blood. He never wearied of pouring scorn on "the molly-coddle homœopathic soul-doctors, who pour the thousandth part of a pint of reason into a gallon of morals, and send people to sleep with it on Sundays." He loathed that "abortion called State religion, that monster born of the intrigue between temporal and spiritual power." He was not "over partial to anthropomorphism." The bolt of his unerring irony is frequently directed towards the most sacred characters in the Christian mythology. In an oft-quoted passage he says that God is dying, and, in a daring figure of speech, suggests the administration to him of the last sacrament. On another occasion he insinuates that perhaps the parvenu God of the Christians is angry with Israel for reminding him of his former obscure national relations.

In the lambent flames of his sardonic humor he scorched everything that the Christian counts dearest. Writing of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he says:—

> "Since his time Deism has vanished from the realm of speculative reason. It may, perhaps, be several centuries yet before this melancholy notice of decease gets universally bruited about; we, however, have long since put on mourning. Immanuel Kant has pursued the path of inexorable philosophy; he has stormed heaven, and put the whole garrison to the edge of the sword."

Even the idea of immortality did not escape his satire. He mockingly suggests that the notion of living for ever must have first occurred to some lover in the arms of his mistress, or to some worthy citizen sipping his beer in the cool of a summer evening.

As a poet, Heine's fame has attained to that height in which praise has become superfluous; but in the character of iconoclast he has a yet higher claim on the attention of Freethinkers. Heine said he knew not if he were worthy of a laurel wreath. "But," he proudly added, "lay on my coffin a sword, for I was a brave soldier in the war of the liberation of humanity." No one will deny the laurel wreath, and assuredly to Heinrich Heine belongs the sword of a valiant soldier of liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

"I don't say 'tis right, and I don't say 'tis wrong," answered the metaphysical laborer. "But I do say 'tis natural. The bud was no more made for you than the bird. 'Twas made for itself—to take its chance of success, like everything else."

"But 'twas me made it, you might say. 'Twas me, under God, for didn't I grow it, and nurse it and prune it and feed it?"

"You did all this," admitted Birkett, "but you didn't net it, you see, and the Lord would say, if He gave the matter a thought, He'd say, 'Well, old Harry Hawke, you very well knew bullfinches was about, and you very well knew their manners and customs; and 'twas your place as a thinking and immortal creature, to outwit 'em.' But you didn't, and so you won't get not gooseberries this year."

"Like your cheek, Johnson," cut in Pancras Widecombe, "like your cheek telling what the Lord would say, and what He wouldn't. You're as bad as Farmer Dunnybrig."

"Drat that man—I hate un!" cried Nicky Glubb from his corner. "So sure of himself as a donkey, and with just as much reason. The Lord this, and the Lord that! I said to him a bit ago, when he stopped and began to preach—I said to un, 'You mark me, Valiant Dunnybrig, you'll get hoofed from heaven yet, for chattering and taking the word out of the mouth of the Almighty!' He said I was past praying for, the old fool, and I said I'd be a shining angel up high above him some day."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

Acid Drops.

We are a little late, but not, we hope, too late, in noticing a comment of the *British Congregationalist* on the Essex Hall meeting for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. The writer admits that, with slight exceptions, "the arguments for the abolition of these Laws were quite sound." He objects to the belief of Atheists "that Christians want the Blasphemy Laws retained as a prop for a weak and tottering religion." Then he adds, "They might be surprised to know how many of those whose beliefs they attack would vote with them for the removal of State protection from a faith which is well able to care for itself." We will not now discuss whether religion is "in a weak and tottering state," we simply ask, "If the Blasphemy Laws are not retained for the purpose of protecting religion, for what other purposes are they retained?" There are no special laws protecting politics, or science, or art, or literature from assault in any form. If a man gets into trouble with the authorities in conducting a crusade against teaching in any of these directions, it is because of his behavior or language, and not because of the thing attacked. And the prosecution completely ignores *what* is attacked, concerning itself solely with the language or conduct. This is really all that Freethinkers are asking for in connection with their crusade against the Blasphemy Laws. They do not ask that in attacking religion a man shall be allowed to do whatever he pleases and use whatever language he thinks fit. All they ask is that the same rules that hold good in controversy concerning other subjects shall hold good for religious controversy likewise.

The claim that a great number of Christians disagree with these Blasphemy Laws is, we feel bound to say, more or less hypocritical. If Christians wanted them abolished they could be abolished at once. While they are retained Freethinkers are perfectly justified in claiming that Christians desire their retention as a means of silencing attacks on their faith. The fact of some Christians being manly enough to support real freedom of opinion cannot relieve the bulk of Christians of responsibility for the maintenance of laws that rest upon a foundation of cowardice and intolerance. The writer's talk of the necessity for "the protection of the public—and of ladies and children in particular—against the profanities, the vulgarities, and the obscenities of the Park Agnostic," is simply puerile. The police have already, apart from the Blasphemy Laws, ample powers to deal with genuine cases of obscenity. Vulgarity is another question, and we do not know that it has ever been proposed to punish a man or woman for being "vulgar" except in attacks upon religion. One may be as vulgar as one pleases in preaching or defending religion, and instead of guarding "ladies and children" against this, they are invited to attend. The real protection against vulgarity must come from the public taste and intelligence, not from the maintenance of laws that elicit torrents of falsehood and hypocrisy whenever they are defended.

The reference to Agnostic vulgarities and obscenities, we must confess, yields us some amusement. So many people have preferred "Agnostic" to "Atheist" because they thought it more respectable, less aggressive, and more likely to disarm opposition. And we always warned them that so soon as Agnosticism became at all troublesome it would be met with exactly the same opposition as Atheism has been met with. Our warning seems fully justified. It used to be the Atheistic vulgarities and obscenities. Now it is Agnostic obscenity against which women and children must be protected. One really gains nothing by bending to bigotry; these Agnostics might just as well have called themselves Atheists at the outset.

It is a pity that people will not restrict their writings to matters with which they have at least a nodding acquaintance. The *Modern Man*, commenting on the demand for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, says that:—

> "Under the thinly veiled guise of various creeds there is already far too much of that which borders on the blasphemous to be heard every day in Hyde Park. The repeal of the Blasphemy Laws would result in a veritable tornado of blasphemous oratory. If that is liberty, we don't want it."

This is the kind of paragraph that the average irresponsible scribbler is given to writing, and unfortunately it suits only too well a section of the public against which the better-minded portion really do want protecting. The Blasphemy Laws are not used against "various creeds," but against one "creed" only. Religious people may be as abusive and as vulgar as they please. The man who does not know this,

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we should have thought, would have been too ignorant for even the ordinary catchpenny paper. Moreover, Hyde Park is not even the whole of London—and certainly neither the most respectable nor the most intelligent portion of London. If Hyde Park is so disreputable as the *Modern Man* thinks, it can be dealt with in other ways, quite apart from the Blasphemy Laws. We are of opinion that there is a much greater need to protect the public against floods of "spicy" paragraphs, served up in popular journals, than against tornadoes of "blasphemous" oratory.

Sir Hiram Maxim's able and interesting speech at the Essex Hall meeting for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws contained one mistake. He spoke of unbelievers in the fables of the Bible, who said what they honestly thought about them, as "liable to be arrested and imprisoned with hard labor." This is not the case. "Blasphemy" is technically only a "misdemeanor," not a felony; and sentences under them cannot (and never did) include hard labor. Not that this is any great advantage, for the "hard labor" prisoners have the best of the bargain, being better fed and less confined to their cells than other prisoners.

The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, of Stamford-hill, speaks of God's sigh, which must be echoed within ourselves, if we are to be acceptable in his sight. But why should God ever sigh? Is it because of his failure as Creator and his non-success as Redeemer? And why should God's sigh have a place in us? Are we to sigh because we pity the Lord; because we are sorry that the works of his hand have turned out so badly?

The Rt. Rev. Father in God, the Lord Bishop of Winchester, has left Farnham Castle for Spain and will be away for some weeks. Christ died on the cross; but some of his followers live on it—very comfortably.

A play entitled "The Sin of David," has been produced at Johannesburg, and has created "a profound sensation." If the production follows the Bible story closely we are not surprised.

Although Mr. Chesterton goes out of his way to attack many Freethought writers in his recently published *Victorian Age of Literature*, he makes an exception in the case of James Thomson, the author of "The City of Dreadful Night." Says Chesterton, "Thompson was a fine poet; but his pessimism, combined with a close pugnacity, does not follow any of the large but loose lines of the Swinburnian age. But he was a great person—he knew how to be democratic in the dark." Chesterton cannot be accurate in the light, for he spells Thomson's name with a "p."

To make certain that he should end his own life, the Rev. James Alfred Nash, Chaplain at St. Marylebone Workhouse, took a dose of poison and shot himself. According to the revivalists, it is only Atheists who commit suicide.

Sir Edwin Durning Lawrence, who believes in the Baconian authorship of the plays of Shakespeare, now contends that Bacon also wrote the Introduction to the Authorised Version of the Bible, and besides that edited and verified it. That Bacon should have edited the "Jew Book" is the unkindest cut of all.

In the good old days people were pretty sharply punished for desecrating the "Sawbath," even though it went no further than kissing one's own wife. There is at least one parson in Britain who regrets that these days have passed for ever. Rev. Pulston Jones told a Pwllheli Free Church Council meeting that he would like to excommunicate any member who bought a paper on Sunday. We quite believe Mr. Jones to be in earnest, and we feel certain that an agitation to revive the old village stocks and place people therein for not attending church would meet with his warm approval.

The *Christian World*, in reviewing one of the numerous works devoted to the reconciliation of science and religion, remarks that it is "greatly to the good" that the author "refrains from buttressing his arguments with textual quotations." Our readers will remember the time when such a work would have been declared suspect had it refrained from this course. Nowadays, even Christians are beginning to recognise that to quote the Bible as an authority for a statement in science is about as helpful as quoting Hans Andersen.

The *British Weekly*, of all papers! is responsible for the following:—

> "Beer and the Bible were very prominent in the 1873 election for East Staffordshire, which resulted in the return of Mr. Allsopp, the Conservative brewer, by a large majority.
> "In the window of an hotel at West Bromwich, crowded with Mr. Allsopp's agents, appeared a remarkable sketch of two cherub-faced Sunday-school children bearing between them a banner which bore the strange device of a Bible ornamented with a crown and sceptre, with the following lines beneath:—
>
> "'Holy Bible, Book divine,
> Precious treasure, thou art mine;
> Mine to tell me whence I came,
> Mine to tell me what I am.'
>
> "Then came—
>
> "'Shall we have this blessing taken from us? No. Then vote for Allsopp.'"

The late Pierpont Morgan has at least two ardent defenders in Great Britain. Both the *Church Times* and the *Guardian* write in praise of the late financier. He was, says the latter journal, "fundamentally a man of high principle and singleness of purpose." He was also "a convinced, if not enthusiastic, Churchman." He did much for the American Church, and "to the day of his death he paid the lighting bill of St. Paul's Cathedral." We recall the name of another financier, Mr. Hooley, who presented a service of gold plate (afterwards, we believe, returned) to St. Paul's Cathedral. Evidently there is nothing in huge financial operations that stands in the way of devout Churchmanship. Rockefeller's piety is also, we believe, beyond question.

During the last ten years Canada has added to its religious capital twenty of what the *Guardian* calls "fancy religions." We see nothing to object to in this. If people will have religions, the greater the variety the better. With so extensive a variety of gods and creeds in the world, it seems remarkable that so many people find nothing in hand to suit them.

The special correspondent of the *Daily Mirror*, describing a bull-fight at Seville, included the following pious item: "All concerned in the actual fight drove to the ring in open carriages, and many made their way to the little chapel at the ringside to kneel at the altar before entering the ring."

Provincial papers are often more outspoken than their metropolitan rivals. Recently the *Southend Standard*, in discussing the decline in church-going, sharply criticised the statement of Canon Reay that such decline was to be attributed to golf, tennis, sea-bathing, and seaside attractions. "Suppose," said our contemporary, "all these agencies effective and operating together, they have no significance or relation to our working-class population, whose absenteeism is nigh to universal." This is a good shot which should cause the Canon to explode.

Miss Marie Corelli has an article in *Nash's Magazine* for April on "The Lordship of Love." In it she describes the militant Suffragettes as "a kind of lost tribe, self-exiled from every Garden of Eden." Members of the "lost" tribe are frequently discovered at country houses and beside pillar boxes. Besides, Adam and Eve were not "self-exiled" from Eden; but "fired out."

Among the recent wills of the poor clergy we observe that of a late Bishop of Japan, £1,596; Rev. E. W. Clark, Notting Hill, £2,399; F. W. Lang, Torquay, £10,184; G. C. Williams, Dublin, £13,031; C. Bell, Prebendary of Salisbury, £13,461; Canon Mrowbray Trotter, £13,717; C. Slingsby, Knaresborough, £18,493; J. Bent, Eastbourne, £26,154; and Rev. Sir W. Honeyman, Shropshire, £89,871. We rejoice to see that so many of the clergy were relieved from the pressure of absolute want during their lives. Nothing so interferes with a due condition of spiritual serenity as taking thought for the morrow, what one shall eat and wherewithal one shall be clothed. Freed from this anxiety, the above-named gentlemen were able, by the dispensation of Providence, to give undivided attention to the spiritual welfare of their respective flocks.

The *Daily Telegraph* sought the opinion of that popular actor, Mr. Forbes Robertson, on the question of the decline of Church attendance. Numbers of clergymen also aired their views in its columns. Why does the editor associate the actor and the clergy? Does he regard them as players?

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Professor Samuel J. Jones, of the Gunter Biblical and Literary College, Texas, has published a book of "Mathematical Wrinkles." The volume contains no reference to that prize puzzle in mathematics—the Christian Trinity.

A girl revivalist has been making a sensation at Wimbledon. The papers say that "she spoke for half an hour without ceasing." Thousands of ladies could beat this modest record without "inspiration."

We see from the program description of Dante's "Inferno," as presented by animated pictures at the Albert Hall, Sheffield, that "Simony, in Dante's time, was considered a very serious offence, and was much more *fragrant* than now." We suppose this is a subtle reference to the "odor of sanctity" which often surrounded it.

Some remarkable miracles have been occurring at the Monastery of the Atonement, near Albany, New York. Quite recently the Abbot of the Monastery fed a wayfarer. His features were Jewish and resembled those of the Savior. He was asked to take two buckets and fill them at the well; but one of the sisters, noting that he looked frail, excused him the task. Then the man with the Jewish face departed. But when the Mother Superior stooped to pick up the pails she found them full. So full that "no mortal hand could have filled them so full, as the water would have splashed over the top in the carrying." In another case, three chickens were stolen from the monastery. At once the aid of St. Anthony was invoked, and the next night three chickens, different to the ones stolen, were put back. The Abbot explains that St. Anthony had worked on the thief's conscience to make restitution—perhaps, with someone else's chickens. Who now says that the age of faith is dead? It is a pity that the miraculously filled pails did not keep full, despite all attempts to empty them, or that the three chickens did not grab the thief and lead him to the nearest police station. It is the Abbot's careful abstention from additions of this kind that gives his story such a convincing air of unadorned truth.

A Reigate lady, Mrs. Oxley, was killed on Good Friday while preparing for church. She had gone upstairs, and while in her room was killed by a sudden flash of lightning. We wonder what bearing this has on the doctrine of a particular Providence. Had she been preparing for a Freethought meeting the moral would have been an obvious one.

Complaining of petty thefts in his church, the rector of St. James's, Colchester, says that "even the thermometer has been stolen, and now the verger cannot tell whether the congregation will be boiled or frozen." The virtuous verger is probably on the verge of vitriolic and variegated verbosity.

Christian England may be reassured. "Hubert," the great Hubert Bland, bourgeois Socialist and Catholic infidel, has just told it that it holds the promise of the future. So *that's* all right. "I venture confidently to predict," he says, "that the future of England is a religious, not an atheistic, future." Some people are always *venturing* to *predict*, and they always do it *confidently*. They always predict what their public wants to believe, and the game is worth a good deal to them from many points of view, including the financial. Wise people, of course, remember that prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error. But wise people are always few. Nobody knows that better than Mr. Hubert Bland.

Dr. Alfred Wilson has been telling the members of the Child Study Society that he had seen a human brain "which resembled the brain of a cat, and it belonged to a woman who was an idiot, who ate ravenously like a beast, and who, when irritated, spat like a cat." This medical relic should be of service to Christian Evidence lecturers, who are often hard pressed for proofs for the Design argument.

At the Lancashire Congregational Union meetings last month it was asserted that "the Church of Christ stands as a bulwark against the wilderness." And what a sorry bulwark it is! Though it has been in existence for nearly two thousand years, the majority of the inhabitants of Christendom are "in a waste howling wilderness" still. What has the Church ever done towards solving the problem of poverty? What has nearly always been its attitude to disease? Why, the Church succeeded for fifteen hundred years in arresting the progress of the world.

The *Guardian* still continues its crusade in favor of conscription, under the name of "Universal National Service." It does not believe that the early Christians were generally opposed to war, although it admits a difference of opinion on the subject. At any rate, after Constantine—that is, as soon as Christians as a body could wage war—

> "Religious scruples as to the lawfulness of war were no longer expressed. Bishops themselves appeared as leaders in battle, and crusades were preached as holy enterprises. Even the Reformation was followed by wars and massacres and by the mutual slaughter of Christians, and Cromwell could think of himself in his military exploits as a true and heroic servant of God."

Of the truth of this there can, we think, be no "possible, probable shadow of doubt," to use the words of W. S. Gilbert. The only difference between Christian warfare and warfare with other people is that Christians have always accompanied their wars with a perfect deluge of pious cant.

"Concert Supersedes Church" runs a headline in a daily paper, which goes on to say that at the Easter Vestry Meeting at St. Peter's Church, Hornsey, it was stated that the Sunday Concerts at the Alexandra Palace had seriously affected the attendances and collections at the services. That is precisely the reason why the clergy so bitterly oppose all Sunday amusements.

There is to be a Noah's Ark fair at the Albert Hall London, in June, and the animals are to be represented by well-known society people. Whoever represents the ass will not want much "make-up."

"Ghosts" are usually very serious; but, according to the *Evening News*, a spook has appeared at the Vicarage of Weston, Yorkshire, who seems to be gifted with a fine sense of humor. One of the maids saw the figure of a woman carrying a small coffin, and the maid heard the woman humming the hymn, "Peace, Perfect Peace." Then came a terrible noise of the smashing of furniture; chairs were upset, a washstand was broken, and a big wardrobe thrown down. A delightful transformation from perfect peace to imperfect pieces.

In connection with the funeral of Lord Wolseley, the *Daily Mirror* quoted some magnificent lines from Swinburne and Garibaldi's glorious address to his soldiers. When it comes to great ideas, Christians have to call upon the Atheists.

THE CURATE'S APE.

A curate had received as a present from a missionary friend in America an ape, which won universal admiration for his domestic talents.

One day, at the time of the feast of the patron saint of the village, the priest was honored by the visit of the bishop; and the curate took pains to exhibit the talented animal to him.

"Just see, your eminence; he imitates me in everything. See how he has decked himself out in my alb and my hat. And he is capable afterwards of kneeling and murmuring a prayer."

"Truly, he is very amusing. And what intelligence! And what precision in his movements! He resembles you exactly, reverend sir!"

"And see now! He sits down with us at the table; and before eating, he makes the sign of the cross."

"Incredible!"

"And he does like me in everything. Before eating the soup, he drinks a swallow of wine; then he adds a pinch of salt to his soup."

"We might think we saw a human creature."

"That is what I say, your eminence. He acts just like me."

During this conversation, the maid comes in with the soup-dish. The ape takes hold of her head, and plants a vigorous kiss on her neck.

The bishop is stupefied. Recovering himself, he turns to the curate with the pertinent question: "And who taught him to do that?"

SWEET REVENGE.

Judge: "It seems to me that I have seen you before."

Prisoner: "You have, your honor. I taught your daughter singing lessons."

Judge: "Thirty years."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £96 15s. 4d. Received since:—John Deacon, 5s. 3d.; H. Kennedy, £3 3s.; C. H. M. Gronn, Australia (per H. Saill), 13s. 10d.; J. F. Aust, 5s.: A. Phillips, 10s.; Richard Johnson, £5; W. H. Harrap, 2s. 6d.; D. Stewart, 5s. *Per Miss Vance:* "Postman," 2s. 6d.

A. LYON.—The book dealt with by Mr. Cohen in his pamphlet, *Deity and Design*, is, you will see from the pamphlets forwarded, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's *World of Life*.

C. LOXTON.—We learn with regret the decease of Mr. Plackett, and congratulate you on the thoughtful and eloquent address delivered over the grave of your old friend. The note of sincerity in such Secular services must serve as useful object lessons to all Christians capable of appreciating their significance.

H. KENNEDY, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, is glad to see we have "jonked the Deil" again. He hopes we shall "get back rejuvenated" to "do battle for the great and good cause" of Freethought.

ROBSON PAIGE.—You were treated as Freethinkers usually are treated by the "glorious free press." Your letter would have been inserted otherwise. Thanks for your congratulations and good wishes.

E. P. (Canada).—We see nothing in Pastor Russell's utterances calling for special treatment in the *Freethinker*. We think Dr. Talmage was spoken of in the past tense. We know he is not in Brooklyn now—for he has been dead some years. He took all the money referred to when he was living.

A. STAPLES.—Humor is not the strong point of the dear *Daily News*. Thanks for your personal good wishes.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

H. DAWSON.—There is really only one Coleridge, *the* Coleridge, Samuel Taylor Coleridge—a great poet, and as Shelley said, with his usual felicity, a "subtle-souled psychologist." The passage you inquire about occurs in his *Table Talk*, a volume included in Bohn's Library.

L. GREENWOOD.—Mr. Foote was too ill to write about Mark Rutherford (Mr. William Hale White) at the time of his decease, a few weeks ago, but he may find an opportunity of dealing with that fine writer shortly.

A. PIMLEY.—Thanks for paper. The immediate source of the rev gentleman's ideas may be as you say; but the idea that the universe has undergone a preparation for man is really an old one. Moreover, it is the central idea of Dr. Wallace's *World of Life*. It is, of course, a pure assumption, absolutely incapable of proof, and quite reversing the logical order of events. Grass does not exist for the cow to eat; the cow exists because it eats the grass. Mr. Foote is, we are pleased to say, making good progress, and we hope to see him in his usual form in good time for the Annual Conference.

S. RICHARDSON.—We really do not think that Bergson is worth the time and attention that has been given him. He is enjoying a certain vogue, but in our opinion it is a vogue only. And it is so easy to become fashionable by disguising animistic ideas in philosophic language. Time is the great test, and within ten years we expect to see M. Bergson go the same road as many of his predecessors.

R. CHAPMAN.—So John Sanderson is dead! We knew him for more than thirty years. He stood in our mind for all that was manly.

J. F. AUST.—You are right. "Mimnermus" should have ascribed the passage to Bassanio instead of Helena. But we all make mistakes at times. Thanks for your good wishes. We note your hope to read our "pages on the Master."

SPICER.—We don't recollect it, and fancy you must be mistaken.

A. PHILLIPS (S. Africa), subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "My desire is to make it £5 by the end of the year, as a token of my admiration for your grand efforts."

RICHARD JOHNSON, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, says he is "sorry to see how slowly the Fund progresses." "I do hope," he adds, "that those who can afford a 'fiver' or more will hurry up at once." Our old friend, a well known Manchester veteran, says he was "quite upset" by our "Personal" note, and begs us to heed our doctor's warning and take more care of ourselves in future.

S. NOAKES.—We are pleased at your efforts to spread the light, and the letter you enclose does credit to both yourself and your convert. We have allocated your P.O. for 8s. 2d. as desired. A selection of pamphlets, likely to be useful, will be forwarded by our shop manager.

J. W. ROBINSON.—Your query is answered in our advertisement columns. A letter to this office will secure all the information you require.

T. C. HOLDEN (U.S.A.).—Thanks for name of probable new subscriber. Form and paper sent as requested.

T. M. MOZLEY.—Thanks for cutting. Mr. Arthur Henderson is a politician and a local preacher—two avocations not very favorable to clear thinking or helpful speech. Responsible people are not likely to take his deliverances on Unbelief or Determinism very seriously. Mr. Foote, as you will see, is fast shaking off his indisposition.

J. BYRNE.—Obliged for epitaph, which may be useful later. We are very pleased to hear from one whose acquaintance with the *Freethinker* dates from 1886. That a paper can be read with interest for so long by one person is a high compliment to those that have helped to fill its pages.

"DORCHESTER."—The trick of lumping together "Drunkenness, gambling, immorality, and infidelity" is a very common one, although Sir Algernon Coote probably thinks it to be original. We should have no hesitation in saying that Christians have nothing to learn from "Infidels" in the shape of drunkenness or immorality or gambling, and if every Christian abstained from all three, what remained would be of a very manageable character.

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

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

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Personal.

SOME friends are expressing a fear that they may not see me at the N.S.S. Conference on Whit-Sunday. I think they may set their minds at rest on that point. I am on the road to recovery now,—though it is a longer road than I like, for I am not as young as I was and I was very badly shaken. My severe illness put a strain upon the heart, which takes time to get its old tone back; so that I must move gently along a quiet road for a bit. But it is only a question of time now, I think; and if the north-east wind will only give place to something more summery and salubrious (Meredith's "sou-wester" would suit me to a nicety) I should make more rapid progress than I am doing just at present. I really ought to be myself again by Whit-Sunday.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The course of lectures in the Stratford Town Hall opened well on Sunday evening last. There was a good attendance, and the lecture was listened to with close attention throughout. At the close of the lecture, on the chairman, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, inviting questions, a local clergyman did his best, with the aid of a small group of supporters, to create a disturbance. Not content with being permitted to ask questions, he mounted a seat and kept up a series of interjections during the whole of the time that Mr. Cohen was replying. Eventually this ill-behaved representative of the faith was reduced to silence, although we may safely say that none but a Freethought audience would have refrained from forcibly ejecting him. However, as he appeared to have

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come for the special purpose of creating a disorder, it was well that he was frustrated. He will probably not try the game a second time.

To-day's lecturer at Stratford is Mr. Lloyd. We hope that local Freethinkers will do their utmost to secure the large attendance he deserves, with as great a sprinkling of strangers as is possible. Mr. Lloyd's lectures are always worthy of close attention, and those who hear him for the first time will certainly not regret their visit. Those who have heard him before will need no inducement to come again. The chair will be taken at 7.30. Tram, train, or 'bus will land visitors at the door of the hall.

Dr. J. G. Frazer, the author of that great work *The Golden Bough*, which has grown under his hands, since the first edition, into so many splendid volumes, is a most indefatigable worker. He has just published, through Macmillan & Co., the first volume of an entirely new work —*The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, which will receive attention in our columns presently. Meanwhile we quote the following striking passage, which will be of great interest to most of our readers :—

> "Whether other men from a simple contemplation of their own nature, quite apart from reasoning, know or believe themselves intuitively to be immortal, I cannot say; but I can say with some confidence that for myself I have no such intuition whatever of my own immortality, and that if I am left to the resources of my natural faculties alone, I can as little affirm the certain or probable existence of my personality after death as I can affirm the certain or probable existence of a personal God."

The religious papers may be relied upon not to give this important passage a gratuitous advertisement.

One of the leading articles in the April number of the *English Review* is "The Christian Drum," by the editor, Mr. Austin Harrison. It is boldly and vigorously written. "From the year one," the writer says, "this religion of mercy, charity, humility, forgiveness, and repentance has stood as the citadel of conscience and moral government, yet in its name the drum has always beaten fiercer and fiercer to arms and conquest; and there have been more wars waged in the name of Christianity than in all the annals of mankind during the thousands of years previous to the Crucifixion, and there has been more human blood shed for the Cross than for any other cause in history; and now, after nineteen hundred years of warfare, Europe is turned into a drill-ground of utterly wasteful armies of destruction going they do not know where, seeking they do not know what, primed for mutual slaughter in the name of the 'very God,' justified by the supreme hypocrisy of self-defence."

"The Church, Christianity," Mr. Harrison says later on, "will follow the drum as it has always done through the ages. War! It has lived on war. Every battle since the Crusades has been fought in its name. Assuredly there is no hope there, though in England alone last year eight thousand books on theology were written and published."

The Bible as a Guide.

In this glorious country of ours we have one book which is considered by Christians to be of more value than all the rest of the literature of the world. It is the Authorised Version of the English Bible. This book is a State-protected book. It is not only alleged to be inspired by God, but it is protected by Act of Parliament, and everybody who dares to criticise it adversely runs the risk of fine or imprisonment in this world, and the glorious prospect of a particularly warm corner in the next. This book is the foundation of the Christian belief, and Christians are so much in love with its contents that they insist upon it being taught in the schools, and moral lessons inculcated from its stories and precepts. Further, it is alleged to contain a true and faithful account of the origin of the universe and of man, and its teachings form the foundation upon which all the sects have built up their religious and moral theories, upon the right understanding of which, they declare, depends the welfare of the human race. In other words, the Bible is alleged to be a safe guide for man in this world, and the best of all guides for the world to come; for its commands are unerring and its teachings infallible. These, at least, were the teachings of the Christian Church up to a little more than a quarter of a century ago; but they have undergone some changes and modifications in recent years, and it is now doubtful how much or how little of the Bible it is necessary to believe in order to be considered a true Christian. Even now, however, the Bible is considered to be the safest guide for man, although Christians acknowledge that every word of it is not divinely inspired; it nevertheless *contains* the word of God, although every Christian must discriminate between the mere language of the author and "the direct utterance of the Most High."

In the exercise of his reason, however, the rational thinker finds ample excuse for doubting the capability of this Christian guide to fulfil its claim; he finds its directions deceptive, and its guidance contradictory and mischievous. In fact, the man who would place absolute reliance upon the Bible would find himself being driven hither and thither through a maze of faith, never able for a single moment to plant his foot firmly upon the impregnable rock of science and experience. What, then, is the Bible? It is a book composed of a series of pamphlets written in distant ages, nobody knows precisely when, or where, or by whom. These books or pamphlets express the opinions of the writers upon a variety of topics, and many Christians still credulously regard these opinions as though they were the infallible utterances of an all-wise and all-good God. The Bible contains a history of the cosmogony of the earth and also an account of the alleged creation of man and of the alleged "fall" in the Garden of Eden.

A critical examination, however, of the first and second chapters of Genesis will make clear to any discriminating mind that the writers were ignorant of the most elementary and demonstrable facts of astronomy, geology, and palæontology, and that they had not the remotest idea of the evolutionary processes by which animal life had developed from lowly forms through crustacea, fishes, reptiles, and birds, lower mammalia, up to man.

In fact, upon the face of these documents, they carry no greater authority than the views of persons living in a primitive age and giving expression to the best thoughts of the age in which they lived. Moreover, the Bible, as we have it, is by no means a complete compilation of the books which originally composed its contents; indeed, a large number of books or essays which are mentioned in some of the books are left out altogether.

In Numbers, for instance, there is a quotation from a book called "The Book of the Wars of the Lord." In Judges and Samuel we read of "The Book of Gasher," and among other books that are mentioned are "The Books of the Acts of Solomon," "The Account of the Chronicles of King David," "The Book of the Chronicles of the King of Judah," and "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel." These are only a few of the books which once formed part of the Bible and are now omitted from the Authorised Version altogether; indeed, some writers have declared that the present volume only contains about one-twelfth of the original records which made up its contents. By what process of discrimination have these books been left out? If the Bible at any time contained the "direct utterances of the Most High," if at any time it was, what a former Bishop of Ripon declared, "pure, unadulterated truth—truth without the admixture of error," was it not a gratuitous piece of impertinence on the part of the learned revisers to make thousands of alterations in the text, and leave out records that had hitherto formed part of the holy volume? It is too late in the day for the Christians to try and reconcile the statements of the Bible

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with the observed order of phenomena, and to pretend that the primitive guesses of our early ancestors are in perfect harmony with the undisputed facts of modern science. To make any such declaration in these days is only to bring upon the affirmers the ridicule and contempt of the most intelligent members of the Christian world, as well as the whole of the Freethinkers of the country. Some, however, seem to think that a good deal of guidance may be derived from a study of the pages of Holy Writ; and though many of them are aware of the fact that the Bible statements are in many respects unscientific and unhistoric, and many passages distinctly immoral, they nevertheless insist that it is necessary that the children in schools should be taught to regard these things as true, and that no suggestion or hint of the untrustworthy character of such teachings should be allowed to enter the minds of the rising generation. But if we take the narratives of the early books of the Bible, what spiritual guidance can we get from them? There is nothing specially edifying in the story of Adam and Eve's encounter with the talking serpent in the Garden of Eden, and, although we are told that our first parents were very wicked in not resisting the temptation of the Devil himself, who appeared in the form of a serpent, I cannot see how they can be held responsible for their actions on this occasion, when they did not know the difference between good and evil until after they had eaten of the forbidden fruit. It is true that they were informed by Jehovah, according to Genesis, that on the day they ate of the fruit they would surely die, but as they did not die until hundreds of years afterwards, I fail to see that there is any moral or spiritual lesson to be learned from such a narrative. The story of Cain and Abel is interesting enough as a narrative, but I am not able to see what spiritual guidance a good Christian can get from it. Abel was a sincere believer in the Hebrew God, and Cain was a firm believer also: but Abel offered lamb as a burnt offering to his Deity, and Cain, not to be outdone in his homage, offered up "the fruits of the earth," which, to him as a farmer, was the best he had to offer. Jahveh showed favor to the younger brother and frowned contemptuously upon poor Cain. Cain felt this slight most keenly. He could not endure such manifest partiality. His blood was up, and in a fit of rage, instead of laughing to scorn this petty exhibition of a Deity's favoritism, he met his brother in a field, wrangled with him, and in a moment of uncontrollable passion murdered him. Abel was a saint. What good thing he ever did is buried with him in the tomb of oblivion. Cain was a sinner.

But who, having read his story, has not had pity for him. Abel may have been a very provoking fellow. Who knows? At all events, it is certain that Cain would never have assaulted his brother if it had not been for his sensitive nature and the keen feeling of injustice he experienced from Jahveh, to whom we must refer as the primary cause of the murder. What moral or spiritual lesson is to be learned from his story? Is it that we must be careful of the kind of God that we worship—that he is just and upright and impartial in all his dealings with his children? Or must we take care that, if we offer him any sacrifices, we must be careful to ascertain beforehand whether they will meet with his approval? Or is the moral that we must not under any circumstances lose our temper? Then why did God give man such feelings and passions if he knew beforehand that many of them would not able to keep them under control?

The story of Noah and of the giants who fell in love with the daughters of men and seriously corrupted their morals may form food for reflection for many beside Christians, but I doubt whether they could find from such narratives any serious spiritual guidance worthy of the name. I pass over the absurd stories of the Flood and the Tower of Babel as being so manifestly fairy tales as to be unworthy of the credence of intelligent Christians, and ask what spiritual guidance they can get from the Biblical stories of the careers of such mythical persons as Father Abraham, "the Father of Nations," Isaac, and Jacob? The story of the early career of Moses is not very inspiring, nor his appearance, with his brother Aaron, before Pharaoh, and the wonderful story of his tricks of legerdemain, in order to convince the Egyptian monarch or potentate that he represented Jahveh, especially when we are told that this God had hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let the children of Israel go. The story of the plagues and the terrible sufferings to which the poor Egyptians were subjected may be interesting enough to the untrained imagination of young children, but I fail to see what food for moral or spiritual guidance a good Christian can obtain from the study of such narratives; or what useful purpose is served by insisting that such stories contain an inspired message from God to man.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

What Do Freethinkers Believe?

FREETHINKERS are not Christians; for Christianity is based on dogmas that are repugnant to reason and common sense.

The Bible tells us that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). This statement, by whomsoever it was first made, is pure assumption. Is it not more reasonable to believe that the universe—that is, illimitable space, with all its myriads of stars and planets and comets—has existed from all eternity than to believe that at some epoch of the misty past it was created by some unknown and incomprehensible Being? One fact is beyond all doubt—that infinite space never had a "beginning," and must, therefore, have always existed

The Bible tells us that, some 6,000 years ago, God created a man and a woman named Adam and Eve (Gen. i. 27); that he placed them in a garden called the "Garden of Eden" (Gen. ii. 23); that there they disobeyed his commands (Gen. iii. 6); and that then he drove them out of the garden and cursed the ground upon which they walked (Gen. iii. 17-24). And the Christian doctrine declares not only that these statements are true, but that Adam and Eve were the parents of the human race; that the sin which they committed against their Maker has descended upon all their posterity; and that every human being will be burned in the "everlasting fires prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41) if they do not believe in one Jesus Christ, who is said to have been the Son of God.

Are these statements true? They are not. Such persons as Adam and Eve never existed; and mankind has been upon the earth, not a mere 6,000 years, but for tens of thousands of years. The story of the Fall is a story, and nothing more; and, therefore, all the religious dogmas that are based upon it are untrue.

What, then, do Freethinkers believe? They believe in that which is just; in that only which can be proved to be true. They know that the religious dogmas which are taught by the priests of all the numerous sects are born of ignorance and superstition; for, as Whately says, "on those mysterious points which are inscrutable to man, the learned can have no advantage over the ignorant and the simple, for *in utter darkness the strongest sight and the weakest are on a level.*" They know that mankind are the children of nature and the creatures of circumstances.

The Bible teaches predestination—that is that, before this earth was created, God knew and determined what should be the life of every creature upon it; but Christians aver that mankind are free agents, that is, that they can determine for themselves what their future shall be, both here and hereafter, if an hereafter there be. But these statements are utterly

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irreconcilable; for *God is Omnipotent and Omniscient, or he is not.* If he be not omnipotent and omniscient, he is *a myth and nothing more;* but if he be, all the woes and miseries and crimes which beset mankind and blacken the pages of history are to be attributed to him and to him alone.

That mankind are the children of nature and the creatures of circumstances is beyond all doubt. It goes without saying that the country in which a man is born, the social status of his parents, his physical powers and mental endowments, and all the circumstances of his environment are due to some unknown power or force, the idea of which can only be expressed by some such word as "Fate." And throughout life every man discovers for himself that he is the creature of circumstances over which he has little or no control. This fatalism is commonly known as "Luck." And so potent is this power or force that the belief in it has been embalmed in the aphorism that "it is better to be born lucky than rich."

But do not Freethinkers believe in an hereafter? Have they no hopes and fears—that is, wishes and desires—regarding a future state of being? Certainly they have! But they differ from Christians in this respect. They have no fears of infinite injustice—no belief in, and therefore no dread of, eternal pain and misery. The Christian doctrine is based on fear—on mortal terror that is engendered by ignorance and superstition. Christians believe in hell, and all its hideous surroundings. They worship an Omnipotent Being who, if their doctrine be true, is an Omnipotent Fiend—an Omnipotent Being who created mankind in order that he might torture the greater part of it in hell throughout eternity. For are we not told that "many be called but few chosen" (Matt. xx. 16); that "straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. vii. 14)? To Freethinkers this belief is a hideous nightmare. If there be one thing of which they feel absolutely certain, it is that in the next world, if there be another world, there is no such place as hell.

To the Freethinker the hereafter means eternal happiness, or eternal annihilation. It means, if the grave be the entrance to another world, that that world will be a world of light and gladness, unclouded by the horror of an everlasting hell. And what sane man will say that eternal annihilation is not preferable to, and more just than, eternal woe and misery? Who can believe in eternal woe? It means, horrible to relate, not eternal death, for that is simply annihilation, but *eternal dying!* It means *excruciating agony that shall last for ever*—a never-ending fiendish miracle; for the tortured quivering flesh of the victim must be re-created even whilst it is being destroyed. Who can believe such a blood-curdling doctrine? Who can believe that such a fiendish doctrine was enunciated by one who, we are told, taught that man should forgive his fellow-man not "seven times, but until seventy times seven" (Matt. xx.)?—which means always. Surely the creature cannot feel and show more pity for, and sympathy with, suffering humanity than the Creator! If there be a Creator, is it not the rankest blasphemy to attribute such fiendish cruelty to him?

The Freethinker feels that such a doctrine is false—feels that it cannot possibly be true. He knows that such persons as Adam and Eve never existed, that the story of the Fall is mere legend; and that, consequently, as there never was such a crime as Original Sin, the pathetic drama that is founded upon it is a tale, and nothing more. Strong in this knowledge, therefore, the Freethinker goes down to the grave in peace—to the grave where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest" (Job iii. 17). For this reason, too, we who are alive sorrow not for the dead, but for the living. Our hearts go out in sympathy with those who have been bereft of their loved ones. We sorrow not with the "dead who know not anything.....for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave" (Eccle. ix. 5-10). To the living we speak words of comfort; but to the dead, when bending over the grave, we simply say "Good-by!"

The sun hath set;
But golden beams still linger in the sky—
Fond memories of the time when first we met;
Good-by!

The tree is dead;
Riven by forkéd lightning from on high;
But still its green boughs, lifelike, wave o'erhead;
Good-by!

Never again
Shall evening twilight glad his weary eye;
The shadows darken, night comes on amain;
Good-by!

J. W. DE CAUX.

Freethought Abroad.

THE *London Mail* of February 22 is responsible for an anecdote of the Spanish Monarch which exhibits the royal *gaucherie* in an acute form. The statement, heading and all, is as under:—

"ALFONSO GETS THE OISEAU.

"The Spanish King's gallant habit of sending round bouquets to the stage door—very often, of course, out of courtesy pure and simple—jarred badly the other night. His Majesty was motoring back to San Sebastian after one of his frequent consultation with Dr. Moure, the Bordeaux throat specialist, and broke the journey at Pau, where he booked a box at the local Opera House. Halfway through the show, 'Kreutzer Sonata,' an A.D.C. was sent behind with a bouquet for the prima donna. He returned with the flowers and clearly agitated. 'Who is she? Why has she refused them?' asked Alfonso, consulting his program. 'The name conveys nothing to me. Find out from the management who she is!' The A.D.C. did as he was bid. Presently he returned, more agitated than before. 'Well, who is she?' demanded Alfonso. 'She is not singing under her real name,' ventured the officer. 'Any fool knows that,' interrupted the King, now thoroughly roused. 'What is her real name?' 'Senora Paz Ferrer, Your Majesty!' replied the A.D.C. And Alfonso was silent, marvelling at his own stupidity. Had not the girl gone on the stage after vainly begging her father's life of the King? Though a first-rate singer, Senora Ferrer finds it impossible to obtain an engagement in Spain."

King Alfonso would have been better inspired if he had placed a penitential wreath on Ferrer's grave.

The report in the English papers (notably in the *Observer* of March 9) of the experiences of an Englishman in a Spanish prison sends the mind back, as our contemporary remarks, to mediæval days. The victim was brought before the Leeds Assizes on March 8, and the cross-examination of the Chief Constable of Halifax revealed a horrible state of affairs in the prison in which the man had been lodged. These particulars, as reported, deserve to be placed on permanent record as showing what is possible in a reputedly Christian country:—

"Mr. Waugh, K.C., who defended, questioned the Chief Constable of Halifax, who said he knew that when Robinson was arrested in Spain he was not allowed to put on his overcoat. The cell in which he was kept was a large bare room, the windows of which were in such a bad state that it was full of draughts.

"'Do you know,' Mr. Waugh asked, 'that for five weeks he was subject to the cold of the night without any extra clothing?'

"Witness: Yes.

"Do you know that he was not allowed a change of linen?—Yes. I made application myself and was refused.

"Do you know that the cell communicated directly with a sewer?—I do not know, but it was in an insanitary condition.

"There was an abominable stench?—Yes.

"Do you know that when he was finally taken from prison he was marched through the streets with thumbscrews upon his hands?—I understand that he was marched through the streets. I saw him come aboard with them on."

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The private letters (still in my possession) which I received from Ferrer before the royal warrant was signed for his death disclosed even worse abominations as daily and hourly inflicted upon Ferrer during the many weeks of his incarceration in a cold, filthy, and verminous cell. No wonder Senora Paz Ferrer spurned the royal bouquet.

The Rationalist Peace Association has evidently not been launched in vain. In the *Peace Movement* (March 15), the English organ of the International Peace Bureau at Berne, it is announced that a French Rationalist League of Peace has just been founded in Paris. Its avowed intention is to follow in the footsteps of the Rationalist Peace Association, which, as our readers will know, has now been in full working order during the last two years, with Mr. John M. Robertson as President, Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner as Chairman, and a Committee consisting of Mr. Foote and other well-known Freethinkers.

The names of the Provisional Committee, which has been constituted at Paris, includes several well-known Freethinkers. It is hoped that similar societies will be formed in other countries, and that a close bond of sympathy and co-operation will be formed between these different Rationalist Leagues for Peace.

The strong note of Rationalism sounded by Mr. Norman Angell in his recent Conway Memorial Lecture is a significant indication that there is a distinct need for a purely philosophical and avowedly secular presentment of the peace question.

The *Peace Movement* also contains an interesting notice of the last Annual Report of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, which was issued last April by the Inspector-General of Customs, Shanghai. The notice is headed "China as a Pacific Force," and its statements confirm the view which I endeavored to present of the New China in my *Freethinker* article of February 16 last. Since that article was written, I have seen Mr. Hain-Jou-Kia again in London, and found him, after journeyings far and wide through Europe founding new Sinophile groups, full of faith in the future peaceful development of the great Chinese Republic. That view finds unexpected and authoritative confirmation in the above-mentioned report, which is signed by Mr. Paul H. King, Statistical Secretary of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs (the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs is a body composed of nearly a thousand Europeans and Americans controlled by an Inspector-General). The following citation from the report is worth volumes as a contrast between Chinese and Christian civilisation, and as such deserves to be placed on permanent record. Mr. King says:—

> "So far the revolution has been one of the quietest in the history of the world; and if the new era now dawning should bring, as we all hope it will, increased prosperity to China, it will surely also mean increased prosperity to foreign nations as well. Her undeveloped resources are enormous, and the potentialities of her purchasing power, under favorable home conditions, are sufficient to stagger the imagination. Again, the rise of China into a world power will make for peace. The West has long felt the burden of its armaments; and China may yet be in a position to teach her common-sense view of the folly of war to willing, because exhausted, listeners. Trade in the past has often been despised by the warrior, the aristocrat, the artist, and even by the priest; and the shopman is a type far removed in popular imagination from anything elevated or heroic. Yet trade is the real measure of civilisation in the strict sense of the word; and where civic virtue flourishes, there will be found prosperous and expanding trade. Trade conquers in a peaceful spirit and improves while it conquers. When mankind is better instructed, civic virtue will come first, and in that respect China has ever excelled. Trade makes for life and the means to enjoy it; while many other things—disguised with splendid pomp and circumstance—make for death. Corn fields are better than parade-grounds; cotton mills than arsenals; and an up-to-date 'floating palace' is a more pleasing sight than a bristling battle-ship. The earth teems with wealth of all kinds, and it may be safely assumed that the new China—with the same fine instinct for commerce which animated the old—will teach all the world to use that wealth for the happiness and not for the devastation of mankind. Poverty has caused war and war caused poverty; but when people are busy with buying and selling, they lose interest in the clash of arms.
>
> "Nothing is more hopeful or of better augury for the human race than to see people making things and growing things and selling things, and the millennium may yet be brought about through the honest trading instincts of man. If we should visualise a great pageant of humanity, there would be many stately and brilliant figures to personify Science, Invention, Art, and so on; but in a correct perspective all those would be seen to circulate round quite a humble-looking masque, Commerce, who served them and used them and paid them. It is not impossible that this masque would be best typified by a Chinese merchant in the new and vigorous Republic of China and of Peace!"

This description of the secular spirit of new China is nobly conceived and very beautifully expressed. A leaven of Freethought is evidently at work in the new Republic. If it were possible to eliminate from the Peace movement throughout the world the Freethought element thinking and working for the realisation of humanitarian weal based on human brotherhood, the Pacifist cause would be brought to a very low ebb.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 3.

Mr. Cohen was elected to the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Brandes, Cowell, Cunningham, Davies, Leat, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Roger, Samuels, Schindle, Silverstein, Rosetti, Thurlow, Wood, J. W. Wood, and Miss Kough.

A letter was received from Mr. Foote explaining that he had only partially recovered from his recent severe illness, and was therefore unable to be present. The Secretary was instructed to write Mr. Foote a letter of sympathy conveying the unanimous wishes of all present for his speedy and complete recovery.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received for the Preston Branch and the Parent Society.

Mr. Cohen reported upon the meetings of the Board of Management of the Scholarship Scheme, and said that a syllabus and list of text-books for the use of candidates was being prepared.

Mr. Brandes reported on behalf of the Sub-Committee elected to deal with the exchange of visits between French and English Freethinkers.

Notices of motion by the Executive for the Conference Agenda were prepared, and Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, and Davies were elected as the Agenda Committee.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

The remains of Mr. John Sanderson, a veteran Tyneside Freethinker, were interred with every token of respect and sympathy at Jarrow Cemetery last Sunday afternoon. Mr. S. M. Peacock, Vice-President N. S. S., read the Secular Burial Service in the presence of a large gathering of relatives and friends, among others representing South Shields Branch being Messrs. Thos. Lumley, G. White, J. T. Horsman, W. R. Bowe, Chapman, Thos. J. Fothergill, and J. Hannan. Mr. Sanderson was virtually the founder of the Branch, and was secretary for a while. In the early days of the Bradlaugh struggle he was an active and brave-hearted fighter in the ranks of progress. During last year health and strength had gradually declined until finally, on Wednesday, April 2, a man noted with friends for honesty and sincerity of purpose, the stalwart of our Branch in the earlier days, passed away peacefully and firm in the faith at the residence of his son, 158 St. Paul's-road, South Shields.—R. CHAPMAN.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "What Do We Know?"

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "The Birth and Growth of Worlds."

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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It is not from one argument only but from the whole of modern science that the tremendous result is derived. "There is no such thing as the supernatural."

—ERNEST RENAN.

Reason and Intuition.

THE contention of M. Bergson is that the intellect cannot explain the phenomena of life, because it is merely "the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools, and of indefinitely varying the manufacture," "the faculty of making and using unorganised instruments." Instinct, on the contrary, uses and even constructs organised instruments, "plainly deals only with things upon which it reacts." Such is the distinction M. Bergson makes between intellect and instinct. Inasmuch, then, as the intellect is concerned with forms, and instinct chiefly with matter, it follows that, in the attainment of knowledge, these two faculties "occupy separate provinces, the one seeking out the forms of things, the other the substance." In this manner the great metaphysician tries to convince us of the utter inadequacy of the intellect to deal with life. It is acquainted only with solids, and its noblest work is to fabricate. "Whatever is fluid will escape it in part, and life will escape it altogether." Poor old intellect, it "cannot grasp mobility," its dealings being almost exclusively with the "discontinuous." In reality everything is mobile, immobility being at best but apparent and relative. Hence, the only object on which the intellect can form a clear idea is seeming, deceptive immobility. In other words, it is fit only to contemplate and be fascinated by so-called dead matter. Life is too much for it altogether; it puzzles and bewilders it even to madness. "The intellect is characterised by a natural inability to comprehend life." How vastly superior is instinct. "While intelligence treats everything mechanically, instinct proceeds, so to speak, organically." Now, what is intuition? It is instinct glorified, "grown disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely." "Intuition is mind itself, and, in a certain sense, life itself." Consequently, intuition is the only safe guide of life.

It must be frankly admitted at once that the intellect is extremely restricted in the scope of its operations and in the quantity of its results. It cannot explain vital phenomena. There are innumerable problems which it is incapable of solving. In consequence of this, M. Bergson takes for granted that intuition may be taken as a perfectly adequate guide in all questions touching life and its interests. But this is an inference unsupported by a single fact. Throughout *Creative Evolution* the author attacks theories of which he disapproved, and having demolished them to his own satisfaction, he *assumes* the truth of his own theory, and speaks of it as if it had been victorious all along the line. Such is this savant's method in all his books, and we are bound to characterise it as a false and mischievous method. As a matter of fact, all knowledge comes through the intellect, none through intuition. There are, it is true, self-evident truths, such as mathematical axioms, and general principles, deduced without trouble from logic. What is called intuitive knowledge belongs to that category. Truths of perception are also self-evidenced, and have no need to be formally demonstrated. Intuition, in this sense, is but the handmaid of the reason, not its supplanter.

We have furnished the above slight sketch of M. Bergson's theory in order to expose the fallacies in it as applied to theology. Mr. R. J. Campbell is evidently a diligent student of the Parisian Professor's works, as is shown in a sermon of his published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for April 9. Two-thirds of this discourse may be described as a series of attacks upon the human intellect. Its great fault is not that it cannot find God, but that "its tendency is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion." There is a long quotation from Newman's *Apologia*, in which the great writer refers to the world as giving the lie to the Christian doctrine of God, and to himself as tempted by "the sight of the world which is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of lamentation, and mourning, and woe," to become an Atheist, or a Pantheist, or a Polytheist. Newman was of opinion that "the unaided reason, when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in a future retribution"; but Mr. Campbell doubts it, and says that it is "a contention which would not be admitted by the scientific mind of to-day." Then he adds:—

> "If we had nothing but the intellect to rely upon in our quest for God, we should never find him. Can you imagine anything more antecedently improbable on rational grounds than that from all eternity a single being should exist, all-wise, all-powerful, all-perfect in every way, and the author of all things, visible and invisible? Why, the proposition is far too stupendous to be grasped by any rational being. We are obliged to do our thinking in terms of cause and effect, and we cannot grasp the idea of an uncaused cause of all existence, especially if we are to predicate of it that it is infinite in intelligence and creative energy."

For a believer in God that is a terribly humiliating admission to make, considering that the reason, as well as every other faculty, is supposed to be a gift from God. Mr. Campbell makes a more naïve statement still:—

> "As Cardinal Newman says, the difficulty becomes intensified when we look at the state of creation. In the name of all that is reasonable, why is the world so wretched, and why—supposing that there is a God—has it been allowed to remain so for unnumbered ages? I do not know; nobody knows. To all rational seeming such a God as the Christian believes in might have been expected to create a better and happier world, and it is no explanation to say that he did so, but that his plans were vitiated by the perverseness of his creatures; we want to know how or why they could be vitiated. Would it not have been as easy for God to secure to his creation perfect immunity from pain and evil, as to make it at all? And, in any case, why has he chosen to remain so strangely silent about the matter? Why should anyone in the wide world be left in any doubt as to what God is doing and what is expected from us?"

All that has been said, and much better, innumerable times before, by prominent Freethinkers. What is remarkable about the present expression of it is that it was uttered from a Christian pulpit. Mr. Campbell, however, tries to break the force of the wonder felt at the failure of the intellect to find God by pointing

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out its limitations when confronted by the problem of man's existence. What he means by that remark is not clear, for the existence of man is an ascertained fact. No one has ever been fool enough to ask for proofs that he himself exists. And at this point the reverend gentleman shows how imperfect his understanding of the scientific conception of the Universe is. While accepting the theory of evolution, he wants to know "how it was that there was anything to evolve." He speaks of "the tiniest speck of matter that first occupied the limitless void of space," and asks, "How did it come there?" He wants his uncaused First Cause, after all, because, without it, it is to him inconceivable how the evolutionary process was ever set going. He must have his Almighty Starter, who created the first tiny speck of matter, and then gave it the Original Push. But science recognises no beginning, knows nothing of a current of consciousness flowing down into matter as into a tunnel, endeavoring to advance, making efforts on every side, forcing its way through hard, rocky materials, and at last breaking out into the light once more, and has not even the faintest idea what is meant by such unscientific phraseology. Mr. Campbell's point, of course, is that the reason can no more explain the existence of man, or of Nature, than it can that of God; but he forgets that he must *prove* God's existence before asking for an *explanation* of it. "To postulate the existence of God," he says, "is not a more staggering proposition than to account for the existence of man." Man's existence is an established fact; that of God is not. Why postulate an existence of which no evidence can be adduced? There are mysteries in abundance in the Universe the existence of which nobody doubts —why introduce another mystery, which is greater than, and only calculated to deepen, all the rest?

Just here Mr. Campbell becomes simply a Bergsonian. What instinct, matured into intuition, is to M. Bergson, that faith is to the City Temple oracle. He even has the temerity to assure us that instinct is a much more wonderful thing than reason, though admitting that the latter has largely superseded it in man. If he is right, the lower has largely superseded the higher, which is inconceivable. He confesses that he finds it rather difficult to knock such an idea into people's minds, and we are not surprised, for it is an essentially incredible idea. Faith, we are told, is instinct spiritualised, which is surely the very worst thing that could have happened to instinct. What does faith do? Nothing but imagine and abnormally excite the emotions. Translated into feeling, faith says, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blessed is the man that trusteth in him"; but reason says, "That is a lie; look at the world and see how terribly out of joint with that declaration it is." Calm, enlightened reason flatly contradicts the falsely comforting assurances of "the spiritual instinct," and ought by all means to supersede it. Newman had firm hold of the truth when he said:—

> "If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living busy world and see no reflection of its Creator."

And yet while no reflection of God can be seen in this living busy world, faith ignores the fact, and cries out, "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is." This is an irrefutable demonstration of the essential hypocrisy of all supernatural beliefs. If a Creator existed, how infinitely humiliated he would be to know that there was no reflection, not even the slightest hint, of himself in the work of his hands. Far better have no Creator at all than *such* a Creator. Christian emotionalism is a sort of mental enebriation and is, in the long run, much more injurious than bodily intoxication. Mr. Campbell acknowledges the fact emphasised by Newman; and yet, like Newman, he can shut his eyes to it and sing the praises of him who, if he exists, is directly responsible for it. We prefer to believe that such a Being does not exist, and to put our trust in Monarch Reason, who, in spite of all the parsons, is slowly coming into his kingdom; and under his sagacious and benevolent reign we shall ere long enjoy a new earth, in which justice and love shall join hands and secure universal peace and plenty.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Pathology of Conversion.—II.

(*Continued from p. 226.*)

IT was shown in my last article that the state of mind religiously described as "conversion" is practically confined to the period of life that falls between the ages of twelve and twenty-five. That this was the case has, naturally, been always recognised by religious organisations. The pressure of facts has compelled them to adjust their methods to the situation; and these methods, as will be seen, offer a first-rate example of the manner in which religion distorts and diverts to its own interests feelings that have, normally, a purely natural significance. Apart from professors of religion, the fact of conversion being an adolescent phenomenon has been recognised of late years by a number of psychologists, who have found the experimental method a useful and powerful instrument of research. But even with these the full significance of the facts is not seen, or, if seen, not acknowledged. There has been a too great readiness to accept the religious explanation of the subject, even after the mechanism of it has been made plain. Instead of asking why physiological and psychological changes that are common to all human beings are expressed by some —it may be the majority—in terms of religion, writers fall back on such expressions as "the awakening of the religious life," the "development of the religious instinct," etc., which are not only hopelessly unscientific, but which really miss the vital point disclosed by their own investigations. Once the real significance of adolescence is recognised, there is not alone no need for a religious explanation of what takes place, but it is not difficult to show that, from the point of view of social and individual wellbeing, religion represents a distortion of human values.

From several points of view the period of adolescence is the most important in the life of the individual. It is a time of significant organic growth, bringing about the development of new functions, with a corresponding change in both the emotional and intellectual output. Before puberty, one may say that the individual has been mainly concerned with growth or acquisition. After puberty vast tracts of nerve tissue are awakened into activity, and an era of rapid development occurs. This is strikingly true of the brain, which up to that point increases more in bulk than it develops in function. There is probably a rapid growth of new nerve connections, which occasions both physiological and mental unrest.* With the physical changes there come even greater and more striking psychological changes. The nature of the individual undergoes what is little less than a transformation. He or she is less concerned with self, and more concerned with others. They become susceptible to impressions, to sights, to sounds, by which they were formerly but little influenced. Each is conscious of new feelings, strange desires, unusual attractions, all of which find expression in that feeling of unrest, the desire to do and to spend oneself, the need for the company of the other sex, which are characteristic of youth in both sexes. The childish desire for protection weakens; the mature desire to protect expresses itself.

Now, the whole significance of these changes, physical and mental, is fundamentally sexual and social. On the one hand, it may be said to be nature's plan for the perpetuation of the species. On the other hand, it is society's method of per-

* See Donaldson's *Growth of the Brain*, pp. 231-248.

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petuating itself. And it is part of the "plan," so to speak, that there shall be developed instincts and capacities suitable to each phase of life as it develops. Thus it has been shown that the lengthening of infancy—the time, that is, during which the young human being is dependent upon its parents, which is much greater than that of any other animal—is nature's method of preparing the human animal for a greater degree of the capacity of adaptation or adjustment. In the same way it has been shown that the play instinct, universal throughout the whole animal world, is again nature's method of preparing the young for the more serious business of adult life.* So, in a similar manner, as childhood is being left behind and maturity approaches, there is a development of both structure and feeling, all of which find their legitimate field of operation in family and social life. If society and the race is to continue, it is essential that there shall be an emergence from the world of childhood that so largely centres around self, into that larger world in which the co-operation of others, and association with others, takes on the character of an organic need. This is the fundamental nature of what appears in the religious world as sacrifice, or, in a more normal form, the desire to serve. The whole significance of adolescence is, then, the entry of the individual into the life of the race. Its connection with religion is purely accidental.

Now, it is a statement quite beyond disproof that if we eliminate religion from the environment there is not a single feeling experienced at adolescence that cannot receive adequate gratification, not a single function that cannot be adequately exercised. It is idle to say that some people have a craving for religion at this time of life. Where an individual is in complete ignorance of the nature of his own development, and those around him are no better informed; where, moreover, there are others in a position of authority ready with a special interpretation, it is not surprising if the religious explanation is accepted. But in reality we have to form a judgment, not on the basis of what some declare they cannot do without, but on the basis of what others actually do without, and show no real loss in consequence. The value of alcohol is decided by the ability of people to go without it, not by the craving of some for it. So with religion. That some, even though it were the majority, express themselves in terms of religion proves little or nothing. It is far more significant that so large a number should find complete satisfaction for their whole nature in purely secular activities.

Leaving this aspect of the matter for the moment, let us see what is the real nature of the religious process of conversion. It has already been pointed out that the central feature of adolescence is that it is a period of rapid change and numerous fresh adjustments. But all periods of change are periods of instability and of susceptibility. While the individual is in a condition of what a scientist would call unstable equilibrium, he is peculiarly susceptible to the suggestions of those around him. In Starbuck's collection of cases, 84 per cent. of the females and 29 per cent. of the males described their conversion as being directly due to imitation, social pressure, and example. From the descriptions one reads of revival meetings, it is probable that this is an underestimate of the percentage of conversions due to these causes. Religion, like dress, has its fashions, and people moving in the same social circle are as likely to imitate in the one direction as in the other.

The full power of suggestion would be more properly considered in dealing with religious epidemics; but it is not out of place here to call attention to this factor in such a recent case as the outbreaks in Wales under the influence of semi-demented persons such as Evan Roberts. Here, apart from the suggestion and imitation operating in the actual meetings themselves, it is quite evident that people went to the gatherings in many cases quite prepared to act in accordance with the published reports. And behind this particular revival, there were numerous other revivals which had handed down the tradition of certain behavior as the characteristics of an "outpouring of the Spirit." In America, these outbreaks seem to assume a more extravagant form than amongst us. Mr. Stanley Hall, for example, thus describes a Kentucky camp meeting, in which the prevailing feature was "jerking." He says, quoting from an eye-witness, that as the meeting progressed:—

> "The crowd swarmed all night round the preacher, singing, shouting, laughing, some plunging wildly over stumps and benches into the forest, shouting 'Lost, Lost!' others leaping and bounding about like live fish out of water; others rolling over and over on the ground for hours; others lying on the ground and talking when they could not move; and yet others beating the ground with their heels. As the excitement increased, it grew more morbid and took the form of 'jerkings,' or in others the holy laugh. The jerks began with the head, which was thrown violently from side to side so rapidly that the features were blurred and the hair almost seemed to snap, and when the sufferer struck an obstacle and fell he would bounce about like a ball. Saplings were sometimes cut breast high for the people to jerk by. In one place the earth about the roots of one of them was kicked about as though by the feet of a horse stamping flies. One sufferer mounted his horse to ride away when the jerks threw him to the earth, whence he rose a Christian. A lad, who feigned illness to stay away, was dragged there by the spirit and his head dashed against a wall till he had to pray. A sceptic who cursed and swore was crushed by a falling tree. Men fancied themselves dogs, and gathered round a tree barking and 'treeing the devil.' They saw visions and dreamed dreams, and as the revival waned, it left a crop of nervous and hysterical disorders in its wake." †

We have nothing quite so bad as this to show in British revivals, although the home phenomena is not different in its nature. Thus, a medical observer of some of the earliest Methodist revivals thus describes the symptoms attending these "divine" seizures:—

> "There came on first a feeling of faintness, with rigor and a sense of weight at the pit of the stomach; soon after which the patient cried out as though in the agonies of labor. The convulsions then began, first showing themselves in the muscles of the eyelids, though the eyes themselves were fixed and staring. The most frightful contortions of the countenance followed, and the convulsions now took their course downwards, so that the muscles of the trunk and neck were affected, causing a sobbing respiration, which was performed with great effort. Tremors and agitations ensued, and the patients screamed out violently, and tossed their heads from side to side. As the complaint increased, it seized the arms, and its victims beat their breasts, clasped their hands, and made all sorts of strange noises."

In other instances connected with the early days of Methodism, one girl is described as "lying on the floor as one dead." Pews and benches were broken by the struggles of the converts. One woman "tore up the ground with her hands." Among the children who felt "the arrows of the Almighty" was a boy "who roared above his fellows, and seemed, in his agony, to struggle with the strength of a grown man. His face was as red as scarlet; and almost all on whom God laid his hand turned either very red or almost black." John Wesley personally interviewed a number of the people who were seized in this manner, and was quite convinced of the supernatural nature of the attacks. He said he had "generally observed more or less of these outward symptoms to attend the beginning of a general work of God," although he admitted that in some cases "Satan mimicked the work of God in order to discredit the whole work." † But whether God or Satan, there was no question of the supernatural origin of the phenomena.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

* On this subject, see the fine works by Karl Groos on *The Play of Animals* and *The Play of Man*.

* *Adolescence*, vol. ii., pp. 286-7.
† Southey's *Life of Wesley*, chap. xxiv.

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"The Religious Bad."

"To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and man which pervade the tragedy of *The Cenci*. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind adoration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intently the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check."—Shelley, Prefsce to *The Cenci*.

It is a common belief that because a man is a religious man he is also necessarily a good man. One of the hardest tasks of the Freethinker is to convince people with a religious training that a religious man may also be a bad man. The conviction that morality is the result of religious teaching has been so dinned into him that the belief in it has become a second nature. They will argue that a bad man cannot be religious; that a bad man who professes religion is a hypocrite—that he uses religion as a cloak for his badness. Or, when driven to the last ditch, they say that the religion of such a person is only superstition. In effect, they argue, all religious people are good, and all good people are religious!

Now, according to the statistics of our huge prison population, the unbelievers in some kind of religion are very few. Are we to say, then, that all these thousands are destitute of religion, or hypocrites, or the devotees of idle superstition? Put in this form, the question answers itself with all rational thinking people.

We seldom look at the *Spectator*; it is usually so old-fashioned, conservative, and pharisaical in its religious views that we have long given it over as hopelessly fossilised. But, glancing listlessly over the contents index of the issue for March 15, our interest was arrested by the title of an article upon "The Religious Bad." Turning to the article—which was anonymous—we were surprised to find that not only was the existence of the religious bad admitted and deplored, although the writer of the article in question is a believer in religion, yet the facts of the case are rammed home in a fashion not unworthy to adorn the pages of the *Freethinker*—which some of it will do before we have finished.

In the whole course of our reading we have never met with such a whole-hearted abandonment of a position which has been, and is still, so stubbornly defended by apologists for religion. The exclamation of the pious upon reading the article will be, "An enemy hath done this."

The writer begins by observing that "The religious bad are the worst enemies of religion," and goes on to explain that he is not speaking of hypocrites, or of those superstitious people who believe that luck lurks in the practice of religious formula, and who "might hesitate to plan a murder on a Friday lest the rope should reward their want of ceremony." But, setting aside the hypocrites and the superstitious, says the writer:—

> "There remain sufficient people who are religious but not moral to harass the minds of believers and fill disbelievers with scorn. As we have said, they are not hypocrites. The tenets of the creed in which they were brought up appear to them to be undeniable. Acts of worship give them pleasure. The spell of Christianity is upon them. The sacred literature of the Jews appeals to their artistic sense. They have a peculiar delight in enlarging publicly upon the (to them) very real sensations of the soul. Their religious experience is at everyone's service, and they have an unbounded curiosity to hear about someone else's. Their talk is of spiritual symptoms. Their religious bedside manners and their jargon impress many people but disgust more. If we come across them in business we shall find that they are 'not slothful,' and it is not at all improbable that they will take us in. They are as sharp as they are sanctimonious, yet we cannot say they are secular. Their minds are not bounded by the narrow limits of materialism, by birth and death, good living, and pretty things. They are aware of the things of the spirit. Their organism is sufficiently sensitive to perceive what to so many better men is imperceptible. It is the existence of such religious people as these which causes some men of affairs to say they trust no man who makes a profession of religion."

No, these men are not Secularists or Materialists—we are very glad of it—for they can perceive those things of the spirit which "to many better men" are imperceptible. The better men in this case being those who have no religion, the Secularists and Materialists.

The writer goes on to observe that money is not the only thing to which they give way. "When they yield to the sins of the flesh the scandal of their conduct is even more detrimental to the prestige of the Church." But worse still:—

> "Another grave moral defect is, alas! typical of the religious bad. They are too often pitiless. That pitilessness should accompany genuine religious feeling is unaccountable, but it is a fact that it sometimes does. Men and women who can accept the consolations of religion without its obligations become far harder than the ordinary indifferentist. For such an indifferentist the sorrows of life are common property. Suffering, separation, and poverty are the inexplicable burden of man, and end only, as they believe, with the quenching of the individuality; the secularists are often truly sorry for their fellow ephemeridæ. For the religious man, be he bad or good, the common lot is not without explanation nor without hope. The hard-hearted religionist looks upon pity as savoring too much of a criticism on the dealings of Heaven with men. To the bad religious man this is the best of all possible worlds, and he will rebuke an acquaintance for the want of faith which makes him unhappy."

Which, reduced to shorthand, means that Secularists are justified in their pity for their fellow-men, but the religiously bad, who believe that everything is ordained to happen by an Almighty God, will look upon such pity as a presumptuous criticism of God's actions; their creed, says the writer, acting like "an anæsthetic, destroying sensation in that part of the consciousness wherein kindness appears to dwell." The writer continues:—

> "Allied to these hard natures we find the religious tyrants. They are the lineal descendants of the persecutors. The law of the land is against them, but Satan can always find a job for their cruel hands—a weak person to crush, a child whose spirit they can break, or an old man or woman they may humiliate. We forget sometimes that the devil is a 'doctor of divinity.' They are no hypocrites, these hard religionists; they are honest, but they are bad; bad though they call their will their duty, bad though they hide their cruelty under a cause; yet they also may be spiritually minded, though Christians they are not.....Why it should have pleased Almighty God to reveal the truths of religion to unworthy persons who appear incapable of repentance we cannot say, but it is certain that a vast amount of truth—religious, scientific, and philosophic—is revealed to persons of very paltry character. So far as religion is concerned, the dispensation must be regarded as a mystery, and one on which the reason throws very little intellectual light."

So a man may be cruel, he may be a swindler and a sensualist, and yet a fervent believer in God. What, then, becomes of the argument so often addressed to Freethinkers that they do away with the moral restraints of religion? That if they destroy the belief in a God who will punish the bad and reward the good they will overthrow the basis of morality? Here we are faced with the fact that there are plenty of men who really and wholeheartedly believe in and worship God; they know that God sees all their actions, but they still persist in their wickedness.

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Robert Louis Stevenson, the novelist, has recognised this fact of "the religious bad" in his novel, *The Merry Men*. After recounting how Markheim murdered the Jew for his wealth, and then becomes the prey to imaginary terrors: he fears the walls may become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; that the planks might yield under his feet and detain him in their clutches beside the body of his victim; that the house next door might catch fire and the firemen invade him from all sides. "These things he feared," continues Stevenson, "and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice." Yes, that is how the religious bad feel. About God they are at ease. He is on their side whatever they do, and all the time.

Again, in his novel *The Ebb-Tide*—written in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne—when the two murderous ruffians, Captain Davis and Huish, are in the boat on their way to murder their benefactor Attwater—who, being a dead shot, they have decided to first blind by throwing vitriol in his eyes—the scoundrel Davis actually began a silent prayer:—

> "Prayer, what for? God knows. But out of his inconsistent, illogical, and agitated spirit a stream of supplication was poured forth, inarticulate as himself, earnest as death and judgment.
>
> "'Thou Gawd seest me!' continued Huish [his companion in crime]. 'I remember I had that written in my Bible. I remember the Bible too, all about Abinadab and parties. Well, Gawd,' apostrophising the meridian, 'you're goin' to see a rum start presently, I promise you that!"
>
> "The captain bounded. 'I'll have no blasphemy!' he cried, 'no blasphemy in my boat.'"

He did not mind helping to commit a horrible murder, but he would not allow blasphemy. That gives a true picture of the working of the mind of the "religious bad."

"But," it may be said, "these are only fictitious characters, and prove nothing." Very well, then; here is a character which is not fictitious—namely, that of Louis the Fifteenth, surnamed the "Well-beloved." Mr. Lewis Melville—himself a learned biographer and historian—in reviewing Colonel Haggard's book,* *The Real Louis the Fifteenth*, observes that Louis "had only two predominant interests in life—women and religion." His first mistress, the Comtesse de Toulouse, was followed by intrigues with several daughters of Madame de Nesle, and later with Madame de Pompadour, and after her death with the infamous Madame du Barri, who some years later paid for her sins in the tornado of the French Revolution, when she was borne shrieking to the guillotine and beheaded. But these were only leading ladies; there were a multitude of others. And through it all he was pious. The teachers of his youth had taken particular pains to instruct him in matters of religion, and Mr. Melville cites Colonel Haggard as saying: "These impressions never left him through life; even in the most libertine moments of his later years he would instruct the poor young girls whom he debauched, after having torn them from their homes or bought them for his pleasures." Such is the value of the restraints exercised by religion upon the lusts of the flesh.

W. MANN.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

AN eminent High Court judge, travelling in the Holy Land, had gone through a very tiring day at Jerusalem, visiting the Garden of Gethsemane, the Holy Sepulchre, Mount Calvary, and other sacred spots, sanctified through past ages by the Gospel story, and made familiar to our own by Messrs. Thomas Cook & Son's excellent tourist arrangements. So deeply had the judge been impressed by the sight of these holy places, that on retiring to rest that night he had an extraordinary dream, fairly rational as dreams go, but so far incongruous and odd in that it presented some of the events of the sacred narrative in a strictly modern light, and under the sub-conscious influence of a modern judicial mind.

He dreamed that he was walking in Jerusalem some nineteen centuries ago, and, hearing the newsboys shouting the latest edition of the *Jerusalem Evening News*, he bought a copy of this paper. Glancing through its columns, he came across a judgment by a learned judge of the King's Bench Division relating to a case which had been tried by him in Jerusalem a few days before. So vivid was the dream that on awaking next morning the judge clearly remembered every word of this judgment, and, wishing to preserve from oblivion so curious a result of dream cerebration, he at once committed the whole production to writing. It was as follows:—

"This is a case in which the accused—an itinerant preacher, self-styled prophet, and alleged worker of miracles—is charged on three separate counts; firstly for brawling and creating a disturbance in the Temple, secondly for sedition and riot, and thirdly for armed resistance to lawful arrest and causing grievous hurt.

"I am of opinion that the first charge does not come within the jurisdiction of a civil court. The alleged brawl in the Temple seems to have arisen out of a difference of opinion between the accused and the priests regarding the rights of certain money-changers and sellers of doves to carry on their business within the Temple precincts. The civil power does not in any way interfere in the usages obtaining in the Temple of Jerusalem, and I must accordingly decline to give any further consideration to this charge, which should be dealt with by the Jewish ecclesiastical tribunal.

"The second charge is a serious one, and comes properly within the purview of this Court. The prisoner is here accused of proclaiming himself King of the Jews, of riding into Jerusalem in state, and of thereby causing a riot in the streets and a disturbance of the public peace. These are, indeed, grave charges, and if proved merit severe punishment; but on carefully weighing the evidence, it does not appear to me that the incidents really bear the serious interpretation which has been put upon them. It is true that the four principal witnesses agree broadly as to the facts, but their account of the affair convinces me that it should be regarded rather as the exploit of a foolish mountebank seeking notoriety for his fanatic notions than as a serious act of sedition. It is scarcely conceivable that a person really claiming to be King of the Jews would select such a ludicrous method of asserting his regal status as that of riding through the streets of Jerusalem on a diminutive donkey. The excitement of the populace, and the shouts acclaiming the prisoner as the 'Son of David' and the 'King of Israel' appear to me to be indicative not so much of a tendency to riot and rebellion as of a spirit of good-humored fun and a natural wish to make the most of a good joke. Seeing the self-styled 'King of the Jews' riding along on his little borrowed donkey, with a folded overcoat for a saddle, and surrounded by his solemn-visaged attendants, the populace seem to have thoroughly entered into the fun of the thing and to have given him all the adulation he expected, and perhaps even more. This view of the affair is borne out by the remarkable fact that the so-called riot seems to have subsided as suddenly as it began, and that the streets along which the mirth-provoking spectacle had passed relapsed into their usual sobriety as soon as the 'King of the Jews' had moved on.

"I now come to the third charge—that of armed resistance and causing grievous hurt. The evidence here is not at all satisfactory; indeed, there is no evidence whatever against the accused personally, and the whole account is discredited by several suspicious features. The first three witnesses mention the fact that soon after the party entered the garden the prisoner's attendants fell into a deep sleep, and yet we are given a circumstantial account of certain words and acts of the prisoner while the only possible eye-witnesses were buried in slumber. As to the so-called armed resistance, the first two witnesses stated that one of the prisoner's disciples cut off an ear of one of the arresting party. The third witness said it was the 'right ear' that was cut off, and that the prisoner miraculously healed the wound. This was surely a sufficiently striking incident to have impressed itself strongly on all the witnesses, yet the other three seem to know nothing at all about it. The fourth witness also specifies the 'right ear,' and gives the name of the owner of the ear as Malchus; but it is curious that the prosecution has not called this man Malchus, whose evidence would have been more decisive than that of all the other witnesses combined. The fourth witness, moreover, gives the name of the disciple who committed the assault, which none of the others do; and he makes a most remark-

* *Daily Chronicle*, July 21, 1906.

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able statement to the effect that, on the prisoner inquiring of the officers who had come to arrest him as to whom they sought, the whole party 'went backwards and fell to the ground.' This is, of course, alleged to be another miracle, and the fact that it is mentioned only by the fourth witness throws considerable doubt on his veracity. Indeed, the whole evidence of this fourth witness is open to grave suspicion, and has to be received with the greatest caution.

"The prosecution has attempted to bolster up a weak case by bringing forward some incidents of the prisoner's past career which are supposed to prove that he was a Sabbath-breaker, a blasphemer, and given to wanton destruction of other people's property; and, before closing this judgment, I should like to make a few remarks on these points. The alleged Sabbath-breaking is of such a trivial nature as to be scarcely worth notice. The eating of grains of corn while walking through a field would appear to any rational mind to involve no greater desecration of the Sabbath Day than the eating of bread in one's house. And as to the performance of miracles on the Sabbath Day, the law prohibits *work* only, and it is doubtful whether the performance of a miracle would come under this description, as it seems to be the essential nature of a miracle that its performance requires no physical effort whatever—a mere act of volition on the part of the miracle-worker being sufficient to bring about the most stupendous results. The blasphemy alleged against the prisoner seems to have consisted in his declaration of a divine mission, and of a mysterious filial relationship to the Deity. Now, blasphemy really means an insult to the Deity, but I can find no element of any such insult in the prisoner's words or conduct. These seem to me to indicate, not blasphemy at all, but merely an exaggerated megalomania. As to the wanton destruction of property, the most serious case put forward is what the learned counsel for the defence wittily described as the 'Devilled pork affair.' To a believer in the reality of demoniacal possession, the prisoner's conduct in this case of the Gadarene swine should seem quite justifiable—indeed, it is difficult to see how he could have acted otherwise. It seems that devils have a strong partiality for occupying the bodies of human beings, and therefore to eject a 'legion' of them from a man without providing other habitation would be merely to court public disaster, for in all probability they would speedily invade the bodies of other people, and thus many would suffer for the relief of one. It was obviously the wiser and more humane course to accede to the devils' own request and permit them to enter the swine.

"To sum up, I find that no valid case has been made out against the prisoner, who seems to be not the seditious agitator, the dangerous rebel, the aspirant to the throne of David, which his enemies represent him to be, but merely an ignorant fanatic, believing himself to be charged with a divine mission, and to be possessed of supernatural powers. I accordingly acquit him of the accusations brought against him in this case, but would advise him carefully to avoid in future any breach of the public peace while propagating his opinions. In a free country, any and every opinion, however extravagant, may be openly proclaimed — any doctrine, however eccentric, may be freely taught; but this inalienable right involves the corresponding duty of respecting the existing conditions of social order."

THE BELLS.

An American tourist was contemplating—from the outside—a quaint old chapel in one of the cathedral towns of England. In a near-by spire the chimes began to ring. A venerable clergyman issued from the ivy-covered pile, and, observing the look of rapt attention upon the stranger's face, was moved, out of the goodness of his heart, to approach and engage him in conversation appropriate to the time and the place.

"My friend," he began, "does not the sound of those sweet bells fall like a benediction upon the soul?"

The American gazed at him blankly and cupped one hand behind his ear in order to hear better.

"Which?" he inquired.

The old rector raised his voice and shouted louder.

"I say that those lovely chimes seem to float down to us like a message of love and peace from on high. Do you not agree with me that theirs is a message from Heaven?"

"I'm sorry," said the visitor, "but still I don't seem to get you."

The clergyman made a funnel of his hand in front of his mouth.

"I merely wished to ask you if you too did not feel that the music coming from that tower yonder was truly celestial music, freighted with hope and beauty and glorious tidings?"

"Mister," explained the American, "the truth of the matter is that those damned bells make so much racket I can't hear a word you say."

Acid Drops.

If you start flogging for one offence there is really no reason why you should not flog for all. It is a short and easy method with offenders, a kind of universal cure for wrong-doing, and, above all, one that appeals powerfully to lazy minds and brutal natures. A witness before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which is inquiring into the number of accidents in the London streets, said that in West Ham danger was incurred by children riding behind tramcars. The witness said that the West Ham Stipendiary entirely endorsed the view that the magistrates should be empowered to order the birch "as the only effective deterrent in the case of children." Again, we say, why not? The exercise of a brutal feeling cannot be curbed by an age limit. And there is no reason that we can see why this admirable Stipendiary's advice should not be carried still further. Nothing effective has yet been discovered that will stop children climbing trees, swinging on gates, shouting in the streets, or throwing snowballs at passers-by. May we venture to suggest the birch for all these things? And if anyone is of opinion that a birching will put common sense into the heads of certain advocates of the whip, he may put our name down as in favor of that recommendation also.

When the Government does take in hand the education question, it looks as though some kind of "right of entry" will be proposed. Lord Crewe, in the course of a semi-official speech said:—

> "I think it ought not to be impossible to devise means by which those parents who would prefer that their children should attend a school of an undenominational character should have a better chance of doing so than they have at this moment; nor do I altogether despair of the possibility of getting over what we all agree is the difficult fence—the giving of special religious instruction by a particular denomination."

We do not think that there is much hope of "right of entry" being agreed to by Nonconformists, and the objections to it from a purely educational point of view should be decisive. Still, it is just possible that by outlining a showy scheme of educational reform the Government might induce the rival religious sects to agree with their proposals. And in that case we should have the blunder of 1870 repeated. A new form of the religious incubus will be established, and it will prove itself as obstructive to educational progress as did the 1870 compromise. If only the Government could screw up its courage and end the religious squabble by proposing a measure of Secular Education, it is within the bounds of probability that it would pass, and the road be cleared for genuine educational development. At any rate, failure of the Government could not be more humiliating, nor its position more contemptible, than in connection with its previous attempts to please those whose really vital interest in the schools is to use them as training grounds for church or chapel.

Very late in the day the *Christian Commonwealth* awakens to the lying character of the orthodox religious tract. It says that "the stories themselves, the incidents they retail, are simply not true, and would not impose upon an intelligent frog. To hand such literature to chance wayfarers is equivalent to the exposure and sale of indecent prints." We quite agree; only we would point out that tracts of the kind described are written for neither intelligent frogs nor intelligent human beings. They are written by the congenitally religious for the incurably stupid. And it is really complimentary to class such productions with indecent literature. Indecent literature usually shows more intelligence than the average tract, and is not nearly so harmful in its effects. The harm in life is not done by the frankly indecent or by the obviously dishonest, but by indecency masquerading as purity, and by falsehood posing as truth. We agree with the *Christian Commonwealth* that "there is an obscenity of the spirit as vile as anything which the police have orders to suppress." It only needs adding that Christian circles have been unusually rich in the production of this kind of "obscenity."

The worst forms of misconduct are those which the law does not and cannot touch. The comparatively trifling offence of circulating bogus coins comes within the range of police activities, but the circulation of false notions on matters of morals and of the intellectual life are necessarily beyond them. There is no safeguard here save a keen sense of personal honor and of social responsibility. And we have always insisted that in this direction the pulpit occupies a fairly low position in the life of the nation. In no other department of public life are statements made with so little care for their accuracy. It is the simple truth that if a man

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carried into the political, or even into the business, world the practices of the pulpit, he would soon find his career at an end in the one case, and his credit ruined in the other case. The *Christian Commonwealth* says "we are beginning to think that what is most needed in religious journalism at the present time is the same standard of personal honor that we expect from secular journalists, which will prohibit them from writing what they do not believe." We do not think that "secular journalists" are very scrupulous on the subject, but their laxity here is very often traceable to religious influences. At any rate, it is quite true that religious journalism in general falls below journalism in other directions, just as pulpit veracity falls below the veracity of the Secular platform.

Rev. Lord William Cecil appears to rejoice that the Turks, "who in times past despised Christians," are now defeated. We do not know that being defeated will make intelligent Turks despise Christians less. It is certain that the treatment of the Turks by the Allies will not make them love Christians more. The West may overcome the East, but that is quite a different question as to whether the East is benefited or not by the subjugation. The West, says Lord Cecil, must inevitably conquer because she is the strongest, and "where she has been resisted, she crushed." This is quite true, and this is the sole ground of Christian advance. At present the balance of brute force lies with the Christian nations of the world, and Christians are not slow to press their advantage. It was sheer brute force, for example, that established Christian missionaries in China, a country in which Lord Cecil seems peculiarly interested. Apart from that, Christian missionaries would have had the same chance there as other propagandists, and would have given it up as hopeless. It is a mistake to imagine that the Chinese ever objected to peaceful propaganda by alien religions. What they did object to was the religion that came with the gunboat, and used the latter to set native laws at defiance and to trample upon native customs. Western civilisation, apart from Christianity, says Lord Cecil, is an awful thing. We beg to say that Christianity, using the resources of civilisation as a means of spreading its teaching, is a still more awful thing, and one that many of the weaker nations have good cause to remember, and hate.

Rev. Thomas Sheepshanks, of Harrogate, left £95,252. He couldn't have done much better (or worse) if his name had been Goatshanks.

From a special article in the *Christian World*, we learn that during the past ten years the Salvation Army has "helped" 400 men from the farm colony at Hadleigh to Canada. Some have come from "various unions, boards of guardians paying their expenses." This has been done, we are told, in accordance with the plan outlined in the late General's book. We beg to differ. The plan outlined was to get hold of the human refuse of the cities, bring them back to manhood on a farm colony, and then send them abroad. How many of those 40 cases per year represent human wreckage saved by the Salvation Army? Precious few; and of these the expenses have been paid by others, the Army merely getting its usual profit. Moreover, what proportion does this emigration of 40 per year bear to the Army's total activity in this field. For or five years ago the Army was boasting of sending out nearly 20,000 annually. On this number it received a capitation grant from the Canadian Government and commissions from the shipping companies. All of this represented a mere business. Consider the proportion of the 40 "helped" to the 20 000 total, and one gets a fair conception of the relations of the philanthropic activities of the Army to its business enterprise.

In the *Burton Daily Mail* for March 31, there is a report of a sermon preached by the Rev. A. Grafftey Smith in memory of the Rev. G. W. Allen, late vicar of Brethy Parish Church, in which he related that the late vicar was once upon a time a member of the Christian Philosophical Society, London, in connection with which he was said to have converted Atheist after Atheist to a saving belief in the Christian religion. Mr. Smith said:—

> "Instead of going to the finest services, he made his way Sunday evening after Sunday evening to Hyde Park, to convince souls as keen and intellectual as his own of the truth of the Gospel. He was successful in winning back some of those Agnostic intellectuals, and many in London would ever thank God that they came across that great mind which exposed the fallacy of their early belief."

Some of the world's greatest men pass their lives in obscurity, and we must confess our ignorance of the redoubtable Mr. Allen's existence, as also of the "Agnostic intellectuals" who have been led by him back to the faith. It is not by any means the first time we have heard of such wonderful conversions, and the brilliancy of the performance is only equalled by the modesty which refrains from giving verifiable names. Candidly, we are wondering whether the late Mr. Allen had been romancing on his own account, or whether Mr. Smith has been romancing for him.

We cut the following from the *Leeds Mercury* of Wednesday, April 9:—

> "Extraordinary scenes were witnessed in Barnsley last night. A man, quietly dressed in an overcoat and cap, mounted an orange-box on Market Hill, and commenced to speak on Atheism.
>
> "It was not long before he had raised a hornet's nest about his ears. He was pulled down from his stand by the crowd, who commenced to hustle him.
>
> "He tried to make himself heard, but it was of no avail. He was driven up and down the hill for a time, but eventually he moved in another direction. He tried to to go up Market-street, but found the road impassable. Still buffeted from one side to another he went along Cheapside.
>
> "By this time the crowd had attained alarming dimensions, and he was followed by thousands of men, women, and children, all hooting and yelling frantically. From Cheapside he turned up New-street and then along Wellington-street, across Peel-square, and to his starting place at the foot of Market Hill.
>
> "He unsuccessfully tried to break away, and it appeared as though he was going to have an even rougher passage, when the uniform of a police-inspector loomed in the centre of the crowd. The unfortunate man was escorted by the inspector, still followed by his enormous and unwelcome retinue, to the borough police-office, where there was another big shout as he entered.
>
> "The police could not say last night that any particular charge would be preferred against him, he had been locked up for his own safety."

"The unfortunate man" sends us the cutting himself. He is the young man who was sentenced to three months' imprisonment some time ago under the Blasphemy Laws. He had been lecturing under the name of Bullock, his real name being Stephens. He appears to have been holding meetings again lately, some being quiet and orderly, and some otherwise. He asks us to advise him whether he should return to Barnsley. We really cannot do anything of the kind. Everyone must decide for himself in these cases. We should have to say the same if Paul asked us whether to should return to the "beasts at Ephesus."

We are no friends of assassination or of any other kind of violence. If the evils of the world cannot be cured by reason, they will never be cured by armies and navies, battleships and big guns, rifles, swords, or other "respectable" agencies of wholesale slaughter; neither will they be remedied by the knives and pistols of assassins or other retail killers of their fellow men. But why should the low-class murderer be the object of unlimited denunciation while the high-class murderer is the object of unlimited praise. The King of Greece, to our mind, stood on no higher moral level than the obscure citizen who shot him. Each took life for his own purposes. The assassin, however, took but one, while the "valiant King" was taking the lives of thousands. In due course the assassin will be put to death by some "civilised" process of annihilation, or relegated to a death-in-life of continuous torture; while the dead King, after being buried with every mark of honor, including the blessing of God through the lips of hireling priests, goes down to history as a noble martyr. Such is human justice and human sense!

Neither the intellect nor the character of King Alfonso sheds any lustre upon Spain. But there seems no reason to suppose that the next King of Spain would be any improvement on the present one. Killing him, therefore, would be foolish as well as wicked. No doubt it will be firmly believed that his escape from the assassin's bullet was due to the intervention of Providence; but no explanation will be offered as to the lack of providential interposition in the case of the King of Greece.

Why do not English journalists try to reconcile their piety with a little attention to the English language? They persist in describing the action of the assassin, whether attempted or successful, as "dastardly." Now that is precisely what it is not. The man goes to certain death (or worse) himself. He knows his risk and runs it, he knows the penalty and pays it, he treats his own life as a pawn in the game. He may be stupid and immoral, but he proves he is no coward. We repeat that "dastardly" is the most inexact description of his conduct. That it is always used on these occasions shows the brainlessness of ordinary journalism.

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"There could be no greater misfortune," says the *Catholic Times*, "than that reforms which would leave women without the protection assured them by the Christian religion should meet with success." We really do not know what protection has ever been assured to women by Christianity. Our social records show that it never protected them against the most villainous exploitation in mines and workshops, nor did it prevent women, when married, losing the legal protection they once possessed against brutal husbands. It is true that some measure of this protection was afterwards regained, but Christian opposition had to be beaten down first. Historically, Christianity has been fairly consistent in preaching the subordination of woman to man, and has powerfully assisted in getting that subordination legally expressed. All that the *Catholic Times* has in its mind is the possibility of the institution of marriage developing beyond the control of Christian Churches. But it will take more than the obscure warnings of religious papers to prevent the gradual secularisation of marriage. In all its essentials this is a social institution, and its precise form should, and must, be ultimately determined by social requirements. The interest of the Church in marriage is that control of it gives it the first clutch on the children. Release marriage from the control of the Church, and it will no longer be so easy to convert parents into the unconscious enemies of their children's welfare.

The late Pierpont Morgan was a very rich man, but his great fortune only represented *acquisition;* he produced nothing, he added not one cent. to the world's wealth, every dollar he made involved a dollar's loss to some other person or persons. His nose and mouth showed his place in the biological scale. We are quite pleased to know that he belonged to the Christian fold. He had even made his own arrangements for his funeral, including the services of three Bishops and a negro soloist. It is presumable that he is now in heaven. A French lady said that God would think twice before damning a gentleman of quality. No doubt the same Being would think thrice before damning a multi-millionaire.

The Welsh parson who threatened to burn the Welsh Church Bill on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral put himself on the level of the women who throw filth into letter-boxes. In not carrying out his threat he showed that his courage was worthy of his intelligence.

It was Montenegro that first unfurled the banner of the Cross during the Balkans war. It is this same Montenegro that Sir Edward Grey accuses of pursuing a war of conquest in the operations against Scutari. That is really what the soldiers of the Cross have been doing from the very beginning. Turkish tyranny was only a pretence.

The Church of England Peace League recently made an endeavor to get clergymen to pass resolutions in their churches in favor of the Peace Movement. A thousand circulars were sent out, and only six felt that the matter was important enough to warrant reply. Only three passed resolutions in favor of peace. Three only out of one thousand! And these are the people who are telling us so much about Christianity being the religion of peace!

A lady, Mrs. Carus-Wilson, is delivering a course of lectures at the Church House, Westminster, on "The Present Crisis in the Church." Naturally she opposes Disestablishment, and quite as naturally she cites France as an awful example of what Disestablishment leads to. France, we are told, has suffered twice by Disestablishment—once at the time of the great revolution, and again within recent years. A less prejudiced student of the subject would be inclined to say that what France really suffered from was the establishment of the Church, not its disestablishment. It is simply beyond question that amongst the agencies that reduced pre-revolutionary France to a condition of almost unimaginable distress and degradation, so far as the mass of the people were concerned, none played a more sinister part than the Church. It held to its feudal rights with even more tenacity than the ordinary nobility, and, worse than that, dragooned the people to the service of the small governing class. It is true, as the lecturer said, that Napoleon re-established the Church; but this was not because Napoleon had any real fondness for the Church, but purely from motives of policy. Quite apart from the fact that Napoleon saw that the Church could materially help him at his own game, the Disestablishment of the Church did not mean the destruction of religion. The mass of the people were still religious, still Christian; and in the interests of social order it was felt that the Church must be controlled. This has been felt by great statesmen from the time of Constantine onwards. When the mass of the people have grown beyond religious belief, affairs can be left to look after themselves. But with the mass of the people intensely superstitious, the Churches possess a power of social disruption that ruling statesmen have always felt must be regulated if chaos is to be avoided.

The second awful example is supplied by the answer recently given to a question by a French schoolchild. Asked as to whom it owed breath, food, life, and all the privileges it enjoyed—a question to which "an English child would naturally have answered, 'God'"—the French child replied, "L'etat." We do not know whether the story is genuine or not, but we are quite prepared to affirm that the alleged answer of the French child is more intelligible and more justifiable than the assumed answer of the English child would have been. For we really do get all the privileges we enjoy from the State—or, as we prefer it, from Society. It is social life that gives us our language, our manners, our customs, and which protects us from the cradle to the grave. No one knows that "God" has anything to do with it. Society is a tangible fact; "God" is a mere hypothesis, and of no use to anyone or anything when we use it. Answer for answer, we vastly prefer to put our money on the French child's reply. And if a recognition of the power and reality of social intercourse is one of the products of Disestablishment, the sooner it comes the better.

A little time back, Southport, being an exceedingly moral and religious town, declined to permit anything so demoralising as Sunday trams. Sunday tides are still in vogue, but their cessation is more properly a matter for prayer than legislation. But we learn from the Vicar of St. Andrew's, of Southport, that the town is "notorious for its Sunday picture shows, in which concerns we have no doubt many of the Christians who voted against the trams running on Sunday have money invested. The vicar now calls upon all pious souls to be up and doing. He does not oppose "a clean, instructive cinema on weekdays," but he strongly protests against these clean, instructive shows on Sunday. Other towns do not allow them, he points out. "Liverpool, Bootle, and Birkenhead scout such an idea." The vicar might have added that many other towns do allow them, and there is a general testimony from the police that they have a wholly beneficial effect on the moral health of the town. But to have pointed this out would have been to have put the case fairly, and fairness is certainly not a marked characteristic of the "Christian conscience" to which the vicar appeals.

We see from the *Christian* that an American converted baseball player, Mr. Sunday, after one week's revival campaign, received as his share of the proceeds 21,000 dollars. There were 18,833 "inquirers," so that Mr. Sunday received over one dollar per head for each "inquirer." Mr. Sunday says that he would have worked just as hard if he hadn't received a cent. And he asks, "What do I want with the money?" We don't know, but it is clear that he got it. If Mr. Sunday finds its possession troublesome, we have no doubt that the churches in which he preached would be glad of it. We imagine, too, that Mr. Sunday finds a share in the gate-money of a revival meeting a little more remunerative than playing baseball.

The Executive Committee of the Protestant Reformation Society protested against the Admiralty placing a British warship at the disposal of the Papal Legate for the purpose of conveying him to the Eucharistic Congress at Malta. The Committee considers it an insult to "loyal Protestants" all over the empire. We do not see that the Admiralty is less justified in doing what it has done for Roman Catholics than it would be in doing a similar action for Protestants. Roman Catholics are as much part of the State as Protestants, and as long as the State is not sensible or logical enough to leave all religious sects alone, it is at least an approach to fairness to treat them all alike. All or none implies a sensible policy. A selection involves not only unwarranted favoritism, it is a direct encouragement to sectarian bigotry and stupidity.

I've been properly amazed to find how often I catch myself seeing eye to eye with the Almighty.....I've lived so near to God, that 'tis with me as it was with Moses on the Mount. I've caught a bit of the Shine.—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £107 2s. 5d. Received since :—M. J. Charter, 10s.; Anno Domini (per C. Cohen), £2; R. Miller (delayed), 2s. 6d.; W. P., £2 2s.; W. W., 2s. 6d.; E. Adams, £2; G. L. Alward (per Miss Vance), £1 1s.

A. MILLAR.—"The still sad music of humanity" is Wordsworth's, not George Eliot's.

KATHERINE TIZNEY.—Pleased to have your sympathetic little letter. We are glad to know that many readers look upon us as "a very dear friend" without any personal acquaintance, merely for the work's sake.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for your well-selected cuttings.

R. N. MCNAIRN.—A pertinent illustration.

T. C. P. (Rhodesia).—We decline to soil our pages with such Christian filth. Contradicting it is merely giving it currency. We wonder you don't see this.

E. B.—Thanks for enclosures.

M. J. CHARTER.—Shall be pleased to see you at the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday—with other Tynesiders.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* (in English) is not now in print, but can sometimes be met with secondhand.

JOSEPHINE M. HURCUM.—You can fully rely upon the "Personals." Mr. Foote is ever so much better. It is he who tells you so, and thanks you for your pleasant letter.

T. P. W.—We cannot recall at the moment any publication devoted to the subject and dealing with the period you name. Files of advanced newspapers might provide you with the information desired. With regard to your volumes of the *National Reformer*—1871-80, an advertisement in our columns might secure you a purchaser for them.

H. PHILLIPS.—Miss Vance has written you on some of the points in your letter. We regret, with you, that there has been a dearth of Freethought lectures in Cardiff of late, but there is no good reason why this should continue. We believe that a large part of South Wales is ripe for Freethought propaganda, but it lies with those on the spot to take the initiative. Glad you have derived so much benefit from the *Freethinker*.

E. RICHMOND.—Thanks. Crowded out this week, but will be used in next issue.

A. P., subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes:—"I shall be glad to find in next week's *Freethinker* that you are again in the saddle—though your supporters have no fault to find with the conducting of the paper during your illness. Would that the *Freethinker* could pay for a permanent 'sub' with anything like the ability, learning, and zeal of the late Mr. Wheeler."

W. DODD.—Certainly you could not *claim* exemption on the ground stated, as the law distinctly provides for the affirmation of those having no religious belief. Apart from that, your treatment by the chairman appears to have been ungracious enough. He, apparently, thought that courtesy was unnecessary with an Atheist; and Atheists must, we suppose, expect such treatment from those whose Christianity leaves no room for the exercise of either good taste or good manners.

S. E. NOAKES.—(1) We do not know the particulars of Cardinal Vanutelli's entry into the Roman Catholic Church, but there is nothing surprising in men sacrificing possessions in their devotion to an idea. Whether it be a religious idea or a secular idea matters little. And even the Church cannot live on interested folly. Disinterestedness has to play its part there as elsewhere. (2) We do not pretend to explain why certain scientists profess themselves devout Christians. We are content to assert that their Christianity finds no warranty in their science.

A. BONAR.—The pansy is the floral emblem of thought, and is the one generally adopted by Continental Freethinkers. The colors of the N. S. S. are as near as possible the old Northampton Bradlaugh colors.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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Personal.

THE real winter of 1912-1913 is just upon us—in April. Balmier weather would do me, and many other people, a lot of good. But we must all wait for it with as much patience as we can. And I have always been fairly well provided with that quality since I waited twelve months for a door to open. So I go out of doors, and roam about as much as I am able, gaining a little fresh strength every day. And I shall want it soon—for I see some hard fighting before me in the near future. Meanwhile I have once more to thank Mr. Cohen for occupying the editorial chair in my absence. I think I may promise a front-page article in next week's *Freethinker*. I started writing one for this week's issue, but found I had not enough mental elasticity to do the subject justice. If it had pleased my readers it would not have pleased me.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The following message from the West Ham N. S. S. Branch arrived too late for last week's *Freethinker*:—

> "This Branch expresses its sincere sympathy with Mr. G. W. Foote in his grave illness, notes with much relief the improvement in his condition, and heartily wishes him a speedy return to health. May he live to enjoy many years of activity and leadership in the cause of causes."

Mr. Foote acknowledged this beautiful message by letter, but that does not preclude its publication for the readers of this journal.

There was another fine audience at Stratford Town Hall on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Lloyd. A little opposition was offered at the end, and a few questions asked, each of which was satisfactorily dealt with. The person who made himself so obnoxious on the previous Sunday wisely stayed away, and there was nothing to mar the harmony of the evening. To-day (April 20) Mr. Lloyd visits Leicester, and we hope that the Leicester folk will give him the large audience he deserves.

The last of the Stratford lectures will be delivered by Miss Kough. We trust that East End "saints" will see that the course finishes in good style and with a full house. Miss Kough's title is an attractive one, and it should be a good occasion for Freethinkers to introduce lady friends to the meetings.

"One of the speakers at a meeting held in London recently to demand the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was George Bernard Shaw, the playwright. In order to maintain his reputation for eccentricity, Mr. Shaw 'referred to Atheists as genuinely religious persons because under this system of religious persecution in Great Britain nobody but a thoroughly religious person could call himself an Atheist. This, he admitted, might seem a paradox to superficial persons.' Mr. Shaw seems to be seized with the mistaken view that all sincerity of conviction is of necessity religious. This led him to say that 'the Blasphemy Laws, so far from being directed against persons who vilify Christianity, are directed against the persons who affirm the truth of Christianity.' If he had said 'the truth about Christianity' he would have scored, but if that was his idea he failed to get it over."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Sir Hiram Maxim's volume entitled *Li Hung Chang's Scrap-Book* has for its sub-title "Missionaries and Opium—The Case for China." It will be published on April 25. Having seen an advance copy, we are already in a position to say that the missionaries and their friends will have something to answer. But will they do it? Or will they resort once more to the old conspiracy of silence? We shall see.

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Cross and Crescent in the Balkans.

In my article on "Religion and Rapine in the Balkans" (*Freethinker*, February 2), I stated that the Balkan nations have sullied their triumphant career of conquest and racial revenge by a revival of the crusading spirit of the Middle Ages, and I drew attention to the massacres, rapes, and robberies inflicted upon the hapless Jews of Salonica as evidences of the brutalising influences of Christianity when motives derived from religious animosity are imported into modern warfare. If we may judge by the consenting silence of that amorphous thing which christens itself public opinion, the prayer of modern piety in this country (and other countries, too) is but a smug variant of the familiar petition: "Give us this day our daily *press*." Our daily press, with few but honorable exceptions, supplies the need of the hungry Christian soul for journalistic pabulum, and its voracious readers are fed, so far as the Balkans are concerned, with the bread that is either treacled over with lies or sodden with slimy half-truths. We hear little of the fatal leap back taken by our twentieth-century civilisation to the all-but-forgotten savageries of the Middle Ages, nor of the guilty connivance of our Christian governments—a connivance partly of soulless *laissez-faire* and partly of callous approval—in the nameless and all but unparalleled abominations that have marked the Bulgarian, Servian, Montenegrin, and Greek armies, which, in the conduct of the Balkan War, have taken Christ as their watchword and extermination as their guiding principle. The sensation created, a few weeks ago, by the wholesale forced conversions of Catholics and the brutal murder of the heroic Father Palic, who declined to be "converted," have indeed, brought the might of Austria into play against the mediæval Montenegrins, but, unfortunately, Austria's intervention is not made on behalf of humanity, *per se*, but for Jingo ends and for the protection of her Catholic subjects against the proselytising ferocities of the Greek Church.

The Albanian Catholics are lucky in having elicited the sympathy of Austria, but the raped, robbed, and murdered Jews of Salonica, and the murdered Moslems in the conquered country generally, have found no champion amidst the chancelleries of Europe. The outrages, therefore, are to go on, and the work of extermination is to be continued, so far as European governments are concerned—first, because the Turks are not Christians; secondly, because there is no national axe to grind on the millstone of intervention; and, thirdly, because of the avowed plea that, pending the final termination of the war, the nation that would seek to stay the hand of destruction would be open to the suspicion of intervening for base ulterior purposes.

No serious attempt has been made to deny the general accusation against the conquering Christians of terrible cruelty committed upon the Moslem "bottom dogs" in Thrace and Macedonia. Since my last article was written, these accusations found terrible expression in a Munich paper, *Mars*, in an article written by the well-known and respected Dr. Hans Barth. I am indebted to our Lausanne contemporary (*La Libre Pensée internationale*, March 1) for the heartrending particulars which this indignant eye-witness gives of these Balkan abominations. Dr. Barth's article is, unfortunately, too long for presentation here; I can only attempt to reproduce from his horrifying descriptions some of the more salient features of atrocity. Never, he says, has the shocking abyss that yawns between Christian doctrine and its putting into practice struck him more forcibly than during this war:—

> "In all their lives, Cæsar Borgia, Torquemada, and Tilly did not carry on so many ravages as the Balkan clergy, the true instigator of these horrors, have committed during these few months. Even the most furious Spanish fanatic must sink into insignificance when compared with these priests who cut Turkish throats in the name of Christ!"

In a vivid description, he shows us the filthy "popes" (or Greek priests), with their tresses of hair agglutinated by dirt, drinking heavily at the café, perhaps to drown the nauseating stench of the piles of corpses around, while offering their hands to be kissed by the soldiers, who, "with the benediction of the papà's," rush forth to the commission of fresh murders!

Dr. Barth states that at Salonica and its environs the work of massacre has gone on gaily. He cites a letter from a consul stating that (apparently in Macedonia only) "at least 240,000 Turks have been assassinated"! As a pendant to this, he declares that, at a lunch at which he was present in one of the Embassies at Constantinople, the statement—which he believes to be perfectly true—was made that at least 34,000 Turkish women and children were strangled by the Bulgarians alone, their sole crime being that they were not Christians! And Dr. Barth adds that neither for these victims nor for the 240,000 victims in Macedonia did the innumerable bands of priests who accompanied the Christian army raise a single finger to save the poor wretches!

If the enlightened reader imagines that the Middle Ages are a thing of the past, let him ponder this awful description of these "soldiers of Christ" who have risen and put their armor on. The words I now give are those of Dr. Barth:—

> "See how beautiful they are, these modern cavaliers of the Cross! The twenty thousand heads of hair tied with buckles dripping with grease, these men in a costume half bandit and half melodrama, with a poignard stuck in their clothes! Twenty thousand furious brothers in Christ, with whom it is not prudent to take two steps in the street, especially the Cretes, individuals comparable to the most savage brutes of all ages, and who, only two years ago, under the leadership of Greek officers, burnt the villages of their allies and impaled and sabred the inhabitants! But what are these Greek assassins as compared with the Bulgarian comitatjis? Perambulating arsenals, their heads like those of wild beasts, with hair on end, and all uncovered! Monsters than whom I would prefer to embrace a hyena! Alas! how these super-hyenas are mild, and tender, and supple when the priest comes near them. How they rush to lick the hands of the 'pope.' As for the pope himself, servant of Christ and minister of the doctrine of pardon, where and when has he, even once, uplifted his hand to pardon or to reconcile?"

Dr. Barth insists that it was not solely the so-called bandits, the non-military elements, who performed these atrocities. The regular troops were no less culpable. The Bulgarians were as bad as the Servians. As for the Greeks, go to Salonica, says Dr. Barth, and the German, Austrian, French, and Italian Consuls and the different European colonies there will give you a tale of horror that will make your hair stand on end with dismay.

Dr. Barth enters into the most painful particulars of these abominations. On the capture of Caralla, arrest was made not only of Turkish functionaries, lawyers, rich people, but of a lot of poor wretches whose crime consisted in not being Christians, together with a large number of Jews, "who were particularly odious to the Greeks because they are friends of the Turk and tolerant in religion and politics." Every night, at about 9 o'clock, some dozens of prisoners (the first batch consisted of 39) were taken out of prison, stripped of clothing to the waist, tied three by three, and flung into the dried bed of a river. Then came the atrocious butchery. With poignards, yatagans, bayonets, they slashed and cut to pieces the human heap of suffering until there was nothing left but an enormous mass of bleeding flesh. The ruffians left the still palpitating heap of convulsive bodies, and on the following evening came with a fresh number of victims. The Reign of Terror lasted for ten days, and during that time the mangled bodies remained without burial, empoisoning the air. The whole population went to the scene where these butcheries were transacted, and the European eye-witnesses of these horrors assure Dr. Barth that many of these poor wretches were hacked to pieces from head to foot. One of the specialities of Chris-

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tian piety consisted in the mutilation of the sexual organs*—all for the crime of being Turks or Jews. Dr. Barth insists that these atrocities were known to the foreign Consuls, and although the ordinary diplomatic means of communication were open between the Consuls and their respective governments; although, in fact, two foreign ships of war were actually in the port of Caralla at the time, the murder and mutilation went on without protest. For this cowardly connivance with a great crime, history will call our twentieth-century politicians gravely to account before the eyes of posterity.

Confirmation of these atrocities is all too certain. An able Russian author, M. Pawlovitch, writing in *Contre la Guerre*,† cites a long series of articles in the well-known Russian review, *Kijewskaja Mysl*, giving terrifying pictures of executions *en masse* and without trial, of innumerable hangings and murder of wounded Turks while under the care of the Bulgarian Red Cross, and the systematic slaughter of entire columns of Turkish prisoners by the Christian soldiers who escorted them. *Kijewskaja Mysl* asks, despairingly, where are the thousands of wounded Turks which the Bulgarian Army Staff boasted before Europe that they had captured? According to Pawlovitch, the details published in the Russian review make it clear that all the excesses in the wars of the last five decades pale before the atrocious details of the Balkan War, in which the conquerors openly declared that everything was permissible in dealing with the Turks. If even a Liberal Russian writer, Doroschewitsch, could write that "it was necessary to tan the hides of the Turks"; if he could accept the doctrine that the Turkish prisoners should be "treated like caged hyenas, without hatred, but with all disgust"; and could enjoin upon the Slav armies to drench their natal soil with the blood of the infidel, "and pave the road to liberty with their corpses"; if all this could be written in the Russian "Liberal" press, not much stretch of imagination is needed to picture what would be the attitude of the Bulgarian and Servian press towards the "damned unbeliever," the traditional enemy of the Christian Church. All wars bring to the surface the savage atavisms of the primitive brute in man, and no war is exempt from atrocities, in spite of the "love one another" inculcations of a hypocritical two-thousand-years-old Christianity. The wars of the five last decades were, at least, sought to be conducted according to the conventional rules of butchery established by international compact. But in the Balkan War the Turks were kept without the pale of all human law; there was no limit and no restraint. This war of Cross and Crescent is a war of extermination; no distinction is made between combatants inflamed with the intoxication of fight on the field of battle and the unarmed and defenceless prisoners; between the army that fights and the peaceful population which, in many cases, has been exterminated by sword and fire and literally extirpated from the soil.

The same number of *Contre la Guerre* publishes at length a letter from Bulgaria, stating that in the villages Mimitly and Kroupnik, in Macedonia, all the Turks whose lives were saved by the Bulgarians were obliged to accept conversion into the orthodox religion. As for those who were unwilling to change their creed so easily, the civilising Bulgarians threw them *en masse* by night into the waters of the River Struma. More than 300 men and women perished in that manner! The writer goes on to say that in the churches of every village the "popes" openly deliver addresses against the Turks and preach in favor of massacring the infidels. No Gladstone arises to-day to thunder against the "atrocious" Bulgarians, because "our" Christian "charity" covers or condones the multitude of their sins.

There is, however, one great writer, Pierre Loti, whose mouth is not to be gagged, nor his pen silenced. His article on "The Savageries of War," in *Contre la Guerre* (March 15), should arrest the attention of our politicians, who have so long stopped their ears and sealed their hearts. He declares that "the Bulgarians, in absolute tranquillity, under the closed eyes of their accomplice, Europe, are proceeding with the systematic extermination of the Moslems in the invaded provinces." In proof of this terrifying allegation, he claims that "there are legions of unimpeachable witnesses, Austrian and German, functionaries, doctors, pastors, and officers." He mentions as his witnesses Doctor Ernst Jaeckh, General Baumann, Colonel Veit, Captain Rein, and Professor Dühring, whose well-documented reports, supported by hideous photographs, speak of pillagings, incendiarism, violations amidst aggravating circumstances of Sadism, and mutilations of indescribable horror; the massacre of non-combatants; old women locked in barns which are set fire to; Musselmen drenched with petroleum before being piled up in mosques and therein burnt alive.....! Then come these accusing words:—

> "Over all this savagery there brooded a base and bestial fanaticism. The funereal *stelæ*, having Koranic inscriptions, were broken and the tombs profaned. The name of Christ was mingled with these assassinations, and sometimes the murderers baptised by force before they began the massacre. More enraged still than the invaders, and more cowardly, the Ottoman Christians went forth to meet the conquerors and guided them to the Turkish houses, first of all towards the richer ones, and divulged the hiding places where money was concealed; or the young women pillaged along with them and took part in the killing.....A naïve detail, full of touching novelty, took place amongst these scenes of horror. The young Moslem women, from whose faces the veil had been torn away—their first great outrage—before they were driven forth to be pasture for the hungry lusts of the soldiers, had covered their faces with a deposit of thick mud gathered in the gutters by the road side....."

And all this vileness wrought in the sweet name of Jesus!

Pierre Loti concludes by saying that—

> "this is going on and will continue so doing as long as there remains in the province of Adrianople a single village that has not become a mass of burnt ruins, with corpses filling the streets. And all the Chancelleries know this with an absolute knowledge, and all of them keep silent, and everywhere the public conscience is wantonly deceived."

In this conspiracy of silence for the purpose of hiding the bankruptcy of diplomacy, the failure of civilisation, and the shame of our vaunted Christianity, the *Freethinker* will not join. We are not concerned to say that the Turks are angels of light, or that the Christians have not suffered bitter wrongs, either in this generation or in the historic past. But we are concerned to uphold and to vindicate, above all the rivalries of Cross and Crescent, of Christian and Mohammedan, the great ideal of an all-embracing Humanity; and it is because we feel that this beneficent ideal is trampled under foot by these armies of revengeful religionists, who, not for the first time in history, are made trebly brutal by their cruel and exclusive creed, we raise our feeble voice against these hideous revivals of mediæval bigotry as being of evil augury for the future.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

* NOTE.—The Spanish bigot, even in our own modern times, loves this fiendish diversion, especially when he has unbelievers at his mercy.

† *Contre la Guerre*, March 5. (Paris: Bi-monthly; editor, Dr. Charles Rappoport.) To say that Anatole France, Pierre Loti, Alfred Naquet, etc., write for this paper is a sufficient indication of its quality.

"The Nation and Its God."

A NOTABLE feature of the address of the Chairman of the Free Church Council is its title. Nationality naturally enters into the conception of Deity formed by every Deist. The deistic inhabitants of these islands, particularly those with insular habits of thought and insular prejudices, cannot very well do other than regard their God as a Britisher who thinks in English. We may go further. Environment is bound to have an effect in determining the

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idea that people form of God. Thus each class has its own God. The orthodox squire has his God. The orthodox tradesman who supplies the squire with groceries has his. Some have even gone the length of saying that with regard to believers who have had the advantages of a liberal education and surroundings of refinement and culture, each man must make his own religion and his own God *for himself*. The Duke of Norfolk and Viscount Halifax cannot very well have formed the same idea of the Deity as, say, Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. R J. Campbell. And one would suppose that there would be differences to be found in the conceptions of the Deity formed by, say, Mr. Rockefeller on the one hand, and an ignorant but enthusiastic iron puddler on the other.

Well; but with the increase of opportunities, the greater dissemination of knowledge, and the advance of freedom of thought, the multiplicity of ideas inevitably resulting must necessarily be embarrassing to a Christian apologist who adopts such a title for a sermon as "The Nation and Its God." The very title suggests inferentially that each nation may have its own particular God. Of course, the ardent British believer is satisfied that his God is the "one living and only true God," and that all other believers in other gods—of whatever nationality—are steeped in darkness. But the puzzling feature in the whole situation in just this: that there are millions who believe in *their* gods with all the firmness, temerity, and intensity of conviction that any Christian believer can believe in *his* God. For example, there are many devout and devoted believers in Allah and Mohammed as well as in Jehovah and Christ.

There is apparently, moreover, a sort of inexorable Salic Law which regulates the governance of the universe. The sex of the Almighty according to Christian doctrine has, it seems, never been challenged up to now. But, with the advance of women, may we not expect to find some feminine rival to the Ruler of the Universe? We have had queens as well as kings, all, indiscriminately, according to orthodox teaching, of divine appointment. Why, then, should a goddess not have supreme control instead of a god?

Now, the President of the Free Church Council (very free) had a good deal to say about his impressions of the nation and how it is getting on; but he gave precious few of his impressions of the nation's God. He was frankly pessimistic on many points, and was compelled to say certain things which, to put it mildly, could scarcely be regarded as flattering to the nation's God. Possibly, the features of our time upon which he deemed it necessary to animadvert at some length have been productive of a demand for change, and may thus account for the appearance of many new-fangled creeds and suggestions for new divinities. Christian Science, Theosophy, New Theologies, are features of the twentieth century. The Christian apologist does not fulminate nowadays. He—gentle creature—never gets angry with the enemies of his truth. He never gets the gloves on nor gives the enemies of his God some straight blows from the shoulder. No, he only gets sad, and sometimes lachrymose and maudlin. He sighs over and prays for the poor infidel, who, he trusts, will find out his terrible mistake before it is too late. The confident impudence and assurance of these worthy persons is too amusing for words.

But, at the end of it all, and notwithstanding all the discouraging signs of the times, the Christian has still—hope! Churches may empty, subscriptions go down, and distinctions gradually disappear between the orthodox and the heterodox—still, he has hope. Because, observe, says the occasional optimistic Christian of the Meyer type, while there are certainly things to discourage, there is a great advance in modern thought, and in the end it will be found that the Christian religion is sufficiently embracing to take in everything and everybody. If Atheists talk like that, they are pitied—or boycotted. From the lips of accredited representatives of Christianity, it would seem to be a happy and consoling utterance.

Of course, Christianity depends for its continued existence on its adaptability to changing and improving human requirements. But that just means that it loses all definite and distinct character of its own. A Bahai missionary lectures in our midst. Christian ministers appear on his platforms by the dozen and crack him up and clap him on the back. Why shouldn't they? The indisputable gullibility of the great British public is past finding out. The gulls don't think they are stupid. Let them learn this if they can: that in the supernatural hocus-pocus, *they will never find one of our medicine men running down a fellow craftsman.*

But this all-embracing kind of modern Christianity has not only the effect of robbing Christianity of its essential features. It makes God a vague, visionary, and withal futile and ungraspable personality, who may be anything that anybody likes, and it encourages the "intellectual twisters" in our midst to the disadvantage and prejudice of sincere inquirers: so true is it that to-day the average member of a Christian community does not know where he is—or where God is either.

We want less rubbishy cant talked and written against Materialism and Paganism. Materialists and Pagans have often been the friends and saviors of humanity. But, as Christianity has flourished in the past on downright mendacity, so in the future it is to depend on—adaptability. And is the "nation's God" of to-day at all like the "nation's God" of Cromwell's time?

SIMPLE SANDY.

The Eternal Priestess.

WOMAN stands on slippery places. Her position is not secure. For ages she has been represented as an inferior being—decreed and destined to be subject to man.

We call our civilisation Christian, we say the Bible is the foundation of our morality and the basis of our laws, and yet the despoiling of women presents a fearful indictment against both civilisation and the Bible upon which that civilisation is founded.

Upon the altars of the Church have been forged the chains that have bound woman for nineteen centuries. The Christian dogmas have insulted and enslaved the mothers of the race. The man-made religion of a man-god, administered by a man-priesthood, has dishonored and degraded woman through all the Christian ages. Nature is remorseless and exact; falsehood, injustice, and wrong bear their pitiless and inevitable fruit. In the degradation of woman we are reaping the harvest sown by the hand of the Church in the field of the world. The problem of the social evil is a world problem. It is as wide as Christendom. It is not peculiar to any nation, or city, or social condition. It is pre-eminently an adjunct of Christian civilisation. It follows the flags of all nations. Wherever the Christian armies of Christian Europe are stationed in Asia or Africa, heathen women are requisitioned for Christian soldiers. Methods of government may differ; social and political institutions vary, but throughout all the Christian nations in one respect, in one fateful feature, there is uniformity; it is the prostitution of woman.

Now and then a community awakens to a more or less vivid realisation of the sadness and the shame of it all. Commissions and committees investigate and report, raids are organised, arrests made, resorts closed, discussions and controversies maintained as to the evil and how to combat it. However well-intentioned these spasmodic expressions of the public sentiment may be, they nevertheless produce more hysteria than wisdom.

The attitude of society towards these unhappy women ought not to be one of condemnation and revenge, but rather of pity and compassion. She is there, maybe, through ignorance or weakness, or through the very excess of love and devotion; she is there, maybe, through no fault of her own, or at

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best through a fault but half her own; she is there, also, knowing full well that the door of hope and reclamation is closed to her for ever; there to hide behind a mask of abandonment and boldness an aching heart; there to suffer, to despair, to die, having no refuge but the grave, no friend but death.

Ah! who would add one drop to the bitterness of her cup, one pang to her grief? We can do little for her now. The way down is easy, the way up all but impossible; they go down as with wings, and up with broken hands and bleeding feet.

In pre-Christian times the position of women was more honorable and more secure than in any Christian land in this dawning twentieth century. Our orthodox friends never tire of telling that woman owes all she has to the Christian religion. The fact is, she owes her subjection and her age-long subjugation to the Christian religion.

Egypt, pre-eminent among the older civilisations, gives us the strange story of the Matriarchate, the mother rule. The Egyptians worshiped as their chief deity the goddess Isis. They revered the goddess Semiramis as the mother of their civilisation. One of their greatest monarchs, Rameses III., caused this inscription to be put upon monuments, "To unprotected woman there is freedom to wander throughout the whole country without apprehension of danger." There is no city or country calling itself Christian on the entire globe where that inscription could be made and safely followed. It is a keen and striking comment that hundreds of years before this era a pagan monarch should choose as a certificate of the glories of his rule the statement that woman was safe anywhere within his realms.

In pre-Christian Rome the people worshiped goddesses. The most sacred treasures, as well as the destinies of the empire, were kept and guarded by the vestal virgins. The tutelary divinity of Athens was a goddess. Wherever a people has a goddess among its deities, it has a priestess among its people, and wherever a religion has a priestess, the women are secure.

The Christian is masculine. There is no feminine element in the godhead. The Christian dogmatists had to violate the principles of interpretation in order to make their god masculine. The word "Jehovah" is susceptible of a translation that makes the gender male and female, or a mother and father god. The dogmatists left the mother off and have always called Jehovah "him." The New Testament words for the third person in the Trinity are all feminine in the Greek, but the Christian dogmatists made every one of them masculine and called the Holy Spirit "him" or "it." There you have the dogmatic god, a triune masculinity, a triple man, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There is no place in the godhead for the mother or the feminine element—God the Father, and that alone, is the certificate and excuse for the Christian subordination of woman.

Until the Church is able to say "God the Father and God the Mother," it will not be worthy of the devotion and loyalty of women. In that prayer, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name," "hallowed" means "whole, complete, integral, rounded, entire, self-supplementing," "Our Father, whole, complete, be thy name," wherein there is a hint of the lost word of occultism. Perhaps when the lost word is found, even Christendom will see and say "our father and our mother." Maybe when that lost word is found, an apostate Church will see that a masculine god and a masculine priesthood are things for women to shun.

The teachings of the Bible are explicit and unmistakable with regard to woman. She was created after man; she was not a part of the original plan, but was an afterthought; she was created for man, a doctrine which the Church has loved to reiterate. She was first in sin; she brought the undoing of mankind by her transgression, and through her came the curse and the banishment from Eden, and the doom of ultimate death.

Under the Old Testament dispensation she was not permitted to enter the inner circle of the temple; she could stand without while more righteous man entered in. When she gave birth to a child, she was compelled to pass through a period of ceremonial purification—forty days if the child was a son, twice that long if the child was a daughter.

The New Testament dispensation did not improve in the slightest the condition of woman. Indeed, the Apostle Paul took pains to make her subjection more complete. He said, "Wives, obey your husbands." Why should a woman obey the husband any more than the husband obey the woman? The idea of obedience on the one side and mastership on the other has its root in the fundamental conception of woman's created inferiority. "Be subject unto your husbands, sit in silence, keep the head deferentially covered, as a sign of humiliation, meekness, and subjection. If you wish to know anything, ask your husbands." These are the inspired utterances of the Apostle Paul. These are the teachings of the Christian Church, yet women revere that Bible as the Charter of their salvation. It is the declaration of their utter sinfulness, the certificate of their inferiority and the cause of their age-long subjugation.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). J. E. ROBERTS.

(*To be concluded.*)

OUR PAGAN SURVIVALS.

"Pagan London" is by no means a bad "Letter to the Editor" lay, and congratulations to the *Daily Telegraph* on its perspicacity in the matter of vacation variety. But are we not a little unfair to the Pagans in comparing them with Londoners? Most of our feasts and festivals and many of our season customs are Pagan survivals. Christian Rome borrowed many of its rites and ceremonies from Pagan Rome, and the Protestant Church keeps many of the festivals that were connected with Pagan celebrations. The Yule log of our Christmas time comes to us from heathen Saxons, who burned one on the night which is now our Christmas night, and burned it as an emblem of the returning sun and the increase of light and heat. And the heathen Saxons kept up the festival of sun worship until the twelfth night. It was the feast of the winter solstice and was the heathen worship of the Sun God.

I have seen in the newspapers that the old custom of beating the bounds is to be abandoned by the City of London. This parochial perambulation is also an old Pagan survival. The feasts called Terminalia were dedicated to the God Terminus, who was worshiped as the Guardian of Fields and Landmarks. The landmarks were not beaten with rods as is our custom to-day, but twined with garlands and occasionally sprinkled with the blood of human sacrifice. In our own Church the parish was originally perambulated by the clergy and the parishioners. The priest asked the blessing of God on the fields that they might bring forth the fruits of the earth in abundance.

The ceremony is associated with Rogation Week, the period which the Saxons called Gangdagas, or Days of Perambulation. And this will be the first year the custom has not been carried out in the City of London since its existence as a city. But it is a Pagan survival. The perambulation of the landmarks with sacrifices and offerings to the god Terminus was originated in the days of Numa Pompilius, and that philosophical monarch was born on the day that Romulus laid the foundation of Rome.

All the pretty emblems of May Day are Pagan survivals. Most of the ceremonies indulged in by the Pagans in honor of the goddess Flora are continued in the May Day celebrations of Christian England. There is no necessity to multiply instances. The fact is beyond dispute that many of our Christian festivals are directly descended from Pagan festivals. But where the old Pagans are injured by the comparison with our Pagan Londoners is that the Pagans feasted and made merry in honor of a god in whom they believed and whom they sought by their performances and their sacrifices to propitiate. Our modern Pagans feast and make merry entirely for their own gratification. Some of them "believe" in a kind of a sort of a way, and some don't. But all are indifferent.—*G. R. Sims, "Referee."*

What I want reminding, and what I go to the Bible and Hayward for, be just the other great truth, that he's a God of Justice too, and have his sword always drawn in secret for the sinner, though it be hid in his shining robe.—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Why Persecutest Thou Me?"

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, a Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "Who Made God?"

OUTDOOR.

DUDLEY (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—April 20, at 7.30, "Thomas Paine and Some Local Calumniators"; 21, at 8, "Science, Religion, and the End of the World"; 22, at 8, "Piety and Dog-Days"; 23, at 8, "Christ: Man, Messiah, or Myth?"

HANDSWORTH (Town Gates): Joseph A. E. Bates—April 17, at 7.45, "Rationalism and Monarchy"; 18, at 7.45, "People with One Idea."

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The public know nothing of well-wishers, and keep a wary eye on those that would reform them.
WILLIAM HAZLITT.

The "Unspeakable" Turk.

Two Years Under the Crescent. By H. C. Seppings Wright. London: James Nisbet & Co. 10s. 6d.

DURING my recent illness—at least during a large part of it—I had no energy to read anything more than the newspapers. It was thus that I noticed a review of the above book in the *Daily News*, in which astonishment was expressed that the author claimed many virtues for the Turk, including the virtue of toleration. This seemed to strike the reviewer all of a heap. Fancy the Turk tolerant! He could not agree with the statement, neither could he answer it, so he just let the author's tribute stand. But my own curiosity was excited. I made up my mind to get a copy of Mr. Seppings Wright's book, expensive as it was. This I did as soon as I was well enough. I have read the book through, and I find that the author, like almost everyone else who has come into close personal contact with the Turk, regards him as a better gentleman than the great majority of his opponents, and as a constant sufferer from Christian abuse and misrepresentation.

A hundred years ago Byron, who knew the Levant so well, stated his own opinion very plainly, that whoever had dealings with a Turk would find him a gentleman, and that whoever had dealings with a Greek would find him a scoundrel. In a long note to the Second Canto of *Childe Harold* "On the Turks" he wrote with his usual force and decision:—

> "If it is difficult to pronounce what they are, we can at least say what they are *not*: they are *not* treacherous, they are *not* cowardly, they do *not* burn heretics, they are *not* assassins."

Byron also pointed out (it was before Catholic Emancipation was carried) that the Turks treated the Christians under their rule with far greater toleration than Protestants treated Catholics in Great Britain, and especially in Ireland. Byron, it must be remembered, was not a Christian himself. That makes all the difference. He could take a disinterested view of the matter.

Carlyle had a bad opinion of the Turks. But he had no knowledge of them. And although he was not really a Christian himself he was, paradoxical as it may sound, a Christian bigot. With his usual graphic power he advised Europe to get rid of "the unspeakable Turk." The epithet was splendid from a literary point of view, and extraordinarily serviceable from a partisan point of view. It suggested that evidence was not necessary or was too bad to print. Yet it was well known to Carlyle that Russia was far fuller of tyranny, bloodshed, and misery than Turkey was. But, I repeat, he was a Christian bigot, though not a Christian; so the Sultan was a devil, and the Czar was simply "drilling anarchic populations" into law and order.

For my part, I venture to say that the average Turk has all along been a far more good-natured and tolerant person than the average Christian. I admit that under sufficient provocation the Turk has been cruel after the general fashion of his age and locality. But I contend that what the Turk has done in hot blood the Christians have done in cold blood; what in the one was an outburst of temper was in the other a deliberate policy; and when the Christians have had an opportunity of imitating the Turk, as they blandly put it, they have always managed to better the example. Even in the present (or recent) war it is undeniable that the Christians have perpetrated shocking outrages upon the Mohammedans in Macedonia, Thrace, and elsewhere; while the evidence of outrages on the other side is of the flimsiest character. War correspondents in a position to know the facts—that is to say, who have been with the Turkish Army—deny that anything of the kind has occurred. Mr. Seppings Wright denies it too:—

> "It was not possible to go through this campaign without hearing in various quarters the reports which had been circulated with regard to the massacre of Christians by the Turks. Personally, I cannot believe there was ever any substantial foundation for these rumors, and the inquiries I made did not induce me to change my opinions in regard to these allegations."

Mr. Wright reports something very different in the awful retreat after the battle of Lüle Burgas:—

> "It is impossible to give more than a slight idea of the awful scenes witnessed on this retreat. A redeeming feature in it was the entire absence of mutiny or violence.
>
> "Mohammedan and Christian were knit together in the common bond of suffering. At least a third of the crowd were Christians. The way in which members of one creed helped the other contradicts to some extent the theory that it is impossible for people of two religions to live together in harmony.
>
> "The soldiers of Asia apparently did not resent the Christian refugees of Thrace sharing their troubles and lightening each other's burdens where it was possible to do so. Wearied children slept peacefully in the arms of rough soldiers."

Later on, when the refugees reached, or entered, Constantinople, Mr. Seppings Wright bears the following testimony:—

> "This dark and dismal picture of human misery, reaching down to the lowest depths, will never be erased from my mind. That these terrible scenes and experiences did not produce serious outbreaks and inroads upon private property, proved the respect which the Turks have for law and order, and for the philosophy with which they regard calamities. What impressed me more than anything else was the display of human sympathy and the charity shown by them to their more unfortunate fellow countrymen, even when they were Christians."

Mr. Seppings Wright stayed at an hotel kept by a Greek in Constantinople. His customers were Turks, Greeks, and Jews, and there was no quarreling. "I saw nothing," our author says, "of the objectionable demonstrations which were freely reported in the European journals—a fact which speaks volumes for the tolerance of the Turk." (This was the phrase that stuck in the throat of the *Daily News* reviewer.)

A Servian's tribute to the Turk, quoted by Mr. Seppings Wright, is worth quoting here. "The Turk," he said, "was the master of the Balkan nations for nearly five centuries. During all those centuries he consistently refrained from interfering with our national churches and with our village municipal life. From the liberty which the Turk left to our Church and our municipal life in the country, our political liberty was reborn."

(*To be concluded.*) G. W. FOOTE.

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The Pathology of Conversion.—III.

(Concluded from p. 243.)

To the examples already given it may be as well to add this one from a missionary's account of a quite recent revival in India—July, 1906:—

> "There were people.....on the floor fairly writhing over the realisation of sin as it came over them..... Saturday we were favored with a wonderful manifestation of the Spirit. One of the older girls, who had had a remarkable experience, went into a trance, with her head thrown back, her arms folded, and motionless, except for a slight movement of her foot. She seemed to be seeing something wonderful, for she would marvel at it, and then laugh excitedly.....One girl rushed to the back of the vestibule and, lying across a bench, with her head and hands against the wall, she fairly writhed in agony for two hours before peace came to her."*

I do not know on what ground we are justified in calling people civilised who chronicle these outbreaks as "manifestations of the Spirit." Savages would do no more; our "civilised" missionaries do no less. Tylor well says that "these manifestations in modern Europe indeed form part of a revival of religion, the religion of mental disease."†

The morbid state of mind induced by these attempts at conversion—a condition that may very easily become pathological—is illustrated by a number of the answers to Dr. Starbuck's inquiries. Seventy-five per cent. of the males and sixty per cent. of the females confessed to feelings of depression and sadness before conversion. In all probability this was partly due to the harping upon a "sense of sin," which is itself of a wholly unhealthy character. The following confessions well illustrate both points. I give the age, where known, in brackets. One writes:—

> "I felt the wrath of God resting on me. I called on Him for aid, and felt my sins forgiven" (13).
>
> "I couldn't eat, and would lie awake all night."
>
> "Often, very often, I cried myself to sleep" (19).
>
> "Hymns would sound in my ears as if sung" (10).
>
> "I had visions of Christ saying to me, Come to Me, My child" (15).
>
> "Just before conversion I was walking along a pathway, thinking of religious matters, when suddenly the word H-e-l-l was spelled out five yards ahead of me" (17).
>
> "I felt a touch of the Divine One, and a voice said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee; arise and go in peace'" (12).
>
> "The thoughts of my condition were terrible" (13).
>
> "For three months it seemed as if God's Spirit had withdrawn from me. Fear took hold of me. For a week I was on the border of despair" (16).
>
> "A sense of sinfulness and estrangement from God grew daily" (15).
>
> "Everything went wrong with me; it felt like Sunday all the time" (12).
>
> "I felt that something terrible was going to happen" (14).
>
> "I fell on my face by a bench and tried to pray. Every time I would call on God something like a man's hand would strangle me by choking. I thought I would surely die if I could not get help. I made one final effort to call on God for mercy if I did strangle and die, and the last I remember at that time was falling back on the ground with that unseen hand on my throat. When I came to myself there was a crowd around praising God."

A crowd around praising God! For all substantial purposes one might as well be describing a state of affairs in Central Africa instead of depicting events in a country claiming to be civilised. It is no wonder that so eminent an authority as Sir T. S. Clouston says revival services and unusual religious meetings should "on no account be attended by persons with weak heads, excitable dispositions, and neurotic constitutions."‡ Unfortunately, it is precisely these classes that are most attracted to them, and which furnish the revivalist with his largest crop of cases.

"Every revival," says Dr. Mercier, "is attended by its crop of cases of insanity, which are the more numerous as the 'revival' is more fervent and more prolonged."§ To actual insanity we may add all kinds of hysterical and nervous disorders; and it is not at all difficult to see a sound physiological reason for this. Let us bear in mind that the central significance of adolescence—the period during which nearly all cases of conversion occur—is that it is a time of instability and readjustment, physical, emotional, intellectual. It is a time of unavoidable stress and strain, of the impact of new mental associations and groupings, of new feelings that crave expression and new desires that press for gratification. It is because of this peculiarly unstable and impressionable condition that the organism needs to be shielded from undue stress, and also because of the neglect or the impossibility of doing this, that so large a crop of nervous disorders first show themselves during adolescence. Dr. Clouston says that about one-half the inhabitants of Scotch asylums are under twenty years of age, and gives a whole crop of diseases as first manifesting themselves during adolescence.†

Dr. W. R. Gowers, dealing with 1,450 cases of epilepsy, says that "Three quarters of the cases of epilepsy begin under twenty years, and nearly half (46 per cent.) between ten and twenty, the maximum being at fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen."‡ Of hysteria also the same writer says that of the total cases of hysteria, 50 per cent. occur from ten to twenty years of age, 20 per cent. from twenty to thirty years of age, and only 10 per cent. from thirty to forty.§ And, in view of the cases of converts cited above, it is well to note Dr. Gowers's warning that "Mental emotion—fright, excitement, anxiety—is the most potent cause of epilepsy," while "the profoundly disturbing effect of alarm on the nervous system, deranging as it does almost every function of the nervous system, enables us to understand its frequency as an excitant of epilepsy."

Yet is precisely at this stage of life when care ought to be exercised to protect the youth from all that is morbid or unduly exciting, and, above all, when the developing qualities of mind need to be carefully and wisely guided in order that the social qualities shall be exercised in the most useful manner, that young people are handed over to the ignorant ministrations of professional evangelists. It is small wonder that so large a proportion of the people grow up with such a rudimentary sense of social duty and obligation. The really golden years of their lives are wasted. What Professor Davenport says of the relation between certain brutal manifestations of social life and religious teaching in America, applies with equal truth to ourselves:—

> "It is well-known that lynching in the South is carried on largely by the ignorant and baser elements of the white population. It is also well-known that the chief method of religious influence and training of the black man and the ignorant white man is impulsive and emotional revivalism. It is a highly dangerous situation, and deserves the earnest consideration of the ecclesiastical statesmen of all denominations which work in the South. It will be impossible to protect that part of the nation, or any other, from the epidemic madness of the lynching mob if the seeds of it are sown in the sacred soil of religion.....Their preachers are great 'soul-savers,' but they lack the practical sense to build up their emotionalised converts into anything that approaches a higher life."‖

The truth indicated here is much wider than Professor Davenport imagines. It is true that so long as the revivalistic type of religion is encouraged we are unconsciously assisting certain very ugly manifestations in social life. But it is also true that so long as we allow the religious interpretation of life to prevail we can never make the most of the human material that lies at hand. For while the process of

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* The *Examiner*, September 6, 1906. Cited by Crutten, *Psychological Phenomena of Christianity*, p. 185.

† *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 421.

‡ *Clinical Lectures*, p. 39.

* *Sanity and Insanity*, p. 282.

† *The Neuroses of Development*.

‡ *Manual of Diseases of the Nervous System*; 1893; p. 732.

§ *Manual*, p. 785.

‖ *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*.

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what is called "religious awakening" encourages, in its more sensational aspects, displays of morbidity which we should do our best to restrain, in its quieter and better aspects it amounts to a sheer misdirection and misuse of human energies. The increase of self-consciousness, the desire to spend oneself in the service of others, the craving for sympathy and communion with one's fellows, has nothing whatever to do with religion, although all these qualities are utilised by it and are classified as religious. They are actually and fundamentally belonging to the social side of human nature. As our hands are developed for grasping, and the various organs of the body for their respective functions, so the mental and emotional qualities are developed in their due course for a rational, social life. Biologically, male and female, at adolescence, are entering into a deeper and more enduring relationship with the life of the race. There is no other meaning to the process.

Naturally enough, men and women, whether they be old or young, but particularly if they be young, express their feeling in accordance with the fashion of their environment. If this were rationally non-religious, the language would be that of a non-religious philosophy. As, however, religion plays a large part in determining the form of the environment, we have, in the majority of cases, quite a contrary result. Only here and there is one found capable of analysing his or her feelings, and very few possess the knowledge that would make such an analysis profitable. The consequence is, that each newcomer is handed over, bound hand and foot, to organisations that are either incapable or unwilling to train a plastic human nature in the right direction. We do not merely sacrifice our first-born; we immolate the whole of our progeny. The ignorant past plays into the hands of the designing present; the past conspires with the present to rob the future of the good that might come to it from the growth of a wiser and a better race.

Were society really enlightened and genuinely civilised, the truth of much that has been said would be recognised as soon as stated. It would, indeed, be unnecessary to labor what would then be a recognised truth. But we are not genuinely enlightened, and a host of agencies conspire to prevent us becoming so. Thus it is that, instead of an explanation of development in terms of biological and social evolution, we have an explanation in terms of ideas that are essentially pre-scientific. Because the individual, as James says, emerges out of the narrow world of childhood into the larger world of humanity, we are given an explanation in terms of a religious or supernatural influence. Because this development involves a certain surrender of one's egoism to the needs of others, supernaturalism again claims to be the operative force. And when this diminished, or, more properly, transfigured egoism leads to the desire for service, or even sacrifice, we have once more an explanation in terms of religious conviction. In reality there is not a heightening of life by supernaturalism, but its exploitation. This is the central truth of the situation. And in ignoring this truth we hand over the care of a growing generation to the worst possible teachers at the very time when a wiser control would be preparing it for intelligent participation in the serious and enduring work of social organisation.

C. Cohen.

Evolution and Creation.

The supernatural origin of the Universe has always been regarded as a religious truism. Until very recently no theologian ever dreamed of taking the story of Creation as related in the Book of Genesis as anything but literal history. It was so accepted by Gladstone in his memorable controversy with Huxley in the *Nineteenth Century*, and it is so understood by the bulk of Christians to-day. Since the advent of evolution, the more scholarly among present-day theologians argue that the Biblical story is either a poem or a parable, and that its value consists not in its historical accuracy, but in the religious ideas that underlie it. This was the interpretation put upon it by Henry Drummond when he intervened in the Gladstone-Huxley debate. Towards the end of his life Drummond became an out-and-out evolutionist, as so many others have done since; but not one of the theologians who have adopted evolution is prepared to abandon the theory of creation altogether. Most of them readily enough admit that all existing species of plants and animals are products of evolution, and not special creations; but they all with one voice contend that the stuff out of which all forms of existence have been evolved was brought into being by a Divine act of creation. The essential point in this contention is that existence has had a beginning, or that there was a time when God existed alone. Now, the question is, if the Universe began to be, how did it originate? To say that God made it explains nothing. When a man makes anything it is not understood that he brings anything into being that did not previously exist, but, rather, that he takes some already existing stuff and fashions it anew. To affirm that God made the Universe in that sense is merely to complicate the problem. One instantly wants to know whence the original stuff came which he moulded into the Universe. There are, however, in the United Kingdom alone some two millions and-a-half people whose Catechism teaches them to believe that "the work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing by the word of his power."

Thus, on the assumption that God made the Universe, we are confronted with three distinct interpretations of the act. He either fashioned or shaped it out of an existing stuff, wove it out of his own substance, as the silkworm spins the threads of its cocoon, or created it of nothing by so many words of his mouth. The word *create* in Genesis i. 1 is not at all decisive, inasmuch as, according to Canon Driver, its root meaning is *to cut*, so that probably the proper signification of the Hebrew *bara* is *to fashion by cutting, to shape*; but, then, we are told that "in the simple conjugation, it is used exclusively of God, to denote, viz., the production of something fundamentally new, by the exercise of a sovereign originative power, altogether transcending that possessed by man." Whatever be the exact meaning of the Hebrew word *bara* as found in Genesis i. 1, the general Hebrew belief was that the heavens and the earth had been made out of nothing. In 2 Maccabees vii. 28, we read: "I beseech thee, my child, to lift thine eyes unto the heaven and the earth, and to see all things that are therein, and thus to recognise that God made them not of things that were." In Hebrews xi. 3, also, we find words of the same import: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear." Taking all things into account, it seems impossible to escape the idea of *creatio ex nihilo*, though it may not be necessarily implied in the terms employed.

Now, the Theist bases his whole argument upon the assumption that the Universe is a manufactured article of enormous proportions, a thing made once for all at a given time named "the beginning." In other words, the Universe is treated as an effect the cause of which must be chance or purpose. "Remember," exclaims the Theist, "there is no third alternative." On the assumption under consideration, we admit the truth of that exclamation; but then we repudiate the assumption because of its absolute unverifiableness. There is not even the shadow of evidence that the Universe ever began to be. Our solar system has doubtless had a beginning, but astronomy tells us of solar systems which have run their course and become extinct, and of others which are now in the process of formation. Solar systems may come and go, like drops of water in a river, but Nature goes on for ever. There is, then, a third

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alternative, namely, that the Universe is infinite both in extent and in duration. This also, we admit, is only an assumption fairly based upon scientific experiments. Using it meantime merely as an assumption, we claim that its services are altogether invaluable. It rids us of the illogical bugbear of a *First Cause*. We frankly admit that assuming a First Cause we are bound to believe in a Final Cause, because the former can only be justified by the latter; but in Nature we can find no trace of either. A First Cause is a contradiction in terms, because the law of causation implies the impossibility as well as the absurdity of an uncaused Cause. "Oh," objects the theologian, "you believe in an uncaused Universe, which is certainly an infinitely greater absurdity than an uncaused Cause." We are exultantly told that a certain well-known apologist "hits the nail on the head when he says that to demand a cause for a First Cause is only to assert that the First is second—which is absurd." To show how well he has driven the nail home, the said apologist adds: "Everything must have a cause, but God is not included in the everything, but is the Source of everything." How does he know that God is not included in the "everything"? We have only his word for it, unsupported by a single argument. We demand a Cause for the so-called First Cause, because we know of no exception to the law of causation; and all that the Theist can bring forward in defence of his position is the bald assertion that the First Cause is uncaused simply because it is the Source of all things.

Not only is the idea of a First Cause illogical and absurd, but it is also disproved by the facts of Nature, so far as they are known. In the first place, matter is both uncreatable and indestructible. As to its forms, it is in a state of perpetual impermanence, coming and going without ceasing, "but," to adopt the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, a reluctant witness—"but it can hardly be thought of as either going out of existence, or as coming into existence, at any given period, though it may completely change its form and accidents" (*Life and Matter*, p. 101). When you burn a lump of coal you only apparently destroy it; but in reality you only change it into carbonic acid gas by combining it with the oxygen in the atmosphere. No new matter has ever made its appearance, and we are confident that such an event is never likely to occur in the future. In the second place, the same statement is true of energy. Energy may be potential or active, but its sum never varies. You may change its form from time to time, backwards and forwards, almost endlessly, but you cannot destroy it. You can change motion into heat, into light, into electricity, and back again, without intermission; but when all your experiments are over, energy is the same in amount as before. As Professor Moore, of Liverpool, says:—

> "Energy may pass from one form to another, and the quantity present in any given form may and does vary, for it is the passage from one form to another, which constitutes all natural phenomena; but there is no manufacture or destruction of energy, there is the same quantity of energy in the Universe as was in the beginning, and shall be for ever. These two great tenets are fundamental in the orthodox faith of the scientific world of to-day" (*Origin and Nature of Life*, p. 29).

If these two wonderful laws—the persistence of matter and the conservation of energy—hold good in Nature, the idea of creation is necessarily excluded. If matter and energy are neither creatable nor destructible, it follows that Nature is eternal. Solar systems are but so many changing forms of matter and energy.

But there is a precious last straw at which the Theist, in desperation, always catches. Powerless to disprove the two great laws just described, he flies for refuge to the oft discredited argument that whatever is present in the effect must, likewise, exist in the cause. Inasmuch as we are intelligent and self-conscious, it is contended, the power behind the whole of the evolutionary process must possess intelligence and self-consciousness; else how could we have been produced? This is an entire fallacy. Anyone who understands Nature at all is fully aware that every effect exhibits qualities which are not present in the cause. The wetness of water is a characteristic which neither hydrogen nor oxygen displays: it is a quality that only results from the combination of the two. Life is the outcome of a specific combination of materials every one of which is to be found in inorganic Nature. As soon as the chemists discover the exact nature of the combination they, too, will doubtless be able to produce living matter. Intelligence is the natural product of the gradual evolution of living substance. When living matter first appeared it showed no signs whatever of intelligence; but as it slowly advanced from the simple to the complex, from the rude to the refined condition, resulting in a centralised nervous system and a brain, it gradually became more and more intelligent, until self-consciousness and personality made their appearance.

We therefore conclude that evolution, scientifically apprehended, excludes the idea of a creator and a creation, and in particular the idea of a purposive direction or conscious guidance towards a designed end. Evolution may be compared to a tree whose fruit is intelligence. If you were to investigate the roots and the trunk of the tree you would see no promise whatever of this incomparable fruit: it is not present at all in either roots or trunk, but is the ultimate reward of the combined action of soil and air upon roots and trunk. One is continually meeting people who labor under the delusion that because there is intelligence at the top of the evolutionary process, intelligence must have been present at the very bottom, and all the way through. They seem incapable of realising that mind, consciousness, personality, call it what you will, is the flower, the fruit, appearing for the first time after the process had been at work for countless millions of years.

J. T. LLOYD.

Animal Metamorphosis.

As the most unsophisticated person is aware, the human infant is developed in the course of nine short months from a tiny protoplasmic speck. In a few weeks frog-spawn passes through various stages, which end with the evolution of the adult amphibian; and the metamorphic history of the countless insects commences with a minute egg. Yet these notorious facts, so obvious to all, have so far failed to impress their real meaning upon the mind of the ordinary average man.

One may still hear, as the writer quite recently heard, men of quite ordinary intelligence express their astonishment at the circumstance that not only the entire scientific world, but the vast majority of brain-workers in every department of civilised life, have calmly accepted a doctrine which manifestly implies that in the course of organic evolution living organisms have become so modified that they bear no outward resemblance to their remote ancestors.

Many, and probably most, animals live in surroundings widely dissimilar to those of their far-off progenitors. And their development from the eggs or spawn of their parents, up to the adult condition, is largely reminiscent of the evolutionary modifications which have marked their upward growth.

The metamorphic processes in toads and frogs are very extensive, and may be observed quite easily in any available pond. When the embryo emerges from the egg, it is composed of head and body only, but the tail makes its appearance in the course of a few days, and the tadpole stage is then attained. As the tail develops, the external gills begin to form, the mouth appears, and the intestine lengthens and becomes coiled. Numerous microscopic teeth arise in the mouth, and these are many times shed. As the tadpole is transformed into a toad or frog, the entire body is renewed. As the lungs develop, the

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external gills shrivel away. The permanent teeth develop; the intestine changes from its coiled form into a shortened and straightened organ. The feeding habits are also modified, and instead of subsisting on decaying vegetable and animal substances suspended in the water, the animal preys on snails and insects. The fore limbs now begin to protrude, the tail dwindles away, finally the hind limbs lengthen, and, with the absorption of the gills, the metamorphosis is complete. The frog now leaves the water and makes its way to the land, there to lead its terrestrial life. Most amphibians undergo somewhat similar transformations. In a small number of instances, however, the absence of water or other causes have necessitated direct development from the egg, and the consequent suppression of metamorphosis. Variations in temperature, or the scarcity of food, are sometimes responsible for the retardation of such evolutionary phenomena as those above set forth.

In all the vast range of insect life, the metamorphosis of the butterfly is most complete. The career of this interesting insect is distinguished by four distinct stages, the egg, larva, pupa, and imago or perfected adult. As soon as the egg is hatched, the emerging larva creeps over its food plant and voraciously devours the foliage. After a time, the gluttonous caterpillar changes into a fasting pupa or chrysalis, and remains almost motionless. Although no food is taken during this resting or pupa stage, very important structural changes are proceeding. With the completion of the pupa period of probation, the ugly creature is transformed into the peerless butterfly. The powerful jaws of the greedy caterpillar have disappeared, and the winged butterfly is provided with a suctorial proboscis, beautifully adapted for probing the corollas of blossoms. Although, as above hinted, these changes appear to occur suddenly, the internal transformations which lead up to them are constantly proceeding. From one to three days before entering the chrysalis stage, the larva appears impatient and restless, and ceases to feed :—

> "If a spinner it spins a cocoon, or if not it enters the earth to undergo its transformation into a chrysalis, or if a larval butterfly it attaches itself to some fixed object as a tree or fence. Profound changes now take place in the mouth parts as well as in the nervous, muscular, and other systems of internal organs." *

The various stages which make up the life of the privet hawk-moth afford a further example of insect metamorphosis. The moth lays her eggs on that common evergreen—the privet, and when the caterpillars hatch out they feed on the foliage. These are jointed worm-like larvæ, whose heads are provided with six simple eyes, a pair of minute three-jointed antennæ and biting jaws. The caterpillar moults three or four times, and before the final moult occurs it stops feeding and wanders aimlessly over its feeding plant. It has now reached its pupal period, and proceeds to search for a suitable spot for pupation. The privet hawk-moth caterpillar then descends to the earth and scoops out a dry burrow in the soil. There the final moult is carried out, the pupa or chrysalis emerges, and very shortly becomes stiff and brown. A careful examination of the chrysalis at this stage proves that it resembles a moth much more closely than the caterpillar from which it was derived. The chrysalis displays a head and body of moth-like form; it is provided with the appendages of a moth, and betrays the presence of short-folded wings. As soon as the moth is matured, its wings expand and its aerial life begins.

But immense as are the differences between the unsightly grub-like larva and the frequently beautiful winged moth, these are, nevertheless, not nearly so remarkable as those which separate the maggot of a blow-fly from the adult insect. The blow-fly drops its eggs on animal matter, and the insect displays a marked preference for meat which sends forth the odors of putrefaction. These eggs hatch out into small dingy-headed white maggots. These larvæ or "gentles" are provided with a pair of powerful jaws with which they gorge upon the meat in which they have been hatched. Their body integument is of a tough, leathery character, quite destitute of limbs. Twice or thrice these leathery, limbless maggots moult, growing larger meanwhile, and immediately after their concluding moult their body assumes an oval form, which continues to retain the larval skin, although the skin parts with its moisture and changes its color from white to brown. After the pupa has remained motionless for a day or two, the brown skin breaks, and the fully formed fly issues forth, and in a few moments is winging its way through the air. The adult insect is as utterly unlike the maggot which is hatched from the egg as any creature can conceivably be.

Nor is this all. In the words of Professor Chalmers Mitchell,—

> "With the exception of the nervous system and parts of some other organs, it seems as if the whole of the organs within the hardened skin of the larva were melted down and became rearranged to form the very different organs of the adult. Patient and extremely difficult dissections, however, have shown that there is an intelligible order in this transformation. Some time before the fly emerges it is surrounded by two delicate and transparent skins. The inner of these, if we can imagine it taken out whole, plumped up with air, and dried, would have the appearance of a fly with a head bearing antennæ, eyes, and mouth organs, etc., like those of a living fly, but rather simpler. This skin is the pale ghost of a former metamorphosis, of a true moult once passed through by the ancestors of the flies, but now on its way to being suppressed. The outer skin is the similar remains of a still earlier moult, and its structure, although fly-like, is less fly-like than the inner skin."

The foregoing phenomena may be regarded as salient illustrations of progressive evolution. In other instances, however, metamorphosis proceeds along paths of degenerative evolution. Professors Herdman, Haeckel, Ray Lankester, Kowalevsky, and other eminent naturalists have laboriously elaborated the developmental processes of the tunicates or ascidians. The well-known sea squirt is a member of this animal group, and the larvæ of these organisms are little tadpoles which swim actively in the sea. As the larvæ approach the adult sea squirt or ascidian form, their tails, and the main parts of the nervous system, with its organs of sight and hearing, disappear. The gullet, with its adjacent body parts, becomes much larger in proportion to the general size of the animal, until these mouth organs make up the greater part of the body, which now permanently settles down to a stationary mode of life. The wall of the ascidian's gullet is now modified into a sieve-like structure, provided with numerous orifices through which the sea water is strained, thus leaving behind the tiny particles which serve as the creature's food. Such are the changes which the energetic swimming larva, whose structure strongly resembles that of the lower vertebrates, undergoes as it sinks to the level of a stationary digesting sac which sucks in liquid at one opening and discharges it at another.

Before these metamorphic phenomena were discovered, no naturalist imagined that the adult degenerate ascidian had any close relationship to the back-boned animal class. This relationship, however, is rendered very obvious by the relatively advanced structure of the ascidian tadpole. The greater number of zoologists are now convinced that the active, free-swimming tadpole represents ancestral remembrances of the originally life-long condition of the organism. And they also regard the stationary and stagnant condition of the adult ascidian as an instance of utter degeneration. Embryological and anatomical considerations lead to the unavoidable conclusion that the sea squirts are lowly forms of the vertebrate animals, which, in their higher forms, completely dominate the world of life. The sea squirts have not participated in the progress which as a whole distinguishes the back-boned organisms.

* Professor A. S. Packard, *Metamorphosis.*

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Strenuous endeavor is to them unknown, but, despite their indolent habits, remembrances of their illustrious origin are made visible during their course of development.

Rising to a more exalted order of animal existence, we discover in the transformations which take place among flat fishes, such as the sole and the turbot, phenomena of a very remarkable nature. These fish metamorphoses appear to be directly conditioned by the circumstances which shape the lives led by the larvæ and adults respectively. Flat fishes form an important family, which are to be found in all seas, while some have adapted themselves to fresh-water life. The young forms of such fishes as brill, halibut, plaice, soles, and others present striking contrasts to the adults. Their general outline is that of ordinary fishes, such as the salmon or roach. In other words, they are bilaterally symmetrical, with an eye on each side of the head, with the right and left sides of the body alike in shape, coloring, and arrangement of the fins. "Whether they live near the surface of the sea, or haunt the bottom, they swim in the same sort of position as we do when we are using the ordinary breast stroke, that is to say, the back is upwards, the under side is downwards." The upper side, again, as in symmetrical fishes, is far darker is color than the pale under side. Not only are the larvæ of newly hatched flat fish identical in form with ordinary free-swimming fish, but like them, they pursue their prey in the normal predaceous manner. When the larvæ have grown to about half-an-inch in length, remarkable modifications occur. The right and left sides of the fish lose their original color. With the sole, plaice, and halibut the right side, and with turbot and brill, the left side darkens in color, whilst the opposite side of the body loses its color and becomes almost completely white. The skull of the larval fish is gristly and plastic, and the eye on the uncolored side of the body now begins to move partly round and partly through the head, until it reaches the other eye on the dark surface of the body. The two eyes remain close together permanently. While the above changes are taking place, the shape of the body and the position of the organs are modified, and the originally normal-shaped fish is transformed into a distorted adult. Thus it is that "what we would call at first sight the upper side, not being the real back of the animal, but the right side in some cases, the left in others." When the transformation is complete, the fish's mode of life changes. It no longer swims eagerly in the water, but falls to the bottom and lies amid the sand or mud with its dark side uppermost. "In these cases," writes a leading biologist, "there can be almost no doubt but that the larva, which is like the great majority of fish, is the ancestral form, and that the change to the adult condition is a condensed and rapid repetition of the slow ancestral history." *

T. F. Palmer.

Dr. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, is a master in the art of Christian begging. The other Sunday his subject was "Hilarious Giving." Giving, he represented as a species of sowing, saying, "He that soweth abundantly shall reap abundantly." Christian giving is giving in order to get. "God gives to those who give," exclaimed this servant of Jesus. It is an old dodge. "Give," cried a colored clergyman to his people, standing invitingly behind a table in front of the pulpit, "and the Lord will repay you fivefold." Ruminating on that at the back of the little church, a young Kaffir, with one sovereign in his pocket, rose and marched ostentatiously down the aisle, and with a magnificent swing of the arm, thrust the gold piece on the table and returned. Every day that week he expected to receive £5, but the Lord delayed the repayment, with that noble interest promised in his name by the minister. The young fellow waited anxiously for weeks and months, but at last his patience ran out, and he went to the minister and said, in a temper, "Give me back my money; you lied when you said the Lord would pay me back fivefold; he hasn't given me a farthing."

* Professor P. C. Mitchell, F.R.S.

Acid Drops.

We are not at all surprised that the Home Secretary has seen it wise, in the exercise of such intelligence as he possesses, to prohibit the Suffragettes from holding meetings in Hyde Park and elsewhere. We are not concerned either to defend or attack the methods of the Militant Suffragettes, but we are vitally concerned with the right of public meeting, which has been attacked more than once during the lifetime of the present Government. When certain Freethought meetings were prohibited because Christians publicly declared that they would create a disturbance if they were held, the Home Secretary decided that the true policy was to threaten with imprisonment those who proposed to speak at such meetings. It was pointed out at the time that these tactics involved a serious breach of public freedom, but we are not surprised that further steps have been taken in the same direction. The real position at present is this: So long as a man is not a member of the Government—an exception was made in the case of Mr. Churchill's meeting in Belfast—any gang of ruffians who make up their minds to create a disturbance can prevent an opinion finding public expression. And this is really mob law with the full sanction of the Government. It is the mob that determines whether certain meetings shall be held or not, and the Home Secretary in a Liberal Government meekly announces that if it will only make its wishes known he will see they are enforced. For our part, so long as a speaker is expressing opinions that he or she has a right to express, adequate protection should be given, even though it involved the use of armed force. And if the opinions expressed are contrary to law, it is the place of the law to deal with them, not the mob. It is idle saying that the Government cannot maintain order if the meetings are permitted. A Government that cannot do this should resign or make room for more capable men. At all costs the right of public meeting should be upheld. It was the turn of the Freethinker yesterday; it is the turn of the Suffragette to-day. Who can say whose turn it will be to-morrow? King Mob has but to speak, and Mr. McKenna will see that his wishes are obeyed.

The editor of the *Catholic Review* contributes an article on "The Failure of Religion in England." "Religion," he says, "no longer counts as a factor in the life of the nation. It is true a diminishing section of the population worship at the ancient shrines; but an overwhelming majority simply pass them by, with that sort of benevolent indifference that is so much more hopeless than the bitterest hostility." "Even, perhaps, as an interesting archæological pursuit," the writer adds, "Christianity no longer exercises its influence on the generality of people, and such influence as remains to it is declining swiftly enough, even among that small section that still in some sort acknowledge its claims."

"Even the Celtic temperament of Wales," the Catholic editor points out, "is feeling the influence of the movement away from God." And the worst of it all is that "the religious leaders of the people" fail to "apprehend this great fact," they do not "grasp its meaning" or "propose any adequate remedy," which "only adds to the pitiful hopelessness of the situation." It is only the Roman Catholic Church that "maintains her position; she has progressed at Liverpool, for instance, while the Protestant Churches have all lost ground;" but she does not show "any great eagerness to fill the void" caused by the general failure of Christianity.

"The movement away from God" is, by the way, a very queer expression. If the existence of God is a fact, how on earth could anybody or anything move away from him? Would it not be just as sensible to talk of the planets of our system joining in a common movement from the sun? They all have a movement of their own, it is true, but they cannot resist the attraction of the great centre of the system they belong to. There is a centrifugal force, but the centripetal force is greater.

All sorts of by-reasons for the failure of Christianity are assigned by Protestant journalists. The Editor of the *Catholic Review* assigns but one. "The true cause," he says, "is to be found in this, that men no longer believe. They are not, with few exceptions," he adds, "hostile to religion; they have simply turned away from it as belonging to an age that has passed."

A demonstration of Catholics was held on April 15 at the St. George's Hall, Liverpool, on the education question. Cardinal Bourne, who was the principal speaker, said that

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the Government could deal with the education question in four divisions—one representing the Roman Catholics, another Nonconformists, a third the Church of England, and a fourth the Jews. Of course, it was beneath Cardinal Bourne's notice that a section of the British people, certainly larger than the Jews, were on principle opposed to the State teaching any religion in State schools. But either it does not suit the Cardinal's game—which in this instance is that of Christians in general—to admit that this class exists, or he was indulging in the common assumption that it was only the convictions of religious people that need be bothered about. This, we repeat, is the usual policy of Christians, and it indicates how much genuine concern they have either for education or for social justice. Education is treated as though it were no more than a mere scramble for church or chapel influence. So long as these are satisfied, everything is assumed to be all right. Nor ought one to blame either church or chapel overmuch for so acting. The real blame rests with the general public which allows the educational future of the children to be either sacrificed or made the subject of dishonorable "deals" between religious organisations and a Government that sees what is right, but lacks the courage to do its duty.

We quite agree with Cardinal Bourne that it is an outrage on Catholic common sense to ask them to be content with a religion in the schools that is "rank Protestantism." Protestants only agree to the religious instruction because, if it is not *all* they require, it gives them nothing they object to. On the other hand, the very form of the religious instruction is contrary to what the Catholics desire, and we believe they would prefer religious instruction being left out altogether. The truth is that neither religious party can get what they really want, because what they want can only be obtained at the cost of other parties in the State. Archbishop Whiteside said at the same meeting that Catholics were the real enthusiasts for education because of the trouble they took to educate their children. We beg to submit that the Catholic Church is enthusiastic for nothing of the kind. Its enthusiasm is best seen in a country like Spain, where education is in a more backward state than anywhere else in Europe. In England everyone is forced to send children to school, and the Catholic Church has to choose either between directing that education itself or handing the children over to schools in which no Catholic teaching exists. And the leaders of the Church know quite well what that means ultimately. Such sacrifices in money as the Church makes is, therefore, not for education at all. It is money spent in the interests of the Catholic religion. It must either educate the children, and pay something towards it, or it must refrain from paying, save by way of ordinary rates, and face the practical certainty of losing a large proportion of the rising generation. This is the essential fact of the situation. All else is mere cant.

Gravesend Sabbatarians have received a well-deserved defeat in their attempts to close the picture palaces on Sundays. The local clergy had been working hard to induce the Council to refuse a seven day's license, with the result that some pretty hard raps were given them by some of the councillors opposed to their efforts. One councillor said plainly that the licensed victuallers were the ones who had cause for complaint, and another councillor said that publicans had complained to him that they didn't do as much trade when the picture shows were open. The Chief Constable had also informed the Watch Committee that it would be in the interests of good order if the Sunday performances were continued. Councillor Cunningham said that he had visited the cinema himself on Sunday and found that "four-fifths of the people present were young men, many of whom might otherwise have been rollicking about the streets." Several councillors referred to the Sunday concerts at the Wesleyan Church at which collections were taken up; and one speaker said that, in his opinion, the only difference between the Church and the cinema was that one took a collection going in and the other on going out. The Mayor, in closing the debate, said rightly that the question of Sunday entertainments was secondary to that of the character of the entertainments themselves, and he showed his opinion of them by voting for their continuance. In the end, the vote in favor of Sunday opening was carried by fourteen votes to four—a handsome majority, on which we congratulate the Gravesend Council, also on the general level of the speeches delivered.

What a fuss is made over a Christian service being held at Pekin, at the request of the Chinese Government, to offer prayers for the success of China at the present critical juncture. The dear *Daily News* topped the report with the bold headline—"Christianising of China." But what, after all, does the Government's request amount to? Let us look at the text of this document:—

> "Prayer is requested for the National Assembly now in Session, for the newly-established Government, for the President yet to be elected, for the constitution of the Republic, that the Government may be recognised by the Powers, that peace may reign within our country, that strong, virtuous men may be elected to office, that the Government may be established upon a strong foundation.
>
> "Upon receipt of this telegram, you are requested to notify all Christian Churches in your province that April the 27th has been set aside as a day of prayer for the nation. Let us all take part."

This was sent to Catholic and Protestant bodies alike. It is simply another evidence of that spirit of toleration for which China has always been distinguished. "Let all take part"—that is the key-note of the appeal. If there is any good in prayer, let us have the benefit of it all round.

The very language of this document, apart altogether from its distribution, shows that it is not specially addressed to Christians. The Celestials know quite enough about Christian history, and Christian practice, to be aware that Christian prayers are not specially likely to secure the election of "strong, virtuous men" to office. Would anybody in his right senses imagine that this description could apply to our own House of Commons?

In the leaderette it devotes to the matter, the dear *Daily News* suggests that the Christian nations should show China a better example of Christian virtue. Good! But why doesn't our contemporary make a beginning in that line itself? It has so little regard for common veracity that it represents the Chinese Government's appeal as addressed exclusively to the Christians. What was it that Herder said? Christian veracity deserves to rank with Punic faith

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The Christian policy is plain. If the Republic weathers this religious storm without any serious accidents, it will be looked upon as a direct answer to prayer; but if it gets on the rocks and is seriously damaged, if not utterly smashed, it will be regarded as a sign either that the prayers were faulty, or that China's day of grace has not yet arrived. In either case, a desperate attempt will be made to convince the Chinese that their only hope of individual and national salvation lies in their wholeheartedly embracing the Christian religion, which, in reality, is the vainest of all hopes.

Sir Robertson Nicoll is in tears because "a savage lust for talk" has taken possession of the Nonconformist Churches. The charge is quite true, but weeping over it will do no good. The truth is, that talking is the only thing left for the Churches to do. All other privileges they have lost; but the privilege of talking at large, being a comparatively harmless exercise, is still theirs. Hence the great multitude of conferences here, there, and everywhere, with infinite floods of nonsensical talk. Nearly all the talkers are professionals; talking is their trade. Sir William thinks they ought to stay at home and work, instead of wasting their time at conferences; but they are wasting their time anyhow. The Churches are dying, in spite of all attempts to revivify them; and so what can the poor parsons do but talk?

The *British Weekly* has been inviting a correspondence on the subject of "What are the Main Elements in Your Unhappiness?" The editor observes that "Religious reasons for unhappiness are the most numerous." We are not at all surprised, and the editor's discovery has an interesting bearing on the claim of the amount of happiness religion confers on people. The truth is that the more sensitive and the better the nature, the less likely is religion to confer a peaceful and lasting serenity of mind. Coarse and brutal natures are far more likely to find happiness in this direction. And it is a striking fact that the really better types of religionists have very often, if not usually, found their reasons for exaltation followed by periods of acute depression, and have dwelt as fervently upon their torments and doubts and unhappiness as upon their religious joys. And the curious thing is that the unhappiness caused by religion is purely artificial. It is a product of the belief that is supposed to confer happiness. When people write that their unhappiness is caused by doubts and fears of Christ's existence, by doubts as to the existence or providence of God, we are not dealing with sources of unhappiness which arise from the unavoidable conditions of existence, and are so far inescapable; we are dealing with beliefs that are a product of misguided education, and which for a really healthy mind would have no existence. It is religion that provides the element of unhappiness in such cases, and the

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better the man the more he is exposed to its incidence. That is why we find the coarse-featured, coarse-natured evangelist shrieking about his happiness in Christ, and the finer and more refined character sorrowfully confessing to the doubts and pains brought about by his religious convictions.

The Rev. R. Marks has a wonderfully ingenious mind. The other evening he delivered a lecture at the All Saints' School, Burton-on-Trent, the subject being "The Great Pyramid of Egypt." According to the *Burton Daily Mail* for April 11, the rev. gentleman described this pyramid as "a wonderful astronomical monument," and also as "a witness to the Bible truth." All modern Egyptologists are convinced that all the pyramids, without a single exception, are tombs of royal and august personages. Only a man of consummate inventive genius could find in them any witness, direct or indirect, to the truth of the Bible. But Mr. Marks' genius is inexhaustible. To him the Great Pyramid is not only "a wonderful astronomical monument," not only "a witness to the Bible truth," but also a storehouse of lessons to "our nation." We congratulate the reverend gentleman upon his apologetic ingenuity and prophetic skill, and we envy the Burtonians their great intellectual treat.

If we are to judge from an article in the *Christian World* by Mr. H. M. Wallis, who writes from Sofia, the world has seriously misjudged the Allied forces in the Balkans. Their course has generally been marked by forbearance, and appeals to the good sense of the conquered Moslem peasantry. Thus, in one village, after peace had been made with the villagers, "the victors insisted on baptising their vanquished neighbors and removing the women's veils. That was the extent of the reprisals, save that a few old grudges were worked off, and a man or two killed." In another village only three were killed, and the Bulgarians "passed on without burning, plundering, or ravishing." More than this, they were touchingly anxious for the spiritual salvation of the conquered. "Let us try persuasion," they said. So a committee made an appeal to the Moslems. "The hearers knew the appeal was honest, well-meant, and kindly." The two or three who protested "were told to go home if they did not want a thrashing." Then the whole village came to "running water," and was baptised. The women—Christian women—then went into the houses and the "womenkind were talked over." At another village, where those who "dreaded the coming of the schoolmaster, and enlightenment, and Christian ways," protested, "they were warned, and then beaten." After that, more conversions. But, on the whole, quite a beneficent proceeding. The *Christian World* says that Mr. Wallis is "anxious to speak up for his friends." He appears to have done so.

Meanwhile we note that other pictures of the amiable Allies continue to appear. Thus, in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, Mr. E. N. Bennett writes:—

> "The lives and properties of Moslems would appear to be outside the ethics of some of our Liberals nowadays. The infamous massacres perpetrated in Macedonia and Albania by the Christian Allies, the unprecedented claim of the conquerors to take possession of the private property of the conquered, the refusal of the Montenegrins to convey to Essad Pasha the orders of the Porte for the departure of the non-combatant population of Scutari—scarcely a voice is raised in England in condemnation of these things."

If Mr. Bennett will read Mr. Wallis's article he will see how grievously he has misjudged the Christian Allies. Why, whole villages rushed to be baptised! And does not that prove the kindly nature of the methods used? True, one or two were killed, and a few beaten, but such things will happen over a disturbed area.

Mr. A. E. Fletcher, once the Christian Socialist editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, and now the writer of "Notes on New Books" in *Reynolds'*, labors under the notion—which is odder than odd in this case—that Secularism and Freethought are low "materialistic" things except when they spell themselves "Rationalist." He also labors under the notion that he understands Shelley, whom he regards as a Christian Socialist too—or, to be still more precise, a Fletcherite. Last week he had occasion to quote four lines from Shelley, though it is not quite clear that he knew the lines *were* Shelley's. This is how he managed the quotation:—

> "We look before and after,
> We pine for what is not;
> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught."

It was shockingly bad taste to omit the lovely last line of the stanza:—"Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." But the false rendering of the second line was sheer carelessness or vulgar impudence. There are twenty good reasons against beginning the line with "We," but the strongest reason of all is that Shelley wrote "And." The difference between the two words in this position is immense; all the difference, in fact, apart from elegance of composition, between the music of the skylark, singing out of sight in the blue heaven, and the creak of a cartwheel in a country lane below. Mr. Fletcher tempts us to quote another great poet. It was Coleridge who, after noting a certain emendation proposed in Shakespeare's text by one of his commentators, exclaimed "What a noble pair of ears the worthy Theobald must have had!"

Lord Alfred Douglas told the court in the recent libel case that in the days when he wrote certain articles, etc., used against him he "really had no religion at all," but for "two years past he had been a Catholic." What was he, we should like to know, when he took to crusading in the *Academy* against the *Freethinker*, and bombastically calling upon Messrs. Smith & Son to cease selling it? His attitude and his language were pious enough, anyhow. Then as now, also, he had too little common sense and too much self-esteem.

In the Lord Mayor's Court the other day (see *Daily Mirror*, April 18) the judge refused to hear the evidence of a boy because he was not taught about God. More knowledge, and perhaps more sense, might have satisfied the judge that the boy would make an exceptionally good witness. It was a wiser judge than this one who, when a K.C. was browbeating a youthful witness who was badly posted up in the matter of theology, and inquiring whether he knew where boys who tell falsehoods go to when they die, stopped the nonsense by saying from the bench, "I'm sure *I* don't know: do *you*?"

The Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan cannot name the hour or place of his new birth, but he knows whom he has believed. Many people think they know when they don't. Furthermore, it is sheer nonsense to talk about *knowing* an object of *belief*. No doubt Dr. Morgan sincerely believes in Jesus Christ, and he has trained, disciplined, and prayed himself into the *feeling* that he knows him; but all genuine knowledge is intellectual, not emotional. Religious experience never yields knowledge, because it is experience not of actual realities, but of those objects which are realities only to faith. Why is Christ's saving power dependent upon faith? Simply because apart from faith it is non-existent, like Christ himself. Let Christ prove his existence and his power by snatching an unbelieving brand from the burning, and the whole world will be at his feet in no time; but he has never done it, and never will do it.

The Rev. A. C. Hill, of North London, is profoundly eager to preserve the Christian Sabbath. It is not as a day of rest and recreation, however, that he is so anxious to have it perpetuated, but as a day set apart for public worship. Being a conductor of public worship, he naturally thinks highly of its merits. It is a custom that induces people to be serious, conduces to reflection upon life, and teaches us "to be quiet while someone else is speaking." To our thinking, those are spurious merits, existing only in Mr. Hill's imagination. Then he assures us that "the men who are engaged in promoting it [public worship] are not afraid of their competitors." "The picture palace and the museum, the art gallery and the park, do not frighten us," he tells us. But, if they only want "a fair field and no favor," why do they use all their resources to have the picture palaces closed on Sundays? Why did they so strenuously oppose the opening of public libraries and art galleries on their parade-day? And why do they exhaust their eloquence in bitter denunciation of the least suggestion of Sunday theatres and music-halls? It is because they *are* afraid of competition, being well aware that in competition they would certainly go to the wall.

The *Church Times* announces "with regret" the death of the Bishop of Richmond. Unless the *Church Times* has room for doubt as to the ultimate destination of the late Bishop, we fail to see the reason for "regret" at his departure. From a Christian point of view the Bishop's friends ought to express pleasure at his translation.

A centenarian named Perkins, who has been married seventy years, has been the recipient of a congratulatory message from the King, in which he is informed that the event is "almost a unique record." His Majesty's daily Bible reading, of which we hear so much in the press, evidently has not yet extended to the lives of the patriarchs.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £115 0s. 5d. Received since:—Elizabeth Adams, £2 2s.; W. Wells (per H. Saill), 5s.; H. E. Voigt, 5s.; T. A. Matthews, £1.

MRS. MORRISON.—We are sorry in one way to hear of your husband's death, for though it was probably a great release to him, the survivors cannot but feel the blow of bereavement when it falls. We are glad to know that our small act of consideration in sending him the *Freethinker* weekly when he could no longer afford to pay for it brightened so many of his weary hours. We are also glad to know that the note we published brought him help from other quarters. And we add your address now, in case anyone should feel moved to "remember the widow and the fatherless in their affliction":—Bonnie Burn Cottage, Bonnyhill, Bonnie Bridge, N.B.

T. WIGG (New Zealand).—Thanks for your interesting and encouraging letter. It is pleasant to learn that your own efforts have increased the number of our readers in your locality from three to twenty-four. We are glad to hear also of the "powerful propaganda" carried on there during the last eighteen months by Mr. H. Scott Bennett, some time M.P. for Ballarat in the Victorian legislature. We note that one of your vivid recollections of the old country, which you left more than thirty years ago, is hearing us lecture in London. Also that the late article on "Charles Southwell" was much appreciated by yourself and your fellow readers.

ELIZABETH ADAMS.—Thanks for your "very best wishes." To some extent we think they may be realised.

W. J. WILDES.—Haven't you seen in the *Freethinker* that Mr. Foote has been very ill? The "Globe" Shakespeare would meet your case, but the type is very small. There is an edition in three one shilling volumes in the "Everyman's Library." If you want Shelley's prose as well as his verse you could get it at a feasible price only in Shepherd's edition in five volumes.

"SPICER."—We are obliged for your trouble in sending us the article, but we are afraid that we cannot bother about the Rev. Waldron on such a subject as "Personality." When such men gain prominent positions they are useful chiefly as illustrations of the dearth of mental ability in the Churches.

H. E. VOIGT.—We quite understand that it was not possible, even if it would have been wise, to confine the Sunday Athletic Club to Freethinkers. With regard to the difficulty of obtaining the *Freethinker* while travelling, we would gladly print from time to time a list of newsagents who supply it, but compiling such a list is a very great difficulty. We do not come in contact, in the way of business, with many local newsagents. Our business is mainly done with the wholesale agents who supply "the trade." And we have met with a very unsatisfactory response when we have asked our readers to send us the names and addresses of their own newsagents. We may make another attempt presently.

T. HUGH PERKINS writes: "I hope Mr. Foote is well again. Never was there more need for such outspoken sincerity as he always exemplifies. I should like to see the circulation of the *Freethinker* extended to equal that of the London daily papers, but I suppose that will never be until enough money for lecturing and educational work is forthcoming."

E. B.—Much obliged, but is it worth while returning to the poor creature? Many thanks for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

ELIZABETH LECHMERE.—You will see that your wish is gratified.

OWING to pressure of space, answers to several correspondents are held over until next week.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Provincial and other N. S. S. Branches should by this time have their Conference arrangements well in hand. Delegates to the Conference should forward their credentials to Miss Vance without delay, so that their cards may be properly authenticated. Visitors requiring assistance in procuring accommodation while in London should write Miss Vance, who will do her best to meet their requirements. The class of accommodation and the length of time for which it is required must be stated. The Secretary and members of the Executive will be present at the Bay Malton Hotel, 160 Great Portland-street, W. (within three minutes' walk of Queen's Hall), on the Saturday evening before the Conference (May 10), at 8 o'clock, to receive visitors and delegates.

Mr. Forbes Phillips, the vicar of Gorleston, near Great Yarmouth, is known as an unconventional clergyman, and he was never more so than in writing the following postcript to a letter to our publishing office:—

> "I hope Mr. Foote is steadily improving in health. I do not agree with all his opinions, but I do admire his honesty of purpose, and his grit. Perhaps you will convey to him my sympathy and my hope that the enforced rest may mean more life. After all men like machines must have a rest sometime."

We feel that we are breaking no confidence in printing these sentences, for this is not the first time that Mr. Phillips has openly expressed himself to the same effect.

Mr. Foote has paid his first visit to the office to-day (Tuesday). But he is not quite able to resume the editorial chair yet, and he continues his thanks to Mr. Cohen for continuing to occupy it.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures twice to-day (April 27), afternoon and evening, at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool. We hope the local "saints" will rally round him in strong force.

Members of the Glasgow N. S. S. Branch are requested to note that their Annual Business Meeting takes place at 12 noon to-day (April 27). A full attendance is most desirable. The Branch has held no meetings for some time owing to the hall it used on Sundays being burnt out with the premises in which it was situated. Even the members' list was destroyed in the fire. Members will therefore see the importance of this notice. To-day's meeting takes place at the Ramshorn Rooms, 122 Ingram-street.

Mr. E. Morris Young is lecturing to-day (April 27) at the Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane, Failsworth. He has come over to the Freethought platform from the Anglican pulpit.

The course of lectures held at the Stratford Town Hall was brought to a successful conclusion on Sunday evening last with a lecture from Miss Kough. A few questions were asked, but there was no regular opposition. The audiences have been good throughout the course, and the local Branch naturally regrets that a longer course of lectures was not possible.

A South African reader of the *Freethinker*, who has been spending most of his time for several months in travelling and voyaging, hastens on his return home to renew his acquaintance with this journal and set himself right with it financially. "I have admired your journal very greatly indeed," he writes, "ever since I first got it, but I never really appreciated *how* much till I found out how keenly I missed it during my life on the ocean wave."

Our readers may remember an excellent notice of Mr. Foote's "Meredith" article in the *English Review* for March, which we reproduced from the columns of the *Daily Herald*. Soon afterwards we received a review copy from the *Herald* office of a collection of cartoons by Will Dyson (price sixpence), but we fell ill just then and we have only just been able to give the matter attention—in the hope that it is better late than never. The cartoons are powerful, and novel to English taste, being the work of a young Australian from the "black-and-white" school of the *Sydney Bulletin*. They deal with all sorts of social and political topics, with which we have no special concern in the *Freethinker*. But there is one cartoon, at least, to which we may call special attention. It is entitled "Cross and Crescent—Turkey, 1912." A typical Turk is nailed up on a Cross, bleeding at the hands and feet, and with collapsing body and drooping head, weighed down by intolerable misery. Birds of prey are waiting to devour his flesh, and underneath we catch the gleam of bayonets and the flattering flag of Christ. "And the meek shall inherit the earth," is the apt quotation clinching the meaning and moral of the picture. That one cartoon is worth the price of the whole collection.

In recognition of the many years' faithful service to the Freethought cause in Birmingham, the friends and admirers of Mr. J. Partridge are presenting him with a testimonial on Sunday evening (April 27) at a meeting to be held in the King's Hall, Corporation-street, at 7 o'clock. There will be speeches delivered in the course of the proceedings, with other arrangements that will make the evening a pleasant one.

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The Clamor Against Portugal.

THE *Times* and the *Daily Mail*,* together with a number of other journals in this country, have just given a large mead of publicity to a sensational "Appeal to British Public Opinion" by the Duchess of Bedford. The appeal, on the face of it, is evidently a grossly exaggerated statement of affairs —I cannot say facts. For instance, we are told that in Portugal "spies are in every household"—a self-evident over-statement, at least, and a highly improbable, and practically impossible, condition of affairs, even if the friends of the Portuguese monarchy and of the Portuguese Church could take the country back to the times of King Carlos, or the good old days when the Inquisition ruled Portugal with an even firmer hand than that which it spread out to destroy Spain.

Two statements in this appeal are open to grave suspicion. First, take what is said in reference to the political prisoners in Portugal (these belong to two categories; actual rebels taken arms in hand when fighting and plotting against the established Republican regime; and, secondly, the priests guilty of infractions of the law with reference to the conditions of neutrality imposed in the conduct of hierophantic exercises). We are told that "convictions are determined beforehand; false witnesses can be had for the asking; an acquittal might be followed by murder." As to this, it is hard to believe that the lamented Pigott, so dear to the heart of the *Times* which is now ventilating this highly colored appeal, has sprung up afresh in Portuguese soil, and multiplied his progeny in the interests of a Republican form of government. The other statement is one the credibility of which will certainly not be accepted without scrutiny, and certainly not on the strength of a bare assertion, from whomsoever it may emanate. "It is well known"—we are told—"that judges repair from the provinces to Lisbon to receive their orders before passing sentences." Who knows this? Does Dame Rumor say so? If the facts can speak, then why are they kept in the background? All this smacks too evidently of partisanship. Fancy some Portuguese Suffragette writing in *O Mundo* that English judges repaired to London before passing sentence on the "Votes for Women" prisoners! One exaggeration is not more feasible or credible than the other.

Then there is the declaration that "since the fall of the monarchy the clergy belong to a doomed class." Well, the Church has been disestablished and disendowed, but the present holders of sacerdotal offices and endowments have been permitted, on conditions that presuppose their acceptance of the existing form of Government, to retain a life interest in their respective jobs. Unless the faithful come to their assistance later on and maintain the Altar and its ministers by free will offerings, certainly the "class" will be doomed, like any other class of public caterers and entertainers, sacred or profane.

When we read that "the chapel exists no more, and the name of God is forbidden," one can only remark that the first member of the sentence is flagrantly impossible, for the chapels exist galore, and as to the second member, the declaration has no meaning, and certainly has no real foundation. There is nothing to prevent a Portuguese from praising God to-day, all day long, in his own time and in his own place.

As regards the complaints made of the rigors of prison treatment accorded to the political prisoners, I am, quite frankly, not inclined to believe that prison accommodation in Portugal, after two years of a Republic, is as spacious and humane as an ideal penal administration would demand, nor am I concerned to defend any proved injustice or harshness of treatment, even against the conspirators of reaction and superstition who form the majority of those on whose behalf the appeal is made. When the inflamed language of the aristocratic article tells us that "the Republic has definitely undertaken the extinction of the Christian faith, and the children in the national schools are decorated with a little badge bearing the words 'No God, no religion,'" all this (apart from the legendary little badge) only means that education has been made secular; that the priest has been left outside the school precincts; that religion has been relegated to its proper sphere as a voluntary "extra" to be provided not by the State but by the parent, or by those directly paid and appointed by him out of his own pocket for that purpose.

The *Daily Mail*, of course, puts its approving *imprimatur* upon the appeal. It tells us that the Portuguese Republicans "are maintaining their rule by a system of more than mediæval inquisition." This, of course, is blatant editorial bunkum. If the editor had read a score or more verbatim accounts of mediæval inquisitorial trials he would probably moderate the violence of his senseless exaggeration. The *Daily Mail* demands, with threats of armed intervention and all kinds of pains and penalties, the release of the political prisoners—a demand that would smack less of the bully if addressed to Russia, where political prisoners are many and unfriended. "There must," says the *Daily Mail* "be an immediate amnesty for political prisoners"—a quite excellent doctrine which the *Daily Mail* might also address to our own Government as affecting "politicals," whether in England, Egypt, or India; it might also be addressed to Spain, Italy, Austria, Russia, and Germany; but perhaps it is safer, less heroic, and more easily befitting the imperial swagger of the Imperialist soul if addressed, as in the present case, exclusively to Portugal.

I am writing to Portugal for full particulars and explanations of facts concerning these ducal documents, and have entreated the friends of the present regime to make a full disclosure and an ample reparation if any proved wrong has been inflicted. Already, since these lines were written, *O Mundo* (Lisbon, April 11) has commenced a series of articles refuting the *Daily Mail* asseverations. I hope, later on, to return to this subject armed with more reliable data than the uncorroborated *ipse dixits* of the Duchess of Bedford.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

* See *Daily Mail* of April 7 and other journals *passim*.

The Eternal Priestess.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 253.*)

THE Christian world does not have, and never can have, so long as it founds its dogmas upon the Bible, the idea and conception of the absolute equality between the sexes. Such was the teaching of the Bible. The early Christian Fathers elaborated and emphasised those teachings; they carried them to their logical conclusions. They said, "Woman is the mother of sin and the door of hell." "They said, "She was subordinate and unclean by nature;" that she was a necessary evil; that marriage was an evil, but permitted as necessary for the perpetuation of the race; that it could only be solemnised by the Church, because the Church, by its act of officiating, lessened the inherent evil of marriage. Because Paul had said she was to keep silent in the Church, woman was not permitted to join in the singing. One of the offences charged against the Huguenots was that they permitted their women to sing at their religious services. On St. Bartholomew's Day thirty thousand men, women, and children were put to death—for what? For the enormous crime of women singing in churches.

The early Fathers did not allow a woman to take with ungloved hands the communion bread. Her touch would pollute the body of Christ. Some of the Church Fathers contended that woman had neither reason nor a soul. They held that she was

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an intermediate being, on a plane between brute and man.

From these teachings, there could come, there has come, but one deplorable result, the utter subjugation of woman through the Christian centuries. Neither her reason, nor her conscience, nor her will were her own. If she was married, her reason, her conscience, her person, her property, her children, all were her husband's. They went so far as to say that the children to whom a mother had given birth were not related to the mother—they were related solely to the father. Under those teachings the husband had the right of life and death over his wife. If he tired of her, he could put her out of the way, or hire an assassin to do it. Husbands sold their daughters, sometimes brothers sold their sisters; woman was a chattel, a wife was an "unhallowed thing." Her subjection by the civil and the ecclesiastical law became complete. It has not been fifty years; it has not been twenty-five years—the day has not arrived yet in some parts of this land, where woman stands on an even and equal plane of civil and political rights.

The old idea of inferiority and subordination of woman is in the blood of the Christian world. With such ideas regarding woman, it was but an easy and a logical step to the development of the celibate priesthood. The Roman Church worked long and arduously to establish that. It was not accepted universally by the Church until the fourteenth century. Until that time Roman Catholic priests, as a rule, were married men. When that doctrine was finally enforced, every priest was compelled to turn his wife and children as beggars out in the streets, while all of his and her possessions reverted to the Church. Women of wealth and possessions were impelled by the Church to renounce the world and enter the convents, in order that their property might revert to the Church. With the celibacy of the priesthood came immeasurable immorality. The celibate was a reprobate. In the centuries that followed, Europe reached a degree of depravity, an enormity of crime, a hideousness of disease, paralleled nowhere in the annals of any people since the writing of history began. The testimony of historians in these matters is uniform and explicit. So great was the moral corruption of the priests that the Church permitted them, after paying a tax to the Church, to keep concubines. They found ample authority and lofty precedent for this in the blessed Bible. So infamous were the practices of those centuries that the mothers and sisters of priests were not permitted to live in the same house with them. No ties of relationship were so sacred, no bond of kinship so close as to protect a woman. There was no respect by anyone, clerical or political, high or low, for woman as woman.

When the serf of the feudal lord took to himself a wife, the feudal lord under an old law claimed the bride for his own.

We are reaping the harvest. Ideas persist in their effects after they themselves have been abandoned.

Christian dogmas have dishonored and degraded the mothers of the race. I hope not to appear indifferent or callous to crime. I hope not to be counted unmindful of the shame and the disgrace of it all, but I hope to be clearly understood when I say that nothing we can do in the red-light district, nothing that we can do among the ranks of the proscribed, will have any other effect than to "skin and film the ulcerous places, while rank corruption mining all within infects unseen." We must strike deeper than at the symptoms or the superficial conditions. We must have more to do with the causes and less with the consequences. Woman must be restored to her original status. Man must be emancipated from the superstition that he himself is first or superior in the order of nature or in the sight of God. We are not giving woman anything. We have nothing to give. We are not making her the beneficiary of our masculine generosity. We are simply endeavoring to restore to her the rights, liberties, and justice that have been taken from her, and through the deprivation of which she has been crushed and disgraced. The restoration to woman of the heritage of which she has been robbed involves first her economic freedom and equality. If she does the same work that a man does, and does it as well, then she is to receive the same wages. And if she works at all for any wages, she must be assured of a decent living wage. Temptations will throng her path; without and within there will be dangers to encounter and foes to face. Let not those temptations be made tragic by privation and poverty. She must be absolutely free and equal with man in all civil and political rights, privileges, and responsibilities. It is not a question of expediency or sentiment. It is a question of simple justice—let us say, of two-fold justice, of justice to the woman, of justice to the man. No part of the race can subject another part without injuring itself. Master and slave descend together—woman must be freed from religion. She must be emancipated from the Church. She must be rescued from the priest. I am not saying that woman must be irreligious, or non-religious. I am saying that if she is religious at all, it must be by virtue of her own reason, her own convictions, and for her reason and her conscience and her faith she must depend on no authority save that of her own reason.

It is a matter of amazement that woman is not worse than she is. Consider what the Church has been to her. Think of the auricular confession. If woman will have religion, let her think it out. Let her not ask, as Paul said, "her husband." Let her not ask, as the Church says, "the priest." She must get and keep her own intellectual self-respect. If there are to be priestly confessors, then let there be women confessors for women. There never was a more formidable conspiracy against womanhood than that involved in a celibate priesthood and auricular confession.

When woman asserts her right to herself, to her own reason and conscience, and accepts the responsibility; when woman is capable of looking any priest in the world in the face and telling him to mind his own business, then the emancipation of woman is at hand.

I believe in the nobility of man. I believe in the nobility of woman. I believe in equality, freedom and comradeship. I believe that the interests of man and woman are mutual in all things, civil, religious, political, and inseparably one. I believe mankind can advance only as man and woman, standing erect and equal, side by side, mutually working, planning, achieving, and hoping, free, equal, unafraid, confident and glad, meet and greet the coming morning of the ever nobler day.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). J. E. ROBERTS.

The Irony of So-Called Revelations.

THE claim to be a revelation from the supernatural is a characteristic common to all religions. Patriarch, priest, seer, and prophet of all times and places have claimed to have received visions from the gods in which mysterious things of alleged momentous importance to man were revealed. Bible and Koran are proclaimed sacred books because they contain such revelations. We propose, therefore, to examine this claim, and see to what extent the contention is valid. There is nothing absurd in the idea that man was made the recipient of a revelation. Nothing could ever be more rational and fitting, for he stood in need, not only of one, but of many revelations. From the lowest rung of his nature to the highest—from his advent till now—he has always been destined, through lack of knowledge, to a heritage of suffering. This predicament is unique to the human race; for out of the million species of sentient forms which now tenant the earth, none but man needs a revelation, and none but man could

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use it if he had it. The birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fish of the sea, and all creeping things possess the sure instinct that guides to life, detects danger, and avoids death. But man is practically bereft of these internal guides, and therefore needs to be taught and piloted from without. He wanted someone to point out to him—that is, to reveal to him—how to avoid those paths that would imperil his life, or would involve it in much suffering.

It is true that he had awakened to self-consciousness, and had become a rational being; but reason without knowledge is power of locomotion in darkness—the possession of feet without light to show one where he can plant them with safety. That was the pitiable condition of man for upwards of a million years—a plight that made the need of a revelation both desperate and tragic.

In urgency of want, in pitiableness of destitution, and in intensity of suffering man's predicament resembled that of Hagar and her child when sent forth by Abraham to wander in the wilderness of Beersheba. The little water provided in her bottle was exhausted, and, as the sandy desert stretched away in all directions to the far horizon, there was no means within ken of having it replenished. The two tales are wonderfully alike in their beginnings; are they also alike in their endings? That is our inquiry. We are told that an Angel of God called out from heaven to Hagar and drew her attention to a well that was close by. Did the like ever happen to man? Were his eyes ever opened to behold wells of urgent knowledge gurgling forth at his side at which he could quench his dying thirsts? To convey a very brief summary of the answer supplied to this question by man's own story is our present task.

Let us therefore pass in review the various channels through which any relief has ever come to him, be it in respect to his organic cravings, to his social needs, or to the hungers and thirts of his mental and moral nature, with a view to finding out whether their source was in heaven or on the earth. I propose to take them in the order of their evolution. His organic wants will therefore come in for first consideration.

1. Now, the lion of his bodily cravings is hunger. To have a continuous supply of food is the premier of the *sine qud non* conditions of his continued existence; yet for man the earth's surface truly resembled a vast barren Beersheba with only a few oases, scattered here and there, where he could replenish his wants. But now, in the light of modern science and industrial arts, we know that, as in the case of Hagar, the wells were close by. For Mother Earth is as bountiful in her supply of means to allay his hunger as she is to quench his thirst, if man were only supernaturally presented with the key which unlocked her larder. But alas! instead of being consoled and instructed by an angel, as in the legend, man was left, for untold aons, in his crass ignorance to eke out a miserable existence in cave and forest, and to subsist on any edible he chanced to find and which did not happen to poison him.

Until he stumbled upon the device of taming wild animals, and of converting the seeds of wild grasses into corn and bread, only few parts of the earth could, with any pretence or approach to plenty, provide for his daily wants—a fact which was the origin and the perennial cause of mutual hostility and of war.

I pass by the obvious moral obligation on the part of the gods to provide for man—which manifestly was their imperative and palpable duty if it were true that hunger and its pangs were implanted by *them* in his nature. For it is not man's sufferings, however acute or unjust, that reveals the irony of the so-called revelations, but the tragic hollowness of the remedies with which the priest attempted to appease his wants. It invariably aimed at stupefying his sensibilities by stultifying his mind. What was, then, the revealed secret with which he claimed to be able to unlock the golden treasures of the soil? *Mirabile dictu!* It was the potency of occultism and magic. Certain magical ceremonies had to be performed. And then—the crops would grow!

The priest, therefore, went forth to the fields, meadows, and vineyards, and blessed them in the name of the gods. He proclaimed, moreover, a national feast at sowing-time and harvest, and bade the people to celebrate them with great solemnity and awe. He further ordained that an impersonation of the earth-god should be annually slain, and that its blood should be poured over the soil to the accompaniment of incantation and magic gestures. At first the victim was a human being; but when man's conscience became more enlightened and humanised, an animal was substituted. In this manner people were taught that priestly invocation, conjuration, and sacrifice were an Aladdin's lamp with power to tap nature's store of vital energy, and to cover land and meadow with corn and pasture, and to laden their trees with fruit. That is to say, it was through the agency of magic that revelation assisted man to allay his hunger. It is a pathetic example of asking for bread and receiving a stone.

2. But man had other physical needs besides hunger and thirst. He was naked, and yet was exposed to all the inclemency and fury of the seasons and the elements. Nature had provided him with neither a fur coat nor with a thatched shelter; and what was still worse, he was not even endowed with the instinct or with the knowledge how to make them. Nevertheless, revelation never offered to teach this miserable, shivering wretch the arts of spinning, weaving, and building. He had to learn how to do these himself in the school of misery, suffering, and death.

But that neglect, though serious, is only a trivial charge compared to the wicked advantage the priest took of man's sorrowful plight; for lo and behold! he meanly used it to exploit the emotions of fear and terror to enthral the human mind. He taught them that nature's giant forces were instruments in the hands of the gods to punish mankind for neglecting its religious duties.

Having now prepared the soil by thus paralysing the human spirit, he brings forth from his supernatural armory the "revealed" brand of protection, and in the name of the gods he flings around "the exposed and the helpless" the priestly mantle of invocation and prayer as a magic shield against the ruthless fury of the elements. That was the sole function of prayer in its origin, and that has been its essence at all times. In fact, it was revelation's panoply against all evils; the priest therefore bade man to pray devoutly and fervently to the demons or divinities hidden in the forces or powers of nature, or to the gods who controlled them, with a view to soothe their spirits and calm their rage.

We need not go to savage lands or sacred books or ancient times for exhibitions of this degrading superstition; it still survives in Catholic countries, as was pitifully displayed in South Italy in 1909, when that terrible earthquake occurred at Messina. The priest who preached in the Cathedral of Taormina on the day of the earthquake told a crowded congregation that it was sent by God because no preparations had been made for keeping the feast of St. Pancrazio on the next day! How dreadful! How infamous! Practically everybody throughout Calabria looked upon that catastrophe as a visitation from God, and the people flocked to the churches to pray. Yes, prayer was the only shield ever devised by the priesthood as a protection for impotent man against the deaf and pitiless powers of nature. Just think of the irony of it. Prayer to the inexorable, the immutable, and eternally deaf! as a safeguard against their ravages.

KERIDON.

(*To be continued.*)

AN ANECDOTE.

Boy: Can God do everything?
Mother: Yes.
Boy: Can he hang a picture without a nail?—*Sphere.*

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National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

CLAVIER HALL, PRINCES STREET, REGENT STREET,

London, W.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1913.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.

   Motion by Bethnal Green, North London, and Kingsland Branches:—

   "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.

   (a) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: J. Barry, W. H. Baker, J. G. Bartram, E. Bowman, R. Chapman, Victor Charbonnel, E. A. Charlton, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, H. Cowell, W. Davey, F. A. Davies, J. G. Dobson, R. G. Fathers, Léon Furnémont, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Hammond, W. Heaford, Eugene Hins, S. L. Hurd, R. Johnson, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, W. Loat, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, James McGlashen, G. B. H. McCluskey, J. Neate, R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, W. T. Pitt, C. G. Quinton, J. T. Ross, Miss Mary Ross, G. Roleffs, Mrs. Roleffs, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, S. Samuels, T. Shore, H. Silverstein, W. H. Spivey, Miss Alma Stanley, Charles Steptoe, W. B. Thompson, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, Miss E. M. Vance, F. E. Willis, C. J. Whitwell, Frederick Wood, G. White.

   (b) Proposed by Executive:—

   "That Mr. T. H. Elstob and Mr. W. Dodd be elected Vice-Presidents."

   (c) Proposed by Mr. F. Wood:—

   "That Mr. Louis Brandes be elected Vice-President."
7. Election of Auditors.
8. Motions by Birmingham Branch:—

   (a) "That one Sunday in the year be called the Charles Bradlaugh Sunday, and that all Branches be requested to arrange for lectures or readings to be given bearing on the life and teachings of Charles Bradlaugh, thus perpetuating the memory of our late great leader."

   (b) "That all motions carried at a Conference shall be dealt with in the course of the three months following the Conference, and a report stating the progress made be sent to the Branch responsible for the motion."
9. Motion by Executive:—

   "This Conference protests against the London County Council's deliberate and continuous effort to cripple, and if possible to destroy, the traditional right of public speech and discussion in all parts of the metropolis under its control; and the Conference protests especially against the mean attempt to injure advanced bodies generally by a perfectly uncalled-for attempt to deprive them of the immemorial right to make collections for their funds within the limits—and *only* within the limits—of their permitted meetings."
10. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—

    "This Conference deeply deplores the growing activity of the military spirit in Europe, and the ever-increasing expenditure on preparations for war, and calls upon Freethinkers everywhere—since the Christian Churches are so impotent in the cause of peace—to do all in their power to stem the tide of international envy, hatred, and malice, which is driving the so-called civilised nations on the abyss of mutual destruction."
11. Motion by Executive:—

    "This Conference calls upon the Liberal Government to countenance no more prosecutions for "blasphemy" or "profanity" (which are only persecutions of weak or friendless Freethinkers for the gratification of Christian bigotry), but to introduce, or allow time for, a short Bill abolishing the odious laws under which such proceedings are still possible in a country that boasts of its religious freedom."
12. Motion by Mr. J. T. Lloyd:—

    "The Liberal Government having declared its intention to deal with the Education question again in the early future, this Conference warns it that it has already failed three times in trying to settle the problem on Nonconformist instead of Church lines, and trusts that its next attempt will rise above all sectarian lines by proceeding upon the principle which is fair and just to all—the principle of Secular Education."
13. Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote:—

    "That the N. S. S. be represented as far as possible at the forthcoming International Freethought Congress at Lisbon, partly as an encouragement to the Portuguese Freethinkers who have taken such a great part in the recent work of progress in Portugal, and also as a protest against the malicious falsehoods so industriously circulated to their detriment by religious bigots and political schemers in England."
14. Motion by West Ham Branch:—

    "That, in pursuance of the declaration made in the Society's 'Immediate Practical Objects,' namely, 'The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinction,' this Conference recognises universal adult suffrage as the most effective method of abolishing sex disqualification and of placing all citizens on an equal footing at the poll. It therefore expresses its sympathy with that movement."
15. Motions by Kingsland Branch:—

    (a) "That an Organising Committee be appointed by the Executive, with power to confer with and advise London Branches when necessary."

    (b) "That all Branches of the National Secular Society be invited to issue an annual record of their income and expenditure, together with the number of meetings held during the year, and that the Executive be instructed to avail itself of the material for the purpose of publishing an Annual Report of the Society's work."
16. Motions by South Shields Branch:—

    (a) "That, in the opinion of this Conference, the Scholarship Scheme should be open to all *bonâ fide* members of the N. S. S. without regard to the length of time during which they have been members; and that all candidates shall pledge themselves to work for the objects and principles of the Society if successful."

    (b) "That public demonstrations be arranged in such places and districts where, from various local causes the Freethought movement is not making satisfactory progress."
17. Motion by Mr. W. Heaford:—

    "That this Conference welcomes the proposed exchange of visits between London and Paris Freethinkers, and instructs the Executive to take whatever steps it may find necessary to bring the proposal to a successful issue."

This Conference will sit in Clavier Hall, Princes-street, Regent-street; the morning session lasting from 10.30 to 12.30, and the afternoon session from 2 30 to 4 30. Both are purely business meetings. Only members of the N. S. S. can speak and vote. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, W. The President will occupy the chair on all three occasions. A luncheon for delegates and visitors is in course of arrangement, particulars of which will be supplied at the Conference.

By order of the Executive,

G. W. FOOTE, *President.*
E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

AN EPITAPH ON THE TOMB OF DR. MESSENGER MONSEY.

CHELSEA HOSPITAL, 1778.

Here lies my old limbs, my vexation now ends,
For I've lived much too long for myself and my friends;
As for churchyards and grounds which the parsons call HOLY,
'Tis a rank piece of priestcraft and founded on folly;
In short, I despise them; and as for my soul,
Which may mount the last day with my bones from this HOLE,
I think that it really hath nothing to fear
From the God of mankind, whom I truly revere.
What the next world may be little troubles my pate;
If not better than this, I beseech thee, Oh! Fate,
When the bodies of millions fly up in a riot,
To let the old carcase of Monsey be quiet.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAILSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): E. Morris Young (ex-Anglican Clergyman), "Atonement the Child of Fear"; 6.30, "Did Christianity Make Good Men or Did Good Men Make Christianity?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Ramshorn Rooms, 122 Ingram-street): 12 noon, Annual Business Meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Freethought and Morals"; 7, "The Lying Gospel."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 18 SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Whether there be one God or three—no God or ten thousand—children should have enough to eat, and their skins should be washed clean.—JOHN RUSKIN.

Secularism Justified of Her Children.

MANY people labor under the delusion that Secularism and Atheism are synonymous terms. It is perfectly true that the overwhelming majority of Secularists are convinced Atheists. Indeed, there seems to be no escape from the conclusion that Secularism logically implies Atheism. It is a certainty that no genuine believer in God can be an honest Secularist. The present point, however, is that Atheism is a purely negative term, while Secularism signifies a complete philosophy of human life, and is packed full with glorious affirmations. It would be correct to say that Atheism is not even an essential part of Secularism. We are Atheists simply because Theism has introduced a false and injurious philosophy of the life we live, and because we cannot get rid of the one without destroying the other. As long as the belief in God exists it is bound to exert a powerful influence upon its possessor's conception of life and its object; and we agree with D'Holbach, who pronounces it an entirely evil influence. The first step towards introducing the true view of life is to discredit and remove an existing false view of it; and this is the only sense in which Atheism is of service to Secularism. To confuse Secularism with Atheism is, therefore, to misrepresent both in the grossest manner possible. It is as great an error as to assert that Buddhism may be summed up in the word "renunciation," an assertion unblushingly made in the article on "Buddha and Buddhism" in the *Everyman Encyclopædia*. The word "renunciation" does occur in Buddhism; but it is merely an introductory word which is soon overshadowed by the greater and richer word, "acquisition." So, likewise, the word "Atheism" is but a preliminary term in Secularism, and we make use of it only because Theism stands in our way and must be thrown off. As in Buddhism renunciation is a condition of acquisition, so in Secularism, Atheism is the door through which alone we can enter into Nature's treasury. We ceased to be Theists in order to become Humanists; we renounced the supernatural that we might inherit all the wealth of the natural.

Because they have never taken the trouble to learn what Secularism really is Christians often taunt Secularists with the awful barrenness of their peculiar position. No taunt could be more unjust, because it mistakes a tiny part for an immense whole. It is usual to speak of Secularists as unbelievers, deniers, Atheists, or people who play the poor game of Pyrrhonism; but the truth is that they disbelieve and deny what is false in order to believe and affirm what is true. They pride themselves upon being the only true believers in the world. When a clergyman was told this the other day he expressed the utmost amazement. He had taken it for granted that the sole business of Freethinkers was to denounce the beliefs of their neighbors because they had none of their own. It had never occurred to him that they might be in possession of firm convictions in the interest of which they were attacking the popular religion with its God of love and Holy Writ. "True religion apart from dogma," says Professor Moore, of Liverpool, "is the sublimed essence of the knowledge of the highest things in the world, and in itself is never opposed to natural science" (*The Origin and Nature of Life*, p. 9). Professor Moore ought to know that there never has been and never can be a religion "apart from dogma." Every religious belief implies a dogma. "J. B.," of the *Christian World*, is always girding in eloquent style at the dogmas of the orthodox Church, heedless of the fact that he himself is, in his way, as great a dogmatist as Augustine or Aquinas. To Freethinkers all dogmas concerning the supernatural are essentially unbelievable, simply because the supernatural is not an object of knowledge. Then we would like Professor Moore to tell us what "the highest things in the world" are, of the knowledge of which "true religion apart from dogma is the sublimed essence." "The highest things in the world" known to us are justice and truth, sympathy and love, and these are, in reality, not things at all, but relations between man and man as members of society. Now, these are things in which Freethinkers are most ardent believers, and in the practice of which many of them have won distinction.

It is well known that Baron D'Holbach was an outspoken Atheist. He is often referred to as "a Materialist of the most material school," who in two great works, *Christianisme Dévoilé* and *Le Système de la Nature* openly attacked the Christian religion, characterising it as "a blind, superstitious bondage, maintained on men's minds by the self-interest of the priests, not only unnecessary but absolutely prejudicial to human morality." But the object of his vigorous attacks on Christianity was to emancipate morality from its supernatural entanglements. He constructed a system of morality without any reference to God and supernatural motives and sanctions. He pulled down dilapidated old structures in order to put up better and safer ones. In an article which pronounces his views "pernicious," the *Encyclopædia Britannica* makes the following significant admission:—

> "Although an Atheist, or at least a Materialist of the most material school, Holbach seems to have been endowed with a more than average share of virtue, and, whether by his courtesy, gentleness, or benevolence, inspired a warm affection in all he met. Even his failings, of which his simple credulity was perhaps the most prominent, were amiable. He was one of the best informed men of his day, and his excellent memory placed at his immediate disposal all the learning he had amassed" (vol. xii., p. 53).

It is a fundamental mistake to represent Secularism as a negative system. It is forsooth the most positive system known to us. It gives no uncertain sound on any of the subjects within its scope. Its message is always direct and clear, so that he who runs may understand it at a glance. There is never the slightest ambiguity about its language. On the subject of life, for example, its teaching is beautifully simple and to the point. Keeping clear of the endless and useless conjectures of the schools, it devotes itself to the elucidation of entirely practical questions. Instead of saying to a man, "Prepare to meet thy God," or "Get ready to die," it directs him as to the best way to meet his neighbor and enjoy his fellowship. The chief fact that matters is that every one of us has his or her

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own place in society, and certain duties to discharge while in it. Life in each case is an opportunity for making a contribution to the general welfare, and we have no data for stating that it is anything else. Man's chief end is to be of use to his fellows. We know nothing about the ultimate object of life, not even that it has such an object. We are what our ancestors have made us, and our descendants will be what we are now making them.

Equally positive is the teaching of Secularism concerning death. Religion has a great deal to say about "the dread of something after death," about a mysterious country which Shakespeare describes as "undiscovered," but which the divine treats with the familiarity of a traveller who has visited and studied every nook and corner in it, particularly the divisions known as heaven and hell. According to him, death means translation from this world to the next, believers in Christ entering heaven and unbelievers the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. For the Secularist, however, death ends all. It is the termination of individual existence; and no fairy tales are told about the terrors that await the unbelieving soul in the Great Beyond. Lucretius makes fun of the man who fears death. When we are dead, he says,—

> "From sense of grief and pain we shall be free;
> We shall not *feel* because we shall not *be*."

To the man who dreads the event he simply says,—

> "The worst, that can befall thee, measured right,
> Is a sound slumber, and a long good night."

Immortality is a beautiful dream of the imagination, and, like all dreams, is true only to the dreamer. Secularism serves our race by delivering it from the tyranny of false hopes and false fears, and by enabling it to regard death as a servant of life.

What, then, is man according to Secularism? The highest, most perfectly developed animal, endowed with nothing that did not come to him naturally in the course of evolution. To the preacher this is a damnable heresy, for he treats man as a dual being, and attributes two different origins to him. He reluctantly admits that his body and its life may have been evolved from inorganic matter, as the biologist declares, or that "from the beginning of life up to life as we know it in a human person, there is an unbroken continuity, so close that it is even demonstrable that the highest form of life might arise from the lowest." The moment we reach man, however, we are in an entirely new world, a world that infinitely transcends the most complex of material processes and operations. When he became man there took place "an act of God, distinct from all other acts; an act by which he did, in the mystery of his wisdom and the operations of his might, differentiate by infinite distances between man and everything that lay beneath him in the scale of creation." In support of this strange doctrine not a single fact can be advanced. The soul, our "life's Star," as Wordsworth calls it, does not submit itself to any scientific experiment, nor do anything to justify the belief in its existence. Secularism can find no trace of it anywhere, and consequently takes no account of it in its philosophy of life. It recognises no duality in human nature, no two origins, and no kinship with any higher order of beings. We represent the summit of the present order of evolution, and our one business is to work for the betterment of the species to which we belong.

Thus Secularism justifies itself as a perfectly safe and reliable guide of life. It deals with facts and ignores metaphysical fancies. It looks at life from a purely natural point of view, and gives practical instructions as to the best methods of utilising it. As compared with Christianity, its superiority is beyond controversy. It teaches us to have faith in ourselves, and to despise the exhortation of self-depreciation. As Emerson says, it looks upon prayers offered to supernatural beings as "a disease of the will, and theological creeds as a disease of the intellect." What it says to all is, "Trust yourselves, and become Saviors one of another." This is positive teaching of the noblest kind. J. T. LLOYD.

The Nemesis of Faith.

IT is one of the ironies of history that, while Christianity has always avowed as one of its aims the purifying of sexual relations (with some of its earlier teachers purification assumed the form of absolute prohibition), it has from the earliest times been accompanied by varied forms of sexual extravagance, claiming a religious sanction for their existence. Something of this may have been due to reaction from a teaching of asceticism, but much more was due to the development of certain characteristics that were latent in Christianity, as in most other religions. At any rate, those whose minds are obsessed with the notion that those sexual extravagances which have from time to time broken out in the ranks of Christians were due to the intrusion of foreign elements, would do well to reflect on the Rev. S. Baring Gould's warning that criticism discloses to us "on the shining, remote face of primitive Christianity rents and craters undreamt of in our old simplicity," and also "That there was in the breast of the new-born Church an element of antinomianism, not latent, but in virulent activity, is a fact as capable of demonstration as any conclusion in a science which is not exact."*

In our own day, when we are faced with religio-erotic movements such as "The Abode of Love," and its kindred movements in America, Germany, and elsewhere, there is a tendency to look upon these as entirely due to the unprincipled erotic fervor of their promoters. Such a conclusion falls short of justice to the people concerned, and is quite lacking in historical perspective. As a matter of fact, those who have initiated these movements have not failed to propound a religious philosophy to justify their conduct, and, however much we may dissent from it, there is no good end served in refusing their arguments a hearing, or denying it to be in line with phenomena that has never been quite absent from the history of Christianity. Indeed, when we look closely into the very earliest records of the Christian Churches, it becomes fairly evident that we are face to face with more than the mere desire of a dominant religious organisation to regulate the morality of its followers. The conviction on the one side that certain things are unlawful is met with a conviction on the other side that the prescribed things are perfectly legitimate. And each side expresses itself, not in terms of ethics, but in terms of religion. It is a conflict of opposing religious convictions; and the fact that non-religious social opinion was on one side need not, and ought not, to blind us to the real nature of the conflict.

In the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (v. 1) and in the Epistle of Jude there are indications that as early as the period during which these were written some Christian leaders were grappling with a tendency among believers that became still more pronounced as time passed. The example of Paul himself was, in fact, cited in justification of departure from the commonly accepted relations of the sexes. For Paul was himself accompanied in his wanderings by a woman variously referred to by different translators as a sister, "a sister to wife," "a believing wife," and "a Christian woman as a wife." At any rate, it is certain that Paul claimed the privilege of keeping the company of holy women and travelling about with them. What his precise relation was to them is not clear, nor have commentators ever made it clear. Their aim appears to have been rather to pass over the subject with as few words as possible. Nor was this practice of taking "sisters" with them on their travels confined to Paul. It was a custom that formed the subject of decrees in several Church Councils and Synods,† and numerous writings of the first three centuries refer to the practice. Nor did its practice cease with the earliest centuries of the Christian era. The doctrine of what is called "spiritual wifehood"

* *Lost and Hostile Gospels*, Preface, p. vii.
† See Baring Gould's *Study of St. Paul*, p. 451.

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persisted, and has formed the basis of many strange sects as late as the latter portion of the nineteenth century.*

Under a more secular form this doctrine of spiritual wives became known in modern times as "Free Love," but religiously it rested upon a two-fold basis. On the one side it was argued that, apart from a wife of the flesh, one might also have a wife of the spirit, and that this union of the spirit may exist side by side with a union of the flesh, and with different persons. On the other hand, it was held that a Christian who had been freed from the trammels of "the law" was by that fact raised above all law. His actions, whatever they were, no longer came under the categories of right or wrong; or, rather, as it was said, to one in a state of grace all things are lawful. Some even went so far as to teach that not only were all things lawful, but all things were desirable. It was openly taught by some of the early sects that, once in a state of grace, nothing that the body could do would corrupt the soul; and, reversing the order of asceticism which sought to crush the body by a process of starvation, they encouraged all kinds of conduct in order to demonstrate the soul's superiority. "The Church," says Baring Gould, "trembled on the verge of becoming an immoral sect." The same writer sums up the matter by saying:—

> "This *teaching* of immorality in the Church is a startling feature, and it seems to have been pursued by some who called themselves apostles as well as by those who assumed to be prophets. In the Corinthian Church even the elders encouraged incest. Now, it is not possible to explain this phenomenon except on the ground that Paul's argument as to the Law being over-ridden had been laid hold of and elevated into a principle. These teachers did not wink at lapses into immorality, but defiantly urged on the converts to the Gospel to commit adultery, fornication, and all uncleanness.....as a protest against those who contended that the moral law as given on the tables was still binding upon the Church."†

A certain detachment from modern conditions is essential to an adequate appreciation of the situation. Unquestionably, once the situation established itself, men of a lower and coarser nature seized the occasion for mere sensual gratification. But this would have been impossible on the scale indicated by Mr. Baring Gould had certain practices not ranked as the expression of a religious conviction. To assume otherwise is equal to assuming that, because men have entered the Church and used the Church from mere love of power or of wealth, there was nothing more than this in the establishment of the Church. Nor must the fact that the opponents of these teachers of a religio-erotic mysticism accused them of immorality and sensualism blind us to the truth of what has been said. Eroticism taught and practised as a religious conviction—that is the essential significance of the situation. To lose sight of this is to escape the vital truth embodied in the phenomena under consideration. We are not dealing with mere sensualists, although we may be dealing largely with an expression of sensualism. It is sensualism expressed as, and sanctioned by, religious conviction that is the peculiar character of the phenomena under investigation.

One of the earliest Christian institutions around which scandals gathered was that of the Agapæ, or love feasts. That they were, later, the occasion of much scandal is certain. That they were the subject of many grave accusations from the Pagans is also certain. On the other side, it is to be remembered that in the earliest period the Pagan accusations were indignantly repudiated by Christian writers, and the Agapæ represented as Feasts of Love and Feasts of Charity. Tertullian described them as gatherings in which each member, male and female, greet each other with a holy kiss, and the institution itself as "a support of love, a solace of purity, a check on riches, a discipline of weakness." From the Acts of the Apostles we learn that the Agapæ was carried on till midnight, even till daybreak; and it was only natural that assemblages of men and women in this fashion should attract notice and give rise to scandal. Further, as the Rev. S. Baring Gould points out, "At Corinth, and certainly elsewhere, among excitable people, the wine, the heat, the exaltation of emotions, led to orgiastic ravings, the jabbering of disconnected, unintelligible words, to fits, convulsions, pious exclamations, and incoherent ravings."‡

Generally, even by rationalistic writers, it has been assumed that the Agapæ commenced as a harmless institution, and afterwards degenerated, and gave good ground for scandal. But it is not easy to find adequate grounds for this belief. The Agapæ was not essentially a Christian institution. Similar assemblies existed amongst the Pagans, and were connected with orgiastic worship of various deities. And even though in its earlier appearance among Christians some of the more extreme forms were avoided, it is not, on the face of it, improbable that some kind of sexual extravagance appeared in connection therewith. At any rate, it is certain that charges were made, and that these were of the gravest character. In the first place they were made by the Roman writers, and the Roman government had been at considerable pains to suppress similar sects of Eastern origin. But afterwards they were brought by Christians themselves. Tertullian accused some of the sects of practising incestuous intercourse at the Agapæ. Ambrose compared the Agapæ to the Pagan Parentalia. The first epistle on Virginity by the pseudo-Clement (probably written in the second century) admits the immoralities committed at the Agapæ by saying: "Others eat and drink with them [*i.e.*, the virgins] at feasts, and indulge in loose behavior and much uncleanness, such as ought not to be among those who have elected holiness for themselves." Justin Martyr more cautiously says, in referring to certain sects: "Whether or not these people commit these shameful acts, the putting out of lights, and indulging in promiscuous intercourse, I know not." Others of the early Christian writers are more precise and definite in their charges. And it is certain that the scandals of the Agapæ were so well known and so prolonged that they became the subject of legislation at several Church Councils, and were finally suppressed because of their licentious character.†

The whole subject is a little obscure, but the one certain and significant thing is that accusations of sexual irregularity were connected with the Agapæ from the outset. These may have been exaggerated, and at first unfounded; but they were certainly made on good grounds at a later stage in its history. And it is quite probable that just as Christianity continued Pagan ceremonies and ideas in other directions, so there were also here a carrying over of the sexual rites and ceremonies connected with earlier forms of religious worship.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

* For an account of many of these sects see Hepworth Dixon's *Spiritual Wives*, 2 vols.; 1868.

† *Study of St. Paul*, p. 458.

* *Study of St. Paul*, p. 374.

† See Major-General Forlong's *Faiths of Men*, vol. i., p. 35; Baring Gould's *Study of St. Paul*, p. 459; Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. i., pp. 415-17.

The "Unspeakable" Turk.—II.

MR. SEPPINGS WRIGHT quotes further from that same Servian tribute to the Turk, and adds, "it is only one of many similar expressions of opinion made in my hearing":—

> "He is charitable, honest, trustworthy; he is modest, yet dignified; he is proud, but not vain; he is brave, but not boastful; he is sober, clean, polite; he is generally poor, but always hospitable; and he is patriotic, ready to starve and suffer and die, without a murmur, for his faith and the honor of his country."

With regard to the Turk's cleanliness, by the way, it is a fact that he always astonishes Western

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doctors and journalists by the rapidity with which his battle-wounds are healed. Mr. Wright was struck by the same phenomenon. "I marvelled," he says, "at the rapid manner in which the wounds of the soldiers were healing." A wound that keeps a Christian in hospital for weeks keeps a Turk there for only a few days. This is because the Christians of that part of the world are not clean-living persons, while the Turk is generally a teetotaler, according to the Mohammedan law, and almost fanatical in the matter of bodily cleanliness. His wounds heal quickly because his blood is pure.

Travellers praise the Turk as being usually a grave, polite, sociable gentleman. "The more I have seen of Turkey, and the more I know about her and her people," Mr. Wright says, "the more I am attached to her cause. Europe has treated this fine, generous race with a callous brutality that fills my soul with indignation. The Turks are being consistently and grossly misrepresented and maligned." Their very simplicity, no less than their pride and courage, makes them a too easy prey to the more cunning and unscrupulous Christians of south-eastern Europe. "The Balkan war," Mr. Wright says, "has been skilfully and shamefully engineered throughout by interested nations." The real motive of the "Liberators" in attacking Turkey has really become too obvious for discussion. They had no grievances themselves, and their passionate love of the liberty of others whom they were determined to free from the "intolerable tyranny of the Turk" was merely a pretence, as their actions and mutual quarrels have since sufficiently shown.

Mr. Wright quotes some excellent pages from another English war correspondent named Beevor. One of this writer's statements throws a flood of light on the "unspeakable" Turk's treatment of prisoners of war. "About thirty Bulgarian prisoners," he says, "were brought in and lodged in the house next door. They were well treated and supplied with food and warmth. In this bitter weather their lot was a happy one contrasted with most of their captors, who sat outside in the frosty biting wind." This correspondent shared Mr. Wright's view of the real character of the Balkan war. This is clearly shown in the following extract:—

> "For the first time we heard that King Ferdinand had declared a Holy War, and we wished at that moment he was with us. From a high hill which dominated the country we were able to realise the magnitude of the immigration, for the whole place seemed to be black with people, animals, and vehicles of all sorts and kinds. Many of the women were unveiled, but they hastily concealed their faces as we passed by. There was one exception—a most beautiful woman, almost white, evidently a Circassian, deathly pale from exposure and misery. She evidently cared not who saw her; indeed she was very like a handsome London lady of my acquaintance.
>
> "I realised the horrors of war, and it made my blood boil to see so much misery, caused by greed and selfishness, cloaked by the hypocritical pretence of reforms."

Mr. Wright represented the Central News at Tripoli as well as in the Balkans. He found the Turk the same character in both localities. And one thing is very noticeable now. The Turk has come to despise European "morality." A distinguished officer at Tripoli expressed the feeling in the following manner:—

> "The object-lesson which every child can see is that the Governments of the world to-day admit of no right, save one, and that is force. God has given us a country, a nationality; but unless that land is sown with guns, then the first European who is strong enough to do so can claim and take it."

"Herein," Mr. Wright remarks, "lies the puzzle to the Asiatic world."

One can read between the lines that Mr. Wright has a poor opinion of the Italians' humanity. He does not charge them with deliberate massacre, though other war correspondents have not hesitated to do so, but he hints pretty plainly that they were not very particular as to what they fired at or whom they killed. An Italian aeroplane circling over Garwia dropped a bomb into the town. Mr. Wright admits that the Italians are all bad marksmen, but they ought to have been able to drop that bomb somewhere else than in the Bazaar, where it was hoped that the women and children were perfectly safe, for it "was a long distance from the camp, and still farther away from the trenches." One victim of that wonderful display of "Christian Science" was innocent of all offence in the world from which it was so cruelly dispatched:—

> "One of the wounded was a dear little baby, and the poor mite presented a very dreadful sight. The stomach was ripped open as with a butcher's knife, exposing the lungs and entrails. It seemed from the first that nothing could help the poor child, but Besher Bey did his very best, and indeed told me he hoped to save its life. But when I went to the hospital tent to make inquiries the next morning, I found the poor little thing dead, and the mother very naturally distracted."

To the eyes of reason and humanity all the glories and conquests of all the wars in human history were ill-purchased at the price of that one baby's slaughter and that one mother's tortured heart. Mother and child! Behold the secret of all morality! Not man's worship of God, but woman's adoration of her babe, is the vital germ of ethical culture. Not in one age or one country, but in every time and every part of the world. The mothers and babes of the land of Tripoli are as the mothers and babes of the rest of the globe—even as the mothers and babes of the land of Italy. But out of Italy come armies and guns and battleships and aeroplanes, for no reason except greed and vanity; and out of one of the aeroplanes drops a bomb that kills six women and children, and amongst them this poor ripped-open baby, who had done no injury to anyone, and whose cost to the world was only a little milk, and a little air and sunshine, and a daily supply of inexpensive caresses; and this brutal business is called by Italian bishops "a Crusade of the Cross"—the carrying of Christian civilisation to a Heathen people; and Christian Europe spends four hundred millions a year in keeping itself ready for this brutal business; and Christianity is the religion of love and happiness, and peace and goodwill!

Why do we not have the real horrors of war presented to us? Euphemisms take the place of horrible facts. Five thousand were slain in a certain encounter! Yes, but they did not die collectively, they died singly,—every one with his separate share of wounds and agony; and if the tragic tale could be told in detail there would never be another battle within the limits of what is often so facetiously called "civilisation." But they are not recorded. They are too horrible for the correspondents' pen or the editor's taste or the readers' nerves. Mankind love to be deceived, and myriads of parasitic adventurers are interested in deceiving them. Mr. Wright confesses that men and women at home have not "the faintest conception of the unspeakable horrors of war." "To an alarming extent," he says, "human nature becomes human nature no longer; sexual distinctions, even the reverence and affection universally admitted to be due to old age and to youth, become temporarily obliterated from the brain, the senses of feeling of which are no longer under natural control." No indictment is drawn up by Mr. Wright against any particular people. All are "equally guilty of cruelties and outrages which," he says, "if I dared to relate them would appal the readers with their horrors."

We protest against this calculated reticence, which is really a policy of concealment. War correspondents should make an effort to tell the truth; that is, to state the facts. This has been left too much to the imagination of great poets, the splendor of whose art, by exciting our admiration, rather detracts from the horror of the frightful scenes they describe. Let us have a plain, prosaic narrative of the facts from the pens of careful and competent observers. This

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would put an end to war more speedily than anything else. The common citizen is not a bloody-minded person; he does not love cruelty, he simply fails to realise the hell of war from an abstract description; let the naked facts be pressed upon his mental vision, and he will revolt against the military spirit which sits like an incubus on modern civilisation. War is murder, war is agony, war is hatred, war is outrage on women, war is the slaughter of children, war is the massacre of the innocent and the helpless by slow starvation and misery,—to say nothing of the waste of human resources that might have been applied to human enlightenment and elevation. War is the worst of all social diseases—and it carries all other social diseases in its train. Civilisation must destroy it or it will destroy civilisation. That is why we implore publicists like Mr. Seppings Wright to tell the whole truth about war; to hide nothing, to let everything come into the light of day.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Irony of So-Called Revelations.—II.

(*Continued from p. 268.*)

8. There was yet another kind of protection of which man stood in need; he was surrounded by legions of wild beasts, which night and day prowled the jungles and forests in search of prey. Yet nature had left man the most defenceless of creatures. He possessed neither fleetness of foot nor strength of body. He was provided with no equipment either for defence or for attack. He was not covered with shield plates like those of the turtle, nor yet provided with horns, talons, claws, fangs, or tusks. Yet the gods maintained the strictest neutrality between the belligerents, and allowed the lethal struggle to go on apace for myriads of ages.

But revelation, as resourceful as ever, was not without a specific remedy to offer—and it is always in these specific brands that the irony of it all is seen. The revealed prescription given him against the ravages of wild beasts was—what think you? To worship them! Let wolf, tiger, or serpent be declared sacred. Let prayer and sacrifice be offered to them, and then they will cease to molest! A relic of this divine remedy we have in the brazen serpent which Moses raised up in the wilderness.

4. So much, then, for his wants in health. Let us now turn to those in sickness and disease. If ever there was given to supernatural powers an opportunity of conferring upon humanity blessings worthy to be called divine, this was one. A portion of mankind had at last so far vanquished its jungle foes as to be able to take up fixed abodes, and to dwell together in groups of huts and primitive dwellings. It was the beginning of a new era for the race of man.

To live in constructed shelters of any kind, grouped into villages and towns, was then as artificial a mode of life as flying is to-day a mode of locomotion. What an opportunity for an angel from heaven to appear, as in the legend of Hagar, and warn man of the dangers ahead! His new road led straight to disease, to pestilence, or to death. Why did not the shout of an archangel or the trump of God stop him on his way, and tell him that his shelter would be a poisoned cell and his dwelling a lethal chamber; that the air of his hut, his house, and his city would be laden with legions of invisible foes incomparably more deadly and unvanquishable than ever were those harbored in our earth's primeval forests? Would not such a warning be more merciful and divine than to allow him to proceed in purblind ignorance to be devoured of microbial pestilence and disease for millenniums and in countless myriads?

Or, indeed, revelation might take a different form. It might take the shape of a verbally inspired book on health—a Bible of sanitation and hygiene—which would, by revealing the ultimate secrets of health and life, teach mankind how at once to adjust his artificial shelter so as to make it conform with nature's stern laws and immutable conditions. If mankind had been given such a book, neither song of bard nor pen of historian could ever tell a million-millionth part of the blessings it would have conferred upon humanity. That would have been a Bible indeed—a book of books—a divine revelation that none could dispute.

Contrast with such a book the barbaric ignorance and the tragic teachings of the so-called revelations of the actual Bible. It everywhere declares or assumes that disease itself was not a natural but a supernatural phenomenon; that it was the work of malevolent spirits or a visitation from God, but never a natural occurrence. It declared that insanity is the result of being tenanted or infested by these spiritual parasites; that witches and sorcerers were their special agents to look after their business on earth and to execute their fell designs; and lastly, that cure was effected miraculously—by prayer, conjuration, ritual, and sacrifice—or through the magic virtue of holy relics, wells, and shrines. It is when we stand in the presence of this parade of ignorance, folly, and falsehood, naïvely put forth as divine knowledge, wisdom, and truth, that we are made to realise the irony of the so-called revelations.

Revelation said, "Disease is of God; go to the priest to be cured." That is the sum and substance of the medical science of revelation.

5. Man is, moreover, a social being. He is one of a herd, and his misery or happiness depends paramountly upon his relation to the rest of the herd. This relation is the ethical, and a consciousness of it makes him a moral being.

The darkness, however, is as intense in this sphere as elsewhere. In fact, his plight is even worse, for the pitfalls are numerous and less visible; the gins and the lures are more subtly laid than in the realm of either health or disease. But did ever the gods flash any light upon his path and take him by the hand and lead him to safety? There is no record; but their priests have ever been doing it in their name. If, however, we judge by the result of their "leading," we must conclude that either they were vile impostors who betrayed their gods or that the deities themselves were brutally callous, impotent, or non-existent. For man has received no light, and no hand has ever been reached out to save him. There is no possible escape from the horns of this dilemma.

Nowhere did the darkness brood more thickly than over man's social realm. Even now we should hail with infinite joy a few rays of supernatural light upon man's social destiny. Civilised humanity is, to-day, almost driven to distraction with problems—apparently as insoluble as ever—of its social well-being. Why do not the gods vouchsafe us with their divine counsel, and tell us, without further suffering, Whence is man's social salvation to come? Is it through the individual or through the herd? Through self-seeking or through compassion? Whether the just claims and needs of the All can ever be satisfied *vid* Self; or, *vice versâ*, that the inalienable rights of Self can be fully met through the all?

Who could estimate the value of supernatural light on the problem as to whether it is ever possible to obtain a state of social equilibrium between Self and Other so long as society is built on a foundation of private property; or, is it an essentially impossible dream? That is to say, can the millennium of peace and justice ever come, either through Individualism or through Socialism, as long as private wealth is the base and structure of the social fabric?

Or, finally, is trying to reconcile the interest of Self and of Other, like trying to harmonise two absolute incompatibles, an intrinsically insoluble problem; and that the future of society will, therefore, be a repetition of the past—a continuous tug of war between groups and classes of human beings, each inspired by self-seeking impulses and each having alternate periods of triumph and defeat? And though mankind seems thus, through want of this very knowledge, to be hurrying down at an ever-

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increasing pace to a catastrophic doom, yet no archangel appears on the social horizon, sent as the herald of God to deliver him from it.

Oh, revelation! was ever the need of humanity more dire of thy gifts than now?

But to return to our study of the past. The New Testament is a most ambiguous and indefinite guide. It is Communistic in one part and champions the order of private wealth and despotic government in another. Both parties appeal to it with equal confidence; and well they may, for evidently the gods had not made up their minds, when this revelation was given, which policy was best for mankind, and apparently they have not yet come to a decision.

The Sermon on the Mount, however, is universally claimed to be a divine revelation. But have not learned prelates and divines freely admitted that no State could outlive a month that was founded on its maxims?

An impracticable absurdity, however, is not irony. That is seen in how the divine maxims were realised in the life of the divine Church itself. In all soberness, may I ask, could ever ideals be more systematically and egregiously belied than have been those of the Sermon on the Mount by the Christian Church, from the first to the last of its career? When and where has it put into practice the maxims?—

"Turn to him the other cheek."
"Go with him twain."
"Lend him that asketh thee."
"Pray for them that despitefully use you."
"Forgive thine enemy—yea unto seventy times seven."

Yes; where and when were these put into practice by the very Church which brought them into being? History can point to long centuries during which it acted and lived on their opposites.

Nor is that all. It not only belied them in its own conduct, but betrayed them wherever it had a chance to exert its blighting influence.

Has the world ever witnessed despotisms more merciless, more bloodthirsty, than those established under the influence, or at the instigation, of the Church? Holy Russia and Catholic Spain to-day, though atrocious enough, in all conscience, are yet only tame specimens of its best handiwork.

Again, if we examine the institutions and the customs of the people we are impressed by the same truth—they are all characterised with the spirit of exploitation and of cruelty, which the humanism of the last hundred years has done much to alleviate and remove. It was, perhaps, only to be expected that the Church should systematically oppose this "movement of mercy," since most, if not all the barbarities which it sought to mitigate or abolish had their origin or sanction in divine revelation.

The history of modern industrialism supplies us with a painful object-lesson of how religion backed and encouraged the callous exploitation of human toil and human life. Child and female were freely sacrificed to the god of greed in the shambles of industry, with the connivance, or rather, with the approval, of the priests of religion, who generally tithed the spoil.

But the irony that attaches to the Christian civilisation comes to full sight only when its achievements are viewed in the light of its arrogant aims. It is probably a trait characteristic of every Monotheism, but it is in particular evidence in the Hebrew type of both the Jewish and the Christian variety.

Its priesthood claimed to have been specially commissioned by the Supreme Deity of the universe, with the establishment of a universal kingdom of God—a theocracy. The irony of this is seen when the grandeur of this sublime mission is contrasted with its woeful realisation in the history of the Western world. Of all the deceptions imposed by man upon his fellows in order to subject and enthral them to his will, the most shamefaced is that of theocracy. Nothing is comparable to it as an insolent imposture save the "divine right" of kings, which, in truth, is only a variant of the fraud.

The term "theocracy" was the mask; the face beneath it was *hierocracy*. God-rule was the surface guise; *priest-rule* was the reality beneath. In strict accordance with this aim and claim the priesthood of both the Jewish and Christian Churches fought long and bitterly to capture the political as well as the ecclesiastical sceptre. It was seized for short intervals before our era by the brave Maccabees; but anything approaching to realisation was achieved only by the Mediæval Church. For centuries a theocracy, *i.e.*, a hierocracy, was established in Europe, for the priest ruled supreme; he either sat on the throne himself or placed his puppets thereon. He ruled the people with a rod of iron, he swamped them in intellectual darkness, and steeped them in moral corruption; but he filled them with faith. It was, therefore, to the Church, a full realisation of its ambitious scheme; it was its golden age, the theocratic millennium, the reign of God.

KERIDON.

(*To be continued.*)

Acid Drops.

We have been amused, but not surprised, at the way the religious papers in this country have dealt with China's Day of Prayer. It will be remembered that the Chinese Government decided on a day of universal prayer, and in a spirit of toleration which Christians seem quite incapable of appreciating, invited the Christian Churches in China to join. In England, this has been generally represented as an appeal of the Government to the Christian Churches alone to help by their prayers. The *British Weekly*, for instance, says: "The newly established Government proclaims.....its belief in the efficacy of Christian prayers." The Government does nothing of the kind. It invites *everybody* to pray, and does not proclaim its belief in anybody or anything. Bishop Montgomery, of the S. P. G., says we do not know "whether the Chinese authorities asked simultaneously for the prayers of Confucianists, Buddhists, and Taoists." If Bishop Montgomery does not know, we can only say that he is strangely lacking in information. Those who read the order intelligently cannot fail to know. We have no hesitation in saying that the Bishop does not want to know. It suits his game to pretend that the Chinese authorities are anxious for the prayers of Christians as being convinced of their unapproachable value.

In order to make as much as possible of the occasion, the Churches at home appointed April 27 as a day of prayer for China. And in the *Evening News* of April 24 this is announced as "the request of the Chinese Republic for prayers in all the British Churches next Sunday." Here we have the lie full grown. First, the request that everyone in China will pray, whatever be their religion; next, the conversion of this into a request for the prayers of Christians only; then, a day of prayer fixed on by English Churches, purely as a method of advertisement; and, finally, the statement that the Chinese Government has asked for prayers in all English churches and chapels. And some people wonder how it is that people come to believe in myths.

Alone among religious papers the *Methodist Times* has dealt honestly with the subject. That journal points out, "It should be borne in mind, of course, that the call to prayers is national and not merely Christian. It will be observed by all those who follow the ancestral and other religions of China." That is the plain truth; and we congratulate the *Methodist Times* writer on being the one truthful person among a crowd of religious liars.

And now what is it that lies behind this peculiar request. In the first place, there is little question that the bulk of the intellectual leaders in China are Agnostic. And even with others, the Rev. Dr. Beavan, just back from China, says that "translations of Carlyle, Spencer, and Huxley are being circulated, and crowds gather to listen to the reading of them at street corners." But the bulk of the people are still religious, and are still in the habit of praying. And in asking for an united endeavor to secure a good, stable Government, the authorities have naturally fallen back upon the habits and beliefs of the bulk of the population. Chinese tolerance included the Churches, and Christian leaders have replied by giving the Chinese an example of the superb manner in which they distort truth, and convert an act of courtesy into a religious surrender.

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Finally there is the clause in the message "that the Government may be recognised by the Powers." Well, the Powers are Christian—at least in theory. And quite as much as anything, we fancy, the astute Chinese saw that by including the Churches in the request for prayer they would enlist on their side a body of advocates who, in return for a sectarian advertisement, might support the national desire for recognition. No one doubts that the Chinese are at least as intelligent as the people who are so anxious to convert them, and they are certainly not likely to overlook the material advantage of such a policy. For the rest, the belief that an educated China will accept beliefs that an educated Europe is steadily discarding, is one that can find permanent lodgment in the brains of none but fools or fanatics.

Mr. D'Eyncourt, the Clerkenwell Police-court magistrate, may not like Sunday bells in general, but he is going to deal with them impartially. He recently refused a summons against a muffin man for ringing his bell on a Sunday, on the ground that "the muffin bell is as much a part of Sunday as the church bell." Yes, and announces a more agreeable article.

"The Bill to permit the opening of saloons throughout the State of New York on Sunday from one o'clock in the afternoon until midnight, is favored by the legislative committee to whom it was referred. It is a poor Bill that divides Sunday between the Churches and the saloons, and awards no share of the day to amusements, sports, and industry."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Dr. Horton is a great authority on the subject of Christian love. He is always talking about it, and on this, as on every theme, he speaks *ex cathedra*. Woe be to all who differ from him, for *them* he cannot love. When he was in India he occasionally met or saw people who were not Christians, and the best he could say about them was that they were loveless. The most conspicuous quality in the character of Hindus and Mohammedans is "lovelessness." But this is a gross libel on the non-Christian population of India. Does it never occur to the reverend gentleman that his attitude to non-Christians bears ample witness to his own "lovelessness"? But it is when he comes to depict non-Christian scientists that he lets his Christian lovelessness shine in all its native shamelessness. In this very discourse on love he forgets all about the emotion, and, in characterising the intellects of unbelieving scientists, employs these choice, eminently Christian adjectives, "blinded," "deadened," "dull," "stunted," "spiritually dead." Dr. Horton talks like that, "not because he is wiser than other men," but because he is under the dominion of invincible Christian prejudice, which incapacitates him for either understanding or being just to people of a different way of thinking from himself.

We cut the following from a telegram in the *Express* of April 16 from its New York correspondent:—

> "An ecclesiastical scandal is threatened owing to the action of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, one of New York's fashionable congregations, barring negroes from attending the services.
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> "The edict was issued some time ago, and now attracts public notice for the first time because of anonymous threatening letters which are being received by the vicar, the Rev. G. A. Oldham. The vicar declines to call in the police, though a number of parishioners are urging him to do so.
>
> "The action of the vicar in forbidding negroes to attend the services was due to protests received from many of the congregation against mixing with blacks in Christian worship.
>
> "At first the vicar held out against the protests, but when a number of white parishioners threatened to leave the church he surrendered and informed the negroes they were not wanted in his church.
>
> "Most of the negroes obeyed the vicar's orders unquestioningly and joined a negro church near by. A few blacks, however, declined to obey, and they were consequently isolated in the church until they stopped attending.
>
> "Now the negroes have threatened to appeal to Bishop Greer, head of the New York diocese, but whether he will take any action is unknown."

The very people who are always boasting (falsely enough) how Christianity abolished negro slavery are the people who won't let a black man worship God in the same church with themselves. What hypocrites these people are! And what humbug is their faith!

The Irish Census report for 1911 contains an amount of what the *Telegraph* calls a "medley of sects." From this report it appears that Ireland can boast of no less than 305 different religious sects. One sect of thirty-nine calls itself the "Exclusive Brethren," and in a population of over four millions it is at least living up to its title. There are forty sects with only two members, so that they contain, at least, the potentialities of a split. On the other hand, there are ninety-one sects represented by a single adherent each. This batch of sects is well protected against divisions, although we should imagine that, with no fellow believer to quarrel with, sectarian life must be very tame. Still, these ninety-one sects can at least talk of the unity of faith without fear of contradiction.

In spite of the doctors' more favorable bulletins, the Rome correspondent of the *Daily News* says that "everything possible is being done, with the tacit co-operation of the Government, to conceal the unquestionable fact that the Pope's life is gradually ebbing away." The Catholic Church is conducted on business principles.

Rumors are circulating in Rome that the Pope has lost his senses. It would never do to admit this, if it were ever so true. Fancy "God's" vicegerent on earth in a state of imbecility! Perish the thought! It would throw discredit upon the whole Catholic business.

We cut the following from the *Daily Chronicle* of April 25:—

> "On the motion for the adjournment of the House of Commons last night, Mr. Aubrey Herbert drew attention to the condition of helplessness, destitution, and famine in Thrace, Macedonia, and Albania. People were dying in hundreds of thousands, he said, and, because they were inarticulate and we did not hear their cries, we did not think they were suffering."

Nobody contradicted or disputed this. *People are dying in hundreds of thousands.* People who have nothing whatever to do with the fighting. Such is one effect of this abominable Balkan war, waged without the slightest necessity by Christian nations against Turkey. Such is Christian "love" (heaven sake the mark!) after nearly two thousand years of the only true religion.

A suggestion has crept at last into a London morning newspaper that "Shakespeare Day" should take the place of "St. George's Day" on April 23. We have been advocating this for the last twenty years. The only offence ever committed in the "wicked" *Freethinker* was being in advance of the time.

"Blessed are ye poor." There seems no doubt whatever of the Christianity of the late Pierpont Morgan. Not alone was he a steady supporter of the Church, and responsible for the electric lighting bill for St. Paul's Cathedral, but his will bears ample testimony to his Christian convictions. In that document he commits his soul to the Savior "in the full confidence that, having redeemed it and washed it in his most precious blood, he will present it faultless before my Heavenly Father." It may perhaps be that the "Heavenly Father," on having the soul of a multi-millionaire placed before him, will treat it far more considerately than he would that of an ordinary mortal. Mr. Morgan, moreover, urges his children to maintain at all costs the "blessed doctrine of complete atonement for sin through the blood of Jesus Christ once offered, and through that alone." We have no doubt that Mr. Morgan found this belief comforting enough. At any rate, it did not prevent him piling up many millions by the usual methods of the American Dollar King. Judging from this confession of faith, we should say that it offers a striking proof of how little genuine mental ability is required for the piling up of a huge fortune.

The Bishop of Peterborough deeply regrets that many working men think more of the amount of wages they can earn than of the sources from which these wages come. This is, indeed, most depressing. If we found that Churches accepted money on this principle, the outlook would be very black indeed. As it is, the fact that the Churches are scrupulous in examining donations to see that their source is beyond suspicion, and that the clergy carefully refrain from investments in breweries, or in companies that are not run on strictly humanitarian principles, encourages us to look to the clergy for a shining example to these sordid working men.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Troyes has issued a decree forbidding priests from riding or owning motor-cars, as such practices do not correspond with the modesty which ought to distinguish the priestly profession. Are the poor priests to imitate their Savior and ride donkeys?

Commissioner Lamb, of the Salvation Army Emigration Department, is to visit Australia and New Zealand to inves-

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tigate emigration problems. We thought the function of the Salvation Army was to prevent people emigrating to Hades, and not the Antipodes.

The "leavings" of professional Jesuites have been running smaller recently. We note the following:—Rev. Thomas Arnold Carr, of Tunbridge Wells, left £7,346. Rev. Thomas Espinell Espin, of Wolsingham Rectory, Durham, left £4,595. Rev. Robert Bennett Oliver, of Whitwell, Isle of Wight, left £4,092. Rev. Ernest Bellamy, curate of Richmond, Surrey, left £2,292. Rev. William Biggins, of Norfolk-street, Brighton, left £1,039. Canon John Walsh, of Ballymacarberry, Co. Waterford, left £2,283. The sum of £250 is devoted to an anniversary High Mass for the repose of his soul. Yet the law punishes common fortune telling.

An International Roman Catholic Club for London is projected. We suppose this organisation must be international on account of the scarcity of English Catholics.

Cultivated Kensington, says a musical critic, used to brandish a sword for Brahms, while Hampstead cried, "There is one god and one Wagner." Evidently, Hampstead was Unitarian as well as musical.

The Rev. Lord William Gascogne Cecil, in a statement explaining China's motives in asking for prayers in Christian churches, says the Chinese "are looking at a heavenly vision as it flits before their dazzled eyes." Maybe it is the vision of the Archbishop of Canterbury receiving £15,000 yearly for preaching the gospel of poverty that appeals to the Heathen Chinee, who, as Bret Harte has reminded us, is "childlike and bland."

Fifteen out of sixteen Chinamen in a police case at Manchester took the oath as Christians. It will not be long before we hear of the conversion of China.

The choirboys of Brompton and Snaenton Village Churches, near Scarborough, have gone on strike because they were not invited to a tea given to adult choristers and lady helpers. We wonder if it was the tea or the lady helpers that formed the attraction.

The bioscope film, "From Manger to Cross," recently made its appearance in Johannesburg. Acting on a petition, hurriedly secured and presented, the Administrator of the Cape Provinces, Sir Frederick de Waal, introduced a Draft Ordinance "to provide for the prohibition of certain performances and exhibitions of a religious character." The Bill was passed, and the Administrator has now the power to prohibit the performance of any form of entertainment which, in his opinion, is calculated to give offence to the religious convictions and feelings of any section of the public." The *Cape Times* remarks that in a few years this piece of legislation will be regarded as a curiosity of the Statute-book. Quite so; but meanwhile it is there. And any section of the religious public that doesn't care to go to a particular entertainment is given the power to prevent other sections attending. The freedom of all is placed at the mercy of the whim of a few. And, as usual, it is the feelings of the religious section that is to be protected. The feelings of other sections may be outraged with impunity.

Everyman must be gaining quite a reputation as a medium in which well-known mediocrities can champion Christianity. Several weeks ago we called attention to some absurdities by Mr. Hector Macpherson on the relation between Christianity and Paganism. And we were pleased to see recently in *Everyman* a letter from Mrs. J. Stark, in which she gives some well-deserved raps to the scribbling Scot. Mr. Macpherson had said that the ideal of the Greek was sensuous enjoyment, and Mrs. Stark aptly comments, "How the sides of the Athenians would have shook with laughter could Aristophanes or Euripides have known that some barbarians of a grossly materialistic age would have accused them of ennui or sensuous enjoyment. The Greeks were as far above us intellectually as we are above the negroes." Mrs. Stark has two or three telling quotations from Professors Murray and Bosanquet that should give Mr. Macpherson food for thought.

It is, perhaps, an illustration of the way in which association with Christianity corrupts sane thinking that Mrs. Stark should mar an otherwise able letter with the sentence, "The Greeks of the classical period were too busy working for posterity and preparing the way for Christianity to be troubled with ennui." We might paraphrase Mrs. Stark and say that the Athenians would have shrieked with disgust could they have known that their Pantheon would have been replaced by the Christian trinity and its crowd of saints, or that their own culture would be followed by the barbarism and savagery of the Dark Ages. Greek culture did not prepare the world for Christianity, it had to be suppressed before Christianity could firmly establish itself. And it was the revival of Pagan culture at the Renaissance that helped to break the power of the Church, just as the best ideals of to-day have a closer affinity with Paganism than with Christianity.

The patriarch Jacob had a whole night's wrestling match with Jehovah, and came out of it victorious. The victory was so complete that his name was changed into Israel, or, *he who wrestleth with God*. Unfortunately, however, he received a permanent injury to the sciatic muscle, which occasioned limping for the rest of his life. The curious thing is, that the divines take this old legend seriously, and deduce therefrom the lesson that there is a sense in which we must all wrestle with God before he admits us into his friendship. Professor Clow, of Glasgow, sees in it "a dim foreshadowing of the gospel of Christ." Amazing is the credulity of the men of God.

"For myself," says Mr. Justice Bailhache, "life would be hardly worth living if I did not feel sure that there is over it all the controlling and the guiding hand of God." Our own attitude is just the opposite. We should feel that life was not worth living if we believed that "God" was at the head of all the folly, wickedness, and suffering of this world. The problem of reform would then be hopeless. It would be opposing God.

The latest story about the Kaiser is that he has an electric sign bearing the words "God with us" attached to the imperial motor. It is only illuminated when his Majesty is in the car.

"An acquaintance of mine," a correspondent says, "tells me he visited the Leytonstone Rink Picture Palace during Easter week. The picture of the events of the week concluded with the murder of the King of Greece. This was immediately succeeded by a series, 'In the Flat Above.'"

A French workman woke up in the Cherbourg Hospital after being asleep for seventy-seven days. There are people who have been asleep, not for days but for years, and show no signs of waking up yet. Lots of the clergy, for instance.

Mr. Israel Zangwill, writing in the *Daily Chronicle* on "The War Devil," humorously suggests that one of the beatitudes has been altered to "Blessed are the pacemakers."

According to the New Theologians the Devil has disappeared; but from recent sermons by other distinguished divines we are inclined to think that a relative must have survived him and is carrying on the business.

Driving the devil out of human beings still lingers in the human mind and practice, even in what are called "civilised countries. A West Ham magistrate has ordered six strokes of the birch (foolish man!) to a small boy accused of theft. The juvenile culprit said that the devil had tempted him, and had tempted him four or five times before. "Then you will have six strokes of the birch," said the magistrate. "Perhaps that will knock the devil out of you." Perhaps the same treatment would knock the fool out of the magistrate. Suppose he tries it.

From the *Observer* of April 13: "The wise, humane, and Christian-like Bill of Sir S. Romilly, referring to the penalty of death against shop-lifting, after passing the House of Commons, has been lost in the Lords, by a majority of eleven only, *five of whom were Bishops.*"—*Drakards Paper*, April 11, 1813.

A Somersetshire vicar, the Rev. Henry Arthur Daniel, has left an estate of £96,673. This clerical camel will have no little difficulty in getting through the needle's eye.

The ceremony of "Blessing the Sea" took place in connection with the Eucharistic Congress at Malta. The performers in that pious farce should read Byron's address to the ocean in *Childe Harold*. It would take some of the conceit out of them. At least it ought to.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £116 12s. 5d. Received since:—K. C. C., £1 1s.; Helena Parsons, £2 10s.; J. G. F., £1. Per Miss Vance: Harry Shaw, 5s.; W. Dodd, 10s.

J. STENNING GREENE.—The only part of your letter that we are able to understand is the statement that Catholic priests cannot hold private fortunes, and that is sheer nonsense. The wills of Catholic priests are proved, just like other people's, and appear in the ordinary lists of wills in the newspapers, with details of special bequests—often, we have noticed, to housekeepers.

K. C. C.—Balance passed over to N. S. S. Secretary. Thanks.

W. L. BUTCHER.—Mark Rutherford was an assumed name. The author of the powerful works bearing that signature was really William Hale White. There are one or two letters from him (we speak from memory) in Holyoake's *Bygones Worth Remembering*. He was intended for the pulpit, but he was expelled from a Congregational college for heterodoxy. He found refuge in the Civil Service. Some of his work is exquisite; in *Pages From a Journal*, for instance, and *More Pages From a Journal*. His six novels are replete with intellect and imagination, which are displayed not so much in the mere stories as in the character-drawing; and there is no posing or sentimentalism or "fine" writing—everything is honest and sincere.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. BURRELL.—The facts you mention are fairly well known; all but the "illegitimate" part, anyhow.

E.B.—Your cuttings are always welcome. Thanks for your pleasant and encouraging letter. With a little continued care Mr. Foote will be "as fit as ever" for the "fight against superstition and bigotry." Creative energy is moving in him again, and work is becoming once more a pleasure. With regard to the proposed Box Hill memorial to George Meredith, we are not as fond as some are of dotting the country with memorials of great men—especially of great writers, who really live on in their writings, and do not live at all if they do not live there. This truth is finely expressed in Milton's epitaph on Shakespeare.

C. TAYLOR (Bloemfontein).—Mr. Foote will be glad to see you when you visit England. He will not be lecturing in August, but he probably will in September. You could get admittance to the Lisbon Congress on the usual terms of a few francs for a member's ticket. This could be managed for you by the N. S. S. secretary at headquarters in London. Glad to hear that your wife as well as yourself "takes a keen interest in the *Freethinker*."

T. F. GREENALL.—The Secular Education League's office is at 19 Buckingham-street, Strand, London, W.C.

R. NORTH.—Shall appear. Thanks for good wishes and congratulations on our recovery.

V. G.—Letters received with thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

After the Whitsun holidays we shall be publishing some portraits of contributors to the *Freethinker* and other men and women connected with the National Secular Society or well known in the Freethought movement generally. The series will start with a rather striking portrait of Mr. Foote. It was mainly the result of an accident; those who have seen it say it is really characteristic.

Mr. Foote is contributing to the *Freethinker* again, but Mr. Cohen is still relieving him of the official duties of the editorship, including the regular Tuesday's task of seeing the paper through the press.

As previously announced, the business meetings of the Annual Conference of the N. S. S. on Whit-Sunday will be held in Clavier Hall, Princes-street, Regent-street. Princes-street is just at the back of Jay's well-known drapery establishment, and may be entered from either Oxford-street or Regent-street. A luncheon has been arranged at La Café Marguerite, 171 Oxford-street, which is within three minutes' walk of Oxford-circus. As the luncheon is for a limited number only, Miss Vance would be glad if those who intend sharing it will let her know as early as possible.

The evening (public) meeting will be in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place. The speakers will include Messrs. Foote, Lloyd, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, Davies, and Miss Kough. Such an array of speakers ought to bring Freethinkers from all parts of London, and these may in turn do a little useful propaganda by bringing their Christian friends along with them. They can certainly assure them that at no church in London will they have the chance of listening to so much sense in so little time.

Mr. Foote will preside at the meetings of the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday and at the public meeting in Queen's (Minor) Hall in the evening. It will be his first public appearance since his severe illness, and a rally of his London friends is expected on this occasion.

Mrs. Helena Parsons, widow of the late Horace W. Parsons, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, in subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, asks us to give her the name and address of any "poor" member to whom she could pass on the *Freethinker* every week, as "it is too good to use as waste-paper." We are delighted to see our old friend's widow retaining her interest in "the cause." We too frequently find that the families of earnest Freethinkers forget the Freethought movement. Sometimes they go to the discreditable length of burying Freethinkers with orthodox rites. Ladies who are ladies by nature don't act in that way. They act as Mrs. Parsons has done.

We are pleased to be able to report that the presentation to Mr. J. Partridge, secretary to the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S., came off with complete satisfaction to all concerned. Speeches were delivered by Mr. Clifford Williams, Mr. Joseph Bates, and the President of the Branch, Mr. Fathers. Letters were also read from the leading Freethought speakers and writers, expressing their appreciation of Mr. Partridge's services to Birmingham Freethought. The presentation itself took the form of a mahogany cabinet and bookcase, bearing a silver plate suitably inscribed, and a ladies' portmanteau to MRS. Partridge.

A special meeting of the Wood Green Branch of the N. S. S. will be held at Straker's Tea Rooms, 224 High-road, Tottenham, at 8 o'clock on Wednesday evening next (May 7). Freethinkers in the district who are not at present members of the Branch, are invited to attend. Miss Vance, as General Secretary of the National Secular Society, is to be present, and will have some important matters to place before the meeting.

The monthly meeting of the Croydon Branch of the N. S. S. will be held at Ruskin House, Station-road, West Croydon, to-day (May 4), at 7.30 p.m. All members and friends in the neighborhood who are interested are cordially invited.

North London Freethinkers are reminded that to-day (May 4) the North London (Parliament Hill), Finsbury Park, and Kingsland Branches commence their open-air work. We hope local "saints" will not fail to support these stations as they deserve.

"The British Missionary Society has received the following telegram from Yuan Shih-Kai:—'Thanks for kindly act. I *pray* prosperity for *your* religion. *All* the Chinese people are grateful to you.'"—*Observer*, April 27.

Clearly, Yuan Shih-Kai considers the British missionary has a different God from what he himself possesses. But if the President of the Chinese Republic can "pray" for the "prosperity" of the English missionary, why the dickens can't he pray for himself? Why employ an outsider if he can do the work for himself?—E. B.

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Sir Hiram Maxim on Chinese Missions.

> "First the missionary, then the gunboat, then the land-grabbing—this is the procession of events in the Chinese mind." "The history of our intercourse with the East from beginning to end is the history of 'make face' with our conscience. Our whole intercourse with the Chinese has been neither honest, serious, nor reputable. It is only the slang word 'rot' that epitomises our pharisaical conduct."—GEORGE LYNCH, *The War of the Civilisations*, 1901; pp. 254-299.
>
> "I have wandered through the Imperial Treasure House at Mukden fingering rare draperies, handling beautifully worked specimens of old-time jewellery, poising priceless pieces of airy eggshell china on my palm, and I have asked what of civilisation the men could bring to the Orient whose guns I heard faintly booming in the distance."—DOUGLAS STORY, *To-morrow in the East*, 1907; pp. 244-5.

WE have to thank Sir Hiram Maxim for a copy of a book he has just completed, entitled *Li Hung Chang's Scrap-book* (Watts & Co., 7s. 6d). In a "Foreword" the distinguished author explains why he gave this seemingly strange title to his book, as follows:—

When his Excellency, the late Chinese statesman, Li Hung Chang, arrived at Dover in the course of making his grand tour of Europe in 1896, his first words when he stepped ashore were, "I should like to see Hiram Maxim." It appears that in 1895 Sir Hiram was invited to attend a meeting called in London to sympathise with the relatives of certain missionaries murdered in China. Sir Hiram took the opportunity to throw some much-needed light upon the subject, and, in a long speech, denounced the sending of missionaries to China at all. This speech was reported, and a copy was sent to the Chinese Minister in London, who forwarded it to Li Hung Chang, who, in turn, delivered it to the Chinese Emperor, and when Li Hung Chang came to England he was commissioned to confer upon Sir Hiram the much-sought decoration of the Double Dragon, which gives a high rank in China to those honored with it; at the same time Sir Hiram had several discussions with Li Hung Chang upon the missionary question, but found his Excellency hopelessly puzzled by the subject. In fact, he observes:—

> "The Chinese were greatly puzzled as to how it was possible for people who were able to build locomotives and steamships to have a religion based on a belief in devils, ghosts, impossible miracles, and all the other absurdities and impossibilities peculiar to the religion taught by the missionaries" (p. 10).

So, in order to present the facts in the strongest light, Sir Hiram prepared a large scrap-book and filled it with extracts and clippings from a great number of publications, accompanied with explanatory notes. It is this "scrap-book" which forms the foundation, and gives the title, to the volume we are now dealing with.

The work is divided into three sections—the first, consisting of fourteen chapters, entitled "The Nature of Christianity," is a terrible indictment of historical Christianity. It shows how that faith fought against science; how it murdered Hypatia and Bruno, and suppressed Galileo. It deals with the religious wars and massacres engineered by Christianity. Of the awful tortures and burnings of the Inquisition and the witch-finding mania, concluding with a description of the awful state of grossness and immorality which prevailed in Europe during the Middle Ages, the Ages of Faith, when Christianity — having crushed Paganism and Freethought—reigned alone, supreme and triumphant.

The second section consists of twelve chapters, entitled "Christianity in China," which, after showing—often from the testimony of the missionaries themselves—the superior morality, toleration, and politeness of the Chinese, things which they are, in many respects, in a better position to teach the population of this country than we are to teach them, goes on to show the uselessness and the actual harm done by missionaries in China. It also shows the terrible injuries inflicted, in blood and treasure, upon the Chinese by Christian nations.

The third section, or "Conclusion," consists of eight chapters, and is a general review of the subject. Sir Hiram gives a list of standard works, like those of Professors Draper and White, Buckle, Mosley, and Lecky, in history; and Giles, Edkins, Smith, Morrison, Parker, Little, Holcombe, Lynch, Norman, Davis, and others, all high authorities on things Chinese, several of whom are themselves missionaries. Sir Hiram gives chapter and verse from these authorities for every statement he makes; his book, therefore, forms a crushing indictment of Christian missions in China.

The facts cited by Sir Hiram in this book are well known to our consuls, diplomats, and, in fact, to anyone who has studied Chinese affairs; but, as Mr. George Lynch has observed, they are afraid to speak out. "I have seen," he says, "the subject gag the mouths of diplomats, politicians, prominent army officers, and men in all manner of high official positions," and he adds:—

> "It is curiously interesting what different opinions you hear expressed in private by sensible men throughout the East compared with those which appear in any of their public utterances, printed or otherwise." *

It is only from men like himself, who, as he remarks, have not to cultivate "the votes of any constituents" that we get the truth. Sir Hiram also very lucidly explained this point to Li Hung Chang. After pointing out that our governing class depend upon votes for their official positions, he observes:—

> "In many cases the parties are so evenly balanced that only a small percentage of the votes is necessary to turn the scale in either direction; therefore, both parties and all officials are bound to cater for the missionary propaganda, at least in the sense of not interfering with it. It is safe to say that not more than one per cent. of our official class is in favor of sending missionaries abroad; still, they dare not oppose it" (p. 5).

The first grave objection to preaching Christianity to the Chinese, observes Sir Hiram, "is that it consists of a series of statements about the world and man which are flagrantly inconsistent with modern knowledge, and disdainfully rejected by most of the leaders of thought in Europe." Moreover, he adds:—

> "We are sometimes told that when we criticise the statements of the Bible we are flogging a dead horse. The truth is that not only do missionaries offer the Bible to highly civilised people like the Chinese with an assurance that it is the gospel of progressive Europe, but we officially impose its discredited statements on all our school children in England. Millions of our less educated adults are encouraged to believe these statements literally, and even the alleged higher scheme of Christian belief is directly based on them" (p. 7).

But if the missionaries had to depend upon their teaching of religion alone for converts, they would get very few specimens to exhibit. They have to be attracted by other means, and the name "rice Christians" indicates one means of attraction. But this method has been so much exposed that it is now discredited, although Sir Hiram cites the testimony of Mr. J. F. Davis to the effect that—

> "A few Catholic missionaries still make converts of the lowest and poorest Chinese, who occasionally appear at the churches and receive each of them a small donation of rice, for which reason they are sometimes called, in Portuguese, 'rice Christians'" (J. F. Davis, *The Chinese*, p. 223).

The more modern method is to attract them by teaching them English, or by giving medical and surgical aid. "We hear much of the success of medical missions," says Sir Hiram, and he cites the following amusing testimony of Major H. Knollys, from his *English Life in China* (p. 180) as to the cause of their success:—

> "Thus far they had at all events preserved a semblance of attention, but at last nature asserts herself, and the undisguised sighings and naive yawnings are impressively portentious. Then empty medicine bottles and cups are held up to the light,

* G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, pp. 253-4.

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and say as plainly as spoken words: 'About time to finish your harangue. Let us get on to the salves, the potions, and the boluses.' At the conclusion of service the patients flock into the surgery for treatment."

The same writer is indignant at "the glowing accounts of results and success" published by the missionaries, and declares:—

> "I have before me at this moment a flaming report on China missions—would that I might particularise its title!—the statements wherein have been concocted either by a knave or a fool, so grossly false are they."

In the chapter entitled "Europeans in China," Sir Hiram draws up a damning indictment of the Christian nations in their dealings with the Chinese; from the beginning to now it has been a policy of perfidy, robbery, and spoliation, punctuated by rapine and murder.

In an eloquent passage the author tells us his reason for publishing this work:—

> "I have had but one object in compiling this book, and that is to save human life and prevent human suffering. If this humble effort of mine saves one Chinaman from being killed, one Chinese girl from being outraged, one Chinese village from being looted and burned, or prevents one misguided man or woman of my own race from wasting his or her life in the vain and foolish attempt to make the Chinaman change the name of his religion, I shall be satisfied" (p. 22).

In a leaflet enclosed in the book he also expresses the wish: "If the book is read in England and the United States, I am hopeful that it will do something to cut off the supply of gold that enables the missionaries to inflict themselves upon the innocent Chinese." But the author knows too well the character of the apostles of the religion which exhorts us to love our enemies to have any delusions as to how they will receive his book, for he further observes:—

> "I venture to assert that the testimony of my many witnesses, together with my own remarks, are unanswerable. Superstition and falsehood are not able to meet the two-edged sword of Truth and Reason in a fair stand-up fight, and no recourse is left to the missionaries and their supporters except personal abuse. I have done my best to expose the wickedness and folly of the worst religious propaganda that we have on this earth to-day, and I must expect my share of abuse and falsehood, together with hundreds of abusive letters, the greater number of which will be unsigned, so as to make it impossible for me to strike back."

Sir Hiram, in this work, follows in the best traditions of the great Freethinkers of the past. Voltaire and Paine passionately protested against all cruelty and injustice. Charles Bradlaugh, in our own time, espoused the cause of the oppressed natives of India. And this work of Sir Hiram's will prove a more lasting monument to remembrance than any of bronze and marble that can be conceived, showing that the great inventor of the automatic gun and the pioneer of the aeroplane, was not only a great inventor, but was also a hater of injustice and a lover of mankind.

The book is lavishly illustrated, well indexed, and forms a very handsome volume.

W. MANN.

A Poet's Polemic.

The Muse in Exile, by William Watson. Herbert Jenkins, 1913.

IT is at once the privilege and the penalty of genius to receive the homage of appreciation and vivisection by contemporaries. That task in lesser cases is left for the professors and critics of a later age. Browning's vogue was the basis of many Browning societies, who explained to the master his own meaning when he had forgotten it. But Mr. Watson is not in need of interpretation like Browning. It is seldom that one finds a poet possessing such clarity of utterance. He has a fine tact of exclusion, and rejects all that is gusty, noisy, or unbecoming. The poetry of Mr. Watson has always seemed to us full of an austere beauty, and we think of him, not as we think of many poets, as merry minstrels singing in the guest hall, but as a ministrant to the Goddess of Liberty, burning, with a stately grace, the incense and the precious gums.

Looking back at the volumes he has already given us, with their fine music, we notice the growth of a greater dignity and a more majestic beauty. His "Lachrymæ Musarum," which made so notable a stir when Tennyson died, must rank as one of the finest poems we have had for many years. Mr. Watson handled the great theme of august death right worthily. In the picture of Tennyson's reception by his brother poets, Mr. Watson's language was exquisite:—

> "Keats, on his lips the eternal rose of youth,
> Doth in the name of beauty that is truth,
> A kinsman's love beseech."

The description of the dead poet is very fine:—

> "Master who crowned our immelodious days
> With flowers of perfect speech."

On the subject of death, indeed, Mr. Watson always writes with dignity. It is not too much to say that "Wordsworth's Grave," "The Tomb of Burns," "In Laleham Churchyard," and "Shelley's Centenary" will be linked indissolubly with the memory of those great writers they celebrate, so penetrating is the insight into the genius of each poet.

Mr. Watson is master of a magnificent vocabulary. His command of splendid and striking imagery is remarkable, and his poems are a golden treasury of jewelled aphorisms. Take, for instance, the following felicities:—

> "The mystery we make darker with a name."
>
> "Not in vague dreams of man forgetting men,
> Nor in vast morrows losing the to-day."
>
> "Song is not truth, not wisdom, but the rose
> Upon truth's lips, the light in wisdom's eyes."
>
> "And set his heart upon the goal,
> Not on the prize."
>
> "The august, inhospitable, inhuman night."

Mr. Watson's poetry is consecrated to the service of man. His "Purple East" and "A Year of Shame" are full of a noble humanity. He has never concealed his Freethought. It is apparent in "The Eloping Angels," a poem of which any man might be proud; but the splendid audacity in "The Unknown God" has not been surpassed by any living poet. The latest volume from his pen, *The Muse in Exile*, will flutter the literary dovecotes. For it is a poetic arraignment of contemporary literature, written with uncommon dignity, and reinforced with a critical essay. This prose introduction was delivered last year by its author to American audiences, and it must have given Transatlantic lovers of literature a very poor impression of English men of letters. For, according to Mr. Watson, England no longer cares for poetry, and, largely, this neglect is due to the wilful misrepresentations of the reviewers, who, in the noble pursuit of "log-rolling," distract and bewilder the reading public, so that they imagine that contemporary poetry has nothing to give them which can illustrate or clarify life.

Hence, the muse is in exile, and when Mr. Watson passes from critical argument to the happier expression of poetry, he brings the present generation to judgment:—

> "Let me do no wrong
> To her whose child I am: this giant age,
> Cumbered with her own hugeness, as is the wont
> Of giants. Yet too openly she herself
> Hath slighted one of Time's great offspring: she
> Hath slighted Song; and Song will be revenged.
> Song will survive her: Song will follow her hearse,
> And either weep or dance upon her grave."

And, again, with more biting phrase, he imagines that Stupidity is enthroned as the monarch of all:—

> "The dullards of past generations, the undiscriminating crew
> That turned deaf ears to Shelley, that turned blind
> eyes upon Keats,
> Unchangeably incarnate, invincibly born anew,
> Still buzz in the press and the salon, still lord it in
> learning's seats.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> When all things else have perished, Stupidity shall remain
> And sit secure on the ruin of every star of the sky."

All this makes sad reading; but we are convinced that it is an over-statement, a poetic exaggeration.

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The present age naturally suffers by the passing of such magnificent poets as Meredith and Swinburne; but the popularity of the poetry of Mr. John Masefield shows the reading public's interest in verse, while, if success upon higher levels be desired, the array of editions of Robert Bridges, Francis Thompson, and, we may add, Mr. Watson himself, are in themselves a refutation of the idea that true artistry in literature is no longer held at its proper valuation. The readers of Meredith and Swinburne, of Browning and Tennyson, were fond of real poetry, and that of the best, but they would not have troubled about the minor verse of uninspired nobodies. Let the modern poets give us as good poetry as the masters, and there will be an end of the slump in poetry.

"For in life's midmost chamber there still burns
Upon the ancient hearth the ancient fire,
Whence are all flamelike things, the unquenchable muse
Among them, who, though meanly lodged to-day,
In dreariest outlands of the world's regard
Foresees the hour when man shall once more feel
His need of her, and call the exile home."

MIMNERMUS.

Church and State in Portugal.

ON April 20 the Portuguese Republicans—in other words the Portuguese people, for with the exception of the defeated hangers-on to the Braganza brigade, and the Church and its dupes, the people of Portugal are heartily in sympathy with the new regime—celebrated the second anniversary of the proclamation of the law decreeing the separation of Church and State. This glorious date, which records the triumph of a great principle of democracy, was the crowning achievement of the long and devoted labors of the Association of Civil Registration founded at Lisbon eighteen years ago. That body, composed principally of Freethinkers, had Republicanism for its ideal, and the divorce of religion from politics and the complete secularisation of all the functions and attributes of corporate civil life, as its ultimate object. When Portugal got rid of the Monarchy the "grace of God," alias the Church, which maintained the Carlos regime with all its vileness and corruption, received its moral and political quietus; and there was no longer any necessity to put the State under the patronage of a mythical Deity. The natural result of the establishment of the Republic on a secular basis was to let loose upon the new regime all the monarchistic and aristocratic bandits of Portugal, who, from the vantage ground of reactionary Spain, made repeated inroads from across the frontier, and in England it inspired the journalistic duchesses to fill the columns of the *Daily Mail* with far-fetched extravagances of assertion and insinuation. The crimes of King Carlos and his satraps, the plunder by them of the national purse, and the reign of terror established by them under which the lives and liberties of the people were constantly assailed—all these highly favored abominations failed to stir the defeated rebels into martial activity, or stir up the disinterested duchesses of Old England to assume their time-honored rôle as heaven-appointed protectors of popular freedom. Happily, the genius of the Portuguese people can afford to smile upon these efforts to re-establish the reign of Humpty Dumpty.

While the Portuguese Republicans remain aloof from religion they are bound to receive the homage of these attacks. They are liberating themselves from a hateful yoke, and teaching Spain and other nations to follow in their footsteps: hence these ducal tears. Nothing, indeed, more heroic has been seen in the history of democracy than the revolt of the Portuguese people against the corrupt monarchy that had so long degraded and impoverished the nation, and against its faithful unscrupulous ally the Church, that great engine of moral corruption which for long and cruel centuries exploited the ignorance of the people. When, therefore, the long-suffering Portuguese nation rose against the Braganza dynasty and drove it into exile, the next, the inevitable, step to take was to capture that other citadel of tyranny, the Church, and reduce it to its proper position as an institution divorced from the State, and subject to it, like all other organisations, religious or secular, in the community. As a measure of national self-defence this was the true, the only, line of policy.

The soil of Portugal was for generations soaked with the blood of heretics, schismatics, and unbelievers, both of Gentile and Jewish blood; and if the Lusitanian Freethinkers and Radicals who, after incredible sacrifices, made the Republic on October 5, 1910, had allowed the Church and its ministers to continue in the enjoyment of their tyrannously unjust privileges over the public purse and over the private conscience of the citizen, the new regime would have deserved not only the contempt but the loathing of mankind.

In disestablishing and disendowing the Church, leaving only to the present hierophants, by a generous and almost excessive consideration of present occupants, a conditional life-interest in their existing sacerdotal functions and relative emoluments, the founders of the Portuguese Republic acted with statesmanlike promptitude, wisdom, and moderation.

First, as to its *promptitude*. The Lusitanian Republic did not foolishly waste precious time *in* Fabian delays, or in creating dilatory half-measures, prolonged during forty unnecessary, wasteful years of compromises and tergiversations, before grappling with the problem and dealing with the abuses that had grown up with and around the Church, as was the case of the French Republic. The Portuguese Republicans at once took their courage in both hands, and signalised the ratification of the new regime by a bold and statesmanlike scheme of disestablishment and disendowment. This much-needed reform—a lesson to England and other nations—destroyed at one blow the political and social status of the Church as the dominating moral organ of the nation, and established the principle of the laicisation of the functions and attributes of the State. This sound policy of rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and leaving "God" to take care of himself and his ministers and devotees, will ultimately restore, in full, to the Portuguese people the rich patrimony (consisting of edifices, works of art, and ecclesiastical lands and revenues) from which the nation had too long been defrauded by the unholy complicity of the Altar and the Throne.

As to the *wisdom* of the reform, this is sufficiently indicated by the impotent rage of the Church and its reactionary partisans, and by the fact that the change effected by Portugal has won the admiring approval of all sound Radicals and consistent Rationalists throughout the world.

The *moderation* of the new law is evidenced by the crucial consideration that if justice had been rigorously applied to the Church after the fall of its ally, the Monarchy, not a single particle of its ancient patrimony, not a farthing of its revenues, would to-day be in its hands.

In all this work of regeneration Portugal has nobly redeemed its dignity and national greatness by a drastic cleansing of its augean stables. If, in the future, it spends its revenues in creating new schools that shall be temples of culture and refinement, where its rising generations will be taught the truths of science, the doctrine of human brotherhood, and the duty of thinking freely and of nobly living, the country will enter upon a new career of glory won on the fruitful fields of Peace and Progress.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

By Suggestion.

THE kingdom of heaven is within you, say good people; and this morning I am inclined to agree with them. A substantial breakfast constitutes a considerable portion of the heavenly kingdom, taking it from a basely materialistic point of view; and a

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mind blessed with the prospect of a few days peace is another satisfactory allotment of Celestia, taking it from a sublimely spiritual point of view. Consequently, I may say, in all safety, that a soul-satisfying slice of heaven occupies me.

Add to that a fine warm sun, a freshness and clearness of atmosphere, the songs of hundreds of birds, and the sense that winter and its gloom are gone for another spell, and you will understand that the Christian's language has no powers to make me angry.

Even the remark, passed in my hearing, that "of all the peculiarities of humanity an Atheist was the most objectionable," simply served to put a human effervescence into the glass of happiness. A broad-brimmed feeling of toleration opens the gates to the fields of amusement; and I smiled.

But the remark set me thinking. The man, to whom we are so objectionable, belonged to the more-or-less-intelligent type. He read a little, thought a little, and spoke a lot. A cheery ring of infallibility gave all his utterances an optimistic tone. He made it quite clear he had thought deeply on whatever subject chanced to occasion his remarks; that he had not taken the slightest notice of other people's opinions; and that natural modesty restrained him so far as the publicity of his conclusions were concerned. He was too powerful and independent a thinker to trouble much about his own post-mortem safety. Christ came to save *all* sinners; but he was not very sure about the Atheist. His infallibility hesitated near the Atheist.

The more-or-less-intelligent resent that which they cannot label. Insecurity is always slippery; that is why Christians are so eager to be charitably disposed to Atheists, saying to themselves, "Poor fellows! they have no hope; nothing to hold on to!" And so it was that my friend, while he gratuitously pitied Atheists, found them objectionable. They were incomprehensible; and the Christian, though he swallows huge doses of supernatural incomprehensibility, is irritated by the slightest dose of the ununderstandable in human nature.

Why are we objectionable to the average religionist? Certainly not because of any mental antagonism, nor because we interfere, directly, with his beliefs, disturbing his equilibrium during his privacy; for the average Christian, in the first place, is quite incapable of real reasoning antagonism; and, in the second, Atheists, by their very training, are not likely to penetrate, without permission, into the sanctity of individual liberty of belief. We are objectionable because our morality is questionable.

With the average Christian, whether he be of the Salvation Army selection or of the middle class *élite*, there is, behind all the verbal trivialities he may eviscerate, the firm conviction that the Atheist's morality is suspicious enough to make it dangerous.

How long will it be before Christians will discover sufficient honesty in themselves to admit we Atheists are even judiciously inclined towards an acquaintanceship with decency of life? How long will they esteem themselves angels and regard us as incipient devils? How long do they intend to keep up the mental farce of imagining themselves the saintly custodians of morality? Just so long as Christianity is a subversive social force; so long as it lives.

The fastidious gentleman, who thought an Atheist's room better than his company, received his instruction in abhorrence of "infidelity" from the pulpit. Knowledge comes to the more-or-less-intelligent people in snatches. Oftener than otherwise it is of the spotted variety: diseased with prejudice. They get a lot of it from the pulpit; for the pulpit is the greatest purveyor of damp dough as wholemeal bread. It beats journalism in the lust for talk; and journalism is not at all stingy.

Nowadays the pulpit does not directly and dogmatically charge us with immorality. Its style is more corruptive. It deals in suggestions. A man is not wicked because he is an Atheist. No; but goodness depends on God's presence within man. God inspires, attracts, loves the best in his children; brings it out; fructifies it; blesses and multiplies it; makes it manifest. The man who has God in his heart possesses God's goodness in his heart also. His life irradiates it. All of which would be excessively pleasant, if it were true; but it is a lie, and a criminal one.

The more-or-less-intelligent listen. Characteristically, they are exceptionally keen at elucidating obvious suggestions; and their conclusions are more courageous than the pulpits' circumlocutions. Atheists are immoral dogs, plague spots; and for this estimation of our character we have to thank the morally superior sex that occupies pulpits, and gives instruction to their more-or-less-intelligent flock. Not that it bothers us; rather does it amuse; for the Christian, when he forgets his Christianity, which happens so frequently that we wonder what its value is at any time, also forgets our depravity. But this aspect of pulpitarianism shows Christianity in a green light.

Organised religion becomes little more than an organised distribution of falsehood, done up in gaudily colored tissue-papers, and sold as a free-will offering. Priests become the distributors of mental rubbish that would bring a blush of shame to the cheeks of a hardened shoddy manufacturer. Consistently and persistently, by suggestion, they instruct their sheep in the excellence of their goods over those of the Atheist; and if they timorously yield a grain of truth in their sermon, they joyfully—no, lugubriously—outweigh it by a ton of lying suggestion in their prayers.

But, enough! the hand that sows tares reaps tares, and the harvest time never passes under unmelting snow. And there is a blackie perched on a young elm, and his song would send the "soul" of a Shelley to the highest heights of poetry.

ROBERT MORELAND.

A Year's Work of the Humanitarian League.

THE Annual Report of the Humanitarian League, presented at the annual meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel, deals with several subjects that have lately been before the public. Regret is expressed that the Government should have sanctioned flogging in the Criminal Law Amendment Bill; but in other respects a steady progress is noted, as in the growing demand for the reform of slaughter-house methods, and for the succoring of wounded horses on battle-fields—questions to which the League has specially called attention. The formation of local branches in Glasgow, Manchester, and other places has helped to extend humanitarian activities and influence.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 24.

Mr. Cohen was elected to the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Baker, Barry, Brandes, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davies, Davidson, Heaford, Leat, Lloyd, Lazarnick, Moss, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Wood, J. W. Wood, and Miss Kough.

A letter was read from Mr. Foote explaining that, although better, care of his health was still necessary, especially in regard to night travelling. The Secretary was instructed to convey the congratulations of the Executive to the President, and their hopes of seeing him amongst them shortly.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were admitted for the Parent Society and the Huddersfield Branch.

The Agenda was reported as complete, and further arrangements were made for the Conference.

The Chairman reported that another meeting of the deputation to the L.C.C. Parks Committee had taken place, and they were still without a definite reply.

Mr. Cohen further reported on the meetings of the Scholarship Management Committee, and read a draft syllabus shortly to be issued for the guidance of applicants.

Some correspondence with the Wood Green Branch was dealt with and other business having been transacted, the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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INDOOR.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Ruskin House, Station-road): 7.30, Monthly Meeting.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Cowell's, 44 Jenner-road, Stoke Newington): Business Meeting—Outdoor Chairmen.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Strakers' Tea Rooms, 224 High-road, Tottenham, near Seven Sisters Corner): Wednesday, May 7, at 8, Special Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Davidson, "Why Should I Believe?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): J. Rowney, a Lecture.

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

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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All the sin of men I esteem as their disease, not their nature.—JOHN RUSKIN.

"The Boycott of Mr. Foote."

"Anyone who takes a chief part in the game we play, shall and must provoke all fools, knaves, and idiots to think and do their worst."—Carlo Ammiani in *Vittoria* (vol. i., p. 194) by GEORGE MEREDITH.

THE above quotation is very appropriate in leading off this article, the occasion for which arises out of the publication of my article on "George Meredith: Freethinker" in the March number of the *English Review*, and some excellent paragraphs on the matter from Mr. Cohen's pen in the *Freethinker* during the severest part of my recent illness. Mr. Cohen's paragraphs, in reply to an anonymous critic in an obscure orthodox periodical, together with other references to the subject in answers to correspondents, attracted the attention of my distant friend and colleague, Mr. George Macdonald, the editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, who wrote the following leaderette in his paper:—

> "The best and best advertised article in the *English Review* for March is entitled 'George Meredith: Freethinker,' and is by Mr. G. W. Foote. For many years Mr. Foote has been patiently doing some of the best writing that appears in English print. Had his pen been at the service of a more popular cause than Atheistic Freethought it must have brought him fame, for good writers are scarce. There is a mystery about what the *Freethinker* calls 'the boycott of Foote,' just ended by his appearance in the *English Review*. The former monk, Joseph McCabe, now a Rationalist, long since invaded standard publications, where he is accepted with all his heresies, while John M. Robertson has no trouble in achieving print in the most respectable places. Mr. Foote is not less scholarly if less involved in style than Robertson, and there is a "class" to his work that does not distinguish the admirable writings of McCabe. Mr. Foote has what on this side we crudely call the punch, and his restriction to the columns of the *Freethinker* has been a loss to that part of the English public who like trenchant prose but are unacquainted with that paper. We have no mate for him here unless it is Mangasarian, who, however, while unsurpassed for substance, may not always phrase with the same facility as his English compeer and admirer. The art and gift of writing well, or more than well, are shared without jealousy by those who have them; envy is inevitably felt by persons less favored."

I need not dwell upon the compliment that Mr. Macdonald pays me. I could not omit it without spoiling his leaderette, and I don't see why I should if I could. I have "suffered so much," as the phrase goes, from boycotting, misrepresentation, and downright slander and libel, in my already long public career, that I may as well let a compliment fall into the other scale now and then—when it happens to come along. Especially when the compliment is honestly written by a competent expert. For if I have been buried from the British public (just like my fellow-contributors, by the way, in the pages of the *Freethinker*), it is no less true that Mr. Macdonald has been similarly buried in the pages of the *Truthseeker*. I am not saying it for this occasion—I have always said it—that Mr. Macdonald has a very pretty natural gift with the pen and a faculty of sly ironic humor with which he might have coined (no, no, that won't do in America—let us say dollar-billed) his pockets and his bank account, if he had served his interests instead of his principles. Persons used to writing may note how well Mr. Macdonald's leaderette is written. There is terseness in it—honorable cunning, running past artfulness into art—strength and firmness of language—and the last sentence lifts the whole matter into a lofty moral atmosphere, in which the base and sordid perish of asphyxiation.

I had rather not have had to bring the names of other Freethought publicists into this complimenting of myself, but I cannot help that either; and Mr. Macdonald's last sentence must serve as the antiseptic to any abrasion of literary skin his criticism may have produced.

But to the point. Mr. Macdonald fails to understand why the boycott has been maintained so long against me when Mr. Robertson and Mr. McCabe have enjoyed the hospitality of highly respectable publications. But is this fact not partially explained, at any rate, by the very compliments he pays me? "Trenchant prose" is seldom enjoyed by those whose opinions are attacked—and they are the great majority when it comes to religious controversy in ordinary periodicals. What our American colleague calls "trenchant" they call by more violent adjectives, of which "ungentlemanly" is the mildest, and "vulgar" and "brutal" only half way up the scale. It is so difficult to reply to the editor of the *Freethinker* (*and* his staff—and his *staff*) and so easy to call him names and walk away full of "indignation," that one need not wonder, after all, that this old and effective trick is so constantly patronised. That "punch" too—borrowing Mr. Macdonald's forcible Americanism—is another explanation. If you have a bad case, and your adversary hits your weak points in every sentence, leaving no room for mental evasion or rhetorical sophistry, you will engage him as seldom as possible. Moreover, the toleration which Mr. Macdonald notes as extended to Mr. Robertson and Mr. McCabe is not what he thinks it. Mr. Robertson is a learned writer, and the critics, for the most part, praise his learning and say as little as possible about all the rest. Mr. McCabe gets a mere mention in the press when he writes a definitely Freethought book. Let him write on Secular Education, and the critics wink at each other with closed mouths. It is an expressive "Mum." Let him run down the Catholic Church, and the Protestant press—including nearly all the Liberal newspapers—applaud him vociferously. No doubt he is doing his own work in a way, but he is doing theirs too, and they know it.

For the forthright implacable style in Freethought—the style of Swift, if I may mention that great name in this connection—there is no more toleration than there ever was in England. "The boycott of Mr. Foote" is not done with because a liberal-minded editor saw that a certain article was desirable and that a certain man was the person to write it. "The boycott of Mr. Foote" is indeed broken down in the case of the *English Review*. But there are not many liberal-minded editors. A single swallow does not make a summer, and a single Mr. Austin Harrison does not make a tolerant English press.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Nemesis of Faith.—II.

(Concluded from p. 275.)

THE full significance of the continuous emergence of Christian sects manifesting some form of sexual extravagance is obscured by the fact of their being relatively small bodies. This, however, is inevitable. The larger the Church, the more it becomes subject to the play of normal social forces, which tend to curb extravagance in all directions. And when a single Church includes the majority of a people, this tendency receives still more complete expression. In such cases the more extravagant developments are prevented. The Church then has to legislate, not for special tendencies and particular individuals, but for general tendencies and for humanity in the mass. The consequence of this is that certain expressions of the religious life can only be found with a few—with those whose perception of special features of religion is much more powerful than the pull of ordinary social life. With the mass of men the tendency is for the interpretation of religion to be determined by social considerations. It is only the few who really and genuinely try to mould society in accordance with the religious idea.

Rightly considered, the remarkable thing is, not that the dominant Church should have repeatedly tried to suppress these curious religio-sexual outbreaks, but that they should so continuously reappear in the history of Christianity, and that they have, moreover, claimed the strongest religious sanction for their existence. How many of these sects have existed it is impossible to say. Many must have disappeared, and left no trace of their existence. That they were very numerous is beyond question. Thus, in the second century we have the Adamites, an offshoot from the Gnostics. Their name was derived from the fact that on entering their place of worship both sexes stripped themselves naked, and went through the service in a state of nudity. The Adamites themselves claimed that the object of this was to familiarise the senses to strict self-control. The more orthodox writers give a vastly different account of the practice.* It is curious, by the way, how strong religious excitement seems to have often led people to avoid clothing. Thus, during the Crusade of 1209 1242, the women Crusaders rushed about the streets in a state of nudity.† During the wars of the League in France, men and women walked naked in processions, headed by the clergy.‡ Other examples of this curious practice might be cited.

Another second century sect, the Nicolaitianes, referred to in the New Testament (Rev. ii. 13-14), was accused of practising religious prostitution.§ So, also, were the Manichæans, a very numerous sect, concerning whom the charges are of a much more detailed character. With them the ceremonial violation of a virgin is said to have formed a part of the regular ritual, and that their meetings frequently ended in an orgy of promiscuous intercourse. As both these acts are found in connection with other religious gatherings, and, as will be seen later, is practised to-day, the story does not sound so incredible as might otherwise appear. The difficulty of deciding definitely is intensified by the fact that the Manichæans, being a very numerous body, were split into a number of sects, and that such charges, while being false concerning some, may have been true concerning others. At any rate, St. Augustine, who had been a Manichæan, says that if all did not lead a licentious life, one portion (the Catharists) abandoned themselves to it, believing they could mortify the flesh only by the practice of all bad instincts and lustful desires, since the flesh proceeded from the Devil.‖

The Carpocratians, who appear to have been a branch of the Gnostics, are said to have held that, as it was impossible to stain the soul by evil conduct, their leader—

> "not only allowed his disciples a full liberty to sin, but recommended a vicious course of life as a matter of both obligation and necessity; asserting that eternal salvation was only attainable by those who had committed all sorts of crimes.....It was the will of God that all things should be possessed in common, the female sex not excepted."*

A little later we have the sect of the Agapetæ also rejecting marriage as an institution, and allowing as a substitute unrestrained intercourse between the sexes, on the ground that "to the pure all things are pure." That some of the charges brought against these and other sects were false there is no doubt. That some were true is fairly certain. The error lies in accusing them, or in thinking of them, as being mere voluptuaries constantly seeking satisfaction for their desires. The truth is that the religious conviction of the propriety of both their teaching and conduct was quite as strong as the religious convictions of those who opposed them. It was this that made their eradication a matter of so great difficulty.

There is no need to go over even the names of all the other sects in the early centuries accused of similar practices to those already described. When suppressed in one form, some of these sects reappeared under another name. Their teachings reappear with the "Brethren of the Free Spirit" of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. Taking their stand on St. Paul's "The law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death," they claimed freedom from sin no matter what their actions. They carried women about with them, held midnight assemblies, and, according to Mosheim, attended these meetings in a state of nudity. The Ranters, the Molinists, the Spirituels of Geneva, the Berghards, the Flagellants, with many others, were all said to have had abnormal sexual practices connected with their religious rites.

Naturally, the closer we get to our own day, and to a period when religious feeling is controlled by a more developed social sense, manifestations of sexuality become confined to revival outbursts, and are more transient in character. Still, they are always occurring. For reasons that do not concern us here, America has in more recent years been the chief ground for the development of sects of "spiritual free lovers." Our own sect of the Agapemonites, with their Abode of Love, received the original impetus from America. A sympathetic account of many of these sects is given by Hepworth Dixon in his *Spiritual Wives*, as well as of similar movements in Germany and England. In some cases the characteristics of the early Christian sects were imitated, even to the length of young women sharing the bedrooms of their spiritual guides. And all appear to have based themselves, as did the early sects, upon St. Paul. J. H. Noyes, himself a leader in some of these movements, in a letter to the author of *Spiritual Wives*, claims "the right of religious inspiration to shape society and dictate the form of family life," and with probable accuracy says that the origin of all these sects is found in revivals. The course of things, he says, may be thus stated:—

> "Revivals lead to religious love; religious love excites the passions; the converts, finding themselves in theocratic liberty, begin to look about for their mates and their Paradise.....Religious love is very near neighbor to sexual love, and they always get mixed in the intimacies and social excitement of Revivals. The next thing a man wants, after he has found the salvation of his soul, is to find his Eve and his Paradise."

For an almost exact replica of some of the erotic extravagances of some of the early Christian sects one may turn to Russia. Here, amongst the many

* See Garrido and Cayley's *History of Political and Religious Persecutions*, vol. i., p. 106; and Blunt's *Dictionary of Sects*, p. 5.
† Crutten, *Psychological Christianity*, p. 157.
‡ Sanger, *History of Prostitution*, p. 116.
§ *Dictionary of Sects*, p. 372.
‖ See *Dictionary of Sects*, pp. 290 292, and Garrido and Cayley, p. 50.

* Mosheim, cent. 2, ch. v., sec. 14.

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millions of dissenting sects, one meets with the strongest and wildest varieties of sexual teaching and practice. The nature of marriage, or the institution of marriage, forms one of the main causes of division. The Bezpopovtski, for instance, vary between holding marriage as a mere conventional institution and a denunciation of it as altogether sinful. "Between these two extremes," says a well-informed writer,

> "there is room for the wildest and most repulsive theories. Carnal sensuality is allied in monstrous union with religious mysticism. Free love, independence of the sexes, possession of women in common, have been preached and practised. Debauchery, as an incidental weakness of human nature, has been advocated as the lesser evil; libertinism as preferable to concubinage, and the latter as preferable to marriage."*

The Klysti, a sect which derives its name from the practice of flagellation, denounce marriage as unclean; but Baron Von Haxthausen, in his *Visit to the Russian Empire* (1856), describes them as practising ceremonies not dissimilar to those related of the Agapæ in its most decadent stages. An offshoot of the Klysti, the "Shakoumi" or "Jumpers," openly teach that the only way to conquer the temptations of the flesh is by unbridled satiety. The "Cupids" were so called from their custom of practising their religious dances completely naked. The "Skopski" take their stand on Matthew xix. 12, and practise emasculation. They say that man should be like the angels—without sex and without desire. With most of these sexes dancing is an important form of the ceremonial. The wild character of these dances remind one forcibly of what one reads of the dervishes of the East, and there is no doubt that they are provocative of strong sensual excitement. Heard, describing the dance of the "Shakoumi," after describing the performance of one of the leaders of an assembly, says:—

> "The audience, arranged in couples, engaged to each other in advance, imitate his example and join the strain; the bounds and the singing grow faster and louder as it spreads, until, at its height, the elder shouts that he hears the voices of angels; the lights are extinguished, the jumping ceases, and the scene that follows in the darkness defies description. Each one yields to his desires, born of inspiration, and therefore righteous, and to be gratified; all are brethren in Christ, all promptings of the inner spirit are holy; incest, even, is no sin. They repudiate marriage, and justify their abominations by the Biblical legends of Lot's daughters, Solomon's harem, and the like."

I have given but the barest of outlines of a subject that might easily fill a moderately sized volume. The association of these curious sexual aberrations with deep religious feeling is undeniable, and of peculiar significance. For it would be allowing sectarian prejudice to cloud one's understanding to assume that with religion in general, and with Christianity in particular, we are dealing merely with outbursts of crude sensualism. Sensualism may have been associated with these outbursts precisely as the loftiest of causes may gain adherents among those whose motives are of the meanest. But fundamentally they witness to two things. The first is the deep connection between religious and sexual feeling. This, as I have shown in previous articles, begins very early in the life of religion, and persists in a more or less marked manner through all subsequent stages of its history. The second fact is that this particular expression of religious opinion is only held in check as social forces assume control over religious ideas. The religious idea, unregulated, is capable of any extravagance. It is the restraining force of a secularised social consciousness that first of all checks the extravagances of religious belief, and subsequently finds a useful outlet for energies previously expended in its service.

C. COHEN.

* Heard, *Russian Church and Russian Dissent*, p. 201.

Once More, Watchman, What of the Night?

IT is well-known that for many years the Churches of this country have been compelled to report a serious decrease in membership and in attendance at public worship and the Sunday-schools. In some instances the loss has been on an enormous scale, almost imperilling the very existence of the Churches concerned. This arrest of progress, this evident shrinkage, at home is beginning to have its proper effect on the work of the Churches on the foreign fields. The leading missionary societies appear to be in a most parlous condition financially, their deficits for the last year being exceedingly heavy, the Church Missionary Society reporting a deficit of £28,000, the London, £29,000, the Wesleyan, £11,000, and the Baptist, £10,000. The secretaries of these societies offer various explanations of their discouraging reports, but not one of them seems to realise that the real cause of the deficiencies is loss of faith in foreign missions, and that this loss is to be accounted for by a corresponding loss of faith in the value of the Christian religion to the world. To admit this in public would humiliate a Christian worker too much, and so he makes all sorts of vain excuses for the failure of the Gospel to convert the world. Of course, it is alleged, it is not the Gospel's fault. In fact, the Chairman of the Baptist Union has just declared that in the Gospel "we can tolerate no suggestion of change, though it present itself in the specious guise of a restatement, or of an adaptation to this wonderful age." It is "the everlasting Gospel, which we have received to deliver," not to amend, revise, or adapt. Principal Gould, while believing that the Gospel needs no revision, is indeed too sacred to be touched by the adapter's coarse hands, is yet of opinion that the methods of presenting it to the world require a scrutinisation of the most drastic nature. But we maintain that the Churches are declining not because of defective methods of presenting the Gospel, but because a scientific age is finding out that the Gospel itself is essentially false.

Instead of frankly acknowledging that Christianity has had its day, and is being driven out of the field by the growing enlightenment of the people generally, the Baptist Union urged the desirability of adopting improved methods of commending it to a sceptical age. Two years ago it appointed a special committee to consider the spiritual welfare of the Churches, and that committee has just submitted its report, which deals with "the causes of weakness in the Church life itself," and recommends certain measures for the general strengthening of "the body of Christ," but which contains not the least hint or suggestion that the Churches are weak and steadily getting weaker because the Gospel, which they exist to propagate, is itself a lie. And yet to observing minds nothing is more obvious than that the real cause of the weakness of the Churches is the very Christianity which they seek to perpetuate. It was candidly admitted by Dr. Newton Marshall that "the convictions of even their most intelligent young people were distressingly vague and fluid"; but it did not occur to him that the vagueness and fluidity of their convictions naturally resulted from their superior intelligence. Multitudes of people believe because they have not got brains enough to doubt. The most devout Christians are generally to be found among ignorant peasants. This is a fact that cannot honestly be gainsaid. The more intelligent a man is, the fewer are his beliefs, and the less firmly held. Speaking of the most intelligent young people in the Churches, Dr. Marshall said:—

> "How little equipped they are for conflict with the anti-Christian notions so readily and indeed confidently held by many of their companions, and expressed as though they were themselves inspired in many modern books. The way to defend our youth from the contagion of unbelief is not to keep them in ignorance, but to feed their minds, to make them understand that the robust intelligence is not the one that capitulates to the

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challenge of Scepticism, but rather that which is strong in faith—as the old heroes of knowledge and progress were strong in faith."

Dr. Marshall would have been wiser had he paid closer attention to his logic. Having admitted that the convictions of their most intelligent young people were extremely vague and fluid, he proceeded to show that the best way to safeguard them against infidel attacks was to "feed their minds"; but it is perfectly clear from the context that, in the reverend gentleman's estimation, the suitable food for such minds is not natural knowledge, but that pseudo-knowledge which cajoles people into the belief that the highest intelligence is that which is strong in faith. Does not Dr. Marshall know that the overwhelming majority of the most intelligent people in Great Britain to-day are unbelievers in Christianity? Why is it that the bulk of our scientists have neither part nor lot in the Christian Church? Is it because they are lacking in robust intelligence that Professor Schafer and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, for example, champion the mechanistic conception of life? Is it as a result of his ignorance that Sir Ray Lankester advocates the same view in his famous work, *The Kingdom of Man?* Has Dr. Marshall the temerity to come forward and publicly affirm that the most intelligent people in our land are active members of Baptist and other churches? Surely not, for he has already exclaimed, "Alas, how vague and fluid are the convictions of our most intelligent youth." Consequently, without fear of well-considered contradiction, we assert that it is the steady growth of intelligence that is so ominously threatening the lives of the Churches.

Principal Gould styled himself a "revolutionary" Chairman of the Baptist Union; but we fail to see where the "revolutionary" element is to be found in his address as published. We are persuaded that, like Dr. Marshall, he gave his case away. Take the following quotation which he makes from Dr. Jefferson:—

> "The problem of developing new converts is even more perplexing than that of retaining the allegiance of old ones. It is easier to convert men than it is to educate them. The converts are many, but the developed workers are few. Only a small proportion of those who start the Christian life ever reach spiritual maturity."

The undeniable truth of that extract carries with it the equally incontrovertible disproof of the truth of Christianity. Converts are so easily made because they are made in childhood and youth. Principal Gould says:—

> "It is a matter of notoriety that our Churches are recruited almost exclusively from the young. Particular and exact inquiry invariably confirms the vague impression that so it is. Take such results as those which Mr. Carey Bonner tabulates in his volume of Ridley Lectures. He tells us that of 800 ministers who were asked to state at what period they made the great decision, 270 answered that it was before they were eighteen years of age. When the same 800 ministers were asked: 'What, in your experience, is the general age for religious decision?' 212 definitely gave the age as under twenty. A wider inquiry addressed to 3,500 professing Christians yielded this notable result, that 75 per cent. of the males and 85 per cent. of the females assigned their decision to years between ten and eighteen."

No wonder that "it is easier to convert men than it is to educate them." But the whole truth on the subject of conversion is not told in the above extract. By "conversion" is meant of making of a public profession of faith in Christ. As a rule the children who get converted between ten and eighteen are believers in Christ almost from infancy. Almost as soon as they acquire the art of talking they are taught to sing,—

> "Jesus loves me. This I know,
> For the Bible tells me so,"

—and to say prayers in which they beseech "Jesus, meek and mild," to "look upon a little child." Their conversion is, therefore, merely the giving outward expression to the faith mechanically instilled into them before they could think at all. This is true of practically all conversions, even of those so-called conversions which take place in mature years at revival meetings. Almost without a single exception converts are believers prior to their conversion. Now, who is the alleged author of conversion? When the definite decision for Christ is made, what, according to Christian teaching, is supposed to happen? If the conversion is genuine God is its author, and he brings it about in order that his Spirit may enter the convert's heart and sanctify it, making it his home, his temple wherein ever to dwell. Do you not now see how utterly absurd the saying is that "it is easier to convert men than it is to educate them"? If the Gospel is true all converts are pupils of the Holy Ghost. They have received a new, Divine nature, a nature full of docility, even eager to be led by the indwelling Spirit. What need can they have of human educators, or, in any case, how can it be difficult to educate God's own children who have undergone two distinct births? Does it never occur to the men of God that they are guilty of high treason against the Savior of the world when they say that "only a small proportion of those who start the Christian life ever reach spiritual maturity"? It is *he*, the Eternal Christ, the Spirit of all grace, who is at once the Savior and Sanctifier of his people; it is *he* who is responsible for the failure of most of his own converts to reach spiritual maturity. And to say this is equivalent to affirming that Christianity is the most gigantic fraud in history. Indeed, such it is on Principal Gould's own showing. *The failure of conversion is God's failure.* A dying Church is a veritable witness to a dead Deity; and men and women are abandoning the former because her whole history bears such eloquent testimony to the latter.

After all, it is neither Freethought nor Science, but the Church that is killing Christianity. It is not Freethinking lectures, but the discourses of representative Christian teachers, that are bringing about the downfall of the Christian Church. The deadliest enemies of Christianity are professing Christians. Ministers of the Gospel constitute the strongest and most unanswerable argument against its truth. Churches are declining in the exact proportion in which people are finding this out. The consequence is that unbelief is in the air and must prevail. Our comfort lies in the undoubted fact that in the ratio in which faith in God and the Church goes out faith in man and his kingdom comes in.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Irony of So-Called Revelations.—III.

(*Continued from p. 278.*)

IT is certainly of some concern to us to know the meaning of "theocracy" in action, when the Romish Church strains, at the present moment, every sinew in its mammoth body to regain its hold upon political power—to become once again a "holy theocracy," a true "kingdom of God"; and woe to humanity if it ever succeeds; it will be the signal for rekindling the fires of Smithfield and for recalling the rack and thumbscrew from their long exile and make them resume their divine duties upon the bodies of sentient beings, for the special gratification and glory of the supreme God of the universe. Of all the bad governments set up by man to rule his fellows, that established by the priesthood, in the name of its God, was the most execrable.

Religion, however, has another representative on earth beside the priest in the person of the prophet, and I wish, before I conclude this section, to bring my modicum of "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," and lay it as a devout offering at his feet. For the prophet, especially for the Hebrew prophet, I have an esteem that approaches to reverence. Words cannot convey my unbounded admiration of his lofty morality, spiritual fervor, and righteous indignation. He, also, spoke in the name of his God; whether it

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be from a customary mode of expression, a desire to secure for his arrows and shafts a divine impulse to speed them on their flight—or was it sincere self-deception as the result of transports of delirium as is ordinarily experienced by epileptic and neurotic subjects?—which it be I care not, I reverence him still. It is also true that the prophet, like the priest, is in the service of religion—a medium of divine revelation—but there is a fact which separates them as widely as the poles asunder; the priest is always on the side of the gods, the despots, the exploiters, and *against man*. Whereas the prophet is invariably on the side of humanity, of right, of justice, and of mercy. He pleads for the wronged, the weak, the widow, and the downtrodden.

It is the voice of the prophet that I hear ring out so silvery from the pulpit of the New Theology, and which compels me to wish it god-speed; for it is a voice often raised on behalf of afflicted humanity and against the gilded, the glorified, and worshiped molochs—the vampires which drain the very life-blood of the modern world.

PART II.

1. Let us now leave the body, with its physical and social needs, and turn to those which belong more strictly to the mind. As man's intellect developed, and as the resources of civilisation multiplied, there awoke within the mind new voids, gnawing, irritating, and painful. Man was seized with the passion to *know*. Not now, as means to relieve his physical wants, but to know for knowing's sake. Events and phenomena puzzled and annoyed him. He craved for explanations; he demanded to know the How, the Why, and the What of every experience. It was emphatically a human want; no animal had ever felt its bite. Man had partaken of the fobidden fruit, and the fatal apple had opened his eyes to a self-conscious existence. This had flung open the portals of his mind, through which were admitted the germs of a new disease. The microbe of knowledge entered his soul and filled it with a new anguish which nothing on earth could immediately satisfy. Superior and omniscient intelligences, however, could have relieved him at once. What an opportunity for the gods! Did they ever avail themselves of it? Search the history of human knowledge for a record and I venture to predict that you will search in vain.

Every page of its annals will bear indisputable evidence that, in whatever direction he moved, man had to hew his way, alone and unaided, out of the jungles and thickets of ignorance before ever a gleam flushed the Eastern sky with the faint first promise of either day or of dawn.

If we examine the entire field of civilised knowledge, we shall find that in every department of science, theoretic or applied, man had to clear out a path through the dense thickets of ignorance with the axe of his own reason. Nowhere can we find any trace of assistance or of a ray of light ever vouchsafed to him from on high. What inspired Bible contains a statement of the fundamental generalisations of science? In which can we find embodied the principle of universal causation, of the uniformity of nature, of the correlation of forces, of the indestructibility of matter, or of the conservation of energy? These are the foundation and pillars of the temple of knowledge, and yet revelation has never made the remotest allusion to their existence. Nor, indeed, is this rigid silence in respect to essential knowledge the worst part of the indictment against it. The irony of it all is seen in the bogus instruction offered to appease this craving for knowledge. In place of facts to explain the How, the Why, and the What, revelation supplies us with legend and with myth.

And yet we have not sounded the bottom of its guilt; for revelation tells us that the direct opposite—the very antipodals—of the foregoing principles obtained in nature, viz, that caprice is more characteristic of her method than uniformity, that magic is a principle of causation, and that all events were explained by regarding them as the doings of spirits, either friendly or hostile.

2. Lastly, let us inquire what light has come to us from the supernatural in regard to itself. What positive knowledge has man ever received about matters alleged to exist beyond the pale of phenomena? Nothing could be more appropriate than for the unseen world to divulge some of its own secrets, especially since man was declared to have vital interest in them. Besides, man's craving for knowledge has never been confined to phenomena; for milleniums he has been burning to know what is beyond the veil—what is the ultimate reality. His plight, however, in this case, is more pitiable than in respect to any of the others, for it is beyond his power ever to satisfy this yearning by his own resources. He has found out means to appease, more or less effectually, all his other longings; but at the confines of phenomena he has reached the length of his tether. Just as the eagle cannot soar above and beyond the atmosphere which supports and buoys it upwards, so the human intellect cannot transcend phenomena—the vital element in which it lives and floats. Man can extend his vision with the microscope to any extent he likes and then speed away on the wings of his imagination to any further extent, and yet he has not crossed the frontier—he is still in the realm of phenomena. Nevertheless, he has always yearned to know what is beyond them, and his ravenous impatience drove him to guess, and guessing he has been ever since. But there is no intrinsic harm in guessings; they serve their due season as balls for a mental game, and so soon as they burst they vanish, to give place to others apparently as lasting but equally as perishable and hollow. The mental exercise tends to keep the human mind vigorous and healthy. It verges on the harmful only when, like cricket and football, the game is adopted as a professional vocation.

But when speculation is taken under the ægis of religion then guessing becomes a positive evil, for theology instantly petrifies the guess into a "revealed truth," which acts thenceforth as a sprag amid the pinions of the intellect and locks the free motion of its wheels. It is when the guess is stereotyped as an eternal verity that it arrests all mental growth by acting as a barrier to the origination and flow of ideas. But what adds irony to it all is the fact that the sanity of guessings even bears a direct relation to man's degree of intelligence and culture, that is, to the stage of his mental development and civilisation. The guessings of primitive man were accordingly barbaric and grotesque, and yet it is these which we find incorporated in sacred books as divine revelations of eternal truths. Let us then see what are the cardinal tenets among these petrified speculations.

(*a*) The premier article of faith in all religious creeds is God as a revealed existence. It is the fundamental assumption of all religions. But the mental and moral contents of this notion are as diversified as the landscape of the earth from the pole to the equator. Only to a wholly imaginary conception could the same word be applied to so heterogeneous a crowd. The common elements which string them together are nebulous, elusive, and fleeting. They would instantly fall to pieces but for the class word, "God." That alone keeps together, in the semblance of unity, the multitudinous forms of a conception which is ever changing like the forms of a cloud, and has been doing so from that early dawn when man's fear first projected it, huge and threatening, on the vast screen of his ignorance.

Now, what is important to observe is that the types of God revealed in the Bible are not in the least possible degree any exception to this universal law. They are neither unique nor constant. Nothing could be more false or ludicrous than to imagine that the Bible, because it denounces Polytheism, is itself monotheistic. We are presented with at least two types of God differing essentially from one another. In the earlier portions of the Bible we get revealed to us a fully anthropomorphic Deity, one with an

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individual name like all the other gods. Later on this turns into a metaphysical one, retaining of its human model only man's faculties and affections. Jahveh, as you know, was man-like in all essential features. He walked in the Garden of Eden, he talked with Adam and Eve, with the serpent, and with the patriarchs. He differed from the Hebrews themselves only by being a more powerful magician than they were. In intelligence, in knowledge, and in moral qualities he was exactly on a par with the semi-barbarians who presumed to reveal him.

When the Hebrew people, however, had developed the resources of their language so as to include a wealth of abstract terms, the God Jahveh entered the chrysalis state and underwent a complete metamorphosis. His various attributes, mental and moral, stood out as separate existences which the vivid Hebrew imagination soon endowed with personalities, and lo presto! out of the pupa case emerged the metaphysical Trinity.

I wish, however, in passing to make a comment or two upon these different conceptions of God. Firstly, that they are absolutely incongruous with each other as well as with the knowledge and conscience of the twentieth century. For fully nineteen centuries have the talent and genius of Christendom incessantly toiled at the impossible task of trying to fuse incompatibles—the finite and the infinite, the wise and the ignorant, the cruel and the merciful, and the malicious and the loving—into unity and harmony. This attempt led to opening the sluices and floodgates to all kinds of subtleties in thought and speech; so much so that it threatened to overwhelm the human intellect and swamp it in a deluge of metaphysics—a catastrophe only narrowly averted through the intervention of a few valiant heretical pilots who braved the surging flood, though in battered arks.

No less remarkable is the fact that, notwithstanding the palpable incongruity between the images of Jahveh and the Trinity-God, they are both alike products of the human mind—every item in both has been quarried in human experience. The only difference is this—that in one the stones are left in their naked crudity and ruggedness, while in the other they are metaphysically chiselled and trimmed. Neither conception possesses a single attribute, power, faculty, or affection which is not originally human; and this is tantamount to saying that they are no revelations at all.

But what touches the hollow claim with bitter irony is not its falsity or its arrogance, but the fact that the modern apologist is literally ashamed of his *revealed* God, either anthropomorhic or metaphysical. To the New Theologian the moral attributes of either Jahveh or the Trinity are as abhorrent as their mental qualities and powers are unworthy. He does his level best to empty the word of its revealed contents and to refill it with the products of reason! Can there be anything more humiliating to God-given revelation than to empty the very word of its revealed and original meanings and then to try and replace them with avowedly human conceptions? I can think of none.

KERIDON.

(To be concluded.)

PANAMA.

"The San Blas Indians are a remarkable people. They live close to the works of the Panama Canal, occupying a narrow strip of territory along the shores of the Caribbean Sea.....They know that the white man would come into their country only to exploit them, and they therefore keep him out.....From early days, they have been able to keep their women free from contamination with white men, and to-day they will not permit a white man to sleep in their country if they can readily get him out of it by sunset..... At various periods missionaries have attempted to evangelise in the San Blas territory, but few Indians would listen to them. Apparently, they object to save their souls at the cost of their lands."—*Chambers's Journal*, May, 1913.

What a significant condemnation of Christians! Evidently the San Blas Indians diagnose character better than the Chinese officials who ask the Christian Churches to pray for them.

Acid Drops.

The *Daily Mirror*, of April 18, devoted half a column, with a portrait, to the case of Helena Gunning, a learned housemaid, who has been for some eight years in the service of Mrs. Walter Wright, 8 Henderson-road, Wandsworth. Her "cooking, sweeping, and dusting" are none the worse for her attention to serious studies. The reporter sings the young lady's praises from all points of view. He even mentions some learned sceptical works that he saw upon the shelves in her "orderly little room," one being Thomas Paine's masterpiece and another Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*. Miss Gunning's name was not unknown to us. We have several times heard from her as a reader of the *Freethinker*. We are not surprised, therefore, that amongst the letters the *Daily Mirror* notice has brought her is one from a Christian bigot of the first water. Miss Gunning sends it to us to do what we like with; and we extend the privilege to our readers. Here is the body of the letter:—

> "If we are to judge you by the rags you read I take it that you are a follower of the ex-convict Foote. Well, follow him to hell if you like, but, if you take the advice of one who has found Christ you will stop reading such blasphemous books, which should not be put on the market, and study God's word. What does a babe like you want to know about paganism and evolution? Study your household duties and leave such things to the blaspheming infidels. Stop before it is too late."

The writer of this letter is a man; we mean that he is of the male sex; witness his insolence about the young lady's "household duties"—which, by the way, she performs to her employer's satisfaction. Another thing about this writer is that he has forgotten his manners, if he ever had any. He has also forgotten his name and address; which is a pity, for we would have immortalised him without charging for the advertisement. But this sort of correspondent generally does forget his name and address, especially when he not only indulges in rudeness towards the person he addresses, but also in libels on other objects of his spite. Mr. Foote, of course, is not an "ex-convict." "Blasphemy" is only a misdemeanor—and a convict is one sentenced to penal servitude for felony.

This insulter of Miss Gunning and libeller of Mr. Foote states that he has found Christ. What we should like to know is, whether Christ has "found *him*"? We hope not. It would be a poor compliment to Christ.

"Western Christendom," says the *Christian World*, "responded with fine unanimity to the appeal of the Chinese Cabinet for the prayers of Christian people on behalf of the new Government." So this particular lie has passed into history—Christian history, that is, and it will be circulated along with the other pious "yarn" about Queen Victoria delivering a Bible to a colored chief, and declaring it to be the source of England's greatness. The Chinese Cabinet made no appeal for the prayers of Christians. It merely fixed a day for prayer, and invited Christians to join in the scramble. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that since the prayers were offered the condition of things has grown worse in China. Some provinces, dissatisfied with the proceedings of the Cabinet, have threatened revolt and asserted their intention to set up an autonomous Government. There is evidently a story to be told about the invitation to the Chinese Christians to pray for the welfare of the Cabinet. We do not know what this story is, although we have a strong suspicion as to its character. All we do know is that British Christians have not missed the opportunity for self-advertisement and some pretty tall lying.

Amidst all the hypocritical blather in England over the Chinese "day of prayer"—as if it were got up solely for the Christians, instead of being extended to them as an act of politeness—a word of sense and honesty came from the lips of the Rev. Cyril Bardsley, honorary secretary of the Church Missionary Society. Being interviewed by a *Daily Chronicle* representative, this gentleman expressed the view that Christianity had a fine prospect of success in China. But there was a serious danger which could not be ignored. It is the one "already experienced in Japan—the educated may easily become Atheists." That is more than a danger in every "heathen" country that feels the ferment of Western ideas. It is quite evident to people of the intellectual calibre of Japs and Chinamen that the Christianity of the Western nations is all humbug. They boast of it, they spend vast sums of money on missionaries to spread it over the globe, but they do not believe in it for they make no attempt to practise it—at least as it is set forth in the New Testament. It is not Christianity that gives Great

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Britain, for instance, its world-wide power; no, it is material wealth and naval and military strength,—the very things, in fact, which the New Testament most severely condemns. Intelligent "heathen" see the real "secret of England's greatness" and are acute enough to practise her example rather than her teaching. Japan is herself a world-power now, and has not only beaten Russia in a stand-up fight but has shown that she does not mean to stand insults even from the United States. And how did she reach that position? Was it by accepting Christianity? No. She tested it and found it wanting. She accepted Western science, but not Western religion. She saw that Christian nations paid no respect to the law of right unless they had more to lose than to gain by doing so. The law of might was the guide of every Christian nation, not only in its dealings with "heathen" countries, but even in its dealings with fellow Christians. Japan recognised that the respect of Christian nations was not to be gained by *honor* but by *strength*. So she made herself strong in what that great Christian statesman, William Ewart Gladstone, called "the resources of civilisation." She raised and trained large armies, she provided herself with the most powerful, up-to-date battleships, she studied the art of war, she prepared herself for a struggle against a Christian adversary ever so many times bigger than herself; and when the hour struck she defeated that gigantic braggart on land and sea. That is how Japan won the respect of the Christian world. Her art, her literature, her social discipline, all the things that make a nation intrinsically great, counted for nothing; her power to kill her enemies with A 1 rapidity was her passport to the comity of nations. And that fact alone is decisive as to the real influence of Christianity upon the world.

We understand that there are three thousand Christian missionaries now working—perhaps we should say operating—in China. But this shows the weakness rather than the strength of Christianity. If its boasts were true, if it were a divine religion, founded by God himself and upheld and promoted by God ever since, it would not need three thousand missionaries, nor three hundred, in China. God would convert the Chinese in his own good time. He would not need the help and encouragement of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Robert Cecil. We suggest that he might even dispense with the help and encouragement of the Rev. Dr. Clifford and the Rev. F. B. Meyer.

We invite these pious gentlemen who have been contributing their prayers (and deuced little else, we guess) to the progress of China, to tell us what good their prayers have ever done for England. Certainly the Chinese do not need to borrow anything from us in the way of morality. They would be doing nothing *outré* if they sent some of their own missionaries over here. They might teach Englishmen politeness, veracity, and honesty. These virtues may not be as necessary to salvation in the next world as belief in the Trinity, in the inspiration of the Bible, and in Heaven and Hell. But they are necessary to salvation in this world. They are very useful and pleasant *here*, whatever they may do for us *hereafter*.

"Father" Stanton is said to have taken no salary for his services at St. Alban's, Holborn. His estate has been valued at £26,186. It was easy to do without a salary on a fortune like that.

Rev. R. E. St. Aubyn Arkwright, vicar of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, inflicted dreadful wounds upon his neck with a razor, and was found dead in his bedroom. He had suffered severely from insomnia. One is sorry to hear it. But how is it that Christians find these troubles as hard to bear as Atheists do? Where does the "consolation" of religion come in?

Fifteen hundred young men, members of the Drexel Biddle Bible Classes, assembled at the First Methodist Church, Camden, New Jersey (Walt Whitman's old residence!) to hear Mr. E. P. Stotesbury, the wealthy Philadelphia partner in Pierpont Morgan and Company, deliver an address designed "to awaken in the audience a desire to save money" by "exhibiting to them several hundred thousands' worth of gold bonds." Jesus Christ never had a chance of illustrating his Sermon on the Mount in that way. He probably never saw a gold coin, he certainly had no bonds, and his price, when Judas "sold" him, was thirty pieces of silver (shekels)—about £3 15s. Mr. Stotesbury's economics are no less peculiar than his piety. He preaches the virtue of "saving" and he spent £25,000 on a dinner and dance. He also confuses saving with acquisition. Saving is the surplus of what a man earns over what he spends. Acquisition is diverting other people's savings (or earnings) into your own pockets or somewhere under your own control. Millionaires like Mr. Stotesbury are not savers but acquisitors. And the virtue of saving easily becomes a vice. Trade depends on spending, not on saving. This is true both in production and distribution. A little money put by for an emergency is a very good thing; but the emergencies that are certain, such as death, or nearly certain, such as illness, accident, and want of employment, should be provided against by insurance, and not by miserly habits of life. Undue saving makes capital too cheap to the millionaires, and at the same time lowers wages for the workers. Mr. Stotesbury may feel this if he does not know it, and his preaching is on the line of his interests.

The Philadelphia millionaire was good enough to tell his audience that he started making his fortune with £10. No doubt he thought that was a bedrock minimum. But there was one person who began with less. He started with nothing, he made everything, and his name is "God." This is not our own announcement. It is what Mr. Stotesbury teaches himself. We remind him of it charitably—to save his head from bursting.

Walter Thomas Young, a youthful Englishman, who has been arrested at New York, was an insurance solicitor six days a week and a Sunday-school teacher on the seventh day—and a burglar every night. He also attended a fashionable Brooklyn church. He is now paying his devotions in the prison chapel.

The Bishop of Southwark has found a boy who recognises "sense" in the episcopal outfit, including the gaiters and the apron. Had the right reverend father in God caught the boy a bit younger he might have recognised "sense" in bishops. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" one has been told to expect praise of ridiculous things.

The Bishop of Oxford declares that the principle of Trades Unionism is thoroughly Christian. Organists and vergers of parish churches will read this statement with pleasure.

Rev. W. H. Bridges, of Edinburgh, writes to the *Guardian* that "the call of China for the prayers of the Christian Church inevitably arouses a sense of wonder.....A so-called heathen nation has taken us at our word. We said we believed in prayer, and they have believed us." And now Mr. Bridges asks, very pertinently, why not use the instrument of prayer concerning questions of national defence? Mr. Bridges must really be very simple if he seriously thinks the Chinese believe that we are likely to depend on prayer in any genuine emergency. The Chinese have had too many bitter experiences of Christian dealing to harbor any such stupidity. Of course, if we really placed any dependence on prayer, there is no reason why we should not make the question of national defence a subject of prayer. But what effect would it have? Would it be likely to affect votes in the House of Commons? Would it stop Churches playing the part of recruiting sergeants? Or does Mr. Bridges mean that the form of national attack and defence is to be that of an army of parsons, on either side, praying against each other? That would certainly provide a use for the clergy, and if out of earshot of the rest of the population the suggestion might be worth considering.

It is part of a carefully fostered superstition that those who write on behalf of militant Freethought are ignorant, illiterate, and may be profitably ignored. Many of the religious writers who are busy circulating this legend must know how untrue it is, although they receive a certain countenance from those timid Freethinkers who long for the heaven of respectability, and seek to get there by assisting this slander on their more mentally robust fellow heretics. To say that an opponent is ignorant is a very easy retort; it gives those who use it an air of authority, and it "warns off" that large class who are only too ready to take their opinions at second hand. We were not at all surprised, therefore, to find a reviewer in the *Manchester Guardian* describing Sir Hiram Maxim's book, *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, as exhibiting "great ignorance," "violence of language," etc., and that the result is "painful." We do not doubt the last part. Whether a thing is painful or pleasant is a quite personal matter. It entirely depends upon what it is that is affected. No one will deny that to clear out a nest of vermin, for instance, is very painful—to the vermin

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The curious thing is that Sir Hiram's book does not claim to be more than a compilation. And it represents a thoroughgoing attack on Christian belief and practices, with special reference to the foreign missionary movement. This attack

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is conducted, in the main, by a series of quotations from writers mostly of admitted standing and authority. Consequently, the charge of ignorance really lies against *them*, and not against the compiler and editor. It is true that the reviewer says that Sir Hiram does not know how to use his material, but that only means that he does not use it in a way that suits the reviewer. Had he quoted writers of similar calibre in favor of Christianity, it would have been well done. As it is quoted against Christianity, it is ill done. That is all there is in the matter. We cannot retort that the reviewer betrays *his* ignorance, as his review is too petty to need so powerful a word. But it does betray both his temper and his partisanship, and those who can read between the lines of his review will take his disparagement of the work as an incentive to purchase.

The reviewer seems particularly annoyed with Sir Hiram's confession that he found himself able, at the age of thirty, to discomfort a roomful of parsons, and "After this occurrence I made a point of going very thoroughly into history, philosophy, and religion, especially the religion of the East. I read everything I could find, fully determined to make myself able to meet all comers; and I think I have succeeded." It doubtless seems very monstrous to an orthodox reviewer that a single Freethinker should discomfort a roomful of parsons, or that he should be able to meet all comers on Christian claims; but is this such a colossal feat, after all? For our part, we confess that we should not be stricken with astonishment at the ability of a Freethinker who was able to silence orthodox Christians, but we should feel a little disgusted if he failed at the task. The "trickiness" of Christian disputants in riding away on false issues might call for a display of greater mental agility on the part of the Freethinker; but the disproof of Christian claims is child's play to a man of fair knowledge and ordinary ability. The substantial doctrines of religion are very few, very simple, and very ridiculous. They are on precisely the same level as a host of universally discredited religious beliefs; and if the *Manchester Guardian* reviewer is not aware of this, it is only because he does not really understand religion, and exercises his paid impertinence on those who do.

The German papers state that the Kaiser has opened a factory for the manufacture of margarine. We are not surprised, for, as an amateur preacher, His Imperial Majesty has already churned out a lot of oleaginous stuff.

According to a wealthy contemporary, the King has twenty-five morning suits, about twenty shooting outfits, besides uniforms and evening dress. Well, well! "The King of Kings" only wore a mackintosh and a halo.

Recently a provincial Methodist preacher was summoned for stealing gas by tapping the main. We never heard of parsons stealing gas before. It is an article in which they are generally well provided.

A young girl was recently convicted for stealing handbags from worshipers at Church. The deterrent effects of religion are not very marked in this instance. We remember a story of a churchwarden, on a rainy Sunday, stalking down the aisle with three umbrellas under his arm, for the use of his friends. At the door a stranger remarked, "Had a good day, I see."

The Rev. Lord William Gascoyne Cecil is evidently a Christian fanatic. In an article in the *Daily Mail* for May 5, he says that "non-Christian races are treacherous." Does not the noble Lord know that treachery is a *human*, not a *Heathen*, weakness? Is he not aware that the Great European Powers have been guilty of treachery in their recent treatment of Turkey? Has not the British Empire been treacherous in its subjection and government of aboriginal races in India and Africa? Are we in Christendom strangers to "the treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate"? Why should the reverend lord go out of his way to insolently slander non-Christian races?

Lord William falls into other deplorable errors. He speaks of "the absolute failure of the native religions" of China. As a matter of fact, Confucianism and Buddhism have conferred moral greatness upon the Chinese people, and there is no sign whatever that they are now disowning and abandoning the sources of their strength. Lord William has visited China and imagines that he knows both it and its inhabitants; but we much prefer to listen to the testimony of such high authorities as Professor H. A. Giles, Mr. Chester Holcome, and M. Eugene Simon, who, having spent years in China, give the direct lie to Lord William's estimate of the non-Christian Chinese character. His lordship is equally wide of the truth in the statement that China "is becoming Christian." The native Christians are but a handful, and, with very few exceptions, belong to the most ignorant classes. China will doubtless adopt Western science; but she is surely too wise to take over the religion which has been and is such a stupendous failure in the West.

Believing that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, Christians are resolved to do everything within their power to convert the rest of the world to their way of thinking on every subject. In particular they persist in vigorous though futile attempts to force their own religion upon all Heathen nations. In Buddhist countries such attempts are good-naturedly tolerated, but scarcely ever prove successful. In picturesque Ceylon, for example, Catholic and Protestant missionaries experience no opposition on the part of either Buddhist priests or the laity; but all the Christians on the resplendent isle number only 360,000, in spite of the fact that 10,000 of the inhabitants are Europeans, and 23,000 Eurasians (descendants of Europeans and Singhalese). For the lack of Christian progress the missionaries blame the Portuguese and Dutch Governments, and partly the British authorities; but the truth is that the people value their own system far too much to exchange it for an inferior one. Latterly there has been a great revival of Buddhism throughout the island, and numerous schools have been opened after Western models. Why cannot Christians stay at home, where there is much more of immorality, degradation, and misery than in beautiful Ceylon?

"J. B.," of the *Christian World*, is an evolutionist, and, being a supernaturalist as well, imagines he can see the next step in evolution. The last step was from animal to human, but the next will be from human to divine. This is a highly interesting item of information; but will "J. B." be good enough to tell us where, when, and how he acquired it? Did the animal that became man know what the next step would be before it was taken? It is self-evident that "J. B." is as yet only human—how on earth does he know that he is going to step into divinity, or what divinity is? He does not know, any more than he knows that "big as the physical universe is, the spiritual one is vastly bigger." Only a theologian would venture to talk such arrant nonsense.

Lord Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, plainly says that the Education Question in England has been from the very first a quarrel between "Church" and "Chapel." It is evidently nothing more now. Witness the letter recently addressed to the Prime Minister by the National Free Church Council and the Nonconformist members of Parliament. What they demand in the projected new Education Bill is a remedy of "the injustice to Nonconformists." Injustice to *them*, forsooth! At present they control the religion taught in half the elementary schools, and the "injustice" they complain of is that they are not allowed to control the religious teaching in the other half,—which is controlled by the Church of England. The truth is that both these religious bodies should be turned out of the schools. No one has any right in the public schools as an Anglican, a Nonconformist, a Catholic, or a Jew. He has a right there only as a citizen. That is really the whole case for Secular Education in a nutshell.

Lamentation fills the offices of the leading missionary societies, instead of the customary hallelujahs, because the public no longer subscribes for the propagation of pious tarradiddles in foreign places. The London Missionary Society has a deficit of £29,000, while the Church Missionary Society has a shortage of £28,000. Yet they are sure of converting China.

The newspapers have been making a fuss over two aged persons, a brother and sister, who lived on only one old-age pension. What would the journalists have said had they been present when Elijah was fed by a raven, or when five thousand persons were surfeited with three sardines and two buns?

The Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Wakefield, recently descended a coal pit, provided with a miner's coat and lamp, and spending about an hour in the mine. Was his lordship trying to emulate the poor founder of his religion, who worked at a carpenter's bench with a jackplane?

"Christ and Patriotism," runs the title of a letter in a recent issue of the *Labor Leader*. Surely "God" should be a cosmopolitan rather than a patriot; but so many people from Palestine are "patriots" nowadays.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £123 18s. 5d. Received since:—Mr. Harrison (per H. Saill), 2s. 6d.; Three Birmingham Saints (per H. Saill), 17s. 6d.; C. J., £3; Mrs. Alice Lee, 4s; C. H. Shepherd, 10s.; Wm. Broadbent, 10s.; J. Tomkins, 2s. 6d.; A. Vickers, £1; J. E. Stapleton, 2s. 6d.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for batch of cuttings.

J. B.—You will let us hear further if you have fresh news of the Comte article you mention. Thanks for your letter. Mr. Foote is making steady and sure progress.

E. B.—Your cuttings are useful and welcome.

J. C. MAAGARD.—Surely you don't imagine that the writer of the paragraph meant what you ascribe to him. The first half of the paragraph negatives the idea. Perhaps you are joking. Eleven o'clock at night is a suspicious hour for finding Christ.

J. TOMKINS.—Thanks for cuttings, subscription, and good wishes. The cuttings are interesting, and may be useful later, but are crowded out this week.

(MRS.) A. LEE.—P.O. allocated as desired. We, too, are proud to learn that the daughter of an ardent Freethinker is not only treading in her father's footsteps, but bringing her children up to march along the same road. It is the adherence of such as yourself that makes the work easier for the next generation. Sorry you cannot get to the Conference on Sunday. Another year, perhaps.

D. MAPP.—We sympathise fully with the spirit of your resolution, but notices of motion for the Conference must appear on the printed Agenda.

BERTHA WORRELL.—Save for accidents—against which none are secure—there is no doubt that Mr. Foote will be present at the Conference meetings on Whit-Sunday. Great truths find strong men, and they become still stronger by expressing them. Mr. Foote will doubtless feel flattered at your very high opinion of his work, and we can say on his behalf that the approval of those who are with him in his life's work is the only approval he desires. He will be pleased to learn that his lectures and writings have been "a very great help" to you in your pilgrimage from falsehood to truth.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

This notice will be just in time to remind some of those who have decided to attend the Annual Conference of the arrangements already made. The two meetings in Clavier Hall, Prince's-street, Regent-street—morning and afternoon are business meetings, and for N. S. S. members only. The evening meeting in Queen's (Minor) Hall, at 7, is open to the public, and we hope that Freethinkers will see that the hall is well filled. All the leading speakers of the N. S. S. will be present, with the President in the chair. Moreover, admission is free, and this gives an extra opportunity for London Freethinkers to do a little propaganda work by bringing along their more orthodox friends. Freethinkers who arrive in London from the provinces on Saturday evening will find the Secretary and members of the Executive ready to receive them at the Bay Malton Hotel, 160 Great Portland-street, W.

"Literary Gossip" will be resumed in the *Freethinker* shortly. Meanwhile we call attention in this column to the *English Review* for May. Its contents are as varied and interesting as usual. Poetry is represented by ten sonnets by different writers. We hesitate to award the palm where the themes and treatment are so diverse. Mr. Bernard Shaw's "Overruled: a Dramatic Story" is clever, like all his work, but it has little substance: it is, indeed, a farce, and reads a good deal like a satire on Mr. Shaw's weaknesses and limitations. Henri Fabre's "The Pond" and Walter Raleigh's "Boccaccio" are perhaps the best things in the present number. Mr. Normon Douglas's "Blind Guides," dealing mainly with Nelson from an adverse point of view, is strongly written and has some vivid ironical flashes at the expense of religion. There is much suggestion (we are not punning) in the anonymous article on "Synthetic Man." "Be Hard, my Friends" is the title of several pages of stimulating paragraphs by the editor, Mr. Austin Harrison. The concluding sentence is worth pondering: "To be strong it is necessary to be hard—to oneself first and always." We should add that the book-reviews fill many pages, and are well written in a liberal spirit. Altogether the *English Review* may be recommended to men and women who want to face facts and find the truth.

Chicago seems to be a flourishing centre of Freethought activity. Mr. Mangasarian, Mr. Roberts, and Mr. H. Percy Ward (late of Liverpool) discourse there to large and different audiences every Sunday. We have just received a letter from the last of these propagandists:—

"1209 Ashland Block, Chicago,
April 21, 1913.

Dear Mr. Foote,—

I am very sorry to read in the *Freethinker* of your serious illness. I trust that you are now well on the way to complete recovery; and I hope that for many years to come you will be able to fight the good fight of Freedom.

I am, with best wishes,
Sincerely yours,
H. PERCY WARD."

Many in America will share Mr. Ward's hope.

The Bethnal Green Branch was wrongly announced in our last issue as starting its open-air lectures in Victoria Park on May 4. The Branch's outdoor propaganda does not start till May 18, when Mr. Davidson lectures in the afternoon and Miss Kough in the evening.

A meeting to consider the formation of a Wolverhampton Branch of the N. S. S. will be held in the I. L. P. Rooms, Dudley-street, Wolverhampton, to-day (May 11), at 3 o'clock. Local Freethinkers are earnestly invited to be present.

The *Humanitarian* (organ of the Humanitarian League) for May gives on its front page two notices of Mr. H. S. Salt's new pamphlet, *Fallacies of Flagellants*." One is from the *Freethinker* the other from "a certain Recorder," who calls the Humanitarian League's publications "irritating trash." The juxtaposition of the two notices is rough on the Recorder. Feeling, sense, and style are on the heretical side this time.

We don't wish to join in any local dispute between the Rev. Forbes Phillips, of Gorleston, and his adversaries. But we are sorry that trouble is made over our recent reference to him in the *Freethinker*. He was unconventional enough to hope that Mr. Foote would soon recover from his recent severe illness. There doesn't seem much harm in that—unless those who think there is believe that it would show a better heart and better manners to hope that Mr. Foote would *not* recover. It appears, however, that he has been taken to task for his simple act of courtesy. Mr. Phillips hits out as follows in last week's *Yarmouth Mercury*:—

> "Mr. Microbe waxes furious over the fact that I had ventured to write to express my sympathy with Mr. Foote in his recent illness. I always admire honest thinkers, and Mr. Foote is one, and I have merely contempt for the trickster who is hiccoughing blatant blasphemy one day and shedding salt tears on the penitent form next day—who sniffles with piety while selling a cheap-jack watch, and the same night in his club makes gibes about sacred things. Give me the honest Atheist before the sloppy Christian, even when he has a score of conversions to his credit or discredit."

Mr. Phillips doesn't want our aid in such a matter as this, nor do we proffer it, for he is well able to take care of himself. All we do is to note that he is not to be frightened out of his tolerance of difference of opinion on the part of those who want to find the truth.

O Mundo of April 27 publishes as a leader Mr. Heaford's article entitled "The Clamor Against Portugal." The *Freethinker* is duly acknowledged as "the splendid Freethought review which is published in London," and Mr. Heaford is greeted as "a great friend of Portugal."

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Portugal and Its Traducers.

THE *Daily Mail* editorial of April 23 pins its faith to the statement that "the prisons [in Portugal] are worthy of the Middle Ages." On that point I might content myself with the statement that the imaginative editor has evidently not made himself acquainted with the Christian cruelties which abounded in the prisons of the Portuguese Inquisition, with the smiling approval of kings, priests, duchesses, and literary "gents." But there is no need for the editor of the *Daily Mail* to transport himself into the dead past towards which the priests, his protégés, look back with longing eyes. The *Daily Mail's* special correspondent at Lisbon might have told him of the report published in *O Mundo* of April 15, of Mr. Swinny's visit to the Penitenciary, at Lisbon, where many of the political prisoners are lodged over whose lot the Duchess of Bedford shed such eloquent but ineffectual tears. Mr. Swinny, as our readers are aware, is the learned and respected president of the London Positivist Society, and his stay in Lisbon synchronised with the publication of the sensational emanations of the Duchess's pen. On his visit to the Penitenciary, he was received by the director, Dr. Caldeira Queiroz, and inspected all the dependencies of the prison—the cells, the offices, the hospital, the pharmacy, the cuisine, etc. He found that corporal punishment was unknown. Mr. Swinny also ascertained that the prisoners are engaged in associated labor; that they enjoy the privilege of conversation during their labor; and that they are permitted to receive visits once a week (think of it, ye English prisoners for blasphemy, and all ye tribes of Suffragettes!) Mr. Swinny was surprised to find that the prisoners are permitted to write to their families and friends at will, and to receive presents of food, etc., from outside. *O Mundo* concludes its report (of which the foregoing is only a brief abstract) by stating that Mr. Swinny was much impressed by the humane system of treatment in the prison, and that, before leaving, he inscribed these words in the visitor's book:—

> "I find the installation and functioning in this prison are excellent. From many points of view the prisoners are better treated here than in similar institutions in England."

Since the publication of Mr. Swinny's report in *O Mundo*, Dr. Caldeira Queiroz has himself replied to the calumnious statements which have been published in this country as to the way in which political prisoners in Portugal are treated. According to the *Star* of April 23, Dr. Queiroz's statement is as under:—

> "Political prisoners work as skilled laborers, or as clerks, librarians, assistant chemists, and so on. They receive visitors every week, and, moreover, they are authorised to receive now and then persons who call on them.
>
> "They have the right to use their private linen from home. They receive books, reviews, flowers, fruits, sweets, etc. They may have a safety razor and a spirit lamp, which are kept by the warders at their disposal.
>
> "The prisoners may thus have boiling water, or hot milk and tea. Meals may come from outside twice a day in the quantities they like, and what they please. They can write and receive letters, they can bathe every day if they like, and they are treated with attention and consideration, as are all other prisoners. They are granted all possible concessions within the boundaries of discipline and order.
>
> "None of the political prisoners has yet been punished. It is true that they behave very correctly and express their satisfaction towards the personnel and the way they are treated. They are the first to protest against the accusations relative to the treatment of the prisoners in this prison.
>
> "It must be added that all prisoners are allowed to submit any claims they have to the director, who attends to them whenever he can."

This statement, combined with the independent testimony of Mr. Swinny and the authoritative denials and counter declarations of Dr. Affonso Costa (the Portuguese Premier) in *O Mundo* of April 19, and the detailed reply in *O Seculo* of April 22, must for ever resolve into myth and fancy the *primâ facie* absurdities and far-fetched exaggerations of the ducal diatribes, which seem to be inspired by the pious and reactionary enemies of a Freethought Republic.

Happily, on two crucial and typical matters in this dispute the veracity of the *Daily Mail* asseverations can be checked and very seriously called in question. First, as to the Duchess's "awful" disclosures. *O Mundo* of April 19 reports a speech of Dr. Affonso Costa in the Chamber of Deputies in which, after referring to the campaign of calumny which the Monarchists organised against the Republican regime, the Premier stated:—

> "To-day, the campaign revived with the visit of the Duchess of Bedford to the prisons of Lisbon. This lady was received with every deference, *and after having stated here that she found everything in order, she went home to her own country and stated the contrary.*"

Perhaps the Duchess sees visions, like the prophets of old, and, like them, being of a literary turn of mind, converts them into narratives. At any rate, she evidently has a wondrous gift of seeing the thing that is not, or divorcing the reality from its context. This fact is clear from the second item of her Æolian Hall impeachment, with its extraordinary declaration that "the Portuguese Minister, in an interview, asked 'What is a Carbonario?' and answered himself by saying 'There is no such thing!'" Like all these ducal utterances, no references enabling one to check or verify the statement are given, but apart from the self-evident absurdity of the citation, with its gratuitous addendum later on, suggesting that the Prime Minister "may be" a Carbonario himself, Senhor Affonso Costa, the devoted Freethinker on whose head the vials of the ducal wrath are poured forth, supplied in anticipation the refutation of these extravagances when he stated a few days before, in the Chamber of Deputies (*O Mundo*, April 19), first, that he *never* belonged to the Carbonario; and, secondly, when, so far from regarding the Carbonarios as non-existent, he avowed that—

> "Although I am of opinion that the Society should have disappeared with the advent of the new regime, I do not cease to consider the Carbonarios as the finest type of Republicans and excellent Portuguese citizens."

The ultimate object of this campaign of calumny is the restoration of the Monarchy, the re-establishment of the Church, the disruption of the elements of social reform on the basis of scientific Rationalism, and the return of the community into the fold of the faith. With this ulterior program in view, the cry is made for the amnesty both of the prisoners within and the exiled and defeated bandits across the frontier. In a general way, amnesty is the right thing to plead for and the generous thing to concede in all cases of domestic discord, but a policy of amnesty dictated from Æolian Hall platforms to the sweet accompaniment of international intervention, is one which the Portuguese Prime Minister will, I hope, resist to the uttermost. I am convinced from a fairly wide reading of the facts—partly of those distorted in the present campaign, and partly of those carefully excluded from the organs of ducal publicity in this country—that the prisons in Portugal are, at least, no worse than our own; that the treatment of the prisoners there is more generous than that which our own politicals have immemorially received, with the sublime approval of the monarchical and religious censors of Republican and Rationalist Portugal, and that no English Ministry, in similar circumstances, would yield to threats organised in the Portuguese press. And while this campaign of threat and vilification goes on, my advice to the Republican party in Portugal will be to keep the prisoners safe and comfortable behind bolt and bar, and wipe the word "amnesty" for the time being off the political slate.

The mode of trial of existing political prisoners has formed one of the counts in the ducal fulmina-

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tions. The sure and certain conviction of the prisoners was asserted, but the many acquittals that have taken place reduce that absurdity into pulp. In this connection it may be useful to quote the crushing statement of *O Seculo* (April 22) :—

> "The form of trial [of political prisoners] does not differ from that under which the Republicans engaged in the revolt of January 21, 1891, were tried by Council of War and under worse conditions of defence."

Of course, two wrongs do not make a right, but the hypothetical wrongs of to-day are not proper to be redressed by the aristocratic hands that were never upheld to defend Freethinkers and Republicans who suffered under the odious regime of the lamented Carlos.

One of the items of complaint against the Republic is the alleged banishment of God and religion from the schools. On this point my friend Vieira, one of the most distinguished writers on *O Mundo*, and a leader of Portuguese Freethought, triumphantly points out, in his article of April 15, that—

> "The schools are *without God and without religion* because they are not for, or against, any kind of God, nor for, or against, any kind of religion. No one has been sent to tear down the crosses in the cemeteries, as the Duchess pretends. The crosses are there still in all the cemeteries; they have only been withdrawn from the establishments that were chapels, but which ought not to be so, because as they belonged to all, Catholics or non-Catholics, in no form or guise should they be employed exclusively by citizens of a particular belief. We believe that nothing was ever more just than this."

I heartily agree with the distinguished writer above cited, and I think, too, that the policy of the Republic in depriving the Catholics of the exclusive use of the cemetery chapel, and opening to Catholics the doors of these sad vestibules to the tomb on a footing of absolute equality with Protestants, Freethinkers, Jews, or Spiritualists, is a sound policy of justice and common sense. In monarchical Portugal, as in monarchical England, the hall of Death, the great leveller and democrat, was made the camping-ground of religious privilege, and the last solemn, consoling words of commemoration and parting had to be made not under the dome of some neutral undenominational building, but, if at all, at the open grave, with all its distressing and non-hygienic associations. In this reform, Portugal sets England a salutary lesson. The cross stuck on the cemetery chapels is a theological battle-sign, and should be buried in the dust of oblivion; and the cemetery chapels, in having a common, unrestricted use by men of all persuasions, should serve to unite the living with the bonds of a generous sympathy and toleration.

The Portuguese papers are naturally a little sarcastic in their references to the ducal campaigner. *O Mundo*, in its leader of April 17, very neatly turns the tables on the perfervid enemy of the Republic :—

> "When the widow of the Duke of Bedford appeared in Lisbon [I translate from our esteemed contemporary], the journals were informed that this lady came here with the intention of visiting our prisons. The public asked : 'But what has the Duchess got to do with this? Why does she not spend her time in investigating the things that take place in the prisons of her own country?' The Portuguese public were quite right. In truth, the prisons, the disciplinary and penal regime of our country are, as every properly cultivated person knows, an open sky as compared with the prisons or the disciplinary and penal regime prevailing in England."

The writer goes on to say that in Portugal the dungeon fetters and the hard labor and other penitential afflictions characteristic of English penology do not exist. The actual treatment of the conspirators is, as far as possible, good, and generally their treatment is much better than that of common prisoners, many of whom are in "durance vile" for offences involving less social evil and less moral turpitude than the marauding reactionaries who have fallen under the protecting wing of the *Daily Mail*. It is important to remember, as *O Seculo* says in its address to the English people (fourteen columns of reply to the Duchess, in Portuguese and English, published April 22) that the prisons complained of are "the prisons that we inherited from the monarchy, the very prisons in which the Republican propagators were detained at various times!" The *Daily Mail* dismisses *O Seculo's* refutation of its romantic flights of fancy in about fourteen lines! This may be wisdom, but it is not fair journalism. The reproduction of *O Seculo's* smashing reply would have crushed the mountain of calumnies in the dust and destroyed the credit of the Rev. R. J. Campbell's pious impeachment of the Republic. Saul amongst the prophets was not a more affecting spectacle than that of Campbell among the duchesses. At the Æolian Hall meeting he moved a resolution of "strong and indignant protest," but one doubts whether its "strength" was fortified with an adequate knowledge of the facts. Probably the "indignation" of the emotional mystic of the City Temple will sweep him past the evidence in favor of the Republic which he assails.

I hope that the readers of the *Freethinker* and the friends of fairplay to the Republic will get *O Seculo* and read and circulate it. To Freethinkers, too, in the States I make a special appeal to spread the light. The pictures given of the saloons occupied by the Visconde de Ervideira, one of the maltreated politicals, and of the rooms of some of the other prisoners, which are samples of the rest, are enough to make the mouths of the Suffragettes water with envy. The treatment of the politicals, as here disclosed, places the penal system of Portugal on a high level of humanity and generous consideration for the prisoners who have fallen into the Republic's hands as the legitimate spoils of a desperate war of self-defence waged by the new regime of liberty against the cruel and unscrupulous enemies of social reform and political and intellectual freedom. I do not pretend that even in Portugal the existing prison system fulfils the highest ideal of an enlightened penology (what can a Republic fighting for its life against enemies within and without do in three years?) but I am convinced, after an ample survey of the ground of attack and defence, that the present campaign of calumny has hatred of Freethought and a malevolent desire to crush the nascent Republic as its mainspring.

I am glad that the advice which I tendered to my friend Vieira in my long letter of appeal, dated April 19 (since reproduced in *O Mundo* of April 28) has been taken seriously to heart, and that he was able to prevail upon *O Seculo* to undertake its splendid and convincing vindication of the Republic. It is to be hoped that the titular representatives of the Republic will take care that the widest publicity be given in the press of this country to the true statement of facts as affecting the aristocratic crusade against the fair fame of an honored and chivalrous race nobly struggling to be free from the twin tyrants of throne and altar.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

A Laughing Philosopher.

> "Rabelais laughing in his easy chair."—POPE.
>
> "I class Rabelais with the great creative minds of the world."—COLERIDGE.
>
> "Le rire c'est le propre de l'homme."—RABELAIS.

IN a recent trial, the details of which were sufficiently Rabelaisian to satisfy the most exacting, the learned judge complained that to read Rabelais was a cause of boredom. That is not the general view, and the popular idea of Rabelais coincides with Pope's famous line. He is pictured as one who laughs and mocks at all things; a hog for appetite, a monkey for tricks. His genius had many facets, and he has been described as a great moral teacher, a grossly obscene writer, a reckless buffoon, a Catholic, a Protestant, and a Freethinker. To paint him as an ethical teacher alone is to ignore the innate drollery of his character. To set him up a mere

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mountebank is to forget the stern reality which underlies his writing. Other unconscious ironists would turn the first of French humorists into an ecclesiastical historian.

To treat Rabelais as destitute of all serious purpose in art or life is even a greater error. Whatever Rabelais may have been, he was not a trifler. He had seen ecclesiastical life from the inside, and he hated priests with every drop of his blood. He studied Greek when it was a forbidden language, and he was an enthusiastic disciple of the new learning when scholars carried their lives in their hands. His zeal for intellectual freedom, untrammelled by priestcraft, entitles him to rank with Erasmus and Von Hutten as an apostle of humanism.

Of middle-class parentage, Francois Rabelais was born in 1483 near the lovely little city of Chinon, on the Vienne, where Henry II. cursed his sons and died. He always regarded Touraine, its cities, rivers, and vineyards, with affectionate admiration. "Noble, ancient, the first in the world," so he called it in the fullness of his heart. His father, an innkeeper, wished to make him a priest. Accordingly, little Francois was sent at nine years of age to the Benedictine monks of Seully, so young that the white shirt was put over the child's frock. Later, he was removed to the Franciscan Monastery of Fontenoy le Comte. The Franciscan vows included ignorance as well as celibacy and poverty. For fifteen years he remained there, taking priest's orders in 1511, at the age of twenty-eight. Always inquisitive, he amassed that encyclopædic knowledge which he put to so good a use in his immortal book, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. It is to this long period spent among the bigoted, narrow, intolerant sons of the great lying Catholic Church that we owe his undying hatred of priestcraft. It breaks out in nearly every page of his writings, here passionately, there sorrowfully, with a cry of rage, a sob of pain, or a mocking laugh of "sanglante derision." He hated the "monk-birds" more bitterly than even Erasmus, for his nature was stronger.

At the age of forty he came into the world a free man, at liberty to follow his studies, burning with a pathetic enthusiasm for the new learning. He threw aside the loathed monastic garb, and became secretary to the Bishop of Maillezais. About 1530 he went to the University of Montpelier with the intention of getting a medical degree. When he attended the lectures he was within sight of his fiftieth year, and he sat by the side of men young enough to be his sons. Two years later he went to Lyons, where he held an appointment as physician to the hospital. His friend, Etienne Dolet, was already established as a printer in the place.

Rabelais's connection with the first reformers of France is certain; the extent difficult to determine. He had no desire for the martyr's crown, and he never contemplated following Calvin into exile, or Berquin to the stake. As he humorously explained, he was "too thirsty to like fire." His sympathies, too, were antagonistic to all dogmas. Luther and Calvin were as abhorrent to him as the priests. The society of Des Perriers, Dolet, and the Lyonnais Freethinkers was more congenial to his habits of thought. Moreover, he had an inside knowledge of the power of the Church and of the malignity of her hired assassins.

Heretics were then handed over to the secular arm to be burnt for the good of their souls and the greater glory of God; and Rabelais did not intend, if he could help it, to be butchered to make a Roman holiday. When he was denounced as a heretic, he challenged his enemies to produce a heretical proposition from his writing. They were unequal to the task; but, none the less, they were there. Rabelais's caution was necessary if he wished to live. Some of his contemporaries suffered for heresy. Dolet was burnt, Des Perriers was driven to suicide, Marot was a half-starved wanderer in Piedmont. Giordano Bruno, whom he had met in Rome, was also done to death. Rabelais may be excused for not wishing to be "saved by fire."

His writings, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, which have immortalised his name, were commenced at Lyons and finished when he was curé of Meudon. They form a series of satires in a vein of riotous and uproarious mirth on monks, priests, pedants, and all the solecisms of his time, yet with all their licentiousness revealing a heart aflame with love for mankind, and a passionate desire for the triumph of truth and justice.

It has been said that Rabelais despised women. He did not write till an age when the passion of youth had consumed itself to ashes. Love was killed in Rabelais by that hateful system of monkery which has filled Christendom with unspeakable horrors. Poor Rabelais! Half of humanity absent from his mind. Love, the central fire of the universe, the source of all human joys and sympathies, the bond of society, appears in the accursed monastic system in which he was trained as corruption and depravity. The damnable discipline surrounded Rabelais from the time he wore a child's frock till he was a man of forty, and the best side of his nature was strangled. He never loved; never even thought of loving. He had no more respect for women than a eunuch in an Eastern seraglio. Nay, more, there had even been crushed out of him that love for his mother which characterises every Frenchman worthy of the name. Alone among French writers he has no filial piety. As the old galley slave used to be known by the dragging foot, on which was once the heavy fetter, so when the unlovely years had eaten away manhood, imprisoned with its blind instincts and objectless passions, the ex-monk is known by his sexless mind. Thrice poor Rabelais! the monkish devils spoiled his life. The robe he wore was to him like a bodily deformity, narrowing his view, corrupting his mind. Originally, his nature must have been lofty and beautiful; witness those exquisite chapters in which he describes the monks of Thelema, whose motto was "Liberty."

Tradition has it that he died saying, "I go to seek the great perhaps." We may picture the rage of the Christians when their old enemy slipped quietly out of their eager clutches. The Catholic Church never forgets and priests never forgive. It was well for the old man that his life was not prolonged. Rabelais went further than contempt for the trappings of Christianity, and he rejected it altogether. He hoped to cure the evil of religion by spreading knowledge, by bringing priestcraft into contempt, by widening the boundaries of thought. It was his desire that his writings should be read. To read rationalistic thought is to think rationally, and is the first step towards Freethought. He knew as much as any man of his time; but he carried his weight of learning with a smile. He was acquainted with the book of the world, and not merely with the world of books. Liberty was Rabelais's sovereign specific for the ills of his time. Finding his contemporaries bound with chains of their own manufacture, it was his life purpose to break the fetters and set them free.

MIMNERMUS.

Worship and Finance.

THE Church Treasurer was standing outside his shop, with both hands in his pockets and his back to the street, evidently in a contemplative mood. I had heard that the pastor of his church was leaving, and I had not yet had an opportunity of expressing my regrets to him. I decided to do so now.

"So your pastor is leaving," I said, after we had exchanged the customary civilities.

"Um—yes," he replied, hesitatingly.

"You will miss him," I said. "He has served you many years."

The Treasurer made no reply, so I asked, "How are you faring in your search for a successor?"

"I might as well tell you straight," said the Treasurer, with an air of abandon. "Fact is, I don't go to 'is church now. Ain't bin there for months."

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I was genuinely surprised, though my previous experiences of the domestic storms which sweep across the tabernacles of the faithful ought to have prepared me for this sort of division. Peace, among Nonconformists, I ought to have known, usually exists only as a theoretical hypothesis and seldom as a present experience. I told the Treasurer I was sorry to hear of the separation, especially as he was an office-bearer in the church, and I asked him to tell me the cause of it.

"Can't keep on lendin' 'em money," he said. "I've financed 'em for years, and I thought 'twas about time I 'ad some o' me money back."

"Yes," I said. "I understand that you have been rather generous to the church. But were they really in a position to pay you back any of your loans?"

"Could if they wanted to," said the Treasurer, with a suggestion of a snap in his manner. "We 'ad a sale of work and raised about £40, and I asked for some of it. We called a church meetin' to settle what should be done with the proceeds, and it was agreed to give me £20. But the pastor wanted it for new Sunday-school 'ymn-books and organ repairs, so 'e persuaded some of 'is pet lambs to call another church meetin', and it was then decided to do as the pastor said. Talked 'em round 'andsome, 'e did."

I knew the Treasurer was a hard-working man. The premises outside which we were now standing consisted of a small butcher's establishment, and the street upon which the "best" of two bedrooms above looked out was a frousy business thoroughfare. The Church Treasurer, assisted by his wife as cashier, and an errand boy under the age for insurance, slew and sold animals for bread, and doubtless not an ox fell under his axe without his Heavenly Father's knowledge. He was by no means rich, and probably could ill afford the numerous advances he had made to the church, upon whose accounts Providence continually permitted tiresome deficits to arise. I could not but sympathise with his request for repayment, and I told him so.

"Business is pressin' nowadays," he said. "Gets 'arder and 'arder to make a livin'."

"Exactly," said I. "And 'tis the same with the churches. Gets harder and harder to make a congregation."

But the Treasurer was out for narrative, and not for argument. Having got well started, he wasn't to be switched off.

"I couldn't feel comfortable," he continued, "at the Baptist church after that. I told 'em straight that they'd lose one family through it, and me and me wife and children changed over to the Wesleyans. You can't get no good from a man who tells you not to do a thing 'e's doin' 'isself, can you?"

"What are you referring to?" I asked.

"Why," said the Treasurer, "wasn't 'e lookin' out for a bigger church all the time 'e was tellin' me not to ask for me money back? I couldn't get no good from 'im after that. 'E didn't 'elp me spiritual life.' After a pause he added, sadly: "I know I didn't ought to look to *man* for 'elp in me worship. I ought to look 'igher, I know. But some'ow I didn't feel meself, if you can understand. I wasn't comfortable, and sich things didn't ought to be in a church. So I thought it best to leave."

The vacating pastor had undoubtedly done his best to satisfy the Almighty in at least one respect, for, in obedience to the divine command, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth," he had filled his quiver with a baker's dozen of youngsters. I could not justly criticise his desire to obtain what he described as a larger "sphere," knowing quite well that by "sphere" he meant something else. When a "call" from heaven is accompanied by a prospective increase of £50 a year in salary, thirteen children are apt to bias a man's decision.

I said as much to the Treasurer, but just then a female entered his shop with the evident intention of making a purchase. She delivered her order to the butcher's wife (sitting in the cash desk), who transferred it to her husband through the open window in the words, "Forward for sossidges." The Treasurer skipped into the shop, and I lifted my hat to the cashier and passed on down the street, musing upon the wondrous power of Christianity to allay petty bickerings and to unite men in the pursuit of one grand and noble purpose.

R. NORTH.

The Life Beyond.

THERE is a land, though none knows where,
But all may go who pay their fare.
The boat which takes you, so 'tis said,
Is timed to do so—when you're dead.
The agents for this happy land
Describe the place as simply grand.
No work is done there all day long,
But all sing one eternal song;
A million million voices blend
To sing this song, which cannot end,
Which has no chorus, verse, or rhyme,
But just one sentence all the time.
A pleasant program, is it not?
And pious folk, who know what's what,
Will book their places in advance,
While fools and sinners miss their chance.
The streets, they say, are paved with pearls
(A detail which will please the girls).
The company is quite select,
And strictly choice and circumspect.
There good old Adam will be found
And other folk long underground.
There Moses and his rod will be
(An entertaining sight to see).
Saints by the ton will swell the fun,
And kings and emperors, many a one,
Who've made fair lands a dreary waste,
The pleasures of this land will taste.
Converted murderers, whom the cord
Has jerked to see their own dear Lord,
Inquisitors who plied the rack,
And loved their victims' bones to crack.
John Calvin, who betrayed his friend,
Eternity in bliss will spend.
Good old King Hall, for his defence
Of Christian faith, his recompense
In this fair region will enjoy;
While with his golden harp will toy
King David, who seduced the wife
And took, by treachery, the life
Of one he counted as his friend.
And there, in holy joy, will spend
Eternity, the sacred shade
Of Rahab, she who once betrayed
Her city to the Hebrew band,
The devastators of her land.
This whore, for treachery renowned,
Among the angels will be found,
If Dante's verse describes aright
The land above so fair and bright.

. . . . .

What say you, Sir; you'd rather go
Among the damned in hell below,
For ever there to boil and fry?
Well, now you say so, so would I!

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

Obituary.

We regret to hear, just as we are going to press, of the death of Professor Thaddeus Burr Wakeman, a distinguished American Freethinker, whose personal acquaintance we had the honor and pleasure of making when we were at New York in 1896. Professor Wakeman was seventy-eight years old. He died of heart failure on April 28, without an hour of sickness or a moment's pain. The remains were cremated on the following Saturday. A memorial meeting was to take place later. We shall probably see it reported in the *Truthseeker*. We owe the present announcement to Mr. Theodore Schroeder, secretary of the Free Speech League.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): Annual Conference. Public Meeting at 7. Speakers: Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, F. A. Davies, and Miss Kough.

OUTDOOR.

London Branches' Outdoor Lectures suspended in consequence of the N. S. S. Annual Conference.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

WOLVERHAMPTON (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—May 8, at 8, "Clerical Popinjays"; 9, at 8, "The 'Pavilions' of God"; 11, at 7.15, "Christ: Man, Messiah, or Myth?"

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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We cannot make true things false, or false things true, by choosing to think them so.—J. A. FROUDE.

Religious Epidemics.

IMITATION and suggestion represent two of the most powerful forces in the associated life of man. Both are forces that are essential to an orderly, and even a progressive, social life; but they may as easily become the cause of movements that are retrogressive, and even anti-social in character. Given a favorable environment, and there is hardly an idea that is too outrageous to become the immediately impelling power of masses of people. Under certain circumstances a crowd of people manifest all the characteristic features of a psychological entity. As Le Bon has pointed out, a crowd will do collectively what none of its constituent individuals would ever dream of doing singly.* It becomes capable of deeds of heroism or of savage cruelty. It will sacrifice itself or others with absolute indifference. Above all, the mere fact of moving in a mass gives the individual a power, a certainty of being in the right, that he can—so far as the mass of people are concerned—never acquire by himself. The intellect is subdued, the instincts are given a freer play, and their movement is determined in turn by suggestions not unlike those with which a trained hypnotist operates on his subject.

In all contagious phenomena mere words or symbols play a powerful part. They serve as a rallying cry for the emotions of the crowd. These words or symbols may be wholly incongruous when taken in connection with the real needs of a people; but, provided they are sufficiently familiar, they serve their purpose. And the more primitive the type of mind represented by the mass of the people, the more powerfully these symbols operate. Shakespeare's portrayal of the crowd in *Julius Cæsar* is eternally true. The skilled orator, playing on old feelings, using familiar terms, and invoking familiar ideas, finds a crowd quite plastic to his hands. It is for these reasons, often perhaps unconsciously, that there is such a keen struggle for a monopoly of good rallying cries by political and social parties, and a readiness to affix certain objectionable names to their opponents. Patriotism, The Church in Danger, Godless Education, Little Englander, are all so many causes that are materially helped or hindered, not by their essential justice or reasonableness, but by the mere verbal images with which they become associated.

In some cases epidemics may be called normal in character—that is, they depend for their existence upon factors that are always operative in society, and utilise that power of suggestion and imitation which is an essential part of the social structure. In other instances they depend upon the workings of obscure mental diseases, and are of a pathological character. In yet other instances they represent a mixture of both. In such cases, for instance, as the mediæval Flagellants, or the Dancing Mania, the presence of pathological elements is unmistakable. Yet they could never have spread as they did unless they had called into operation those principles of crowd psychology to which science has only within recent years turned its attention, and which are normal factors in every human society. At present I am concerned only with epidemics as they occur in connection with religion, and in showing how, in spite of their admittedly pathologic or undesirable character, they have yet served to keep religious belief alive and active. The two epidemics above mentioned furnish good examples of what has been said.

We may start with the once numerous sect of the Flagellants. Commencing in Italy about the middle of the thirteenth century, this sect continued in existence for at least 150 years; it maintained itself in various parts of Europe, England and Scotland appearing to be the only countries in which the sect failed to establish itself. As a religious penance, whipping antedates the outbreak of the flagellation mania, as it has survived its disappearance. In Spain, until quite recently, there existed a religious order, the "Brotherhood of the Cave," which established itself in cellars, where the faithful resorted to have themselves whipped. Flogging has also formed an important part in both conventual and monastic discipline. The pathological aspect of the subject is too unsavory to enter into at any length; it is enough to say that the connection between the whipping of certain parts of the body, and the production of intense sexual pleasure, is now an established fact, and it is clear that the anti-social life of monks and nuns would easily lend itself to the development of the practice. On the other hand, when this practice assumed an epidemic form, mere imitation, combined with intense religious faith, would act as a potent cause for its extension.

The pictures of the flagellants in all countries were very similar. They marched from town to town, men and women, and even children, stripped to the waist—sometimes entirely naked, praying, and whipping each other incessantly. "Not only during the day, but even by night, and in the severest winter, they traversed the cities with torches and banners, in thousands and ten of thousands, headed by their priests, and prostrated themselves before the altars." At other times they proceeded to the market-place, arranged themselves on the ground in large circles, taking up various positions in accordance with their real or supposed crimes. After each had been whipped, a letter was read, which it was said an angel had brought to St. Peter's Church, at Jerusalem, stating that Christ had granted, at the intercession of the saints and of the Virgin, pardon for all who should wander about for thirty-four days and scourge themselves. A large number of women joined these flagellants. It is said that 25,000 marched from Modena and over 20,000 from Florence. In Germany, also, the crowds assumed large dimensions. In the end the Church and the secular powers joined forces for their suppression.

Of much greater significance in the history of religion is the Dancing Mania, which broke out as the craze for flagellation was subsiding. I have pointed out in previous articles the significance of the practice of dancing in the early history of religion. In primitive religion dancing is one of the commonest means adopted to produce ecstasy, usually helped by the taking of some vegetable drug. In

* See *The Psychology of Peoples* and *The Crowd*, by Gustave Le Bon.

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more civilised times the phenomena takes on more of a hypnotic character, and it is easy to see the play of suggestion when dealing with the various dancing manias of the Christian period. A people subject to the social disorganisations of the mediæval period, and living in an environment saturated with supernaturalism, are peculiarly susceptible to such an influence as that which expressed itself in the Dancing Mania of the fourteenth century. Hecker, who gives a very elaborate account of the epidemic as it appeared in different countries,* describes it thus :—

> "They formed circles, hand in hand, and, appearing to have lost control over their senses, continued dancing, regardless of all bystanders, for hours together, in wild delirium, until at length they fell to the ground in a state of exhaustion.....While dancing they neither saw nor heard, being insensible to external impressions, but were haunted by visions, their fancies conjuring up spirits whose names they shrieked out; and some of them afterwards asserted that they felt as if they had been immersed in a stream of blood, which obliged them to leap so high. Others, during the paroxysm, saw the heavens open and the Savior enthroned with the Virgin Mary."

At Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and Metz, says the same writer :—

> "Peasants left their ploughs, mechanics their workshops, housewives their domestic duties, to join the wild revels. Secret desires were excited, and but too often found opportunities for wild enjoyment; and numerous beggars, stimulated by vice and misery, availed themselves of this new complaint to gain a temporary livelihood. Girls and boys quitted their parents, and servants their masters, to amuse themselves at the dances of those possessed, and greedily imbibed the poison of mental infection. Above a hundred unmarried women were seen raving about in consecrated and unconsecrated places, and the consequences were soon perceived."

Hecker rightly says that the influence of the Roman Catholic religion, connected as it was with processions, public penances, and other practices likely to excite the mind of an excited populace, reduced the mind to a very favorable state for the outbreak of a nervous disorder. It is significant to note in this connection that one of these outbreaks occurred immediately after the revels of St. John's Day, a Christianised Pagan festival, and that the name of St. John was frequently in the mouths of the dancers. Once attacked, the hypnotic character of the complaint showed itself by its annual recurrence. To again cite Hecker :—

> "Most of those affected were only annually visited by attacks; and the occasion of them was so manifestly referable to the prevailing notions of that period that, if the unqualified belief in the agency of saints could have been abolished, they would not have had any return of the complaint. Throughout the whole of June, prior to the festival of St. John, patients felt a disquietude and restlessness which they were unable to overcome. They were dejected, timid, and anxious; wandered about in an unsettled state, being tormented with twitching pains, which seized them suddenly in different parts, and eagerly expected the eve of St. John's Day, in the confident hope that by dancing at the altars of this saint they would be freed from all their sufferings. This hope was not disappointed; and they remained, for the rest of the year, exempt from any further attack."

The connection of St. Vitus with the Dancing Mania is accounted for by the legend that St. Vitus, said to have been martyred in 303, just before his death prayed that he might protect from the Dancing Mania all who solemnised his death, and that a voice from heaven was heard to say, "Vitus, thy prayer is accepted." The fact that the prayer was offered over a thousand years before the disease appeared, and that there is no proof that St. Vitus ever existed, are difficulties too microscopical for the eye of faith to discern.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

* *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, Sydenham Society, 1844.

The Maligned Non-Believer.

SEVERAL years ago the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon went to Manchester to deliver a lecture on "Atheism and Faith," which was afterwards published. In that lecture the reverend gentleman made a peculiar statement, namely, that "religion resting upon reason is a house founded upon sand." As a matter of fact, no religion does rest, no religion ever did rest, upon reason, simply because every religion is contrary to reason. The only exception is Buddhism, which in the usual acceptation of the word is not a religion at all. What Mr. Gibbon meant to convey by the statement was the false notion that religion is not contrary to, but above reason, for in the same discourse he nicknamed reason "a farthing guttering candle." Mr. Gibbon is the present Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, the Spring meeting of which has just been held in London. In his address from the chair Mr. Gibbon returned to the subject of his Manchester lecture, and talked at length, in a superficial, flippant, and misleading manner, about "the non-believer of our time." He was candid enough to place this wicked character "prominent in the forefront," and to allow that he *is* a messenger of God to this generation. He is "a significant and somewhat ominous figure," challenging "whatever of human worth and Christian faith survives among us." We wonder how many of our readers will be able to recognise him from the following description :—

> "I see a youth, English, Welsh, Irish, or Scotch, of decent upbringing, of average education, with good, not brilliant faculties, of naturally clean instincts and wholesome habits, interested in sport, not deeply interested in anything of an ideal order, rather bored by business, keen on his own pet hobby, football, cycling, photography, and such-like, while as for religion, he has just let it go. That's all. Once it was in his bag, but it fell out and he never troubled about it any more; he went on without it, and has never felt the loss of it."

With all due deference to so exalted a functionary, we pronounce the above a miserable caricature. In reality, it is an accurate portrait of multitudes of people who, though utterly uninterested in churches and chapels and unintelligently sceptical as to many things in the Bible, are yet at heart believers in God and a future life. We have met hundreds, if not thousands, of them ourselves, and know the breed quite well. They are not the typical unbelievers of our time at all, but rather the indifferentists or nothingarians, over whom neither Freethought nor the Christian faith can exert any moulding influence.

Possibly Mr. Gibbon has never met a genuine non-believer; indeed, from his description one naturally infers that he has not. If he had ever come into direct contact with a veritable Atheist he would have been absolutely incapable of delivering the greater part of his address. The Atheist is a person profoundly interested in all the things that matter, and distinguished for his close, hard, logical thinking. He has the courage to face the facts and to reject conventional explanations. Mr. Gibbon made feeling allusions to social problems; to "the underworld of poverty, and all that goes on there"; to the girl who is "forced to sell her labor for a living," whose innocence, youth, and fairness "are all bait to the enemy"; but the Atheist knows that if Christianity were true such distressing problems would not exist. Indeed, Mr. Gibbons cannot but be aware that for the existing state of things the Churches themselves are very largely responsible. The Churches are mainly supported by the middle class, and in *Widowers' Houses* Mr. Bernard Shaw describes "middle-class respectability and younger-son gentility as fattening on the poverty of the slum as flies fatten on filth." Mr. Gibbon says that "Atheism unites all our creeds"; but, unfortunately, it unites them only for the heartless persecution of Atheists. Is it conceivable that God raises the Atheist on purpose to challenge the Churches to prove their piety by putting the wretch to death, or clapping him into prison?

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According to Mr. Gibbon the non-believer is one who has consciously or otherwise "absorbed the negative results of modern criticism":—

> "His common sense always strained at Balaam and Jonah, and his moral sense, sharpened by his love of sport, which serves him as a conscience, stuck at many things said of God—and so, not being deeply interested, he let the whole thing go.....So there he is, millions of him. According to the old logic, he ought to be an exceedingly bad man; but not a week, scarcely a day, passes without some heroic deed flashing out of the mass of life about us, showing what fine metal men are made of; God being with them, though they know him not."

If Atheists are good it is a sign that God is with them without their knowing it. That is to say, nobody can be good unless God makes him so. Such is Mr. Gibbon's teaching; but does he not see what dreadful implications it contains? Here, for example, is an extremely awkward question which we are obliged to put to the Chairman of the Congregational Union. If God is infinitely powerful, good, and loving, how is it that there are any wicked people in the world? In other words, why is God with some Atheists, inspiring them to deeds of heroic excellence, and absent from many Theists, who, in consequence, grow rich by grinding the faces of the poor and devouring widows' houses? We exhort Mr. Gibbon to pay serious heed to this question, and answer it if he can. We honestly confess that we regard it as of much greater importance than any of the matters discussed by him in his long address. The God he believes in is, on his own showing, guilty of the cruellest partiality and injustice. All the awful evils so rightly deplored in the address thrive simply because God is not with all people alike, because he is a despicable respecter of persons. If he can be with some people who disown him and cause them to appear as great luminaries in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, why does he not dwell with all alike, and so make "a crooked and perverse generation" an impossibility?

Mr. Gibbon wants to know how the non-believers can be reached by the Churches. We beg to inform him that thousands of those whom he looks upon as non-believers could easily be reached and won back by scientifically planned revivals conducted by specially qualified evangelists. Why, Gipsy Smith is reaching and winning back such people by the thousand wherever he goes; only they backslide again almost as soon as the artificial excitement dies down. But the genuine non-believers are beyond the reach of the Churches altogether. The following is what Mr. Gibbon thinks on the point:—

> "Such a dogged attempt to deal with the social question as would give religion an edge and the semblance of a real fight would reach great multitudes of them. They have no use for a disguised Buddhism that in hymn and prayer offers rest to people who are not tired, but they would flock to the colors if there was a declaration of war against the Devil and his angels."

We absolutely dissent from the reverend Chairman's opinion. Conscientious unbelievers are convinced that all Churches are, consciously or unconsciously, fraudulent institutions. Our opposition to them is not based upon their inefficiency, but upon their falseness. We have turned our backs upon them not because their accomplishments are few and ineffective, but because their claims are baseless; not because they sail so unskilfully, but because they sail under false colors. In other words, the supreme fault we find with them is that they pretend to be what they are not, and to do what is impossible. They pretend to be Divine institutions, indwelt by the infinite and almighty God who is justice and love, to constitute the body of which the Eternal Christ is the head, or to form the temple which the Holy Ghost fills with his glory; but they have never furnished the least verification of such august pretensions. Throughout their whole history they have given innumerable demonstrations of their exclusively human origin and character. Their differences, their bitter wrangles, their cruel persecution of one another and of all outsiders, bear ample witness to their non-Divine connections. But the absurdest of all their claims is that they can actually limit the activity of the Supreme Being, or that the Savior of the world has seen fit to do his saving work through them, and through them alone, and through them only within the bounds of their own capacities. And yet they wonder why we do not believe in such a God, who can do nothing for China or Japan except through Christian missionaries specially sent out from Christendom, and scarcely anything even through them. We have the testimony of such unquestioned authorities as Dr. H. A. Giles, Professor of Chinese at Cambridge, Mr. Chester Holcombe, and Mr. Eugene Simon, who have spent many years in China, that the Chinese compare most favorably with the best Christian nation. Mr. Gibbon has never lived in China or Japan, and yet he has the audacity to apply the following language to all Heathen people alike:—

> "They are souls in exile. They are earth's disinherited. In them the human spirit is humiliated. They have no share in the things that belong to man's life,.....no place in the work of civilisation."

He calls them all "these entombed races." This is blind prejudice in its full, irresponsible swing. And yet a man who can talk such lying nonsense imagines that if the Churches were on fire with such irrational zeal Atheists would flock to their colors in their thousands. It was empty twaddle of that sort that first drove them to Atheism, and certainly such egotistical attitude and activity on the part of the Churches as Mr. Gibbon recommends is not likely to decoy them back to Theism. The Chairman of the Union says that they have no use for "a disguised Buddhism." True; but they have very considerable use for the real Buddhist system, because it is practically identical with their own. Buddhism does not offer rest to people who are not tired, but it does promise deliverance from suffering and sorrow to people who are prepared to follow the path pointed out by Nature, a deliverance which will not be possible in Christendom until Christianity has died out of it.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Irony of So-Called Revelations.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 294.)

(*b*) According to revelation, however, the unseen world is tenanted not only by Gods, but by legions of angels, good and bad. But I am not going to waste your time with a dissection of the anatomy of these crude hybrid creations of primitive man. They are not worthy of any attention save to remark that, according to revelation, they are all, bad and good, true existences. The treatment, however, that is now generally accorded to his Seraphic Majesty—the supreme head of the legions of darkness—puts the religionists in a sad dilemma. The Bible, as you well know, reveals a Satan as well as a God. Its sacred pages are as replete with his unwearied attentions to mankind as they are with those of God. The Devil and his host play not only a very conspicuous rôle, but a most fundamental one, in the revealed scheme of salvation. The effect of their doings, in fact, forms the very foil in which the deeds of God and his angels are set. By every canon of reason and logic, Satan is as veritable an object of revelation as God is.

But oh! what revenges time had in store for revealed supernatural secrets. For now good theologians and devout religionists are actually ashamed of him, and even take pleasure in ignoring his very existence, despite his immortal nature! Some go to the extent of writing books which openly repudiate his ancient claim to a suzerainty over our lives. He is actually exiled from the halls of learning and culture, and is obliged to take refuge in Salvation Army barracks, Gospel halls, and revival meetings.

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All this is done in apparent oblivion of the ludicrous predicament they put themselves into. If you accept the Bible as an inspired revelation, you have to accept both God and Satan as real existences. If you deny the reality of one, you cast your revelation to the four winds. You are bound to retain both, or let go your authority. Satan and God must stand together, or foreswear your Bible. There is no escape from this dilemma.

(*c*) The inspired Bible makes a further disclosure in respect to the inhabitants of that far country—that it is also inhabited by another spiritual genus, the souls of *homo sapiens*, or the spirits of men; and further, that at a future date it will be tenanted by their bodies as well. That is to say, that man is immortal both in soul and in body.

The dogma that man has an immortal soul is common to practically all religions. But the announcement of a day of resurrection on which the body will return from the grave in an immortal form is a revelation which Christianity can practically claim as its own. But how cruelly fate deals with revelations! This special tenet of the New Testament was about the first to partake of the fate of Jonah and to go by the board to save the Christian vessel, with its cargo of creed, from being irretrievably lost. To attract, however, no attention to its fate, it has been lowered with deathlike silence; and it is a sad calamity that the missionary enterprise should play the part of the whale and bear it to distant shores to disturb anew the peaceful Ninevehs of Pagan lands.

Nor can even the immortal soul put in any legitimate claim to belong to the spiritual world. It is a crude semi-material ghost, which, but for recent sublimations, would have had to follow the "immortal" body over bulwarks to save the good ship from sinking.

(*d*) We are favored, moreover, not only with revealed information about the inhabitants of that elusive country, but also with a blurred summary sketch of its physical geography. Briefly, it is divided into two great regions, heaven and hell. Neither of them, however, has a particle of a claim to be called spiritual.

Its hell was a lake of fire, in which the souls and the bodies of men burned for ever without being consumed. The only revelation here is that of the crassest ignorance as to the nature of the process of burning. This revealed "spiritual" hell is virtually as material as the stones and the mortar with which our houses are built. It is no wonder, therefore, that it has disappeared from the map of the spiritual world of the twentieth century—its "everlasting fires" were altogether too revolting for the more refined and humanised conscience of the last fifty years.

But heaven's title deeds are no sounder than are those of Gehenna. The logic and the reason that would demolish the gates and the bastions of the one would have precisely the same effect upon the thrones and the harps of the other. But, as I have just said, the portals of hell were closed by our emotions and not the hydraulic machinery of our logic. The doors of heaven are left open simply because the visions within are not abhorrent to our nobler feelings and humanity. It was our awakened conscience and not our enlightened reason that put out the "unquenchable fires." Moreover, the heaven now standing is not at all the paradise of revelation, but a delocalised sublimed abstraction of the human intellect—a kind of Nirvana from which the harps, the thrones, and streets of gold have all been dissolved away in the vat of human reason.

We have now traversed the whole domain of human wants and desires—bodily, mental, moral, and speculative—and we have seen that at every plane of his nature the priest answered man's cry for bread by giving him a stone. Man groaned for light, and the priest, in the name of his gods, mocked him with a "will-o'-the-wisp." In brief, we may say that it is impossible to conceive of a being in a more direful need of a revelation than man; nor is it possible to imagine one who has been more tragically left without any.

It is no wonder, then, that divines and apologists, on realising that revelation is a house built on the quicksands, and is in danger of collapsing when assaulted by the batteries of reason, take alarm, and seek to wall it up and prevent it from coming down with a crash.

The most ingenious, and probably the most disingenuous also, of the sophistic buttresses reared to prop up its tottering walls is that known as "progressive revelation." It is an attempt to save the situation by admitting the fact that it is no revelation at all. In effect it says, "I admit that all you say is true; that man has slowly, laboriously, and tragically acquired by his own efforts every particle of the knowledge and wisdom he now possesses; I know, moreover, that he succeeded only after infinite stumblings, failures, and mistakes. I admit all that; but let me call it 'revelation.' Then I need not close my shop or change the name and sign of my establishment."

When, however, the speaker is fully conscious of the sophistic nature of the quibble, it is a modern form of the ancient ruse of "pious fraud" so much practised by the early Christian Fathers. For in itself it is a piece of imbecility on a par with contending that the image in a mirror is not a reflection due to the rays of light falling on it, but a supernatural revelation manifesting itself behind the glass. Primitive people and savages have always reasoned in that very manner; and it was certainly less irrational of them than it is of modern apologists. For surely, if a God of all wisdom and goodness desired to reveal himself to ignorant, credulous, and helpless humanity, he would not do so by means of such frightful and repulsive caricatures of himself as we have in sacred books and revealed religions. Nor would he falsely picture the workings of his universe and represent the world as if it were a stage for magicians to perform their antics upon.

It is a strange use of language to call what you have found out yourself with difficulty a revelation. If anyone used similar reasoning in the ordinary affairs of life he would be considered dishonest or demented. Let us take an example. Suppose a person was bent upon solving a new problem—one of a practical kind, say, in industrial chemistry. For months, and perhaps for years, he devotes all his time and energy to an apparently fruitless task—reasoning and experimenting, experimenting and reasoning; often thinking he has found a clue, and eagerly following it up, until repeated trials prove it to be a "will-o'-the-wisp." But, nothing daunted, he tries and tries again, until, after scores of failures, he at last succeeds; and away he runs to a friend and shouts, "Eureka, eureka! I have found it, I have found it." "What have you found?" coolly queries the friend. "What a question from you, who know all about my long, painful struggle. Why, it is how to manufacture synthetically that new dye you know I was working for years and years upon, and which you also know has cost me the use of my arm and of my eye, and which has undermined my health." "Oh, you say you have found it," says the friend. "My dear fellow, how blind and conceited you are; you did not find it—it was only 'progressively revealed' to you, that is all!" Such is literally the story of humanity in respect to all it knows, and such are the delightful methods of reasoning espoused by the advocates of revelation. Revelation has invariably belied its professed function. It professes to bring us light, but what it has invariably done is to intercept the light. From first to last, religion has enclosed our one source of light—the human intellect—in a vitreous globe of superstition, which, by being so opaque and colored, has always dimmed, deflected, or tinted the few rays that have struggled through it from time to time. In all the intellectual effulgence which now illumines our civilised world, there is not one single ray but which can be traced directly to its one fountain head in intelligence and the reason of man.

KERIDON.

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A Daydream.

DREAMS are quite unknown to me during the hours of sleep. Perhaps that is why my mind, thinking it misses something, takes temporary leave of absence when the circumstances are suitable enough and goes wandering away along paths that, often, have neither beginning nor end. My book slips to my knees; my pipe goes out; and, hey, presto! I become a dweller in dreamland.

In this manner of transit I discovered myself in a room. Although but a second before I had been sitting under the budding branches of a lithe young beech, and watching the swinging fingers form themselves into fantastic, kaleidoscopic pictures, I was not in the least surprised at my change of environment. Although but the quiver of an eyelid before, so to say, I had been breathing deep breaths of an atmosphere scented by lily perfume, I experienced no astonishment at the "closeness" of the air in which I now found myself. It seemed natural enough.

The room was destitute of any furniture. In the centre, directly under a stained-glass dome, stood a solid plinth-like mass of cunningly carved wood, similar in appearance to the resting-places of the sculptured likenesses of departed murderers and other heroic men. Upon its cushioned surface lay a woman, clothed in a long, loose white robe, her dark brown hair lying thickly around her shoulders. The face was turned from me; but the beauty and grace and delicacy that seemed to be exhaled from the figure were so exquisite that I marvelled at my own calmness, at my lack of appreciation.

The walls of the room were of mahogany panels, every alternate panel forming a frame for a picture, painted in vivid colors, each representative of a certain phase of woman's life. These pictures were suggestive rather than deliberately instructive. They might embody a particular mental attitude to certain questions, leaving the onlooker to agree or disagree as he felt inclined. To me they presented, in pictorial art, many thoughts that had long been hung in the gallery of my mind. Astonishment at seeing them realised in form and color did not dawn upon me. This, too, seemed natural enough.

Directly opposite me, in the dark frame that gave it such peculiar effect, I saw a picture of a kitchen, flooded with brilliant sunrays. The mother had sunk listless, weary, into an old leather armchair; and six children were playing pranks with the results of her morning's work. Their mother, too tired to trouble, seemed to be dreaming. Before her eyes was a visioned bookcase. Her whole desire yearned for it. But the front of the case was of glass fitted into the sides: there was no entrance to the books.

Children, I thought, may be the crystallisation of a woman's duty; but, if they mean more pain and more unhappiness for her than pleasure, then the fewer children the better. There are greater duties than that of bringing children into the world; and one of them is the recognition by man that happiness is as much a woman's right as his.

Alongside, perhaps meant to precede the other, the panel showed a woman in the midst of a mental conflict. One hand shaded her brow and eyes; but not so much as to hide that sad beseechment, so full of knowledge of its feebleness, that makes the strong heart quail, and feel criminal. With the other hand she gently pushed away from her a child. Before her, in the dimness of the picture, stood the outline of a man. His eyes were observant, interested even; but a hateful smile of superiority hung around his lips. I could nearly hear him sarcastically saying, "Instinct, madam, the strongest instinct we, you and I, possess! And you fight, or would fight, against it. H'm!"

On the other side was depicted a moonlight scene. Into a dense forest of fir twined a pathway. My eyes seemed to follow it in its pilgrimage among the trees. No sensitive mind could have resisted its loveliness, you would have thought; and yet, one of the two girls who stood in the foreground was afraid. Notwithstanding the other's courage, she would not go. She was afraid.

Another picture showed a thin, white-faced woman, sick unto death, gazing with startled eyes at an infant lying upon her breast. In the little hands was a wreath with the inscription, "From Baby."

All the panel pictures facing me dealt with the question of sex, as if the artist had considered that here, if anywhere, could be found the key to the problems of the rights and wrongs of women.

I had begun to ask myself if a woman's intellect, her mind, were not of more importance than her genitive powers, if her desires should not constitute duties to man, where this was concerned, when the figure on the plinth moved uneasily, and then struggled. Her breath soon came in convulsive gasps, and her whole body seemed to be toiling against some form of restriction. Her robe opened at the foot; and I noticed her limbs were tied with soft, silky material to the couch.

She turned her head towards me, revealing a face whose features were set in determination. As the struggle became more and more intensified, her robe became more and more disarrayed, and I saw she was bound from feet to neck by innumerable strands of the same silky material.

Unaccountably, I was utterly unable to help; nor did she seem to wish assistance; she did not seem to be aware of my presence.

The face hardened without relinquishment of its beauty. The muscles worked nervously, but without cessation. "Freedom or Death," the closely pressed, motionless lips had carved upon them. In the eyes shone the look that quails at nought, the look that puts the cowards of weakness to flight.

One by one the silken bands were all rent, and the robe torn off. She leapt from her resting-place of centuries, and quickly she turned round, searching for a door. There was none. A window? None, but the stained glass roof, with its scriptural representations of woman's duties.

Strength, courage, hope, dissolved in the tears of disappointment; and she leaned against the wall, burying her face in her arms. Her labors had been expended in vain. She had toiled for freedom, and its breath was poisoned. This was her reward.

My eyes searched the room for an opening: I felt my first strong twinge of human sympathy; and I observed that, on one side of the room, there were four alternate panels blank. I walked up to them, and discovered that they had, at one time, been pictures; but, obviously, a process of erasion had taken place.

"Blank picture the first," I said to myself, "woman's natural periodic weakness, entailing cave-residence while man hunted. Blank the second, woman the keeper of the hut of the gods, while man eased his mind from them while hunting, etc. Blank the third, phallus worship by the woman, while the men battled with and killed each other. Blank the fourth, an assemblage of gods, from a chunk of clay smeared with blood to the interrogation mark of the modern Christian; a bevy of priests, from the incarnardined devil of the dead days, who was on familiar terms with the awesome occupant of the holy hut, to the modern portly and saintly collector of pew-rents; and a crowd of women in the foreground."

Suddenly there was a harsh grating noise; and blank panel the third moved up. The woman eagerly darted to the aperture; but before reaching the apparent way of escape there issued from it a black, loathesome snake, that drew itself slowly over the polished floor. Repulsive, with eyes glinting greenly even in the subdued light of the room, its long sinuous, detestable body covered with a moisture that impregnated the close air with mustiness, like mildew, the creature awakened within me all my hatred of the ugly. My human emotions were thoroughly aroused at last.

And the woman? Did she feel as I felt? She was bending down caressing the ugly brute, and whispering to it. Then she stood erect, while it

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slowly circled her limbs, her waist, her shoulders, imprisoning her in its folds. She stroked the ugly hooded head nestling on her bosom. She spoke lovingly to it; and I shivered.

That was all. I picked up my book; inhaled some big breaths of the fresh, sweetly perfumed air; relit my pipe; and found myself saying silently, "Women still worship two men and a splash of formless masculinity above the bright blue skies. They object to man-made laws, man-made restrictions of many kinds. They are fighting against some of the deepest rooted prejudices of the male mind. If it be not a sex war, it is perilously like it. And yet they still *worship* these, to them, real men, whose masculine characteristics they attempt to smother in Godism. Let woman continue to bow down even before a dream picture of man, and she will never achieve the freedom for which she longs; for worship means slavery of body and mind. When she shatters that dream picture the snake encircling her mind will uncoil itself, and fall dead. Only then will she be free from the insidiously base influence of that which has, more than anything else, in the past, kept her enslaved—Religion."

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

A correspondent of the *Daily Citizen* lately put in a plea for the Bishops. He said that they must not be supposed to spend all their salaries upon themselves. They have to keep motor-cars, they have to give subscriptions to this, that, and the other cause. Quite true. But these expenses have to be met by laymen with similar incomes. We all know, without being told, that Bishops cannot spend four, five, or ten thousand a year on eating, drinking, and clothes—even including gaiters and shovel hats. Millionaires cannot spend their money in that way either. The navvy who said he had a bigger belly than the then Duke of Marlborough was not such a fool, after all; he was thinking of *actual* consumption—the consumption of *food*—at which game he could beat his lordship hollow. It is not even the luxuries of life that run away with big incomes; it is the *conventions* of life that do it. In a certain position you are expected to live in a certain way—and "there you *are*, don't you know."

That correspondent's letter in the *Daily Citizen* reminds us of a case that came before a Royal Commission some seventy years ago. A parson well known to have fat livings returned his income as £150 a year. Being asked to explain this, he replied that his income was nominally £1,500 a year; but his two livings were far apart, and he was obliged to keep a horse to travel to and fro; then his wife had very delicate health, and was unable to walk much, so she required a carriage and pair; besides, he had a large family, all sons, who went to college and received an expensive education; and by the time he had paid for these and other expenses, he had only £150 a year left for himself! By which method of calculation wealthy men might show a small return to the Income Tax Commissioners. The reverend gentleman, indeed, was not returning his income but his pocket money.

Mrs. Besant had a boy that she was training for "the spiritual leadership of the world." The boy's father, by the aid of the law, took his son back out of Mrs. Besant's hands. What is to become of the spiritual leadership of the world now? Fancy one Hindu parent being able to upset such a great and glorious arrangement. The person really responsible for this unhappy miscarriage is a well-known Theosophist called Leadbeater. Mrs. Besant regards this gentleman as "a man on the threshold of divinity," and he alleges of himself that he stood face to face with "the Supreme Director of Evolution." Mr. Justice Bakewell, however, held that "Mr. Leadbeater was certainly an immoral person, and was highly unfit to be in charge of boys." But the holy men of all religions are so liable to slander!

Some of the newspaper reviewers were annoyed because Sir Hiram Maxim said that missionaries were the greatest liars in the world. But what is one to make of the following. One of the speakers at the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society, the Rev. Edgar Dewstoe, of South China, said that the trouble in China was that the people had no ethics. A prominent Chinese had said to him, "Unless we can get some ethics there would be terrible trouble." This, doubtless, impressed many of those present, for a great number of Christians have so little knowledge of ethics that they seriously believe that morality is a Christian invention and a Christian monopoly. But imagine talking of a nation which contains millions upon millions of people who are Confucians and Buddhists as having no ethics! There is no need to give Mr. Dewstoe's statement a name—everyone will be able to give it a suitable one. The surprising thing is that anyone should have the impertinence to make such a statement, or that others should be found ignorant enough to believe it.

Mr. R. J. Campbell has been complaining that the "soul of man" is being crushed by Materialism. Millions of people exhibit no interest in anything "outside material categories." They are being whirled along by the momentum of their Materialism, and there is no prospect of a slackening of the pace—with much more to the same end. All of which is true enough, although it is intended to convey a lesson that is the very opposite of the truth. The moral intended to be drawn is that this state of things is due to neglect of Christianity, and that a cure is to be found in a return to its teachings. And that is simply untrue. Historically, Christianity has not only shown itself powerless to arrest the growth of ethical Materialism, it has always flourished most where Christianity is strongest. There are no two countries in the world where the craze for material possessions is greater, or the worship of mere wealth stronger, than in England and America—two countries which ostentatiously flaunt their Christianity in the face of the world. England and America set the pace of the world in money-making, and measure other nations' greatness by this single test. England and America are mainly instrumental in impressing upon other nations the need for economic and industrial development. They decline to even recognise them as civilised until they have done this—this and one other thing.

The other thing is the power to wield brute force over a physically weaker people. It is a mere truism to say that the peace of the world is threatened by Christian nations only. Non-Christian nations—Turkey, China, Japan—are powerless to do this, even were they so inclined. Moreover, these nations are being forced into courses of military development in order to protect themselves against the brigandage of Christian nations. Japan has already made itself a military Power. China will be forced to follow suit. And recent events in the Near East have shown Turkey that if it is to live as a nation it must be strong enough, in a military sense, to hold Christian cupidity at bay. In this country it is Christians that laugh loudest when it is said that reason and not rifles should settle differences of opinion between nations. They say that other nations—Christian, like themselves—will be guided solely by considerations of material self-interest. If we have anything worth taking, they will take it, given the strength and opportunity. Other nations say the same of us. Money and muscle are the two things which, on their own confessions, the Christian nations of the world are ready to respect.

Mr. Dan Crawford is an African missionary, and has just published a book on Central Africa, entitled *Thinking Black*. In it occurs the following passage:—

> "Christ's cause in Africa is often wounded in the house of its friends, but never so grievously or gratuitously as when a missionary of the Cross beats all his fellow-Europeans in the matter of first-class get-up. The best houses, best furniture, best eating, all at 'The Mission.'"

Other missionaries express their resentment in long and angry letters to religious journals.

During an amateur performance at a provincial theatre recently the public was absent from the gallery. A young lady sitting in the stalls remarked, "No gods! Even the theatres are atheistic, nowadays."

A doctor has discovered no less than 9,000 microbes on a razor taken from a barber's shop. We commend this to the attention of the Christian Evidence Society—or what is left of it—as a fine illustration of the Design Argument.

The New York papers tell us that a Harlem firm is making one of the largest candles, which will be lighted to the memory of the late Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. The candle, which is sixteen feet in height, cost £300, and will burn for nine years. It would burn a lot quicker at Mr. Morgan's present address.

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Many months ago that peripatetic parson, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, assured a Newcastle audience that we were on the eve of the mightiest revival of religion ever witnessed, that very soon churches and chapels would be thronged with people convicted of sin and crying out for salvation, and that the Gospel nets would be so crowded with human fish that they would actually burst. The reverend gentleman *knew* that the glorious time was close at hand; but after nearly six months the predicted revival is apparently as far off as ever. The Baptist Union has just reported a decrease of 2 231 members and of 4 924 Sunday-school scholars during 1912. Even the Presbyterian Church of England, for the first time in its history, mourns the loss of 65 members and 2,252 Sunday-school scholars. A revival of religion is doubtless a *possibility*, but at present it is anything but a *probability*. At any rate, Mr. Meyer is certainly a false prophet.

Is there any greater simpleton in England than the Bishop of London? What better-informed and more sensible members of his profession keep as quiet about as possible he delights in pressing upon public attention. All the exploded blunders and follies of the Bible and Christianity he rejoices in holding up to public derision. The poor creature doesn't recognise what a spectacle he is making of himself. He doesn't see, for instance, that the doctrine of Providence—the *honest* doctrine of Providence—the doctrine of *special* Providence—is already on its last legs. Clergymen with brains in their heads fight shy of it; they leave it, as far as they are concerned, on its sick bed; but the Bishop of London takes it out for a walk, stands it up on its tottering legs, dresses its shrunken figure in its ample old clothes, and is positively proud to see himself parading arm in arm with it in places of public resort. On the evening of the day when the Suffragette bomb was cut short in its destructive career in St. Paul's Cathedral, Dr. Ingram was the chief performer at a Church Army service there, and he took the opportunity (of course!) of putting Providence in a corner before the whole world. This is how he was reported in the *Daily News*:—

> "It would be sheer want of gratitude, he said, if they did not first stand up and utter their thanks to God for taking care of his own Cathedral—(loud cries of 'Amen')—against the machinations of the miscreant who tried to wreck it.
>
> "We say in our way, in the human way, that it was only an accident that the lever was turned by mistake to the right instead of to the left, or the chancel would have been a wreck to-day, and therefore we know that those who set themselves to do the Devil's work often even cannot do that right.
>
> "But we ought to look away from that, to leave that to the judgment of God, and render thanks to him for his overruling Providence in saving the Cathedral and preventing, perhaps, many innocent lives being sacrificed.
>
> "Band, strike up, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow,' said the Bishop in conclusion. Without giving the band time to respond to the Bishop's call, the men and women comprising the huge congregation sprang to their feet and sang the Doxology with overwhelming depth of feeling."

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Indeed! Then who is responsible for the "flow" of events that are *not* "blessings"? In answering this question Dr. Ingram would in all probability introduce that comical figure Old Nick. What else *could* he do? In his theology it is a case of pull Devil pull baker—with "God" as the baker; with the Devil mostly getting the "pull" his way, and "God" getting only an occasional advantage. "God" must have exerted himself in a very special manner to overmatch the Devil by saving "his own Cathedral." Other churches have been burnt down without any successful providential interference. The Suffragettes managed to burn down a London church only a few days before their abortive attack on St. Paul's. "God" could not or did not prevent *that* conflagration. Why should he save one church and not another? Are they not all "his own" houses? The only answer we can see is that "God" saved St. Paul's by way of compliment to that great and good man, the Bishop of London. In which case we suppose we ought to congratulate the Bishop. But we would rather not say all that this would justify us in saying of his "God."

"Many innocent lives" were saved by the act of Providence at St. Paul's. It must be equally true that "many innocent lives" are lost elsewhere by the want of an act of Providence. Is it conceivable that any "God," not fit for a prison or a lunatic asylum, would follow such a partial and cruel policy? And if such a Being is entitled to an overwhelming hymn of "praise" and "thanks," is he not also entitled to a still more overwhelming hymn of dispraise and denunciation? If saving a few is put to his credit, should not the other side of his moral account be relatively increased when he leaves crowds to perish?

God does everything or nothing. There is no escape from that logic. And if the Bishop of London cannot see it, it only shows what a shallow and feeble intelligence may sit on an episcopal bench. But that is not fresh news.

A tussle between two tiny children at Gillingham, Kent, led to one being scalded to death in a bowl of hot water. Apparently, Providence was too busy watching over the Bishop of London's joss-house to trouble about the fate of helpless "little ones" of the human race.

The Victoria Institute is a favorite place for scientific men to talk nonsense in the name of science. Professor Sims Woodhead cheered a religious audience there the other day by remarking, "My experience leads me to think that however life came into the world, however life and matter came to be associated, there must be a great Cause, a great Ruler, a great Regulator." Capital letters turn nonsense into sense for many people, but others recognise it as nonsense all the same. Professor Woodhead's "experience" cannot possibly give him any greater right to dogmatise on the matter than the experience of the man in the street. He might as reasonably talk about his experience of what exists on the other side of the moon. Lord Halsbury, who presided, summed up the matter very well by saying, "I am not certain that I understood the subject before I came here, and I am not certain that I am in a better position now." Quite a compliment to the lecturer.

The sex of the third member of the trinity has always been a matter of doubt. There was no trouble about God the Father and God the Son. They were males, sure enough. But what of the Holy Ghost? The matter has been cleared up by the Rev. David Smith. He preached the other day to a City Temple audience on "The Motherhood of God." In the course of his sermon, he said that the motherhood of God "provided the explanation of the Trinity." So the Holy Ghost is, after all, a woman. Father, Mother, and Son; the family is complete. May we also take this as a vindication of the character of Mary.

A venerable "chestnut" is doing the grand tour in clerical circles. Some time ago a Bishop laid claim to it. He was asked (so he said) whether Jonah was really swallowed by the whale, and he replied that he would put the question to Jonah when he met him in heaven. "But suppose you don't find him in heaven?" the sceptic queried. "Why then," the Bishop retorted, "you can ask him yourself." This ancient story, and all its variants, probably grew out of the words passed between Hamlet and his uncle over the dead body of Polonius. According to the Rev. A. J. Waldron, as reported in one of Monday's newspapers, the incident only happened the other day, and the credit of the witticism belonged to a Salvation lass. We should not be surprised if Mr. Waldron eventually takes the credit of it himself. We know of no one with a more imaginative memory.

Rev. Canon Joyce says that "the mere scientist found nothing in miracle but a fact which he found it impossible to fit into his scheme of cause and effect." The "mere scientist" is in no such predicament. The miracles of religion fit well enough into his scheme of things, and he is at no loss to explain them. It is not at all a question of harmonising them with the world of physical phenomena, but simply one of explaining the psychological conditions that originate them. The question of miracle is wholly a psychological one. As psychological facts every scientist accepts miracles; as physical occurrences they are so palpably ridiculous that none but a congress of clergymen would waste time over their discussion. And their acceptance as psychological facts only means that in its immature state the mind sees supernatural happenings where none really exist.

That after death ghosts of people try to play tennis, if they were interested in it during life, was the assertion made recently by Mr. Henry Hotchner, a Yankee Theosophist, at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society. If people cannot play tennis properly after two lifetimes of preparation, they had better give the game up.

Is *Truth* accurate in stating that children in Portugal going to school are compelled to wear a badge with "No God; no religion"? Our contemporary is a very alert paper, but we believe somebody has been pulling its leg on this occasion.

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A well-advertised meeting of the Todmorden Branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society consisted of the chairman, the speaker, a reporter, and one other person. The chairman took the chair, the speaker delivered the address, the one other person formed the audience, and the reporter did his share of the business with professional equanimity. We congratulate the lecturer. He is a hero. Jesus Christ said that where two or three were gathered together he was in the midst of them to bless them, but he never said he would preach to them. The lecturer sighed his sorrow at such a small attendance, but then "the attendance at meetings at Todmorden had never been good."

Rev. Dr. Cairns says it is a fact that "in Japan the educated classes are already, in the main, Agnostic. The kind of thing that has been happening in Japan is the kind of thing that is going to happen in China, unless the Christian Church intervenes." But how is the Christian Church going to intervene in China? And what prevented their succeeding in Japan? There are plenty of missionaries among the Japanese. The Government places no obstacle to their progress. They have a fair field, and the result is, as Dr. Cairns confesses, the educated classes are mainly Freethinkers. What different result does any person of judgment expect in China? The Chinese are not less intelligent than the Japanese, and is it likely that educated Chinamen are going to accept a creed that educated Japanese have rejected? The Chinese will act exactly as the Japanese have acted—they will take from the Western world anything it has to offer in the shape of scientific knowledge, and hand back its superstitions with a polite reminder that they have as much of that kind of article, home-made, as they need.

Lord Mayors talk a lot of nonsense in the course of a year. The Lord Mayor of London, the other day, speaking as chairman at a meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, Tottenham-court-road, said that "he noticed that no less than twenty-one nationalities were represented at their tea-table one Sunday afternoon. Their work was, therefore, Imperial in character." We did not know that Imperialism meant the co-operation of twenty different nationalities. But one lives and learns.

Those clergymen who are always girding at science would do well to ponder some of the facts given in Sir E. Ray Lankester's recent book, *Science from an Easy Chair*. It is stated that science has reduced the death-rate of our great cities in fifty years by more than one-third. It has also conquered small-pox, typhus, and yellow fever, and has also reduced the deaths under operations from 1 in 3 to 1 in 30.

The Nonconformist Churches, according to Dr. Clifford, were never richer than they are now. In this respect the fancy religionists pay the Government theologians the sincere flattery of imitation.

In a recent literary supplement of the *Times* appeared a malicious attack on Auguste Comte, in which that great man was accused of very many shortcomings. No one will attack or defend the memory of the *Times'* scribe half a century after his death.

An illiterate East London shopkeeper has a notice in his window, "Competition deified." This is not the only place where "God" and "Mammon" are interchangeable terms.

A ghost has been seen at a house at Whitehead's-grove, Chelsea. According to a person in the house, it appeared like a dark face and neck hanging from the ceiling. Perhaps it was a cherub soiled with the London smoke.

The Kaiser's son seems to be as impulsive as his royal papa. In his book, *Germany in Arms*, just published, he asks the German people to give their lives joyfully for the Fatherland, "though the world be full of devils." We thought it was the function of the Black Army to fight "devils"; real soldiers never waste their time attacking phantoms.

The word "Atheist" seems to act on some intellectual innocents much as a red rag does on a bull. Recently, the Bishop of Peterborough, preaching at Westminster Abbey, referred to "Atheistic Socialism," and Mr. Keir Hardie replied in an open letter, published in the *Labor Leader*, saying that the system of society upheld by the Bishop was "atheistic and unchristian, and an outrage upon the teachings of Jesus." Real Atheists need not worry about simple opponents whose whose only idea of the "retort discourteous" is to say, "You're another!"

The Rev. R. W. Thompson, M.A., B.D., has undertaken, in the columns of the *British Congregationalist*, the task of guiding doubting minds into a state of religious certainty. In the issue for May 8, a correspondent declares that he has never read in a book nor "heard in any sermon a convincing statement of the necessity of the death of our Lord as atonement for the sins of the race." Mr. Thompson expresses his great desire to help this anxious inquirer; but the assistance he actually offers is of a most extraordinary character. "Sin," he says, "is personal self-assertion as against God." This "personal self-assertion" on man's part is offensive to God, and produces a reaction in him. This reaction, however, God wants to check, and in checking it he repudiates himself. Now, that is what God did in the death of his son—check his reaction against sin, repudiate himself, in the most dramatic manner possible. Such is the atonement, according to this man of God; and we are not at all surprised that thoughtful people cannot believe in it. A God who repudiates himself, and in doing so murders his only begotten Son, richly deserves to be utterly and finally repudiated by all sensible, self-respecting people. Mr. Thompson's theology is the silliest we have ever come across.

The Nottingham District of the Primitive Methodist Church, with its 264 churches, 59 ministers, 938 local preachers, and 41,000 members, was obliged to report, at its annual Synod held a fortnight ago, a loss during last year of 900 members. This is one more proof, added to innumerable others, that Christianity is visibly passing, in spite of the frantic declaration made by its representatives that it is really coming. It is a method of coming that we thoroughly enjoy.

Sixty-nine nationalities were represented in the 42,000 visitors, who, according to a return made recently, visited Shakespeare's birthplace last year. Gentle Shakespeare's influence is more humane than that of "Gentle" Jesus, for soldiers are not required to keep the visitors at Stratford from murdering each other, as is the case in the Holy Land.

Rev. J. F. Roberts, of Manchester, has discovered that "the years that follow marriage are the happy hunting-ground of the spirit of indifference." In other words, a man thinks more of a living Englishwoman than of a dead Jew; which, after all, seems natural.

After a long appeal for funds, the editor of a Christian paper, having to insert a two-line fill-up at the bottom of the column, worked in the following:—"If we got everything we prayed for, even God himself couldn't satisfy us."

"Bill to choke the Smoke Fiend," read a headline in a daily paper recently. This did not relate to Satan, who has been called the fourth person of the Deity, but to the reduction of smoke from fires and furnaces.

A tract, written by a person innocent of humor, bears the title, "Shall I go to Hell?" If an answer is wanted, we give it cheerfully in the affirmative.

ANECDOTE.

My little nephew, aged four, was saying his prayers, kneeling on his bed, and resting against his nurse. Suddenly he stopped.

Nurse: "Go on, dear."

Small Boy: "I can't."

Nurse: "Go on, dear."

Small Boy: "I'm switched off, Dod's talking to someone else."

Naturally, nurse's breath was somewhat taken away, and she did not know what to answer, when suddenly reassurance came from the small boy. "It is all right. We are connected again now," and he began again.—Mrs. Alec Tweedie, "*Thirteen Years of a Busy Woman's Life.*"

"Don't you threaten me, or I'll have the law of you," answered the old man....." And it don't make it no better, but a damned sight worse, that you do it in the name of the Lord. You'm a lot too fond of dragging in the name of the Lord, and you may find some day that your fine friendship with the Lord be all o' one side, and He ain't got so much use for you as you fancy."—*Eden Phillpotts "Widecombe Fair."*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £130 7s. 5d. Received since:—R. Stirton and Friends (Dundee), £1 5s.; J. Brodie, 3s.; "Henchman Mac," 10s.; J. G. Dobson, 5s.; "Ernest," 5s.; D. Mapp, 2s. 6d. Per F. Rose (Bloemfontein): A. S., 10s.; L. L., 5s.

INGERSOLLITE.—We agree with you. The "Higher Critics" are very well in their way, but they only go safely, leisurely, and learnedly over the ground that Freethought pioneer critics traversed more or less hastily in the midst of grave dangers and the exacting labors of a popular propaganda, and with no means of livelihood except what they could "make" as they went along. There is nothing new in smashing the authority of the Christ passages in Josephus and Tacitus, for instance. The former, at any rate, was settled by the semi-orthodox Lardner in the eighteenth century, and the latter was done—not tediously, but briefly and effectively—by Robert Taylor in 1828, when he wrote his *Diegesis* in Oakham Gaol, where he was suffering imprisonment for "blasphemy." Dr. W. B. Smith's is a very able book, but the really original work of both Old and New Testament criticism was, in its main features, done long ago.

E. RAGGETT.—The idea of *Freethinker* postcards has been mooted before. We may take it up one of these days. Pleased to hear of your letters in the local press. They cannot fail to do good if they bring replies and lead to public controversy.

J. HEWITT.—See paragraph. Thanks. It was outside our province to say anything about the reporter.

C. F. BUDGE.—The *Herald* and the *Freethinker* don't cover the same ground. What good would be done if they did amalgamate, according to your suggestion?

J. H. LANGFORD.—We don't suppose you will get any reply from the Bishop of London. We had already dealt with the matter in "Acid Drops."

J. E. LING (Canada).—Pleased to hear from you, and hope to hear again.

AVON DALE.—We are not surprised at the course of events. But don't be weak enough to let yourself be made miserable by bigots.

A. H. TABRUM.—We have printed "Meredith's last letter" to us. You can print yours—if it concerns anything of importance. You say it was not written by Meredith himself, but for him. Ours was written entirely by himself, letter, address, and all; and it showed him to be a supporter of the *Freethinker*. What does your letter show? Or does it show anything?

HELENA GUNNING.—We don't think we confused you with your sister. We are glad there are two of you. So you have had other letters from vulgar Christians! Well, it is only what you might expect. Mr. Foote is recovering his old form, but is not quite up to concert pitch yet.

R. STIRTON.—Acknowledged, as you will see. In such matters we take the will for the deed, although for the sake of your friends we wish their desire could have been realised. It is the nature of a journal like the *Freethinker* to set up relations of a personal kind between the editor and his readers. This does not arise in the course of an ordinary newspaper, where the relations are of a more commercial character. But the *Freethinker* is not run for commercial purposes, and does not appeal to the commercial instinct in its readers.

W. W. HANCOCK.—We were under the impression that people had ceased to trouble about this particular person. The only distinguished thing about him is the name, and that was made so by his Atheist brother. Certainly Mr. Foote holds that a man who believes government to be an evil has a right to be heard. And all reasonable people would take up the same attitude as Mr. Foote. But to claim the right for an opinion to be heard is not in itself an expression of either approval or disapproval of the opinion held.

R. STEVENSON.—Your letter is interesting, but not surprising. Mr. J. M. Robertson's Atheism is, we think, too well known to need any verification. He has taken no pains to hide it, and you should refer your friend to Mr. Robertson himself.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Personal.

I AM sorry that my voice failed me on Sunday night. I knew there was a risk of that, but I had determined to go through as far as possible with my duty. Some men might have been deterred by personal considerations; by the feeling, for instance, that no one should see them in public except in their best form. But I am not built in that way, and I hope I have done enough platform work in my time to sustain any reputation I might desire in that direction. Anyhow, I care very little for "reputation"; I have always tried to do my duty first and last. The cause is great—the cause is all; what are you or I in comparison? Had I cared for anything but the cause I should have reserved all my energy, such as it was after my recent severe illness, for the evening meeting. I could have got through that all right with perfect *éclat*, and my mere selfhood would have been gratified. But my presence was indispensable in the presidential chair at the Conference. I saw special reasons for that, though I don't want to discuss them now. So I took both Conference meetings, lasting altogether nearly five hours; and as I was not only Chairman of the Conference, but also President of the National Secular Society, I had a great deal of quite unavoidable talking to do. The result was that I was unable to finish the speech I meant to give as Chairman of the Queen's Hall evening public meeting,—which, by the way, was worth seeing. I sat for two hours listening to my colleagues, and enjoying their speeches, for I am happy to say they were all in their best forms. I arrived home at a quarter to twelve, I left home at nine in the morning; I had been more or less on the stretch all the time; and those who know what such work is will also know that it was a pretty good record for a man who had so recently been in the doctor's hands, with only strength enough left to hope for the best.

My friends need not be alarmed. I am going on all right. Sunday's work did me no harm. I think it rather did me good. And my throat is in really good condition again.

But I am not going to the *Freethinker* office to-day (Tuesday). Mr. Cohen is still there, doing the official part of the work for me, and I have to thank him once more.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

With the one great drawback of the President's ill-health, everything went off quite satisfactorily at the Annual Conference last Sunday. Mr. Foote took the chair at both the business meetings and again at the evening meeting in the Queen's Hall, but it was quite plain that his doing so involved no small amount of courage and resolution. As readers of the *Freethinker* are aware, his illness has been a severe one, and to spend some seven hours in the chair in the course of a single day is not at all an easy task. If anything can compensate for the strain, we feel sure it will be the warm feeling of personal attachment displayed by those present. Mr. Foote's re-election to the Presidency was, in one sense, a mere formality. It was more in the nature of a vote of confidence in one who has steered the party well for so long and often over some very troubled waters.

The Conference Agenda gave rise to a deal of animated and interesting discussion, as was anticipated. But Freethinkers know at least how to differ, and a difference of opinion on certain motions left those present none the less united on the Society's work. One resolution, carried with a slight and unimportant verbal alteration, arranged for the institution of a Bradlaugh Sunday, and it has since been suggested that the Sunday nearest to Bradlaugh's birthday would be the most suitable. If that suggestion is adopted by the Executive, the date this year would be September 28. Amongst the provincial members present, apart from delegates, we noticed Mr. S. M. Peacock (South Shields), Mrs. Bolt and Miss Underwood (Birmingham), Messrs. W.

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Dodd and J. Williams (Cannock), Mr. J. Ross and daughter (Liverpool), and Mr. and Mrs. Sanders (Manchester). The absence of Mr. Johnson, a very welcome and familiar figure on these occasions, was noticed and commented on, but he had written a letter expressing his sorrow at an enforced absence owing to ill-health. He appeared, however, to have bequeathed the mantle of his amiability to another well-known Manchester Freethinker who was present, Mr. W. Bailey.

The Annual Report of the Society, together with an account of the Conference proceedings will appear next week. We had arranged for a report of the evening speeches at the Queen's Hall meeting this week, but the transcription of the shorthand reporter's notes has not reached us in time for publication; in fact, it has not reached us at all. We do not know who is to blame—the reporter or the postal authorities. All we know is that it is not to hand. So, for the present, we content ourselves with saying that the public meeting was a good one from all points of view. The Hall was well filled, and the speeches of the President, Miss Kough, and Messrs. Cohen, Heaford, Moss, Davies, and Lloyd were thoroughly enjoyed by the audience—that is, if close attention and unstinted applause are safe guides.

On Monday the delegates—divided into two parties, one under the guidance of Mr. Victor Roger, the other in the care of Mr. Harry Jones—spent the day visiting places of interest in and around London. Both gentlemen proved themselves very efficient guides, and the delegates fully appreciated their freely given services. Unfortunately, some places of interest were closed owing to Suffragette activity, but more than enough remained open. In the evening the two parties gathered at the Bay Malton Hotel, with Miss Vance and a number of the members of the Executive. Singing, conversation, and a little dancing filled up the remainder of the evening until such time as some delegates left to catch their trains home and others returned to their respective hotels. The only drawback to the day was the weather—and for that, of course, the National Secular Society disclaims all responsibility.

The long-talked-of new Bill for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has been introduced in the House of Commons, and is by the usual order of the House printed—at a cost of one halfpenny to the purchaser. Mr. Foote will give it special attention in our next issue.

Why Be Good? is the title given by the late Dr. E. B. Foote, of New York, to a piece of writing by Mr. G. W. Foote, which came from his pen some thirty-five years ago. Under this popular title it started the publications of the American Freethought Society, of which Dr. Foote was treasurer. Two issues of this tract have been printed in three years, we think; one issue comprising 30,000 copies. The *Truthseeker* does not state the number of the other issue.

"Mr. Foote may be gratified to know," the *Truthseeker* says, "that a half-column selection from his *English Review* article on 'George Meredith: Freethinker,' has appeared in the *Evening Sun*, one of New York's stablest and most widely circulated newspapers."

One of our French subscribers, living at Paris, sending a new year's subscription, writes: "I enjoy its [the *Freethinker's*] courageous and clever articles immensely. They contain many interesting ideas and good documents which may be of great use in debating religious questions, and strong weapons for the struggle against the bigotry, the falsehood, the hypocrisy and the bad faith of all religions, and especially of the Christian one."

The General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, reports a very successful meeting on Wednesday last at Wood Green. A new secretary, Mr. G. Wraight, 109 Kimberley-road, Edmonton, was appointed. The young bloods of the Edmonton Branch have joined hands with the Wood Green Branch, and there is every promise of a successful outdoor season. Literature will be on sale at all meetings, and local Freethinkers are invited to join the Branch. Mr. W. Davidson opens the campaign this (Sunday) evening at 7.30.

A CONUNDRUM.

Who is one of the most immoral men in England to-day? The celibate Rector who has a large *family living*.

Christianity and the Chinese.

"In China, after centuries of missions, the very name of Christianity is detested,—and not without cause, since no small number of aggressions upon China have been made in the name of Western religion. Nearer home, we have made even less progress in our efforts to convert Oriental races. There is not a ghost of a hope for the conversion of the Turks, the Arabs, the Moors, or of any Islamic people; and the memory of the Society for the Conversion of the Jews only serves to create a smile. But, even leaving the Oriental races out of the question, we have no conversions whatever to boast of. Never within modern history has Christendom been able to force the acceptance of its dogmas upon a people able to maintain any hope of national existence. The nominal success of missions among a few savage tribes, or the vanishing Maori races, only proves the rule; and unless we accept the rather sinister declaration of Napoleon that missionaries may have great political usefulness, it is not easy to escape the conclusion that the whole work of the foreign mission societies has been little more than a vast expenditure of energy, time, and money, to no real purpose." —LAFCADIO HEARN, *Out of the East*, pp. 205-6.

"Moreover, when firmly established, and after having obtained considerable prestige and powers through his influence with the kings and chiefs, by methods the righteousness of which has been very often open to grave suspicion, the missionary then, in accordance with the frailties of human nature, has become intolerant, and instead of looking upon himself, as formerly he did, as a Divine instrument with a Divine mission to advance the native materially, morally, and spiritually, and, seeing and deeming himself superior in every respect to his charge, considers that he is entitled to live a life of ease, at the expense of the native, and of the mission funds in Europe and America, the contributors to the latter being kept in a state of felicitous delusion as to the real conditions by the circulation through the medium of the Religious Press of unverified and highly tinged reports." —FRANK BURNETT, *Through Tropic Seas*; 1910; p. 163.

THE reformed Chinese Government telegraphed to all the provincial governments in China that April 27 was to be observed as a day of prayer for the nation, and they were also requested to notify the fact to all Christian Churches in their provinces. This message has set the Christian world agog; it already—in its mind's eye—sees China at the foot of the Cross. The *Daily Chronicle* (April 18), in announcing the news, says "it has given extraordinary satisfaction to the Christian communities" in China. On the following day, under the heading "Christianity in China—Spread of the Faith in Recent Years," we are told that "During the last six years Christianity has made enormous strides in China, more especially among the official and influential classes"; and further it cited the testimony of a prominent missionary official that—

> "The majority of intellectual Chinese incline to-day either towards Christianity or Freethought.....Many members of the newly elected National Assembly, both in the Senate and House of Representatives, are Christians, and there is every indication that Christianity will spread still more rapidly when the new Government has got its educational and social projects into working order."

It is a rosy picture, from the Christian point of view; but let us examine it a little closer. To begin with, we are told that the "intellectual Chinese incline to-day either towards Christianity or Freethought." It would be more accurate to say that the intellectual Chinese who has made acquaintance with Western science generally discards religion altogether. It is, in the great majority of cases, not a choice between Christianity and Freethought, but between the religion he has been trained to believe in and Freethought. Why should an educated Chinese discard his native superstitions to assume worse ones of foreign manufacture?

The truth appears to be that the recognition of the existence of Christian Churches in China thus made by the Chinese Government is merely a move to ingratiate themselves with the Christian Powers until the new Government becomes firmly established.

We had strong doubts, in spite of the statement in the *Chronicle* to the contrary, as to this day of prayer emanating from the reform party in China, and our doubts were amply justified; for we read in the *Daily Chronicle* of May 3 a long and impassioned letter from Dr. Sun Yet Sen, the leader of the reformers, denouncing the new Government for "its

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wicked betrayal of the trust reposed in it," and declaring "the fury of the people is worked up to white heat, and a terrible convulsion appears almost inevitable."

In considering the probability of the Christianisation of China in the immediate future, it should be remembered that twice during its history China has been within measurable distance of Christianisation —once by the Jesuits, under the patronage of the Chinese Emperor, and again during the terrible Taiping rebellion, a Christian movement, which was crushed, after enormous bloodshed, by that good Christian, General Gordon.

With these two movements we shall deal later, for the present merely expressing our belief that the conditions under which these movements arose are not likely to occur again. In fact, the golden opportunity of the Jesuits will never occur again.

Now, let us consider some of the difficulties the missionaries have to contend with in their attempts to Christianise the Chinese.

To begin with, it has been justly observed that—

> "Bringing the beauties of Christianity to the heart of a Chinese is a vastly different matter from bringing the same to, let us say, a South Sea Islander. In the one instance you have a gross and idolatrous savage, who more often than not has a feeling of admiration for a white man, provided he is not a trader; when you have gained that savage's goodwill, half the battle for Christianity has been won. In China you have a people whose settled conviction it is that the ultimate purpose of your presence there is to kill them off and confiscate their property." *

Similarly, Mr. George Lynch remarks:—

> "Chinese civilisation is such a mass of complicated and intricate manners, customs, and prejudices that the average man is really like a bull in an intellectual china shop with regard to them. The most intellectual and cultivated missionaries commit many mistakes in this direction; but a large number of doubtless well-intentioned people, men and women, go out who are neither intellectual nor cultivated. It cannot be too often insisted upon, and must be constantly borne in mind, that the Chinese are not savages. They cannot be dealt with as we would deal with the South African natives. However we may trample on and disregard their feelings in dealing with them politically, as the heavy boot of a soldier might tread down the complicated structure of an ant-hill, yet in missionary work their sentiments must be treated with consideration if any progress is to be made." †

Mr. Lynch points out that native Chinese missionaries, sufficiently educated and intellectual, would be more in touch with native feelings and prejudices. But, as he further observes:—

> "It is a curious commentary on the actual success of missionary labor in China that so few native Chinese have been ordained into the priesthood of any of the various forms of Christianity which for so long have been preached to them. Socially and intellectually it seems to be only the lowest classes of the adult community that, apart from children, become converts to Christianity" (p. 260).

And of the children brought up by the missionaries in the Christian faith, "they have only succeeded in very few cases in educating them up to the standard of fitness for ordination."

But there is one drawback inseparable to the employment of native missionaries, as Dr. Morrison has pointed out, for, after observing that "the Chinaman is as difficult to lead into the true pathway as any Jew," he goes on to point out that:—

> "A native preacher can never be so successful as the foreign missionary. The Chinese listen to him with complacency. 'You eat Jesus's rice and, of course, you speak his words,' they say. The attitude of the Chinese in Tongchuan towards the Christian missionary is one of perfect friendliness towards the missionary, combined with perfect apathy towards his religion. Like any other trader, the missionary has a perfect right to offer his goods, but he must not be surprised, the Chinese thinks, if he finds difficulty in securing a purchaser for his wares as much inferior to the home production as is the foreign barbarian to the subject of the Son of Heaven." ‡

Then, again, the average Chinese convert expects to make a living by his change of faith. Dr. Morrison tells us that at the Inland Mission at Wanhsien, which had been established since 1887, there were no converts, but there were three hopeful "inquirers," whose conversion would be more speedy the more likely they were to obtain employment afterwards. Dr. Morrison says:—

> "They argue in this way; they say, to quote the words used by the Rev. G. L. Mason at the Shanghai Missionary Conference of 1890, 'If the foreign teacher will take care of our bodies, we will do him the favor to seek the salvation of our souls' This question of the employment of converts is one of the chief difficulties of the missionary in China. 'The idea (derived from Buddhism) is universally prevalent in China,' says the Rev. C. W. Mateer, 'that everyone who enters any sect should live by it.....When a Chinaman becomes a Christian he expects to live by his Christianity'" (p. 28).

Then there is the difficulty of making the Chinese realise their need of religion, as we understand it. The Rev. E. J. Hardy—for some years chaplain to our forces at Hong Kong—says:—

> "And in proportion to the need in which China stands of the Gospel is the difficulty of making her comprehend and appreciate its message. To the Greeks of old the sublime self-sacrifice of the Cross of Christ seemed foolishness, and to the Chinese now it has, when first they hear it, the same appearance. To a missionary who had described the death of our Savior, a Chinese remarked, 'That Jesus Christ plenty big fool.'" †

The same writer observes:—

> "These two sayings are current amongst the Chinese: 'Worship the gods as if they came, and if you don't it is all the same.' 'Worship the gods as if they were there, but if you worship not the gods don't care.' People so indifferent to their own religion are not likely to be much prejudiced against another one. On the subject of religion China is perfectly tolerant. Missionaries are not disliked because they preach Christianity, but because they are foreigners or suspected of being political agents. The people often say 'We have no objection to Jesus; doubtless he was good. Make an image of Him and put it by the side of our god's, and we will knock our heads before Him as well as before them. Some advantage may come from so doing'" (p. 313).

The Catholic priest at Chaotong told Dr. Morrison: "Talk to the Chinese of a God, of Heaven or Hell, and they yawn; speak to them of business, and they are all attention" ‡ And, as the Rev. E. J. Hardy further remarks:—

> "That a missionary should come so far for no other reason than to teach a new religion is unintelligible to them. Surely, they think, behind what seems only a harmless craze there lurks a sinister design. To many, a Chinese missionary appears as an advance agent of the gunboat. Missionaries come, territory goes, and it is little wonder if the Cross has come to be thought of as the pioneer of the sword" (p. 315-6).

These are only a few of the difficulties the missionary in China has to contend with. There are many others, as we shall see.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued*)

* "Missionaries in China," *Macmillan's Magazine*, November, 1895.

† G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*; 1910; p. 259.

* Dr. G. E. Morrison. *An Australian in China*; 1902; p. 122.

† E. J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*; 1905; p. 111.

‡ G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 105.

Allan Ramsay and the "Unco' Guid."

WE are now in the days of Stage Guilds and Actors' Church Unions, when special services are held for "the profession," and pastoral letters are sent them; when sermons are preached upon the moral influence of the stage, and the player and cleric may be found *tête-a-tête*. Yet it was not ever thus. Once upon a time it brought *anathema* from the Church to all and sundry who followed the calling of player and minstrel. Once upon a time they were denied the rites of the Church and the law of the land. The Church called them "heretics," and banned them

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even from its precincts; whilst the State classed them with "rogues and vagabonds," and refused them the common law of the land.

And why did all this come to pass in "Once upon a time"? Because the "player" and the "minstrel" taught the people the joys and pleasures of life. "Look you!" cried the player, "I have jokes to humor you, riddles to puzzle you, and antics to amaze you!" "Listen, too," cried the minstrel, "here is a drink-song for the lads, and a love-ditty for the lasses, and a jig-time for both!" And the people laughed, and sang, and danced, and were merry. But men in sober habit, and long visages, watched these gaily attired and merry-faced bohemians, and frowned. "Jokes, antics, songs, jigs. *Sancta Maria!* Had not the Holy Church forbade such things; had it not enjoined all to prepare themselves in prayer, penance, and humility during this life that they might be worthy for the life to come?"

And in those days of "Once upon a time," the men in sober habit had power in the land, and they said to the men in gay attire, "Upon you and all your class we pronounce *anathema!*"

Generations were born and died, but the world had moved but slowly. For it seems that even at the beginning of the eighteenth century, which was many centuries after "Once upon a time," there lived a certain Allan Ramsay, poet and bookseller, of Edinburgh, who wondered why such excellent people as "players" and "minstrels" had no place in his city where they might follow their vocation. He determined to build a *theatre* for such as these; but alas! he had reckoned without the men in sober habit. They, too, like the men in sober habit in "Once upon a time," said such things were contrary to the Church. But first let me tell you something about Allan Ramsay.

Allan Ramsay is, perhaps, the best known among the poets of Scotland after Robert Burns. Yet few are really so conversant with his life-work as with his name. Ramsay lived at a time (1686-1758) when the rule of the men in sober habit was still powerful. Logie Robertson gives us a glimpse of their rule and power in the Edinburgh of Ramsay's day. He says:—

> "There was no theatre or place of amusement anywhere in the town. Dancing was immoral, and an institution of the devil—or at least of Herodias, and was therefore to be put down. We are told of an organised attack with red-hot spits being made upon the door of a room in which dancing was being peacefully practised, to the great terror and danger of the dancers.....The Sunday, or the Sabbath as it was quite appropriately called, was kept in the letter of the Mosaic law. There were pious prowlers to scout the streets and pounce upon breakers of their version of the fourth Command. Their records tell of the rigidity of their righteousness. On one occasion.....they silenced a whistling bird in a cage; on another they confiscated a hot roast to which they were nose-led from the street!"

Into such a world came "the joyous Ramsay," as Sir Walter Scott calls him; but he had little sympathy with this narrow and bigoted rule of the men in sober habit, who are known in the North Countrie as the "Unco' Guid." In truth, he was somewhat of a Freethinker. At least, he avows himself "not tether'd to connection," as he says to James Arbuckle:—

> "Pray tak heed,
> Ye's get a short swatch o' my creed:
> Weel then, I'm nowther Whig nor Tory,
> Nor credit gie to purgatory;
> Neist Anti-Toland, Blunt, or Whiston,
> Know positively, I'm a Christian
> Believing truths an' thinking free,
> Wishing thrawn parties wad agree."

But he had little of Orthodox Christianity in him, as we shall see.

Even in his delightful pastoral, *The Gentle Shepherd*, we see something of his "thinking free." Here Ramsay makes the "larn'd gentry" reprove the ignorant shepherd folk for their superstitions. To give credence to dreams rouses Pattie's laughter, whilst the good Sir William says of witches, ghosts, and devils,—

> "What silly notions crowd the clouded mind,
> That is, thro' want of education, blind?"

Ramsay was certainly against the Kirk, as he says in his versified epistle to James Clerk:—

> "I have it even within my power
> The very Kirk itself to scower—
> And that you'll say's a brag richt bauld;
> But did'na Lindsay this of auld?
> Sir David's satires helped our nation
> To carry on the Reformation,
> And gave the scarlet dame a box
> Mair snell than all the pelts of Knox."

Although he did not attempt the Kirk-scouring process with any such power as Burns did later, yet he gave a goodly hand in the work. Save for an occasional satire, Ramsay preferred *ignoring* the Kirk to attacking it, certainly a much safer course in those days.

In a religion of happiness in *this* life, he asked the people to believe, assuring them that—

> "a sour face
> Is not the truest mark of grace."

This life was the one Ramsay was sure of, and knew most about:—

> "That ill-bred death has nae regard
> To king, or cottar, or a laird;
> As soon a castle he'll attack,
> As wa's o' divots roof'd wi' thack,
> Immediately we'll a' tak flight
> Unto the mirky realms o' night,
> As *stories gang*, wi' ghaists to roam
> In glomie Pluto's gousty dome."
> —*Imit. Hor.*

His creed was: "Here and Now":—

> "Leave to the Gods your ilka care;
> If that they think us worth their while,
> They can a rowth o' blessings spare
> Which will our fashious fears beguile.
>
> For what they hae a mind to do,
> That will they do, shou'd we gang wud
> If they command the storms to blaw,
> Then upo' sight the hailstanes thud.
>
> Let neist day come as it thinks fit,
> The present minutes' only ours;
> On pleasure let's employ our wit,
> An' laugh at fortune's feckless pow'rs.
>
> Be sure ye dinna great the grip
> O' ilka joy whan ye are young,
> Before auld age your vitals nip,
> An' lay ye twafold o'er a rung.
>
> These bennisons, I'm very sure,
> Are o' the God's indulgent grant;
> Then, surly carles, whisht, forbear
> To plague us wi' your whining cant."
> —*Imit. Hor.*

Ramsay failed to see any sin in "wine, woman, and song":—

> "As lang as reason guides the wheel
> Desires, tho' ardent, are nae crime,
> When they harmoniously keep time;
> But when they sprang o'er reason's fence,
> We smart for 't at our ain expence."
> *Epist. to Rob. Yarde.*

This is Secularist teaching every line. He also clearly saw how the Church had "hedged" in the joys and pleasures of life for its own purpose:—

> "Lang syne, when love an' innocence
> Were human nature's best defence,
> Ere party jars made lawteth less
> By cloathing 't in a monkish dress."
> —*Epist. to Rob. Yarde.*

At such *revolté* verses as these the "unco' guid" were alarmed, and quite a bitter faction arose against Ramsay in the country, and he began to be looked upon as a sort of Antichrist. Yet the Epicurean and Rationalist trend of his verses was not the only offence to the "unco' guid," for it appears that the poet, wanting the people to read and take delight in art and literature as he did, instituted a circulating library, in connection with the bookselling business, which I believe was one of the first of its kind. The "unco' guid" were in rampant fury at this innovation, and openly charged him with "debauching the faculties of the soul with lewd books." But these angry cries and menaces scarcely

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disturbed Ramsay for a moment; he simply smiled, took up his pen again, and went on

"Sousing sonnets on the lasses,
Hounding satires at the asses."

It was fortunate for the poet that he was successful in business, as it enabled him to sustain himself against the onslaughts of his enemies. Only once did they gain a victory over him, and it cost him a considerable part of his fortune. As we remarked at the outset, Ramsay had decided to build a theatre for his city, which he considered "a maist rational diversion." The place was erected, and everything was ready for the opening; but the "unco' guid" had been at work, and the "authorities" refused him a licence. Ramsay fought hard against their ruling, and the Lord President of the Supreme Court was petitioned, but to no avail; the "unco' guid" had triumphed. The poet went sadly back to his book-store to retrieve his fortune, that it might also help him to retrieve his defeat. But, although the former he accomplished in full, the latter was denied him.

Yet the whirligig of time brings its own revenge. To-day, Ramsay's city boasts four large and prosperous theatres, and recently the writer of this article had the honor of appearing at one of them before crowded audiences. He also happened to make one of a very sparse congregation in a kirk—the tabernacle of the "unco' guid." Then he saw and understood that Allan Ramsay had retrieved his defeat after all.

And now, why is it that the Church to-day is so amicably inclined towards the stage? To tell the truth, there is much common ground between them, as Sarah Bernhardt once pointedly remarked to an insolent cleric who had reproved her, that "people in the same line of business should never fall out." In short, the time has come when the Church knows full well that the curtain is about to be rung down upon its miserable *scena* of humanity's tears and weaknesses, to make room for a nobler and healthier art where humanity's smiles and strength are given full rein. And so the actors of the old *scena*, anxious to keep the curtain up a little while longer, extend the fraternal hand (so long withheld) to the actors of the new *scena*. But we of the latter must not forget the past. We must not forget how long they have kept the curtain up and had the stage to themselves. And finally, we must not forget those who have rung down the curtain upon them, especially "the joyous Allan Ramsay."

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Lester F. Ward.

OBITUARY.

IN the death of Lester Frank Ward, on April 18, at the age of 72, the United States has lost one of the most—if not *the* most—comprehensive thinkers it has produced, and the world one of its most ardent scientific reformers. It is characteristic of the quality of the English Press that while devoting much space to the death of men like Pierpont Morgan, who contributed nothing whatever to the world's development, the death of Professor Ward passed quite unnoticed. It is only from a paragraph in the New York *Truthseeker* that we became acquainted with the fact. This silence is not, perhaps, due to conscious neglect; it is more likely the result of sheer lack of interest on the part of the English newspapers in the higher branches of intellectual life. Had Professor Ward been a noisy American politician, or one of the group of "Dollar Kings," his death would, without doubt, have received wide publicity in the British Press.

As a young man, Lester Ward served through the Civil War, afterwards graduating at Columbia University. In 1879, after contributing to various magazines, he published *Haeckel's Genesis of Man*, in which the evolutionary account of man's origin is fully accepted. As Assistant Geologist to the United States Geological Survey, his publications included, the *Flora of Washington*, *Flora of the Lamaric Group*, *Geographical Distribution of Fossil Plants*, etc., etc. His great work, however, was *Dynamic Sociology*, in two volumes, covering over 13,000 pages, and published in 1883. This work is nothing less than a complete system of social science in the most comprehensive sense of that expression. This work had the honor of being condemned by the Russian Government, and an edition of 1,200 copies ordered to be burnt. Apart from other things, the Russian censor appeared to have feared from the title that the work was an encouragement to Socialism and Dynamite. Since 1883, other editions of the work have been called for in America, and it has been translated into several European languages.

It must be confessed that the title, *Dynamic Sociology*, is rather a forbidding one, but it exactly expresses the spirit of the work. Although availing himself of the labors of Spencer, and paying generous acknowledgment to him, Ward's work is really more in the line of Comte—a fact not to be obscured by the statement that, along with fundamental truths, Comte's work expressed "the greatest possible number of only less fundamental errors." Had Spencer not taken up a negative attitude toward social organisation, the relation of Ward to Spencer might have been different. As it is, Spencer's attitude is completely expressed in the title of one of his earliest books, *Social Statics*, just as Ward's attitude was expressed in the title of *Dynamic Sociology*. Those who desire a brief summary of the relations between Spencer and Ward on this point should read an article by the latter in the *American Academy of Social and Political Science* for January, 1894, a journal to which Ward was a frequent contributor. More clearly than either Comte or Spencer, Ward saw, both in the *Dynamic Sociology* and in *Psychic Factors of Civilisation* (written to specially emphasise this point) as well as in the *Outlines of Sociology*, and other writings, the importance of the active operation of mind in shaping human society. And unquestionably the growing recognition amongst scientific sociologists of the nature of the true social force as a psychic force is largely due to the work of Lester Ward.

If there is one fault in Professor Ward's writings it is a fondness for detailed classification—a probable result of his early scientific work. Apart from this, his writings have the advantages for the general reader of being clear from the intricacy of Comte and the technicalities of Spencer. No reader of average intelligence and education can fail to understand Professor Ward's meaning. And, more important still, he never appears to have lacked courage in dealing with religion. The naturalistic attitude is fully accepted in the *Dynamic Sociology*, and the author neither insults his readers nor degrades himself by inventing apologies for religion or for Christianity among civilised people. "Religion," he says, "is joined to error at its trunk, and none but errors grew out of it." This is a genuine scientific position, and stands out well from the absurdity of those who admit that religion began in error, but claim that in some miraculous way the elaboration of this error developed truth. Nothing is left, he also says, "but to regard the advent of Christianity as a calamity." Even the belief in immortality, he claims, has exerted a demoralising influence, and properly distinguishes between the moral elements which are associated with religion and religion itself. "They exist independently of religion, and their connection with religion is only apparent."

One would like to quote at length from Professor Ward's works, but space forbids. I have written the above as a slight mark of admiration and gratitude to one who was a great humanist, a capable and comprehensive thinker, and a great sociologist. Above all, he was a great Freethinker, and it may easily be that his greatness in other directions owed not a little to his possessing a mind in which superstition had no place.—C.

The Breakers.

To George William Foote and all his Fellow-Workers for Secularism.

As the wave in thunder rages
'Gainst the hard and sullen rock,
While throughout eternal ages
Futile seems its ceaseless shock;
So the mighty waves of Reason
Seem to smite the callous soul,
So, from season unto season,
Spurned, the living waters roll.

Yet the task an end is making;
Every billow dashed to spray—
Every surge, in splendor breaking,
Sweeps some tiny grain away;
So, 'neath Reason's sure attrition,
Working on through ages vast,
Densest rocks of superstition
Shall be worn away at last.

A. E. MADDOCK.

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THE
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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Those who speak of the profit of wisdom are never so wise as when they admit, without pride or heart-burning, that wisdom grants scarcely a boon to her faithful that the foolish or wicked would prize.—MAETERLINCK.

The Death of Prayer.

WE wrote several articles formerly on cases of Peculiar People who had to appear at coroners' inquests on the dead bodies of their children. The father of one of these deceased children was committed for trial on the extremely serious charge of manslaughter. Another was severely censured, after the style of the old magistrate whose judgment was "Not guilty; but don't do it again." A further case occurred. That time a juryman wanted to have a Biblical discussion with the Peculiar father, but was checked by the coroner, who did not care to have his court turned into an arena of theological debate.

Another fact which we desire to notice is this. The medical witness in the last instance was asked whether a doctor would have prolonged the child's life, and he was unable to answer the question. It was an ordinary case of pneumonia, yet it was impossible to say whether a doctor would have done any good or not. Could there be a more striking illustration of the empirical character of the "art of healing"? Does it not warrant a strong opposition to the overweening pretensions of the medical profession? Does it not justify us in refusing to be ruled by so-called experts? Does it not warrant us in declining to invest their nostrums with any sort of privilege. The medical art is in many ways a noble one. Its object is, or should be, the alleviation of human suffering, and the prolongation of human life. But when the doctor seeks to invade our homes with compulsory powers we have a right to investigate his scientific credentials; and when we find that doctors are very much at variance with each other, that fundamental points of treatment are still in dispute, and that a medical dogma like vaccination is easily riddled by evidence, and especially by statistics, we have a clear right to ask these gentlemen to be more modest, and to fall into a line with the general body of their fellow citizens.

The point, however, is collateral. Our primary object is to deal with the doctrine of prayer. And we venture to assert that this doctrine is practically dead. It has a semblance of life, but no reality; and the committal of those Peculiar People on a charge of manslaughter was the stroke of the bell at its funeral.

For a long time the clergy who come into contact with thinking people, and have to face an educated opinion, have been very chary about pressing the doctrine of prayer in the good old-fashioned style. When the late Professor Tyndall suggested that the efficacy of prayer should be submitted to a scientific test, a wily clergyman replied that it was absurd to expect God Almighty to let himself be made the subject of an experiment. And when Mr. Galton investigated backwards, in the region of the unalterable past, and proved by statistics that the efficacy of prayer was absolutely imperceptible, the clergy took shelter behind a dignified silence. We know of ministers like the late Mr. Price Hughes successfully praying for the exact sum of one thousand pounds; and Muller's orphanage is still supported by the wide and constant advertisement that it relies entirely upon the Lord. But every man of the world smiles at such equivocal simplicities. They are relics of a bygone age of credulity. The general tendency of the age is to ignore prayer altogether, except in the perfunctory rites of "divine worship." Insurance companies treat it with quiet disdain. Christians have to pay the same life-policy premiums as infidels, and churches have to be protected by lightning conductors. Underwriters never trouble themselves about the religious or irreligious habits of the captain of a ship, or whether his list of passengers is hallowed by the presence of a bishop or damnified by the presence of an Atheist lecturer. The rate of insurance depends entirely upon secular considerations. When a town is visited by an epidemic fever, the citizens know very well that the remedy must be found in improved sanitation, and they look upon church prayers as a harmless ceremony of the time-honored clerical profession. The town councillor who proposed a religious procession, and general supplication to God, would be laughed at as an old fogey. That sort of thing has been impossible ever since Lord Palmerston told the Town Council of Edinburgh to try whitewash instead of prayer against the cholera.

The Church of England has forms of prayer for rain and fine weather, but it rarely uses them, and some day or other they will be dropped out of the Prayer Book. The most thick-headed farmer, in these days of scientific agriculture, and international competition in the food market, is quite aware that it is no use relying upon the parson. Thanksgiving services are still held; but they are regarded as routine ceremonies, without any real relation of the character of the harvest.

The scientific spirit is gradually but surely permeating the public mind; and science knows nothing of miracle, and every answer to prayer *is* a miracle.

The clergy who try to reconcile science with miracle only do so metaphysically. All they urge at bottom is this, that if there be a God he can work miracles if he chooses. No one denies this hypothetical proposition. The only practical question is this: If there be a God, *does* he work miracles? In other words, do miracles *occur?* That question is to be settled by evidence, and all the evidence we have points to the negative. Every man of science believes in natural causation and the unbroken order of nature.

Prayer is now generally recommended as a pious exercise. But whoever prays to God without expecting an answer is, as Coleridge said, indulging in a species of self-magnetism. It is like any other kind of dram or drug. A Christian soldier might fight better after a prayer, but so he might after a glass of brandy. It may be said that prayer is at least a conscious communion with one's ideal, but that is possible without simulation and self-deception.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Religious Epidemics.—II.

(*Continued from p. 306.*)

THE only direct survival of the Dancing Mania of the fourteenth century appears to be the "Jumping Dance of Echternach," in Luxembourg. This is an annual Whit-Tuesday festival, and existed as late as twenty years ago; but I am not certain whether it has by now disappeared or not. Some thousands of persons take part in this procession, the method being that of gaining the church by a series of jumps, forward and backward, when all who have taken part in it fall on their faces and pray. High Mass is at once celebrated. There is no indication that this is epidemic in character; it seems rather the celebration of a past epidemic.

In modern times epidemics of dancing have been more local and less persistent than was the case in the Middle Ages, but whenever they have occurred it has always been in connection with religion. In most cases the dancing has tended more to resemble "jumping," and—although this may be due to more careful observation—has been accompanied by convulsive actions of a clearly epileptoid nature. One of the most famous of these instances was that of the French Convulsionaires, from 1727 to the period of the Revolution. A well-known but not very famous preacher, Deacon Paris, died in that year. Very shortly after his death it was declared that miracles took place at his grave in the cemetery of St. Medard. So large a number of people gathered round the grave in expectation of the reported miracles, that eventually Louis XV. ordered the cemetery to be closed. But by this the work had been done. As usual, the expected miracle occurred. The very earth from the grave, when sent to persons at a distance, produced the anticipated miraculous results. Sometimes, we are told, those seized

> "bounded from the ground like fish out of water; and this was so frequently imitated at a later period that the women and girls, when they expected such violent contortions, not wishing to appear indecent, put on gowns made like sacks, closed at the feet. If they received any bruises by falling down, they were healed with earth from the grave of the uncanonised saint. They usually, however, showed great agility in this respect; and it is scarcely necessary to remark that the female sex especially was distinguished by all kinds of leaping, and almost inconceivable contortions of body. Some spun round on their feet with incredible rapidity, as is related of the dervishes. Others ran with their heads against walls, or curved their bodies like rope-dancers, so that their heels touched their shoulders."

As usual, women played a large part in this movement; while many of the phenomena described, such as the insensibility to pain inflicted in the course of these religious seizures, reminds one of more recent hypnotic phenomena. The way in which suggestion operates among people has been illustrated over and over again in the history of Methodism. Soon after the introduction of Methodism into Wales, for example, there arose the sect of the "Jumpers." The chief peculiarity of this sect was expressed in the name, and consisted in wild dances and convulsive leaps in the air until the performers fell down exhausted. The various epidemics of religious dancing in America appear to have originated from the Welsh outbreak, although assuming even more extravagant forms, and, when connected with "camp meetings," leading to a great amount of immorality. The dancing sects of Russia have already been described; and in such movements as the "Pentecostal Dancers" and the half-insane proceedings of revivals in recent years we have little more than the shadow of those mediæval movements from which they descend.

Another epidemic of the Christian period of European history, far more important than any yet noticed because of its indirect consequences, was monasticism. It cannot, of course, be claimed that Christianity originated monasticism; but it has been one of the characteristics of Christianity to take certain repellant features of religion in general and give them a still more virulent expression. This was notably so in this case. In the East the figure of the monk had been a familiar sight long before Christianity, but the main current of social life flowed on with the minimum of disturbance from it. The social and domestic virtues received adequate, if not full, recognition from the upholders of the monastic life. It was left for the Christian Church to give monasticism the character of an epidemic, to denounce purely social and domestic virtues as a positive hindrance to the religious life, and to thus come perilously near destroying civilisation altogether.

It was argued by Bingham, a learned seventeenth century ecclesiastical historian, that although asceticism was known in the earliest period of Christian history, monasticism did not originate within the Church until the fourth century. It is not a matter of great importance whether this be so or not; it is, however, certain that with no other religion has monasticism ever created such a vogue, or proved itself so grave a social danger. The mere number of monks and nuns was enough to threaten social security. Allowing for what Lecky calls the "glaring mendacity" of the Lives of the Saints, a description that applies to all ecclesiastical writings to a greater or smaller extent, it is evident that their number must have been very great. It is said that St. Pachomius had 7,000 monks under his direct rule; that in the time of Jerome 50,000 monks gathered together at the Easter festival; that one Egyptian city mustered 20,000 nuns and 10,000 monks, and that the monastic population of Egypt at one time equalled the rest of the population. In less than fifty years after the foundation of the Franciscan Order it possessed 8,000 houses, with 200,000 members. In the twelfth century the Cluniacs had 2,000 monasteries in France. In England, as late as 1546, Hooper, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, declared that there were no less than 10,000 nuns in England. Every country in Christendom possessed a huge army of men and women whose ideals involved a more or less complete negation of all that makes a people sanely happy and progressive.

The character of the monk during the height of the monastic epidemic has been well sketched by Lecky. Its presentation here will save a more lengthy description*:—

> "A hideous, sordid, and emaciated maniac, without knowledge, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero and the lives of Socrates and Cato. For about two centuries, the hideous maceration of the body was regarded as the highest proof of excellence. St. Jerome declares, with a thrill of admiration, how he had seen a monk, who for thirty years had lived exclusively on a small portion of barley bread and muddy water; another who lived in a hole and never ate more than five figs for his daily repast; a third who cut his hair only on Easter Sunday, who never washed his clothes, who never changed his tunic till it fell to pieces, who starved himself till his eyes grew dim, and his skin like a pumice stone.....Some saints, like St. Marcian, restricted themselves to one meal a day, so small that they continually suffered the pangs of hunger.....Some of the hermits lived in deserted dens of wild beasts, others in dried-up wells, while others found a congenial resting-place among the tombs. Some disdained all clothes, and crawled about like wild beasts, covered only by their matted hair.....The cleanliness of the body was regarded as a pollution of the soul, and the saints who were most admired were one mass of clotted filth. St. Athanasius relates with enthusiasm how St. Anthony, the patriarch of monarchism, had never, to extreme old age, been guilty of

* *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 107-10. For a careful description of the monastic discipline, in its more normal aspects, see Bingham's Works, vol. ii., bk. 7. Gibbon gives his usual brilliant summary of the movement in ch. 37 of the *Decline and Fall*; Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy* gives the classical and authoritative account of the consequence to morals of the monastic practice of celibacy.

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> washing his feet.....St. Abraham, the hermit, who lived for fifty years after his conversion, rigidly refused from that date to wash either his face or his feet.....St. Eupraxia joined a convent of one hundred and thirty nuns, who never washed their feet, and who shuddered at the mention of a bath."

It is apart from my present purpose to give anything like a full description of the monastic life; but the consequences of this epidemic on general social life, and on the life of religion, are too important to pass without observation. And, first, in relation to religion itself. That it served to strengthen and perpetuate the life of religion there can be little doubt. However much some people may have revolted against the monastic ideal, it nevertheless strengthened immensely the religious idea. The sight of monarch and noble yielding homage to the monk, acknowledging his supremacy in what was declared to be the supreme interest in life, the interference of the monk in every department of life, saturated society, so to speak, with religion; and although at a later period the growing rapacity, tyranny, and dissoluteness of the monkish orders led to a revolt against their rule, the imagination of all must by that time have been thoroughly impressed with the power and importance of religion. Most people fear ghosts long after they have ceased to believe in them; they pay homage to a crown long after intellectual development has robbed that symbol of all its original significance, and there is little doubt that even after the arrest of the epidemic, the virus of the disease still made itself felt. In spite of their absurd ideals and disgusting penances, later generations have not failed to hold up the saints of the Church as ideals of the religious life. They have been used to impress the imagination of their successors as they were used to impress the imagination of their contemporaries. The picture of Thomas à Beckett, with a hair shirt running with vermin may disgust, but this has not served to prevent his being held up as an example of the uplifting power of religion.

This, then, was one great consequence of the ascetic epidemic. It kept religion alive, it held at bay those social forces that normally make for its disintegration, it saturated society with the feeling for religion, and made it less able to resist religion in after generations. For religion does not, if one may use the language of medical science, deposit an anti-toxin that protects against further attacks; it belongs to that class which, once a successful assault has been made, prepares the way for still further onslaughts.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

"The Observance of the Lord's Day."

READERS of this journal may remember that the Gravesend Sabbatarians recently suffered a signal defeat. They made a vigorous attempt to induce the Town Council to refuse a seven days' license to the picture palaces, but the Council turned a deaf ear to their petition and granted the license by the handsome majority of fourteen votes to four. Naturally the local clergy and their followers angrily resent this strong rebuff, and the churches and chapels resound with bitter denunciations of the powerful anti-Sabbatarian spirit rampant in the community. The *Reporter* for May 10 contains a remarkable sermon, with the heading of this article for its title, by the Rev. S. J. Poole, M.A., Vicar of St. James's Church. Because of certain serious allegations which it makes, this discourse calls, in the interest of truth and justice, for a careful and critical examination. Now, there are a few points on which we are glad to find ourselves in agreement with Mr. Poole. He quotes two eminent statesmen, Beaconsfield and Gladstone; and we are at one with the latter in the statement that "the religious observance of Sunday is a main prop of the religious character of the country," and with the former in the assertion that a day of rest is a prime necessity of mankind. We almost approve of Mr. Poole's following remark:—

> "'The Sabbath was made for man,' that is, for man in the whole of his make, body, mind, and spirit—and man in the whole of his range, for mankind, for every man, no matter what part of the globe he inhabits. And hence its observance dates back as far as history takes us in the development of man. It is coeval with man. From the very dawn of history we note the Sabbath, one day's rest after six days' labor, has been the charta of spiritual, mental, and bodily refreshment."

But the mischief with Mr. Poole is that to him a day of rest means a day of worship; not a day of physical recreation, but of spiritual renewal; a day on which he opens his shop and exhibits his wares; not a holiday, but a holy day. He tells us plainly that he wants to preserve Sunday as a day of worship in order to safeguard Christianity. It is not Sunday, as such, that he is so profoundly concerned about, but Sunday as the Lord's Day. Without Sunday and without Christianity there would be no use for parsons.

Such, in a nutshell, is Mr. Poole's case, though he does not put it that way. Indeed, he puts it in an entirely different way. Instead of saying that in the absence of Sunday and Christianity there would be no clergymen, he declares that the loss of the former two would result in the disappearance of morality. He says:—

> "When we speak of safeguarding Christianity we speak, *ipso facto*, of safeguarding the highest code of morals. For a really high code of morals does not exist outside Judaism and Christianity. We hear of the high morality of other religions. We admit there are precepts of great value in them. But there are so many foul accretions connected with all these religions, such a cargo of dross and base metal, that we may not for one moment compare them with Christianity as the model and lever for high moral living. Nay! outside Christianity you are on a quicksand when trying to walk steadily in search of a safe code of moral living."

A man who can talk like that is the victim of one or more of three things—abysmal ignorance, stone-blind prejudice, or professional mendacity. Can Mr. Poole conscientiously characterise the Chinese, Japanese, or the Burmese as morally our inferiors? Has he really read the Buddhist Scriptures, which are about four times as long as the Bible, and which contain a system of morality which, in the opinion of many competent judges, is second to none in the world? The reverend gentleman alludes to Portugal as a most distracted and unhappy country, but he forgets that less than five years ago Christianity was supreme there, and that its yoke was so galling that the people, unable to endure it any longer, resolved to fling it off, which they did with magnificent success; and the present troubles of the country are almost exclusively the outcome of the devilish but so far futile machinations of the fallen monarchy and priesthood, which are hand and glove. The truth is that Portugal is releasing herself from the cruel shackles of her superstitious, priest-ridden, and king-devoured past, and that the process would be much smoother and swifter if her Christian enemies would only give her simple justice and fair play. Mr. Poole also refers to the increase of juvenile crime in France under secular education. But if he had taken the trouble to consult the latest official statistics before speaking he would have seen how contrary to the truth his information was. For the last twenty-four years crime of all kinds in the French Republic has been steadily on the decrease.

Happily, our opposition to Mr. Poole ends just here. He either ignorantly or deliberately lies when he exclaims, "Kill Christianity, and you will kill morality." Millions of the most moral people on the planet to-day are non-Christians and non-Theists. We challenge him to cite unquestioned facts in disproof of this statement. But he is quite right when he cries, "Kill the Sunday, and you will kill Christianity." Christianity has subsisted on its Book and its Day; deprived of them it would speedily die. In theory man is described as being by nature

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religious, as having within him an instinctive hunger for God, which God alone can allay. Again and again are we told that it is quite impossible to rob him of religion, or to prevent him from seeking food for his spiritual nature. In practice, however, the flattest contradiction is given to that theoretical teaching. The whole argument against secular education hinges upon the positive assurance that if the Bible were excluded from the day-schools religion would be doomed. Catholics, Anglicans, and Nonconformists are all agreed on this point. Those three main divisions of the Christian Church unchurch one another with marvellous celerity, and they cannot meet one another on any point. Hence the never-ceasing warfare between them over religious education; but there is no division among them on the fatal character of the secular solution. Listen to Mr. Poole:—

> "I have in my mind a certain grammar school of great repute as a public school. At that school religious instruction is given one solitary half-hour each week. Most of the boys come from homes where the Sunday is little revered, and Christianity little taught. When these boys grow up, what will they be? *Baptised Heathens!*—little more." (The italics are our own.)

Quite right, Mr. Poole. The secular principle alone is fair and just, but it will certainly breed Freethinkers by the thousand. A half-hour dose of religion per week is not enough, and fails to keep the spiritual instinct alive. Listen once more:—

> "And so we come, step by step, to this staggering truth, uttered by one of the world's greatest Sceptics, Voltaire: 'Kill the Sunday, and you will kill Christianity.' This is said to have been his answer when asked how to stamp out Christianity in France. And his words are tragically, fearfully true. Unless there is a day specially set apart for the Church to do her work, the principles and morals of Christianity simply cannot be taught."

What a complete surrender of the case for Christianity. Here, again, theoretically, the future of the Cross is absolutely secure. The Gospel Jesus proudly predicts that against his Church not even the gates of hell can ever prevail. You remember the martial strains of the famous hymn:—

> "The Son of God goes forth to war,
> A Kingly crown to gain;
> His blood-red banner streams afar!
> Who follows in his train?"

In theology, both of the New Testament and the Church Christ is a king who "must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." He is the irresistible, all-conquering Redeemer, endowed with all power in heaven and on earth, concerning whom great voices in heaven were heard saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." And yet Mr. Poole tells us that we can steal the Sunday from this mighty monarch by opening theatres and picture palaces and absenting ourselves from church and chapel, and that if we do rob him of his own field day, we shall thereby hurl him headlong from his throne down to the bottomless pit of eternal oblivion. What a compliment is this that a servant pays to his own Master whom in theory he holds to be absolutely invincible! What a puerile giving away of the Christian case is this whole sermon which is ostensibly in defence of Christ and his Day!

Yes, Christianity is a house founded upon the sand, destined to fall when the winds of criticism begin to blow; but it is not every day that an apologist of that religion tells you so with his own lips, as Mr. Poole does in this amazing discourse. The truth is not that the kingdoms of this world are likely ever to become the kingdoms of "our Lord, and of his Christ," but that the imaginary kingdom of "our Lord, and of his Christ" is gradually making room for the real kingdom of man, in which he shall reign to the end of days.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—II.

(*Continued from p. 315.*)

> "From their [the Chinese] point of view it goes without saying that all foreigners are enormously rich, and that there are no poor in our favored lands, or we should not have money to spend in maintaining corps of missionaries nearly as numerous as our merchants, and in subsidising outcast Chinese to forsake the family altars to 'feng chiao,' or be 'sealed' to a doctrine strange and incredible."—ARCHIBALD LITTLE, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p 256.
>
> "From old time these attacks upon the domestic faith of docile and peaceful communities have provoked massacres, and if persisted in they will continue to provoke massacres while the people have strength left to strike. How foreign religious aggression is answered by native religious aggression, and how Christian military power avenges the foreign victims with tenfold slaughter and strong robbery, need not be here recorded. It has not been in these years only that ancestor-worshiping peoples have been slaughtered, impoverished, or subjugated in revenge for the uprisings that missionary intolerance provokes."—LAFCADIO HEARN, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, p. 519.

ANOTHER great obstacle the missionary to the Chinese has to surmount is that of the language. Mr. Chester Holcombe, in his valuable work *The Real Chinaman* (p. 49), says "a barrier far more serious than the Great Wall to any intimate acquaintance with the Chinese is found in their language." The Chinese language has no alphabet. Each character represents in itself a complete idea, and practically corresponds to a syllable in our language.

> "The lack of any alphabet and the enormous number of characters make the labor of learning to read Chinese burdensome in the extreme. Each character must be learned by itself; and when the student has mastered a thousand or five thousand, the succeeding thousands must be learned in the same way" (p. 53).

Such are the difficulties of learning Chinese. Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming, after observing that forty thousand different characters are used in the classics of Confucius, says:—

> "Happily a knowledge of four thousand suffices to enable a student to read such a book as our Bible; but to acquire even these takes an average student about six years, and even when he has attained some skill in reading he has not begun to learn to write."*

Which requires a rare proficiency and skill in drawing.

These difficulties, great as they are, dwindle into comparative insignificance before the obstacles in the way of learning to speak Chinese. Mr. Chester Holcombe, who was for many years interpreter to the United States Legation at Pekin, says that the really serious difficulties inherent in learning to speak Chinese render it an almost insurmountable barrier to any thorough knowledge of the people. He tells us:—

> "No amount of book study will enable a person to speak it. It must be learned from the lips of a living teacher. With any amount of drill it requires a quick ear and great flexibility of the vocal organs to acquire accurate pronunciation. So serious is the difficulty, that it may be accepted as a rule that no person over thirty years of age can learn to speak Chinese correctly, as the vocal organs, after that period, appear to have lost a portion of their flexibility. Many persons under that age fail to acquire a command of the language, even with the most faithful effort. Not one foreign speaker of Chinese in ten can make the ordinary Chinese cat-call. Although I accomplished this feat, I failed, after seventeen years of patient effort, to produce a certain sound with which the donkey-driver urges his long-eared beast about the streets of Pekin. My only consolation in the failure is that no other foreigner has been known to master it."†

The same writer further tells us that the most expert foreign authorities disagree as to the best representation in any European language of many of these sounds. For instance, he observes:—

> "It probably will never be settled whether the Chinese word for 'man' should begin with *j* or *r*; the fact being that the exact sound is an intermediate one, almost impossible to any foreigner, between the two."

* C. F. Gordon Cumming, *Memories*; 1904; p. 352.
† Chester Holcombe, *The Real Chinaman*; 1895; pp. 62-63.

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Mr. Holcombe once asked several American and European scholars learned in the Chinese language, who were guests at his table, how the Chinese word for "porridge" should be represented in English. He received seven different combinations of letters.

Another peculiarity of the Chinese language, and one which is responsible for more blunders than all the others put together, is that the tone in which a word is uttered changes the meaning of the word itself. For instance, in English a word conveys a single idea to the person to whom it is spoken. Thus the word "man" always means a man in our language, although the word may be uttered in a tone to indicate inquiry, contempt, sarcasm, surprise, anger, or any other emotion. In Chinese this is all changed; the tone in which a word is uttered affects the meaning of the word as much as the sound does. Thus, says Mr. Holcombe, "In Chinese a man ceases to be a man the instant you change the tone of your voice in uttering the word. He may be a disease, a nightingale, or a carrot, but he can be a man in only one tone of voice." And, as he further remarks—

> "It is no easy matter to speak a single word of Chinese correctly. A long and steady drill of the vocal organs is necessary to the accurate and ready pronunciation of each separate character. At the outset of his Chinese studies the author devoted four hours each day for eight weary months to a drill on the tone table" (pp. 66-7-8).

Chinese, as the same writer remarks, is undoubtedly the most difficult language on earth to master. He says a volume might be filled with the most annoying blunders committed by foreign students of Chinese. For instance:—

> "A missionary once informed his audience that the Savior, when on earth, 'went about eating cake.' He intended to say 'healing the sick'; but an aspirate wrongly placed changed healing into eating, while an error in tone made cakes out of those who were ill" (pp. 68-9).

On another occasion—

> "The writer once heard a venerable missionary address the Deity in prayer, before a crowded Chinese audience, as 'O Thou Omniverous God.' He meant to say 'omniscient,' but used an aspirated *ch* when the other would have better served his purpose. On another occasion a missionary saw with astonishment an audience hurriedly leave his chapel in response to what he supposed was a courteous invitation from his lips to be seated. In point of fact, however, he was not giving them a welcome, but assuring them that they had made a mistake in entering. An aspirated *t* caused all the misunderstanding."*

The Rev. Wm. Milne, the colleague of the missionary, Dr. Morrison, declared that "To acquire Chinese is a work for men with bodies of brass, lungs of steel, heads of oak, hands of spring steel, eyes of eagles, hearts of apostles, memories of angels, and lives of Methuselah."†

Even when the foreigner, after herculean struggles during a series of years, has learned to read and speak Chinese, he will still be unable to make himself understood. He will now have to cope with what that great authority on things Chinese, Mr. Arthur H. Smith—who spent twenty-two years in China as a missionary—calls the Chinese "talent for misunderstanding." This arises through their different mode of thought. We pride ourselves on going directly to the marrow of the subject, and, having reached it, saying exactly what we mean; but, says Mr. Arthur Smith, "The whole Chinese system of thinking is based on a line of assumptions different from those to which we are accustomed." In fact, our modes of thought and the Chinese are at opposite poles. It has been said that we think in straight lines, but the Oriental thinks in curves; and however proficient the foreigner may become in the language, so that he could write down every character spoken by a Chinese, yet, says Mr. Smith, it would still be "impossible, from merely hearing what a Chinese says, to tell what he means"; and he declares that anyone who can read a copy of the Pekin *Gazette*, and form a correct notion as to what is behind it, "knows more of China than can be learned from all the works on this Empire that ever were written." And he adds: "Is there not reason to fear that by the time any outside barbarian shall have reached such a pitch of comprehension as this implies, we shall be as much at a loss to know what *he* meant by what *he* said as if he were really Chinese."

So the student of Chinese, having, as he thinks, mastered the language, finds, to his pained surprise, that he is not understood. He therefore, says Mr. Smith, "returns to his studies with augmented diligence, and at the end of a series of years is able to venture with confidence to accost the public, or any individual thereof, on miscellaneous subjects." But with no better results.

> "The speaker will have opportunity for the same pained surprise as when he made his maiden speech in this tongue. The auditor evidently does not understand. He as evidently does not expect to understand. He visibly pays no attention to what is said, makes no effort whatever to follow it, but simply interrupts you to observe, 'When you speak we do not understand.' He has a smile of superiority, as of one contemplating the struggles of a deaf-mute to utter articulate speech, and as if he would say, 'Who supposed that you could be understood? It may be your misfortune and not your fault that you were not born with a Chinese tongue, but you should bear your disabilities, and not worry us with them, for when you speak we do not understand you.' It is impossible to retain at all times an unruffled serenity in situations like this, and it is natural to turn fiercely on your adversary, and inquire, 'Do you understand what I am saying at this moment?' 'No,' he replies, 'I do not understand you.'"*

Bearing these facts in mind, we can appreciate the miraculous character of some of the conversions recorded in the missionary magazines. For instance, Mr. Stanley P. Smith

> "had been only seven months in China when he performed that wonderful conversion, so applauded at the Missionary Conference of 1888, of 'a young Chinaman, a learned man, a B.A. of his University, who had heard Mr. Smith speak in *the Chinese that can be acquired in seven months*, and accepted Him there and then (*Records of the Missionary Conference;* 1888; i., p. 46). Indeed, the earlier the new missionaries in China begin to preach, the more rapid are the conversions they make."†

Dr. Morrison—the Australian medical man who travelled in China, not Dr. Morrison the missionary—the author of the last quotation, also sarcastically remarks:—

> "The Chinaman is rarely carried away by his feelings at the theatre; indeed it may be questioned if strong emotion is ever aroused in his breast, except by the first addresses of the junior members of the China Inland Mission, the thrilling effects of whose Chinese exhortations is recorded every month in [the missionary magazine] *China's Millions*."‡

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

GOD AND THE WHITE SLAVES.

Poisonous paint on us, under the gas
Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven,
Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,
Watched by the eyes of you pitiless heaven!
Let the stars stare at us! God, too, may glare at us
Out of the void where he hideth so well.
Sisters of midnight, he damned us in making us,
Cast us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,
Smiles from his throne on these markets of hell

—*Robert Buchanan.*

If Pierce weren't a fool, he'd help on the spirit of the night and put everybody in a state to seek his public-house after the concert be done. Who wants "The Keys of Heaven" except of a Sunday. The keys of the beer barrel be more like it.—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

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* Holcombe, *The Real Chinaman*, pp. 64-5.
† Marshall Broomhall, *The Chinese Empire*, p. 371.

* A. H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics;* 1906; p. 59.
† Dr. G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China;* 1902; p 179.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

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National Secular Society's Annual Conference.

THE business meetings of the Conference were held in Clavier Hall, Princes-street, Regent-street, London, on Whit Sunday, May 11.

The following Vice-Presidents attended: — Messrs. J. Barry, E. Bowman, R. Chapman, H. Cowell, C. Cohen, F. A. Davies, W. Davey, W. Heaford, J. T. Lloyd, W. Leat, A. B. Moss, J. Neat, R. T. Nichols, S. M. Peacock, J. Ross, G. Roleffs, V. Roger, F. Schindle, S. Samuels, H. Silverstein, T. J. Thurlow, F. Wood, and Miss Stanley.

The delegates from Branches were as follows:—J. Lazarnick, W. R. Brooks (Bethnal Green); E. Clifford Williams, J. W. Hackett (Birmingham); J. W. Gott (Bolton); H. R. Clifton, S. Soddy (Croydon); W. Davidson, J. Hecht (Edmonton); C. Cohen (Glasgow); A. S. Collinson, Miss How (Islington); E. Bellamy, S. B. Savill (Kingsland); J. G. Dobson (Manchester); D. Mapp, M. J. Charter, T. H. Elstob (Newcastle-on-Tyne); W. J. Lloyd, Miss Kough, Miss Stanley (North London); R. Chapman, J. T. Horsman, T. Fothergill (South Shields); R. H. Rosetti, Miss Pankhurst (West Ham).

The Minutes of last Conference were taken as read.

The Executive's Annual Report was submitted orally by the President, who was very warmly welcomed after his long and severe illness.

The Financial Report was unanimously adopted.

Election of President: During this function the chair was occupied by Mr. C. Cohen. On the motion of the Bethnal Green and Kingsland Branches, Mr. G. W. Foote was unanimously and enthusiastically re-elected. On resuming the chair the President acknowledged the honor that had been paid him once more by the Conference. He knew that, as their leader, he possessed their confidence, and this he fully appreciated. He coveted no higher, and there could be no more honorable, position. Had he wished it, no doubt he might have entered Parliament; but he considered it a much greater honor to be President of the National Secular Society. The Press had always boycotted him most assiduously. When it became his turn to speak at a public meeting the reporters either went out in a body or closed their note-books. It was no egotism to say he could write; but the prizes of literature never fell to his lot. He did not complain. His one business in life was to carry on the fight for Freethought—the grandest of all causes. His remarks were received with great applause.

Election of Vice-Presidents.—On the nomination of the Executive the following were re-elected:—J. Barry, W. H. Baker, J. G. Bartram, E. Bowman, R. Chapman, Victor Charbonnel, E. A. Charlton, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, H. Cowell, W. Davey, F. A. Davies, J. G. Dobson, R. G. Fathers, Léon Furnémont, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Hammond, W. Heaford, Eugene Hins, S. L. Hurd, R. Johnson, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, W. Leat, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, James McGlashen, G. B. H. McCluskey, J. Neate, R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, W. T. Pitt, C. G. Quinton, J. T. Ross, Miss Mary Ross, G. Roleffs, Mrs. Roleffs, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, S. Samuels, T. Shore, H. Silverstein, W. H. Spivey, Miss Alma Stanley, W. B. Thompson, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, Miss E. M. Vance, F. E. Willis, C. J. Whitwell, Frederick Wood, G. White.

Mr. T. H. Elstob and Mr. W. Dodd were also elected Vice-Presidents, both being well-known as zealous and able workers of long standing in the Freethought movement.

Mr. Harry Jones and Mr. S. B. Savill were elected auditors.

Mr. Clifford Williams (Birmingham) moved: "That one Sunday in the year be called the Charles Bradlaugh Sunday, and that all Branches be requested to arrange for lectures or readings to be given bearing on the life and teachings of Charles Bradlaugh, thus perpetuating the memory of our late great leader." Mr. Williams dwelt, with suitable emphasis, upon the desirability of frequently recalling the splendid services which Mr. Bradlaugh had rendered to the world as founder and first President of the National Secular Society. He alluded to the great man's magnetic, dominating personality. Mr. Hackett seconded, speaking in glowing terms of the magic influence that lies in Charles Bradlaugh's name. He stated that the Birmingham Branch wished to suggest to the President that the Bradlaugh Sunday should be followed by a special number of the *Freethinker*, containing, on the front page, a portrait of Bradlaugh, with an article by the Editor on some feature of his life and work, or a summary of the lectures delivered. He felt confident that of such a number of the journal they would be able, at Birmingham, to sell from 200 to 500 extra copies. Messrs. Peacock, Chapman, Hecht, Davidson, and Thurlow spoke against the motion, their chief objection to it being that the setting apart of a day for the perpetuation of the memory of anyone, however great, would or might engender a species of fetishism; but Messrs. Silverstein, Heaford, Ross, and the President saw no such danger in the proposal. The President recommended the striking out of the words "thus perpetuating the memory of," which the mover and seconder readily consented to do; and thus amended the motion was carried.

There was another motion from Birmingham, moved and seconded by the same gentlemen, namely, "That all motions carried at a Conference shall be dealt with in the course of the three months following the Conference, and a report stating the progress made be sent to the Branch responsible for the motion." After considerable discussion, and the substitution of "as soon as possible" for "in the course of three months," the motion was carried.

The following motion was formally moved, seconded, and carried: "This Conference protests against the London County Council's deliberate and continuous effort to cripple, and if possible to destroy, the traditional right of public speech and discussion in all parts of the metropolis under its control; and the Conference protests especially against the mean attempt to injure advanced bodies generally by a perfectly uncalled-for attempt to deprive them of the immemorial right to make collections for their funds within the limits—and *only* within the limits—of their permitted meetings." The hope was expressed that the newly elected Council would see the wisdom of pursuing a more liberal and rational policy.

Mr. Cohen moved that: "This Conference deeply deplores the growing activity of the military spirit in Europe, and the ever-increasing expenditure on preparations for war, and calls upon Freethinkers everywhere—since the Christian Churches are so impotent in the cause of peace—to do all in their power to stem the tide of international envy, hatred, and malice, which is driving the so-called civilised nations on the abyss of mutual destruction." The mover called attention to the fact that the Christian Churches had never been hostile to war, but have often instigated wars and taken an active part in them. With the exception of the Quakers, Christians generally have approved of war. Freethinkers are almost the only people who are, on principle, advocates of peace. Mr. Moss, who seconded, denounced the boy and girl scouts movement as calculated to develop a warlike disposition in the young. The motion was unanimously carried.

The President moved: "This Conference calls upon the Liberal Government to countenance no more prosecutions for 'blasphemy' or 'profanity' (which are only persecutions of weak or friendless Freethinkers for the gratification of Christian bigotry), but to introduce, or allow time for, a short Bill abolishing the odious laws under which such proceedings are still possible in a country that boasts of its religious freedom." The President rejoiced that now at last a Bill for the repeal of those inhuman enactments had been introduced in the House of Commons, and that every possible influence should be brought to bear upon the members to secure their support to such a Bill. He referred to the work of the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and to the splendid public meeting held under its auspices at the Essex Hall. It was agreed to delete the words "introduce or," so that the motion reads, after "bigotry," "but to allow time for the short Bill before the House abolishing," etc.; and with that alteration it was carried.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd moved for the Executive the following: "The Liberal Government having declared its intention to deal with the Education question again in the early future, this Conference warns it that it has already failed three times in trying to settle the problem on Nonconformist rather than Church lines, and trusts that its next attempt will rise above all sectarian lines by proceeding upon the principle which is fair and just to all—the principle of Secular Education." This was seconded by Mr. A. B. Moss. Upon this subject the Conference was of one mind, and the motion was carried unanimously.

It was heartily agreed: "That the N. S. S. be represented as far as possible at the forthcoming International Freethought Congress at Lisbon, partly as an encouragement to the Portuguese Freethinkers who have taken such a great part in the recent work of progress in Portugal, and also as a protest against the malicious falsehoods so industriously circulated to their detriment by religious bigots and political schemers in England."

Miss H. Pankhurst moved the following motion from the West Ham Branch: "That, in pursuance of the declaration made in the Society's 'Immediate Practical Objects,' namely, 'The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinction,' this Conference recognises universal adult suffrage as the most effective method of abolishing sex disqualification and of placing all citizens on an equal footing at the poll. It

(*Continued on p. 330.*)

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Acid Drops.

We believe in the freedom of the press as much as anybody, and we have given pledges of our attachment to that policy. We feel towards it like the good lad in Meredith's *Egoist* felt towards his dear Miss Middleton; he did not mind how many loved her,—he only objected to anybody's wanting to hurt her. In the same way, we extend the hand of welcome to any person who is really fighting for freedom. We were delighted to see that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, on behalf of the Labor Party and the National Labor Press, had offered to publish the *Suffragette*, which the Government is trying to suppress. It is both against English law and English tradition that a periodical should be suppressed before it is published. Nex week's *Suffragette* is not yet in existence, and to say that it shall *not* appear is tyranny of the worst description. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald would do a chivalrous thing if he opposed this Government despotism. But what he offered to do, if you look into it closely, does not amount to much. Nothing that could possibly be prosecuted with success is to be allowed to go into the paper. It is to be rigorously censored and absolutely harmless. Hadn't the women better look after their own paper? It may be ungracious, but it is generally advisable, to look a gift horse in the mouth.

The militant suffragettes seem well supplied with piety. The extracts read by Detective Beazley from speeches by Miss Barrett included this one:—"When we hear of a bomb being thrown, we say, 'Thank God for that!'"

When the Christian Bulgarians and the Christian Greeks took to fighting each other it was time to reckon up the cost of the Balkan war. The Bulgarian returns are available already. The number of officers killed is 330, and the number of men 29,711. The number of officers wounded is 950, and the number of men 52,550. The number of missing is 3,193. Making a grand total of 86,734. All this price of blood and wounds is paid for what? For a crusade of the Cross against the Crescent, as King Ferdinand was indiscreet enough to call it at the outset of the war.

Those dear good Christians, the Bulgars and the Greeks, took to fighting each other over the possession of places that did not belong to either of them. A neutral zone had to be established to prevent further fighting. "How they love one another!"

From the report of a public meeting, held in the Council Chamber, Kimberley, in the *Diamond Fields Advertiser* for April 18, we see that the question of religious instruction in the public schools there is following much the same course as at home. A movement is on foot to introduce dogmatic religious instruction in the schools, and the meeting was called to protest against this being done. At present the law allows for the usual Bible reading and the Lord's Prayer. It is also competent for ministers of religion to utilise the half-hour allowed for Biblical instruction by giving dogmatic religious lessons. But this means, of course, the clergy themselves have to do the work, and that is not at all to their taste. The mover of the resolution of protest, and in favor of the *status quo*, said this power had been in the hands of the clergy for many years, but so few had availed themselves of it that it had been allowed to lapse. So much for right of entry. In itself, it is a vicious principle, and one fatal to school discipline and development; but it will never work, because, as a late Bishop of London said, the best of the clergy are too busy, and the rest are too lazy. Their desire is to use State-paid teachers to do their work for them.

In this connection, we were glad to see that a letter was received from the Diamond Fields Teachers' Association stating that it "had on two occasions protested against teachers being employed to instruct in religious subjects." This is the right kind of spirit, and we should wish to see the same temper amongst teachers in this country. A very large section of them are in favor of the abolition of religious instruction in State schools, but it is almost impossible to get any number of them to publicly say so. And yet, in the present state of English public opinion, an open expression on the part of the teacher might well become a decisive factor in settling the question. The reason given, privately, of course, for their silence, is that open speech would lead to their victimisation, and would in any case hinder their promotion—a plea which shows that whether we are dealing with Churchmen or Dissenters, religious government means tyranny on the one side and hypocrisy on the other.

It was a good omen that the principle of Secular Education was not left without its spokesman at this meeting. Mr. Zeiss moved an amendment to the effect that all religious instruction, including special Bible reading, should be discontinued in public schools. The amendment was lost, but its being moved gave an opportunity for the expression of some home-truths, and, judging from the report, evoked a fair amount of sympathy. It was also remarkable in drawing from a clerical speaker, named Lillie, the statement that, having lived for some years in England, he repudiated the suggestion that the religious question gave rise to any bitterness there. He had, he said, heard no murmurs there. Mr. Lillie must have a remarkable power of *non*-observation. With passive resisters declining to pay rates and going to prison, Nonconformists threatening to turn out the Government unless their "grievances" are remedied, and Churchmen clamoring for more dogmatic instruction, we congratulate Mr. Lillie on possessing a serenity of disposition that prevented him hearing even "murmurs" on the question of religious instruction in public schools.

The *Christian World* notes the issue of a new manifesto by the Secular Education League, and curtly adds, "that solution will be the policy of despair." It may be, so far as some people are concerned; but we fancy many a highwayman must have forsaken his profession in "despair" at safely pursuing it longer. Some people act justly because they prefer it; others because they are prevented acting otherwise. That is all there is in the matter; and we are quite prepared to admit that the bulk of religionists will not act justly in this matter until they are forced.

The Rev. R. S. King, Rector of Leigh-on-Sea, has a protest in this month's local *Parish Magazine* against the "spread of anti-religious teaching." He adds that "It is not we older ones, perhaps, who will be much disturbed by such frothy teaching, but we must remember that it is our children who will have to bear the brunt of it." We can assure the rector that Freethought audiences are not so largely composed of children under the age of eleven as the congregations he is accustomed to.

Baron Paterno, the cavalry lieutenant, who murdered the Countess Trigona, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Italy, was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment, beginning with six years' solitary confinement—which appears to be driving him mad. He has made several attempts at suicide, and he has been placed in a padded cell and securely bound in a strait-jacket. He is also watched day and night. What, we ask, could be more horrible? If this is the alternative to capital punishment, we prefer capital punishment. To kill a man is merciful compared with torturing him as long as nature holds out against death.

Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon has been trying to describe what Christian Churches will be like 250 years hence. But will there be any Christian Churches left by that time? No doubt Dr. Gibbon is sure of it. We are not. And our anticipation may be quite as good as his.

There is a professional servant of Christ called Stanley Parker—once, we believe, of Woolwich, then of Brighton, afterwards of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and now of York—who has lately been "going for" Spiritualism in a local newspaper. In one of his letters he describes himself as an old debater, having "debated with Mr. G. W. Foote and Mr. Percy Ward." We are asked if this is true. Mr. James Lawrence, who is connected with the Spiritualist movement at Newcastle-on-Tyne, put the question to us in a letter on the subject. Our reply is that we never debated with Mr. Stanley Parker—or any other Parker. We are not aware that we ever saw him. He may, of course, have got up after one of our lectures—in the open discussion which is always invited—and asked a question or offered criticism; but even if this be true, it is far-fetched to call it debating with Mr. Foote. With regard to Mr. Percy Ward we can say nothing. He has been out of England for some time, and is now stationed at Chicago. We admit that Mr. Stanley Parker has been referred to several times in the *Freethinker* on account of fantastic statements of his reported utterances in the public press. We have always found him a person of romantic memory, and he seems to retain that characteristic unimpaired.

John Carrington, a Sunday-school teacher and local preacher, died suddenly during a service at Eld-lane Baptist Chapel, Colchester. There is no moral. Had it been the case of a Freethought lecturer dying at a Secular meeting the moral would have been a mile long.

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At the annual meeting of the Chief Constables' Association held at the Westminster Palace Hotel recently, the Bishop of Wakefield greeted the chief constables as "brother bishops." It is not often that an ecclesiastic is so frank concerning the real duties of the "Black Army."

A pilgrimage of members of Suffrage Societies from all parts of the country to London is being arranged for July, and Mrs. Fawcett has expressed the hope that the processionists will attend a service at St. Paul's Cathedral. Had not the passive Suffragettes better ascertain the intentions of their active sisters with regard to this building?

The Rev. D. Ewart James, of Southend, compares the Christian Church to a sailing ship; but, for some reason or other, she has stopped. She has got organisation, men, money, learning, and machinery, but she has been in the doldrums for some time now. The curious thing is that the wind of God is always blowing, and it is always an entirely favorable wind; but the vessel refuses to go. Nay, she moves backwards, right against God's wind, which is certainly a great miracle. Who ever heard of a sailing ship travelling against the wind? The truth is that the wind of God is purely imaginary, while the wind of science is a stupendous reality, and is driving the Church on the rocks. We rejoice to know that in proportion as the wind of knowledge increases in strength the wind of superstition dies down.

Bishop Weldon, Dean of Manchester, has just been saying that "a Democratic Government is the only possible government to-day, and the only one that is in keeping with the will of God." Poor God! He is very rarely able to get his will carried out in this world. Democratic Government has only existed occasionally, and within small limits, in the history of mankind. That is how "thy will be done on earth" has been fulfilled. In the same way, the Christians amongst the Land Nationalisers assert that God intended the land for the people, but the landlords got in front of him and "collared the blooming lot." And he can't shift them.

The Protestant ministers of Indianopolis have refused to have any dealings with Billy Sunday, the converted prize-fighter and evangelist, on account of his vulgarity and crude methods. Meanwhile Sunday goes on drawing the "gate money," which he probably finds pays better than pugilism. He is said to be making £12,000 a year.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the well-known dramatist, says that "the crying defect of Dissenters to-day is an inability to discern when their leaders and pastors are talking solemn nonsense." The justice of the statement cannot be denied; but it applies to a much larger class than the Nonconformists. It is true of all religious leaders. Solemn nonsense is the principle thing with which they deal, which is one of the reasons why they object to ridicule, or to what they please to call irreverence. Could there be a finer example of "solemn nonsense" than a congress of mature individuals—physically mature, that is—discussing such absurd questions as the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection? It is only because there is a kind of hereditary solemnity around these topics that people can discuss them with a straight face. What is called the cultivation of a reverential attitude towards religion means no more than a training that will enable one to treat ridiculous things seriously. History shows that nothing is too absurd to be religious, and nothing should be too religious to be recognised as absurd.

Christian prayers did no more good than other prayers for the benefit of China. The political situation has been more strained ever since they were offered up. Another day's prayer might shatter the Chinese Republic to pieces.

The Church in Essex is deteriorating in culture. In the *Southend Church Chronicle* there is a vulgar request asking the readers to "buck up and take all the tickets" for an entertainment, whilst in the *Leigh Parish Magazine* a note on a garden party reads: "We are unable either to supply any information or to do our bit in booming the fête." A Salvation Army officer could do no worse.

On Sunday, May 11, a severe thunderstorm visited Ware, and damaged Christ Church in that town. Hunsdon Church, about nine miles from Ware, was also struck by lightning while the celebration of Holy Communion was in progress. Fortunately, no one was injured, but the church was so filled with fragments from the tower that the service had to be stopped and the evening service could not be held. This church was not fitted with a lightning conductor. This is only yet one more case going to prove that the Almighty takes no more care of his holy buildings than he does of a public-house when neither is protected by science.

"Owe no man anything," the New Testament says. How far Christians have heeded this text may be seen by the announcement that there is £16,000 owing on Primitive Methodist chapels in East Lancashire. There is to be a three years' campaign to clear off this indebtedness—starting with the aid of Sir W. P. Hartley, whom the Methodists find "real jam."

Sir A. Conan Doyle has made a very feeble reply to Mr. S. H. Swinny with respect to the treatment of the "politicals," that is "royalists," in the Portuguese prisons. Sir Conan actually urged the withdrawal of the British Minister from Lisbon by way of protest. Mr. Swinny has been to Lisbon, and seen the prisons and prisoners for himself, and he reports that there is nothing special to complain about. One prison, which was said to be infested with vermin, he found "appallingly clean." Prisons, of course, are prisons; and it is idle to expect that the Portuguese Republic is suddenly going to turn them into Carlton Hotels for the sake of the Duchess of Bedford and her royalist friends, who insist on attempting petty revolutions and wailing over the consequences. Sir Conan Doyle knows nothing personally of the subject he writes so dogmatically upon. Mr. Swinny is a first-hand witness, and his competence is beyond challenge. On the whole, it seems that the noise made over the Portuguese prisons is due to two causes; first, because the country is small and can therefore be bullied with impunity,—second, because the upper-class people are the principal sufferers.

Father Bernard Vaughan, the celibate gentleman who is perpetually preaching the gospel of large families, has been telling a Liverpool meeting of Catholic young men that the Separation Law in France has proved the greatest of blessings to the Church. It had freed her from her thraldom to the State, and she had increased in strength and prosperity ever since. Supposing that this is true—and we dare say there is some truth in it, as we predicted at the time—it seems fair to ask Father Vaughan to explain why the Catholic Church, with the Pope at its head, fought tooth and nail against the Separation which was a blessing in disguise. The infallible Church turned out to be utterly wrong—God's vicegerent on earth showed a want of common sagacity. What becomes of the Papal claims after such wretched blundering?

After all, it appears that what religion has gained in France during the last ten years has been lost in England. Father Vaughan, in that same speech, said: "There seems to be almost a revolt here against the supernatural. Instead of churches filling, I find them emptying. Some have been converted into mansions for the rich, while not a few chapels have been changed into theatres or music-halls." So *that's* all right.

The Dean of Worcester, the Very Rev. Moore Ede, told the Congregational Union, the other day, that one of the most pithy and effective sermons he ever read was as follows:—

> "The world is wrong-side up. The world must be put right-side up. We are the men to do it."

That sermon may be pithy and a in certain sense effective; but it is not true. Christians have been trying to set the world right for nigh two thousand years, and they are as far from doing so now as they were at the beginning.

American society is polo crazy, says the *Evening News*. In the old country some are cracked on religion.

The *Daily Mirror* recently had a picture of an open-air preacher with an audience composed entirely of children. Has it come to this? A little time ago preachers used to count women among their auditors.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron, Vicar of St. Matthew's Church, Brixton, is announced to speak at the forthcoming annual meeting in connection with the Preventive and Rescue Shelter for Fallen Women at Southend-on-Sea. Is the reverend gentleman an authority on the subject?

"Smoked before Suicide"! ran the headline in a daily paper. Pious people think this is done afterwards.

A minister was saying his prayers aloud when his wife entered the room. "You get out," said the parson; "this is a monologue, not a catalogue!"

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £133 12s. 11d. Received since :—Mrs. Brooks, 2s. 6d.; Miss Brooks, 2s. 6d.; Maurice Abrahams, 3s.; G. F. Dixon (West Africa), £2; John Scott, 2s. 6d.; E. V. G., 10s.

CONNIE BROOKS.—We note that you are looking forward to the resumption of "Literary Gossip," and that you like our articles on literature so much that you wish we would "let us have as much as you can of them." Pleased you thought the Meredith article "splendid."

T. H. HOW.—We can't see any harm in it. If the late King Edward told the chauffeur, and peremptorily too, to take a turning that proved to be the wrong one, and called himself "a damned fool" for interfering—it was a gentlemanly action on his part, and in a sense the swearing only made it more so.

R. SPIERS.—Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence is a wealthy man, and is able to force his nonsense on the public. Only the ignorant could be impressed by his ridiculous statements and foolish reasoning. To answer him is like refuting the contention that the moon is made of green cheese.

A. WYCHERLEY.—Your letter in the local press is anything but "uninteresting." Such contributions do good in many ways, and we wish that all Freethinkers would, whenever possible, avail themselves of this channel of publicity.

A. PHILLIPS (S. Africa).—We have regular readers in all parts of the world.

T. HOPKINS.—Actions can only be immoral as far as they affect others. Robinson Crusoe, alone upon his island, could not act immorally (except to lower animals). Excess in eating and drinking, in such circumstances, could be only a matter of taste. But the moment Man Friday appeared upon the scene moral relationships commenced. Of course it may be urged that Robinson Crusoe was bound not to injure or make a beast of himself, if he had any hope of being rescued and returning to human society. But that is only another proof that it is human society that gives the word "morality" all its meaning. —We will notice the other matter in your letter next week. In the meanwhile, will you try to obtain further particulars, such as the lecturer's name? And do you know anyone who could corroborate your statements? Not that we doubt them in any way.

R. STEVENSON.—The oath of allegiance to the Crown does not appear to have been touched by Bradlaugh's Oaths Act. Presumably, therefore, Ministers of the Crown have to take that oath still. We do not make any reference, as you do, to particular persons. Bradlaugh took the oath himself. That is how he entered the House of Commons under the ruling of Mr. Speaker Peel. It was part of the Christian misrepresentation of Bradlaugh that he had *refused* the oath at first, and afterwards wanted to *take* it. He never did anything of the kind. He kept on saying so, but he couldn't kill the falsehood.

H. MONTGOMERY.—We do not undertake to answer such letters by post, but we have strained a point in your case. For the sake of others, we may repeat here that marriage before a registrar is perfectly secular. No religious words of any kind are used. Glad to hear that you and your fiancée are both Freethinkers now, in spite of your religious training, and that you read this journal "greedily" every Thursday.

G. F. DIXON.—We shall be printing a photograph of Mr. Foote in the *Freethinker* shortly. We cannot say anything at the moment about special copies for sale in the ordinary way. You are right about our editor being "not over keen to face the camera." He would as soon face a battery of guns. We have sent you the publication you want.

V. SPRAGUE (U. S. A.).—We answer No to all your questions but one. Such statements about Huxley, Darwin, etc., are pure (that is, impure) Christian inventions—with the exception of the last. Mrs. Huxley's verse was cut upon Huxley's tombstone, but he was dead when it was done, and it is difficult to see how he is committed by it.

JOHN SCOTT.—Yours is a touching letter. One is glad, however, that your Atheist wife bore herself so bravely at the last in presence of the pious harpies who beset her deathbed.

JOHN CLARK.—The matter shall be seen to. Accept our sympathy.

A. H. TABRUM.—Please try an orthodox journal. That seems a more suitable medium for your communication. Mr. Foote is quite prepared to defend his own statements concerning Meredith's relation to Freethought; he is not bound to prove or disprove statements made by others.

T. J.—The first of your quotations is from Swinburne. We do not identify the others. We are not quite sure how long ago it is since Freethought lectures have been delivered in Cardiff, but there was at one time a fair amount of activity in that city. Mr. Foote debated there with Mr. W. T. Lee, and Mr. Cohen and others have lectured there. We see no reason why there should not be more work in the near future.

J. P. (Newtown).—We do not think your edition of Bayle has any particular market value—probably not more than 10s. It is more useful than valuable in a commercial sense. It had a great influence in its day, and is still of use to students. We appreciate the good wishes of yourself and wife, and your opinion of what you are good enough to call our "great work."

C. A. TURNER.—Thanks for your letter *re* Mr. Tabrum's "Meredith letter." It seems a mare's-nest.

R. S. P.—The matter was dealt with in the Preface to our *Jewish Life of Christ*. Thanks, all the same; and the cutting may yet be useful.

J. B.—Such letters to the local newspapers must do a great deal of good. Your pious adviser was wrong. Shelley did not write *Frankenstein*. His wife (Mary) wrote it.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—We don't think Bradlaugh's *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick* is in print now, but you might inquire of Bonner & Co., 38 Cursitor-street, London, E.C. We will look at the Sabbatarian Bill you mention. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that all workers must rest on the same day. They couldn't do it. Preachers couldn't rest on Sunday, anyhow, to begin with.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The present issue of the *Freethinker* is almost a Conference number. The majority of our readers will, we think, appreciate even a summarised report of the proceedings of the Conference, since, thanks to the way in which our glorious English press is conducted, there is no other medium in which this can appear. We also give a lengthy, although not a verbatim, report of the speeches delivered at the public meeting in the Queen's Hall. Here, again, many of our readers will be brought into touch with many of our speakers whom they have little or no opportunity of meeting otherwise. Those who do have opportunities of hearing them on the platform will doubtless be glad of reading their speeches. It is not every group of speakers who are worth reading. Speeches may sound well, but read badly. In this respect the N. S. S. has a certain tradition to maintain, and on this occasion it has been done. Space prevents our publishing this week the (official) Annual Report. That will appear next week.

What we have done in keeping the *Freethinker* alive for so many years, without capital save our own earnings from other sources, and without any kind of subvention, will be understood by those acquainted with such matters. But they are very few. The bulk of our readers may form some idea from the disclosures in connection with the prosecution of the leaders of the Women's Political and Social Union. It appears that over £4,000 was lost on their paper, the *Suffragette*, in a period of fourteen months. Yet the paper represented what seemed to be a very considerable movement, it was sold by women at meetings all over the country, and one time it enjoyed a good circulation. Yet the £4,000 went. There never was any £4,000 to drop on the *Freethinker*. It has had to be sustained by our own exertions—for thirty-two years.

Perhaps the foregoing statement will prompt our friends to a greater activity in pushing the circulation of this journal. The great thing is to get it into fresh hands. We beg *our* friends to introduce it to *their* friends or acquaintances. A little missionary work in this way is easily done and is sure to be effectual. Many people who would become regular readers of the *Freethinker* if they knew of it have never seen a copy of it; others have never even heard of it. Here is an excellent chance for our readers to help us in a way that is not costly, and involves very little trouble. We shall also be glad to send a post-free gratuitous copy for six consecutive weeks to any name and address forwarded to us

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as that of a person likely to become a regular subscriber. We have gained many new readers in this way.

The *Observer* of May 11 reproduced a paragraph from its issue of Wednesday, May 5, 1813. Here it is:—

"HOUSE OF COMMONS.

RELIEF TO PERSONS DENYING THE TRINITY.

"Mr. W. Smith moved for leave to bring in a Bill to exempt from certain penalties persons not acknowledging the doctrine of the Trinity.—Leave was given in a Committee, which sat upon the proposition to bring in the Bill, which was accordingly brought in.—*Bell's Weekly Messenger.*"

The result of that Bill was the relief of the Unitarians from the Act of William III. and from the Common Law of Blasphemy as far as the doctrine of the Trinity was concerned. Exactly a hundred years have rolled by since then, and on the same date in 1913 a Bill is introduced to repeal the Blasphemy Laws altogether. Yes, the world does move, however slowly. What the great Galileo said of the physical world, in spite of the terrorism of the Inquisition, is just as true of the intellectual and moral world.

O Mundo, of May 14, publishes a translation of Mr. W. Heaford's *Freethinker* article of May 11 on "Portugal and its Traducers." Mr. Heaford's article is given the place of honor on the front page of our Lisbon contemporary, which duly acknowledges its indebtedness to the pages of the *Freethinker*.

Freethinkers residing in or near Wolverhampton, who do not already know, will be pleased to learn that they now have an opportunity of joining a Branch of the N. S. S. in Wolverhampton. Mr. Joseph Bates, who lectured every night last week on Snow Hill to large and attentive audiences, held a meeting at the I. L. P. room in Dudley-street and invited all those present wishing to join the N. S. S. to tender their names to Mr. Wainwright, the secretary *pro tem.* Twenty-two applications were received, which will doubtless be increased when those in sympathy, who are away on their holidays, return. An offer of a room for meetings has been received and there is every prospect of a strong and useful Branch being formed.

N. S S. Annual Conference.

(Continued from p. 326.)

therefore expresses its sympathy with that movement." In an excellent speech Miss Pankhurst enlarged upon the humiliating subjection of woman under Christianity, upon the disabilities from which she still suffers, upon her beneficent influence in the home and in society, and upon the duty of Freethinkers to do their utmost to secure her emancipation. Mr. R. H. Rosetti seconded the motion, emphasising the fundamental principle of the equality of the sexes before the law. The Conference was in substantial agreement with this motion. Several slight alterations were recommended, and a highly interesting and lively discussion ensued, in which Messrs. Davies, Cowell, Bellamy, Savill, and others took part. Then Mr. V. Roger moved the previous question, and this, being duly seconded and supported, was carried. The feeling was that, in existing circumstances, it was not expedient that the Conference should commit itself on the subject.

Two motions by the Kingsland Branch were as follows: (*a*) "That an Organiser, or an Organising Committee, be appointed by the Executive, with power to confer with and advise London Branches when necessary." (*b*) "That all Branches of the National Secular Society be invited to issue an annual record of their income and expenditure, together with the number of meetings held during the year, and that the Executive be instructed to avail itself of the material for the purpose of publishing an Annual Report of the Society's work." These motions were duly moved and seconded by the delegates of the Kingsland Branch; but, after perfectly friendly questions were asked and satisfactorily answered, they were dropped.

On behalf of the South Shields Branch, Mr. R. Chapman moved: (*a*) "That, in the opinion of this Conference, the Scholarship Scheme should be open to all *bonâ fide* members of the N. S. S. without regard to the length of time during which they have been members; and that all candidates shall pledge themselves to work for the objects and principles of the Society if successful." Duly seconded, this motion was subjected to a lively discussion. Messrs. Heaford, Davidson, Soddy, Thurlow, and the President strongly advocated adherence to the rule already adopted by the Executive, namely, that the Scheme be open only to those who have been members of the N. S. S. for twelve months. Messrs. Bellamy, Cohen, Hecht, and others were of opinion that no such safeguard was necessary. When put to the vote the motion was lost.

Mr. Chapman, representing his Branch, moved: (*b*) "That public demonstrations be arranged in such places and districts where, from various local causes the Freethought movement is not making satisfactory progress." After a brief discussion this was remitted to the Executive to take such action as may be deemed advisable.

At this stage the President had to leave, and Mr. Cohen was requested to take the chair. Mr. Heaford moved: "That this Conference welcomes the proposed exchange of visits between London and Paris Freethinkers, and instructs the Executive to take whatever steps it may find necessary to bring the proposal to a successful issue." Mr. Heaford spoke with his usual fervor of the desirability of cultivating a feeling of comradeship between Freethinkers of different nationalities, in order to break down all national and international barriers. The motion was seconded, supported, and carried.

Mr. Cohen now pronounced this very pleasant and successful Conference at an end. There was great rejoicing that the President had been sufficiently recovered to occupy the chair at both meetings, and to guide the discussions with his usual tact and sound judgment.

J. T. L.

PUBLIC MEETING AT THE QUEEN'S HALL.

Mr. Foote, who was received with loud applause and a a voice "Bravo, General!" said: After all, there was something, he supposed, in military language, for the last time he appeared in public at Essex Hall he did not break down from any independent action of his own; he was like a soldier who went out on duty and got shot, though not fatally. He was wondering at one time whether he should be there that night at all, but while there was any force left in him he hoped to be able to use it for the great, good, old cause. (Applause.) Every time he occupied the chair at these Conference evening meetings, he asked the audience to recollect that the National Secular Society was established, led, and inspired by one of the greatest Englishmen who ever lived—Charles Bradlaugh. A great many people fancied Charles Bradlaugh was gone for ever. No man who lived a useful, strong, unselfish life went for ever. Charles Bradlaugh at least lived while his memory kept alight in the heart of any man who knew what he was. It devolved upon them to carry on as best they could the work which he carried on with greater strength than they; but not, they might say without boasting, with greater love of the cause than they themselves possessed. For, after all, he did not see why an obscure man, who had kept his heart bound to the cause, who had lived without advertisement and without notice, might not stand up at last, even with the General himself, and say, "I also loved." And if there should be a meeting beyond the grave, any one of them who loved the cause might feel sure that Charles Bradlaugh would be the very first to acknowledge the claim. But their work was their own in the sense that they had to deal with the problems of to-day with regard to their principles. It was useless for folk to go about saying that Bradlaugh would have done this or that. How did they know? They were only making his dead voice the echo of themselves. If Bradlaugh could advise them from the grave, they would willingly listen, but intermediaries were of no use to them. They had to think and decide for themselves. Fortunately, Freethinkers were never lacking in courage to do that. Courage was a great word. Christianity had been the religion of cringing. Freethought had been the philosophy of courage. What they felt ought to be done, they had always striven to do. Their men and their women went to prison in the old days and suffered persecution gladly. Why? Because they too loved a great cause. They were pioneers of its progress, and although some of them were now forgotten, and some of them could not be remembered because they would not give their names, their courage had lived in their work and made that work easier for them to-day. They stood there, firstly, for the duty to think; secondly, for the right of thought; for duties did not naturally spring out of rights, rights sprang out of duties, and anyone who fancied that he had a right which was not the counterpart of some duty, was mistaken. They held that every section of the community should enjoy the same right in order to fulfil the same duty. He had a right to think for himself; so had everyone; and one man's right could not possibly be greater than another's. As much as he differed from them they differed from him, and he had as much right to stop them as they had to stop him. Bradlaugh was prosecuted for blasphemy. He (Mr. Foote) was not only prosecuted, but he paid the penalty, and now, he was glad to say, that after the agitation of all those years, a Bill had recently been brought before the House of Commons for the total repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. (Sustained Applause.)

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He had not quite recovered his voice yet from his illness, but he was glad, even as the case stood, to be able from that platform to tell them that. (Renewed applause.) That was the only revenge he wanted. He had no quarrel with Christians; he had quarrelled only with their creed. They had been in the wrong path; he was glad to see they were turning in the right. They (the Christians) were beginning to be ashamed of their intolerance. It was high time they were! The world could never again be subjected to such intolerance as Christianity had inflicted upon it. And who had won that great result? The men and women of their cause and platform, who had challenged tyranny, plucked its beard, defied it in every way, and who would at the finish feel that their sacrifice and sufferings were all compensated for by the glorious victory of liberty and truth. (Loud and continued applause.)

Miss K. B. Kough: As the Annual Conference marked the beginning of the business year of the National Secular Society, so it could also be said to mark the new year in the activities of that body, and she thought it would be as well if all of them would look around and ask themselves what was the work that lay more immediately in front of them. They knew that Freethought was spreading by leaps and bounds, and that the Churches were becoming emptier every day; and she thought they could take credit for the fact that it wat almost completely due to the work of Freethinkers. It was, at any rate, the Freethinkers who began it; they had done the spade work, and Christians were beginning to see that a little Freethought must be allowed in to leaven their own principles, and they were accordingly becoming a little more reasonable every day. They had to remember that to bring that struggle to a successful issue they still needed militant Freethought propaganda. Militancy was the outcome of intense enthusiasm, and it was the note of more enthusiasm that she wanted to strike that night. She really thought that Freethinkers might make themselves a little more heard. None of the Freethought leaders, past and present, had been millionaires; and while scrupulously fulfilling their various duties, and being most excellent citizens, they had always had the courage of their convictions, and had never forsaken their Freethought principles. It was their duty to sacrifice, and not develop, such sensitiveness for the feelings of their next-door neighbor or their fellow-workman. Freethinkers who take the comfortable path should think of Mr. Foote's twelve months' imprisonment. They should think of the sacrifice Mr. Lloyd made when he left the Presbyterian Church for them. Besides, many of the evils that would follow greater outspokenness exist only in their imagination. If they were only to open their mouths, it would surprise them to find how many people there were holding precisely the same opinions. What would happen to the Christian Churches if every Freethinker were to stand up and declare his Freethought principles, and allowed it to be understood that he was proud of them? It was not for all to sacrifice themselves as their greatest men had done, but much could be done in a quieter way. Circulating Freethought literature and wearing the Freethought badge were simple methods of that character. Women could be very strenuous indeed in working for any cause which had once fired their enthusiasm. (Laughter and applause.) Her regret was that they did not advocate the cause which would get them all so much forward. If they would only realise that it was religion that was woman's worst enemy, they would not only help on their own cause most wonderfully, but they would help on also the liberation of mankind. More specific objects for the immediate future were the abolition of the State Church, the passing of the Bill for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and the seeing to it that their children should receive simple justice by a system of Secular Education in the State schools. Let all sympathisers join their ranks and stand shoulder to shoulder in the warfare that aims at saving, not slaying. It was the fight between reason and superstition, knowledge and ignorance, and they took their stand in that battle, zealous only in the cause of truth. (Loud applause.)

Mr. C. Cohen, in the course of an effective speech, liberally punctuated with laughter and applause, said he was not going to endorse Miss Kough's appeal to the Freethinkers to sacrifice. He was going to ask them to enjoy themselves. He preferred to think that all those men who fought for Freethought, and who really believed in it and appreciated it, were not people who sacrified themselves, but people who went in for a deep and genuine enjoyment. Personally, at any rate, he had never sacrificed himself—he enjoyed himself. (A Voice: Victoria Park.) Victoria Park! He had never enjoyed himself more in his life. (Loud laughter.) And he meant to keep on. He couldn't imagine himself getting any enjoyment out of the Salvation Army, for instance, but to realise all that was best and noblest in oneself was not to sacrifice oneself, it was to realise oneself. The trouble was that there were so few people who had found out in what direction real enjoyment lay. Some of them had been half their lives playing the humbug for the benefit of others who were busily engaged playing the humbug for their benefit. (Laughter.) Let them try to be honest and see how much they would enjoy it. When they looked around and saw how some of them were allowed to enjoy themselves without being interfered with, they were inclined to overlook another important fact, and that was that if religion was no longer actively engaged in fighting them in an open, honest, admirable way, it was none the less engaged in fighting them in an underhand, dishonorable, discreditable manner. In England, religion controlled almost all the great events of life. It prepared for you before you were born; it got ready for you in the institution of marriage, so that you might be born in a properly religious atmosphere. The Divorce Commission expressed its fear that religion would lose its hold on marriage. They consulted the Bishop of London, a celibate deeply interested in large families, as to his views on the Divorce Question. (Laughter.) The whole secret of their anxiety was that they dare not lose their grip on marriage. If that went, they lost their hold on the family; if that went, they lost their hold on the children; and if *that* went, how on earth could they make a man believe in religion unless they started early enough? Do not let them lose sight of the important fact that the idea of keeping religion in the schools is to turn the schools into places for breeding believers. It was purely an economic question. It was a question of providing customers for a class of goods that they would not purchase if allowed to grow up with a natural, unperverted taste. (Applause.) Another point was the Sunday question. If you once gave the people an opportunity for rational, cleanly, decent enjoyment on Sunday, how, the clergy ask, can they expect anyone to go to church? They don't. (Laughter.) But by what right should the religious world prevent the other section from having such enjoyment on Sunday in the interests of Church and Chapel. He did not believe in a one day a week morality. Nothing that was good for Monday was bad for Sunday. If a man had got any villainy in him, he thought it was better for society that he should get rid of it on Sunday, and be decent on the other six days, than that he should keep it quiet on Sundays and let it run loose the rest of the week. If Christians confined their misdemeanors to the seventh day, they would all be much better off. It was just the same in the outside avenues of life. True, the penalty for non-belief nowadays was not burning. The Church had learned that often the only man they silenced by killing was the actual man killed. The rest went on talking. The more modern method has been to insidiously discourage plain speaking. Many a man would stand out against an open bribe in money who would succumb to the insidious bribe of social position. Just as the world suffers in not realising that self-expression is enjoyment, and self-repression is the only real sacrifice, so the world fails to recognise the extent of the amount of hypocrisy, humbug, and artificiality in which religion has plunged it. What was wanted was freedom in thinking, naturalism in morals, and rationalism in social life. They did not believe that a man needed a religion in order to prevent him murdering his next-door neighbor. Whenever a man told him it was necessary to be religious to be moral, he felt inclined to tell him he was a liar. Freethinkers could be fairly decent without religion, and he did not believe they were so morally superior to Christians as Christians made out. He believed that a Christian could be, if he tried, as good as any Freethinker. He thought that thousands of their own preachers had been slandering them for thousands of years. They did not want to revolutionise moral practice. It could not be done. They could create a revolution in moral theory, but they could not affect moral practice at any rapid rate. They wanted people to look at life from a perfectly rational point of view. They wanted them to realise that it really didn't matter whether there was a God or not. Christians said the same—in practice. It didn't matter whether there was a future life or not; if it were there they would get it. There would be enough to go round. It was not a British possession —(laughter)—at least, not yet. (Renewed laughter.) He did not object to having mansions in the skies; he objected to paying rent in advance. And he objected to a people calling itself practical keeping 40,000 men to preach to them about a land of which they knew nothing. This practical people was withdrawing from active productive work, mental and physical, that huge body of men with the necessary huge amount of money, and subsidising this force to work against themselves. The ignorant South African native was laughed at because, when there was a plague of locusts, he knelt down before his joss and burnt incense to clear away the plague. At the same time, the clergy of the Church of England were offering up prayers to get rid of the floods in Norwich. What was the mental difference? (Applause.) Who had the greater excuse? The South African savage or the English savage, with every opportunity for knowing

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better? Religion was a barbarous, brutalising thing. Circumstances did not at present allow it to express itself in full. Give it the chance and its vile symptoms were always shown. And give Freethought the chance of rearing a single generation from childhood to maturity, and religion, as a whole, would become a memory of the past. (Loud applause.)

Mr. W. Heaford: Brutality and rapacity belonged naturally to religion—belonged to it in the past, and belonged to it to-day to the fullest extent that the Church was able to exercise. Two hundred years ago it burnt the scientist and the philosopher, and it terrorised the great leaders of human thought. A few decades ago it was satisfied to play the part of a body-snatcher, and seized the corpse of a Darwin, after it had done its best during his lifetime to capture his magnificent intellect. The Church to-day was, after all, but the ghost of its former self. It was a ghost that hankered after the old fleshly realities that it once possessed. It still acted the part of a body-snatcher. There recently died in Madrid a great leader of Spanish Freethought, a leader of the anti-clericals, who had been excommunicated by the Church; and yet the Church was mean enough to snatch the body of that dead Freethinker in order that it might have the satisfaction of burying him in consecrated ground. He wished them joy of their victim. He believed the last stronghold of religion would be amongst the English people in these two little islands, and the inhabitants of the United States of North America. Religion was visibly dying. The democracy all over the world was slipping through the fingers of the priest, and was beginning to work out its own destiny without the help of Holy Mother Church. In Portugal, they had both disestablished and disendowed the Church,—hence the ducal tears—(laughter)—hence the reaction against the "wicked" Republic. The Portuguese democracy would not be tied to the apron-strings of the Church, and was determined to give in the schools a rational secular education to every boy and girl, and leave the priest severely outside. (Applause.) If England were to be great, if its politics were to be purified, and if its character were to be dignified by love of truth, that same process must go on here. Theirs was the noblest gospel ever preached to mankind. It was a gospel in the sense of its being *true*; it was a gospel in the sense of its being *good news*. There was no angry God to torture and torment his creatures for ever and ever in an unmentionable place which used to be called hell. The Church had invented fresh names; but the old humbug was there, the old priestcraft was there. Until man rose above these superstitions, until he was determined to look with serious eyes upon these traditions of the past, until he was courageous enough to look facts in the face, until that day he would be in bondage to that institution which for two thousand years had been a scourge to mankind. From that day forward, if they had not the mighty intellect of a Bradlaugh, if they were not called upon to make the great sacrifice of a Ferrer or to be burnt at the stake like a Bruno, at any rate they could let their light so shine before the whole world that they would see that, as far as their personal example was concerned, the principles of Freethought would be illustrated and vindicated in their lives, and they would thus do what lay in their power to leave the world better, brighter, and clearer from superstition than when they entered it. (Loud applause.)

Mr. A. B. Moss said: He remembered Charles Bradlaugh winding up a magnificent meeting many years ago at the Hall of Science by saying that no man ever lived to see a religion die. Whilst that was perfectly true, he (the speaker) had lived to see a religion undergo great changes. He was old enough to remember a time when people really *believed* that Christianity was true; when people really believed there was a burning hell awaiting humanity. On one occasion he had heard Charles Haddon Spurgeon give a very vivid description of hell, and seen him hold his audience spellbound by his exposition. He remembered him pointing into the arena and saying in thrilling tones, "That old man over there with the bald head is *damned*." (Loud laughter.) They were taught then that all were inherently depraved, and that all their good works were as filthy rags. Of course, that belief was only held inside the church; *outside* they didn't believe it. And he remembered when people were so ignorant as to believe that the Bible was God's inspired Word—every line, every syllable. They had changed since then. No clergyman nowadays could draw an audience who gave such teaching as that. The people were growing too intelligent. The Christian still thinks he follows Christ. He did not do anything of the kind. It was a good job he didn't, as if the teaching of Jesus was practised, society would fall to pieces. "Resist not evil," "Take no thought for the morrow," "Lay not up for yourselves treasure on earth," "Blessed be ye poor"—he did not blame Christians for not practising such teachings, but he could hardly imagine greater insincerity. Christianity had undergone such a transformation as to be almost unrecognisable. And as knowledge grew, they, as Freethinkers, knew that the changes would become completer still. The forces against Christianity, and which would ultimately destroy it, were the forces towards education. Science, art, music, all the great civilising influences were against Christianity. Christians themselves had come to see that the ground was crumbling beneath them. They were practically admitting it in many ways. They scented a real danger in the humble picture palace. The cinema show was proving a greater attraction than the Church. Some up-to-date churches, in fact, were so awake to this that they were introducing the pictures into their services, and he had even heard of one church in London which was charging one penny extra for admission by the early door. (Loud laughter.) On their side were science, philosophy, and reason, and these would lead to the ultimate triumph of their cause. They cared little about a heaven in the skies, they cared much more about a heaven on earth. They wanted to make it possible for man to lead a full life, with both happiness and health; they wanted to bring about a race with purified ideals and a glorified humanity. (Applause.)

Mr. F. A. Davies: He agreed with Mr. Moss that the old religion was dying, and that the old dogmatic beliefs were intellectually dead. One example Mr. Moss had given of the Christian neglect of the teaching of Jesus, namely, "Blessed be ye poor," was a crumb—a substantial crumb—he had let fall, which would serve him as a text to base his few remarks upon. In this doctrine Christianity presented its most striking feature. Prior to Christianity, the view of real wellbeing that was entertained by the old Jewish people was frankly materialistic. Solomon was a wise man—but he was also a wealthy man. The teaching of Christianity on this point was quite revolutionary. If you were rich, you were poor. If you were poor, you were rich. In a mass of doubtful doctrine there was nothing that stood out so clearly. The poor would be saved; the rich would be damned. Lazarus was poor and Dives was rich. That was all we know about them; yet it was sufficient to send one to heaven and the other to hell. Now, this one fact was a quite sufficient indictment of Christianity. They needed nothing else to show the essential hypocrisy of the whole thing to find a people professing a religion whose main doctrine was poverty, when no one practised it unless he was compelled to. No one dreamt of practising it. Why, one of the religious bodies had put aside a sum of £250,000 so that all their parsons might have a minimum wage of £120 per year. This may seem little enough, but it was more than ever Jesus had. (Laughter.) The newspapers had been engaged on one of their periodic fits of British hypocrisy over the Marconi Commission. We had Mr. Lloyd George, a sincerely religious man, a follower of Jesus, the representative of Welsh Nonconformity in the Government, a man so imbued with the Christ idea that he supported the Evan Roberts revival in Wales—we have him trying to "make a bit" over stocks and shares. But it was not only Lloyd George. "Everybody's doing it." (Laughter.) Mr. Garvin, a Roman Catholic, is unmerciful in his castigation of Mr. George in his endeavors to make money. He is the servant of two millionaire newspaper owners, both Christians. All were Christians, and all were following Jesus in the only real social doctrine Jesus ever tried. His one essential doctrine was poverty. They (the Christians) were following Jesus as far behind him as they could possibly keep. So ingrained was this hypocrisy that they never imagined themselves to be saying or doing anything incongruous. In fact, the easiest way to enter Christian society was to set at naught the Master's command in that way. There was not a single Christian sect who had ever tried it. The Society of Friends had made itself unique; it had tried to follow Jesus in one respect—the doctrine of non-resistance. For this partial consistency their Christian friends gave them a warm time, and taunted them with the name of "Quakers." But even the Quakers drew the line at following Christ on the "Blessed be ye poor" principle. If there were no other argument against Christianity, it would be sufficient to point to the reckless struggle for wealth which goes on in all Christian communities, and the absolute ignoring of this commandment of Jesus Christ. (Applause.)

Mr. J. T. Lloyd: At a recent Conference of the Congregational Union of England and Wales there was passed a eulogium of the Higher Criticism of the Bible without a dissentient voice. A layman was responsible for this, but the Conference cordially endorsed it. The gains secured by the Higher Criticism, they were told, greatly exceeded the losses; in fact, there were no losses. The gains were: a new vision, a new Bible, a new God, a new Jesus Christ, a new Savior of the world. One was justified in exclaiming, "All things are past; we behold all things are becoming new." There was every reason for rejoicing. He was delighted to hear from so many reverent lips that the great Freethinkers of a hundred years ago had not lived and

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labored in vain; that the Bible which Paine, Voltaire, and many others denounced so scathingly, and that the God believed in and worshiped so implicitly, were dead. So far the Conference deserved their praise. But from many things which were said there he, for one, most emphatically dissented. This new vision had, they were told, completely taken the wind out of the sails of the sceptical controversialists. Nothing of the sort. Their new Bible was just as vulnerable as the old one. It was not so long since Gladstone wrote *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scriptures*. That Conference had declared the old impregnable rock to be shattered into millions of fragments, and the same doom would overtake the new. Their (the Freethought) position was that the "Holy Bible" was an exclusively human document, bearing innumerable, unmistakable marks of the ignorance, the credulity, the moral elevation (in the best portions) of its several authors and compilers, and yielding not the least sign of the superhuman. That was the position they held to-day, and the position they held yesterday, and not one incontrovertible fact had ever been adduced by the champions of the old Bible or the new Bible to the discredit. They could look these men in the face and say, so far from their statement being true, it is their own position that has had the wind taken out of its sails. (Applause.) The layman let the cat out of the bag. He said he wished the New Theology had a High Court of Appeal to which they could take all points of dispute, and take from it the decision as to whether these things were settled or not. That was just the trouble. The New Theologians, with their new this, that, and the other had no Court to take disputable questions to. They (the Freethinkers) had one, and to that Court of Appeal they had given the short, sweet, simple name of "Reason." One great poet had called "Reason" a "monarch." They were proud to be known as the subjects of that great potentate, the only power in heaven and earth to whom they knelt. They were assured that this new deity was not revengeful like the old, but tender and patient. They were all his children, and they lived in his house; in fact, they constituted his family, and of this family he was the all-loving head. A perfect father should have perfect children, who held together in harmony, fellowship, and love. One set of the divine family, about forty-one millions, occupied an island called Great Britain, and another set numbering fifty-seven millions were to be found in the country called Germany. Now mark; the inhabitants of these two countries were all children of the same Heavenly Father, who leads them, watches them, and guards them all alike. Now, in order to see the true absurdity of such a doctrine as that, one had only to bear in mind that these two sets of God's children were armed to the teeth against one another, and that peace between them was only preserved by a vast preparation for war. Two other sets of God's children, the Mohammedans and Christians, had devoted many months to the work of killing one another by the thousand. Did they not see how tragic a farce, how stupendous a failure, it was if there were any Heavenly Father? And how had it fared with Jesus? We had lost sight of him until criticism came along and showed him to us afresh. The Savior-God, the God-man, who undertook the delivery of mankind by dying on the cross, this chimeric, impossible being, criticism had lifted bodily out of the New Testament and thrown headlong into the outer darkness; and it had left—a mere man, who was specially called to inform us that we had a living Heavenly Father up in the skies who would truly pardon us for being what he himself had made us, if we truly repented. Here we were confronted with economic injustice, the curse of poverty, and the thousand-and-one wrongs and evils of the world; and the question naturally arose, What could we do? An eminent divine had said last week that there were in God three elements—fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood—of which the human counterparts were but "shadows." He preferred the "shadows" to these so-called realities. The Holy Trinity was a dream which had never come true. The only trinity worth troubling about was the human trinity of father, mother, and child; and in that trinity lay all the transcendently glorious possibilities for the future of the world. (Loud applause.)

Mr. Foote, in dismissing the meeting, said he had been glad to have listened to his colleagues—he did not often have that pleasure—and in the name of the audience he thanked them for the treat they had provided.

T. H. E.

"Him! The scum, the dirt!" responded Mr. Glubb. "You wait! I'll be upsides with him, if it ban't till we meet in a Better Land. And when the day comes, if I find him up there, I'll break his damned harp over his head as sure as my name is Glubb. Ess, I will, but he won't be there thank the Lord; his goose be cooked for that. So I'll have it out in this world, for, my eyes won't never see that dog in the next."—*Eden Phillpotts, "Widecombe Fair."*

A Bill to Amend the Blasphemy Laws.

Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. After the passing of this Act no criminal proceedings shall be instituted in any court against any person for schism, heresy, blasphemy, blasphemous libel, or atheism.

2. The enactments specified in the schedule of this Act are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column thereof.

3. This Act may be cited as the Blasphemy Laws (Amendment) Act, 1913.

SCHEDULE.

Session and Chapter.	Title or Short Title.	Extent of Repeal.
1 Edw. 6. c. 1	An Act against such Persons as shall irreverently speak against the Sacrament of the Altar.	The preamble and sections one to six inclusive.
1 Eliz. c. 1 -	An Act restoring to the Crown the ancient jurisdiction over the State Ecclesiastic and Spiritual, and abolishing all foreign power repugnant to the same.	Section fourteen so far as it revives any enactment repealed by this Act.
1 Eliz. c. 2. -	An Act for the uniformity of Common Prayer and Divine Service in the Church, and the administration of the Sacraments.	Section nine.
14 Car. 2. c. 4.	An Act for the uniformity of Public Prayer and administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies.	Section twenty-four.
9 Will. 3. c. 35 (9 & 10 Will. 3. c. 32. in Ruffhead's Edition).	An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Blasphemy and Profaneness.	The whole Act so far as unrepealed.
60 Geo. 3. & 1 Geo. 4. c. 8.	The Criminal Libel Act, 1819.	In the preamble the words "blasphemous and"; in section one the words "any blasphemous libel or"; in sections three, four, seven, and ten the words "blasphemous or."
2 & 3 Vict. c. 47.	Metropolitan Police Act, 1839.	In section fifty-four, sub-section (12), the word "profane" wherever it occurs.
10 & 11 Vict. c. 89.	Town Police Clauses Act, 1847.	In section twenty-eight the word "profane" wherever it occurs.
51 & 52 Vict. c. 64.	The Law of Libel Amendment Act, 1888.	In sections three and four the words "blasphemous or."

This Bill is introduced by Mr. Holt, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Sir William Bylee, Mr. Chancellor, Mr. George Greenwood, and Mr. Radford, and is printed by order of the House of Commons.

A young man presented himself at an oral examination for the position of electrical engineer. To test his shrewdness, the examiner propounded the following question:—

"What is electricity composed of?"

The candidate looked confused, but not wishing to appear too ignorant of the subject, he replied:—

"I am afraid I have forgotten. I used to know the formula, but it has quite slipped my memory."

The examiner smiled.

"That is a great pity," he said. "There are only two people in the universe who ever possessed that particular piece of information. God won't tell, and now you've been and forgotten!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 6.30, a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Religion a Product of the Human Mind"; 7.30, Miss H. Pankhurst, "How Christians are Made."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. J. Darby, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Square): Gilbert Manion, at 11, "Why I Reject Christianity"; 3, "The Salvation Army"; 7, "Christian Socialism Exposed." Also a Lecture each evening during the following week at 7.30.

BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Place): 6.30, R. Mearns and A. Thompson.

COLNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Cumberland-street): 3, R. Mearns and A. Thompson.

LICHFIELD (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—May 23, at 8, "Rationalism and Death"; 25, at 7.30, "Omar Khayyam, the Tentmaker"; 26, at 8, "Religion in the Dog Days"; 27, at 8, "Christ: Man, Messiah, or Myth?" 28, at 8, "Clerical Popinjays."

NELSON BRANCH N. S. S. (Chapel-street): 3, R. Mearns and A. Thompson.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 22 SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Our missionary offices to America as to Africa, consist I believe principally in the stealing of land, and the extermination of its proprietors by intoxication.

—JOHN RUSKIN.

The Dead Jew.

THE ancient Jews occupied an insignificant place in the world's history. The land they inhabited, as Gibbon says, was of the size and fertility of Wales. Yet the chosen people described it as a land flowing with milk and honey. In the same way, they made themselves out to be the most important nation on this globe—which they regarded as flat, as we should be if we believed in their nonsense. God Almighty was always thinking about them. Even when they got into trouble it was only his way of showing his concern about them. Their chastisements were a sign of his love.

The plain truth is the opposite of their patriotic boastings. The Jewish nation simply existed on sufferance. Its existence as an independent kingdom was remarkably brief. It disappeared as soon as one of the great empires stretched out its paw for the mouse of Palestine.

What did the Jew contribute to the world's civilisation? In science, art, and philosophy he was absolutely barren. But he was a fierce religionist. He clung to his god Jahveh with invincible tenacity. His god was himself, immensely magnified; and he was therefore worshiping himself in disguise. His religion was patriotism, as his patriotism was egotism. It was the Jew against the world, and of course the world got the best of it.

Nevertheless, the Jew had his revenge. He imposed himself on the modern world by proxy. As luck would have it, his prophetical Scriptures were the starting point of the new universal religion which arose out of the wreck of the old national religions of the Roman Empire; and the Jewish spirit of fanaticism was necessary in the apostles of a faith which was to triumph over civilisation as well as the imperial authority.

Christianity bound up its own Scriptures with those of Judaism, and is only now, after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, beginning to make a separation, through what is called "The Higher Criticism." Christian "scholars" took Hebrew as the centre of learning, Palestine as the centre of the world, and the petty squabbles of Jewish tribes as the centre of universal history. But all this has been changing since oriental studies, scientific researches, geographical exploration, and world-wide intercommunication, have broadened our minds and enlightened our conceptions of the past. Not to put too fine a point upon it, the ancient Jew is played out. He is a detected fraud. He lied himself into a fine reputation, and Christianity, for reasons of its own, supported him in the imposture. Wider knowledge has exposed his pretensions. When we were shut up, century after century, to slender sources of information, it was easy to deceive us. We were like the boy, who thinks a lot of his village pond, until he gazes on the mighty ocean.

Yes, we are getting over that Jewish delusion. We have studied ourselves out of its history and science, but there still remains a final act of emancipation. Christianity goes on worshiping a dead Jew. It adores him as a veritable god; it also affects to regard him as a transcendent man. It makes him the be-all and the end-all of humanity. The thought of going beyond him is blasphemy. He is first and last, and there is none beside him. Salvation is still of the Jews, through the worship of Jesus Christ. They are dead in everything else, but they live in this, little as their modern descendants suspect the fact.

The godhead of Christ is at its last gasp. The reactionaries see that it can only be perpetuated by a tyrannous abuse of our system of national education. If the child be not captured the man is lost. This is the admission of the Trinitarians. Nor is this all. God the Father is once more asserting his predominance in Christian theology, and the Son is falling into a place of subordination. By this means he will pass out of godship altogether. It is only a question of time. Will it indeed be very long before Christendom exclaims—Great Christ is Dead!

We know how mythical is the "history" of Christ. His career is a plagiarism of that of the old sun-gods. His very crucifixion is a shifting anniversary, with the sun and moon; and his resurrection marks the real birth of the year at the vernal equinox. And thus, if Judaism has survived in Christian teaching, Paganism has survived in Christian rites and ceremonies. The old nature-gods are hard to kill. They have a deeper life than the gods of yesterday. Men will bask in the sunshine and cry "Hail!" to the "god of day" after Christ is swept down to oblivion.

What remains when Christ is gone? The man Jesus. And what is he? A dead Jew? Simply this and nothing more. And why is a dead Jew better than a dead Greek, a dead Roman, a dead Hindu, a dead Chinee, a dead Egyptian, or even a dead Englishman? It was once asked, Can any good come out of Nazareth? It is greater folly to ask, Can any good come *except* out of Nazareth? Such narrow parochialism is unworthy of the human spirit. The world is greater than Nazareth, and Humanity is greater than Jesus. We will not bend for ever over the tomb of the Nazarene. It is a slavery to keep us there. We will be eclectic. What good Jesus taught (if he ever really lived) we will accept. But we will also reject the rest. We will not worship a dead Jew.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Religious Epidemics.—III.

(*Continued from p. 323.*)

ONE enduring and inevitable consequence of the prevalence of monasticism has not, I think, been sufficiently noticed by many writers. That is, its influence on the ideal of marriage, on the family, and on the domestic virtues generally. Gibbon said that the Pagan world regarded with astonishment a society that perpetuated itself without marriage. Unfortunately, this perpetuation was only secured by the sacrifice of some of the dearest interests of the race. For in general one may say that any appeal to the idealistic aspect of human nature affects precisely the class that are in least need of such a stimulus. The world would indeed lose little, and might possibly gain something, if many who become parents died without leaving descendants. But there is no evidence that monasticism, with its preaching of celibacy, ever attracted this class. The safe assumption lies in quite the opposite direction. Monastic Christianity made its appeal for celibacy on behalf of purity and religion. The sexual relations of men and women were deliberately labelled as "unclean." Married persons had undergone "defilement." Neither the social nor individual value of marriage and the family were recognised, but were at best permitted as inescapable evils.

Hardly any movement ever struck so hard and so disastrously at social wellbeing as did monasticism. Wives were encouraged to desert their husbands, husbands to desert their wives, children their parents. Parents, in turn, were exhorted to devote their children to the monastic life; and although, at first, those who had been condemned to monasteries by their parents were allowed to return to the world on reaching maturity, this liberty was taken from them by the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633.* Some few of the Christian writers of this period protested against children forsaking their parents; but, in general, to trample upon affections of this kind, was treated as the supreme proof of excellence. St. Jerome fully expressed this in the following passage:—

> "Though your little nephew twine his arms around your neck; though your mother with dishevelled hair, and tearing her robes asunder, point to the breast with which she suckled you; though your father fall down on the threshold before you, pass on over your father's body. Fly with tearless eyes to the shadow of the cross. In this matter cruelty is the only piety.....Your widowed sister may throw her gentle arms around you. .....Your father may implore you to wait but a short time to bury those near to you, who will soon be no more; your weeping mother may recall your childish days, and may point to her shrunken breasts and to her wrinkled brow. Those around you may tell you that all the household rests upon you. Such chains as these, the love of God and the fear of hell can easily break. You say that Scripture orders you to obey your parents, but he who loves them more than Christ loses his own soul. The enemy brandishes a sword to slay me. Shall I think of a mother's tears?"†

The consequences of such teachings are not difficult to forecast. Marriage as an institution became coarsened and brutalised. Dean Milman said that in all the discussions concerning marriage and celibacy he could not recall a single instance where the social aspect appears to have occurred to the disputants. Children are rarely mentioned except as an illustration of some point, as one might use any other natural object. Dean Milman's remark is not only true of early Christian literature; to some extent it holds of Christian literature as a whole. That much-admired evangelical classic, for example, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, shows a curious obliviousness to the value of family and social life. Individual salvation is its keynote. Nothing is to be allowed to stand in the way of that. But neglect of the social and humanising aspects of family life inevitably lead to a hardening of character and brutalising of social relationships. The brutal ferocity of the theological disputes of this period has never failed to arouse the comments of historians. But there was nothing to soften and humanise them. Everything was dominated by the theological interest. Next to the sin of heresy in oneself was the tolerance of heresy in others. And we owe it in no small measure to monkish activity that the tolerance of Pagan times, with the widespread respect for truth-seeking, was replaced by the narrow intolerance of the Christian ages, and which has never been eradicated in Christian Europe.

Following upon this influence was the almost total extinction of the civic life and civic virtues that had been so striking a feature of the old Roman Empire. "A candid examination," says Lecky, "will show that the Christian civilisation has been as inferior to the Pagan ones in civic and intellectual virtues as they have been superior to them in the virtues of humanity and chastity." One may justifiably question the accuracy of the concluding part of this statement, but the opening portion admits of overwhelming proof. Celibacy is not chastity, and the reduction of sexual relationships to mere animalism does not result in purity. And it is difficult to see how the coarsening of character that Lecky himself describes can be consistent with a heightened humanity. But there is no question that the growth of humanity spelt disaster to the civic life and institutions of the Empire. Nothing the Romans did was more admirable than their organisation and development of municipal life. They made no attempt at a uniform organisation, but gave as much free play to local feeling and liberty as was consistent with imperial order and peace.* Civic life became, in consequence, well ordered and persistent. It was far less corrupt than administration in the capital, and freedom persisted in the towns for long after it had practically disappeared in Rome. Indeed, but for the influence of Christianity it is not improbable that the urban municipalities might have provided the impetus for the rejuvenation of the Empire.

Against this, however, monastic Christianity was in antagonism from the outset. To begin with, its object was individual salvation, not social development. And to this social activities presented themselves as a decided hindrance. People were exhorted to the monastic life, and praised because of their neglect of civic duties. And as this exhortation naturally affected the more thoughtful and the more conscientious, the immediate consequence was to lower the character of municipal life by throwing its direction into the hands of a less worthy class. Next, the frenzy for individual salvation, and the growing influence of monasticism, made even association with non-Christians, if not a sin, at least in the highest degree undesirable. Theology became the one absorbing and the one important topic. The figure of the monk becomes supreme, and his ideal infects and paralyses the healthful activities of the mass of the people. The Pagans would have understood by a "good man" one who spent himself in the interests of his country. The Christian understood by it one who succeeded in saving his own soul by the sacrifice of all family and social affections. Monasticism, vampire-like, fed itself upon the life blood of the empire, and the civic life and ideals of Rome sank into a mere tradition, to inspire long after such men as Rienzi and those of the French Revolution.

I have no space to more than notice another religious epidemic, also of great significance in the history of both religion and civilisation. This is the various crusades for the recovery of the Holy Land. Pilgrimages to the burial places of saints and other sacred spots connected with Christian history had long been in vogue, and had formed both a source of revenue to the Church and of inspiration to the

* Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 131.
† Cited by Lecky, vol. ii., pp. 134-5.

* For a fine sketch of Roman municipal life see Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, ch. ii.

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faithful. Among these places of pilgrimage, Jerusalem held a prominent place, and for purposes of protection and comfort, the pilgrimage usually included a large number of people. Towards the end of the eleventh century, pilgrims who returned home complained of ill-treatment by the Mohammedans. Recent events in Europe have shown how easy it is even to-day to rouse Christian feeling against a Mohammedan power, and it was considerably easier to do so in the eleventh century, and with a people only just recovering from such an epidemic as monasticism. Between them, Pope Urban II. and Peter the Hermit—the former from political reasons, and the latter from sheer fanaticism—succeeded in rousing Europe to a maniacal desire for a recovery of the Holy Land. And for nearly two hundred years the world saw a series of crusades on as absurd an errand as ever engaged the energies of mankind.

Ordinary histories lean to representing the Crusades as a series of armed expeditions, led by princes, nobles, and kings. This gives a quite inaccurate conception of the movement during its most virulent stages. It was, in reality, a psychological epidemic. No custom, howsoever ancient, no duty, no law, was allowed to stand before the crusading mania. Peter himself led a huge concourse of people, ill-armed, and including a large number of sick, aged, and even children. Some of the bands were led by a goose and a goat—a curious felicity in selecting symbols. Although on a religious expedition, small regard was paid to humanity or decency. Defenceless cities *en route* were sacked, women outraged, and men and children murdered. The Jews were murdered wholesale. Generally, the slaughter of Jews at home was preparatory to crusading abroad. Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, although themselves providing contingents for the crusading army, suffered heavily by the passage of these undisciplined, lawless crowds.

The most remarkable of all the Crusades, and one which well shows the character of the epidemic, was the Children's Crusade of 1212. It was said that the sins of the Crusaders had caused their failure, and priests went about France and Germany calling upon children to do what the wickedness of their fathers had prevented their doing. The children were told that the sea would dry up to give them a passage, and the Mohammedans stricken by the Lord on their approach. A peasant lad, twelve years of age, Stephen of Cloyes, received the usual vision, and was ordered to lead the Crusade. Commencing with the children around Paris, he collected 30,000 children, without money or food, and commenced the march. A German army of 40,000 children was also mustered, led by a boy of ten years of age. The result of this Crusade may be told in a few words. About 6,000 of the French contingent, having reached Marseilles, were offered a passage by some shipowners, and were sold into slavery. Many others met the same fate, the girls being reserved for a more sinister traffic. Thousands died on the march over the Alps. Some succeeded in getting home again, ruined in both mind and body.

Probably about 5,000,000 lives were lost during the period of the Crusades. And what were the results? First, there is no question that the religious feeling was strengthened. Persecution of heretics and unbelievers assumed almost a mania. Crusades were initiated in other directions—against the Moors in Spain, against the Albigenses, and against other heretics. Failure did not cure fanaticism—it fed it; the returned Crusaders brought their religious intolerance home with them, and it was not the policy of the Church to allow this intolerance to remain idle. This is one side of the picture. The other side is a more favorable one, although it did not immediately show itself. But the Crusades, for the first time, brought the uncivilised Christian West into intimate contact with the civilised Mohammedan East. Large bodies of people had met a people with a courage equal to their own, and with a humanity that was greater, and possessing a culture and a civilisation to which they could lay no claim. Hitherto, Mohammedan culture had only influenced Christendom through the medium of the Spanish schools and universities. Now, the influence became more general. A taste for greater comfort began, literature began to improve. We approach the period of the Renaissance, and to that new birth the indirect influences of the Crusades, despite their religious intolerance, and cruelty, and fanaticism, offered a contribution of no small value.

C. COHEN.

God and Nature.

IT is a remarkable and highly significant fact that every fairly old church or chapel is surrounded by a graveyard. The popular impression is that the church or chapel antedates the graveyard; or, in fact, that the graveyard is there because it is, in a sense, subservient to church or chapel. Indeed, it is generally taken for granted that a church is a place of worship, and that the dead are buried in its vicinity because it is customary to hold a Divine Service prior to interment. Only the other day a clergyman asserted that "the ancient Britons built Stonehenge because they were awed by the terrors of the Universe and sought to propitiate the sun-god with human blood." The truth is, however, that the graveyard is older than the church, and that the latter owes its origin to the former. There is abundant evidence to show that, originally, what we call a church was not a place of worship at all, but a slab to mark the place of burial, a heavy stone laid on the grave to prevent the dead from rising, or a heap of stones supposed, in many instances, to be inhabited by the ghosts of the deceased. Major Conder (quoted by Grant Allen in his *Evolution of the Idea of God*, p. 41) describes the various stones employed in the following manner:—

> "Rude stone monuments, bearing a strong family resemblance in their mode of construction and dimensions, have been found distributed over all parts of Europe and Western Asia, and occur also in India..... They include *maenhirs*, or standing stones, which were erected as memorials, and worshiped as deities, with libations of blood, milk, honey, or water poured upon the stones; *dolmaens*, or stone-tables, free standing—that is, not covered by any mound or superstructure—which may be considered, without doubt, to have been used as altars on which victims (often human) were immolated; *cairns*, also memorial, and sometimes surrounding *maenhirs*; these were made by the contributions of numerous visitors or pilgrims, each adding a stone as witness of his presence; finally, *cromlechs*, or stone circles, used as sacred enclosures of early hypaithral temples, often with a central *maenhir* or *dolmaen* as statue or altar."

There was no unanimity of belief as to where the souls or ghosts of the dead dwelt. Many imagined that they lived on with the bodies in the tombs. Professor Flinders Petrie says:—

> "In Upper Egypt at present a hole is left at the top of the tomb-chamber; and I have seen a woman remove the covering of the hole and talk down to her deceased husband. Also funeral offerings of food and drink, and even beds, are still placed in the tombs" (*Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 12).

Others believed that the ghosts of the dead were in the stone or stones on the top of the tombs, and the living came and feasted with them there. According to another system, all the dead belonged to Osiris, whose kingdom was thought at first to lie in the marshlands of the delta, then somewhere in Syria, and last of all in the Milky Way, which was devoutly sung as the heavenly Nile. According to another system still, the soul at death entered the sun in the west, and was taken along in everlasting light.

Thus we learn that churches were not originally places of worship, but places sometimes of entertainment, and sometimes, alas, of bloody sacrifices, offered to conciliate departed spirits. Such, in brief, was the starting point of the evolution of God and his worship. This was a personally guided evolution, an evolution of which the priests of the different religions have had full charge. The ancient Britons

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did not build Stonehenge "because they were awed by the terrors of the Universe," but because they were anxious to honor and, perhaps, solicit the favor of, their heroic dead. Nennius, who flourished in the ninth century, and who is the first writer to mention Stonehenge, assures us that "it was erected in commemoration of the 400 nobles who were treacherously slain near the spot by Hengist in the year 472." The Welsh Triads furnish a similar account of the object of its erection. It is an incontrovertible fact that around it there is a ring of nearly three hundred barrows. Even those who regard it as a temple, in which the men of the Bronze Age met to worship the sun, candidly admit that most of the old circles mark out burying places. It is true enough that our far-off ancestors were often "awed by the terrors of the Universe," but that was not because they believed in supernatural powers which were hostile to them, but because they were ignorant and took it for granted that all natural forces were living beings, capable of smiling or frowning upon them. It was Nature of which they stood in such unspeakable awe; and it was this awe, rooted in primal stupidity, that gradually led to the inference of a Super-nature, of a something behind and above Nature which was the cause of all her activities. And so people were found thinking and talking about Nature *plus* God, or about Nature as a sort of machine worked by a Supreme Being. Curiously enough, from the very first, this Supreme Being, who ran the Universe, was believed to cherish some spite against mankind, and to take delight in doing it almost all the harm he could. He was a Being who needed to be wheedled, cajoled, bribed into something like friendship, or whose placation could be effected only by the costliest sacrifices conceivable. That is to say, God was interpreted in terms of Nature; and, ignorant as these ancestors of ours must have been, their account of God was perfectly rational. If God exists, and inanimate Nature is his instrument, his attitude to the human race, and, indeed, to all other races of living beings, is undoubtedly that of an enemy, or, at least, an indifferentist who cares not what happens.

In the *Christian World* for May 22, "J. B." quotes Proudhon thus:—

> "God is evil. If God exists he is essentially hostile to our nature. We attain to science in spite of him; to society in spite of him. Every step forward is a victory in which we crush the Deity."

Proudhon was a man who devoted his whole life to the service of oppressed and suffering humanity, and who found it impossible to believe in a good God while face-to-face with such oppression and suffering. Of the Being so violently anathematised by the great revolutionary writer, "J. B." says: "Assuredly, it is not the God we know." But just as assuredly the God "J. B." claims to know permits all the cruel wrongs and evils the contemplation of which filled Proudhon with such infinite disgust. It is amazingly easy to charge orthodoxy with misrepresenting religion, with being an influence that denied justice and fought against it; but the fact remains that if God exists he not only permits injustice to prevail, but actually employs lightning, flood, earthquake, and volcano as instruments of the most cruel and wanton destruction. The God of the *Christian World* is not one whit better than the God of the *Christian* or the *British Weekly*. The truth is that Theism in all its forms is an utterly discredited, self-condemned system. "The Something Behind" has completely failed to justify the belief in it. Justice simply means right relations between man and man and between the human race and the rest of the kingdom of life; and these can be secured alone as the result of our own exertions. "J. B." speaks of a Divine anxiety for the worst sinners living; but the continued existence of the sinners proves the perfect futility of the Divine anxiety.

"The Something Behind" is a metaphysical speculation of the flimsiest character. It can be talked and written about to any extent, but bring it to the touchstone of actual life and its absolute unreality becomes instantly established. Nature and Life we know, but "the Something Behind" is wholly without witness. Take the question of beauty, which "J. B." uses as an illustration, and you will realise the force of the argument. "And what is beauty?" he asks. "It is a question which Materialism can never answer. It is so essentially an affair of the soul." This he says after giving a very eloquent description of the inimitable beauty of Spring—"the trees clothing themselves—the oak, the ash, the elm putting on their dainty attire, the chestnut throwing up its milk-white cones, the laburnum with its golden gleam, the meadows pied with daisies, the bluebells showing as though the heavens were coming up through the earth." "This is beauty, so essentially an affair of the soul," he then exclaims. We maintain, on the contrary, that the beauty so well portrayed is essentially an affair of the material eye transmitted from the material world without to the material brain within. This is not explaining beauty, we admit, but neither does saying that it is "so essentially an affair of the soul" tell us what it is. "J. B." is an Idealist who does not believe in a material existence at all, who has the temerity to assure us that a stone is nothing "but a mass of congested thoughts," and who coolly asserts that the stone's existence, its present, past, and future, its shape, coherency, weight, color, divisibility—that "all these things are ideas, and have no meaning except as appeals, signals from one mind to another." Well, if we were to take that stone and fling it with all our might at "J. B.'s" face, we incline to the opinion that it would impress him as something more substantial than "a mass of congested thoughts."

We are firm believers in Nature, but not in Nature *and* God. We accept the Universe, but reject, with thanks, "the Something Behind," it. And we must add that it is quite unfair, on "J. B.'s" part, to claim Huxley as an ally. That great scientist was certainly not an Idealist of the "J. B." type; nor was he a Theist of any type. The Prologue to *Controverted Questions* makes it sufficiently clear that he was not a supernaturalist. He resented being called an Atheist, but he was without God; he repudiated Materialism; and yet invariably spoke of life in terms of Matter.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—III.

(Continued from p. 325.)

"All the societies of the Far East are founded, like that of Japan, upon ancestor-worship. This ancient religion, in various forms, represents their normal experience, and it offers everywhere to the introduction of Christianity, as now intolerantly preached, obstacles of the most serious kind. Attacks upon it must seem, to those whose lives are directed by it, the greatest of outrages and the most unpardonable of crimes."—LAFCADIO HEARN, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1905, p. 517.

"I am aware of a so-called English missionary who rampages about Central Asia with the funds supplied by societies at home, and who, taking with him a portmanteau full of Bibles, thinks that by dropping its contents here and there, he is winning recruits to the fold of Christ. What is the educated Chinaman likely to think, for instance, of Samuel hewing Agag in pieces before the Lord, or of David setting Uriah in the forefront of the battle, and commissioning Solomon to slay Shimei, whose life he had himself sworn to spare, or of Solomon exchanging love-lyrics with the Shulamite woman? Even in the New Testament, the bidding to forsake father and mother for the sake of Christ must to the Chinaman's eyes be the height of profanity, whilst if he can follow the logic of St. Paul, he accomplishes that which is beyond the power of many educated Christians."—LORD CURZON, *Problems of the Far East*, 1896, pp. 290-1.

"Nowhere is missionary work as difficult as in China. Think, for instance, of the difficulty of explaining to an ancestor-worshiper such words as, 'If any man come to Me and hate not his father, he cannot be my disciple. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father.'"—REV. E. J. HANDY, *John Chinaman at Home*, 1905, p. 317.

EVEN if, after enormous labor, the missionary masters the Chinese language, his pathway is still

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beset with difficulties. As Dr. Morrison observes:—

> "I believe that it is now universally recognised that the most difficult of all missionary fields—incomparably the most difficult—is China. Difficulties assail the missionary at every step; and every honest man, whether his views be broad, or high, or low, must sympathise with the earnest efforts the missionaries are making for the good and advancement of the Chinese. Look, for example, at the difficulty there is in telling a Chinese, who has been taught to regard the love of his parents as his chief duty, as his forefathers have been taught for hundreds of generations before him—the difficulty there is in explaining to him, in his own language, the words of Christ, 'If any man come to Me and hate not his father, he cannot be my disciple. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father.'" *

We have noticed the apathy displayed by the Chinese regarding the existence of a God, of a soul, or of heaven and hell. This, combined with their ancestor-worship, forms an almost insurmountable obstacle to their conversion to Christianity. Mr. A. H. Smith, who was himself for many years a missionary in China, tells us that: "The Polytheism and Pantheism of the lower classes of Chinese are matched in the upper classes by what appears to be pure Atheism." And "there never was on this earth a body of educated men so thoroughly agnostic and atheistic as the mass of Confucian scholars."† And, further, the same author declares:—

> "It is frequently quite impossible to interest a Chinese in the question whether he has three souls, one soul, or no soul at all.....he is very likely to care nothing either about his 'souls' (if he has any) or about theirs, unless it can be shown that the matter is in some way connected with the price of grain" (p. 308).

Moreover, he adds, "the idea of solemnity appears to be foreign to the Chinese mind." But "this does not prevent his conformity to the rite. The ancients did so, and he does as they did. Whether it is of any use 'who knows'" (p. 300). Just as among our upper classes they attend church as a social function and because it is the thing to do.

It must be confessed that the Chinese character provides very unpromising material for Christianity to work upon. But the rock against which the waves of missionary enthusiasm beat in vain is ancestor-worship.

To quote Mr. A. H. Smith again, whose work, *Chinese Characteristics*, is acknowledged to be the best and most authoritative work dealing with things Chinese:—

> "It is a melancholy comment upon the exaggerated Chinese doctrine of piety that it not only embodies no reference to a Supreme Being, but that it does not in any way lead up to a recognition of His existence. Ancestral worship, which is the most complete and ultimate expression of this filial piety, is perfectly consistent with Polytheism, with Agnosticism, and with Atheism. It makes dead men into gods, and its only gods are dead men. Its love, its gratitude, and its fears are for earthly parents only. It has no conception of a Heavenly Father, and has no interest in such a being when He is made known. Either Christianity will never be introduced into China, or the ancestral worship will be given up, for they are contradictories. In the death struggle between them the fittest only will survive" (*Chinese Characteristics*, p. 185).

We do not believe that in that struggle Christianity will emerge victorious, unless by altering its creeds and dogmas it accommodates itself to the spirit of ancestor-worship, and then it will not be Christianity but something else.

Let us try to realise the strength and vitality of the cult of ancestor-worship as practised in the Far East. Says Lafcadio Hearn:—

> "By aid of that cult have been evolved all ideas of duty to the living as well as to the dead—the sentiment of loyalty, the spirit of self-sacrifice, and the spirit of patriotism. What filial piety signifies as a religious force can best be imagined from the fact that you can buy life in the East—that it has its price in the market. This religion is the religion of China, and of countries adjacent; and life is for sale in China." *

When the Panama railroad was being constructed—many years ago, before science rendered the place healthy and habitable—the laborers, black and white, died off like flies before the unhealthy conditions then prevailing, until not sufficient could be procured for the work. Says Hearn:—

> "But labor could be obtained from China—any amount of labor at the cost of life; and the cost was paid; and multitudes of men came from the East to toil and die, in order that the price of their lives might be sent to their families.....Where this religion prevails, the individual is ready to give his life, in a majority of cases, for the family, the home, the ancestors.....Out of filial piety, indeed, has been developed the whole moral power that protects the State—the power also that has seldom failed to impose the rightful restraints upon official despotism whenever that despotism grew dangerous to the common weal" (p. 58).

The Chinese, the Japanese, and the Korean, says Mr. Arthur Diosy in his fine work, *The New Far East*:—

> "has ever present to his mind the thought of his forefathers. He lives surrounded, as it were, by a crowd of ghostly relatives, eagerly scanning his every action. With the Japanese, racial instincts cause the feeling to predominate that prompts them to add fresh lustre to the ancestral roll of honor by valiant deeds in war, or by acquiring civic fame in times of peace" (p. 231).

To the Chinese it seems to have been narrowed down in the majority of cases, says the same writer, "to a slavish adherence to the ways that commended themselves to his forefathers, and an intense dread of offending them by any departure therefrom."

A Chinaman may be a Buddhist, a follower of Confucius, or a Taoist, but before and above all, he is an ancestor-worshiper. Ancestor-worship is older than any of these systems, which only obtained a footing in China by accepting it as it stood. Mr. Chester Holcombe says:—

> "The worship of ancestors is literally universal in China. There are no exceptions to the practice, except in the case of Christianised Chinese, and on no other ground do these receive so much criticism and abuse, amounting in individual cases to persecution, as for the neglect of this solemn duty. So far as can be discovered, the worship is as old as the race. It is the most deeply rooted of all forms of religion in the very fibre of the Chinese character, and, beyond all question, it will be the last of all forms of false faith to die out among them."‡

As is well known, China, at the end of the seventeenth century, came within measurable distance of being Christianised by the Jesuits. Under their influence, "Christianity," says Mr. Arthur Diosy, "flourished for a time to a remarkable degree, numbering its churches by hundreds, and its adherents by hundreds of thousands." ‡

Mr. Davonport says it "progressed by leaps and bounds, extending over all Northern China, even beyond the Great Wall into the old Chinese province now called Shing King, in Manchuria." And, further on, he remarks: "The progress of Christianity was, perhaps, more rapid than has ever been known in any other part of the world."§

How is the remarkable success of the Jesuits in the seventeenth century, and the undeniable failure of the hundred-fold more numerous missionaries of to-day, to be accounted for? There are several reasons.

In the first place, the Jesuits had the field to themselves. There were not a multitude of Christian sects contending with one another for converts, each sect being regarded by the Chinese as a different religion.

Then, as Mr. Diosy points out, the modern preachers began "their labors at the wrong end"; they "devoted their attention almost exclusively to

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* Dr. G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 69.
† A. H. Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, 1906, pp. 292-3.

* Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1905, p. 57.
† Chester Holcombe, *The Real Chinaman*, 1895, p. 123.
‡ Arthur Diosy, *The New Far East*, p. 220.
§ Davenport, *China from Within*, pp. 231-5.

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the lower strata,"* the corresponding class from which the Salvation Army recruit their ranks in this country. The Jesuits, on the other hand, says the same author, "wasted no time, but proceeded straight to the fountain-head of local authority; they—

> "ingratiated themselves with the highest in the land .....established themselves in the Palace at Peking, erecting their church within its pink ramparts, and became the trusted high officials and intimate friends of at least three of China's greatest Manchu Emperors."

But, then, these Jesuits were learned men, conversant with Western science, who made themselves very useful to the Emperors as mechanicians, astronomers, and in the practice of medicine. Matthew Ricci, the Jesuit missionary, says Professor Parker in his *China and Religion* (p. 191), was "a profound mathematician, very erudite, and also patient and courteous to boot, he greatly impressed the educated natives." Of Verbiest, another of them, the same authority observes, "He was all the more able to obtain good terms by his readiness to cast brass guns of large calibre.....and by his handiness in arranging diplomatic difficulties with the Russians" (p. 197).

Then, again, the Jesuits saw that it would be useless to contend against ancestor-worship, so they incorporated it in their own faith. Says Lafcadio Hearn:—

> "In China, the Jesuits were quick to perceive that the power of resistance to proselytism lay in ancestor-worship; and they shrewdly endeavored to tolerate it, somewhat as Buddhism before them had been obliged to do. Had the Papacy supported their policy, the Jesuits might have changed the history of China; but other religious orders fiercely opposed the compromise, and the chance was lost."†

It was the Dominicans and Franciscans who—attracted to China by the success of the Jesuits—acquainted the Pope with the heretical proceedings of the Jesuits, and they were formally condemned by the Holy See:—

> "The worship of Confucius and of ancestors was condemned as pagan, so that missionaries were not allowed to attend any festivals or sacrifices connected therewith; Chinese philosophy was deemed to be altogether heretical, and even Chinese books were not to be admitted into the missionary schools, because they contained superstitious and atheistic matter."‡

This practically put an end to the Christian propaganda in China. The Emperor Kanghsi was highly offended; "he was justly incensed at the assumption of the Pope in issuing edicts and interfering in the internal affairs of the Chinese Empire,"§ and forbade any missionary to remain in the country without his permission. His son and successor, in the year 1724, issued an edict strictly prohibiting the propagation of Christianity.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

* Diosy, *The New Far East*, p. 218.
† Hearn, *Japan*, p. 361.
‡ Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 235.
§ *Ibid*, p. 236.

The Resurrection of the Dead.

THE Christian Burial Service is based on the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, notwithstanding that its teaching respecting the resurrection of the dead is contrary to that of Jesus Christ. Is it not so? Well, let us consider the point.

Paul, the self-styled apostle, was a conceited bigot, who claimed to understand "those mysterious points which are inscrutable to man." Said he: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures;* and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day *according to the scriptures*" (v. 3, 4).

"According to the scriptures"! What scriptures? They could not have been the New Testament, for not a line of it had then been written. They must, therefore, have been those Hebrew writings part of which now form the Old Testament. But where in the Old Testament is there the slightest allusion to a Christ who should "die for our sins," and be "buried and rise again the third day"? There is not one. The only so-called prophecies regarding a Ruler in Israel speaks of him as being a man, and not a supernatural being; as one who should be a powerful potentate, not a spiritual myth—a barbarian conqueror like unto Joshua, who should exalt the Jewish nation above all the other nations of the earth. Paul, therefore, was either ignorant of the "scriptures," or he deliberately told an untruth respecting them. What a pity it was that he did not, as he suggested others should do, "awake to righteousness and sin not" (v. 34).

Having spoken thus, to the "shame" of those whom he was addressing, he proceeded thus:—

> "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him; and to every seed his own body" (v. 35-38).

Was ever a more nonsensical statement made? And yet Paul calls the man to whom he is addressing himself a "fool"!

Says Paul: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Does not common sense teach us that *dead* seed does not quicken, and that it is only *living* seed which germinates and produces a living plant?

Says Paul: "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain." Is not such so-called reasoning simply pitiful? The dead body of a human being when placed (that is, sown) in the grave is not "grain" of any kind, and, being dead, cannot reproduce itself. To liken it to, or to compare it with, "wheat," which it "may chance" to be, "or some other grain," is mere silliness. Animal life—and physically man is an animal—is absolutely different from, and can have no affinity with, vegetable life.

Then we are told that "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him; and to every seed his own body." There is no "chance" here. But how can a dead body, whether in or out of the grave, be *given* a body? And, were it "wheat or some other grain," God could not—as is proved by the words "to every seed his own body"—give it any other body than that which naturally belongs to it; for does not common sense teach us that "every tree is known by his fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes" (Luke vi. 43).

Paul endeavors to cover up his blunder by perpetrating another, for he says: "It is sown a natural body, and is raised a spiritual body." But on what fact does he base such an assumption? Is not this unsupported assertion plain proof that "on those mysterious points which are inscrutable to man" he was as ignorant as all other human beings are? If the body raised be not the body that was placed in the grave, no resurrection can have taken place; for resurrection means, and means only, *the rising again of the dead body that had been buried in the grave!*

Paul's assertion that "this mortal must put on immortality" (v. 53) is equally absurd. Immortality is not a garment that can be put on and off. That which is immortal never had a beginning, as it shall never have an ending; and, therefore, the being who possesses it must have possessed it from all eternity.

This, then, is the teaching of Paul. What is the teaching of Jesus Christ? Here it is:—

> "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that *one of thy members perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell.* And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is profitable that *one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into Hell*" (Matt. v. 29, 30).

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These were the words which Christ spake in his Sermon on the Mount, and what could they mean but that the corpses of all human beings will, at the Judgment Day, be raised from the dead even as, at his crucifixion, "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many" (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). And that he meant what he said is proved by the fact that, on a subsequent occasion, he reiterated his statement, saying:—

> "Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is *better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.* And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee: *it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire*" (Matt. xviii. 8, 9).

And, *mirabile dictu*, Paul, when writing to the Thessalonians, contradicted the assertions he had made to the Corinthians. For, when speaking of the Last Day resurrection, he said: "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the *dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*" (1 Thes. iv. 16, 17).

J. W. DE CAUX.

Acid Drops.

Edward Clodd is surely rather "previous" in saying, as he does in a recent letter to the *Daily Chronicle*, that—"If the vicar of Great Clacton and all other ministers of religion would agree that the Bible should be included in the curriculum of public elementary (and other schools) as literature (than which there can be no greater and nobler) they would carry the whole country with them." We hope the Association of which Edward Clodd is Chairman would not endorse this utterance. Nor did we think that their Chairman was so "childlike and bland." Keeping the Bible in the schools as "the highest literature" is the game of the Rev. Dr. Clifford and similar representatives of the Nonconformist Conscience—which, by the way, is no conscience at all. These gentlemen know very well that the Bible may be kept in the schools as a book of literature, and used there as a book of religion. That is what it is used there for. It cannot possibly be used as a book of literature until it is dead as a book of religion. We venture to suggest, also, that when it is dead as a book of religion it will be much less praised as a book of literature. What remains to be said is that Edward Clodd appears to be only half emancipated. He sees through religion—yet he trusts the clergy. George Meredith knew better. That is why he preferred our methods of attacking Christianity to Edward Clodd's.

As we expected, there was more in the Chinese Government's request for prayers in the Christian Churches than met the eye. No one but a fool or a fanatic could have imagined for a moment that the Chinese authorities were really convinced of the value of the prayers of its Christian subjects. We said at the time that it was a political dodge, although it suited the game of the missionaries to take the appeal at its face value. Now we see that the advanced Republicans in China are asserting that the call to prayer was nothing more than a move to gain support, at home and abroad, for one political party. The internal condition of China is very unsettled, and the Government appears to be putting down opposition in a very high-handed manner. The *Chinese Republican* (Shanghai) accuses the Government of resorting to assassination, and publishes documents in support of its statements. Christians at home may yet regret that they permitted themselves to be so easily fooled by their leaders, whose chief concern appears to have been to raise more funds.

It is amusing to note how widely the men of God differ on the most important subjects. The annual breakfast meeting of the Lord's Day Observance Society was recently held under the chairmanship of the Dean of Canterbury. Dr. Wace held that the fourth commandment is still in force; that is to say, that we are under a moral obligation to keep the Sabbath Day holy. Archbishop Whateley, however, pronounced such an idea "utterly unintelligible"; and surely the Archbishop was as competent to judge as is Dean Wace. The truth is that for the religious sanctity of Sunday there is not one sound argument.

The Rev. S. J. Poole, vicar of St. James's Church, Gravesend, is determined to do his very utmost to preserve the sanctity of the Sunday. A second sermon by him appears in the *Reporter* for March 17. In the first, he argued quite rightly, that the existence of Christianity depends upon the preservation of the sacred character of the Day of Rest. In the second he contends, erroneously, that the preservation of the weekly rest-day is conditional on its perpetuation as a day of worship. In this he is certainly wrong. Is he not aware that the State is continually providing additional days of rest for the people? Has he not heard of the Shops Act of 1912? There is absolutely nothing to indicate that if Sunday ceased to be a sacred day it would be lost as a public holiday.

The remedy for the "evil" of Sunday secularisation, says the *Church Family Newspaper*, lies in the hands of the people themselves. We do not agree in the "evil," but otherwise we concur in the sentiment expressed. If people do not want Sunday entertainments, let them stay away. They may be assured that none will be kept going if an audience is not forthcoming. But it is wholly vicious to ask the *State* to stop people attending because others desire to stay away. And it is stupid to ask for them to be closed lest people should be tempted to enter. The Freethinker asks for no more than that the matter should be left in the hands of the people themselves. Let those who wish to go do so. Let the others stay at home, or go to church. There will then be perfect liberty all round in a matter which permits absolute freedom without injuring anyone.

The Evangelical Union of South America held its annual meeting a few days ago. The Rev. C. Inwood is a missionary recently returned from South America, and although he has lived and labored there, he calls it "a continent of dead souls." In a leaflet issued by the Union the question is asked, "Do you know that it is a continent without Christianity and without God, and that its people have never heard of a Savior from sin, but are in utter darkness?" Speaking at the aforesaid meeting, Mr. Inwood, referring to Argentina, said that "unless something special happened in a few years, they would have a civilised and a degraded Heathenism rampant in their midst."

Now, what are the facts? Take the Argentine Republic, to which Mr. Inwood alluded in such disparaging terms, and you will find that 991 per 1,000 of the population are Catholics, while only 7 per 1,000 are Protestants. We have no faith in the moralising influence of any form of Christianity, but we are convinced that the missionaries misrepresent Catholic South America quite as grossly as they misrepresent Pagan China. Is Protestant Britain free from corruption, immorality, illegitimacy, and crime? Does not Mr. Inwood know that we require 68 722 policemen to render life fairly safe in the United Kingdom? We boldly affirm that, morally, Protestantism is every bit as big a failure as Catholicism, or that Christianity is everywhere a wholly discredited religion.

Warriors of the Cross again! Look at the following passage from the *Daily Chronicle* of May 24, in the course of a telegram from its Vienna correspondent, dated May 23:—

> "A Sofia report describes the exasperated feeling prevailing there at the Servian outrages committed at the Bulgarian village of Zagra. The report throws particular light on the morals and behavior of the Servians. Servian officers were assaulting girls, and the indignant villagers shot the officers, whereupon Servian soldiers burnt the village. Six Bulgarians were killed and 80 wounded."

Onward Christian soldiers!

A missionary, writing to the *Guardian* from South Africa, says that Christianity altogether fails there to hold its own against Mohammedanism. He says there is scarcely a town in South Africa where Mohammedanism is not daily making converts, not only from the natives, but from the mixed races. In Capetown he refers to three whole streets that have now become Mohammedan which formerly were Christian. His conclusion is that "Instead of winning Mohammedans to Christianity, we cannot even win back our own who have become Mohammedan."

A model of the skull of the "oldest woman in the world," which was found at Piltdown Common, Sussex, by Mr. Charles Dawson, F.S.A., has been added to the collection at the Natural History Museum. Scientists consider that the original lived about 50,000 years ago. This was long before the time of old Father Adam.

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The *London Budget*, in a recent issue, contains an account of a new manuscript of the Bible, stated to have been found in Egypt. By a singular coincidence, the same number of the periodical also contains an article, "Antiquities Made to Order."

Royal personages learn nothing and forget nothing. The procession through the streets of Berlin, in which the "God-anointed" monarchs journeyed, with soldiers all around and the despised populace at a very respectful distance, might easily have been paralleled in the days of the first Pharaoh.

The Rev. Prebendary F. S. Webster advises open-air preachers to avoid argument. We can assure him that all we have heard usually do so. If he could only induce them to avoid misrepresentation, the manufacturing of fictitious experiences, and cultivate truth-speaking, it would be a move in the right direction.

Seven offertory boxes in Brighton churches have been rifled in the course of a single week. A case of "Let us Prey."

The *Guardian* heads its report of the East London Fund for the Jews Annual Meeting, "The Appeal of the Jew." We are not aware that the Jews have been appealing to Christians to come and convert them, and certainly the results do not lead one to believe that they are anxious to "come in." It is rather the appeal of impertinent Christians for funds to carry on a work that is without even the apparent justification of ordinary missionary labors. No Jew is made better by becoming a Christian, and, although we should like to see the whole Jewish race merged in the populations amid which they reside, it is absurd to expect that they would be benefited by becoming Christians. The natural growth of the Jew is not from Judaism to Christianity—that is certainly not an advance, and it might be plausibly argued that it is a distinct retrogression. His line of growth is from Judaism to Freethought. And that is the line that is actually followed all over the civilised world.

Miss Evelyn Underhill, authoress of *The Mystic Way*, believes that there are two Christianities taught in the New Testament, one for "the many," the other for "the few"—the one *exoteric*, the other *esoteric*. Miss Underhill is in error. There are *three* Christianities in the New Testament—the Jerusalem, the Pauline, and the Johannean—and each one is a complete negation of the other two. Yes, even at the very beginning, three distinct Gospels were preached—The Gospel *of* Jesus, the Gospel *about* Jesus, and an attempted combination of the two. Paul's was the Gospel *about* Jesus; and in the Billingsgate of his day he vigorously cursed every other, by whomsoever preached.

The Christian Church is nineteen hundred years old, but we learn from the organ of the New Theology that up to the present moment she has not evolved "a positive message." "The conviction is deepening that the time has arrived when" she should do so. We are told that there is great need for it, and that there are "provided indications of the awakening of the religious mind"; but so far *the* "positive message" is conspicuous only by its absence. The truth is that the Church delivers innumerable positive messages, every one of which contradicts all the others; and this is one reason why she is dying.

The increase of the expenditure on armaments between 1905 and 1912 was as follows:—

Russia	from	51	to 76	millions
Germany	,,	50	,, 71	,,
France	,,	43	,, 59	,,
United States	,,	42	,, 65	,,
Austria-Hungary...	,,	18	,, 32	,,
Italy	,,	16	,, 25	,,
Great Britain	,,	61	,, 73	,,

The total increase between 1905 and 1912 was from 281 millions to 400 millions. Such is the upshot of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace! That 400 millions, wisely spent, would soon redeem the world.

That women will in time take the place of men as parsons is the belief expressed by the Rev. Anna Shaw, who, with Mrs. Charlotte Gilman, occupied the pulpit at the Ethical Church, Bayswater, on a recent Sunday. In America there are already 3,000 women in the pulpit, while the number of men is decreasing. As the congregations of all churches are largely composed of women, this irruption of women in the pulpit promises to make religion purely a Feminist movement.

Drapers have declared war upon the farthing rates which figure so prominently in retail drapery transactions. The last refuge of this despised coin will be, in all probability the collection bag at churches.

Dr. Len Broughton is an exceedingly popular preacher, and preaches every Sunday to crowded congregations at Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, London. As is well known, he is an American who settled in this country a year ago. The following extract from a sermon preached in his own church on Sunday evening, May 18, is, therefore, eminently significant:—

> "Everywhere I go I hear the wail of the loss in membership and of the shrinkage in congregations. The great rank and file of the world, say what we please, is moving away from the Church of Christ. And if this present moving of the masses of men from the Church of Christ continues at the present rate, it does not take a prophet to say that the day will come when the Church is doomed.....Something is radically wrong, and it behoves us to cease our bragging, and our fear of being charged as pessimistic, to face honestly the situation, and, if possible, find out for ourselves what the trouble is."

"Zoo in hysterics," runs a headline in an evening contemporary. Perhaps it is the arrival of a crowd of those little creatures which showed the magicians of Egypt "the finger of God."

Replying to a correspondent, who suggests the closing of churches during a portion of the week, as protection against militant Suffragettes, the *Guardian* thinks that with police outside and watchers inside the danger may be minimised. But what is the matter with God? One would think it was his business to guard the churches against attack. They are all solemnly consecrated to him, and the least he could do would be to look after his own property. To fall back upon policemen and volunteer watchers seems an awfully common, secular way of doing business.

The Dean of St. Paul's thinks that the special task of the next generation ought to be "the promotion of a better understanding between religion and science in all matters of social life." Immediately after expressing that opinion the Very Rev. Dr. Inge went on to say that already in this country religion is almost a thing of the past. On his own showing, Christianity has been and is a colossal failure amongst us. The following are his words:—

> "Never before in our history has there been such a throwing off of all restraint, and all reverence—such contempt for rule and custom—such greedy pleasure-seeking in all classes. I fear we are rapidly becoming the least industrious, as we have long been the most wasteful, of the nations of Europe."

What a sad, humiliating confession for an ambassador of the infinite, omnipotent, and all-loving Christ to make!

In a non-stop piano-playing feat a Manchester clerk rendered 1,400 pieces of music from memory. He was fed, washed, and shaved while playing. Was he practising for the eternal Hallelujah Chorus in heaven?

"Any contribution to funds such as the South London Church Fund," says the Duke of Devonshire, "ought to be regarded as an insurance." Precisely! A fire insurance.

"Many preachers," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "faced by the fact that the old certitudes and convictions are irretrievably gone, make no attempt to replace them with new." This is a fair sample of the kind of thing that passes muster with some people for sound thinking. How on earth can a certitude ever go? A conviction may disappear, but a certitude remains such to the end of the chapter. What people took for certitudes in the field of religion are now to all capable minds exploded fallacies. And there is really more to admire in the preacher who sees this much, and says so, than in the one who is looking about for new ones—which in practice means a more or less conscious misinterpretation of acknowledged facts, or a building up of new beliefs on a basis of sheer ignorance. There are no certitudes to-day in the field of religion. There are certitudes in science, and in morals, and in life in general; but these have nothing to do with religion. Secular science provides the only possible clues to an understanding of man and the world; and there is no need whatever for a religion that, if honest, can only re-echo its teachings, and, if otherwise, can only serve as an obstruction to rational life.

"The Perfect Three" is a *Daily Mail* heading. It does not refer to the Christian Trinity.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £136 13s. 5d. Received since:—Mr. and Mrs. Deakin £5 5s.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

G. THACKRAY.—We cannot act as a medium of book loans and book exchanges between our readers. If we took the first step, how could we resist the second?

E. B.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

J. BROOKBANK.—We appreciate your feelings in the matter, but it is quite impossible for us to send competent Freethought speakers to Dr. Saleeby's meetings to deal with his vagaries. It is possible, also, to attach over-much importance to an alleged "Rediscovery of Design in Nature." The myth of design in nature was exploded long since for all with intelligence enough to discern its character, and we are not afraid of its re-establishment at the hands of Dr. Saleeby. Neither he nor anyone else can discover what does not exist; but for minds that are only partly freed from superstition there is a natural fascination in unscientific ideas, and speakers of that class will always succeed in attracting their like.

J. WILLIAMS.—The Welsh pastor you quote may be quite correct in saying that some pitboys' wages are more than those of some Congregational ministers. We do not know if this be the case, but we feel pretty certain that the pitboy who does his work well deserves more. And, after all, these ministers do not take the low wages from choice. Their wages are low for the same reason that another person's wages is not high. We do not agree with sweating in any direction, and those who engage ministers ought to pay them. But there is something profoundly insincere in this cry about the poorly paid clergy, as though it were due to conscious forbearance on their part. If more was offered them they would take it. And we do not know that many of them would be earning more in any other profession, and some would certainly be earning less.

W. AINSLEY.—Thanks. We are always pleased to receive cuttings or items of news that correspondents think will be likely to prove of service.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

A special meeting of the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, of which Mr. Foote is a member, was held on Tuesday evening, May 20, to consider the Bill for Amending the Blasphemy Laws that we reproduced *in extenso* in last week's *Freethinker*. It was decided to give a general support to the Bill at once, but to approach the introducers with a view to certain improvements. Another committee meeting will be held soon to consider the introducers' reply. Mr. Foote will therefore reserve his editorial criticism of the Bill until that committee meeting has been held, as he wishes to act loyally with his fellow members. There is no need, of course, for any hurry.

On Mr. Foote's suggestion and motion a copy of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's excellent little book on the Blasphemy Laws is being sent to every member of the House of Commons, with a covering letter drawing special attention to its value and importance.

We congratulate the Glasgow Corporation on exhibiting a little common sense (under pressure) in connection with Sunday closing. The Council had decided to close all ice-cream shops, restaurants, fried-fish shops, etc., on Sundays, besides insisting on 10 o'clock closing during the week. The Sheriff Principal, however, refused to confirm these bye-laws, with the result that the Council has now passed bye-laws allowing Sunday opening from 10 to 8, closing at 10.45 on week-night and 11 on Saturdays.

There seems quite an epidemic of common sense in Glasgow—we mean so far as Sunday is concerned, for we do not believe there is any lack of it in other connections. The Caledonian Railway Company continues its Sunday excursions to pleasure resorts, and has even promised an enlargement. The Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church has observed this "with pain," and "respectfully warns" the railway company that "God will certainly punish transgressors for this form of iniquity either in this world or that which is to come." Meanwhile the company is content to risk punishment in the world to come for the sake of better dividends here. We congratulate them on their decision.

The Wood Green Branch is holding some very successful open-air meetings at its old station on Jolly Butchers Hill. Miss Kough had a large meeting there on Sunday last, and Mr. Davidson on the Sunday previous. What the Branch needs most at present is more local help. If some of the sympathisers who attend the meetings, and who are willing to help in the actual work of the meetings, will give their names and addresses to the chairman, their services will be much appreciated.

A special meeting of the Kingsland Branch will be held to-day (June 1) at 7.30 p.m. at Mr. Davy's, 21 Castle-street, Stoke Newington. Important business has to be considered.

Mr. E. Torday, in his *Camp and Tramps in African Wilds*, gives an interesting comment on the supposed danger to white women amongst natives. He does not profess an acquaintance with the "half-civilised" natives of the coast, but as they are under European influences one ought not, in any case, permit their conduct to influence our judgment of other Africans. So far as the natives of the interior are concerned, he says emphatically that they are "utterly unlikely" to insult white women. "Even in the most dangerous parts of the Congo, where a man would require a strong military escort, a white woman would always be able to pass unmolested." But, he says, "the natives respect the white man, and expect you to respect their wives and sisters." Unfortunately, that, we expect, is precisely what the white man often fails to do. He goes out with certain notions as to the character and morality of the natives, and, once among them, thinks any conduct good enough. And it is just a question how far missionary activity is responsible for this. Missionary societies have flooded the world with accounts of native life that are to a large extent prepared with an eye to creating support for missionary work. The natives are represented as little better than animals, plunged in all sorts of degradation, and because their customs are different to ours, regarded as being destitute of morality. The consequence is, that the white man starts off with an utterly erroneous notion of the character of the native, and thinks any kind of treatment good enough for him. Then when misconduct brings reprisals, there is an outcry; and this still further confirms, to superficial onlookers, the gross inferiority of the native races.

Mr. Torday says he has twice crossed the Congo Free State and has never come across a tribe that was not naturally good tempered. This quite bears out what many other travellers have said. More than one has expressed the opinion, based on actual experience, that the white man who deals with the natives fairly and honestly, respects their customs, and treats them as human beings, is quite safe. Exceptions to this rule arise usually when the natives are smarting from wrongs inflicted by other white men. And in such cases their action is as indiscriminate and on the same level as the treatment of an English crowd to a foreigner because Great Britain has trouble with the country from which he comes. Mr. Torday says that all the natives ask is to live in peace themselves, and let everyone else do likewise. Unfortunately, this is what the white races will not permit. The trader exploits them in the interests of profit, and the missionary in the interests of religion. And often the latter, with his "Industrial Mission" and private trading, combines both.

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Rudyard Kipling.

"Amid littleness and detail he detected the genius of life, the old cunning Proteus, nestling close beside us."—EMERSON.

THERE has been, perhaps, something of a slackening of public interest in the works of Mr. Rudyard Kipling during the past few years; but the production of an *edition-de luxe* of his writings, a rare compliment to a living author, has met with so ready an appreciation that it augurs well for a revival of his fame.

Few writers ever took the field with so instant and signal a success. Emphatic, impetuous, audacious, he voiced contemporary passion and sentiment with no uncertain sound. Its possibilities and dangers were both mirrored in his stirring talent. First came the rumor of a new genius from the Orient, after the manner of creeds from time immemorial. Then "Plain Tales from the Hills" put many of us in an uncritical stage of admiration, "Soldiers Three" and "In Black and White" completed the conquest, and subsequent works in prose and verse caused the reading public, like Oliver Twist, to ask for more.

After centuries of the religion of the "Man of Sorrows," it is good to think that Mr. Kipling is a power. Since Dickens few English authors have roused so much hearty laughter. "The Taking of Lungtungpen" and "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney" recall the open-air humor of Marryat and the animal spirits of Fielding and Smollett.

To have made India a reality to dwellers in the United Kingdom is, in itself, no mean achievement. Meadows Taylor, Marion Crawford, and other novelists had reminded us that there was such a place. Phil Robinson humorously discussed the beasts and birds, but Kipling awoke the stay-at-homes to the real India, including the places—

"Where the best is like the worst—
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments,
An' a man can raise a thirst."

The studies of native life collected under various titles have importance far beyond their relative size. Mr. Kipling's versatility is unquestioned; but few were prepared to find that the hand that sketched "In Black and White" should also have produced the far more subtle "Jungle Books." "Without Benefit of Clergy," "The Man Who Was," "The Drums of the Fore and Aft," and a dozen other short stories are little masterpieces. With De Maupassant, his aim is for color, air, and light, with his eyes on the supreme moment only. His art is as modern as Maeterlinck in its breadth, and as classical in its restraint as the pages of old-world Homer.

Like Meissonier, Mr. Kipling succeeds best on a small canvas. "The Light that Failed," "Stalky & Co.," and "Captains Courageous" are magnificent failures; but the short stories are in every way admirable. Despite his limitations, he is one of the most popular writers of the day. With Bret Harte he presents us with infinite riches in a little room. The best of his work would hardly bulk more largely than one of the novels of old Samuel Richardson, which used to draw tears from the eyes of our great grandmothers. For readers of to-day like their sensations brief and pungent. Realism and romance meet within the covers of Mr. Kipling's books. The art which conceals art is made subservient to the human nature of his characters. In their warm-blooded, and often lawless, natures we feel no shackles of convention cramping their actions, or rendering them less true to life as we know it. Had his stories been told in the manner of the "penny-dreadful," devoid alike of grace and grammar, we had yet read them with pleasure, so vital are they in essentials.

Mr. Kipling possesses other gifts, and he has sought the bay leaves of the poet. Although lauded extravagantly as a singer, it must be admitted that he is seldom other than a brilliant and spirited rhymester. "Departmental Ditties" are clever society verses; "Barrack-Room Ballads," "The Seven Seas," and "The Five Nations" are more evidence of a poet in heart than of an artist in expression. They are stirring, these clever metrical and verbal effects, but they are not the "linked sweetness" of real poetry. The golden music of Swinburne or the quiet dignity of William Watson is never paralleled in Mr. Kipling's pages. The exquisite audacity of "Tomlinson" serves only to remind us what such a theme might be in the hands of a great master of melody. The "Recessional," if we have any canons to measure it, must show cleverality rather than poetry as the result; but we dare not dwell too closely upon Mr. Kipling's rhymes. To the great public, to the people who admire the verses of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Mr. Kipling may seem a poet; but to the lovers of real literature he is first and foremost a romancer, who can hold his audience surely with his stories.

Much has been made of Mr. Kipling's piety. The young lions of the Tory press proudly acclaim him as the most religious poet since Dryden, and the Nonconformist journalists sorrowfully retort that he has no "soul." This, however, is the merest partisanship. Of all the gods created by men in their own likeness, the Anglo-Indian deity of Mr. Kipling is the most astonishing. Such sentiments as those expressed in "The Young British Soldier" ought to make the pious penmen shy of claiming Mr. Kipling as a lineal literary descendant of Dr. Watts:—

"When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
An' the women come out to cut up your remains,
Just roll to your rifle, and blow out your brains,
And go to your Gawd like a soldier."

He uses Biblical illustrations with a freedom which reminds one of Sir John Falstaff:—

"Said England unto Pharaoh, 'You've had miracles
When Aaron struck your rivers into blood; [before,
But if you watch the serjeant he can show you something
He's a charm for making riflemen from mud! [more,
It was neither Hindustani, French, nor Coptic,
It was odds and ends and leavings of the same,
Translated by a stick (which is really half the trick)
And Pharaoh harked to Serjeant Whatsisname."

Now and again Mr. Kipling leaves this fluent fingering of the keys and strikes a deeper note. He has reproduced in most startling fashion the wondering amazement of the Hindoo brought face to face with the Christian religion:—

"Look, you have cast out love! What gods are these
You bid me please?
The Three in One, the One in Three? Not so!
To my own Gods I go.
It may be they shall give me greater ease
Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities."

In "White Horses" the piety has become tinged with patriotism, and he hints that the very sea is bestowed by the Almighty for the purpose of destroying the enemies of England. In the "Recessional" our wonderment is by no means lessened. The second verse, if it stood alone, might pass, though its best line, "An humble and a contrite heart," is by no means novel. How curious is the association of the reference just quoted to that other sentiment:—

"Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the law."

We would not close upon this note. Writing at a time when so much of contemporary literature is neurotic and "tommyrotic," Mr. Kipling has kept always to the white road of pure fancy, the path that winds between fragrant hedgerows and leads into the shadowy woods. How fresh it seems, how young, how invigorating, to take the old road with Mr. Kipling, and walk once more with the soldiers three into the beckoning forest of romance. We never grow too tired or too old for that quest and that recompense. Read with admiration to-day, we wonder if the charm of Kipling's witchery will last. It matters little, perhaps. He has an audience, and in the future the secret of immortality is beyond us, as the greater secret was alike to old Omar and his lustrous lover. To discover how much choice of subject and novelty of incident has prejudiced us in

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his favor is not worth trying. "Nature's infinite book" is open to all. If Rodyard Kipling finds themes to move his readers to laughter or to tears where others had but found poor material for dreary books of travel, so far from decrying such talent, ought we not to yield him praise for the pleasure he has given the English-speaking world?

MIMNERMUS.

The Co-operative Habits of Animals.

PITILESS as the eastern blast which sweeps earth and sky in the early days of spring, the processes of nature have, nevertheless, been materially tempered by the co-operative devices incidental to plant and animal life. Vegetable organisms club together for strength and security, and in the animal kingdom various ingenious contrivances have been evolved which soften the harsh influences of frigid unemotional nature. The social instinct has worked wondrous benefits to those creatures which associate for mutual aid and support. And the crowning product of evolution, the human family, has profited immensely through the shielding influences of social solidarity. What the most earnest and heartfelt supplication to the gods has failed most utterly to accomplish has been achieved through that social instinct which animates the world of life as a whole. A thousand and one instances might be recorded in which solitary animals would readily succumb to the unfavorable factors that environ their lives, but which are enabled to multiply and replenish the earth as a result of their gregarious habits and instincts.

The social insects such as ants and bees have risen in consequence of their co-operative habits to a very advanced stage of social and intellectual evolution. They, at least, have learned the lesson which mankind has so far failed to master, that those members of the community that render no service to the State are merely a burden upon the working population. They who produce nothing, either mentally or physically, are relegated to their proper position in a commonwealth whose existence is dependent upon the mutual benefits rendered by those who form its social and economic assets.

Travellers and naturalists have often remarked upon the extreme friendliness which the fiercest birds of prey manifest among themselves. The co-operation of all kinds of aquatic and terrestrial birds against carnivorous enemies is also well attested by careful and competent observers. Among migratory birds the co-operative spirit attains a high degree of development. Birds which were previously scattered over a wide range of territory assemble in the spring and autumn at appointed places before proceeding upon their perilous journeys over land and sea. And if we may judge from the deluge of talk in which they indulge, they seem to be debating as to the ways and means of their projected travels. Those very eminent authorities, Seebohm and Dixon, fully corroborate the accounts of earlier ornithologists concerning the animated discussions of migratory birds when they return to their northern resting stations in spring. "For many days in succession," says Prince Kropotkin, "sometimes one month, they will come together every morning for one hour before flying in search of food—perhaps discussing the spot where they are going to build their nests."

Ascending to mammalian life, we find that social species are far more numerous than those few unsocial carnivorous quadrupeds which still maintain their position in places where man's influences have as yet little force. The far spread herds of antelopes, buffaloes, gazelles, and deer; the immense flocks of undomesticated goats and sheep, are all social creatures. Vast congregations of squirrels formerly abounded in Siberia, and the grass-lands of Eastern Africa are still the pasture places of immense herds of zebras and antelopes. The intensely social beaver was abundant in all the running waters of Northern America and the Siberian streams until man waged a war of wholesale destruction upon these highly intelligent rodents. Such markedly colonial rodents as marmots, ground-squirrels, mice, and other animals continue to flourish in almost incredible profusion in favorable habitats in all the mainland masses of the earth's surface. In the tropics troops of sagacious elephants still survive, and the most numerous monkeys belong to species which are most distinctly social in habit. The social reindeer is the outstanding feature of the sub-Arctic regions, and the leading animals of the Polar areas are the gregarious musk oxen and Arctic foxes. The seals and cetaceans are mainly fraternal animals, and, despite their unrelenting persecution by man, they still survive in large numbers. All the wild horses, camels, and asses are in their natural state markedly social, and immense herds of these organisms still pasture in the great plateau of Central Asia. The gregarious creatures, when totalled, number very many millions, while the unsocial or solitary carnivores are, in comparison, very few.

Among the more numerous flesh-eating mammals, however, the social instinct is more pronounced. Nor are the lions, tigers, and other large cats quite so unsocial as was formerly supposed. Chalmers Mitchell has given us a very pleasing picture of the family life of the lion. Sir Samuel Baker noted the co-operation of the king of beasts when seeking for prey. Another characteristically carnivorous class—the entire dog family—is notoriously sociable. All the wolves appear to hunt in packs, as also that other member of the dog family, the jackal. Even the surly bear is not indifferent to the society of his fellows. As a matter of fact, social desires dominate the world of life in general, although they exist in various degrees of development.

It is a noticeable circumstance that social solidarity is most highly evolved among animals who would be comparatively defenceless if they stood singly and alone. Co-operative phenomena are most elaborate among social insects, birds, rodents, herbivorous mammals, and our monkey cousins. Hundreds of species of monkeys are known to science, and the co-operative factor varies very considerably among them. We possess little knowledge of the habits of nocturnal apes, but they appear to prefer a secluded and isolated life. Small family groups are formed by the howling monkeys, and among the man-like apes the orang-utan has always been seen alone or in small troops, while the gorilla appears strictly as a strong family man. But all the other members of the monkey tribe, the mandrills, chimpanzees, baboons, and the rest associate in large groups on the friendliest footing, and even strange species are sometimes permitted to enter their congregations. Most monkeys become melancholy in solitude, and their poor health and high mortality in captivity is often solely attributable to this cause. In their native forests, when beset by enemies, the cries of those who have wandered from the main body cause the other animals to rush to their assistance. They co-operate when attacked, and are frequently successful in beating off their enemies, particularly the smaller beasts of prey and carnivorous birds. Even the imperial eagle considers discretion the better part of valor where a band of monkeys is concerned. The devoted love of the female for her offspring is well known to all students of natural history. One of the fine plates in Chalmers Mitchell's recent work, *The Childhood of Animals*, represents a monkey fondling and suckling her young. This illustration was taken in the Zoological Gardens, and the whole attitude of the mother and babe is most remarkably human in appearance. The most trustworthy eye-witnesses affirm that several species of monkeys manifest the deepest concern for their wounded companions, and refuse to leave them until they are certain that they are past recovery. James Forbes and his fellow-hunters were so much impressed by the grief of some monkeys at the sight of a dying

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comrade—a victim of one of their guns—that they solemnly resolved "never again to fire at one of the monkey race."

Herbert Spencer, the greatest of all modern philosophers, has shown us that the primitive association of living cells into colonial groups laid the firm foundations for all subsequent evolution. In a steadily developing degree, this co-operative organisation most certainly distinguishes every ascending rung in the ladder of evolution. Therefore Prince Kropotkin is fully entitled to assert that in the course of this evolutionary advance the social trend becomes more and more conscious.

> "It loses its purely physical character, it ceases to be purely instinctive, it becomes reasoned. With the higher vertebrates it is periodical, or it is resorted to for the satisfaction of a given want—propagation of the species, migration, hunting, or mutual defence. It even becomes occasional, when birds associate against a robber, or mammals combine, under pressure of exceptional circumstances, to emigrate. In this last case, it becomes a voluntary deviation from habitual modes of life.....It also takes higher forms, guaranteeing more independence to the individual without depriving it of the benefits of social life. With most rodents the individual has its own dwelling, which it can retire to when it prefers being left alone; but the dwellings are laid out in villages and cities, so as to guarantee to all inhabitants the benefits and joys of social life."*

It appears a self-evident proposition that the protective factors bound up with corporate life constitute a powerful instrument in the struggle for existence. Communal life fortifies weak insects, puny birds, and defenceless mammals from the assaults of their foes. Other things equal, the gregarious mode of life secures greater longevity and promotes the maturity of sufficient offspring to maintain, at least, the average number of the species. It is fully realised that numerous other factors are involved in the maintenance of the race. But it will be conceded by those best acquainted with the complex conditions which govern animal life, that the immense importance of the social factor is hard to overrate. Intelligence, for instance, is of inestimable value to the organisms which possess it in any high degree. But mental faculty is probably more largely indebted to the social factor than it is to any other. It has been said that "Language, imitation, and accumulated experience are so many elements of growing intelligence of which the unsocial animal is deprived." Given highly evolved organs of touch, and combine such organs with an environment in which facilities are constantly afforded for gaining new experiences, and we find such eminently sociable animals as ants, parrots, elephants, monkeys, and men which combine the greatest gregariousness with the most highly evolved mental powers.

Against the elements the social factor is practically powerless amongst most organisms below man. Bird life in Britain is always more richly represented after a succession of mild winters. A hard and prolonged frost usually takes a terrible toll of bird and insect life. In Sussex, after the severe winter of 1885-6, the skeletons and feathers of what once had been plump blackbirds, were quite numerous near the farms and hamlets. A dozen dead birds might have been picked up in one orchard alone. Sir George Trevelyan mentions an outstanding American instance of a similar kind. He writes:—

> "January, 1779, was the coldest month recorded in a series of observations which had been carefully and continuously noted down in Pennsylvania over a space of nearly two centuries.....The snow lay from four to six feet deep over the whole country. Wild animals were almost exterminated, from deer and turkeys down to squirrels and partridges."†

When, however, the fullest allowance is made for the survival value of strength, swiftness, protective and warning coloration, cunning, and power of endurance in the brute battle of life, the fact remains that the nobler qualities of reason, justice, sympathy, and love find their fitter nurseries among those organisms whose social proclivities serve to evolve a state of existence in which the weak and helpless are to some extent guarded from danger. Society life helps to limit the physical struggle, and thus assists the evolution of the higher æsthetic and moral emotions and desires. The securer the social structure, the greater the amplitude and duration of human life. With the deepening of life's processes thus rendered possible, we may confidently anticipate a future of sublimer artistic, literary, and ethical achievement than any the world has so far witnessed. For whereas in past ages the advantages conferred by culture have been almost entirely confined to a favored few, the day is now dawning when the higher things of life will become so democratised that they will be placed within the reach of all who care to cultivate, create, or enjoy them.

T. F. PALMER.

* *Mutual Aid*, p. 53; 1902.

† *George the Third and Charles Fox*, vol. i., p. 290.

Another Lie Nailed Down.

I SEEM to have a nose for a lie. I suppose it is because I have spent so much of my life in attacking Christianity—which is the most lying religion on earth. The German historian and philosopher, Herder, who was not a fanatic nor even a partisan, went to the length of saying that "Christian veracity" deserved to rank with "Punic faith."

What a lot of Christian lies I have nailed down in the pages of the *Freethinker!* To enumerate them all would take a good deal of space. I must leave them, therefore, at present, to the memory of my readers.

Some of the lies I have run down were big ones—such as the Torrey lies about Paine and Ingersoll. Others were of a middling size, and others again were small ones—hardly big enough for a Freethinker to refute or a Christian to invent. I leave my readers to determine the size of the one I am now bringing to their attention.

An old reader of this journal, Mr. A. Hopkins, in the course of a letter I received from him dated May 15, wrote as follows:—

> "Last Sunday week I heard a Christian Evidence lecturer reading extracts from a letter in Hyde Park. I neither heard the commencement nor the end, but the letter had to do with the close of the late Mr. Wheeler's life. So much as I heard showed how the Christians had cared for him, and how, at a meeting in a small attic in Judd-street, Euston-road, the sick man had ordered Mrs. Foote and others out of his room because they were not converted or saved. All this and more was read from a many-paged letter by the lecturer. Unfortunately I could not stop to challenge the speaker; for I was with friends from the country and could not stop till the end."

Mr. Hopkins has made inquiries at my request, and the lecturer appears to have been a Mr. H. A. Marsh. I think I have heard that name before. Was it not the name of the Christian gentleman who, with the aid of a Christian local newspaper, gave such a brilliant exhibition of Christian charity at Streatham Common a few years ago? An exhibition which ended with a threat of bringing up three hundred Billingsgate porters and King's College divinity students to drive one poor Atheist speaker off the field; thus showing that the friends of Christ were many as well as select.

I have heard again from Mr. Hopkins. He attended the Christian Evidence meeting in Hyde Park last Sunday (May 25) and questioned the chairman, a Mr. Allen, about the letter from which Mr. Marsh had been reading.

> "He was quite familiar with the matter, and said that as far as his recollection served the writer of the letter was a sister of Mr. Wheeler. He further told me that the letter was in possession of Mr. Richards, who lived in Tramway-avenue, Lower Edmonton. It appears that Mr. Allen is in regular attendance at Hyde Park on Sunday mornings, and he told me that he will be pleased to be seen any time to give further information on the matter."

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But there is no need for Mr. Allen to concern himself about "further information." I will supply it myself, and I am a better authority than he is on this subject. Mr. Wheeler was my oldest and dearest friend. I loved him while he lived; I have never ceased to love him since he died. He has been dead for fifteen years, and for fifteen years he was my sub-editor on the *Freethinker*, and my comrade in many other Freethought enterprises. He was a vice-president of the National Secular Society to the last breath he drew. That Society paid the cost of his funeral, and I, as its President, delivered an address at his graveside. And I found that he had appointed me executor to his will. Yes, I think I ought to know something about the last days and hours of Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. And I say that the statements now made in this precious letter read at Hyde Park are absolute lies,—as I will prove in next week's *Freethinker*.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

The Coming Education Bill.

MANIFESTO BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SECULAR EDUCATION LEAGUE.

DURING the past few years it has been repeatedly declared by supporters of the Government that certain political questions must, as far as possible, be dealt with and settled in order to give time and opportunities for the consideration of other matters affecting the welfare of the people at large. The speech of Lord Haldane at Manchester on January 10, made on behalf of the Cabinet, intimated that chief among those important subjects will be the ever-recurring question of National Education. It is evident from Lord Haldane's speech on that occasion, amplified on various occasions since by other members of the Government, that an effort will be made to deal with the question in a more comprehensive and systematic way than has hitherto been attempted. Such a settlement would probably fix the conditions of our educational system for a considerable time.

There is one aspect of the question—that of religious education in State-supported colleges and schools—on which it is quite hopeless to expect a satisfactory settlement except on the lines of the fundamental principle that the State, composed as it is of citizens of all creeds and no creed, should have nothing whatever to do with the teaching of religion in any of its educational institutions. It is inevitable that in any proposed new legislation on this subject attention will be directed largely to the proposal for eliminating the religious difficulty by the adoption of the Secular Solution; and it is of the highest importance that the most careful thought should be given to it by every citizen, in order that, if possible, the divisions among educationalists which have so long obtained on this particular subject shall be permanently removed and the ground cleared for united effort for the real educational progress of the nation at large.

It is a lamentable, but acknowledged, fact that for many years the controversies that have arisen on this subject of religious teaching in the State Schools have markedly hindered the cause of true education. Time and energy that should have been devoted to the physical training and mental culture of the children of the nation have been diverted to unprofitable discussions as to what religious dogmas should or should not be taught in the schools, and real education has continually suffered in consequence. In spite of carefully prepared syllabuses, the children have been taught, as was inevitable under the circumstances, dogmas on which neither the sects nor the nation were agreed; while unfair religious tests, expressed or unexpressed, have been imposed on the teachers, who have suffered accordingly. It is incumbent on all those who have the cause of true education at heart to use every effort to ensure that, whatever the new proposals may be, this old ground of contention shall once and for ever be removed, and the way made clear for the working out of those wide and far-reaching principles on which all citizens, whatever their private or personal beliefs, can unite and harmoniously work together for the common good.

It is unnecessary to enter here on the controversies of the last two or three generations. It is sufficient to point out that the Education Act of 1870, which, with its Cowper-Temple compromise, was supposed to bring peace on this vexed question, brought on the contrary a sword, which up to the present day has continually been sharpened by the sectarian controversialists. Since 1870 every effort to settle the question in the various Education Bills which have been introduced by both the great political parties has broken down, by reason of the continual clinging to illogical and unjust compromises, which have satisfied no one, but have actually increased the confusion, both of thought and attempted action. This has again and again been acknowledged by the great political leaders on both sides. Mr. Gladstone stated that he had never been strong against secular education. He said: "It seems to me impartial, and not, if fairly worked, in any degree unfriendly to religion." Mr. John Morley said that on this question the Act of 1870 was a most "deplorable illustration of refusing to examine ideas alleged to be impracticable." As lately as 1906 Mr. Joseph Chamberlain said: "There are only two means of settling this question. One is that the State should pay for no religious teaching, and the other is that the State should pay for all religious teaching." He had always given his support to the first. And the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman stated that in his opinion nine-tenths of the Liberals, if they had their own way, would ask for the Secular Solution.

What is the Secular Solution? Not that the State in its schools should be hostile to religion, but that it should simply be neutral. The secular position is that the State, which, in its collective capacity, is the custodian and expender of the taxes that are drawn from all citizens, irrespective of their religious opinions, should refrain from supporting any such opinions through its educational institutions. The believer in Secular Education would object as much to State support of Secularism or Atheism as he would to the support of Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, or Nonconformity. The advocate of Secular Education holds that the responsibility for providing religious teaching rests with the parents and the churches, and that with it the State, as such, should have nothing to do.

The present system of illogical compromise and injustice satisfies neither parent nor teacher. The time has come when it should be swept away in favor of a system which, besides being perfectly logical, is also—which is even more important—perfectly just. The only system which meets these necessary requirements is Secular Education. The Secular Education League confidently appeals to all citizens to use their utmost endeavors in the coming educational campaign to determine that once and for all the nation's schools shall be freed from sectarian controversies and religious disputes, so that National Education may be promoted in harmony with those humane principles on which all citizens are agreed.

These are the principles on which the new measure must be framed, if it is to produce harmony and lasting peace.

"The Miracle" is the title of a remarkable film now being shown at various cinematograph halls through the country. Since the good old Bible days it appears to be the only miracle which has attracted general attention.

According to the *Evening News*, a Liberal candidate "hopes to attend one service in every place of worship in the City." This proposed increase in the congregations of the derelict churches will, if carried out, cause great joy in ecclesiastical circles; but politicians will not be likely to accept it as a precedent.

Dr. Herbert Gray, writing in the *Evening News*, says that the football captain is "a demi-god." Why demi? Is it because he does not make it so hot for his opponents as the more popular deities?

The clergy have made begging a fine art. Recently the personal column of a daily paper contained an appeal by a vicar who wished to take his wife abroad "free from cost." Another advertisement was from a young Anglican clergyman who desired "adoption," and still another from a parson's widow who asked for help to educate her boy. Why do these people advertise instead of praying?

A peeress has been writing to the *Times* in indignant tones concerning such dances as "Turkey Trot" and "Tango," which she describes as "horrors of Negroid origin." What would the titled lady have said of David's demure dance before the ark, described in the Bible? *That* dance would make any turkey trot.

In the course of a recent action to determine the copyright of a dramatic sketch, the author stated that he was not indebted to anybody for his plot, and added that "the incidents were as old as Adam, perhaps a little older."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 6.30, a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Miss Kough, "Lying for the Glory of God."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, A. D. Howell-Smith, "Christianity and Civilisation." Finsbury Park: 6 30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

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COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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THE
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Intellectual cowardice is quite as disreputable as physical cowardice.
—W. R. PATERSON (Benjamin Swift).

The Witch Mania.

WITHOUT discussing whether magic precedes religion or not, it is plain that the practice of magic belongs to the very earliest ages of human culture. The witch and the wizard are familiar figures in all stages of religious history. Not only are their figures familiar, but their method of operation remains substantially constant. The methods of bewitching people or things described in European witch trials of the seventeenth century are precisely those practised by savages all over the world. A Fijian would have felt quite at home sitting on the judicial bench with Sir Mathew Hale condemning poor half-insane women for magical practices. To bewitch a person by securing a few hairs belonging to him, or to cause his death by manufacturing a lay figure and driving pins into it, are plans pursued by savages to-day, just as they were followed by the more civilised savages of these islands little more than two centuries ago.

In subscribing to the belief in witchcraft, Christianity only fell into line with other forms of religious belief. Its peculiarity is that, coming into existence when it did, it gave to the belief an authority that it was fast losing, while its intolerance of opposition prevented criticism doing the natural work of purification. The primitive theory of things, which holds that man is surrounded by spiritual agencies, mostly of a malevolent description, was fully endorsed by the early Christians. In the commonest as well as in the rarest events of life demoniacal agency was to be seen. The suppression of witchcraft had been ordered in the Old Testament, and demoniacal activity endorsed by the New. Moreover, the fact that Christianity, for long after its establishment as the religion of the Empire, was struggling with earlier forms of faith, gave further impetus to this belief. An easy explanation for miracles and marvels that occurred in connection with non-Christian beliefs was that they were the work of demons. And in all probability much that went on under the form of witch assemblies, up to a comparatively late date, a more detailed knowledge than we possess would show to be the exercise of prescribed forms of faith. The old saying, "The sin of witchcraft is as the sin of rebellion," has in it more than meets the eye. There is little real difference between the magic that appears as piety and the magic that is denounced as sorcery, save that one is permitted and the other is not. The gods of one religion become the demons of its successor; and the same rule applies to the practice of successive faiths.

But while witchcraft exists in all ages, it exists in a way quite different to that which presents itself from the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. For centuries the attention of the vast majority of people had been directed and centred on questions of theological interest. Every branch of culture was under the control of the Church, and no explanation was tolerated that conflicted with its teaching. The general mind was saturated with supernaturalism to an almost incredible degree. The wildest tale of witchcraft was suitable to such an environment, and there is no question that many of those who were tried and executed for sorcery actually believed the things they were accused of doing to be within their power. The fifteenth century saw, too, a rising tide of heresy against which the Church was forced to do battle, and to ascribe this to the agency of Satan was an easy plan to pursue—just as the heretics attributed the power of the Church itself to the same source. Social conditions were also favorable. Moral ties were as loose as they could reasonably be, and the attitude of the Church towards the sexual relation had forced the religious mind into wholly unhealthy directions. This aspect of the witch epidemic has been but little dealt with, but it is undoubtedly a very real one. A German writer says:—

> "Whilst in the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, as those well acquainted with the state of morals during this period can all confirm, a most unbounded freedom was dominant in sexual relations, the State and the Church were desirous of compelling the people to keep better order by the use of actual force, and by religious compulsion. As forced a transformation in so vital a matter necessarily resulted in a reaction of the worst kind, and forced into secret channels the impulse which it had attempted to suppress. This reaction occurred, moreover, with an elemental force. There resulted widespread sexual violence and seduction, hesitating at nothing, often divinely daring, in which everywhere the devil was supposed to help; everyone's head was turned in this way, the uncontrolled lust of debauchees found vent in secret bacchanalian associations and orgies, wherein many without masquerade played the part of Satan; shameful deeds were perpetrated by excited women and by procuresses and prostitutes ready for any kind of immoral abomination; add to these sexual orgies the most widely diffused web of a completely developed theory of witchcraft, and the sympathetic strengthening by the clergy of the widely prevalent belief in the devil—all these things, woven in a labyrinthine connection, made it possible for thousands upon thousands to be murdered by a disordered justice and to be sacrificed to delusion."*

That there was a very strong sexual element in mediæval witchcraft is undeniable. When we examine the stories current of the "Sabbath" of the witches, we find that a large part of the proceedings are of a strongly marked erotic character. The figure of Satan often enough reminds one of the old Pagan deity, Priapus, and it is possible that the "Sabbath" itself was little more than a carrying out of the old priapic ceremonies, with the mixture of Christian language and symbolism made inevitable by time and other circumstances.†

Universal as has been the belief in witchcraft, it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that it justly assumed what may be called an epidemic form. Then a fatal impetus was given by the issue of a Bull by Pope Innocent VIII. This precious document declares:—

> "In truth, it has come to our ears that very many persons of both sexes, deviating from the Catholic

* Cited by Bloch, *Sexual Life of Our Time*, p. 120. Michelet, in his *Sorceress* (Paris; 1904), has dealt with this matter in an extremely vivid and picturesque manner.

† See Michelet, *The Sorceress*, particularly pp. 122, 181-3.

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> Faith, abuse themselves with the demons, Incubus and Succubus; and by incantations, charms, and conjurations, and other wicked superstitions, by criminal acts and offences have caused the offspring of women and of the lower animals, the fruits of the earth, the grape, and the products of various plants, men, women, and other animals of different kinds, vineyards, meadows, pasture land, corn, and other vegetables of the earth to perish, be oppressed, and utterly destroyed; that they hinder the proper intercourse of the sexes, and the propagation of the human species."

It was this Pope who commissioned the inquisitor, Sprenger, to root out witches. Sprenger's book on the subject remained for long the guide for all those engaged in the work.

Almost at once the mania for witch-finding and witch-burning, and one may also assume the belief of people that they could secure and utilise satanic power against others, assumed alarming dimensions. The number given as executed is so great that one would hesitate to accept them as genuine if the statements were not well authenticated. Says Lecky:—

> "In almost every province of Germany, but especially in those where clerical influence predominated, the persecution raged with a fearful intensity. Seven thousand witches are said to have been burned at Treves, six hundred by a single bishop in Bamberg, and nine hundred in a single year in the bishopric of Wurtzburg. .....At Toulouse, the seat of the Inquisition, four hundred persons perished for sorcery at a single execution, and fifty at Douay in a single year. Remy, a judge of Nancy, boasted that he had put to death eight hundred witches in sixteen years.....In Italy a thousand persons were executed in a single year in the province of Como. .....In Geneva, which was then ruled by a bishop, five hundred alleged witches were executed in three months; forty-eight were burnt at Constance or Ravensburg, and eighty in the little town of Valery in Savoy."*

In England, from 1603 to 1680 it is estimated that seventy thousand persons were put to death for sorcery.† Grey, the editor of *Hudibras*, says that he had himself seen a list of three thousand persons who were put to death during the life of the Long Parliament. The celebrated witch-finder, Hopkins, hung sixty in one year in the county of Suffolk. In Scotland, for thirty-nine years, the number killed annually averaged two hundred. The most remarkable, and the most horrible executions of all were those that took place in Wurtzburg in February, 1629. No less than one hundred and sixty-two alleged witches were burned in batches. Among these were actually no less than thirty-four children. The following details give the actual ages of most of them:—

Burning.	Numbered.	Among Them.
7th ...	7 ...	1 girl aged 12.
13th ...	4 ...	Girl of 10 and young mother.
15th ...	3 ...	Boy of 12.
18th ...	6 ...	2 boys of 10, girl of 14.
19th ...	6 ...	2 boys of 10 and 12.
20th ...	6 ...	2 boys.
23rd ...	9 ...	3 boys, 9, 10, and 14.
24th ...	7 ...	2 boys brought from hospital.
26th ...	8 ...	Little boy and girl.
26th ...	7 ...	2 boys, 8 and 9.
28th ...	6 ...	Blind girl and infant.‡

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

Partial Knowledge.

THE Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Melbourne, assures us, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for May 28, that the confession that the supernatural can only be known in part in this life, constitutes what he calls Courageous Agnosticism, while the denial of the possibility of knowing it at all must be characterised as Cowardly Agnosticism. It is not our good fortune to have seen the reverend gentleman's discourse upon Cowardly Agnosticism, though we can easily infer what it was like. His deliverance on Courageous Agnosticism lies before us, and we proceed to examine it. The relativity of knowledge is a scientific truism and almost a truism in philosophy. This being the case, where does the courage of Agnosticism come in? Surely it requires no courage to acknowledge an undeniable fact. If God and the theological unseen world are known at all, it is a foregone conclusion that they are known only in part. To say, "We know in part," or "We see in a mirror darkly," is simply to state a fact, even on the assumption that the subjects under consideration are in any sense or degree objects of knowledge. To break the force of this undoubted truth, Mr. Spurr disparages knowledge. "Knowledge is good and great," he says, "but there is something better and greater," even love. But what is love without knowledge? At bottom, knowledge and love are one, as they also are in their highest and noblest development. To know the truth is to love it, and to love is to know it.

In his championship of the relativity of all knowledge, Mr. Spurr falls into several grievous errors. Speaking of the progressiveness of scientific knowledge, he says, "No longer dare any scientific man repeat the confident declaration of Professor Tyndall in his famous Belfast address. The day has passed for that kind of thing." Evidently the reverend gentleman is not up-to-date in his scientific information. He makes that assertion in the teeth of the fact that from the platform of the British Association at Dundee, last September, Tyndall's theory of matter, so beautifully expressed from the Association's chair at Belfast forty years ago, was clearly and vigorously reaffirmed both by the President and several distinguished members. Has not Mr. Spurr read Professor Schafer's Presidential Address on "The Nature, Origin, and Maintenance of Life," and the report of the subsequent discussion on the subject, in the course of which, Professor McCallum and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, among others, declared themselves "in agreement with Tyndall that matter is imbued with the potentiality of life"? "I have heard nothing," concluded Dr. Mitchell, "which makes it not possible to accept the exposition of our President in the fullest possible way." Equally inaccurate is the reverend gentleman's statement that "in one day" the scientific world's faith in the indivisibility of the atom "was shaken to pieces by the discovery of radium." Writing twenty years prior to the discovery of radium, Professor Buchner used the following language:—

> "In fact the unlimited divisibility of atoms or of the molecules built up from them can be doubted when looked at either from a theoretical, a metaphysical, or an empirical point of view, and it can only be maintained that we are not in a position to divide them further by the chemical and physical forces known to us.....It has also become very probable through recent investigations that the substances heretofore regarded by us as elements or original bodies are nothing of the kind, but are themselves compounds, and that the so-called atoms therefore consist of units of a higher grade, as the molecule does of atoms" (*Force and Matter*, pp. 48, 49).

Ten years before the breaking up of the atom actually took place, Professor Haeckel wrote:—

> "We may conclude that the empirical elements we now know are not really simple, ultimate, and unchangeable forms of matter, but compounds of homogeneous, simple, primitive atoms, variously distributed as to number and grouping" (*The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 79).

It is perfectly true that we know Nature only in part, and see her marvellous operations only as if in a mirror darkly; but is there any evidence that we know Supernature even in part, or see it even in a mirror darkly? Mr. Spurr admits that "there are over-confident Christians who make unjustifiable claims to knowledge," but instead of expatiating upon this important admission the reverend gentleman forgets his manners and goes off at a tangent to deliver a violent and vituperative tirade against "over-

* *Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, vol. i., pp. 3-6.
† A. Williams, *The Superstition of Witchcraft*, p. 214.
‡ T. Wright, *History of Sorcery and Magic*.

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confident unbelievers." These vile wretches are thus portrayed :—

> "Inspired by vanity, they forget that they know only in part, hence they commit the indiscretion and the impertinence of challenging what others know. Wise men will ever be modest, remembering that the field of truth is so vast that it cannot be compassed by any human mind."

This is rudeness, and we beg to remind the reverend gentleman that rudeness is not argument. There are not a few in Melbourne who perceive the folly and futility of dubbing Freethought writers "hackmen," rather than "scholars." To abuse an enemy is to increase the momentum of his arrows. Mr. Spurr is apparently ignorant of the fact that this style of attack only weakens his own case. He does not even know what the object of his attack really is. He speaks as if Agnosticism really meant a claim to superior knowledge, rather than a confession of complete ignorance. Agnostics are not people who cherish the belief that they "know all," but, on the contrary, people who humbly bow their heads before the majesty and grandeur of the Universe and admit their inability to explain it. Mr. Spurr is radically mistaken when he charges them with the indiscretion and the impertinences of "challenging what others know." They are not foolish enough to do anything of the kind. What they challenge is what others *imagine* they know. We wish to refresh his memory with the following famous utterance by Huxley :—

> "When I reached intellectual maturity and began to ask myself whether I was an Atheist, a Theist, or a Pantheist; a Materialist or an Idealist; a Christian or a Freethinker; I found that the more I learned and reflected, the less ready was the answer; until at last I came to the conclusion that I had neither art nor part with any of these denominations, except the last. The one thing in which most of these good people were agreed was the one thing in which I differed from them. They were quite sure that they had attained to a certain 'gnosis' (knowledge),—had more or less successfully solved the problem of existence, while I was quite sure I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble. And, with Hume and Kant on my side, I could not think myself presumptuous in holding fast by that opinion" (*Controverted Questions*, pp. 354-5).

We are neither Theists, Pantheists, nor Idealists, but simply Atheists, in precisely the same sense as that in which Huxley called himself an Agnostic, and what we challenge is, not what Mr. Spurr *knows*, but what he *believes* he knows. We venture to address him thus: "You make a claim to a true though imperfect knowledge of God and the spiritual world; you affirm that this knowledge comes to you by Jesus Christ, whom you proclaim as the Savior of mankind; and this knowledge thus gained you describe as saving, uplifting, ennobling; but we utterly fail to find anything in you or about you, as a member of society, to justify such a claim. You are neither better nor worse, in moral character, than millions of others in all parts of the world who pretend to possess no such knowledge." In thus addressing the reverend gentleman, we assure him that we are inspired neither by vanity nor by the belief that we know all, but by the honest conviction that Christians are in reality quite as ignorant as ourselves. We do not question their supernatural beliefs, nor those ecstatic experiences which naturally spring from them; but we do earnestly contend that such beliefs are so many illusions, or rather perhaps, that their objects are purely illusory.

At this point we come face to face with a most curious phenomenon. Mr. Spurr denounces Mr. McCabe, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Vivian as charlatans. He accuses them of writing, "with assumed authority, on all kinds of subjects, many of which demand years of patient study"; but we submit that this accusation is much more applicable to members of his own profession than to the advocates of Freethought. Rightly or wrongly, we speak in the name of, and make all our appeals to, our own reason, while the theologians base all their utterances upon an alleged revelation from above, conveyed to them indirectly in a book, or specially and directly communicated to every one of them by an alleged Holy Spirit. They speak in the name of the Lord and appeal to the authority of Heaven; but the Lord is eternally silent and Heaven's seal is lacking. That is to say, they hold an imaginary Heaven responsible for all their own blind prejudices and strange vagaries. What we challenge is their right to assume heavenly authority for their various and conflicting deliverances. The sincerity of many of them is beyond doubt; but, then, a man can so easily play the hypocrite unconsciously to himself.

With all due deference, we hold that in this discourse which has come to us from the Antipodes, Mr. Spurr adduces not a single proof that Christians possess even a partial knowledge of the supernatural; he merely contents himself with asserting that they do. He plays the dogmatist from beginning to end. We are aware that "intellectual vanity is a stupid and offensive thing," and we hope never to be guilty of it; but we are convinced that the numerous assumptions of the men of God are more stupid and offensive still, because not one of them has ever been or ever can be verified.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—IV.

(*Continued from p. 342.*)

> "The East has been tolerant of all creeds which do not assault the foundations of its societies.....The hatred of Western religion in China and adjacent countries is undoubtedly due to the needless and implacable attacks which have been made upon the ancestor-cult. To demand of a Chinese or an Annamese that he cast away or destroy his ancestral tablets is not less irrational and inhuman than it would be to demand of an Englishman that he destroy his mother's tombstone in proof of his devotion to Christianity. Nay, it is much more inhuman,—for the European attaches to the funeral monument no such idea of sacredness as that which attaches, in Eastern belief, to the simple tablet inscribed with the name of the dead parent."—LAFCADIO HEARN, *Japan*, p. 518-9.

> "The Chinaman, who is entirely content with his own religion, and only asks to be left alone, is assailed by a propaganda that commences with an attack upon all that he holds most dear. To him the ethics of Confucius sum up the whole duty of man to the family and the State; while the payment of homage to the higher powers is provided for by the polytheistic conceptions of the Buddhist cult. He hears the former disparaged, the latter derided. He is invited to become a convert at the cost of ceasing to be a citizen; to tear up the sheet-anchor of all morality as the first condition of moral regeneration. Small wonder that a propaganda, which thus lays the axe to the very root of the tree, should encounter the stubborn resistance of all those who have been accustomed to seek shelter under its branches."—LORD CURZON, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 288.

ANCESTOR-WORSHIP is so bound up with the national life and traditions of the Chinese that it is the opinion of those most conversant with Chinese manners, customs, and modes of thought that to destroy belief in it would be to undermine the moral basis which constitutes the Chinese the most peaceful, law-abiding, and industrious nation in the world.

Mr. R. F. Johnston, who served as District Officer and Magistrate at Wei-hai-wei in China, and, therefore, has an intimate knowledge of the Chinese, observes :—

> "Most of my readers are doubtless aware that it has been, and perhaps still is, the custom of many missionaries to require their converts to surrender their ancestral tablets, or to destroy them, as a proof of their sincerity before baptism. There are many sad stories connected with this cruel proceeding, and it is refreshing to listen to the frank confession of so experienced and fair-minded a missionary as Dr. Martin, who admits that he himself once insisted on a convert giving up his ancestral tablets, and has ever since regarded this as one of the mistakes of his life, and looks back upon it with 'poignant grief.' As he adds decisively, 'I had no right to impose such a test.' It is to be hoped that his words have served as a warning to some, at least, of his successors in the missionary field." *

* R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, pp. 382-3.

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He also believes, with other high authorities, that "If Christianity is to win its way to the hearts of the Chinese people, it will probably have to condescend to a compromise on the question of ancestor-worship."

The Jesuits, in the sixteenth century, as we have seen, made their compromise with ancestor-worship; Father Ricci professing to believe that the ancestral functions were merely civil and commemoration rites, and allowing the converts to continue their practice. But the Jesuits have always followed the practice of St. Paul in making themselves "all things to all men," holding that "the end justifies the means."

As Professor Giles points out, in reference to the ancestral spirits:—

> "These offerings are made for the special purpose of conciliating the spirit, and of obtaining in return a liberal share of the blessings and good things of this life. This is the essential feature of the rite, and this it is which makes the rite an act of worship pure and simple, so that only superficial observers could make the mistake of classifying ancestral-worship, as practised in China, with such acts as laying wreaths upon the tombs of deceased friends and relatives."*

The Emperor of China, K'ang Hsi, being appealed to by the Jesuits, decided in their favor. The Pope, on the contrary, influenced by the jealous Dominicans, declared the rites to be rank idolatry:—

> "The fact that several Pontiffs had successively boxed the compass on this point did not in the least mend the matter; the essential consideration was that an Italian gentleman assumed, and successfully assumed, to tell the subjects of the Emperor of China that the Emperor was wrong on a technical matter of Chinese interpretation." †

Then the great Emperor became aware that behind these wonderful men from the West "there was a mysterious *foreign* Power actively controlling the millions of all races who entered the fold of the Church." ‡ He, therefore, forbade any missionary to remain in the country without his permission. After his death his son and successor issued an edict in the year 1724 prohibiting the propagation of Christianity; all missionaries not required for scientific purposes at Peking being ordered to leave the country. The Emperor condescended to state his views to three members of the Society of Jesus, as follows:—

> "You wish to make the Chinese Christians, and this is what your law demands, I know very well. *But what in that case would become of us?* [We should become] *the subjects of your kings. The Christians whom you make recognise no authority but you;* in times of trouble they would listen to no other voice. I know well enough that there is nothing to fear at present; but when your ships shall be coming by thousands and tens of thousands, then, indeed, we may have some disturbances." §

This put a stop to the influx of missionaries, who reappeared to the sound of foreign cannon breaching the Wall of China.

Ancestor-worship was the stumbling-block which brought about the fall of Christianity in the eighteenth century. It is ancestor-worship that still bars the way to-day. To cite again from the work of Mr. Arthur Smith, the missionary:—

> "Everywhere the critical question is, What shall be done with regard to ancestral-worship? And upon this point the rigid demands of custom and the verdict of the enlightened Chinese conscience remain at variance."

The same writer thinks that perhaps the best way to treat the subject would be the historical one, of showing that the rites and usages were neither ancient nor authoritative, and that the underlying idea in ancestral-worship can be expressed in Christianity without violation of conscience. This seems to us a confession of the hopelessness of fighting this cult, and a recommendation of the very methods of compromise which proved so disastrous to their Jesuit forerunners. However, as he admits, that method is not applicable in this case. For he observes:—

> "But to this method of procedure there are serious if not fatal obstacles. The mass of those who can be induced to listen to the claims of Christianity are not those with whom the historical method is possible, since the greater part of them have no education and many of them cannot read. With such it is literally indispensable to deal with as with children." *

As we have remarked, the opposition of the missionaries to ancestor-worship is a principal cause of the hatred entertained by the average Chinese towards the Christian converts. When a Chinese becomes a Christian, he severs himself, or, rather, he is discarded, by his family, his relatives, and his friends. He becomes an outcast. Says Mr. Smith:—

> "The refusal of the Christians to perform ceremonies which they regard as idolatrous at the New Year season, at the Spring festival when the sacrifices are offered at the graves, at weddings, and especially at funerals, render them liable to severe persecution, sometimes to the extent of being driven from their homes, deprived of all rights of property, and expelled from the clan to which they belong, and from the district in which they were born. It is hard for those who are their shepherds to witness such occurrences (which, with varying degrees of severity, are of constant occurrence) without endeavoring to rectify matters in accordance with the rights expressly guaranteed to Chinese Christians by treaty. In many instances this is accomplished after a more or less severe struggle, and a measure of liberty for the Church as a result. In many other cases, however, the best that can be obtained is a cessation of acute hostilities, with a threat of renewal whenever it suits the convenience of the anti-Christian party" (*China in Convulsion*, pp. 36-37).

Of these Christian treaty rights above-mentioned, we shall have something to say later on, merely remarking here that these rights are founded upon one of the blackest pieces of forgery and fraud—the work of a French Catholic priest—ever recorded in history.

Again, the theatrical performances, of which the Chinese are so fond, are also banned, and this is the cause of another grievance. The same writer tells us:—

> "Persistent resistance to demands for *pro rata* contributions to the fund for holding theatrical exhibitions or the performance of the Taoist high mass necessarily irritates a wide circle of Chinese. Should the proposed celebration be given up for this reason, the animosity felt toward the cause of this undesirable result is shared by the main participants, and also by the public, which is always athirst for some excitement in the dead level of the monotonous Chinese daily life. If the Christians stand aloof and withhold their quota, others must pay so much the more; and as the passion for theatricals is such that a Chinese as a rule can no more withstand the temptation to witness a performance than he can help shaking when set upon an insulating stool with a stream of electricity pouring through his body, it will be singular if his presence even on the outskirts of the crowd does not lead to trouble. That the Buddhist and Taoist priests have not sooner and more generally recognised the 'divisive and perversive' nature of Christianity in relation to those religions, only displays the intellectual imbecility of those who are thought sufficient to represent these faiths in the care of the temples and the public ceremonies. It has been generally noticed that during the Boxer disturbances priests have often been prominent, sometimes as leaders. The only wonder is that this has not happened long ago" (*China in Convulsion*, pp. 39-40).

The tolerance of the Buddhist and Taoist priests is not due to "intellectual imbecility," as this missionary suggests, for, as we shall see, the Chinese have always been tolerant in matters of religion. Notice, by the way, the testimony to the dividing and perverting nature of Christianity, which has always carried out the teachings of its founder, who declared, "I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her

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* H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, pp. 65-6.
† A. H. Smith, *China in Convulsion* (1901), p. 47.
‡ Arthur Diosy, *The New Far East*, p. 221.
§ Arthur Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 236-7.

* Arthur H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, pp. 34-5.

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mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." And many a household in China has found to its bitter cost that this was no idle boast of the Prophet of Nazareth.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

"Portuguese Political Prisoners."

(Gill & Son, Ltd. London: 1913.)

PUBLIC opinion in Portugal has been irritated and outraged by the publication of an audacious pamphlet in this country bearing the above title. The pamphlet is the more astonishing from its lachrymose but misleading sub-title, "A British National Protest." As a matter of fact, there is no evidence at all that (with the exception of the "Foreword," of which more anon) the "Protest" is either British or national, unless the "nationality" be Portuguese; and the "Protest" seems none other than that of some anonymous and inventive exile. All the magniloquent fustian in the first three pages about the glories of "the Portugal of old" (which was also the Portugal of the Inquisition and the wholesale murder or robbery of heretics and Jews), betrays the hand of the unrepentant partisan of the ancient regime as it triumphed in the days of the late pious and lamented Carlos. The cloven hoof of the vexed and defeated exile shows itself, too, in the sentence (p. 11) which refers to:—

> "A Republic which for over two years has perpetuated oppression and injustice such as no country would endure for one single week *were it inflicted under monarchical rule instead of in the sacred name of freedom.*"

No Englishman who knows what unparalleled abominations have gone on, not merely "for one single week," but for decade after decade, and generation after generation, "under monarchical rule" of the holy Tears, could possibly put pen to paper and write this stupid and astonishing declaration. We have heard often enough of "British" goods produced in Germany, but we were scarcely prepared for "British National Protests" made in Portugal.

Now about the "Foreword." This is a short and sweet production of eleven lines, by Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, the distinguished writer whose inflamed impeachment of Portugal coruscated recently in the columns of the *Daily Mail*. The "Foreword" is a surprisingly cautious commendation of "the writer of the following pages," whose name is discreetly withheld, and concerning whom we are offered the non-committal statement that our Great Unknown "had exceptional opportunities of collecting information concerning the sufferings," etc., of the prisoners—all of which, of course, one readily accepts, subject to the observation that the art of "collecting information" does not always imply the faculty of checking and verifying it when received, or collating it with the necessary relative facts for the formation of a sound judgment. The Pentateuch is a classic case in point, with its fantastic mosaic of "collected information."

In this same "Foreword" the revealing sentence is found that: "During my recent visit to Lisbon I was able to learn the *opinions* of many people in very varying conditions of life, and their *testimonies* were all entirely in harmony with the standpoint set forth in this pamphlet." All this is quite beside the question. The *opinions* of "many people," *qua* opinions, are, in fact, worth nothing; and testimony, even when it descends in cataracts, is clearly not evidence. All depends upon the competency of the witnesses, and the scientific validity of their testimony. Opinions can be freely and copiously gathered from all sorts and conditions of men for the most outrageous nonsense under the sun, as witness the lives of the saints, where biography rhymes with lie. After reading this "Foreword," one has an uneasy feeling that the basis of the Duchess's *Daily Mail* impeachment of the Portuguese Government was built only on the multitudinous tongue-wagging of irresponsible slanderers.

I observe in *O Mundo* that public opinion has been unduly perturbed by the issue of this precious pamphlet. I hope that the Portuguese Republicans will not be frightened by this nightmare of a bogus "British National Protest." No Briton to-day, not even the editor of the *Daily Mail* itself, would go out of his way, as this pamphlet does, to speak of the Portugal of to-day (page 1) as "ground down by tyranny and oppression, depopulated by emigration, bereft alike of freedom, credit, *honor, law, and order.*" If British public opinion formed such an erroneous view of the Portuguese nation, the Republicans would, indeed, have cause for grave regret and anxiety. But the voice of the Portuguese monarchist simulating the bluff growl of John Bull is distinctly audible in the theatrical palaverings of this "National Protest," and this fact discounts the value of the ducally applauded incubration.

On page 3 mention is made of certain mythical "32,000 Carbonarios, who, as they draw a handsome wage for denouncing to the State supposed 'conspirators,' are naturally much enamored of a system which gives good financial profit in exchange for small exertions!" It is a pity that the writer did not embellish the narrative by "collecting information" as to the amount of the "handsome wage," or attempt to ascertain why a naturally wicked regime is lavish enough to pay so dearly for "small exertions." The slime of exaggeration which settles thick on this beautiful accusation makes it too incredible for serious consideration. A rationalist Republic which disestablishes and disendows the Church and secularises the schools may be sinful, according to ducal codes, without necessarily being stupid.

Burke stated that it is impossible to impeach a nation. Our writer transcends Burke and all possibility, human or divine, by offering a solemn impeachment of the Portuguese people. We shall see that his statement is one the ridiculousness of which is only equalled by its monstrosity. For instance, on page 18 he actually dares to tell us, with evident marks of acceptance and approval, that—

> "Another informant relates that on one of the occasions when the prison van was stormed by the Lisbon mob, and the Royalist occupants dragged out and brutally attacked with knives and whips, a prisoner exclaimed, 'Do not beat *me*, I am not a Royalist, but a *thief*.' *Whereupon the mob welcomed him as a brother.*"

The British nation will want evidence more trustworthy than that of "another informant," vouched by an unknown writer, before it will accept such an evident fable as "gospel" truth. The coda of the sentence, about Lisbon revolutionaries welcoming a *thief* as a *brother*, is one of those artistic embellishments that befit the novelist rather than the dispassionate historian. The writer had evidently taken his cue from the theatrical story of the Jewish mob clamoring for the release of Barabbas.

Another graphic touch, which certainly was not laid on by a native "British" artist, but by some Portuguese dauber, is the fine story, on pages 23-24, that in February this year Dr. Affonso Costa, Senhor Alvaro de Castro, and Dr. Rodrigues, and their secretaries, visited the Penitenciaria; that the political prisoners and the lowest criminals being assembled in the disused chapel, they were all ordered to remove their hoods at the sound of Dr. Rodrigues' whistle; and when the miraculous whistle whistled the Doctor delivered an oration to them, which was greeted with applause *from murderers and thieves.*" An excellent theme for comic opera, but quite alien to the sober genius of history.

On page 34 our Portuguese Briton talks dramatically about the "active" volcano of English adverse criticism—"that criticism will grow to such proportions that there will be no restraining it"! After this alarming diagnosis, the "informed" writer—who is an optimist by nature—talks on in the dark

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and mysterious Guy Fawkes style of melodrama:—

> "The time has long gone by [so he writes] when national opinion was controlled or led by diplomats [Great Jupiter! how I admire his sweet simplicity and childlike innocence!—W. H.]; and the English Foreign Office, *however anxious to look leniently upon the difficulties of a friendly Power*, is utterly unable to dominate popular feeling in a country where free writing and free speech are the hereditary birthright even of the humblest."

All this is the wildest nonsense out of Bedlam—it takes such little account of the omnipotence of diplomats and the serious limitations of speech and writing in this country! No Government in so-called Christian England would dare to affront the conscience of civilisation by strangling the Portuguese Republic. Governments to-day go to war, not for ideals, but for new markets; for goldfields and diamonds, and not to restore exiled monarchs or rehabilitate effete regimes, however pious they may be. When, therefore, we are told, on page 38, that "unless the Carbonaria assassins" are disbanded and the other ferocious ultimata of this fervid writer conceded, "it will no longer be within the bounds of possibility to stem the rising tide of British public wrath," the only thing I can say to Portugal, as a Briton myself, and living on the spot where "the tide" is supposed to be rising, is that not a ripple of wrath has yet appeared on the frothy waves of ink poured out from the indignant pen of our excited scribe, and that the only ebullition that sentiments of this fantastic kind are likely to excite in the British people is a contemptuous outburst of incredulous hilarity.

Portuguese public opinion can afford to disdain the hectoring threats of a writer who concludes his thirty-nine pages of rhodomontade by branding England's "ancient ally," as he calls Portugal, "as the shame, the scandal, and the plague spot which united Europe cannot but condemn." My final word to this writer is to convert his screed into a ragtime revue, with a coryphantic spectacle of exiled kings, disendowed bishops, and sour-faced patron saints.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Acid Drops.

The truth is coming out at last about the war of the Balkan allies against the "unspeakable" Turk. Even the *Daily Chronicle* is beginning to let the cat out of the bag. In its issue for May 30 there was an outspoken letter from a "Correspondent lately returned from Montenegro." In a general way this writer says, "The Allies, there is, alas, no doubt, have often out-Turked the Turk.....Whole tribes have been exterminated, if the boasts of Serb and Montenegrin are to be believed." The capture of Scutari was at once a farce and a tragedy. It was not captured by Montenegrin valor at all. It was reduced by starvation, and by a deliberate policy in direct defiance of the rules of civilised warfare. "The trenches were safer than the town. The fire of the siege guns was "directed on the civil population" to force the town's surrender:—

> "All the while, in defiance of Europe, the Montenegrins rained shells and shrapnel into the best quarter of the town. Every church, school, convent, and hospital was a mark. Two thousand wretched refugees were sheltered in the cathedral, believing it would be safe. But the guns of the Orthodox sought specially each Catholic building. A searchlight turned on the cathedral at night enabled the gunners finally to get the range, and 40 shells in and near it completely wrecked the finest building in these lands."

This is what pious King Nicholas called "fighting for the independence of Montenegro." The Christian old savage.

The *Guardian*, which was, like other Christian papers, rabidly anti-Turkish at the outbreak of the Balkan War, now confesses that unless the Allies show more honesty and common sense, "the condition of the Balkans, Slav and Hellenic, will be worse than under the unspeakable Turk." Those not blinded by Christian prejudice are not at all surprised at the present state of affairs. When a party of thieves set out for plunder, a quarrel about its division is not unusual. We venture to say that unless outside pressure is effectively employed the lot of many in the Balkans will be worse under the Cross than it was under the Crescent.

Mrs. Besant is in London again. A number of her English supporters met her at Victoria Station. "She was attired," the *Chronicle* reporter said, "in a tussore silk costume of flowing Oriental lines and a kind of turban, in the front of which a jewelled brooch glittered." This get-up reminds us of Gerald Massey's lines to Annie Besant, when she left her work on the London School Board to run about the world for the Mahatmas. The last of Massey's stanzas were these:—

> "Now there's woe and wail for her,
> True hearts ache and ail for her,
> Poor wee faces pale for her.
>
> And the deeds she might have done,
> Not as Sophist, but as one
> Worker in a Million.
>
> Ignis Fatuii of the fog,
> Lured and led her all agog
> Into the Blavatsky bog.
>
> Cursèd fraud that could entice
> Her to that great Sacrifice!
> Priceless SOUL without her price.
>
> Is she dreaming? Let us make
> One more call for Love's dear sake;
> Annie Besant, won't you wake?"

Gerald Massey's appeal fell upon deaf ears. Annie Besant did not wake. She will dream to the end now.

The Hindu boys, whom Mrs. Besant was ordered to restore to their father, were brought to London with her. They prefer being with her to living in their own home. No doubt. It is far more comfortable for their bodies, and far more flattering to their minds.

Shakespeare has been interviewed at last; this time on "the astral plane" by a Theosophist. An account was given at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Charing Cross. It appears that Shakespeare admitted that Bacon wrote the plays; but, added the poet, "I edited them." Shakespeare also remarked that "up there" they did not take much interest in the controversies "down here." From this we imagine Shakespeare to be in "heaven"; but may we assume that Bacon is "down under"?

Souls in Pawn is the title of a book. The "next world" has been often described as "the New Jerusalem"; but we did not know its business included pawnbroking.

The Assembly of the Scottish United Free Church reports a serious shortage of ministers. We do not know that anyone is complaining except the ministers themselves; the rest of the people seem to be bearing up well in the circumstances. The Rev. J. R. Sclater says that a commonly given reason is that payment in the ministry does not compare favorably with payment in other professions. At present the stipend of half the ministers of the Free Church does not amount to more than £160 per year. This, of course, is not a great salary for men of real ability, but it is quite as much as many thousands of people get in other walks of life who make no pretence to self-sacrifice, spiritual election, etc., etc. It may be that the Church cannot get men of ability and honesty at this figure, but can they get them at any figure? Suppose the Church could raise salaries to £500, or even £1,000 a year all round. It might then be able to purchase ability, but could it purchase honesty and character? We very much doubt it. There is always a certain amount of ability in the market ready to sell itself to the highest bidder, but the ability that goes with genuine conviction is not for the Church. That finds a more useful and more congenial outlet in other directions.

This is the real crux of the situation. Mr. Sclater says that "a proportion of the possible candidates does not think that the pecular opportunity of Christian service afforded by the ministry overbalances the narrowing of life" involved in a ministerial career. This is only saying in a confused fashion what has been said above. The pull of life is away from the Church. Science and literature and art and social life all open up avenues of employment that a man can take up without a keen sense of self-stultification. He does not have to spend the rest of his life explaining away or apologising for the beliefs he is paid to defend. Given a belief worth defending, and there will not be lacking defenders. But given beliefs such as are enshrined in the doctrines of the Churches, and generation after generation a lower degree of ability and character is attracted by them. It is this, and not salaries, that is at the bottom of the trouble over both the quantity and quality of the clergy. It may still command ability without honesty or honesty without ability, but it cannot, to any considerable degree, command both.

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Rev. R. H. Armitage, of St. Mary's Vicarage, Whittlesey, suggests that every person ordained should be compelled to spend five or six years out of the country. The suggestion strikes us as a good one, and we should favor a very liberal extension of the time during which the newly fledged parson should be kept abroad.

Father O' Halloran, rector of a Roman Catholic church at Ealing, borrowed £76 from a poor old Miss Mary Hynes, who was left £400 by the late Lord Kilmorey, in whose service she had been. When the reverend gentleman was invited to refund he set up the plea that the money was a gift. The jury, however, held that the transaction was a loan—the defendant exercising a dominant religious influence over the plaintiff, who had received no independent advice. The man of God has to shell out both cash and costs.

They have been holding a Missionary Exhibition at Leeds and the Rev. J. Hinton Knowles has made it the occasion of denouncing the religion and morals of the "heathen," particularly in India. Local circumstances might surely have made Mr. Knowles more modest on this point. He is the new vicar of Christ Church, Hunslet. His predecessor left the Lord's Vineyard some time ago—leaving his wife and family behind and taking with him a younger piece of what the Bible calls "flesh."

Another poor Christite! Rev. Thomas Samuel Curteis, of 93 Philbeach-gardens, London, S.W., for many years rector of Sevenoaks, Kent, left £29,508. "Blessed be ye poor!" "Woe unto you rich!" "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." And more to the same effect.

The *Methodist Times* asks the question: "Are the Gospel Records Reliable?" and in reply admits that many blunders may have been made by the New Testament writers. But, it says, the Gospels do not rely for their validity upon "mere historical tests," but upon "the spiritual sense of the man who honestly reads the narratives and lets them make their natural impression upon him." Well, for our part we should not be seriously disturbed if it were shown that the four Gospels were actually written by Jesus Christ himself, and that they have descended to us unaltered. To have the actual narrative in our hands would not prove the story to be credible; it would only show, at most, that the writer or writers believed it to be true. But why go back two thousand years for this kind of testimony? Thousands of people, since the time of Jesus, have witnessed to their sense of supernatural possession and illumination, and others have endorsed their testimony. But this does not make the stories themselves a bit more believable. It only throws us back upon the task of explaining how they came to have such a conviction. Instead of exposing a deliberately concocted falsehood, we have to explain the genesis of a psychological delusion. That is all there is in the matter.

As to the "spiritual sense" of the man who reads the Gospels deciding whether they are reliable or not, that is sheer verbiage. The faculty invoked is itself pure myth. There is no such thing as a "spiritual sense"; there are only the normal qualities of the mind which judges so-called spiritual things. Anyway, the spiritual sense judges as it been taught to judge. The Christian decides, on appealing to his "spiritual sense," that the picture of Jesus Christ is authentic. The non-Christian decides in quite the opposite direction. Why should we accept one more than the other? As mere impressions, both are equal. As a matter of fact, the writer deserts his "spiritual sense" as soon as he has utilised it. He appeals to the influence of the life of Jesus on the world. And, again, we ask, How do you know? Has a mere reading of the life of Jesus ever affected anybody? Has the reading not always been accompanied by suggestions that the life would produce certain consequences? And if the consequences occasionally follow, to what are we to attribute them—to the reading or to the suggestion? How often have people discovered an aperient in bread pills, or a narcotic in cold water? The psychology of the religious process is quite simple, as simple as that of advertising a patent medicine.

Canon Masterman says that "after all, it is not much good trying to prove the Virgin Birth to men who don't believe in God." True; but how does the Canon propose to deal with unbelievers in God? He clearly discerns the futility of arguments based on the external world, because the external world is itself an unanswerable argument against the Divine existence; but is it, can it, be much good appealing to human consciousness? Leave human consciousness alone and it never knows anything of God. The belief in God is not an inheritance, but an acquirement, made only by a limited number of mankind, and made by these not spontaneously from within, but artificially, under pressure from without.

We now learn that the second person in the Holy Trinity lost his self-consciousness for the space of twelve years. During the period between his birth as the "Holy Thing" from Mary's womb and his appearance in the Temple as a boy of twelve, he was not aware that he was in existence. For this most marvellous information we are indebted to the Rev. Dr. David Smith, who, in the *British Weekly* for May 22, tells a correspondent that, while meditating in the sacred building and arguing with the doctors, in the twinkling of an eye he remembered, or, as Dr. Smith puts it, "discovered," who he was. Subsequent to the re-awakening of his self-consciousness, he worked for eighteen years at his father's trade at Nazareth, making carts and chairs and tables and such things. Then at his baptism he was formally called to begin his ministry as Incarnate God. And yet some people pretend to be surprised to find that supernatural belief is dying throughout Christendom.

An American divine tells us that "God is like Christ"; but what is Christ like? Nobody knows. There are at least a thousand Christs on earth to-day, and they are all different. If it be said that Christ is like the Gospel Jesus, and God like Christ, then we are bound to declare that we will have none of God. The Gospel Jesus was rude to his mother, disowned his family, cursed his enemies, enjoined non-resistance to evil, pronounced beatitudes on poverty, blessed the sword, and depreciated the present life; and if God is like him we are glad that we have no dealings whatever with him.

Rev. A. Huntley, vicar of Christ Church, Hull, deplores the growing desecration of the Sabbath. He says that the leisured classes show a bad example. He knows of a church in the South of England where all the choirboys have left in order to earn money as golf caddies on Sundays. Very sad, no doubt, from the reverend gentleman's point of view. But most people will sympathise with the boys; for a little money is acceptable, and the air is fresher on the golf links than it is in the average stuffy Bethel.

Dare to be a Daniel! But don't try it on with a sledge-hammer. The Chancery Court has had to teach this to the Rev. Daniel Hughes, of the Crane-street Baptist Chapel, Pontypool, who has been using that instrument to settle a legal question between the trustees and himself.

Dr. Horton's manners are not improving. However much he may have grown "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" during recent years, it is clear that growth does not include a corresponding progress in charity and toleration. It is quite impossible for the reverend gentleman to make the slightest allusion to opponents without losing his temper and resorting to bad language. In one of his latest sermons, he admits "that the great majority of people to-day, as in the time of Jesus, deliberately and defiantly shut God out of their lives." This fact makes him angry, and "the great majority of people" are set down as the dupes of "puerile—yes, it is very puerile—self-confidence." The man who overturns the Bible is "a feeble critic"; he who denies that Jesus can save is "stupid and ignorant"; while the rejecter of the historicity of Jesus is the victim of hopeless infatuation and ignorance. What makes him wild is the fact that "the great majority of people" hail such "feeble critics," "stupid and ignorant" deniers, "infatuated and ignorant" rejecters, with boundless delight, and turn a deaf ear to him and his message. And yet, "in spite of the fact that never was there a time when unbelief was so hardened, so infatuated, so ignorant, so daring, and so destructive—in spite of all that," the reverend gentleman assures his hearers that they who *do* believe shall certainly be saved. Now, on the assumption that "the great majority of people" are on the wrong road, are Dr. Horton's hostile attitude and abusive language likely ever to bring them to the feet of him who died for their redemption? Is it really true that the more pious and devout a man becomes the less of a gentleman he is?

The Bishop of London is constantly treating the world to a fresh imbecility. His latest outbreak is to the effect that he knows East London and its misery more than most people, and even there for every miserable person that could be produced he had got nine happy ones up his sleeve. We dare say he could find them *there*—and nowhere else.

In his presidential address to the London Diocesan Conference, the Bishop of London, made some pungent remarks

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on the report of the Divorce Commission, in the course of which he told an anecdote. "Charlie and I," he was told a girl said the other day, "are going to be married, and if we don't get on, we can always be divorced!" Did his lordship hear this yarn from the lips of Charley's Aunt?

Dr. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, says that "men to-day exalt human nature and reject the Deity of Christ." That shows their superior wisdom. The men of yesterday exalted Christ and belittled, maligned human nature. That is what the Church has always done. The present revolt from her is our most hopeful omen.

According to a weekly contemporary, the King is a great reader, and keeps in touch with modern literature, particularly historical and sociological works, besides the best fiction. As the King also reads a chapter of the Bible daily, if the religious papers are to be believed, he must be quite a bookworm.

Speaking at Mansfield Hall, Canning Town, on a recent Sunday afternoon, Dr. Massie said that Christianity has conferred dignity upon labor. Sentimentally, this may be true, but actually it is the very reverse of true. "Amongst Christians," he is reported to have said, "the man who worked for his living was respected, and the man who did not work was condemned." Is not Dr. Massie aware that the man to whom the greatest deference is paid and the highest respect shown in Great Britain to-day, is not the man who works for his living, but the man who lives upon the labor of others? The Church is fully as culpable in this respect as the world. Are not all her seats of honor occupied by the rich? When a wealthy Christian gentleman gives a dinner party, are carpenters and masons and unskilled laborers found among their guests? No, Christ has never done anything for labor save keep it in subjection. Labor is at last waking up, however, and beginning to do a little for itself.

The Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A., of Glasgow, is an exceptionally wise man. He is able to compare man's knowledge with that of angels, and to declare that, in some respects, man's is the greater of the two. Angels "cannot know the conditions of a tempted, tried, delivered man," though they experience a vast amount of curiosity regarding them. As a matter of fact, Mr. Forbes knows absolutely nothing about angels, not even that they exist. It may sound exceedingly ridiculous, but there is no denying the fact that pulpit eloquence is always at its best when dealing with subjects on which no knowledge is obtainable on any terms.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the much-talked-of African missionary, is returning to Africa. He finds Western civilisation very disappointing. Western civilisation will doubtless survive Mr. Crawford's disapproval; all the same, it is curious that he should prefer the country where is so little of Christianity to the country where there is so much of it. If Mr. Crawford were not in the missionary business himself, one might expect him to be less ardent as to the necessity of Christianising the natives. We understand that Mr. Crawford originally took up with missionary work for the benefit of his health.

The Canadian Government census gives details of the religious opinions of the population, which numbers seven and a quarter millions. These profess seventy-nine religions, including 15,971 Mormons, and various other fancy theologies. The non-religious total 29,161. Canada is being dechristianised at a greater rate than China is being converted.

The *Times* says that Canada is a country of religious liberty because no one Church dominates. That is very good so far as it goes, but it needs more than this to make a country a land of religious liberty. All that the *Times* understands by the expression, apparently, is that all the Churches are on a legal equality. That may be so, but it is, after all, a domestic concern. That the State should not favor any one Church is good, but if it ceases to favor one because it favors all, then we do not know that there is very much in it. It is liberty of opinion that is needed, and this is only secured when the State definitely declines to consider religion as coming within its province, either to attack or defend.

The Church of Scotland is in the doleful dumps. Her mission funds are reduced, the Jewish mission groaning under a deficit of £1,300. Her communicants decreased during last year by 1,066, the first decrease within living memory. The number of her baptisms has decreased by 2 per cent. in sixteen years. Scotland is at last beginning to emancipate herself from her long-continued bondage to credulity and superstition. Buckle's picture of her during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is no longer true.

A baby shirt worn by Nelson on the occasion of his christening is to be sold at Sotheby's Sale-rooms, and is expected to fetch a high price. Priests sell relics at higher prices of persons who never existed.

The *Christian Commonwealth* is ostensibly a Christian journal issued for the purpose of furthering the interests of the Christian religion. Yet for some years it has been loudly singing the praises of Mrs. Besant, and publishing full reports of her London lectures on Theosophy. To this we have no objection whatever; but we wish to call attention to the fact that Mrs. Besant, not only is not a Christian in any accepted sense of the word, but is pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Horton to be "by far the most formidable opponent of Christianity in India." Furthermore, in any accepted definition of the term, Mrs. Besant is not even a Theist. Dr. Horton candidly admits that she is doing an enormous amount of good in India, but "feels that to the chief opponent of missionary work in India a Christian can only say, 'You go that way, I go this, for I am on Christ's side for his glory, and he is Lord of all.'" So far good; but why does our contemporary so energetically "boom" in England one who is said to be in India "by far the most formidable opponent of Christianity"?

We welcome the Rev. S. J. Poole, vicar of St. James's Church, Gravesend, as a valuable ally. In his series of sermons on "The Observance of the Lord's Day," he has been unconsciously fighting our battle. His plea for the observance of the Lord's Day has exposed the essential falseness and impotence of Christianity. Its hold upon mankind is so slender that if Sunday loses its religious character it will certainly drop off. Thank you, Mr. Poole, you have rendered us splendid services. You are quite right. A secularised Sunday will infallibly result in—*Godlessness.*

"Couple's appeal to Washington," runs a scare line in a newspaper. Dear old George died over a century ago, and he won't hear. The clergy constantly appeal to another "gentleman," who has been "dead" twenty centuries.

An article in a weekly contemporary is headed "Why We Need Not Sneeze in Church." It is a snuffy subject; but Freethinkers sneeze at the Church.

The Union Government Native Affairs Department (South Africa) draws attention to the increase of consumption among the natives, chiefly due, it is said, to the infection spread by those who return from the mines. There is also great difficulty in combating the "fearful ravages of syphilis." The natives are evidently in for the usual consequences of Christian civilisation. The report also says that South Africa "appears to suffer from a superabundance of denominations." Increase of consumption, ravages of syphilis, and an overdose of religious denominations. Quite a pretty trinity!

A circular issued at Wibaux, Ill., U.S.A., in connection with a crusade to increase church attendance, characterises Sunday papers as being full of "so-called funny pictures and lurid sensationalism." The Bible, which is considered suitable reading on that day, contains such serious and non-sensational stories as those of Noah's Flood, Jonah and the Whale, and Balaam's Ass.

At a recent sale at Christie's 155 guineas were paid for six dessert plates, and 58 guineas for two other plates. The price makes us think they were used at the Last Supper.

A cynic might suggest that there were no plates at the Last Supper, but only a common dish into which each guest plunged his hand and took out what he fancied. "He that dippeth his hand in the dish with me," said Jesus, "the same shall betray me."

"Clever Stage Clergyman" is the heading of a paragraph in an evening contemporary. The parsons are not so brilliant in ordinary life.

The late Lord Avebury, formerly Sir John Lubbock, who created two new holidays, was termed admiringly, "Saint Lubbock." He did more for the working classes of this country than all the "saints" in the Calendar.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £141 18s. 5d. Received since:—R. Wood, 5s.; H. Wyllie, £1 1s.; L. Martin (West Australia), 5s.; J. Wordhough, 13s. 6d.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

D. R. WILLIAMS.—A very good letter. No wonder the preacher did not reply. Thanks for your good wishes.

R. WOOD.—Mr. Foote steadily improves, but the last screwings up to concert pitch are slower than he anticipated.

ELIZABETH LECHMERE.—Duly attended to. Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

S. FERRIDAY.—Sent as desired. Pleased to know you value the *Freethinker* so highly.

C. W. CHRISTIE.—We are obliged to you for your long account of the career of the Rev. Stanley Parker, but he is not worth so much of our space or your trouble. What really interests us is the fact that you despise the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and all it stands for, as much as you were once attached to it and preached its doctrines.

H. V. S.—Under consideration. Sorry to hear of your illness, and hope you are quite yourself again now.

JOSEPH CLOSE.—It is *not* necessary for Freethinkers, when affirming, to hold up their hands—or their feet. Pardon the joke. But the whole matter, thanks to the good Christians, is so funny. We will take your hint, and call attention to Bradlaugh's Oaths Act from time to time. Glad you held out and set the Court right.

R. M.—We cannot express a dogmatic opinion about a particular occurrence within your own experience—it would have to occur within ours in order to justify an attempt at explanation. So much depends upon the person influenced, the character of the product, and many other circumstances. All we can say here is that the marvels related as having occurred at Spiritualistic meetings have never been verified in a way that was satisfactory to a committee of scientific experts and trained observers. You would probably find *Abnormal Psychology*, by I. Corint, and *Evidence for the Supernatural*, by J. L. Tuckett, of value to you as aids to understanding what you have witnessed.

J. E. FYSH (Santo, New Hebrides).—Pleased to hear from one who was an ardent worker in the N. S. S. ranks in this country, also to learn that your enthusiasm for the good old cause still lives. Unfortunately, there is need for this in all parts of the globe. Superstition is world-wide, and the antidote must be world-wide also. Your desire to do more than you are doing is laudable and natural, and none of us are too great to be without the same kind of feeling. The best way is to do what we can, when we can, and rest content. Miss Vance is attending to the other matters mentioned in your letter. The new edition of Frazer's *Golden Bough* has reached its seventh volume. Each vol. is published at 10s. net.

E. DALES.—We note your delight at our exposure of the Wheeler slander; and, as you will see, we are dealing with the matter at length in the present issue. You say you have "heard it read many times," and we wish we could feel sure that after our exposure you will not hear it again. A lengthy experience, however, has convinced us that a certain type of Christians will repeat a lie just so long as it pays them to do so. All we can do is to supply the matter for its refutation.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We are devoting a little extra space this week to our exposure of the latest Christian Evidence lie concerning the late J. M. Wheeler, but we believe that most Freethinkers will consider the space well used. Apart from our own personal interest in the matter, the party as a whole owes a duty to the memory of its writers and speakers, and attack should be met with a prompt defence. A lie about a living person is bad enough, but a lie concerning a dead one carries with it something specially contemptible. We have done our best to make the exposure of this particular slander complete and final, and we hope that Freethinkers will bear the facts in mind so that they may meet the statement, whenever and wherever made, with a prompt contradiction.

We believe our readers find extracts from correspondents' letters interesting. Here is one which expresses rather a fresh view:—

> "The thanks of the readers of the *Freethinker* are due to you, not only for your own work, but also for that of the remarkably able body of writers your personal qualities have drawn to co-operate with you during so many years. I am only looking at it from the standpoint of an ordinary reader, and it impresses me; but I am confident that the strength of this impression deepens upon those who know the difficulties of editorial work, to say nothing of the special circumstances of the case."

There is discrimination in this eulogy—whether it is deserved or not.

Mr. T. Martin, an old-time London Freethinker, now of Perth, Western Australia, writes us that he is commissioned "to convey to Mr. Foote and staff of the *Freethinker* the compliments of the Right Hon. T. Walker, Attorney-General of this State, and to wish them every success in their propaganda." Mr. Walker is an old associate of Sir Robert Stout, whose Freethought opinions are well known. Both were also associated with Mr. Joseph Symes in the earlier portion of his activities in Australia, and we are glad to learn from Mr. Martin that our old friend's work in the colony is still bearing fruit. We are not surprised at this being so. Joseph Symes was a born fighter, and the memory and work of such live on long after the names of more timid souls are forgotten.

From the last number of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand, we see that Dr. Jacques Loeb has been refused membership of the New York Century Association. Dr. Loeb is among the world's greatest living biologists, and many of his investigations into the reactions of the nervous system of the lower organisms have become classics. Several reasons are given for rejecting his membership. One, that he is of Jewish descent; another, that he has strong predelictions for Socialism; a third, that he is erratic in his views. The first reason is ruled out by the fact that the club already has a number of Jewish members. The second also rings hollow. We believe the third is nearer the truth. Dr. Loeb's views are erratic. By that is meant, we presume, that he has not scrupled to express his antagonism to the religious interpretation of nature, and to avow a thoroughgoing scientific Materialism. We question whether America holds a dozen men of greater or more daring scientific genius. We decline to condole with him on his rejection from the Century Association. He would have conferred honor by his presence. The Association alone loses by his absence.

"Mr. Dunnybrig has terrible coorious ideas, I warn 'ee. He says the Almighty lets us see more and more of Him as the world goes on, and that God larns from his creatures, just like we larn from our dogs and cattle.

"In a word, he declares that God be improving," said young Harry Hawke. "I've heard him tell it at the meeting-house where we go. And many suchlike things he'll dart out in the fury of prayer as comes over him."

"Should you say that was true, or be it just a pinch of madness in the man?" asked Pancras. "Do God Almighty change, or be it blaspheemious to think so? I should reckon it was, for 'tis as much as to say He ban't up to His high-water mark."—*Eden Phillpotts*, "*Widecombe Fair.*"

If we believe the language of the devout, we must admit that the most spiritual of men hide in their heart thoughts of which they are heartily ashamed. It is not into the mouth of the reprobate, but into the mouth of her devoted members, as they enter upon their sacramental service, that the Church puts the significant prayer—"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit." Inconsistency in adults is far too well recognised to need proof.—*F. A. Sibly*, "*Youth and Sex.*"

The Christian resolution to find the world ugly and bad has made the world ugly and bad.—*Nietzsche.*

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Another Lie Nailed Down.—II.

AFTER writing the first part of this article, which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, it occurred to me that the Christian bigots might say, "Oh, yes! What you are writing now is all made up for the occasion. You can say anything you like fifteen years after the event." Consequently I decided to start by reprinting what I wrote immediately after Mr. Wheeler's death. The following is reproduced verbatim from the *Freethinker* of May 15, 1898.

JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER.

For thirty years he and I were close friends; for twenty years we were close co-workers. We were so much to each other personally, so intimate in every respect, that with his death a certain savor has gone from my own life. We worked together for Freethought—I nominally his chief, he nominally my subordinate, but with no thought of anything but absolute equality and brotherhood ever entering into our actual relationships. We had the same essential interests, hopes, and aspirations. We communed in spirit—if I may say so without being misunderstood. Our thoughts were as open as daylight to each other. No reticence but that of self-respect stood between us. He influenced me, as I influenced him; and sometimes his thought passed into my work, as my thought passed into his. Rarely, I imagine, are two men so associated as we were. And then we had passed through the fire of affliction together. A common suffering lent a final tenderness to our friendship, and gave it a special sacredness.

I must go back over a long tract of years to make the reader understand my dead friend's story. It was in 1868 that I made his acquaintance in London. We were both eighteen; I his elder by a fortnight—a difference I used sometimes to tell him he could never reduce. We were both Freethinkers, both fond of good reading, both full of young enthusiasm for the triumph of our ideas. I think he contributed to the *National Reformer* a little before I did. For a short time I lost sight of him, though we corresponded, when he went with his family to live at Glasgow. I met him there when I went to deliver my first lectures in Scotland. It is all as fresh as yesterday. We talked and talked and talked, especially about poetry, capping quotations from Shelley and Swinburne, and always recurring to Shakespeare, who was ever the supreme god with us. As we said good-night one evening, he put his hand on my shoulder in his impulsive way, and said: "George, you must be the leader of the Freethought party." I laughed; it seemed so absurd. Neither of us foresaw how we should one day be fighting at the front together.

Those were the golden days of bateless hope and tireless energy. He went over with me once when I had to lecture at Edinburgh. We climbed Arthur's Seat, on the abrupt side, before breakfast; and while he sat down on the summit I stood up at his desire and recited Swinburne's "Song in Time of Order" as though I were addressing an audience on the other side of the Firth of Forth. When I was last at Edinburgh, only a few months ago, he wrote to me on business matters, and ended by saying he wished he was there with me, and would go up Arthur's Seat once more in my company, if I would only recite that poem again for him at the top.

I think it was after the death of his father that Mr. Wheeler removed to Edinburgh, following his profession as a lithographer in a publishing house there. Mr. Wheeler, senior, was a man of liberal opinions. He had a great affection for the noble Italian liberator, Mazzini, and named his eldest son after him.

When I started the *Secularist* in conjunction with Mr. Holyoake, in 1876, Mr. Wheeler became a regular contributor. Some of his articles were extremely valuable, particularly those on Buddhism, which he had studied profoundly. He wrote gratuitously and ungrudgingly till the paper was merged in the *Secular Review*. This was in the summer of 1877. I was in the midst of great personal trouble at the time, and his loving sympathy was a stedfast star in my night.

When I felt equal to fresh labors, and started a monthly magazine called the *Liberal*, Mr. Wheeler once more gave his ready co-operation. Good reading from his pen appeared in nearly every number. We were both, as it were, feeling for our way in the Freethought movement, and at last we found it definitely. Mr. Bradlaugh's brutal treatment by the bigots of England opened our eyes to the real nature of modern Christianity. Previously we had thought it to be nearer death than it was. We knew it had no power left for good, but we learnt it had still much power left for mischief, and we changed our policy accordingly. He was with me in heart and head when I started the *Freethinker* in 1882, and when the paper began to make its way he threw up his employment at Edinburgh and came up to London to take his chance with me. I was only able to guarantee him £1 per week then, but we could both work hard and live on little. As soon as possible, of course, I paid him more. The amount was further increased after my imprisonment, and from that time, until his death, the sub-editorship was the principal source of his income.

Delicate as his organisation was, with an overplus of nervous susceptibility, and an exquisite sympathy that made him feel too acutely the sufferings of others, he had, nevertheless, a dauntless courage. There was not a shadow of fear about him. He would have done his duty, and stood for his convictions, in the face of any danger. I always knew that if I had to go to the pass of Thermopylæ he would go cheerfully with me. When he praised me for the way in which I had faced prosecution, knowing as I did all the time that I was pretty sure to go to prison, I laughed and said, "Nonsense, Joe; I'm not braver than you, only a bit bigger." When peril is really near you don't find courage universal. I did not find it so. But I knew my old friend would never quail. The *Freethinker* was left in his hands when I went to Holloway Gaol for twelve months as a "blasphemer." Not to lay too great a burden upon him, however, I forbade him, in black on white, to publish any illustrations during my absence.

Weeks rolled by, and I knew nothing of what was going on in the world outside my prison. But one day Mr. Bradlaugh came to tell me that the trial of the other indictment, in which he was included, was coming on before Lord Coleridge in the Court of Queen's Bench. I asked him about Mr. Wheeler, and was told that he had "gone mad." Mr. Bradlaugh put it too abruptly; he did not know how dearly we loved each other. The news stunned me. When I got back to my prison cell I walked up and down like a caged animal. The word "mad" was burning in my brain. It was long before I felt the relief of tears, but at last they came in a deluge. This was the only blow that wrung them from me. I had nothing but a lofty scorn for my enemies, but the fate of my friend was too terrible. It was worse than mine, and I could not foresee the end of it.

Mr. Wheeler had to be placed in an asylum. He got better, but he was liberated too soon. He came back to work and broke down again. Once more he recovered and resumed writing for the paper. When I was released from prison at the end of February, 1884, he was reasonably well, and I hoped he was as free from his trouble as I was from mine. But less than three months afterwards he broke down again. It was a very bad attack, but I was able to look after him myself. I kept him in the asylum until he was quite fit to leave, then I sent him for weeks to the seaside, and his residence was changed so that he might return to new surroundings. He had fourteen years before him of happy, useful life; and now the end has come he has left behind him a host of friends, without a single enemy, and hundreds of men and women whose intellectual life-blood has been enriched by the fruit of his studies. Surely he did not live in vain. More than most men he deserved to live longer, and death should have come

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to him more gently. As I knelt down and kissed his brow in death—for I was too late to see him living—I could only say "Poor Joe!" And as I rose to my feet again and looked down on him, and around at the strange place in which he died, I could only think: "Is this Nature's last boon to a good man? Is this her only laurel for a noble head?" In the light of the doctrine of Theism such a spectacle was a ghastly mockery.

I only learnt that Mr. Wheeler was dying after five o'clock on Thursday, May 5. I drove to the asylum as fast as I could, but I was too late to look for the last time into his eyes and perhaps catch a last word from his lips. It was all over when I arrived. He died at half-past five. Fortunately, Mrs. Wheeler was summoned earlier. She exchanged a word or two with her dear husband. He tried to say more, but failed. She asked him if she should send for me, and she tells me that a beautiful smile spread all over his face. I shall think of it as long as I live.

The acute mania, lasting for ten days, had completely worn him out. His recuperative power was gone. All that was possible was done for him. He was treated with kindness and attention and medical skill, but he could not be saved. We wish he could have died in more pleasant surroundings, but it was impossible. It was necessary to remove him from his home to the asylum; indeed, it was his only chance of recovery, and that was the supreme consideration. The decision, of course, rested with Mrs. Wheeler. It was not my doing, though I should have done the same. All who know the facts are perfectly satisfied that everything was done for the best.

Had I known this trouble was coming I would have dragged my friend away from his work and his books to the country or the seaside. Perhaps it would have saved him. But one cannot tell. I did not know there was anything wrong until the Monday morning, May 2, when he sent a note round to my house saying that he had no sleep and was unfit for work, and asking me to call round. I advised him to potter about in his little garden while I attended to the paper. In the evening when I called again he was much worse. There were clear symptoms of the old disorder. Medical and other help was obtained, but the malady developed rapidly, and on the Thursday he was removed. He was just a week in the asylum. The doctor said a change would probably take place at the end of that period—for better or worse. When the end came it was without suffering. The mania subsided. He was quite calm. His wife found him quiet and rational. He dozed away into his final rest.

On the Saturday morning before he was taken ill I met him as usual at business. He seemed a little flurried at first, and I looked at him keenly; but the agitation disappeared, and I felt no apprehension. We disposed of business, and had a delightful talk about Shakespeare. There could be no better topic, and it was the last rational conversation I had with him. He mentioned it to Mrs. Wheeler when he got home. She tells me he was so pleased, and apparently happy. And I am pleased to know that our last communion was in the great serene depths of thought—soul to soul.

I have neither time nor space to write now of Mr. Wheeler's great intellectual gifts, his wonderfully wide reading, his profound acquaintance with the whole subject of the evolution of human society, and his minute knowledge of religion, from Christianity down to the most savage superstitions. At such a moment it is character more than intellect that claims our attention. He was brave, gentle, pure, loving, and benevolent; full of kindness towards his fellows, and all dumb animals. His nature had no stain of malignity. He loathed cruelty of every kind. He was as honest as truth, as veracious as daylight. He did whatever he undertook with a whole-hearted devotion. He was true to others, and true to himself. He knew and felt that philosophy is barren without the fertilisation of love. He was one of the heralds of a new and more glorious day for humanity.

Mr. Wheeler has left a will, bequeathing all he dies possessed of to his dear wife, and appointing her executrix and me executor. As soon as possible I shall estimate the value of his small estate—of course it is comparatively trifling. I shall also have a talk with Mrs. Wheeler about the future, and with something definite before me I shall make whatever appeal I may think necessary for the widow of this dead soldier of the army of human liberation. Meanwhile I shall see to what is requisite.

All this is necessary to be said in view of the reference to how the Christians "cared for" Mr. Wheeler.

I will state the precise facts. The National Secular Society paid the expenses of Mr. Wheeler's funeral. I myself paid the expenses of his removal to the asylum and his expenses there for the week. I also paid Mrs. Wheeler her husband's salary in full for six weeks, and half that amount for another six weeks. She also received money from another source, the details of which I did not trouble to ascertain, although it was referred to as follows in the *Freethinker* for May 29:—

> "I also venture to refer, in passing, to another matter. I have been told that some who are not very friendly to the National Secular Society mean to do something for Mrs. Wheeler. By all means let them do so. I should be sorry to divert a single penny from her pocket, although I think a common effort on such an occasion is in every way desirable. But in order that I may not be misunderstood—and it seems so easy to misunderstand me—I deem it advisable to say that Mrs. Wheeler is not in immediate want of anything. I have paid her Mr. Wheeler's salary in full since he was taken ill, besides defraying other (not large) expenses; and although I cannot go on at this rate—and indeed it will not be necessary—I shall continue to provide her with a sufficiency until her affairs are settled. It is not very pleasant to mention these things, but one has sometimes to choose the lesser of two evils."

Mr. Wheeler's estate was soon wound up. It included his library, the house he had lived in for many years, and a little money in the Birkbeck Bank. Mrs. Wheeler was thus in possession of some £400. In addition to that I raised a "Wheeler Memorial Fund" for her through the *Freethinker*, which amounted to nearly £150. Mr. George Ward, acting on her behalf, checked the total of the weekly acknowledgments, and Mr. S. Hartmann, the N. S. S. Treasurer, who acted as treasurer to this Fund, paid over the amount by cheque to Mrs. Wheeler in the presence of Mr. Ward and myself. Mr. Hartmann is dead—Mr. Ward is still living. I mention these details for the sake of accuracy.

It will be seen, then, that there was no room for the Christians to "care for" Mr. Wheeler. He was well cared for without them. I am not surprised, however, that they boast of what they never did.

The house that belonged to Mr. Wheeler was a small one in Enkel-street, near the "Nag's Head," Holloway. I believe he became possessed of it through the kindness of Mr. W. J. Birch. He had lived in it for many years, he was taken ill in it, he was removed from it to the asylum. Judd-street, Euston-road, is therefore somewhat cryptic.

There never was any suggestion at the time that Mr. Wheeler had in the slightest degree reverted to Christianity. His utterances while in a state of acute mania (for he died in a padded room) count, of course, for nothing. I was told that his ravings were largely about the Devil; but it is easy to understand that, for he had been collecting materials for a "History of the Devil." Mr. Wheeler's funeral was thus described by Mr. H. Clifton—who reported my address at the graveside, a report which I may reproduce for the newer readers of this journal:—

> "The funeral of the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler took place at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday afternoon, May 14, at four o'clock. Beautiful wreaths covered the coffin from Mrs. Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. Foote, Mr.

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Graham, the Misses Bell (Glasgow), Mr. and Mrs. Pilcher, the N. S. S. Executive, and Edith Vance and Annie Brown. A large number of London Freethinkers were gathered round the open grave. There were also Captain Adams (of Montreal), Mr. Pinder (Leicester), and Mr. W. B. Thompson (Chatham). The N. S. S. Executive was represented by G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, R. Forder, E. M. Vance, Annie Brown, E. Truelove, S. Hartmann, P. Sabine, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, W. Leat, T. Gorniot, and F. Schaller. Among the crowd of mourners were Toby King, Miss Truelove, Mr. and Mrs. Bonner, Mrs. Forder, Mr. G. Bedborough, Mr. and Mrs. Chilperic Edwards, Mr. Tom Shore, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Watts, Mr. C. Herbert, Mr. and Mrs. Standring, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Fagan, Mr. and Mrs. Caisey, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, Mr. H. R. Clifton, Mr. W. P. Ball, Mr. Pitt (Birmingham), and many other ladies and gentlemen whom we have not space to enumerate. The beautiful weather gave the fullest opportunity to Freethinkers from all parts of London of paying the last sad mark of respect to the deceased, who was respected and loved by all. When the coffin was lowered into the grave Mr. Foote delivered a brief address. He spoke under great emotion and with much difficulty."

While I am on this subject I venture to reproduce Mr. Holyoake's tribute to Mr. Wheeler shortly after his death:—

"A LOST WORKER.

"Few men to whom a great name has been given have better illustrated it in their lives than Joseph Mazzini Wheeler did in his. He had much of the silent devotion, disinterestedness, and incessant effort associated with that name. I often think children should have the right of two names—the one given by parents in honor of someone whose career has great value in their eyes, and a second name which should be the child's right of selection when he comes of age and is able to decide for himself under what name he will be known. Mr. Wilks, an editor of the *Morning Star*, had been more fortunate had he not borne the great name of 'Washington.'

"Mr. Wheeler was happier in his name, as he really had qualities which illustrated it. He gave all his days and more than all his strength to the service of Freethought. He was the most painstaking of all those who have written on the careers of heretical thinkers. He was the biographer of the soldiers of the cause of unfriended progress. He took unstinted pains to find out the facts. He wrote books himself which could be trusted for substantial accuracy. He was more than a historian; he was himself a thinker. In reviewing Grant Allen's notable book on the *Idea of God*, Mr. Wheeler wrote this memorable sentence: 'To me, it appears that the necessity man is under of interpreting things outside himself in terms of his own consciousness is a sufficient explanation of the origin of all theistic beliefs.' He who could write this was an authority in thought. There is a campaign in the sentence; there is a volume in it. I know of no sentence on the subject so simple, so comprehensive.

"Behind the veil of Mr. Wheeler's modesty there were usefulness and power of no ordinary kind. It may be truly said of him, his life helped to shorten the days of superstition and to lengthen the days of reason.

"G. J. HOLYOAKE."

There are reasons for the special pleasure I have in reproducing this eulogy.

I think I have nailed down this lie about Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. I have shown that the Christians had nothing whatever to do with "the close of the late Mr. Wheeler's life." He was in my employment, as sub-editor of the *Freethinker*, up to the last moment of his sanity. Secularists gave him a public funeral. The President of the National Secular Society delivered the valedictory speech over his coffin. Mrs. Wheeler (he had no children) was treated with every kindness and consideration by the Secular party. Christians did not "care for" her any more than for him. I never heard that one of them contributed to any fund raised for her advantage. It was her misfortune that she fell into the hands of designing persons, who had no relation whatever to the Secular party, who relieved her of her money, and shortened her life. I do not say they were Christians. I know they were not Freethinkers.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Life and Labors of Haeckel.

THOMAS HOOD once referred to the musical, mystical Germans. But although modern Germany has been wonderfully prolific in musical genius, and has mystified the world with the most cloud-creating, metaphysical systems, it has also given birth to some of the very greatest of nature's students and interpreters. Among these, Ernst Haeckel, the Darwin of Germany, occupies a pre-eminent position. This distinguished Naturalist was born at Potsdam on February 16, 1834. The child was father to the man. As a boy, the great biologist was instinctively attracted by living nature. He revelled in light, color, and beauty. He adored the sun and the wondrous blue of the heavenly vault. He was fascinated by trees, butterflies, and blossoms. Although the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy would sit silently for hours and pull a daisy to pieces, and then triumphantly restore the florets to their original place in the flower disc, he nevertheless displayed that sturdy independence and thoughtful originality which were destined to characterise him through life. Both parents of Haeckel were of cultured stock. The father was a man of considerable ability, and the mother helped to deepen her son's loving interest in the wonders of nature. The lad's inclinations were strengthened as he came under the influence of the writings of the great Pantheistic poet and philosopher, Goethe. The famous traveller, Humboldt, likewise helped to deepen Haeckel's desire to study and understand nature and nature's laws. Then Darwin's *Voyage of a Naturalist Round the World* set the lad's brain aflame, although as Bölsche truly says, at this early period no one could have foreseen what the celebrated English naturalist was to mean to him through the coming years. While still a higher form schoolboy at Merseburg, Haeckel elected to make the study of the vegetable kingdom his life's work.

At this time, the immortal Schleiden was teaching botany at the University of Jena, and the young Haeckel regarded him as the teacher of teachers in all matters that related to plants and plant life. The young botanist was about to begin his studies under Schleiden when a serious attack of rheumatism necessitated his return to his parents, who were now domiciled in Berlin. This incident to some extent determined Haeckel's career, as his studies shortly afterwards recommenced under Dr. Alexander Braun in the Prussian capital. Braun was a close friend of the Haeckel family, and the pupil was brought into friendly personal touch with that progressive man of science. Haeckel's enthusiasm for botany was boundless, but his matter-of-fact father could not be persuaded to regard its serious study as in any way appertaining to the practical. He therefore decided that his son should embark on a medical career; and it was during his medical course that Haeckel came under the influence of such celebrated professors as Leydig, Kölliker, and Virchow. From their teachings he derived the ideas which afterwards created such a sensation throughout the world of science. Another eminent man who played an important part in the fashioning of Haeckel's ideas was Professor Johannes Müller, the Berlin physiologist and anatomist. Müller encouraged his promising pupil to accompany him when, during the summer vacations, the master studied the marvels of aquatic life along the shores of the lakes and seas.

Having taken his medical degree, Haeckel was sent to Vienna to walk the hospitals, and although his old love for botany revived, he soon passed the State examination, and, in 1858, became fully qualified as a practising physician. His patients reached the magnificent number of three; but as his hours of consultation were fixed at from five to six in the morning, his slender success need not awaken much astonishment. The elder Haeckel was now fully satisfied that his son was not cut out for a successful doctor, and, in these circumstances, he consented to furnish the funds for a twelve months' tour in

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sunny Italy, and to the garden of Europe the young physician journeyed in 1859. The marked artistic tendency of Haeckel's nature now for a time asserted itself. In Sicily, he tells us, "I was nearly thrown out of my line and made a landscape painter." He possessed a positive genius for painting, but this special passion for art proved but a transient phase of his career. In the waters of the sunlit Italian sea Haeckel commenced the loving and patient study of minute marine organisms, which laid the foundations of his subsequent scientific fame. With the aid afforded by his microscope and fishing-net, he made the acquaintance of a world of wondrous living creatures previously undreamed of. His newly discovered treasures served the double purpose of ministering to his love for the beautiful while materially assisting him in mastering an important province of zoological science. Out of these investigations arose his monumental monograph on the Radiolaria, which is undeniably one of the most elaborate contributions to biological science ever written.

Haeckel returned to Germany in 1860. In Berlin he heard for the first time that the Englishman, Darwin, had published a preposterous book, entitled *The Origin of Species*. Darwin, it seemed, dismissed the then almost universally accepted dogma of the fixity of species with scant ceremony. This revolutionary thinker had undertaken in his book to prove that plant and animal species had arisen through the agency of natural selection. All living things vary, and those that fluctuate in a favorable direction become the winners in life's race, while those that vary in an unfavorable manner or fail to adapt themselves to a modified environment are sooner or later destined to perish. In the light of the innumerable facts and arguments resistlessly arrayed in Darwin's masterpiece, the current theory that the world of life existed just as it came from the Creator's hand was no longer tenable. Haeckel immediately plunged into the pages of this amazing book, and became deeply impressed by its teaching.

"It profoundly moved me," he wrote to Professor Bölsche, "at the first reading. But as all the Berlin magnates (with the single exception of Alexander Braun) were against it, I could make no headway in my defence of it." It was not until Haeckel had debated the matter in lengthy conversations with his friend Gegenbaur at Jena that all doubts disappeared, and Haeckel became a firm adherent of Darwin's philosophy.

Many able men who might at that time have embraced the evolutionary gospel were held back by the benumbing influences of traditional doctrine. But Haeckel had already outgrown the theology of his childhood. The man-like god of the Churches had been displaced and dethroned for the all-pervading deity of Spinoza and Goethe. The utter spiritual degradation which Haeckel had recently encountered in Naples and Sicily among a so-called Christian population made him realise that an anthropomorphic divinity is but one step removed from the miracle-working saints and madonnas of Roman Catholicism. He was, therefore, disposed at the commencement of his career to look to the powers inherent in nature as affording the only possible explanation of the phenomena of living matter. In this frame of mind, he discarded his earlier prejudice against the probability of spontaneous generation, and completely abandoned his faith in the existence of a special vital force.

Haeckel was at this time a private teacher at Jena, but became Extraordinary Professor of Zoology and Director of the Zoological Museum shortly afterwards. And now this new professor published his work on the Radiolaria, in which the doctrine of descent was unreservedly accepted. The book and its author caused much searching of heart among such authority-bound biologists as Giebel and Agassiz. Haeckel had now definitely thrown all theological preconceptions to the winds, and in this early work he wrote in a vein which plainly indicated that he regarded Darwin's politic reference to the "Creator" as a concession "not "consistent, and, I think, not quite sincere." That this surmise was well warranted, is, of course, sufficiently obvious to every candid reader of Darwin's *Life and Letters*.

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, the evolutionary philosopher, Oken, was inspired with a desire to spread the light of science among the people. He scorned the then fashionable doctrine that science could never enter into the lives of common men. Largely owing to Oken's influence, scientific congresses were occasionally held, and the utterances of the more democratic and progressive scientists thus reached a wider public through the powerful medium of the press. One of these gatherings took place at Stettin in September, 1863. Haeckel led off as first speaker, and in a brilliant address he carried Darwin's views to their logical conclusion. In the *Origin of Species* Darwin had avoided all definite allusion to the human race, and had patiently awaited the publication of his epoch-making *Descent of Man*. But the younger and more impetuous Haeckel refused to wait, and at the Stettin Congress he declared that—

> "as regards man himself, if we are consistent we must recognise his immediate ancestors in ape-like mammals; earlier still in kangaroo-shaped marsupials; beyond these, in the secondary period, in lizard-like reptiles; and finally, at a yet earlier stage, the primary period, in lowly organised fishes."

Bold as this utterance was, it was at the time fully supported by Virchow, who was present when Haeckel's speech was delivered. But upon the old school of scientists, who struggled under the disadvantages imposed by traditional dogmas, it descended like a bolt from the blue. All things that live or have ever lived, Haeckel assured his auditors, were the outcome of orderly natural evolution.

Haeckel pictured the world of life in the form of an all-embracing genealogical tree.

> "The thousands of green leaves on the tree that clothe the younger and fresher twigs, and differ in their height and breadth from the trunk, correspond to the living species of animals and plants; these are the more advanced, the further they are removed from the primeval stem. The withered and faded leaves that we see on the older and dead twigs represent the many extinct species that dwelt on the earth in the earlier geological ages, and come closer to the primeval stem-form the more remote they are from us."

This remarkably realistic conception may be phrased in a slightly different way. If we examine an aged elm, we may notice the evidences of growth and decay which have characterised its development. There are many dead boughs and branches, and, although the trunk may be hollow, the stately tree goes on spreading its branches in the light and air. New trees are born from its seeds, and its far-extending roots may give rise to saplings in the vicinity of the parent plant. And so in the organic kingdom when regarded as a whole. Despite the fact that multitudinous species have disappeared during the course of organic development, countless new forms have arisen to carry on the vital processes of nature. For this assertion there is absolutely conclusive evidence. Having made a very critical and conservative estimate of the palæontological discoveries of the previous century, Huxley was ultimately compelled to conclude that, even if the evolutionary theory had not existed, the striking testimony to its truth furnished by the fossil remains which had been found in the rocks would have forced men of science to invent it.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

SNUBBED.

Several medical men and a newspaper man were visiting an insane asylum. The employee who was showing them about pointed out a man who considered himself the Lord.

The newspaper man, true to his instincts, seeking to have an interview, asked the insane one whether he really made the earth in seven days.

The latter gave him a look of utter contempt, and said as he passed on, "I'm not in the mood to talk shop!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, John Kellard, "Christianity the Enemy of Progress."

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 6.30, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss K. B. Kough, "Thomas Paine: a Commemoration."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Why I am an Atheist"; 7.30, R. Miller, "Christians *v.* Mohammedans."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, C. E. Ratcliffe, "Further Replies to Christian Critics." Finsbury Park: 6.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, J. Hecht, "Science and Superstition."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Square): 7.30, R. Mearns, "Historic Christianity."—A meeting of the Branch for the purpose of electing officers for 1913 at the Socialist Club, Wood-street, at 3 o'clock.

BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Place): Arthur Thompson, 3, "Why I Ceased to be a Christian"; 6.30, "Bible Beauties."

BURY BRANCH N. S. S. (front of Circus): Matt Phair, 3, "Socialism and Religion"; 6.30, "What must we do to be saved?"

FARNWORTH (Market Ground): Monday, June 9, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Uncrowned Kings."

OLDHAM (Park Gates): Gilbert Manion, 11, "What Do We Know of the Soul?" 3, "Christian Socialism Exposed"; 6.30, "Reason *versus* Emotion."

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THE
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When men will not be reasoned out of a vanity they must be ridiculed out of it.—L'ESTRANGE.

To the Rescue.

SOME years ago the English newspapers contained reports for a whole week of seven explorers who were accidentally imprisoned in a cave in Austria. The unfortunate men were known to have some food and some candles, but the extent of their supply was uncertain, and their condition was suspected to be desperate. Extraordinary efforts were made to effect their release, the Government even sending engineers to assist in the undertaking. It may be said that the whole of Europe was interested in their fate. Many people in England looked anxiously at the morning and evening papers for tidings from Gratz; and when at length, after eight days of entombment, the seven explorers were released, a sigh of satisfaction was breathed by millions of men and women who never saw them, and never would see them, and who would soon, perhaps, forget or half forget that incident in the bustle of our eager civilisation.

While those seven imprisoned explorers were, so to speak, in the very shadow of death, thousands of other persons were passing out of existence. But they were expiring in the "ordinary course of nature." Familiar things do not strike the imagination. Old soldiers on the battle-field see comrades fall around them with absolute unconcern. Undertakers lose all sense of the solemnity of funerals. And in the same way we do not shudder at the ordinary bills of mortality. But in circumstances of exceptional peril a fresh appeal is made to our sympathies. Thus it was that thousands of men, women, and children died of all sorts of painful or loathsome diseases, while the fate of those seven explorers trembled in the balance, without causing a single pang to the general heart of the community.

It is not our object, however, to write an essay on sympathy and imagination. What we really want to do is to indicate the religious moral of this episode.

Seven men were in peril of death—a horrible slow death from starvation in utter darkness. The world at large knew nothing of them but their danger. It was ignorant whether (as men) they were good, bad, or indifferent. Whatever their characters, it was impossible to leave them to such a terrible fate. Society insisted on every effort, at any cost, being made for their release. Many persons near at hand—not relatives, nor even friends—could scarcely sleep for thinking about them in the lone still night with its "giant heart of memory and tears."

Now all this is something new in the world. Not that sympathy is new, not that there is anything novel in help between man and man. The novelty is in the scope of the emotion. A cosmopolitan humanity is growing up which realises the sentiment of the Roman poet who made a stage character exclaim that, as a man, nothing human was alien to him. The world is becoming more sensitive. It shivers at the thought of suffering which, hundreds of years ago, it would have regarded with sheer indifference. And this intensity, this expansion, of the sympathetic emotions, is not due to any religious causes. It is due entirely to the progress of science, which has brought about a rapid intercommunication between different parts of the world, multiplied interests and attachments, and quickened all the springs of life.

Directly, this progress is material; indirectly, it is ethical; still more indirectly, it is religious. It is a fond conceit of the theologian that religion is a *cause* of progress. Religion is a purely conservative agency. It stereotypes what it finds. Always the last to move, it brings up the rear of the great procession of humanity. The gods of to-day reflect the ideas and characters of the men of a thousand years ago.

Still, religion *does* move, however slowly; though it only moves because it must, because it cannot afford to be left utterly behind. In an age of humanity, the brutal old doctrines of divine caprice, holy vengeance, and heavenly malignity, die a natural death. Yet they are not buried; they become transformed. The old words are retained with new meanings. Some little adjective, adverb, or preposition is seized upon, and magnified into infinite meaning; and thus, by changing the proportion of the ingredients, the compound is totally changed in its character. Once it was taught that most men went to hell; now it is taught that most men go to heaven. There has been no alteration in the "inspired" text, only a change in its interpretation. The Word of God is compelled to follow the growth of the Spirit of Man.

How is it possible for men and women who are wretched at the thought of the peril of seven men they never heard of before—how is it possible for men and women who make frantic efforts to save them—to believe in their heart of hearts that the Creator of *all* men and women will thrust the majority of them into hell, and hold in his untrembling hands for ever the key of their dungeon of torture? Hell is doomed when the very worst of men would shrink from keeping their enemies in it for a single hour. Cruel lynchings and other atrocities may be wrought by "civilised" men in moments of fierce passion, when the beast within them leaps through the restraints of civilisation. But cruelty is no longer inflicted deliberately in cold blood. How then can we go on worshiping a God who coolly plans, and remorselessly carries out, the wholesale damnation of his own creatures?

Gradually, but surely, generation after generation, the world is growing sweeter, purer, and brighter. The barbarous ideas of the old theology are fatally discredited. A new religion is springing up—the Religion of Humanity. Rescuing souls from hell is a decaying employment. Science and brotherhood are striving to rescue the poor, the downtrodden and the wretched. The policy of the new reformation is to make the most of *this* life. The promises of bliss in another life begin to fall upon the people's ears as idly as the threats of future pain. Man is entering upon his heritage of comfort, hope, and dignity in this world—which is the world of all of us, and where, in the end (as the poet says), we find our happiness, or not at all.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Witch Mania.—II.

(*Continued from p. 354.*)

THE vast majority of those executed for witchcraft were women. At all times witches appear to have been more numerous than wizards, owing, one may assume, to their closer connection with the world of supernatural or ghostly beings. It was said "For one sorcerer, ten thousand sorceresses," and Christian writers were ready to explain why. Woman had a greater affinity with the Devil from the outset. It was through the woman that Satan had seduced Adam, and it was only to be expected that he would utilise the same instrument on subsequent occasions. James I., Macaulay's "wisest fool in Christendom," writes in his *Demonologie* that it is easy to account for the greater number of witches, "For, as that sex is frailer than man is, so it is easier to be entrapped in the gross snares of the Devil, as was over-well proved to be true by the serpent's deceiving of Eve at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sex sensine." To be old, or ugly, or unpopular was to invite persecution, and in an overwhelming majority of instances to be accused meant conviction. It was said that it was common with women of the lower classes, during the height of this mania, to pray that they might never grow old.

Upon the most trivial signs, women were accused of dealings with the Devil. If the crops failed, or the milk turned sour; if the head of a local magnate ached, or a minister of the gospel fell sick; if a woman was childless, or a child taken with convulsions; if a cow sickened or a sheep died suddenly, some poor woman was charged with witchcraft, and tortured until she confessed her alleged crime. A mole or wart on any part of the body was a sure sign of commerce with the Devil. Every such woman was believed to have one part of the body that was insensible to pain. To discover this, she was stripped and long pins run into her body. If a suspected witch kept a black cat, could not shed tears, or failed to repeat the Lord's Prayer correctly, these were all so many signs of guilt. More serious tests were the following: A woman's legs were tied across, and she was so seated on them that they bore the entire weight of her body. In this position she was kept for twenty-four hours, and on the first sign of pain condemned as a witch. There was the torture of the boot—a frame in which the leg was placed and wedges driven in until the limb was smashed. A variation of this was to place the leg in an iron boot and slowly heat it over the fire. There was also the thumbscrew, an instrument which smashed the thumb to pulp by turning a screw. More barbarous still was the bridle. This was an iron hoop, passing over the head with four prongs, two pointing to the tongue and palate and one to each cheek. The suspected witch was then chained to the wall, and watchers appointed to keep her from sleeping. The slightest movement caused great torture, and in the majority of cases a confession was secured. The favorite and most general test, however, was by water. The right hand was tied to the left foot, the right foot to the left hand. She was then thrown into a pond. If she sank, and drowned, she was innocent. If she floated, she was guilty, and was burned.

This water test was a favorite of Matthew Hopkins the celebrated witch-finder, appointed to the work by Parliament during the Commonwealth. Hopkins travelled up and down the country, much like an assize judge, putting up at the principal inns, and at the expense of the local authorities. He charged twenty shillings a visit, whether he found witches or not. If he discovered any, he charged twenty shillings for every witch brought to execution. In addition to the water test the following was practised. The witch was placed crosslegged on a stool in the centre of the room. Doors and windows were kept open to watch for the entrance of some of the Devil's imps. These imps might come in the form of a fly, a wasp, a moth, or other insect. If the watchers failed to kill any insect that came into the room, it was clear evidence that this was a demon, and the proof of guilt was established. Hopkins was responsible for the death of a large number of people, and it is comforting to know that he eventually fell under suspicion of witchcraft himself. His success in discovering witches led to the accusation that he was in league with Satan, who provided him with a list of witches. He was seized, tried by his own favorite water test—and *floated*.

It is hard to realise, nowadays, the gravity with which these trials were undertaken. An outline of a very famous witch-trial will best bring this home, and which I take from the report published in 1682, at the sign of the Bible, Duck-lane, London. The trial was that of Rose Callender and Amy Duny, before Sir Mathew Hale, "Lord Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer." The two women, both widows, were charged with bewitching Anne Durent, Jane Bocking, Susan Chandler, William Durent, and Elizabeth and Deborah Tracey. William Durent was an infant, left in charge of Duny. For some fault the mother reprimanded Duny, who, in reply, threatened her. The same night the child was taken with fits, and on consulting a Dr. Jacob, of Yarmouth, was told to hang up the child's blanket at night and see if anything was therein. A great toad was found, which, on being thrown into the fire, "made a great and horrible noise," and was no more seen. Stranger and more conclusive still, the next day, Amy Duny was found to have her face "all scorched with fire."

Elizabeth and Deborah Tracey, aged nine and eleven, were also bewitched by Duny. They were seized with lameness, fits, and extreme pain in the stomach. Upon recovery they "would cough extremely, and bring up much phlegm and crooked pins, and one time a twopenny nail." These pins and nail were produced in court as evidence. The children's aunt also declared that she saw flies, bearing crooked pins in their mouth, come to the children. The father tried to cure them by reading the New Testament. This would proceed well enough until they came to the name of Lord or Jesus or Christ, whereupon they would suddenly fall into fits. The other charges and evidence followed in precisely similar lines.

Quite a number of eminent persons were present in court, among them being Sir Thomas Browne, the author of *Religio Medici*. The latter being "desired to give his opinion what he did conceive of him; was clearly of opinion that the persons were bewitched, and said that in Denmark there had been lately a great discovery of witches, who used the very same way of afflicting persons by conveying pins into them, and, crooked as these pins were, with needles and nails." The judge, Sir Matthew Hale, in directing the jury, said "that there were such creatures as witches he made no doubt at all. For, first, the Scriptures had affirmed so much. Secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence of such a crime." He also "desired the great God of Heaven to direct their hearts in this weighty thing they had in hand; for to condemn the innocent and let the guilty go free were both an abomination to the Lord." The jury duly returned a verdict of Guilty, and they were executed four days later.

There is not much variety in the numerous reports of witch trials. I have cited this one because it is among the most famous in English history, and because of the eminence of the men who testified their belief in the reality of the offence. There has, indeed, never been a delusion that could call a more numerous array of great names to its assistance than this one. Sir Thomas Browne, whose testimony at the trial of the two widows has already been cited, said in the most famous of his writings, "For my part I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are witches. They that doubt of these do not only deny them, but spirits; and are obliquely, and upon consequence, a sort, not of infidels, but

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atheists."* Henry More, the great Platonist, asserted that they who deny the agency of witches are "puffed up with nothing but ignorance, vanity, and stupid infidelity." Ralph Cudworth, one of the greatest scholars of the latter half of the seventeenth century, said that they who denied the possibility of intercourse between Satan and human beings "can hardly escape the suspicion of having some hankering towards Atheism."† Writing nearly a century later, when the English law merely prosecuted as rogues and vagabonds those who pretended to witchcraft, Blackstone thought it necessary to point out that this alteration did not deny the possibility of the offence, and added :—

> "To deny this, would be to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth in which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony; either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits."‡

About the same time Wesley gave utterance to his famous declaration on the subject :—

> "It is true likewise that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge that these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised and with such insolence spread through the land in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."§

This was written at a time when, as Wesley says, the educated European mind was beginning to reject tales of witchcraft as mere fables, although as late as 1778, the "Associated Presbytery" passed a resolution deploring the fact that witchcraft was dropping into disrepute. At the commencement of the witch epidemic, Montaigne had written :—

> "How much more natural and more likely do I find it that two men should lie than one in twelve hours should pass with the winds from east to west? How much more natural that our understanding may, by the volubility of our loose, capering mind, be transported from his place, than one of us should, flesh and bones as we are, by a strange spirit be carried upon a broom through a tunnel or a chimney."‖

Montaigne's voice was quite unable to arrest the development of the epidemic. Against his influence were the many centuries during which people's minds had been saturated in superstition, and which had created an atmosphere favorable to all kinds of delusion. Fortunately, other forces were set in operation. The growth of physical science, and the weakening of direct theological influence in social affairs, gave rise to a temper of mind fatal to the continuance on a large scale of such a belief as that of witchcraft. To-day it has ceased to interest the world except as a problem of historical psychology.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

* *Religio Medici*, pt. i., sec. 30.
† *True Intellectual System*, vol. ii., p. 650.
‡ Stephen's edition; 1883; vol. iv., p. 238.
§ *Journal*, 1768.
‖ *Essays*, bk. 3, ch. xi.

Weighed in the Balances.

Father Ralph. By Gerald O'Donovan. (Macmillan; 1903. 6s.)

THIS is a book which Catholics dare not read. From their point of view its rightful place is on the *Index Prohibitorius*. It constitutes a terrible indictment of the Irish Catholic Church. Her motives, methods, and aims are weighed in the balances and found wanting. She contains many thoroughly sincere and noble characters who, though as a rule extremely ignorant and superstitious, love what they believe to be the truth better than life; but the priests rule the people with a rod of iron, which is bound to be bad for both. Such is the Irish Church as depicted by Mr. O'Donovan in this fascinating though painful story. From his mother's womb Ralph O'Brien was set apart for the priesthood. His mother had prayed for a son, solemnly promising that if the Lord gave her one he should be a priest. He came in answer to her prayer and promise. She was a fanatic to whom the Church was everything, and in whose sight a priest was holy and could do no wrong. Major O'Brien thought that his wife was more or less mad and took her religion much too seriously; but he allowed her to have her way with Ralph. Brought up in a convent, she had been taught to hate the world because of its extreme wickedness, and she was determined that her son should grow up unspotted from it. Her supreme care was to guard him from the slightest worldly contamination. In providing a permanent nurse for him, her first concern was that she should be decidedly religious. On the advice of her confessor, Father Eusebius, a Carmelite friar, Mrs. O'Brien engaged Ann Carty, a member of the third order of Mount Carmel, who made it a condition of service that she was allowed to attend mass daily, and a number of sodalities several times a week. Formerly her religiosity had made it difficult for Ann to get or keep a place, but Mrs. O'Brien regarded it as her highest recommendation.

Inniscar, his family place, being let on a long lease, Major O'Brien had settled down in Dublin; and after his marriage he took a house in Harcourt-terrace, in which Ralph was born. To his mother Ralph was the child of miracle. When Ann Carty arrived she was informed that her charge was a dedicated vessel, holy unto the Lord; and it was as such that Ann always looked upon him. Every day she took him in his pram to the Carmelite church, and then, lifting him out of the pram, she bore him in her arms to the rails of the high altar, where she knelt and prayed. As the boy grew older he began to take notice of his surroundings and to ask questions. Ann was as ignorant as she was devout, and her answers to his questions were not convincing, except when heaven and hell were concerned. At breakfast one morning the following dialogue occurred :—

> "What is heaven like, Ann?" he asked, as he ate his porridge.
>
> "Oh, it's a grand place entirely. There's God sitting on a throne of gold, and the Blessed Mother near him on another throne, and all the angels playing on harps and fiddles."
>
> "Is it as fine as the altar in Clarendon-street when the candles are lit?"
>
> "Oh! it's more beautiful than anything you could think of."
>
> "Will we go there, Ann?"
>
> "If we are good, dear."
>
> "And why don't we go there now, this very day?"
>
> Ann busied herself for a minute buttering some bread, while he waited, spoon poised in the air, eagerly watching her.
>
> "Why, we'd be only paving stones in heaven if we went now, but when you are a priest and have done a lot of good things, you'll be high up in heaven, with maybe a harp of your own."
>
> He sighed, ate his porridge in silence, and then said: "I suppose we couldn't go to hell either?"
>
> "What put that into your head?" Ann said, startled. "Of course we won't go to hell. Hell is a bad place, and no one that says their prayers, and does what they are told, will go there."
>
> "But there are lots and lots of people there."
>
> "Only the wicked, darling."
>
> "Tell me some."
>
> "Oh, there's Cromwell, and Henry the Eighth, and millions more."
>
> "Were they wicked?"
>
> "You'll learn all about them when you grow up."

Ralph turned out a splendid learner. At eight years of age he knew the whole Catechism by heart, and was being prepared for his first confession. He now discovered that he was a great sinner, and the place he was most familiar with was hell. He thought

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about it by day and dreamed about it by night. He read and re-read again and again, with avidity, that most horribly wicked book, *Hell Opened to Christians*. He went to his first confession, and later to his first communion. He attended a Jesuit school, and soon won an exhibition and a gold medal for Latin. He loved Latin because it was the language of the Church, but was greatly puzzled when he found that the Jesuits and the Carmelites held opposite views on the subject of Pagan learning. Many other questions troubled him, such as the idea of Oliver Goldsmith being in hell, as well as many other Pagan and Protestant writers, whom he so greatly admired.

After twenty-seven years' absence Major O'Brien returned to Inniscar, and Ralph entered the Bunnahone Seminary, still believing he had a vocation and always worrying about his soul. This Seminary was a preparatory school for Maynooth, and its speciality was spiritual training. The President, Father Phil Doyle, was neither a scholar nor a saint, but a man of the world who loved night parties and playing nap. French was taught by a man named Nolan who was nearly always drunk. He was late for his class one day, and the boys sat waiting. At last the door opened and closed, and Mr. Nolan was seen, hat on head, walking cautiously towards the desk, touching the wall with his left hand and leaning heavily on the stick in his other hand. Halfway he stopped, keeping one hand on the wall and one on the stick, glared at the boys, and said in measured tones—"What are you looking at, you country bumpkins? Have you never seen a gentleman before?" At last, he reached the desk, took off his hat, overcoat, and gloves very slowly, and sat down with difficulty. "I have to apologise, gentlemen, for being so late," he said suavely, "my rheumatism is very bad to-day." "He has been oiling it with Pat Darcy's rum," said one of the boys; "I smelled it the moment he came in the door." Such was the Bunnahone Seminary for spiritual training. Ralph's mental eyes were being slowly opened; but he still believed he had a vocation, and was anxious about his soul.

After six months at Bunnahone Seminary, Ralph went to Maynooth, and soon learned that the latter was not much of an improvement upon the former. There was scarcely one Professor who could be pronounced a genuine scholar, or who had mastered the branch of learning committed to his care; and the majority of students left the College almost as ignorant as when they entered it. Ralph worked hard, however, and was amazed at the incompetence of so many of the teachers. Doubt now assailed him; but he still believed in his vocation. In due course, he was ordained and obtained a curacy under Father Molloy at Bunnahone. Father Molloy was a drunkard and lacked principles. The Bishop of Bunnahone had the reputation of being an exceptionally holy man. Mrs. O'Brien half worshiped him. Major O'Brien had always disapproved of the choice of the priesthood for his son; and when Ralph was appointed a curate at Bunnahone, close to his home, his resentment rose to such a height that it upset his mental balance. His anger against him was so strong that he made a new will, leaving his entire property to his wife. He indignantly refused to see his son whenever he called; and in this frame of mind he died. The Bishop was now his mother's sole consolation. His lordship was never absent from Inniscar, and Mrs. O'Brien responded to his every whim. He wheedled her money out of her by the thousand; and last of all she made everything over to him and entered a convent. Other rich women in the diocese had done the same before her.

Father Ralph became a popular favorite; but his intercourse with the people soon convinced him of the fact that, as a class, the priests were universally hated. The people submitted to their rule simply because they feared them. Here and there a priest was to be found who was a good man, such as Father Duff, who confessed that he never gave ten minutes to thinking about his soul in his whole life, and that if the Catechism didn't tell him he had one he wouldn't know it, and Father Sheldon, who was obliged to admit that doing any thinking on his own account was "a dangerous occupation for a priest"; but being good men they made bad priests. Father Molloy was declared to be the typical priest, and he was a heartless tyrant in his parish. Father Ralph established a club for working-men which proved a great boon to many of them. Father Molloy frowned on that club from the beginning. When three of the members were nominated to fill half of the six vacancies for the office of Town Commissioners, Father Molloy and his friends canvassed the town against them with complete success, and the club itself was smashed up. "One by one half-a-dozen workmen were dropped by their employers, and found it impossible to get work elsewhere." This was done out of spite because they had ventured "to set themselves up against the respectable shopkeepers of this ancient town." Father Ralph did his utmost to find employment for them, but he "could get no one to take them." When he asked Father Molloy to get them work his reverence, pursing his lips and frowning, said, "A little starvation will do them good and bring 'em to their senses." Eventually he promised to think about it, but he added:—

> "I won't lift a finger though for Byrne and Dunne. They may go to hell for all I care. I wish to God they were out of the town. I'll have no man in the parish that won't go my way. I met that little Dunne yesterday and he had the impudence to cheek me. I'll make mincemeat of him yet."

Father Ralph became a Modernist, and the present Pope's Encyclical against Modernism compelled him to renounce his Orders. No one can honestly peruse this book without coming to the conclusion that the curse of Ireland is priestcraft, and that the Irish nation cannot possibly prosper as long as this curse remains. There are many thousands who do not believe in the Church, but they are afraid to say so openly. In every parish the priest is supreme. When Monarch Reason awakes in Ireland the Fathers Molloy will have to flit, and Mr. O'Donovan's book will do much to accelerate the advent of that happy time.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—V.

(Continued from p. 357.)

> "I am fully aware of the delicacy of the subject of which I write. It is hedged around by a curiously impalpable barrier. Men in certain positions dare not speak their minds openly about it for fear of their words being misconstrued at home. The power behind the missionaries in America especially, and also in England, is great. The brand of 'Atheist' or 'Unbeliever' can easily be attached to a [Cabinet] Minister, so it comes to pass that one hears opinions in private that they dare not imperil their position by expressing openly."—GEORGE LYNCH, *The Path of Empire* (1903), p. 47.

> "The Boxer patriot of the future will possess the best weapons money can buy, and then the 'Yellow Peril' will be beyond ignoring. Wên Hsiang, the celebrated Prime Minister of China, during the minority of Tung Chih in the early 'sixties, often said, 'You are all too anxious to awake us and start us on a new road, and you will do it; but you will all regret it, for, once awaking and started, we shall go fast and far—farther than you think—much farther than you want!' His words are very true."—SIR ROBERT HART, *These from the Land of Sinim* (1901), pp. 52-53.

BEFORE proceeding further, it will be as well to clear up one or two popular misconceptions—due to the wholesale misrepresentation and downright lying of missionary propagandists. To hear some missionaries, over here for a six months' holiday, discourse at the annual missionary meetings held in our churches and chapels, one would think that the only recreations of the Chinese consisted in smoking opium and murdering their female infants; or, if they permit them to live, to torment them by binding their feet; added to which they worship idols and are immersed in the most degrading superstitions. The opposition encountered by these great and good men in China is accounted for by the "opium war," by which Indian opium was forced

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upon the unwilling Chinese at the point of the bayonet, and to the intolerance of the Chinese religions.

As a matter of fact, the Chinese are, of all nations, the most tolerant in matters of religion. Professor Parker, in his *China and Religion*, observes:—

> "It is surely very much to China's credit that at no period of her history have the ruling powers 'in being' ever for one instant refused hospitality and consideration to any religion recommended to them as such. If there has been hostility, it has always sprung up from political and economical causes" (p. 2).

And the same author declares:—

> "That the Chinese Government has always been one of the broadest-minded and the most liberally inclined towards pure religion; that it has never persecuted to the merciless and cruel extent once so common all over Europe, and that when it has seemed to persecute at all, it has really only defended what it honestly believed to be its own political rights; it has never encouraged religious spite, mental tyranny, or the stifling of any free opinion that keeps clear of State policy, scandal, or libel" (pp. 6-7).

To make this point clearer, says the Professor:—

> "If we put it in another way, suppose the 2,500 missionaries of innumerable Protestant sects now in China applied for passports to go about the same work in Russia, what would be their reception? How would their rights compare with those they enjoy in China?" (p. 8).

And, as he further points out, we know nothing of "final causes" or of a man-like "Supreme Ruler":—

> "Why, then, should the *odium theologicum* be so persistent except on the hypothesis that no one possesses the least knowledge about either life or soul, and therefore each apostle feels angry at being driven into a corner when pressed for demonstration? Such, at least, is the tolerant view the best rulers of China have always taken of religion" (p. 15).

This toleration is the outcome of that natural and ingrained scepticism which we have seen to be characteristic of the Chinese mind. We could give many more citations as to the toleration of the Chinese in matters of religion, but it will suffice to give the testimony of Mr. Alexander Michie, whose work, *The Englishman in China during the Victorian Age*, is the standard book on the subject. He says:—

> "One trait in the national character was highly favorable to the reception of a foreign religion. The Chinese were of all nations the most tolerant of opinion. They had already accepted and assimilated two foreign religions—Buddhism and Mohammedanism; indeed, they had also, two hundred years before, accepted and retained Christianity until it was expelled in convulsions provoked by the foreign missionaries themselves. Its second advent need not have caused convulsions had it come as the others had done, with clean hands, as a religion and nothing else." *

So much for the missionary charges of intolerance. Now for the charges of infanticide so boldly and repeatedly brought against the Chinese by the missionaries.

Dr. Morrison, who says that this subject, of the prevalence of infanticide in China, has been discussed by a legion of writers and observers, and the conclusion generally arrived at is—the prevalence of the crime has been enormously overstated. He goes on to observe:—

> "The prevalent idea with us Westerns appears to be that the murder of their female children is a kind of national pastime with the Chinese, or, at the best, a national peculiarity. Yet it is open to question whether the crime, excepting in seasons of famine is, in proportion to the population, more common in China than it is in England. H. A. Giles, of H. B. M. Chinese Consular Service, one of the greatest living authorities on China, says: 'I am unable to believe that infanticide prevails to any great extent in China.....In times of famine or rebellion, under stress of exceptional circumstances, infanticide may possibly cast its shadow over the empire, but as a general rule I believe it to be no more practised in China than in England, France, the United States, and elsewhere' (*Journal*, China Branch R. A. S. (1885), p. 88). G. Eugène Simon, formerly French Consul in China, declares that 'infanticide is a good deal less frequent in China than in Europe generally, and particularly in France,' a statement that inferentially receives the support of Dr. E. J. Eitel (*China Review*, xvi., 189). The prevailing impression as to the frequency of infanticide in China is derived from the statements of missionaries, who, no doubt unintentionally, exaggerate the prevalence of the crime in order to bring home to us Westerns the deplorable condition of the heathen among whom they are laboring. But even among the missionaries the statements are as divergent as they are on almost every other subject relating to China."*

After citing several of these contradictory statements, Dr. Morrison observes:—

> "One of the best known Consuls in China, who lately retired from the service, told the writer that in all his thirty years' experience of China he had only had personal knowledge of one authentic case of infanticide. 'Exaggerated estimates respecting the frequency of infanticide,' says the Rev. Dr. D. J. MacGowan, 'are formed owing to the withholding interment from children who died in infancy.' And he adds that 'opinions of careful observers will be found to vary with fields of observation'" (*China Review*, xiv., 206). †

Of the love of the Chinese for their children, we have ample testimony. Miss Elizabeth Kendall, in her recently published book, *A Wayfarer in China*, tells us:—

> "The way to the heart of the Chinese is not far to seek. They dote on children, and children the world over are much alike. More than once I have solved an awkward situation by ignoring the inhospitable or unwilling elders and devoting myself to the little ones, always at hand. Please the children and you have won the parents" (p. 56).

Mr. George Lynch observes:—

> "As to the love of the Chinese and Japanese for their children, it has to be seen to be appreciated. Those wise-eyed little mites, who before they can walk sit perpetually enthroned upon their mothers' backs throughout the live-long day, are a source of so much joy and adoration to their parents that one feels no surprise not to hear them cry as other children do." ‡

And these are the people who, according to some missionaries, practice wholesale murder of their helpless infants!

As for the practice of foot-binding, it is indeed a barbarous custom. It has been condemned by the reform party now in power in China, and is well on the road to extinction. Mr. R. F. Johnston, in his valuable work on the Chinese, says:—

> "In spite of the cruelty involved in foot-binding, the rather common impression that the Chinese have no affection for their daughters or regard the birth of a girl as a domestic calamity is very far from correct. That a son is welcomed with greater joy than a daughter is true, but that a daughter is not welcomed at all is a view which is daily contradicted by experience. Mothers especially are often as devoted to their girls as they are to their boys. In the autumn of 1909 a headman reported to me that a woman of his village had killed herself because she was distracted with grief on account of the death of her child. The child in question was a girl, fourteen years of age. 'Her mother,' said the headman, 'begged Heaven [*Lao T'ien-yeh*] to bring her daughter back to life, and she declared that she would willingly give her life in exchange for that of her daughter.' It is erroneous to suppose that the old loving relations between mother and daughter are necessarily severed on the daughter's marriage. It is often the case that a young married woman's happiness consists in periodical visits to her old home." §

Moreover, it should be carefully remembered, says Professor Giles, that Manchu women do not compress their feet, and the Empresses of modern times—who belong to the Manchu race—have feet of the natural size. Neither is the practice in force among the Hakkas, nor among the hill tribes, nor among the boating population of Canton and elsewhere. The same authority observes: "Neither is there any foundation for the generally received opinion that

* Alexander Michie, *The Englishman in China during the Victorian Age* (1900), vol. ii., p. 228.

* Dr. G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, pp. 129-130.
† *Ibid.*, p. 130.
‡ G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 292.
§ R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, p. 247.

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the Chinese lame their women in this way to keep them from gadding about. Small-footed women may be seen carrying quite heavy burdens, and even working in the fields."*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

We have received a long, chaotic letter from Mr. H. A. Marsh, which he rightly surmises will not be printed in the *Freethinker*. The only relevant statement he makes is that his contemptible babblings about the late J. M. Wheeler—who died fifteen years ago, and might have been left, as the saying is, to rest peacefully in his grave—did not refer to anything that occurred during his last illness, in 1898, but to something that occurred during his first illness, in 1883—at which time, we believe, Mr. Marsh was either very young or unborn. His own authority on the matter may be treated as negligible. The authority he advances is that of a Mr. Richards, who states, in a letter to Mr. Marsh, dated March 26, 1913—that is, thirty years after the event—that he heard Mr. Wheeler utter certain words as to whether blasphemers could be saved, etc., etc. We have no room for more of such nonsense. For its importance to the lower sort of Christians depends upon that word "illness." They take it to have been a common illness, whereas it was mental illness. Mr. Wheeler broke down after our imprisonment, and had to be placed in an asylum. Surely every sensible person will excuse us from discussing samples of his ravings while in that condition. We may add that Mr. Wheeler's illnesses were always mental. His body was frail, but not unhealthy; he ate well and slept well; it was brain trouble every time that he broke down. He was in three asylums in 1883—the year of my imprisonment; he was in another asylum in 1884—after my release; and he died in another asylum in 1898. We did our utmost for him during that fourteen years. We had been warned that another attack would probably be fatal.

We decline to consider the ravings of a madman—for such Mr. Wheeler was during every recurrence of his malady. We heard plenty of them one Sunday afternoon in 1884, when we had to rope him (with the assistance of Mr. W. J. Ramsey) and take him to a lunatic asylum ourselves. That horrible performance just left us time to swallow a cup of tea and step upon the Hall of Science platform.

The greater part of Mr. Marsh's letter is occupied with an invitation to us to go to Hyde Park and hold a public discussion with him. On what? Why, on whether Mr. Wheeler was fair to the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale in an article in the *Freethinker* in 1893—twenty years ago! What on earth has Mr. Marsh to do with that article? What has anybody to do with it at this time of day? We don't remember what the article was, and we decline to take the trouble to refer to it. Any mistake, misrepresentation, or injustice it might have contained should have been corrected or challenged at the time. It is not going to be discussed by us, or in these columns, to-day. Only born fools—or designing persons trading on the folly of born fools—would quarrel with our decision.

A word in conclusion. Is it not, perhaps, the most decisive condemnation of Christianity that the champions of its "Evidences" have always devoted most of their time to raking over the muck-heap of personalities. We never knew them to do anything else. We never heard of their doing anything else. Were we to imitate them we could fill whole *Freethinkers* with similar cackle about Christians. But we decline to follow their disgusting example and sink to their ignominious level.

Since writing the foregoing paragraphs we have received a most amusing letter from Mr. W. Davidson, a member of the N. S. S. Executive, residing at 131 Warwick-road, Edmonton. The opening paragraph of this letter shows what sort of stuff the latest yarn about a distinguished dead Freethinker is made of. Mr. Davidson writes:—

> "Inquirers are referred to Mr. Allen, and we are informed that a letter exists written, it is supposed, by a sister of Mr. Wheeler's; the letter being in the possession of a Mr. Richards, of Edmonton. Mr. Allen lives three doors from me, but I was so unkind as to pass his door, and seek out Mr. Richards who holds 'the original letter.' He received me with a courtesy that is very rare among the elect and placed the whole case before me. To come to the point. There is no letter from Mr. Wheeler's sister; in fact, there is no letter at all. To cap it all, Mr. Richards knows nothing about the sister; he does not know if there is one."

Mr. Richards tells his own story and seems to be his own witness. He repeats to Mr. Davidson, with several fresh decorations, what he has already said to Mr. Marsh and others. He admits that Mr. Wheeler, on the night of March 9, 1883, was "off his head." Why, then, go further? How on earth can it matter what poor Wheeler said? We don't care a straw *what* he said. It cannot be of the slightest interest or importance to any sensible person in the world. And we repeat that we decline to cumber our pages with it.

Mr. Davidson goes on (Mr. Richards took him there) to that wicked article of Mr. Wheeler's in the *Freethinker* of January 29, 1893. This part of Mr. Davidson's letter is extremely funny, and we would print some passages if we had not already given the matter too much space. "The whole thing," Mr. Davidson concludes, "is an escape of Marsh gas, which has produced the usual will-o'-the-wisp."

A protest against the use of religious terms in business advertising has been made in a new direction and in rather a novel manner. The Annual Convention of the Society of Friends, held recently in New York, protested strongly against the use of the word "Quaker" for advertising articles of commerce. The committee asks, if "Quaker Whisky," and similar expressions, why not permit the following?—

> "Baptist beer is the best booze."
> "Congregational cocktails makes multitudes marry."
> "Episcopalian paint covers a multitude of sins."
> "Catholic cocktails are a cure for all cases."
> "Presbyterian purses for plethoric pockets."
> "Lutheran looking-glasses give pious reflections."

The committee appointed to consider the matter invites the co-operation of other religious bodies for their mutual protection. Perhaps, if this invitation meets with no response, Quaker business men may contemplate reprisals. The subject opens up almost infinite possibilities.

Dr. Campbell Morgan says he only really believed in the Bible when he put all other books on religion aside and said, "I will read it without prejudice and without pride, as every man should. I will let it make its own appeal to my soul. And it did." Of course it did. So would any other book read in the same circumstances. It is as plain as it can be that Dr. Morgan expected that it would appeal to him, and, in such cases, the expected usually happens. That is not reading the Bible without prejudice; it is commencing with a prejudice of a very strong and definite character. Dr. Morgan is either deliberately fooling himself or fooling other people.

A new novel bears the title *The Naked Soul*. The very essence of nudity! And no doubt full of piety.

A woman named Kate Martin was charged recently with riotous behavior in a church. As she wanted to see "God," and not the clergy, she was committed to an asylum.

The *Church Times* professes itself greatly disappointed at the outcome of the Balkan war. So, we imagine, are many others. These others who may have pictured the Allies as undertaking a war in the interests of freedom and brotherhood will have had a rude awakening on finding the movement disclosed as a mere piratical enterprise, with the Christian Allies ready to fly at each other's throats over the plunder. The regret of the *Church Times* is not, however, on this score. Its grievance is that the "hope of December"—"the entire destruction of the Ottoman Empire"—is not to be realised. It is not content for that Empire "to continue another day." We do not imagine that it matters much whether the *Church Times* is content or not. Its shriekings are only noteworthy as showing how far Christian bigotry will carry some people. The *Church Times* has never raised a word of protest against the now admitted barbarities of the Christian Allies. It is a case of the Cross against the Crescent, and anything the former may do in such a contest is wholly justifiable.

Only a week or so ago this same very Christian journal was indulging in another shriek in favor of conscription—we beg pardon, compulsory military discipline, which is a new name for the old thing. It laughed at those who thought a military training injurious to character, an incentive to militarism, or economically wasteful. As though any form of compulsory military training could avoid producing all these effects. It argues that many would be better off

* H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*; 1911; p. 105.

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under military training than they are at present. Very likely; but that is an argument for better social organisation, not for conscription. And how is it possible to maintain a large army of men in a wholly non-productive pursuit without saddling the rest of the community with their support? Even though it be necessary, it is economically disastrous.

The Christian Church, says the *Church Times*, holds it not merely permissible, but even laudable, to bear arms at the bidding of lawful authority, and that without questioning the fundamental justice of the conflict. That is the proper spirit of militarism. Fight on order, whether the conflict be just or unjust, and without even inquiring whether it be one or the other. And that, we are asked to believe, is not detrimental to character? If such a course means anything at all, it means the entire abrogation of a sense of right and wrong. And how can we expect men trained in that school to become as useful citizens as they might otherwise be? The *Church Times* also reflects that a nation that relies on a voluntary army may rush light-heartedly into war, but a nation in arms will act differently. It is "precisely the obligation of military service" that has "turned France from drunken dreams of glory to become the most stable upholder of European peace." We welcome this good opinion of France, which has disestablished religion, and which contains so large a leaven of Freethought in its councils. But the reasons upon which the good opinion is based are simply idiotic. France had its "drunken dreams of glory" under conscription, not under voluntaryism, which never existed in modern France. And, if conscription leads countries to become powerful factors for peace, are we to conclude that it is England—Christian England, with its voluntaryism—that is ready to rush light-heartedly into war, and is the storm centre of European life? Really, the *Church Times* is getting on dangerous ground. Its theology is stupid enough, but its sociology is even worse.

Mr. Balfour has been repeating his attachment to "religious education." Who doubted it? That is the "ticket" of his party, and it was his party he was addressing. Of course he talked with his tongue in his cheek. On other platforms, and on other subjects, he would never dare to say that "no thinking man" could differ from the views he was expressing. He knows very well that "thinking men" differ from him on all sorts of subjects. Perhaps it only needs to be said that the Archbishop of Canterbury (Chairman of the Church of England, Limited) presided at the meeting.

The Rev. David Barron is greatly mistaken when he says that it is "a certificate of character to be attached to a Church." It used to be a certificate of *respectability*, but never of *character*. It is a notorious fact that the biggest scoundrels in history were professing Christians. In many centres now, however, to be attached to a Church is not looked upon even as a sign of respectability, the Churches having completely lost the place they once held in the estimation of the public.

Mrs. Besant has been addressing big meetings at Queen's Hall. This is not surprising when we consider her natural gift of speech, the way in which she dresses herself now she is a Theosophic high priestess, the large amount of money spent on advertising her lectures, and the tomfoolery she pours forth in a flood. Talk sense—and how few will listen! Talk nonsense—and what a crowd will hang upon your lips! Mrs. Besant has learnt the truth of this by joyful experience. The moment she left Atheism and embraced one of the most foolish and pretentious superstitions in the world, she found that she had combined "conviction" with "respectability." People could go and hear her without loss of social dignity. There was a rush of disciples (we should call them by a harder name) who were tired of Christianity, and many of whom saw through it, but were naturally of a religious temperament, and dying for something to take the place of the faith they had abandoned. They had to have *some* faith, and Mrs. Besant supplied it. Moreover there was a special business advantage in Theosophy. You could make it up as you went along—on the principle of the American political candidate who ended an eloquent speech by saying, "Well, gentlemen, those are my sentiments; and if they don't suit—they can be altered." The very advertisements of Mrs. Besant's recent Queen's Hall lectures hold out a bait to every variety of superstitionists. Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Jews, Salvationists, Mormons, are all invited to walk into the Theosophic Annex and enjoy themselves. Mrs. Besant is working the "happy family" arrangement in religion. That is all she does. It would be a waste of time to discuss anything she says. She does not discuss nowadays; she delivers oracles. She knows no more than she did when she was an Atheist. She asserts a great deal more, but it is all about the unknown. Some day or other (after death) you may find that Mrs. Besant's assertions are true; meanwhile you give her unlimited credit for the cheques she draws upon your credulity. It is by this that all the religious charlatans in the world succeed in their operations. They supply you with information about the next life, and you supply them with position, comfort, and cash in this life. We are sorry that Mrs. Besant has joined that tribe, but there is no shirking the fact. Don Quixote told Sancho Panza that there never were but two parties in the world—the Haves and the Have-Nots. Just in the same way there never were but two mental camps in the world—the camp of Faith and the camp of Reason; and Mrs. Besant is in the wrong one.

The Rev. Dr. Meyer told his congregation at Regent's Park Chapel that he delighted in the posters on the hoardings. Did he include the pictures of the musical comedy girls?

Theologically speaking, the Rev. H. S. McClelland, B.D., of Finchley, is clearly a coming man. At present he has charge of the Correspondent Column in the *Christian Commonwealth*. He is exceedingly ingenious and very well versed in the art of playing with words. An anxious inquirer asks, "Can any *cultured* mind believe any longer in the Genesis stories of the Creation and the Flood, or the Nativity stories in certain of the Gospels?" Mr. McClelland answers thus: "Certainly, my friend. My difficulty is to understand how they can be believed by any except the cultured mind." This may strike the thoughtless as an extremely smart answer, but in reality it is no answer at all. It is rather an instance of verbal jugglery.

By a *cultured* mind, the reverend gentleman tells us, he means "the mind that has learned to distinguish actual truth from ideal truth, and has realised that ideal truth is nearer reality than any cumbrous happening of history." If he is right it follows that the cultured mind is only about fifty years old. The stories referred to had always been regarded as actual "cumbrous happenings of history" until scientific criticism rendered it quite impossible to treat them as such any longer. So great a man as Gladstone had not a cultured mind, for he strenuously argued that the stories under consideration were actual truths; and the same may be said of a vast number of divines at the present moment. The fact is, that the New Theologians imagine that the cultured mind belongs exclusively to themselves.

Take the story of the Virgin Birth as an example. If it is not *actually* true, if it never happened, how on earth can it be *ideally* true? Mr. McClelland is perfectly right when he says that to regard "these statements as the record of actual facts is to deprive them at once of their spiritual significance for thousands of devout and holy men who simply cannot believe they ever took place." If the Virgin Birth never took place, what "spiritual significance" can it possibly have? Certainly no more in the case of Jesus than in that of Gotama, Plato, Alexander the Great, Scipio Africanus, Augustus, or any other person whom the ignorance and credulity of admirers deified after he was dead. Such juggling tricks will save neither the Bible nor Christianity.

The Rev. John Appleyard, of Burnley, says that "when Jesus encountered social evils he promptly sought a remedy." On what authority does the reverend gentleman make such a statement? Can he name one social evil which Jesus attacked and sought to remove? Was he not known as "the friend of publicans and sinners [harlots]?" What help did the poor ever get from him? Did he not rather mock them, saying "Blessed are ye poor"?

The Dean of Norwich and Mrs. Florence Barclay are at loggerheads about the Bible. Dean Beeching is to some extent a Higher Critic, but Mrs. Barclay, with greater consistency, holds that God's Word must be characterised by absolute infallibility. We agree with the lady. The Word of God *must* be infallible. The Bible is fallible; therefore it cannot be the Word of God. As a scholar the Dean admits its fallibility, while as a clergyman he treats it as the Word of God, which is the very acme of inconsistency.

The usually well-informed correspondent of the *Christian World* has a remarkable article in that paper of June 5, on the state of religion in Germany. He says that about 40,000 persons left the State Church during the first four months of this year. In 1905 the number of seceders was 12,000; in 1911, 60,000; in 1912, 100,000; and this year

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the number is expected to reach 200,000. In the official papers they are compelled to fill up, stating their opinions, they describe themselves as Free-religious, Freethinkers, Monists, Atheists, Pantheists, Humanists, Theosophists, Gnostics, and no religion at all. English religious leaders, with that ingrained duplicity which seems inseparable from British Christianity, are in the habit of referring to such movements as losses that affect the Roman Catholic Church or the Lutheran Church alone, and leaving it to be inferred that evangelical Protestantism is the gainer. On this point the *Christian World* correspondent is most explicit. He says:—

> "Observe, this is not a movement from one Christian denomination to another. It is not a movement against Episcopacy as such, against Presbytery as such, against State connection as such. Unbelief is at the bottom of it, and the men who secede, save in a very limited number of cases, are not ridden by any principles of State policy or dogma. They care for none of these things. The seceders reason thus: 'I do not believe any longer in the Church or its dogmas. I regard the Christian Church as an absurd and antiquated institution, which may have played a useful part in the past, but has no longer any reason for its existence. Its Bible, its creeds and confessions, have been shown by science to be untenable things to which no modern and educated man can consent.'"

"Unbelief is at the bottom of it." That, we believe, is a perfectly honest and accurate summary of the situation.

Rev. David Smith, who runs a correspondence column in the *British Weekly*, was trying last week to cheer up a mother who had lost a girl of nineteen years of age. He tells her that the mother's revolt against God is a "heathenish attitude." When pagans did not get their desires they blamed their gods, and "What better are we than those dark pagans if, when sorrow comes, we cry out against God and charge him with cruelty?" Personally, we should say that Christians are in this respect decidedly worse than "these dark pagans." It may be all right praising one's God for doing well, when he does well, but it shows a lack of courage and intelligence not to tell him he does badly when things are done ill. Paganism, in this respect, left a man a man, with enough courage to resent ill-treatment and impeach its author. Christianity taught man to keep on its knees and return thanks to the hand that flogged him. For our part, we prefer to see one stand up to whatever he has to face—God or man.

Mr. Smith gives the mother two grains of consolation, after administering the rebuke. He tells her that sorrow is the universal lot, and if she looks around she will "find others whose case is far worse." Maybe; but that really does not affect the issue. Each one's sorrow is one's own, and one's grief at the loss of a child is not really lessened because someone else has lost two children. It is an old piece of religious consolation, "Thank God, there are many worse off than I," but those worse off have their grievance increased, if possible, by the fact of others being better off. God may hit some people harder than others, but the real question is, "Why should he hit anyone?" The second crumb of comfort is that "there are sadder places on earth than the grave," and "Taken away from the evil to come" might be written on every child's grave, for "what the evil would have been God only knows." Well, that is a pretty way to compliment God! The "dark pagans" stood up to their gods and told them what they thought about their conduct. The Christian, lacking the courage of plain speech, tells God, by way of praising him, he has arranged the world so well that every person born is lucky who dies young. The difference between pagan and Christian does not, after all, seem to be in a difference of perception of the facts, but in strength of mind and honesty of expression. Dr. Smith is evidently a very bad case.

Mr. Blatchford denies a statement "said to have been made at a public meeting in America by Mr. Mangasarian" that he had abandoned rationalism and declared himself a Christian. "I think," he adds, that "someone has been pulling Mr. Mangasarian's leg." Perhaps so. But isn't it possible that someone has been pulling Mr. Blatchford's leg?

Mr. Blatchford is further concerned about another report that has reached him,—namely, that "Mr. Mangasarian prophesies an alliance between the Roman Catholics and the Socialists against Freethought." "What strange bees some men do get into their bonnets," Mr. Blatchford exclaims. True; the German invasion of England, for instance; which as the comic song says "hasn't come off up to yet."

"That, by God, we *can't* stand," exclaims Mr. A. M. Thompson. Never mind what it is that the stout knight and his friends *can't* stand—though they know quite well that they have *got* to stand it. Why does Mr. Thompson take the name of God in vain? We understood that he (Mr. Thompson, not God) was an Agnostic, a Rationalist, or something of that sort—not an Atheist, of course; perish the thought! Why does he cry "by God"? If a Theist cries it he may be sincere. It is by no means a proof of sincerity in a Non-Theist. Mr. Thompson should try to recover his sense of humor.

Mr. Silas Hocking says that if the Church is in a decline, Christianity is not. "Christianity was gaining ground, but—it might as well be said first as last—it was outside the Church." We have heard this many times before; but it is sheer nonsense. Christianity and the Church are identical. They have never existed, they never can exist, apart. We do not know what Mr. Hocking means by Christianity, but we should be very glad to learn exactly where and in what manner it is gaining ground outside the Church. If he understands by it the teaching of Jesus, as Professor Harnack does, he knows as well as we do that in that sense it has always been a dead letter.

The Christian Pulpit is the strangest institution in the whole world. In proportion as the tide of its power recedes the tide of its audacity rises. The latter was never higher than it is at this moment, and the former never quite so low. The consequence is that it does not matter in the least what the Pulpit says on any subject, because nobody takes its utterances seriously. Like the clever writer of "The Office Window" in the *Daily Chronicle*, the great majority of people seldom hear a sermon, and rather than read one would play with Bradshaw. But as there are a few who still both hear and read sermons it may be useful to call attention to the fact whilst the influence of sermons is at ebb-tide, their extravagance is at flood-tide.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for June 4 there is a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall which abounds in the wildest, most extravagant statements. One is that we know more about the man Jesus than we do about almost any other man who ever lived, and that we of to-day know more about him than any people in the past knew about him, except his personal friends. This statement is absurdly untrue. Why, there are scholars among us who deny his historicity, many more who doubt it, while theologians not a few regard him as largely a legendary character. Dr. Marshall is, therefore, talking sheer nonsense when he says that Jesus is almost the best known man that has ever lived. Greater scholars than he, who proudly call themselves Christians, such as Professors Schmiedel, Harnack, and Bacon, though believing in the historic Jesus, frankly admit that it is extremely difficult to extricate him from the webs of legend in which he is entangled in the Gospels.

But Dr. Marshall waxes more extravagant still. He goes on to assert that the historic Jesus is the Eternal and Universal Christ. That we may do him no injustice we give his own words:—

> "Christ is the light of the world. By that we do not mean that he may be the light of the world, or that when missionaries have carried the Gospel everywhere he will be the light of the world—no, we mean that he is the light of the world. We mean that all the real light that men have had has been Christ. Edwin Arnold wrote a poem about Buddha and called it *The Light of Asia*. Students of non-Christian religions tell us of much light for the soul that those religions possess. And it is all Christ. Is this too daring?"

No; *nothing* is too daring for the Pulpit; but we are obliged to pronounce it frothy cant and twaddle, of which a man of Dr. Marshall's intelligence ought to be incapable. If such a Christ existed and beheld even London, he would shed tears of blood at the thought of his own infinite failure.

Rev. A. J. Waldron says he is ready to "back Disraeli any day against Jack Johnson." Very likely. It's easy odds on the ghost in such an encounter. Few blacks, or whites either, would stand up long to such an adversary. But that is not the end of Mr. Waldron's wisdom. "Don't spoil everything on the wedding day," he told the same Brockwell Park audience, "by telling your wife what ripping tarts your mother makes. Swallow the bride's pie, tell her it's a dream of delight, and then take a pill on the sly." This beats Confucius hollow. Jesus Christ did not die in vain. Without his sufferings on the cross the world would never have had Mr. Waldron playing the Christian philosopher in *Tit-Bits*.

M. Bertillon, the eminent French criminologist, says the gentleman robber is found only in fiction. Evidently he does not regard priests as gentlemen.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £144 2s. 11d. Received since:—J. Barry, £1; Bogey, 15s.; J. N. V., 2s. 6d.; T. M. Mosley, 2s.

W. KENT.—The "twaddle" you send us from the *British Weekly* is too tiresome for criticism. We don't know where to begin and should never know where to end. Rev. Dr. Forsyth may take his verses for poetry, but it is rather odd that the editor should agree with him.

M. J. LEWIS.—We do not see what there is "to throw some light" on in the printed tract you send us. These stories of unnamed converted Atheists are manufactured by the dozen. They are mostly written by people of poor character for readers of weak brains. The only thing that needs explaining is the quantity of deliberate lying that goes on in connection with Christianity. We are glad to have your appreciation of the articles printed in the *Freethinker*.

T. M. MOSLEY.—We will glance through Mr. Ballard's production and see if there is anything in it that merits criticism. We are aware that Mr. Ballard has a vogue in certain circles, but we do not think any serious thinker is likely to be affected by what he says. We can quite understand that Mr. Ballard feels neglected when Freethought writers of repute ignore him, but as they invariably direct their criticism against writers of much better standing, their consciences are clear.

A. HOPKINS.—We note your opinion that our Wheeler articles "have given the C. E. people a nasty jar." Also, that you will expect them to *lie* low for the future. We feel more sanguine about their low lying.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

F. COLLINS.—We do not undertake to hunt up books and report prices for our readers. All we can tell you is that Holyoake's *Bygones Worth Remembering* was published in two volumes by T. Fisher Unwin.

SYDNEY SMITH.—Shall be sent as desired. We wish you good luck in the New World.

J. BARRY, sending his annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "Allow me to express the hope that by this time you have entirely recovered from your late illness, and that for many years yet you will be able to preside at the Annual Conference in the efficient manner that you did at the one recently held." Mr. Barry is a vice-president of the N. S. S. and a Director of the Secular Society, Ltd.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Personal.

I AM in the *Freethinker* editorial chair again. It is not fair to leave a responsibility to others when I feel able to bear it myself. Moreover, there are serious reasons why I should attack various arrears of work. Work, I mean, which cannot very well be delegated, but must be done by myself.

My pen has not been absent from the *Freethinker* for some time, as readers will have seen. In resuming the editorship I do not suddenly undertake a too heavy task. I am taking this step with my eyes perfectly open.

There are a few things I want to say to the party in general, and to my friends in particular. This I will do next week. Meanwhile, I beg to tender hearty thanks to Mr. Cohen for doing the duties of the editorial chair so long and so well, and to Mr. Lloyd and "Mimnermus," and other contributors for special help.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The following paragraph is from the editorial "Notes" of the June number of the *Humanitarian*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, edited by the League's honorary secretary, Mr. H. S. Salt:—

> "We are extremely glad to hear of the recovery of Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society, from a recent serious illness. There are but few public men who have given such unwavering support to humanitarian principles—not merely to this principle or that, but to the movement as a whole. As editor of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Foote has again and again made courageous and powerful protest against the various forms of brutality with which the Humanitarian League has to deal. We say 'courageous' because it does require courage to speak freely (when one is not obliged to speak at all) on such subjects as flogging and vivisection, and 'powerful' because we know of no writer of the present day who goes to the root of a question with a keener and more unerring logical instinct than Mr. Foote. And in an age when there is so much flabby sentiment and slovenly writing, what better help can humanitarianism receive than the tribute of a clear and cogent mind?"

This is a very handsome compliment—no doubt *too* handsome; but the writer's discrimination makes it valuable. We have never had any inclination to "gush over scoundrels," as Carlyle would have put it; yet we would rather do them good than harm, and whoever feels otherwise is something less than a man. Our chief objection to brutal punishments, for instance, is that they not only brutalise brutes still further, but impair the dignity and self-respect of those who inflict them. Mr. Salt puts this aspect of the matter as well as it could be put in the present number of the *Humanitarian*, in reply to Canon Horsley, who had been talking nonsense about the "theorist humanitarian" who points to the hooligan and says "Love him!" Mr. Salt—unlike Canon Horsley, by the way—does not belong to the "love your enemies" faith, and does not "cant about 'loving' a peculiarly unlovable type." "We approve," he says, "of discipline for the hooligan; and the reason we oppose flogging him is not because we are under any sentimental illusions as to his qualities, but because we regard judicial flogging as a loathsome and useless practice, quite incompatible not only with any 'love' for the person subjected to it, but with any intelligent self-respect." That is the great point. Let us keep *our* self-respect, even if the hooligan has lost *his*. Surely that is a wise, dignified, modest, and unassailable position. Heroics are not wanted in the case; only steady common sense.

It would seem that Alfred Austin, the late poet laureate, was more heterodox than was supposed. His remains were cremated at Golder's Green on June 5. No funeral service was held, and no members of the family attended. A memorial service was held the next morning in the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, and another at the crematorium. Evidently there was a "rift within the lute" somewhere.

We are glad to say that patience has not been wasted, after all, with regard to the London County Council's attitude towards public meetings in the Parks and other open spaces. The Council has agreed at last that collections may be taken up at meetings held by *bonâ fide* Societies. We are able to announce that the N. S. S. "permits" are on their way to the General Secretary (Miss Vance). There is something more to be said, but it will keep till next week.

An anonymous reader, signing himself "Bogey," sends a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund. If all the "bogies" of the world subscribed as much, in person or proxy (we guess it would have to be the latter), we should never have to make another appeal.

The Independent Religious Society (Rationalist) holds Sunday morning meetings in the Studebaker Theatre, Chicago—which it was fortunate enough to secure after being driven out of a larger hall by Christian bigotry. We are very glad to see by the brief official report on the front of the last Sunday Program (May 18) that "The Society has had a healthy growth this winter, and is now more firmly established than ever. This is a great tribute to the ideas and the ideals which command our loyalty and service. Our audiences have frequently taxed the capacity of the theatre and hundreds have been unable to gain admission." Chicago, of course, does not present the same difficulties that colossal London does; nevertheless the difficulties there are great enough, and Mr. Mangasarian performs a fine achievement in holding his audience together Sunday after Sunday for eight months in every year. We are sure he must feel the strain of such a task, and look forward eagerly to his annual holiday.

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Mr. Mangasarian has favored us with copies of his two recent books—*The Bible Unveiled* and *The Truth About Jesus*. We have only had time to turn over the pages yet, but that assures us of a treat in store,—and as far as possible we will share the treat with our readers. We may add that Mr. Mangasarian has also favored us with a more than friendly letter, which many of our friends would very much like to read, but which we can hardly subject to the light of publication. The last sentence of all may perhaps be excepted. "I hope to be in England," Mr. Mangasarian says, "during the coming summer, and it goes without saying that you will be the first man that I shall look for."

The formation of the Secular Society, Limited, by Mr. Foote—a constructive achievement which those who call him a "destructive" have been able to imitate but not to equal—has settled the question as to whether funds can be received, held, and expended securely for the promotion of Freethought. We are not, surprised, however, that Mr. Will Crooks, who would be a wiser man if he played the buffoon less, is not aware of the fact. We may tell him at once that the help he seems now to proffer is not needed. Freethinkers have maintained their rights without his assistance and may continue to do so on the same conditions. Speaking at an Upper Holloway chapel on Sunday, Mr. Crooks was good enough to say (see Monday's *Daily News*) that "If a man wishes to leave his money for the propagation of Freethought he should be allowed to do so. He will regret it as soon as he's dead." Freethinkers are already allowed to leave their money in that way and for that object. Thank you for nothing, Mr. Will Crooks! You are not up to date in that matter. Neither is your humor very fresh. Charles Lamb asked Coleridge whether a man might not be damned without knowing it. Suppose you find *yourself* in the wrong box hereafter. There's no certainty, you know, until you get your ticket and address.

The most striking article in the June number of the *English Review* is Mrs. Billington-Greig's "The Truth About the White Slave Traffic." Like the good Freethinker and wholesome sensible woman that she is, with a natural revulsion against lies and wrong-doing, Mrs. Billington-Greig determined to see for herself what truth there was in the stories of the trappings of girls on which the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1912 was founded. She discovered—and she produces her detailed evidence in support of the statement—that those stories were very bad maresnests; that the people who solemnly told them back out of their responsibility when properly challenged; that official persons "in the know" flatly deny that any such White Slave Traffic existed; and that, as far as all the obtainable evidence goes, this new Bill, with its reintroduction of flogging, is simply hysterical legislation, brought about by "Parliament, the pulpit, and the press, the three chief public agents of irrational emotion." "The Fathers of the old Church," Mrs. Billington-Greig concludes, "made a mess of the world by teaching the Adam story and classing women as unclean; the Mothers of the new Church are threatening the future by the whitewashing of women and the doctrine of the uncleanness of men." This article should be read by everyone who cares for right and just relations between the sexes. For what is all the good intention in the world worth without thinking? Mrs. Billington-Greig's word to her own sex may be summed up as "Let us think."

A lively article in the *English Review* is Professor Rouse's on "Our 'Melancholy' Hymnal." Dr. H. Charlton Bastian contributes an important article on "Spontaneous Generation," ending with the statement that "For the Evolutionist the metaphysical conception of mind as an entity should disappear, and with it all forms of 'spiritualism.'.....To speak of 'mind acting directly upon mind,' by way of so-called telepathy and other communications from the 'Spirit' world, must be for him a barren form of words." Mr. Arnold Bennett continues his articles on "The Story Teller's Craft." We differ from some things he says on Writing Novels, but we gladly endorse his fine tribute to Henry Fielding—one of the healthiest as well as strongest of writers, in spite of Charlotte Bronte.

The Edmonton Branch of the N. S. S. takes its annual outing on Sunday, June 22. The place selected is Loughton, and friends in the district who desire to join the party will meet on Edmonton Green at 9 o'clock on the morning of the above date. Those desirous of joining the party later may do so at the "Robin Hood" Hotel, Loughton, at 12 o'clock. Tickets for the excursion are 1s. each, from the Branch Secretary, or from Mr. Hecht, 34 Chiswick-road, Lower Edmonton.

The Life and Labors of Haeckel.—II.

(Continued from p. 365.)

IN 1866 Haeckel published his *General Morphology*, a two-volumed book running to twelve hundred pages of printed matter. This proved a work of the very first importance, which displayed a wonderful knowledge of organic nature. It marked an epoch in the science of animal classification. Huxley hailed it as one of the most solid scientific works ever written, and the eminent German zoologist, Richard Hertwig, has recently said that "Few works have done as much towards raising the intellectual level of zoology." Our own distinguished biologist, Professor J. A. Thomson, has spoken of it in the highest terms of praise. Nevertheless, despite its acknowledged value and importance, it fell practically still-born from the press. Its few readers were confined to the higher and more advanced students of the natural history sciences.

The term "morphology" now embraces the entire science of organic form. The generalisations of this science, like those of every other, are the outcome of a lengthy evolutionary development. Morphology commences with Aristotle, and that great Greek philosopher's contributions to the science were elaborated and extended among others by Linnæus and Ray. At a later date, Cuvier, Lamarck, Hilaire, and Goethe deepened and broadened its study. In 1865, quite independently of Haeckel, Herbert Spencer devoted special attention to the relation of morphology to physiology. His wonderfully fruitful discussion of the problems relating to the shapes of organic structures, which forms part of the *Principles of Biology*, is one that no reader who desires to master the philosophy of evolution can afford to neglect.

But the two thinkers who influenced Haeckel most profoundly were Oken and Goethe. He accepted Oken's main principles without repeating the few blunders which that philosopher admittedly made. But the author of *Faust* was the guiding star of Haeckel's philosophical and ethical system. From first to last Haeckel has unfalteringly claimed the "physician of an iron age," as Arnold called Goethe, as a consciously consistent evolutionist. In the writer's opinion there can be no doubt that this judgment is just. As Geddes and Mitchell have put it,—

> "Goethe lived for forty years after the publication of his *Metamorphosis of Plants*, was familiar with the whole scientific movement, and warmly sympathised with the evolutionary views of Lamarck and Geoffroy St. Hilaire. Independently of Vicq d'Azyr, he discovered the human pre-maxillary bone; independently of Lorenz Oken he proposed the vertebral theory of the skull; and before Savigny he discerned that the jaws of insects were the limbs of the head."

Haeckel's *General Morphology of Organisms*, with the sub-title, *General Elements of the Science of Organic Forms, mechanically grounded on the theory of descent as reformed by Charles Darwin*, contains in embryo practically all the doctrines subsequently expounded in a score or so of important scientific works. The main contentions of the *Evolution of Man* and the *Riddle of the Universe* alike lie latent in the earlier work. The gastræa theory and the doctrine of recapitulation are both to be traced to the pages of the *General Morphology*.

The two succeeding years were divided between his professorial duties at Jena University and his happy and fruitful journeyings to various parts of the world in search of further materials for his biological studies. In 1868 Haeckel determined to popularise his *magnus opus*, the *General Morphology*, and the university lectures he had just delivered on this subject were published in a small, plainly bound volume. This was the first edition of *The Natural History of Creation*. Its success was instantaneous. Although it is but an abstract from the great *Morphology*, it is, perhaps, the most vivid description of the genesis and development of life ever penned.

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This is certainly true of its later editions, containing, as these do, so many amplifications and improvements. The tenth edition is a handsome and splendidly illustrated production.

But the first edition, issued as it was when its author was a poor, ostracised, and comparatively unknown man, contained but a few crude woodcuts, entirely different to the fine plates and figures which now adorn the work. In comparing the embryos of different animals, the same blocks were sometimes employed, and this has led to a considerable amount of vindictive misrepresentation, both in reactionary circles in Germany and elsewhere. The facts have been very temperately stated by Professor Bölsche, himself a biologist of considerable standing. He writes:—

> "For instance, there was the question of demonstrating that certain objects, such as the human ovum and the ovum of some of the related higher mammals, were just the same in their external outlines. The fact is quite correct and established to-day. If I draw the outline, and write underneath it that as a type it is applicable to all known ova of the higher mammals, including man, there is no possibility of misunderstanding. But if I print the same illustration three times with the suggestion that they are three different mammal-ova, the general reader is easily apt to think, not only that they are identical in the general scheme of this outline, but also in internal structure. He imagines that the ova of man and the ape are just the same, even in their microscopic and chemical features. This leads to a contradiction between the illustration and what Haeckel expressly says in the text. *We read that there is, indeed, an external resemblance in shape between these ova, but that there is bound to be a great difference in internal structure, since an ape is developed from the one and a human being developed from the other.* It would have been better if the general reader, who is not familiar with these outline pictures, had been more emphatically informed in the text below the illustration that even the outline is to be taken as a general and ideal scheme. In this sense we must certainly admit that the illustration was bad, since it might lead to a misunderstanding of the clear words of the text. But what are we to say when the opponents of Haeckel's views viciously raise the cry of 'bad faith' on the ground of a few little slips like this, and suggest that he deliberately tried to mislead his readers with false illustrations?.....All these wild charges are of no avail. The human ovum, which corresponds entirely in its general scheme to that of the other higher mammals, was not discovered in 1868 by the wicked Haeckel, but in 1827 by the great master of embryological research, Carl Ernst von Baer. The considerable external resemblance, at certain stages of development, between the embryos of reptiles, birds, and mammals, including man, was decisively established by the same great scientist. These really remarkable stages in the development of the human embryo, during which, in accordance with the biogenetic law, it shows clear traces of the gill-slits of its fish-ancestors, and has a corresponding fin-like structure of the four limbs and a very considerable tail, can be seen by the general reader at any time in the illustrated works of His, Ecker, and Kölliker (Haeckel's chief opponents), or in any illustrated manual of embryology, and their full force as evolutionary evidence can be appreciated." *

Another outstanding masterpiece is the *Evolution of Man*, in which, with great wealth of embryological detail, the origin and growth of the human race is elaborately traced from the primal protoplasmic speck. No contemporary biologist disputes the facts presented in this work, although some naturalists still hold out against Haeckel's deductions from the facts. The *Evolution of Man* continues the story of life's development as narrated in the earlier *History of Creation*, and was the first, and still remains the ablest and most successful, attempt to popularise the main discoveries in embryology on broad philosophic lines.

The great works above considered served to render Haeckel's celebrated Gastræa Theory familiar to the educated world. This theory was no wild speculation, but was based on a secure foundation of demonstrable fact. As is well known, the fertilised ovum from which all animals are developed consists of a single cell. This divides into two cells, and cellular cleavage proceeds until a whole cluster is formed. In this cluster the cells arrange themselves at the surface, thus leaving a hollow cavity within. This stage is succeeded by the formation of two layers of cells, which arrange themselves like a double skin in the walls of the cell cluster, thus leaving an opening at one spot in the walls of the cell colony. This is now a free-swimming embryo with a mouth—the opening just mentioned—an outer skin, and an internal digestive skin. A creature such as this attaches itself to the floor of the sea and develops into a sponge. It is important to notice that this mode of development is common to corals and jelly-fishes as well as sponges. Moreover, this identical process is found among all orders of animal existence, including the very highest, man himself. But in the case of the lowly sponge the gastræa stage represents its full maturity. With the higher animals, however, the gastræa stage is merely an early embryonic condition which is quickly passed through and left behind. Hence Haeckel was constrained to conclude that the gastræa stage stands for a form of life which constituted the adult condition of the common ancestors of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, including man. This seemingly far-fetched theory was once laughed to scorn, but is now frankly accepted by the majority of biologists throughout the world.

Another theory which is closely associated with the one just outlined is known as the Doctrine of Recapitulation. The underlying principle of this doctrine had long commended itself to philosophical naturalists. The pioneer embryologists were both puzzled and surprised at the phenomena which their studies revealed. Among these pioneers Oken occupies a high place, and to him the idea occurred that the caterpillar represents the worm-like stage of the ancestors of butterflies and moths. For instance, he says: "There is no doubt that we have here a striking resemblance, and one that justifies us in thinking that the development in the ovum is merely a repetition of the story of the creation of the animal groups."

Oken's theory that the embryological development of animals represents in reality a record of their past evolutionary history was received with ridicule. To some extent he was himself to blame for this, as his assumptions were not always accordant with anatomical and palæontological science. Haeckel, however, reformed all this; and in framing his generalisation he made the necessary modifications demanded by the sciences in question. Instead of discovering an unblurred record of life's development in the phenomena presented during the ascending stages of embryological growth, Haeckel discovered a condensed, abbreviated, and to some degree modified, epitome of the evolutionary history of animal forms. These qualifications and reservations amply suffice to account for the gaps and leaps which the developing embryo displays.

The law, then, that the numerous phases presented by the embryo or fœtus—the unborn animal or child—more or less correspond to the stages through which its ancestors have slowly ascended in the course of their evolutionary development offers the only conceivable explanation of the facts. This explanation is now almost universally accepted by biological experts, and it certainly seems a remarkable coincidence that the history of organic evolution which has been preserved in the rocks completely corroborates the picture of life's development which embryological science presents to all who care to ponder the marvels which that fascinating branch of natural study has brought to light.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

* *Life of Haeckel*, pp. 104, 105.

What do savage tribes at present accept first of all from Europeans? Brandy and Christianity, the European narcotics. And by what means are they fastest ruined? By the European narcotics.—*Nietzsche.*

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Division of Labor in Reform Work.

OUR idea of a Freethought society is a society of Freethinkers, with a meeting-place and a platform upon which, by means of lectures and discussions, Freethought may be voiced in harmony with its advocacy in a Freethought paper. We once had an opportunity to name a weekly paper, and we called it *Freethought*, and if we were to name another we should choose the same title. For a society what better word can be selected? It is good English, being the term applied to the rise of scepticism in England in the seventeenth century. The original Freethinkers were Deists, as some are to-day, but there was agreement among them, as the dictionary puts it, in rejecting the "authority of inspiration in religion, especially that of the Bible." After three hundred years of accepted use, it is too late now to begin analysing the word and raising the objection that thought is not and cannot be free, since one must think as circumstances compel. It is admitted there is not absolute freedom in thought more than in action, but we do not boggle over the word "free" in that other respect. Refining on the ultimate meaning of a word is a waste of time, and there is no point in the sarcasm about a free platform and free speech when these are denied to the invader of a meeting held for a specific purpose. One who does not know the historic significance of Freethought may learn it from a dictionary. He will find there no justification for the idea that it means the rejection of all things established by law and custom. A Freethought society demands no qualification of a member except that he shall be a Freethinker in the dictionary sense, and a member should be equally generous in asking only that the society shall in the same sense be true to its name.

There are occasions when, in vindication of the principles of free speech, which are vital to Freethought, a society must offer hospitality to advocates of unpopular reforms, as occurred when Abner Kneeland, founder of the Boston *Investigator*, invited William Lloyd Garrison to his platform because all others were closed to the Abolitionist. It was so in the early days of the New York Liberal Club, when there was hardly another place in the city where a Socialist could be heard, or where any other form of Radicalism could find an audience. The multiplication of Liberal platforms, the parentage of which the late Dr. Foote traced to the old Liberal Club, has provided the economic reformers with plenty of stage room, and they have their own audiences. It is the same with other radicalisms, so that the duty of setting aside their own advocacy to listen to that of Socialism, Suffragism, Eugenics, with solvents of the social question, does not now devolve upon the Freethought society or its speakers and supporters as such.

For the first time in a number of years the Freethinkers of New York have this winter had a society of their own, projected, according to our understanding, with a view to doing exclusively Freethought work. From the lectures printed in the *Truthseeker*, readers will judge how closely this program has been followed. While notices of meetings held for other and allied purposes have been read at the hall, the distribution of circulars has not been encouraged, and only Freethought literature has been offered for sale. The character of the society has, in this way, been clearly defined—it has aimed to be nothing else than a Freethought society; and yet we may note here, as a curious illustration of the difficulty of making people understand, that when on a recent Sunday steps were taken toward a permanent organisation, and a committee chosen to name it and outline its purposes, there was an inquiry from an auditor as to whether the society proposed to extend its discussions over the various problems engaging the attention of the community, and two or three names, with Freethought left out, were suggested. As though the first thing to do in the advocacy of Freethought were to call it something else!

It is pretty near the universal experience of our societies that they have been most injured by the speakers' forgetting or ignoring the object of the organisation and what the audiences had come for. In our years of attendance at the Manhattan Liberal Club, we saw scores who went away dissatisfied and not to return because, having come to hear one sort of a lecture and discussion, they were obliged to listen to another kind. They ask what that has to do with Liberalism? and there is no answer. A divisive issue, or an issue in which no interest is felt by many, must be as productive of dissatisfaction and indifference among Freethinkers as elsewhere. Varieties of viewpoint are undoubtedly diverting, but can a society any more than an individual make diversion the main business of existence and continue to live? A man must have a pursuit and follow it in order to subsist, and the more steadily he adheres to his purpose the better his chances to succeed. If the same is not true of an organisation, we can only express our regret at not seeing why.

We have been told that a semi-literary society cannot get along nowadays unless it takes up the "sex" and "economic" questions. We wish sex and economics success in all their worthy undertakings, but to succeed with them would not be exactly to succeed with the Freethought question, which is our purpose.

There may not be everything in a name, but there is a great deal in the meaning of it. For what may be accomplished in the spread of Freethought ideas, Freethought should have the credit by name.

It is assumed that all secular reforms are moving in the same direction, or toward the same far-off event that will never happen—that is, the complete happiness of the race. In making the journey it is a reasonable supposition that the way will be pleasanter and progress accelerated if there is not too much straggling from road to road by the travellers, and too much strength wasted by some in trying to convince the rest that after all there is only one way to approach the goal, or by others in trying to travel all the roads at once. Freethinkers have been the starters of about all the reform movements we see. We can think of none with any promise in it that was not cranked at the outset by some religious heretic. They have since acquired motive power of their own. When Freethought holds a campfire it will welcome them as intelligent and appreciative auditors, and as contributors when the hat goes round, and will return their visits. If they are not always invited to address the gathering, and to elucidate their views at large, they must not regard the circumstance as unfriendly, but lay it to the adage that there is a place for everything, and accept the principle of division of labor.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). GEORGE MACDONALD.

Freethought in Latin America.

THE South American Republic of Chili is, perhaps, little known to the readers of this journal, and has not figured largely in the Freethought movement. Bordered on the one side by the Pacific, and on the other by the Andes, Chili has been called the last corner of the world. Nevertheless, the seed of Freethought finds here a virgin soil, and for this reason a few words may not be out of place, the immediate motive being that at the time of writing a vigorous Freethought campaign is being carried on by that powerful and passionate speaker, yet withal tender and winsome daughter of Spain, Senora Belen de Sárraga.

Those who took part in the Freethought Conference at Rome may remember the delirious manifestation made at the close of one of her imposing speeches, and she was amongst those who carried an offering of flowers to lay at the foot of Giordano Bruno's statue. Later, she attended the Freethought Conference at Buenos Aires; and it

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was while there that she saw the need of her propaganda in the Republics of South America.

The present campaign has not been confined to Chili, but has extended to the Argentine, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru.

At Valparaiso, huge crowds flocked to hear her, and waited on her words with expectancy to drink in the New Evangel. All seats were taken up days beforehand, and at the close of each lecture huge crowds accompanied her to the hotel, with shouts of "Long live Freethought," and she was obliged to speak again from the balcony before the crowd went away. For a wonder, the press has been fair, though the ostensibly Catholic organs, when not violently attacking her, have kept a profound silence. The characteristic of her meetings was the large number of well-dressed ladies and young men, and one feels that the rising generation can be easily won to Freethought when it is lucidly placed before them. Said the distinguished lecturer to an interviewer:—

> "My mission is to preach the Gospel of Freethought to Latin America, and the only enemy of Freethought is religion, with its mysterious doctrines, inscrutable to human reason. Seeing the need of our propaganda in America, I have undertaken this mission, which I intend to repeat as long as my physical condition will permit. I come to preach the truth; to emancipate the woman, the worker, and the student; to make possible the ideal of Freethought."

Such, in brief, are the sentiments which are finding a ready echo in the hearts of the Chilian people, and one can only hope that this outburst of enthusiasm will be wisely organised and directed, so that it may become a potent fighting force in this intensely Catholic country.

PERCY S. BOWEN.

Effect of Christianity on the Incas of Peru, South America.

BEFORE the year 1532 the natives of Peru lived under an ideal government. The laws by which they were governed—thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not be idle—and which were rigidly enforced, resulted in a condition of social purity never equalled in history. "The land was divided among the people, all were provided for, and their State-provided land sown and harvested for them by the community, the result being that while none of the common people could become rich, neither could they descend to poverty and want." In 1532, Pizarro, the Christian conqueror, and his men, descended on this wonderful land, with a message from the Pope to Atahualpa, the Inca king. Peru was doomed. Her delicate system of government, her architectural monuments, whose ruins are still the wonder of the world, were ruthlessly destroyed by the "ignorant bigotry of fanatical priests." The nameless horrors perpetrated upon these people in the name of Christ form one of the many bloody monuments which, standing in silent array in the pathway of history, testify to the truth of the text, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). At a meeting arranged by Pizarro between the Inca king and himself, the Christian conqueror laid an ambush for the Indians, and made Atahualpa prisoner. After promising to release the monarch on paying several millions of money, and while that money was being brought, the Inca king was butchered. Why? Because he would not accept Christianity. To-day, *as a result of the introduction of that religion*, the social life of Peru is as debased and degraded as it was lofty and pure in the absence of Christianity.

R. N. MCNAIRN.

A hair on the back of my hand as great as any miracle.—*Walt Whitman.*

A Letter to Sir Hiram Maxim

From Mr. George Roberts, a Celebrated American Lawyer on Patent Cases.

MY DEAR SIR HIRAM,—

I have read your work, *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, through from cover to cover, and have thoroughly enjoyed it all. It is very concentrated food, owing to the fact that you have extracted the meat out of the authoritative sources quoted without requiring the reader to digest the less nutritious parts with which they were originally accompanied. On that account your work is much more forceful than any one author, however learned and widely travelled, could have made it. Think of the progress that the civilised world has made in a century since those who sold or circulated Paine's relatively mild treatise were punished so barbarously! I shall look, however, for a great row in certain sections of the Christian community over your blasphemies; but the bulk of the conventional crowd will boycott the whole thing with studied silence, as is done in the case of most of the anti-Christian literature.

The Churchmen of all sects go on repeating their old mummeries without paying the slightest attention to the fact that the most advanced scholars, even of their own denominations, have become satisfied that more or less of the fundamentals on which their professional predecessors insisted has sunk into the bottomless morass on which they originally rested. What can you expect? The libraries and booksellers will not handle the publications of the R. P. A. or other similarly liberal publishers, and the people at large have no chance for becoming enlightened upon subjects which all should be familiar with. Huxley expressed himself despairingly of the prospect of enlightenment in the near future, and his pessimistic attitude would seem to be justified. There is one subject that ought to be treated in a more rational way by thinkers and writers who are competent to deal with it; and that is the incompatibility of the morality taught by the New Testament (not to speak of the Old Testament) with the obvious and generally accepted principles of secular morals. Most of the critics who destroy the credibility of the mythical and miraculous parts of the narrative, end by paying tribute to what they are pleased to style "the noble and lofty moral character of the teachings of Jesus." That is mere pious cant! The morality of the New Testament is at the best of an inferior sort, and much of it wholly impracticable and vicious. I have seen it urged many times that Jesus was the great originator of the doctrines of the fatherhood of God and of the brotherhood of man. No doubt, certain general phraseology can be quoted in support of this proposition; but when it is brought down to concrete examples the assertion fails.

Take, for instance Luke xvii. 7-10. The word "servant" which there appears is the Greek *doulos*, defined by Liddell and Scott's lexicon as "a slave, bondman, strictly, one born so." Now, Jesus is represented as accepting the view that such a person is one who has no rights which his master is bound to respect, and who is not entitled even to sympathetic consideration. He is merely a "nigger"! The brotherhood of man, indeed! And as for the relation of God to man, the latter is simply the same sort of slave—God's nigger. That is the alleged fatherhood. The glamor remains even after the reason is convinced that there are no facts upon which to base it. The training received in youth is very hard to overcome, in spite of its having been wholly outgrown. I confess to you that your characterisation of the ark of the tabernacle as "a very fine god-box" gave me a little shiver, although I laughed. The shock was of long outgrown inculcations; but the remnants of the old emotion still manifested their traces involuntarily. We can then well understand how hard it must be for the majority of our Christian fellow citizens to be reformed by the utterances of the Freethinkers.—Cordially and sincerely yours,

(Signed) G. L. ROBERTS.

THE RABBI'S REPLY.

A good story is told of a Jewish rabbi. He was riding in a street car, and rose to offer his seat to a lady. Before she could take it a young man plumped himself down in the vacated seat. The rabbi said nothing, but gazed at him in disgusted silence.

"What's the matter?" suddenly demanded the young man in a gruff voice. "What are you glaring at me for like that? You look as if you would like to eat me."

"I am forbidden to eat you," answered the rabbi. "I am a Jew."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture; 6.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 6.30, Mr. Gallagher, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): J. W. Marshall, 11.30, "Who Were the First Christians?" 7.30, "My lie unto His glory."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss H. Pankhurst, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Square): Gilbert Manion, 11, "The Uselessness of Christianity"; 3, "Reason *versus* Emotion"; 7.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): 3, Arthur Thompson, "Bible Beauties"; 6.30, Matt Phair, "Socialism and Christianity."

BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Ground): Joe McLellan, 3, "Bible Stories"; 6.30, "More Bible Stories."

FARNWORTH (Market Ground): Monday, June 16, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Faith: A Relic of a Barbarous Age."

LEIGH (Market Square): R. Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist." Tuesday, June 17, Gilbert Manion, at 7.30, "Is God Conscious?"

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—W. R. PATERSON (Benjamin Swift).

Where is God?

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

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

Where is God? He does not seem to be discoverable for love or money. The clergy talk about him a great deal, but that is a trick of their trade. What they *know* about him would not fill a volume; no, nor even a sheet of note paper, and probably not the space of two lines. They pretend to know what he *is*, they set forth his *attributes*, they *ticket* him, so to speak, like an exhibit in a museum. They say he is this, that, and the other. They tell us he is all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful; also that he is omnipresent, which means that he is everywhere, and what is everywhere must be everything—a Pantheistic conclusion that is enough to make the ordinary man of God stand aghast and throw up his hands as if in presence of the abomination of desolation. Yet how can that conclusion be resisted? If the alleged Deity is everywhere, then God is all, and all is God.

But the gentleman who put that pertinent question did not mean, we take it, to ask *where* God is, but rather what he is *doing*. If he created the world, why did he not make a better job of it? If he rules the world, why does he not regulate its affairs more wisely and benevolently? If he watches over the world, why does he not interfere on behalf of justice and humanity? That seems to be the gentleman's idea, and we defy all the ministers of religion to give these questions a satisfactory answer.

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

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

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

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Witch Mania.—III.

(Concluded from p. 371.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* *History of Civilisation*, ch. xix.
† Dalyell, *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 623.
‡ *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 628.

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

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

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

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

C. COHEN.

The Scientific Chart.

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

> "The Huxleys and Renans of the Universe can get on without having a complete scheme of life, past, present, and future, handed to them as a whole to be kept intact and followed throughout existence. They make their own schemes. The mass of the people cannot do this. They have neither the time nor the brains. If they have no chart provided for them, they roam hither and thither like a ship without a steersman ; they are at the mercy of every shifting wind. Science has a vast responsibility to bear. It has thrown so much doubt on the existing charts that numbers of people have come to count them valueless. Yet it supplies no chart of its own."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"J. B." is perfectly justified in saying that "man's supreme need is companionship, the sense of personality, of something, of someone who cares, who has love to answer his own craving for love"; but he goes seriously, hopelessly astray when he asserts that this need can be adequately supplied only from a supernatural source. We hold, on the contrary, that the belief in supernaturalism has engendered in man many false or abnormal needs, and that the attention given to the task of satisfying these has resulted in a serious warping and twisting of his nature. The search for God and his companionship has been so assiduously pursued that the search for man has scarcely yet begun. "J. B." quotes from Wundt, who until very recently was a Materialist, from Kepler and Copernicus, who flourished in the red dawn of modern science, and from Michelet and Hugo, both of whom were Freethinkers, and who, like all Freethinkers, enthrone love, human love; and the quotations are not arguments, nor does a single one of them even attempt to prove that the belief in God is good for man. It is a belief that has caused the bitterest of controversies, the bloodiest of wars, the cruellest of persecutions, and the worst of corruptions in all the walks of life. We conclude, therefore, that Dr. Hellems has made good his thesis that "we can know our duty, and live our life without the help of voices heard so faintly that we cannot be sure whether they belong to truth or to hope"—voices which many of us firmly believe are never heard at all except in fancy.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—VI.

(*Continued from p. 374.*)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

* Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 283.
† *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 145.
‡ G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, pp. 45-6.

FLASHES FROM NIETZSCHE.

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

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

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

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

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

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Acid Drops.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some days ago the Burton-on-Trent railwaymen had their annual parade, which culminated in a religious service at St. Paul's Church. The preacher was the Rev. Dr. Temple, Headmaster of Repton School, whose subject was the Bible. According to a report in the *Burton Evening Gazette*, Dr. Temple is a well-informed Higher Critic, who contends that the Bible, though containing many grave discrepancies and mistakes, historical and otherwise, is yet God's Book, and should be studied devoutly. But while making that highly irrational claim for Holy Writ, the reverend gentleman was sorrowfully obliged to admit that the great writers of the present day are devoid of religious convictions and ideals. Faith, confidence, and hope seemed to have gone out of their minds. Knowing far more than their fathers did of the horrors of life, of the savagery of Nature, the struggle for existence, and the survival of the fittest, they found it difficult, if not impossible, to believe in a good and loving God. Of course, Dr. Temple himself was fully convinced that the only remedy for the mental disease of the age was Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A writer in the *British Congregationalist* for June 12, in attempting to justify Foreign Missions, falls into several grievous errors. He says that "missionaries introduce neither rifles nor spirits"; but both rifles and spirits *follow* them as surely as echo follows song. The writer admits that there is a grain of truth in this, but we contend that it is composed of nothing but truth. Furthermore, all missionaries represent countries in which rifles and spirits are in full and constant evidence. This writer also avers that the missionary "stands for a higher and better civilisation than could otherwise be initiated." We do not know what he means by civilisation; but we have it on the authority of the President of the Free Church Council that European civilisation is antagonistic to the Christian religion, and we believe he is right. We are prepared to go to the length of saying that civilisation is steadily killing Christianity in the West; and in proportion as the East adopts Western civilisation, its own religions die. These two facts are really beyond dispute.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We prophesied all this at the beginning.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

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

THE new secretary of the Edmonton Branch is Mr. James Wraight, 100 Kimberley-road, Upper Edmonton, N.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

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

We stated last week that the London County Council had come to a just and wise decision at last with regard to the matter of collections at meetings in the Parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. *Bonâ-fide* societies are to have "permits" as before for making such collections, and that is all that the friends of freedom demanded. We may say that all's well that ends well. But it is necessary to add, without laboring the matter, that the attitude and action of the National Secular Society, with the aid of the *Freethinker*, were the governing factors on the public side of the dispute. Raising money for a legal fight, if necessary, gave a greater seriousness to the whole quarrel. We suggest that the balance in hand (that is, in *our* hands) should be handed over to the National Secular Society. We shall, indeed, do this, unless we hear from any subscribers to the "Fighting Fund" to the contrary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

> "My Dear Sir,—I have just finished reading your most excellent article on the late George Meredith, and cannot refrain from writing you in order to express my thanks, not only for a further great service to the 'good old cause,' but also for the intellectual delight it has given me and, I feel quite sure, hundreds of other people.
>
> "You will be pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* finds a ready sale at my lectures, and that its contents are as much admired here as they are in England. The lectures, I might add, are attended very well, audiences of one thousand being the average.
>
> "Again most heartily thanking you for the article and your really great work in the cause of mental freedom,—I am, dear Sir, yours very truly, H. SCOTT BENNETT."

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

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Christians and the Old Testament.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> "they seem to have two Gods—whom we call one, but who, by no possible stretch of the imagination, could be combined in one person.
>
> "The first is a sort of old woman, who made the world and man as though he expected everything to go right and no evil or mischief to mar the work of his hands. But he laid his plans so badly that the whole scheme went awry and heaven has been mourning ever since.
>
> "Poor God! He is not to blame, the theologians tell us; it is wicked man, more especially woman, who has put everything wrong. God has done his best, and the result has been untold ages of chaos and unimaginable suffering. All God can do is to provide a Redeemer and save a few out of the wreck, and so keep on pleading with humanity: 'O prodigal child, come home.' You will, I am sure, forgive me the seeming irreverence of saying that that kind of God is a fool. And the other God, or God with the other face, is not much better.
>
> "This other God has prepared a hell for his poor, helpless victims of what is called his righteous wrath. He has made it big enough to contain the whole race, and into it the whole race will have to go unless they repent in time and avail themselves of the sufferings which he has graciously inflicted upon somebody else for their benefit. He has been sitting up there in heaven ever since creation first went wrong brooding darkly over what he means to do to perverse and rebellious man when the time comes" (*Daily Chronicle*, January 10, 1908).

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

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

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

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

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the course of conduct that would lead to their destruction?

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

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

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

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

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

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

Verbatim Report by Mr. H. CLIFTON.

(Reprinted by Request.)

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

Our friend was as good a man as ever breathed. The frailties of mortality clung to him as to all of us; but in his case they were never dark frailties, they were only the frailties of our common imperfection. There was nothing malignant about him. He had no taste for cruelty. He was full of loving kindness. He was always ready to sympathise with another's trouble, and to help where help could be given. He was gentle. There was a certain delicacy about his mind as there was about his physical constitution. Nothing impure—certainly nothing approaching to baseness—could ever have found a harbor in his mind. I speak from a full knowledge. He was my friend of thirty years. I knew him almost from boyhood. I speak from knowledge and long experience, and I say that no gentler or more beautiful spirit inhabited the earth. He was also a brave man. He had the soul of a hero. It was enshrined in a frail casket, and yet I am sure that if it had ever fallen to his lot to meet the martyr's doom, he would never have quailed. In a sense he *has* met a martyr's doom, for undoubtedly what strength he had was sorely smitten by the sad events of fourteen or fifteen years ago. It is not pleasant to open recollections of bigotry and fanaticism on such an occasion as this, but we who know how he suffered, and what dealt the blow, will feel that his life was shortened by his devotion to principle in the hour of danger.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Life and Labors of Haeckel.—III.

(Concluded from p. 379)

THE literary output of this noble and courageous, but still greatly abused and misrepresented, man is imposing in its magnitude. Nearly twenty years ago, when Haeckel's sixtieth birthday was celebrated at Jena, he had written forty-two works, which consisted of 18 000 pages, besides numerous scientific memoirs. His contributions to the *Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Challenger*, which were undertaken at the request of the leading representatives of British science, comprehend four volumes of that magnificent work, enriched with 230 splendid plates. This natural philosopher, who has been pictured as a completely isolated speculator by various ignorant and spiteful persons, is in reality surrounded and supported by practically all the younger and more enlightened students of organic existence. The name of Haeckel is now better known throughout the entire civilised world than that of any other living man of science. In 1900 he was acclaimed as one of the glories of nineteenth century humanism by a few thousand thoughtful men and women in Europe, Australia, America, and the Far East. The *Riddle of the Universe*—a popular summary of his scientific and philosophical achievements—has since carried his name and fame to every class of society in all parts of the civilised globe. At the close of the nineteenth century Haeckel, like Herbert Spencer, thought that the world was declining towards reaction. Impelled by a passionate desire to do something which might help to stem this retrogressive tendency, Haeckel penned what he then regarded as his last will and testament. The success of the *Riddle of the Universe* is without parallel in the history of science. Its circulation among the German-speaking peoples ran into hundreds of thousands. Fourteen translations into as many languages were in eager demand, and it carried a plain account of the doctrine of Evolution to the minds of millions to whom that doctrine was previously little more than a name. "Answers" to this iconoclastic work appeared in profusion, but all of them are either dying or dead. The *Riddle* remains, and still finds purchasers and readers, and is likely to be treasured and remembered when its enemies have been long forgotten.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In terms dictated by ignorance or malice—very probably a sinister combination of each of these bad qualities — a more or less orthodox writer in a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century* has delivered judgment on the "exploded" doctrines of Spencer and Haeckel. What first-hand information this Solomon possesses of the work accomplished by these outstanding modern humanists seems difficult to discover. But that aside, when we remember that all that matters in modern science and philosophy is thoroughly permeated with the spirit of evolution, we can afford to smile and pass on. When Congreve's play was hissed, he appeared on the stage before his demonstrative critics and contemptuously told them that "This play will be a play when you're all dead and damned." And in much the same manner, when the names of most of his critics have descended to the dust, the name of Ernst Haeckel is certain to remain as that of a brilliant and scientific genius who, being mortal, made slight mistakes here and there, but was, nevertheless, more largely instrumental in carrying the message of Darwinian evolution through the world than any other disciple of the English naturalist; he was also a great independent pioneer in realms that Darwin scarcely entered.

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

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

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

T. F. PALMER.

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

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The orthodox person puts his intelligence in handcuffs.
—W. R PATERSON (Benjamin Swift).

Mrs. Besant's Confidence Trick.

[The foregoing article was written and published at the end of 1894. It is reproduced now as some check on the ready acceptance of Mrs. Besant's "messages" to the world. She did *not* go back to the Hall of Science. She did *not* undeceive the people she had duped.]

MRS. BESANT'S conversion to Theosophy, under the personal influence of Madame Blavatsky, necessitated my telling her publicly that, in my judgment, she was no longer a Secularist, and that her proper place was outside the National Secular Society. Having said this, I left it to her own sense and honesty to determine her procedure, and it was not long before she found her position in our party untenable.

On looking back over this episode I am entirely satisfied with the course I pursued. Many persons were dissatisfied at the time, but they did not understand the situation as I did, and I believe there are few Secularists at present who do not believe that I was in the right. You cannot have a strong and stable Society composed of persons of diverse and even hostile opinions in regard to what is ostensibly their bond of union. It is impossible for a sensible man to quarrel with the Church on account of "excommunication." Every organisation has the right to say who shall and who shall not belong to it. The mischief began when the Church, after excommunicating one of its members, proceeded to inflict upon him every possible suffering and degradation.

Before leaving us, however, Mrs. Besant elected to give a farewell address at the Hall of Science, which, of course, was crowded to suffocation. By this time she had assumed all the airs of a high priestess, who had inherited by a sort of divine right the mantle of Helena Blavatsky. The tradition of the Hall of Science, where she had lectured for many years, was thrown to the winds. Mrs. Besant walked off the platform after her address without waiting for a single question or a moment's discussion.

Throughout that address Mrs. Besant maintained the attitude she had adopted from the beginning. To her old Freethought associates she said: "Did you ever know me to tell you a lie?" Of course they did not, and the impulsive lady took that as a guarantee that all she told them was absolutely true. He logic allowed of no distinction between lies and inaccuracy.

I said at the time that this was a form of the confidence trick. No person had a right to demand such implicit credence. A man in a public-house said to a greenhorn: "Let me hold your purse while you go round the corner." Mrs. Besant said: "Let me hold your mind while you go out of it." The motives might be different, but the methods were the same.

Mrs. Besant created a profound "sensation"—as the *Chronicle* put it—by stating that, since Madame Blavatsky's death, she had received letters from the Mahatma who had been in communication with that lady. They might not believe her, but then the old question arose again, "Did they ever know her to tell a lie?" And this dispensed with all necessity for evidence.

Mrs. Besant would say that too much importance should not be attached to these "miracles" of precipitated letters. At the same time she was wise enough to see that they were her trump card with the gaping mob of superstitionists. It is a way they have. Jesus Christ himself is reported to have made light, occasionally, of *his* "miracles," telling persons who profited by them to "tell no man," with the dead certainty that the advice would only make them more zealous advertisers.

"Did you ever know me to tell you a lie?" was an awkward question, especially when asked by a lady. Mrs. Besant might have got an answer if she had asked, "Did you ever know me to be deceived?" Several persons could have said, "Yes."

It now appears that Mrs. Besant *was* deceived. The oracle was under the influence of mechanical inspiration. The afflatus of the god was simply the breath of Mr. W. Q. Judge. This gentleman has since been accused of forging the Mahatma letters in question, with others of the same kidney. A "Judicial Committee" was appointed by the Theosophical Society to investigate the charges, and the farce of this "investigation" has been fully exposed in the *Westminster Gazette*. The Committee sagely found that the rules of the Society did not permit them to try Mr. Judge. After this grave hocus-pocus, Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant came to an agreement. Each made a statement which has been printed for circulation among the "genuine brotherhood." Mr. Judge's statement is a rigmarole worthy of Pecksniff. Mrs. Besant's contains the following passage:—

> "I do not charge, and have not charged, Mr. Judge with forgery in the ordinary sense of the term, but with giving a misleading form to messages received psychically from the Master in various ways.....Personally, I hold that this method is illegitimate.....I believe that Mr. Judge wrote with his own hand, consciously or automatically I do not know, in the script adopted as that of the Master, messages which he received from the Master, or from *chelas;* and I know that in my own case I believed that the messages he gave me in the well-known script were messages directly precipitated or directly written by the Master. When I publicly said that I received, after H. P. Blavatsky's death, letters in the writing that H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge, and as they were in the well-known script I never dreamt of challenging their source. I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and that they were done by Mr. Judge; but I also believe that the gist of these messages were psychically received, and that Mr. Judge's error lay in giving them to me in a script written by himself and not saying so.....Having been myself mistaken, I in turn misled the public."

Mrs. Besant was "mistaken," and she "misled" others. After all her posing I was right; it *was* a form of the confidence trick. What will she do now? This is what she *ought* to do. She should visit the Hall of Science again and confess that she was duped. She owes the people she "misled" this act of reparation. But I scarcely believe she will make it. The public admission of fallibility is fatal to those who trade on mystery.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Medical Materialism and Faith.

THE study of religion falls easily and naturally into two parts. The first is a question of origin. What were the conditions that suggested the hypothesis of supernatural powers dominating or creating the world of man and nature? The answer to this question has now been furnished by numerous writers, and there can be no doubt that whatever modifications of that answer may be demanded by more extended knowledge, its outline has been accurately drawn. All the religions of the world rest on a basis of ignorance. Civilised man does not create his religion, he inherits it. Religions belong to a time when man, unaware of his own nature or the nature of the universe, formulates answers to problems that are presented to him, as they are to us. Life propounds the same questions to all, savage or civilised, but the answer given depends upon the knowledge possessed by those who furnish the reply. The variation is not in nature but in man. The untrained mind sees a spiritual power as the cause of a disease, and seeks escape by magic and prayer. The scientific mind takes test-tube and microscope, hunts for the malignant germ, and provides an antidote. If by some miracle the scientist could have been first in the field, the supernatural would never have existed. As he comes last, religion has a long start, and by the time he arrives it has bitten so deeply into human institutions, and so permeated habits of thought, that its complete eradication is the most difficult of tasks.

The second half of the study of religion is concerned with its perpetuation. Granted that religion is rooted in delusion, how comes it that this delusion has lasted so long? Freethinkers, at least, believe that all actual knowledge, all real verifiable knowledge, counts as an asset for naturalism, and is, so far, antagonistic to supernaturalism. At any rate, we do not believe that there exists a single fact that does not admit, ultimately, of a perfectly rational explanation — an explanation that dispenses with supernaturalism in any form. Why, then, has religion not disappeared? For religion cannot exist, even to the most uncultured mind, without evidence of some sort. The evidence may be irrelevant or inconclusive to a better trained intelligence, but evidence of some sort there must have been, and must be. The savage may have created religion; but that is not the sole reason why, thousands of years after, his descendants continue to believe in it. "Our fathers have told us," constitutes a strong appeal; but the children also will require proof. What kind of proof is it that religious people have, in all ages, taken as confirmation of their beliefs? A study of savage life shows us clearly enough how the religious idea vitalised the facts. We must study after ages to find what class of experiences have vitalised the idea.

It is this question I have been dealing with in the *Freethinker* under different titles. I commenced the series by taking the almost farcical attempt of the late Professor William James to deal with what he called "Medical Materialism." Under this term he classed all those who hold that a great deal of what passes with the world as religious feeling is either masked sexual feeling or due to abnormal nervous conditions. Unconnected with religion, Professor James would, in all probability, have been the first to recognise that "Medical Materialism" amply covered the majority of the cases cited in his "Varieties of Religious Experience," but connected with religion, he—although his own religious belief appears to have been of a very nebulous character—forgot his scientific caution in the endeavor to place religious experience in a category of its own. My articles, consequently, took the form of supplying the evidence, or some of it, in support of the view of the "Medical Materialist." So far as I am aware, this ground has never been systematically worked, although numerous writers have touched on it more or less incidentally. And even now, at the end of a lengthy series of articles, little more than an outline has been presented.

The lines of evidence are threefold. First, there is the fact that diseases, bodily and mental, are in the lower stages of culture universally attributed to spiritual agency. This explanation holds the field, and is not replaced until a comparatively late period of human history. But of special importance to our inquiry is the fact that this belief does not disappear suddenly. Even after the facts upon which the belief is based are otherwise interpreted, the frame of mind induced by the long reign of such a conviction persists. Supernatural and mystical cures persist, and are still used to an extent that only those accustomed to collect the beliefs of villagers and the less educated among townsmen are acquainted with. To take only one example: saffron tea is still very widely used as a cure for measles. All medical men know that it is not of the slightest value, and students of folklore can trace its origin in the theory of sympathetic cures. So with the fact of disease in general, and the persistence of religious belief. The conclusion that disease is caused by spirits is one suggested by the religious belief, but in turn the observed facts react on and strengthen religious belief. Every case of disease is a fresh proof, an unanswerable piece of evidence. And all the time religion as a social fact is becoming more firmly established.

The next line of evidence is that furnished by what I have called the culture of the supernatural. By some means or other—probably by accident in the first instance—it is discovered that certain herbs and vegetable drugs have a peculiar effect on the human mind. Those who use them see things that people do not normally see, or hear things unheard by others. Abstention from food and other bodily privations produce similar results. What is the inevitable conclusion? The only one possible is that the subject is in communication with a spiritual world from which he is excluded under normal conditions. From this to the next step is obvious and easy. To repeat the experience, one has only to repeat the conditions. And repeated they are, in all religions, with at most a modification rendered necessary by changed times and circumstances. That is why fasting and other methods of "fleshly mortification" have played so large a part in religious ceremonies. The savage medicine-man, the Hindoo fakir, the mediæval saint created their visions and ecstasies by the simple plan of a derangement of the nervous system. Of course, they did not know what they were doing. To them the derangement was the condition of ecstasy or intercourse, not the cause of its existence.

The third line of experience is connected with the phenomena of sexuality. From the earliest times man has associated the procreation of his species with the existence of a supernatural world. This is seen in the magical devices of early and mediæval times to obtain children, and in prayers and other customs connected with childbirth that still exist. But more important than this in later periods is the fact that a great deal of expressed religious feeling is little more than masked sexuality. As has been noted over and over again by medical observers, the connection between excessive piety and eroticism in the insane is most marked. And in normal cases we see the phenomenon of childless women and unmarried men expressing themselves towards Jesus and the Virgin in language which, when diverted of its religious glamor, leaves no doubt as to the real nature of its origin. The visions described, the feelings experienced during ecstasy, are unmistakably due to strong, unsatisfied sexual feeling. In these cases we are dealing with a mere perversion of the sexual instinct.

When we have not perversion, we have misinterpretation. This occurs, as I have shown, during the period of adolescence. The primary and significant features of adolescence are a development of the sexual nature and an awakening of a consciousness of race kinship. Connected with these and flowing from them, there is a rapid development of what are called the altruistic feelings, the individual becoming

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less self-centred and more concerned for the well-being of others. These things are, of course, merely so many devices of nature for the perpetuation of the race, although in the course of social development the primary features become overlaid with a number of secondary characteristics. In a society fully conscious of the nature of the forces at work, these developments would be reckoned at their true value, and wisely directed to the furtherance of a healthy social life. In a society more or less saturated with supernaturalism, a different policy is pursued. Following the customs of our remote savage ancestors, who naturally take the development of sex life as a striking evidence of supernaturalism, the modern Christian preacher seizes the opportunity of exploiting youth in the interests of religion. The vague, but none the less powerful feelings associated with sex are interpreted as the "strivings of God in the human soul," precisely as the savage associates the sexual phenomena of womanhood with the agency of the tribal ghosts. The distinction between the savage and the Christian here is verbal only. Mentally, they move on the same plane. The growth of the social feelings is given a religious covering, with the result that instead of youth being, as it should be, the period of conscious entry into the larger social life, in only too many cases it is no more than the beginning of a life-long servitude to retrogressive religious influences.

This is, of course, not the only way in which religion exploits man to-day. As supernaturalism gets more and more discredited by modern life and modern knowledge, preachers are driven further in their course of exploitation. Older generations frankly set the world against the spirit, life against religion, and treated the advance of one as involving the retreat of the other. This was a plain policy, and an honest policy, but it could not be maintained. Contemporary preachers adopt the bolder, but less honest, policy of claiming the whole of life for religion. The instinct for truth, right, justice, the love of the beautiful, the desire for social intercourse, with the comfort and assistance that comes from it, are all referred to the influence of religion. All this is sheer exploitation of human nature by a religion no longer honest enough or bold enough to avow its real nature. And, unfortunately, the early education of the vast majority of people prepares them, easy victims, for such a policy.

In these articles I have been trying to furnish evidence of the way in which this misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and exploitation of human nature, in both its normal and abnormal aspects, has gone on. I am convinced that it is these factors that have chiefly contributed to the perpetuation of religious beliefs, and that they still form the strongest obstacles to their disappearance. For wild and absurd as some of these beliefs have been, their influence does not disappear with their rejection. They leave behind a psychological residuum fatal to positive or scientific thinking. It is like a man who has been long in slavery, but is now free. He may no longer be in real danger of the lash, but the fear of the whip has become part of his mental life and cannot be eradicated. So with all the admitted delusions that have gone to keep religion alive. Generation after generation saw proofs of religious agency that now impose upon no one in a civilised country. But the effects have bitten deeply into the social life, a temper of mind favorable to supernaturalism has become part of our social heritage. If one can imagine the course of human history to have been different; if, directly men emerged from the savage culture stage, disease had been recognised for what it is; if hallucination, delusion, hysteria, and insanity had been seen in their true nature; if emotional and intellectual qualities had always been properly understood; if these things had transpired, it is no more than a statement of the plainest of truths that religion would have died with those primitive social conditions that gave it birth.

C. COHEN.

Criticism and the Christian Faith.

IT is now beyond all controversy that criticism has come to stay and to do a mighty work, and of necessity to subject anything to criticism is inferentially to regard it as open to question. Criticism implies doubt, and doubt is the half-way house between belief and unbelief. Tennyson teaches that doubt is an enemy to be fought and conquered; but we maintain that our first duty in regard to doubt is to sit in judgment upon it, or, in other words, to examine it with calm and dispassionate care. It is by no means a foregone conclusion that it must eventuate in a stronger and brighter faith. Of course, to a fanatical believer doubt is an evil to be resisted and laid at all cost, because he is convinced that unbelief damns a man to all eternity; but criticism begins its work in doubt, and it depends entirely on the evidence at its disposal whether it ends in belief or unbelief. When the critic first laid his hands upon the Bible he did not look upon it as an infallible book, but treated the claims made for it as highly debatable; and already the result of his work is that the old doctrine of inspiration and infallibility has generally been abandoned. Professor Peake frankly admits that criticism has produced a great deal of change in the popular mind in regard to Biblical and theological questions. The change is on a much larger scale than the Professor imagines. He is primarily a theologian, and his theology hamstrings his criticism; but even he, evangelical divine though he be, is critically forced to state that "the reconstruction of the life of Jesus, the course of his ministry, and the purposes which animated him, are subjects of very keen debate." It is no longer possible to declare, as our fathers confidently did, that Christianity is rooted in history, or that the Four Gospels are literally true. Indeed, Dr. Peake himself believes that "you cannot base Christianity upon history alone," because the alleged historical facts are called in question by so many eminent scholars. "It must be confessed," he says, "that the disadvantages of our alliance with history are no figment of the imagination," which means that the history concerned is, more or less, of a doubtful character. He grants that there are elements in the Gospel story which Christianity has no vital interest in asserting, and these may be allowed to go; "but there are some things which lie at the very centre of the Christian position; cut those out, and Christianity has been eviscerated"; *and therefore they must be retained whatever criticism may say.*

Thus the theologian and the critic are bound to reach a point at which they must part company. Sooner or later the critic lays his axe unto the root of the Christian tree, and then the theologian cries out, "Halt! This tree must stand. It is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations." If the critic responds to that appeal, the adjective "reverent" qualifies him; but if not he is denounced as an enemy of the truth, and the adjectives "negative," "destructive," "irresponsible," and "irreverent" are attached to him. The critic may do what he likes as long as he refrains from touching anything that is considered of "vital interest" to Christianity. If he keeps within the bounds of reverence he is welcomed as a strong ally, and nothing but good is said of him. "You must give up that negative attitude of yours," says the Rev. H. S. M'Clelland to an inquirer with whom he deals in the *Christian Commonwealth* for June 18. This inquirer had only asked the following fair question: "How many of the old landmarks will remain when the devastating tide of modern criticism and scientific inquiry has reached its height?" This is the reverend gentleman's answer:—

> "All you will ever require, my friend, for the safe pilotage of your soul to its eternal haven. But don't you think it is time you began to ask a new kind of question concerning that 'devastating' tide? For there is one thing about that flood upon which we are both

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certain to agree—it is running too strongly now to be stemmed by any human power. Why go on assuming that this tide is a *devastating* thing? Are you sure that it is not bringing new spiritual life to the dry and barren soil of an irreligious age?"

This answer misses the inquirer's point altogether, and must be condemned as an offhand and cruel trifling with his case. By "landmarks" was clearly meant distinctive Christian doctrines; and it cannot be doubted but that many of these have been given up or modified out of recognition under the pressure of modern criticism and scientific discoveries. Less than fifty years ago the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible occupied an essential place in the Christian creed; but to-day it is rarely we come across anyone who still holds it. The historicity of man's fall in the Garden of Eden upon which Paul built his curious theory of redemption, the view that it was Adam's sin that brought death into the world, the doctrine that Christ bore the punishment of the sins of the world—all these used to be held universally as essential tenets of the Christian religion, but one by one they have been dropped. Now, where and when is this devastating process going to stop? This question Mr. M'Clelland deliberately evaded, and took to bantering his questioner about his negative attitude and his not facing the facts as they are. We invite Mr. M'Clelland to "face the facts as they are," which he fails to do in his Correspondence Column in the *Christian Commonwealth*.

It is easy enough for an able and successful minister to give the names of at least fifty young people whom he has won over to his way of looking at things, and whom he may rhetorically describe as having been "carried forward on that life-giving sea [modern criticism and scientific inquiry!] to the shores of a new world of spiritual promise and moral enthusiasm." The reverend gentleman tells us himself that there is in some of his answers "an element of exaggeration," and surely that element is not wanting in that now under consideration. Yes, he exaggerates, rhetorises, plays with words. Modern criticism and scientific inquiry bring us no information concerning the "soul" and its "eternal haven," and they are equally ignorant of God, whom Mr. M'Clelland rhetorically describes as "manifest in varying degree in every throb of his creation." We are not one whit behind the reverend gentleman in admiration of all noble literature and all noble life, but to us they are the media, not of God's revelation, but of humanity's self-expression; not of the descent of Deity, but of the ascent of man. No one has ever been borne on the rising tide of modern criticism to a knowledge of God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, or to a knowledge of the man Jesus as the perfect revealer of the Father, in whom we see life at its fullest and best. The soul, the eternal haven, God, Christ, and the better land—these are all theological or metaphysical assumptions, unverified and unverifiable, for not one of which can criticism be held responsible. We congratulate Mr. M'Clelland upon his repudiation of the "'inspired' passage as something altogether distinct from the results of normal human intelligence," and marvel at his simplicity and inconsistency in looking upon not only all noble literature but all noble life as the media of God's revelation. Is all noble literature "something distinct from the results of normal human intelligence"? If not, how on earth does Mr. M'Clelland know that it is a medium of God's revelation? He does not know, but theologically imagines it, and then uncritically asserts it as a fact. We do not regard the noblest life as in any sense or degree beyond a normally endowed human being, and certainly we can see nothing in it suggestive of its being the medium of the revelation of a superhuman person.

We do not insinuate that Mr. M'Clelland has not been greatly influenced by modern criticism. It is very probable that it led him to throw the Old Theology overboard and adopt the New; but we hold that the New Theology is no more the child of criticism than the Old. It is wholly uncritical to say that criticism has given us a new conception of God. It may sound better to describe the new conception of God, not as "the special contribution of any single race or tribe," but as "a slowly developing revelation in the soul of humanity"; but the one description is not one jot or tittle more believable than the other, because neither is realisable. But our main point is that criticism is no more favorable to the one conception than to the other, because both represent a frame of mind in which criticism has absolutely no place. The whole tendency of criticism is to eliminate the supernatural. It found the Bible the work of God and left it a purely human product. In the exact proportion in which criticism and scientific inquiry gain, supernaturalism loses. The Gospel Jesus is a fine example of this principle. No accredited New Testament critic regards him as a God-man. It is all very well for Dr. Peake to assert that "no one who accepts the authenticity of any of the Pauline epistles has any right to deny the historicity of Jesus"; but Professor Drews, who is quite as competent to judge, asserts the very opposite, and we agree with him.

Criticism has only just started on its momentous career; but already it has rid the world of huge masses of theological rubbish. We are persuaded that its triumph will mean the complete downfall of superstition. To the question, "How many of the old landmarks will remain when the devastating tide of modern criticism and scientific inquiry has reached its height?" we would therefore answer, NONE. Every one of them is doomed, and so many of them have already disappeared. These are irreparably lost, and the rest are in the process of evanishment. The world will be all the richer when they shall all have gone. We lose them because we are gaining wisdom; and wisdom is the offspring of reason; and reason is the supreme critic of life and all its interests.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—VII.

(*Continued from p. 389.*)

"Do not dream of a life beyond this, for you will find no other, nor of a heaven beyond the universe, for beyond the infinite universe there is nothing. Earth is heaven, and paradise is on earth; it is for you to realise it. Cultivate your mind, honor your ancestors, respect your traditions, let the past and the future be both a living present to your mind. Identify yourself with one and the other through humanity. Never forget that you are one with the earth, with the universe, and take care no act of yours offends against this unity.....Such, in brief, is the catechism or religious code of China, and it has so far entered the hearts and practice of the population that the civil code is not much longer."—E. Edo. SIMON, *China—its Social, Political, and Religious Life* (1887), pp. 95-6.

"We have no wish to exalt China at the expense of European civilisation, but we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that her vices have been exaggerated and her virtues overlooked. Only the bigoted or ignorant could condemn with sweeping assertions of immorality a nation of many millions absolutely free, as the Chinese are, from such vices as drunkenness; in whose cities may be seen—what all our legislative and executive skill cannot secure—streets quiet and deserted after nine or ten o'clock at night. Add to this industry, frugality, patriotism, and a boundless respect for the majesty of office; it then only remains for us to acknowledge that China is, after all, 'a nation of much talent, and, in some respects, even wisdom.'"—H. A. GILES, *Chinese Sketches*, pp. 201-2.

IN considering the effect of opium upon the Chinese, there are other factors to be taken into consideration. For instance, it is well known that the Chinese are less sensitive to pain than Europeans are. "Chinese children," says a good authority, "bear illness and pain like little heroes."* And European medical men have observed that once a Chinese has placed himself under the surgeon's hands, he will, without the aid of chloroform, undergo the most painful operations without flinching. May it not follow that the nervous system that is less

* R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (1910), p. 248.

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susceptible to pain is also less susceptible to injury from opium than our own more sensitive nervous apparatus? Another application of the proverb that "one man's meat is another man's poison."

Then, again, it must be remembered that the Chinese have been in the habit of taking opium for hundreds of years, and as Dr. Archdall Reid has shown in his ingenious work, *The Present Evolution of Man*, that races who have had the most extended experience of these drugs and poisons are the most temperate in their use of them, because those individuals who are most intemperate in the use of them perish, leaving behind the temperate and those who have no craving for them.

However that may be, the Chinese Government—who seem to have been imposed upon in this matter by the European outcry against opium—have now taken in hand the task of altogether suppressing the trade. When they have succeeded in doing that, if they ever do succeed, they will probably find themselves in a worse position than ever. For a stimulant of some kind is essential to relieve the monotonous character of their lives, and if opium is suppressed, they will undoubtedly introduce something worse to take its place. As Professor Giles says of the Chinese:—

> "In centuries past a drunken nation, some two or three hundred years ago they began to come under the influence of opium, and the abuse of alcohol dropped to a minimum. Opium-smoking, less harmful a great deal than opium-eating, took the place of drink, and became a national vice; but the extent of its injury to the people has been much exaggerated, and is not to be compared with that of alcohol in the West. It is now, in consequence of recent legislation, likely to disappear, on which result there could be nothing but the warmest congratulations to offer, but for the fact that something else more insidious, and more deadly still, is rapidly taking its place. For a time, it was thought that alcohol might recover its sway, and it is still quite probable that human cravings for stimulant of some kind will find a partial relief in that direction. The present enemy, however, and one that demands serious and immediate attention, is morphia, which is being largely imported into China in the shape of a variety of preparations suitable to the public demand. A passage from opium to morphia would be worse, if possible, than from the frying-pan into the fire."*

Dr. Morrison declares that to convert a desire for opium into a taste for morphia is analogous to changing one's stimulant from beer to methylated spirits,† a most vile and maddening stimulant.

Probably the Chinese Government will also suppress the trade in morphia when they discover their mistake. As Mr. Arthur Davenport observes:—

> "There is no civilised nation in the world which does not indulge in a narcotic of some kind or other. Should the Chinese abandon opium, they will infallibly fall back on their old, but now happily vanquished enemy, alcohol, when their last state will be worse than their first." ‡

When we reflect upon the ravages caused by drink in this country; that for every hundred injured by over-indulgence in opium in China, a thousand are ruined by drink in our own country; that drink turns people into madmen, capable of the most devilish cruelty and brutality, as our papers daily testify; while the opium pipe, in moderation, soothes the weary brain to sweet dreams and invigorates the tired body, how impudent and hypocritical the missionary campaign against opium sounds.

As we have said, the missionaries wax very eloquent over the sin of Great Britain in forcing our Indian opium upon the unwilling Chinese, and describe our wars with China as "Opium Wars." Now, we hold that our wars with China have been wholly unjustifiable, but they were not undertaken with the purpose of forcing opium upon China. For, as the historian, Stanley Lane-Poole, observes:—

> "Opium is an ingrained habit of the Chinese people, and was in use long before the East Indian Company came into existence. In the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries opium was a recognised import in Chinese tariffs. In 1799 the drain of silver from the country in payment for foreign imports alarmed the Chinese Government, and the principal article of trade, opium, was prohibited, not because it was injurious in itself, but because it took away too much specie."*

This decree, however, remained a dead letter for forty years, and the trade went on as though it had never been issued. As the same writer says:—

> "The people liked opium, the Chinese officials liked opium, large crops of the poppy were grown in China, and costly cargoes of opium were cheerfully imported from India. Opium was no more 'forced' upon the Chinese than brandy upon England; nor have the Chinese authorities ever charged us with compelling the importation. They even proposed (in 1837) to re-legalise the opium trade in the hope of checking the drain of silver, and this by itself is proof enough that the difficulty was one of finance, not of morals" (p. 9).

This is also the opinion of Mr. Eames in his history of *The English in China*, where he declares that it was "the economic side" of the opium question "to which the Chinese Government mainly devoted its attention when the opium traffic first became a subject of contention between England and China" (p. 229). Before 1828 the balance of trade had always been in favor of China, large quantities of silver being imported, a result very pleasing to them, and which lasted up to 1829, when, for the first time, the volume of imports exceeded exports, so that, instead of silver coming into the country in return for goods going out, silver began to go out of China for goods coming in, and the Chinese Government began to look forward with alarm to the time when the country would be depleted of the whole of its stock of silver. Says Mr. Eames:—

> "In all the documents contributed to the controversy by Chinese writers, the main theme was how to prevent the impoverishment of the people due to the loss of wealth arising from the opium trade, whether manifested in the export of silver, or in the diversion of agricultural resources to the production of a noxious luxury in the place of products of lasting value. Though the reasoning employed and the principles relied on were not always economically sound, yet it is evident that the economic evil was considered by the Chinese the most important. The Viceroy said in terms that the object in proposing to repeal the interdict on opium was to prevent the loss of specie occasioned by the sale of the drug for money. The regulations which he recommended were aimed chiefly at preventing this loss."†

It is true, says Mr. Lane-Poole,—

> "we may read eloquent Chinese diatribes on the sin of opium-smoking, for the argument of immorality began to be advanced as soon as it was discovered that public opinion among the English was sharply divided on the subject.....But the same people who expressed the finest sentiments on the subject in public were found to indulge in the practice in private, and the official class generally throughout China were passionately addicted to opium-smoking. The habit had become national long before England had anything to do with China, and it would have continued had there never been any British trade."‡

One of these Chinese indictments of opium, widely circulated in this country, was by no less a person than the late Li Hung Chang, in which that wily statesman observes: "The poppy is certainly surreptitiously grown in some parts of China, notwithstanding the laws and frequent imperial edicts prohibiting its cultivation." Upon which Dr. Morrison observes:—

> "'Surreptitiously grown in some parts of China!' Why from the time I left Hupeh till I reached the boundary of Burma, a distance of 1,700 miles, I never remember to have been out of sight of the poppy. Li Hung Chang continues, 'I earnestly hope that your Society, and all right-minded men of your country, will support the efforts China is now making to escape from the thraldom of opium.' And yet you are told in China

* H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, pp. 238-9.
† Dr. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 49.
‡ A. Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 28.

* Lane-Poole, *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, p. 9.
† J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, pp. 250-1.
‡ Lane-Poole, *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, pp. 9-10.

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that the largest growers of the poppy in China are the family of Li Hung Chang." *

Dr. Morrison, who travelled in China in 1894, observed :—

"Edicts are still issued against the use of opium. They are drawn up by Chinese philanthropists over a quiet pipe of opium, signed by opium-smoking officials, whose revenues are derived from the poppy, and posted near the fields of poppy by the opium-smoking magistrates who own them." †

Naturally, it was the producers of opium in China who were most interested in suppressing the supply of foreign opium, which entered into competition with the home-grown produce.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

Acid Drops.

"Thoughts have gone forth whose power can sleep no more." This was the motto on one of the Suffragette banners at the funeral of Miss Emily Wilding Davison, the lady who tried to stop the Derby as an advertisement of her "cause." It is a pity that Shelley's words did not receive a better all-round study. No one deprecated violence more than he did; no one gave less quarter to hatred and revenge. To try to cure evil with more evil he saw was sad, mad, and bad together.

Fight on. God will give the victory." These words were on Miss Davison's coffin. Religious people are so often guilty of nonsense and bad taste. We do not dispute that God gives the victory. We know nothing at all on that point,—and we suspect that the ladies know just as much as we do. But we regard it as perfectly certain that if God does give the victory he always gives it to those who win it. What a curious exhibition of human vanity it is that God is claimed to be on all sides—before the event! "Me and God" is the commonest partnership.

Rev. C. Hinscliffe, who took the funeral service at St. George's, Hart-street, Bloomsbury, talked the greatest nonsense over Miss Davison's coffin. First of all, he begged the supporters of the Woman Suffrage cause not to make her death a matter of party propaganda; which, of course, was precisely what they were making of it all the time. In the second place he told them that "The whole thing was in God's hands, and God always made exactly the right use of everything." So, so? Well, in that case God made exactly the right use of the 1913 Derby. And since then he has made exactly the right use of the Ascot. Thus all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

Now that the original General Booth is dead Mr. Bernard Shaw remains the greatest self-advertiser in England. But swelled-head is liable to develop in this sort of business. Mr. Shaw's latest letter to the *Times* on the treatment of Mrs. Pankhurst and other Suffragette prisoners, with its reference to Mr. Asquith ("I cannot persuade him") is really colossal. We saw symptoms of this coming on at the Essex Hall meeting in favor of the total repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. The one thing that loomed large to Mr. Shaw's mental vision was that the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws would enable him to write a play on Mohammed. The cream of the joke is that anybody can write as many plays as he pleases on Mohammed. Voltaire wrote one in pre-revolutionary France, and it was translated into English and staged in London. Mr. Shaw perhaps thinks himself so great a writer that a play on Mohammed from *his* pen would alarm the Sultan of Turkey, the Khedive of Egypt, the Shah of Persia, and all the Mohammedan rulers.

Mr. Shaw is an industrious letter-writer to the *Times*, and he is willing to tackle almost any subject. He has lately been dealing with the Suffragette question, with special relation to the Liberal Government. We must conclude that he is inspired, for he certainly utters anything but sense. One of his proposals was that the Suffragette prisoners should be allowed to commit suicide in their cells by self-starvation. This is what he offered as just and merciful in comparison with forcible feeding. Yet he has the calm assurance to declare that Mr. Asquith cares no more for the lives of Suffragette prisoners than he does for those of rabbits. After all, perhaps, Mr. Shaw made that proposal with his tongue in his cheek. He must surely have known that it could not be carried out in any prison that had a doctor amongst its officials. The fact is, we believe, that Mr. Shaw (like most politicians, for that matter) thinks any stick good enough to beat his political adversaries with. The Suffragette prisoners have cornered the Liberal Government, as they would corner Mr. Shaw's or anybody else's Government—in the way that women can always corner men if they choose to do so. Mr. Shaw knows this quite well—he *must* know it—and before he denounces and derides poor distracted McKenna's fluctuating policy he is bound to state what would be his own. Up to the present his only proposal is to let the ladies commit suicide. We repeat this could not be carried out; but supposing it could, we fail to see how it entitles Mr. Shaw to assume such lordly airs of moral superiority over the authors of other proposals—especially over those who have to deal with this baffling problem in a practical manner of some kind.

Mr. Shaw's last letter to the *Times* on the rearrest of Mrs. Pankhurst on the day of Miss Davison's funeral was perfectly fantastic. His enemies might even call it dishonest. The argument was based upon a suppression of the facts. Mrs. Pankhurst boasts that she has declared war against society as at present constituted; not a defensive war, but an aggressive war,—and not even an open war, but a surreptitious war, in which the aggressor inflicts injury without facing responsibility, and even claims and enjoys the protection and all other advantages derived from a supposed peaceful association with the very people it injures. Mrs. Pankhurst boasts that she commands the female soldiers in this war; inspires them, plans for them (in person or by proxy), and finds the money for the campaign. Let us suppose for a moment that she has a right to burn down public and private property, in order to frighten society into capitulating to her demands. Let us suppose this. What, then, about the other people—the people attacked? Have they no rights? Haven't they equal rights with Mrs. Pankhurst? If she tries to destroy their property haven't they the right to try to preserve it? Is it reasonable to expect that the Government which represents the general community is going to give Mrs. Pankhurst and her Amazons a free fling? Is it reasonable to expect that they will, in consideration of her illness, brought about by her own deliberate personal act, not only let her out of prison in order that she may recover, but also allow her to attend meetings and funeral processions in aid of the very policy for which she was incarcerated? Is she to be considered to be too ill to be in prison, yet well enough to participate in public propaganda? The idea is utterly absurd. We deny that this part of the Suffragette question is a political one at all. Whether women should have the parliamentary vote *is* a political question. (Heaps of men, by the way, haven't got it yet.) But whether rival political parties should be allowed any weapons but persuasion—whether they should be allowed to commit, and to commit as a deliberate policy, acts which from any other point of view would be regarded as abominable crimes,—this is *not* a political question; it is a question of the elementary social and moral principles of human society. Mr. Shaw knows all this as well as we do. But he is a Janus-faced controversialist. He defends order or disorder as it serves the turn. But it is noticeable that he never gets in the way of danger himself.

Is it not time to say that the "militant" Suffrage movement is a middle and upper-class movement, and is therefore rather privileged than otherwise? Had it been a working-class movement the Government would have been far less embarrassed by its prisoners. It would have put their food within their reach and said, "There you are; eat it or not, as you please. There are plenty of cemeteries."

Dr. Ethel Smyth reproaches the Archbishop of Canterbury for declining to "invite prayer in our churches for guidance in the woman's question." She reminds him that women are the Church's "mainstay." *That* is true, anyhow; and we are sorry for it. It is lamentable to see a woman like Dr. Ethel Smyth still clinging to the faith that has been her sex's worst enemy—the faith based on the language of Jesus expanded by the teaching of Paul. Even learned ladies are foolish enough to cling to the old faith. They help the Archbishop to cling to his old salary. That is all.

Like all other sects the Primitive Methodists are far on in decay. At their recent Conference at Derby it was stated that during last year they lost 405 members and 7,081 Sunday-school scholars. During seven years there has been a decrease of 20,000 scholars and over 2,000 teachers. Tearful regrets were expressed by many in the face of these

* Dr. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, pp. 46-7.
† *Ibid.*, p. 48.

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great losses, but nobody could tell how to prevent them for the future. The irresistible power of the Holy Ghost no longer counts. "Sir W. P. Hartley declared his faith in the financial self-sacrifices of wealthy men," as if abundance of cash could save the situation. The one fact that looms large is that the false pretences of the Christian Church are fast losing their hold of the masses of the people, or that, at last, she is beginning to be seen as she really is.

A Berlin correspondent to the *Christian World* for June 19 informs us that in all parts of Germany religion is visibly dying. Sunday is rapidly ceasing to be regarded as the Lord's Day. "The majority of the churches are more than half empty—at least in Protestant districts," and the few who do attend are mostly women and children. "Even the Kaiser sees nothing inconsistent in attending church on Sunday morning and spending the rest of the day on the racecourse." The correspondent's conclusion is that "as matters are at present in Germany, Sunday is not a day for religious observances so much as a day for recreation, amusement, sport, and theatre-going." As Dr. Horton admitted, not long ago, the trend of things—the spirit of the age—is everywhere distinctly and irrevocably anti-Christian; and this, in our opinion, is one of the most hopeful and encouraging signs of the times.

The Rev. Dr. Jowett, late of this country, but now of New York, has expressed his entire satisfaction with his ministry at Fifth Avenue Church. Why not? The church is a fashionable one, the congregation is wealthy, the minister is well paid. What more could any preacher desire? Naturally, Dr. Jowett finds that "in every direction religious life in America is proving itself a great and powerful factor in the cause of social regeneration." Rev. Mr. Aked, once of Liverpool, said exactly the same under similar conditions. And plenty more evidence of the same kind is procurable on the same terms.

Dr. Clifford has been at it again—not this time in connection with education. The other day he gave figures showing the exodus of people from the Roman Catholic Church. We do not question the figures, we have no need to, only Dr. Clifford's inference that the exodus is from Romanism to Protestantism. What we *do* challenge him to prove is this: "The cry of Europe," says Dr. Clifford, "now was, 'Sir, we would see Jesus.' We are tired of ikons and images and all the masses and pomp of the Catholic Church." Dr. Clifford's hearing must be defective. The cry of Europe, as other people hear it, is that it is equally tired of the pomp of the Catholic Church and the pettifogging hypocrisies of the Protestant one. The decline of church attendance in England and Germany, with the course of affairs in France, Italy, and Portugal, are quite enough to show what a romantic imagination Dr. Clifford has.

"The majority of the Churches are more than half empty—at least in Protestant districts. There are hundreds of congregations where one seldom sees more than an occasional man. There are crowds of women and children, but the men are thronging the beerhouses and cafes or are scouring the fields and woods." This is what the *Christian World* Berlin correspondent writes on June 19. It is a fine comment on Dr. Clifford's romantic description of the exodus from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism and the cry of Europe, "We would see Jesus."

Rev. Charles Brent, Bishop of the Philippines is to be congratulated. Crossing the Atlantic from Liverpool, the Bishop travelled steerage. His reason was that "a Bishop's place is among the common people." When the ship's officers found him out—which was not, we think, a very difficult thing—the only concession to his comfort the Bishop would make was to have a cabin to himself and have his meals served there. This strikes us as not at all a bad way to travel steerage, and many others must have envied him. If *we* want to go to New York, we expect that if we pay steerage rates we shall have to put up with steerage accommodation. But we are not envious. On the contrary, we admire Bishop Brent's plan of campaign. That is why we congratulate him.

Why do judges persist in utilising the privileged position of the Bench to indulge in statements quite irrelevant to what is before them, and to which no reply is possible at the time—or, indeed, at any time, in the same court? In summing up the case for the jury in the late Suffragist trial for conspiracy—which made the matter more offensive than if it had been introduced *after* the verdict had been given—Mr. Justice Phillimore took occasion to introduce, *apropos* of nothing in particular, some remarks on the relative merits of Christianity and Mohammedanism in relation to women. We do not know what this had to do with the case before him. The Suffragists were not avowed Mohammedans, nor had their offence any immediate connection with Christianity. We can only assume that the occasion presented itself as one in which Mr. Justice Phillimore could vent his own religious opinions, attack a rival creed, and prove that, able as he may be as a judge, he has much to learn both as regards the character of Christianity and of Mohammedanism.

Here is Mr. Justice Phillimore's deliverance, as reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 18:—

> "The religion of the world which had done most to elevate the position of women was Christianity. The religion which had probably done most to repress them was Mohammedanism.....Mohammedanism was a religion which had always been propagated by the sword."

Now we would suggest that in the England of to-day Mr. Justice Phillimore's religious opinions are his own personal possession, and that he is no more justified in crying up their value while in the discharge of his judicial duties than he would be justified in advertising the value of pictures that hang on the walls of his house. We admit that there is nothing to prevent him advertising his personal opinions on matters outside the case before him, but a nicer sense of personal responsibility than Christianity seems to develop would suggest that when one is a judge in a community which comprises all varieties of religious opinion, and a considerable bulk of no religion at all, the strictly honorable course would be to keep one's own religious opinions out of sight. A due sense of discrimination between one's public duties and one's personal opinions is always advisable, and in no case more so than when one occupies so important a position as the one filled by Justice Phillimore.

The remarks made were not merely injudicious; they were untrue. The statement that Christianity had elevated the position of woman is one that could only be made in the tone and manner in which it was made because we are living in a Christian country. It is the rule to picture Christianity as all that is good, whether facts justify the picture or not. As a matter of fact, it was Christianity that reduced woman in Europe to political and social servitude, and it is against Christian feeling that women have always had chiefly to contend. Mr. Justice Phillimore, we believe, is acquainted with the writings of the early Christians, and we defy him to find any other literature in the world in which woman is treated to so much abuse, and often abuse of such a character that it is simply untranslatable. The whole influence of Christianity for centuries was in the direction of robbing woman, while single, of all legal rights, and of making her, when married, a mere article of property belonging to her husband. In saying this we are not expressing a mere prejudice; we could cite the evidence of lawyers and historians of unquestioned eminence to prove it, were it necessary.

In saying that Mohammedanism is a religion propagated by the sword, Justice Phillimore is simply propagating a vulgar Christian slander. At any rate, it is not truer of Mohammedanism than of Christianity; and on the whole, force has never been employed against rival religious opinions by the former in the same brutal and relentless manner as it was used by the latter. No religion has used the sword more frequently or more ruthlessly than has Christianity. And the worst of European wars, since the decline of the old Roman Empire, have been either waged directly in the interests of Christianity or inspired by Christian feeling. The Crusades and the Thirty Years' War are sufficient proofs of this. It is true that Mohammedanism has used the sword also, but it at least has not used force in the interests of religion as Christianity has done. A conquered people were admitted liberty of worship by them at a time when such freedom was unknown in Christendom. Jew and Christian were allowed to follow their religions in Mohammedan Spain. How much liberty were either given when Spain became Christian? There is not, in fact, a country in the world, in which Christianity has not been established and maintained by force; and whatever the faults of Mohammedanism may be, the Christian, at any rate, is in no position to cast stones.

An inquest was held at Braintree on John Thomas Gilbey, farmer, Thomas Peter Gilbey, his son, and Arthur Smith, laborer, who were struck by lightning in a heavy thunderstorm. The jury returned a verdict of death by the act of God. Why is not that personage indicted for murder or manslaughter? Are the police unable or afraid to serve the summons or execute the warrant?

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There has been a correspondence in the *Observer* lately about the curious epithets applied by Catholics and Protestants to each other. This is a subject that was thoroughly worked out in one of our speeches to the jury before Mr. Justice North in 1883, when we were defending ourselves against an indictment for "blasphemy." Our old friend and sub-editor, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, going no further than the pages of Mosheim, collected a long catalogue of abusive epithets applied by Christian disputants to each other—especially during the period of the so-called Reformation. He supplied them to us—for we were in Newgate Prison at the time—and we fired them at the Roman Catholic judge on the bench, who was so eloquent on the subject of how "infidels" should attack Christianity, how polite they should be, how tender towards the feelings of the poor sensitive Christians. "Just listen to this," we said, "and hear how polite and tender the Christians have been to each other in their mutual controversies." Judge North squirmed under that catalogue of abusive epithets. It contained nearly everything that envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness could suggest. We rather think of reprinting it from the verbatim report of our speech.

We haven't been looking for rich dead disciples of the "blessed be ye poor" Nazarene for the last week or two. We have just lighted upon one—the Rev. Thomas Marsden, vicar of Chigwell, Essex, who left £18,557. Rather a big hump to go through that needle's eye.

Rev. Dr. C. F. Aked, formerly of Liverpool, since of New York, and now of San Francisco, whose salary is not less than £2,000 a year, has renounced his English citizenship and naturalised himself as an American. It can't make much difference now. The reverend gentleman has been six years absent from his native land. We guess the old country will survive the bereavement.

Mr. Aked explains that he favors America with his patronage because he is Republican and hates monarchy. But how does he reconcile that with the Christian Scriptures? How about the text "Fear God and honor the King"?

The great Anti-Home Rule meeting recently held at the Albert Hall was described in the *Daily Mail* report as "representative of all branches of Protestant Christians." "Brief religious exercises" were indulged in, and the principal speakers were clerical gentlemen. Canon Stephenson, of Belfast, repeated, amidst great applause, the foolish old epigram that "Home Rule and Rome Rule were synonymous." Rev. W. Dudley Fletcher, of Coolbanagher, Queen's County, talked about the Ne Temere decree, by way of showing how Roman Catholic Church law would override the law of the land. We suppose he doesn't know that this same game is openly played by the Protestant Church of England, whose clergy defy the marriage laws of the State by refusing to celebrate the marriage of divorced persons or marriage with a deceased wife's sister. There is no need to go to Ireland to find insolent priests.

Mr. H. W. Nevinson is reporting to the *Daily Chronicle* on the present situation in Albania. His first letter appeared in the issue for June 21. It was dated from "Scutari, June 14." The following extract will interest our readers:

> "I need not describe the ruin that its heroic defence has brought upon the city. The centre of the bazaar (the most beautiful in the near East next to Constantinople and Prisrend) has been burnt to the ground. But that happened after the surrender, and is attributed only to the Montenegrin's ancestral instinct for loot. The destruction of the cathedral by the forty large bombs fired into it was more wanton, for some 2,000 women and children had taken refuge there, supposing it to be absolutely safe. They forgot that Montenegrins and Serbs are orthodox, but the Cathedral Catholic, and that Christians do not necessarily love each other."

After describing the Montenegrins' savage defiance of the Hague conventions, Mr. Nevinson adds that the experiences inside Scutari, terrible as they were, "appear slight misfortunes compared with the slaughter and utter ruin in the surrounding villages. For the greater number of these villages have been devastated, burnt, and wiped out." Such are the sublime achievements of these soldiers of the Cross, who started out on the hypocritical pretence of "liberating their fellow Christians." They have liberated nobody. They have simply played the part of brigands — *Christian* brigands.

Thousands of Church of England people met in Hyde Park on Saturday (June 21) to protest against the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church. The Bishop of London and other speakers were loud in their indignation. But they had better save their breath to protest against the attack on their own Church—which will come next. Meanwhile the Bishop of London's question "Why Rob God?" will make many people laugh. They know that robbing God only means robbing the priests, and that robbing the priests means leaving them to live on their own earnings instead of other people's money.

A lady correspondent of the *Daily Sketch* refers to Jesus as "crucified between two thieves as a malefactor convicted of blasphemy." This is incorrect. Pilate refused to hear the charge of blasphemy; Jesus was then accused of sedition, found guilty, and sentenced to execution.

Mr. Harry Lauder occupied the pulpit at the Castle Green Congregational Church, Bristol, on Sunday afternoon. It was "free seats," of course, and a big crowd went to hear him at the price. He was helping a brother Scot in the person of the regular parson, the Rev. George Adams. He reminds us of the 'bus-driver who spent his day off in driving another man's 'bus.

It is curious to find the leading article in the *Methodist Times* headed "Beware of Heresy-Hunting!" It is rather late in the day for a Christian paper to issue the warning, and it looks as though the Rev. Scott Lidgett realises that to hunt heretics to-day in the Christian Churches is far more dangerous than leaving them to pursue their own road. For we do not imagine for a moment that the warning is based upon recognition of the truth that the heretic should be given the right to say what he pleases. We believe it is due to two things: First, because if all the heretics were turned out there would be few, and they the less intelligent section, left; and, second, that heresy-hunting involves acquainting many of the laity with truths that leaders of the Churches think had better be kept from them. "We will not," says the *Methodist Times*, "place a premium on the economy of truth, or on the cowardice of mediocrity." But that is precisely what all forms of Christianity have done, are doing, and will keep on doing. You cannot shut men out of office, or oppose them in public, or boycott them in business on account of their hostility to Christianity, without giving the coward or the hypocrite an advantage over the brave and honest man. You cannot even favor a Christian in public life, because he is a Christian, without doing this. And, on the other hand, to encourage all to express their opinions, without imposing social penalties upon them, would be to bring about such an exodus from the Churches as would make them a negligible factor in social life. This is really the dilemma of the Churches, although many of the leaders have not wit enough to see it.

The Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Melbourne, is a typical minister of the Gospel. He is brimful of prejudices, and expresses them without hesitation. In a letter published in the *Christian World* for June 19, he belauds two new evangelists who had just tried their hands at converting Melbourne, and are about to visit this country with a similar object in view. He praises them simply because they belong to his school of religious thought. Messrs. Smith and Robins are Americans, and represent the latest brand of evangelism, and Mr. Spurr calls them "these two great men." Now, Freethought has no great men under its banner. All its advocates are conspicuous only by their inferiority. In Melbourne it is professed by "a few brainy men," but their "ignorance of Christianity is colossal," and "a few students who studiously avoid all books on evolution that emphasise its spiritual value and implication." The Freethinkers of Melbourne will appreciate his classification of them into "some Athenians who ever run after new things, and some Yarra Bankers who hail every Rationalist as a god." This is nothing but coarse, vulgar abuse, the employment of which only shows that Mr. Spurr is anything but a great man, and that his ignorance and prejudice are simply colossal. His insulting allusions to Mr. McCabe are quite worthy of his profession.

Our correspondent "E. B." sends us the following "with reference to Mr. Foote's article on 'Where is God?'"—

> "What mortals *think* they know of God,
> A thousand tomes rehearse.
> What mortals do *not* know of God,
> Fills all the universe.
>
> —ANON."

> "God is a blank sheet, on which nothing is found but what we ourselves have written.—MARTIN LUTHER."

Perhaps "E. B.," who has leisure as well as culture, will collect more of these epigrams.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £151 4s. 11d. Received since:—J. W. O'Leary, 10s.; O. N. Beagley and Friends, 8s.: F. M. A., £3.

H. P. MARRITT.—(1) Glad to hear that the friend who presented you with a year's issue of the *Freethinker* has conferred upon you so much benefit. Ease and satisfaction of mind must be very welcome to one who has spent so much of a long life in a state of distraction through the dogmas and controversies of theology. (2) The Jews and Caffres have no special connection. Their national rite, the sign of their covenant with their god Yahveh, has been found in many different parts of the world, including the new world. Thanks for your good wishes. Our shop manager will attend to the rest of your letter.

C. H. M. GROM.—We note your opinion that Mr. Foote's lectures would cause still more excitement at Melbourne, if he could only be persuaded to visit it,—which, however, is not very likely now.

E. B.—Your cuttings are very welcome.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We hope the Birmingham Branch will have good weather and a successful picnic next Sunday. We should like to join it ourselves—if it were possible. We remember that golden day at Stratford-on-Avon. This may satisfy you that our health *is* improving.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for your weekly batches of cuttings.

J. SMITH.—There is an excellent volume on Evolution by Professors J. A. Thomson and P. Geddes, in the (shilling) "Home University Library" (Williams & Norgate).

W. JAMESON.—The first of sixpenny reprints was Paine's *Age of Reason*, issued by the Secular Society, Ltd., and edited by Mr. Foote, with some thirty pages of Notes and a Biographical Preface, which the late G. J. Holyoake called "masterly." Pioneer work is more easily followed than initiated.

J. W. O'LEARY.—Thanks for your letter as well as the enclosure.

J. D. HARDING.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

C. BOURCHIER.—Sorry we cannot inform you. Try the Theosophical Society.

H. SMALLWOOD.—It is only a common case of clerical begging, and does not seem to call for any special comment.

J. B.—See paragraph. Pleased to hear from you. Enclosure returned. Glad to have your "congratulations on returning health."

O. N. BEAGLEY, forwarding subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "It is sent by a few working men in appreciation of your long and plucky fight for freedom of thought, and as a slight acknowledgment of the pleasure and enlightenment they have derived from the pages of the *Freethinker*."

F. M. A., subscribing to the President's Fund, does so "with a wish that you may do all possible to husband your health and strength, and that you may long be spared to so ably lead 'the best of causes.'"

BOLTON BRANCH.—Miss Vance will lay it first before the N. S. S. Executive.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The Birmingham Branch holds its annual picnic next Sunday (July 6). Members and friends take train from Snow Hill Station at 10.5 a.m. for Warwick. Hot luncheon will be served at the Eastgate Restaurant, 15 Smith-street, Warwick, at 12.30. Tickets, including train fare and luncheon, are 4s. each. Applications to be addressed to the secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Shenstone-road, Rotton Park, Birmingham. "Saints" from Coventry, Rugby, Leamington, and the district are cordially invited to join the party.

The Liverpool Branch has its annual picnic to-day (June 29) to Thurstaston. Waggonettes leave Woodside Station at 10.15 a.m. Local Freethinkers will all be welcome. Tickets—3s. 6d., including tea; 2s. 3d. for cyclists—can be obtained of the Branch secretary, Mr. W. McKelvie, 57 Penrose-street, Everton, Liverpool.

The Croydon Branch's Sunday evening lectures now begin at 7. We are glad to hear these meetings are so successful.

"F. M. A.," whose initials appear elsewhere in our columns this week, writes:—

> "Here is a point about the word Atheist that I have never seen dealt with, showing what a grand example of the genuine Christian lie it is. In our language there are many words beginning with the Greek prefix *a* = without, but not one which denies the existence of the subject-matter of the word. Apathy, Anodyne, Anhydrous, do not deny the existence of Feeling, Pain, or Water."

We have often dealt with this point, though not lately. It is indeed a very important one. It is raised, with other important points, in our pamphlet *What is Agnosticism?*

Mr. Philip G. Peabody, of Boston—the subscriber who made up the balance of some £20 to complete the full £300 of the President's Honorarium Fund for 1912—has been travelling a great deal since then. In his last letter to us he makes an important statement. "I have been eleven times in Turkey," he says, "and the Turks deserve all the good things you say of them. The whole truth of their treatment by Christians is hopelessly unspeakable and almost unbelievable." Mr. Peabody is quite in love with the Russian people; they are naturally gentle, generous, and kind, and their cruelty to the Jews is "the most marvellous proof of the cruelty-breeding influence of the Christian religion."

We do not regard it exactly as a "Sugar Plum" that Mr. Justice Neville has made an order for the compulsory winding up of the "Daily Herald" Printing and Publishing Society, Ltd. But there is no other part of the *Freethinker* in which we can very well notice the matter. To tell the truth, we are sorry to see the *Daily Herald* going under. It seems to have made a bad mistake in supposing that Mr. G. K. Chesterton was going to save it; just as, at the first, it made a bad mistake in supposing that the working-classes cared what the Bishop of This and the Bishop of That thought about social questions. After all, however, there is no use in crying over spilt milk. Our object is rather to draw attention to the way in which the *Freethinker* has been kept in active existence for thirty-two years, during which time all sorts of advanced papers have come and gone. Our readers in general, and our friends in particular, if they think the subject over, will probably see that ours has been no light achievement. Not that we want to take all the credit to ourselves. We have had the ungrudging and unstinted assistance of a body of contributors, who, while not disdaining wages when obtainable, are (and have been) animated first of all by the soldier spirit in fighting for "the best of causes." (That phrase of Meredith's shall not die.) But that very fact helps to make the maintenance of the *Freethinker* not only an achievement but a triumph.

A good deal of money appears to have been dropped in the *Daily Herald*. The Company was incorporated in September, 1912, with a nominal capital of £50,000, of which 19,036 Preference shares and 171,000 Ordinary shares of 1s. each had been subscribed. Judgment creditors for £3,488 petitioned for the compulsory winding-up in the bankruptcy court. We do not know how this will work out, but obviously a lot of money has been lost, which may run to under or over £10,000. That sum spent upon the *Freethinker* might have made it a good property—or "a paying concern"—for so much depends on the editorship of any journal, the larger part of its value at any moment consisting of "goodwill."

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

A CONSIDERABLE time has now elapsed since I first heard of "the passing of Jesus"; but in looking around for signs of the event, I can see little to indicate that "the passing" has gone beyond the initial stage: and this small result is due mainly to "Biblical criticism" chiefly from the pens of a few scholars amongst the advanced clergy.

There is a falling off, certainly, in the attendance at places of worship; but the causes which operate in this matter are manifold, and do not, I think, often include the belief that the Gospel "history" is untrue. Yet, until the latter fact has become widely known, "the passing of Jesus" will not be realised. At a recent Conference, it is true, the Congregational Union passed a resolution in favor of the "higher criticism"; but I am quite sure that the representatives who so voted had no idea what those critical results are. Neither, again, has the great apostle of the New Theology; for that preacher, in his published sermons, refers again and again to the Gospel narratives as historic events. In the Religious Press the results of Biblical criticism are minimised or misrepresented, and only one, here and there, studies the subject with an eye to truth. To the vast majority of Christians the New Testament is "the word of God" from cover to cover. They have no idea that the Gospels contain within themselves sufficient evidence to prove to any unprejudiced reader that they are merely a collection of fictitious stories written originally by nobody knows whom. In the present series of papers, I propose simply to make a selection from those narratives, and show, as I have just stated, that they are one and all ancient Christian fabrications.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

By the above heading is meant the deliberate misrepresentations made by the Gospel writers that Jesus Christ was the subject of Old Testament "prophecy." Over and over again, throughout the four Gospels, the teacher Jesus is represented as doing this, that, or the other, in order that "the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith," etc.; and in every instance, without a single exception, the Old Testament passage which is quoted had no more reference to the Christian Savior than to the man in the moon. The following are a few examples.

1. The Virgin Mary, we are told, "was found with child by the Holy Ghost.....that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (Matt. i. 18—23).

This quotation is correct so far as it goes, save that the Hebrew word translated "virgin" denotes nothing more than "young woman." Turning now to the Old Testament narrative, we find that when Rezin king of Damascus and Pekah king of Samaria were about to unite their forces against Ahaz king of Judah, Isaiah appeared before the last-named king, and told him to have no fear, for the designs of the two hostile kings would come to naught, after which he gave him a sign. This was: that a "young woman" should conceive, and bear a son, and that before the child should be of an age to discern good from evil, or even to say "my father" and "my mother," the countries ruled over by the allied kings should be over-run by the Assyrians, and the "riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria" should be carried away by the king of Assyria. This child, as the context shows, was the prophet's own son, whose name, upon second thoughts, Yahweh decided should be "speed spoil, hasten prey." "Immanuel" was a pet name for the people of Judah (Isaiah vii. 14—16; viii. 3, 4, 8).

2. Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem because "it was written by the prophet" that out of Bethlehem should come a governor who should rule over Israel (Matt. ii. 6). Just so; and it was further predicted that this ruler—like a second David, "from of old, from ancient days"—should deliver the Israelites of that day from the Assyrians, when the latter invaded Judæa (Micah v. 2—7).

3. The child Jesus was taken by his parents to Egypt "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son" (Matt. ii. 14—15). The quotation is taken from Hosea xi. 1, and reads:—

> "When *Israel* was a child, then I loved him, and called *my son* out of Egypt."

The reference, it is scarcely necessary to say, is to the people of Israel, who, when young as a nation, were called by the god, Yahweh, out of the bondage of Egypt.

4. A massacre of babies, it is stated, took place in Bethlehem in fulfilment of "that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not" (Matt. ii. 17—18). The quotation is correct; though how "Ramah" could mean "Bethlehem" it would puzzle anyone save a Christian reconciler to say. Turning now to the passage in the Book of Jeremiah, we see that the reference in that book is not to a massacre of infants, but to sons and daughters who had been carried away into captivity. Of this fact the Gospel writer was perfectly aware; for Jeremiah, to comfort the mothers of Israel, goes on to say:—

> "Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears;.....they shall come again from the land of the enemy.....thy children shall come again to their own border" (Jer. xxxi. 15—17).

Further examples of these so-called "prophecies" are unnecessary. Similar misrepresentations, numbering perhaps forty or more, are to be found in the Gospels and the Book of the Acts, though in some three or four cases the same quotations are repeated in a second or third Gospel. In every case these pseudo-prophecies are declared to have received their fulfilment in Jesus Christ, or his apostles, or people in his days; but, needless to say, not one of the whole batch has the smallest reference to Jesus or to his time.

Looking, now, at the examples just cited, there cannot, I think, be the slightest doubt but that the Gospel writers knew perfectly well that they were perpetrating an atrocious fraud, and did so deliberately. This kind of deceit these pious Christian teachers doubtless believed they could practise with impunity, for very few of the common people had any acquaintance with Greek letters, and fewer still had access to MSS. of the Greek Septuagint. Even if the worst happened, the passages quoted in the Gospels could be found in the book named; so the fraudulent writers had no fear as to the result.

Setting aside, however, for the moment this misrepresentation, the question to be considered is: Are the incidents already noticed historical? Is it a fact of history that a virgin "was found with child" by no other agency than that of the Holy Ghost? Were a number of babies massacred at Bethlehem by order of Herod the Great? And did the parents of Jesus go to Egypt to escape this massacre? Now, if the alleged Gospel events are strictly historical, one might easily imagine the writer selecting certain Old Testament passages, and saying that these were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. But, if the Gospel stories are pure fiction (as they can be shown to be), those stories must have been suggested to the writer by something. Now, what could be more likely to do so than the passages which the Gospel writer had noticed in the Old Testament, and copied out as predictions to be fulfilled in the history of the Christian Savior? To further illustrate this point I must take another example from the Gospels.

Psalm xxii. was regarded by all the early Christians as referring to Jesus Christ. Verse 18 reads: "They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots." Now this having been predicted of Jesus (from the evangelistic point of view), it is

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interesting to note that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in their accounts of the Crucifixion, say of the Roman soldiers, "they parted his garments among them, casting lots." I have no hesitation in saying that this statement would never have appeared in the Gospels but for its presence in Psalm xxii. I will now go a step farther. The two sentences—"They part my garments among them"—"upon my vesture do they cast lots"—form an example of synonymous parallelism peculiar to Hebrew poetry. This consists of two sentences which express the same ideas in slightly different terms. In the present example, the second sentence—"upon my vesture do they cast lots"—is but a repetition in a varied form of the first—"They part my garments among them"—the "vesture" being but another name for the "garments," and the "parting" or division being made by "casting lots."

Now the writer of the Fourth Gospel took the "vesture" to be distinct from the "garments," and the "parting" and "casting lots" to be separate acts. Hence, in accordance with this erroneous view, he completely alters the narrative. He says (John xix. 23—24):—

> "The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did."

Here, I think, we can safely say, "These things therefore the soldiers did *not*." The other three evangelists took their accounts from an older Gospel, and simply followed their copy, which said nothing of the fulfilment of prophecy in this case. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, however, happened to know the Old Testament source of the "parting of the garments," and he piously fabricated an incident which he considered a better fulfilment of the passage, as he understood it. The giving Jesus a seamless coat that could not be divided was certainly ingenious, as was also the giving his Savior so many garments. A complete suit in that day comprised but two—an outer garment and an under one. Peter, and probably Jesus also, only wore one (Matt. x. 10; John xxi. 7)—and no shoes.

My theory respecting the origin of a large number of the Gospel narratives does not, of course, in any way affect the fraud of the original Gospel writers, in falsely representing alleged events in the life of Jesus Christ as fulfilling Old Testament prophecies. These systematic frauds are incontrovertible, and show, amongst other matters, the immoral and untrustworthy character of those writers, as well as completely disproving, once for all, the claim so often made for them by ignorant Christian advocates—that of writing their narratives under the influence of the "spirit of God."

ABRACADABRA.

Herbert Spencer.

(1820-1903.)

> "Who saw life steadily and saw it whole."
> —MATTHEW ARNOLD.
>
> "This man decided not to live, but know."
> —BROWNING.
>
> "Without fears, without desires, without ceremonies, he has used sheer reason, and played the philosopher."
> VOLTAIRE on "Confucius."

HERBERT SPENCER was a world-figure. Long before his death men had come to think of him with Plato, with Bacon, with Kant, with Comte, and with Mill, as one of the great men who mark an era. To the great mass of people, it is true, he was only a great name; but to the world of intellect he ranked with the highest minds, with those who open up new vistas to men's eyes and widen the horizon of knowledge.

He was not born, like Darwin, to ease and affluence. He had his own way to make in the world; but for what is commonly meant by success he cared nothing. To spurn delights and live laborious days for the sake of ambition and its rewards is comparatively easy. Spencer belonged to the few great men who have sunk their personality in their cause, and without thinking of fortune or fame. To his system of Synthetic Philosophy, which puts things together and does not pull to pieces, he devoted his genius, his energies, and his patience. Struggling for years against poverty, against obscurity, against the indifference of the general public to philosophy, he persevered to the end. For forty years of his life he was perfecting the details of his philosophical scheme. There has been no grander intellectual achievement since Edward Gibbon took his memorable walk under the acacias at Lausanne. Spencer never startled the world, and his utter want of orthodoxy was not fully realised until his *Data of Ethics* appeared in 1879. Then Christians were annoyed to find that the man who had quietly taken his place as the leading English philosopher was a thorough Freethinker. Standing outside all Churches and creeds, he built up his own philosophy by science alone.

Herbert Spencer, in his writings, sought to show that all phenomena, physical and psychical, are the natural products of elementary matter and its laws, these being modes of operation of the primal law of what he calls the "persistence of force." His scheme, probably the vastest ever conceived by the human mind, embraced the story of the evolution of the universe from formless stuff into solar systems, the process being advance from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the coherent. This same process from the like to the unlike was shown to be in operation in the life history of the earth. No break between things inanimate and animate being assumed, life, mind in the lower animals and man, man's social and intellectual development, are in unbroken sequence shown to be parts of the eternal order. The Synthetic Philosophy, as the author chose to call it, is nothing more or less than the law of evolution, as exemplified in nature and in man, in the animal realm and the vegetable and human, the sphere of sense, and the sphere of conscious and moral aspiration.

Spencer's literary style was austere, and he deliberately stripped his writing of all embellishment. He never chose to ornament the expression of his thought by surface graces. If he did not display the element of fancy, he had the larger gift of imagination, for, in a sense, the *Synthetic Philosophy*, as a whole, is as truly imaginative as the tragedies of Shakespeare or the pictures of Michael Angelo. To whom, Spencer asks in one of his essays, will a piece of Alpine scenery more powerfully appeal, "to an ignorant mind, or to the mind of a philosopher who knows that over that mountain a glacier slid a million years ago?"

The glory and the triumph of Herbert Spencer is that his philosophy rests on ascertained knowledge. While other philosophers have evoked various extraneous agencies to account for the difference between man and the rest of the world, he preferred to trust to evolution, the law which connects the thoughts of a Shakespeare with the obscure movements of an ascidian on the rocks. Spencer had a harder task than any of his predecessors, because the product of science has become so much more extensive, and because he took all knowledge to be his province.

Living to a patriarchal age, Spencer long outlived his associates in his early days of fame, Mill, "George Eliot," Lewes, Darwin, and Huxley. It is strange to think that Spencer's friends might well have reckoned him the least likely of their circle to survive to an extreme age. For, like Voltaire, he had a frail constitution. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that he never knew what health was, so fragile was his body. For the greater part of his life he was an invalid, a victim of dyspepsia and insomnia. What courage he displayed through it all?

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The quantity and quality of his work would have put an extremely strong man to shame. As the product of an invalid, it is marvellous. He was a hero as well as a philosopher.

For nearly half a century his authority has been unquestioned, not merely in his own country, but in every part of the civilised world. His works are read not only throughout Europe, but in India, America, and Australasia. In the far East the principles of the philosopher of evolution are better known than those of any other English thinker. He belongs to that rare company to whom may be applied the supreme tribute, "Others abide our question; thou art free." Spencer was not merely an academic philosopher. His love for liberty was as worthy a feature of his life as his enthusiasm for knowledge. He was not loved by priests, ever the hindmost of the thinkers, and he suffered many of the whips and scorns of clerical animosity. But Freethinkers have to endure that sort of thing. Few men, indeed, were more sober or temperate in their expressions, or more just to opponents, than Herbert Spencer.

His was a life of sacrifice. The tremendous intellectual labors which Spencer carried on brought him neither wealth nor comfort. He was unable to find a publisher for his *Social Statics* in 1850, and he had to print and sell it on commission. A small edition took over fourteen years to sell, and the *Principles of Psychology* sold almost as slowly. Again and again he found he was losing money by his writings. Once he would have had to stop his great work but for a timely legacy. After a quarter of a century's work, the sales of his works just paid the publishing expenses. All his labor had gone for nothing, and his health had broken down from the constant strain of his studies. We can but admire the singular devotion, completeness, and dignity of the philosopher's life. Seeking no honor nor applause, he made an imperishable name. No philosopher, ancient or modern, held up a higher standard of conduct, none illustrated it by a purer or more unselfish life. At a time when commercialism was rampant, the pursuit of study for its own sake, and not for any base or ulterior object, was an exception so rare as to be scarcely credible. In an age of compromise Herbert Spencer remained ever faithful to first principles; in an age of ostentation he cared only for truth.

MIMNERMUS.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

THE manager of a large metal manufactory in a Midland city was talking to his assistant.

"Our managing director, Sir Brummagem Brass, has just telephoned to me that the Right Reverend Dr. Pontifex, Bishop of Dulchester, wishes to go over the works this afternoon."

"Funny taste for a Bishop," said the assistant manager. "I should have thought that some of the articles we turn out would scarcely have interested a man of his profession."

"Well, I believe he is one of our largest shareholders," said the manager, with a smile.

"Oh, that would fully account for it," observed the other, drily.

"Sir Brummagem says he hopes we will give the Bishop every facility for seeing the works; indeed, he asked me to take him round them myself, but unfortunately I have a most important engagement this afternoon, so I must ask you to do the honors of our little shop. Hope you don't mind?"

"Not at all. Shall be delighted," replied the assistant manager.

So when the Bishop's magnificent motor-car drew up at the entrance of the great metal works, the assistant manager was there to give him a polite but far from obsequious reception. In fact, the assistant manager was blessed with a fairly keen sense of humor, and promised himself quite a pleasant half hour.

The prelate was conducted through a number of busy workshops, full of the unceasing hum of rushing machinery operating under the unceasing care and vigilance of human beings scarcely less mechanical in their movements. And all the while the assistant manager was giving the visitor rapid explanations of all salient features.

Presently, as they were entering yet another workshop, the assistant manager said:

"This is the small arms factory, your lordship. The machine you see here is turning the grooves of rifle barrels. As I daresay you are aware, we hold all patent rights in the well-known Swift-Dedley magazine rifle—which you now see in process of manufacture. It is sighted to three thousand seven hundred and fifty yards, has a muzzle velocity (with cordite charge) of two thousand five hundred foot-seconds, and a remarkably flat trajectory, thus ensuring wonderful precision at long ranges; indeed, we claim that it is the most perfect military rifle yet produced in England, and the War Office is now considering the question of adopting it for the British Army. We executed large orders for this rifle from the Argentine Republic just before the commencement of their present war with Bolivia and Paraguay, and the military authorities of the Argentine attribute their remarkable successes in the field entirely to its use—the percentage of killed among the Bolivian and Paraguayan troops being greater than that of any war of modern times.

"Here," continued the assistant manager, when they reached another part of the workshop, "we turn out the new infantry machine guns which did such useful work during the recent British expedition to the Hullabaloo Hills on the Indian frontier. These little machines are so light that they can be hauled by a couple of soldiers up the steepest hillsides; and as they fire from six to seven hundred shots per minute, they are most effective against the wild rushes of fanatical tribesmen. The half-naked Hullabaloochis, with all their magnificent bravery, could do nothing against these guns, and were mown down in thousands. In fact, as your lordship is aware, the expedition proved eminently successful from a military point of view, and settled the Hullabaloo business in a few weeks."

"Ah," observed the Bishop solemnly, "it is sad, indeed, that such things should be, even though they form part of the unavoidable duties of imperial dominion. We can only hope that the ultimate advantage may outweigh the temporary evil by conferring on these poor people the great moral benefits of British rule."

"And that, I am sure, we can safely leave in the hands of your lordship's department," replied the assistant manager with a curious smile. "For us, of course, it wouldn't do to lay much stress on the moral aspect of the question. All we are concerned with is to make our business pay the largest possible dividends."

They moved on to another great workshop, and the assistant manager's face again wore the curious smile, and there was almost a twinkle in his eye as he said:—

"This is what we familiarly call our toy department, your lordship. Here we turn out enormous quantities of religious accessories—ornaments, charms, idols, and so on, for the East Indian and African trade."

"Dear me," observed the Bishop in a dubious tone.

"Yes. And it is gratifying to feel that here at least there can be no moral scruples in our business, for it must surely be one of the duties of imperial dominion to satisfy the religious requirements of subject races. This great gold-plated pinnacle is intended to surmount a Burmese pagoda, and these brass Buddhas mostly go to Burma, too, though a fairly good trade is also done with Ceylon and Siam. There is also a large business done in West Africa with these idols in britannia metal and bronze, and since the opening up of Northern Nigeria a large exporting firm has found it worth while to establish a business at Bonny, on the Calabar coast, mainly for the trade in idols. Hundreds are sent into the interior every month, and we have been assured on good authority that deities manufactured by us are being regularly worshiped from the Kameruns to Dahomey and from Sokoto to Lake Chad. Your lordship will observe that the idols we turn out, though far from beautiful according to our artistic standards, wear a more benevolent expression than one is accustomed to find on the countenance of an African god, and this cannot fail to have an elevating and refining influence on their worshipers. We can congratulate ourselves, therefore, that while still in pursuit of dividends as our main object, we are at the same time doing our humble share in conferring those moral benefits which your lordship has just referred to."

The right reverend gentleman, who was by this time openly frowning, looked hurriedly at his watch. "Dear me," he said, "I was not aware it was so late. I am afraid I must be getting away. Much obliged to you for a very interesting visit."

But as he drove away in his motor-car he said to himself, "Rather disagreeable young man that. I believe he was laughing at me all the time."

When the manager inquired about the Bishop's visit, the assistant manager said, "Oh, yes, quite a success. His

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lordship seemed deeply interested in the military small arms factory, and even more so in the toy department."

"What! Did you actually show him all those African idols and things?" asked the manager, laughing. "That should be almost enough to make him sell out of the company."

But the Bishop didn't sell a single share. On the contrary, he bought some more at the first opportunity.

Correspondence.

THE MONTREAL RELIGIOUS CENSUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As you will gather, the enclosed item, clipped from the *Gazette* (Friday, May 30), the various Protestant and the Jewish sects have united their forces to obtain a religious census of the City of Montreal:—

> "Nearly eighty per cent. [I quote from the item enclosed] of the city, it is said, was visited yesterday, and on the basis of the results obtained, it is calculated that roughly ninety-five per cent. of the population will be found to lay claim to some church affiliation or connection."

We may safely conjecture from the above that within a short while the daily papers will be bristling with unctuous headlines to the effect that "The blood of Christ has washed us clean," or "Christianity dead," etc. Foreseeing this, I hasten to acquaint you with the true state of affairs.

The census, so far, has been undertaken exclusively by members of some Christian or Jewish organisation, by aid of a door-to-door canvass. The whole scheme, of course, is utterly silly; but, as the thing was to be done, it should have been done fairly. It was not.

We are five in our family—my mother, two sisters, my brother, and myself. My mother does not attend any church; my elder sister is an orthodox Roman Catholic; the younger (twenty), Agnostic; and my brother and myself, both over twenty, are Atheists (and readers of the *Freethinker*). Thus we have one Christian out of a family of five, yet we have been booked in the census lists as a Roman Catholic family!

I have not spoken to my friends who are freethinking, but I have no doubt that the same system has prevailed throughout the city. And, as many boarding-house ladies are Christian, a house will be dubbed Catholic or Protestant, though half the inmates may be Rational.

I hope you will give this letter prominence in your columns, as there are a number of your Montreal readers who will have some interesting information to offer.

Montreal. CHARLES MCDONELL.

PORTUGUESE POLITICAL PRISONERS: A FREETHINKER'S PROTEST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your paper of June 8 a correspondent, Mr. William Heaford, states that the pamphlet, *Portuguese Political Prisoners: a British National Protest* (L. Upcott Gill, Bazaar-buildings, Drury-lane), was written by a Portuguese Royalist. Mr. Heaford has been misled by an assertion to this effect in the *Mundo*. As honorary secretary to the Committee of the British Protest I am able to inform him that an English author is responsible for the pamphlet, which was submitted to the Committee before being offered for sale at the Æolian Hall meeting on April 22. Mr. Heaford was evidently not present at this meeting, or he would not be sceptical as to the keen and strenuous interest which is taken by the British public on the subject of the Portuguese political prisoners. The speakers were representative of all shades of opinion, and amongst them was Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan, who spoke as a Liberal and a Freethinker. I quote Mr. Trevelyan's words, as they afford the clearest estimate of the motives and ideas which inspired the British Protest:—

> "We have not assembled here to indulge in hysteria over doubtful and exaggerated reports. We have come still less to grind the axe of any party or any person, or any group of persons, or of any Church in Portugal or in England. This meeting over which Lord Lytton has so ably presided represents a union for one purpose of persons of very different political and very different religious opinions, which taken together go a long way to make England. The Conservative and Progressive tendencies in politics have been represented in this movement, on the platform; the Protestant, Catholic, and the Freethinking tendencies in religion have all been represented this afternoon. *For my part I stand here as a Liberal who is also a Freethinker,.....and I would especially appeal to Liberals, and especially appeal to Freethinkers, not to wink the eye at crime and injustice because it happens to be committed in the name of an anti-clerical Republic.*.....It is not merely a question of the state of the prisons and the treatment of the prisoners; there is the question of why they got there. Many of them have not been tried, and those who have been tried have in many cases been tried with grave injustice. *They are put there because of their opinions, not because of their acts.* That is not Liberalism or Socialism, but Jacobinism, and that is as much opposed to Liberal principles as despotism. *These men are not Freethinkers. They indulge in the persecution of opinion, and that is the opposite of free thought.*"

Mr. Trevelyan went on to say that he was one of those who had protested against the execution of Ferrer, and had protested against the state of the prisons in Russia, but that this was not the time or place to discuss either. The question at the moment was to see what would be the effect upon "our ancient ally," Portugal, of the expression of British public opinion in favor of "justice, humanity, and law." The concluding phrases of Mr. Trevelyan's speech sum up the convictions of which the meeting was the outward sign:—

> "Those who know Portugal best believe that there are innumerable breasts in Portugal that beat to this same sentiment, not only Royalists but Republicans also. If it be thought we are asking for something which Portugal cannot grant, when we ask for an amnesty, there is the fact that an Amnesty Bill has actually been presented to Parliament in Portugal, and it is the opinion of many experienced persons that the great majority of the nation is in favor of it."

I may add that one of those most strongly in favor of it is the President of the Republic.

Since the Æolian Hall meeting, over 200 Republicans and Socialists have joined their Royalist compatriots in prison, and there can be little doubt in the minds of dispassionate observers that the granting of a general amnesty would allay the discontent and widespread resentment which has been aroused by the despotism of Affonsa Costa.

C. M. TENISON.

Yokes Court, near Sittingbourne, Kent.

Self-Mutilation.

> "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew v. 30).

A RECENT occurrence in India shows that the sources from which the above teaching of Jesus were derived still survive in the East. The following is a summary of the account, given in the *Pioneer* (India) of May 11, of the incident:—

Three years ago an illiterate peasant named Lachman settled down as a sadhu in a temple in Mortakka in the Central Provinces. He was full of religious fervor, had done the *Parkrama* of the Nerbudda, and listened attentively to readings from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. These referred mostly to the offerings of different parts of the body as sacrifices to Shiva, and Lachman was so impressed by them that he resolved to experiment on himself. So, on March 20, he cut off his hand with a hatchet, put it in front of the image of Rama, and then went to Appaji, the pujari of the temple, and showed him his bleeding stump, which he declared gave him no pain. Appaji called up some other priests, and they applied ligatures, and also informed the village police.

Fortunately, that same evening, Captain Tarr, civil surgeon, arrived at the village, and, finding that the arm had been very roughly hacked, decided on operating. Lachman refused to take chloroform, and watched quite calmly the surgeon's work. A second operation was necessary before the hæmorrhage could be stopped.

Next morning the patient expressed no surprise that the hand had not rejoined the wrist, but he declined to remain in the village to have his wound dressed daily, so he departed on his way fully confident that no harm would befall him, as he was under the protection of Rama. Nothing has been heard of Lachman since, so probably the wound may have healed. If he is alive, he will assuredly acquire supreme merit among other sadhus. He is about forty years of age, and, though unable to read or write, yet has been, since boyhood, deeply religious.

E. B.

He was a curate and he came up from the country to try his luck at the Adelphi Theatre voice trials recently. He explained that things were very quiet in the country, and now that the theatre had improved so much he felt that he could adopt the career without loss of dignity. Then he sang "There is a green hill far away." And the audience wished him there. One verse was enough. He tried another, but was conducted out into the daylight. No doubt his next song was "Home, sweet home."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): F. Schaller, 11.30, "Atheism"; 7.30, "Christianity Unsound."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Religion: a Product of the Human Mind."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 10 a.m., Meeting. All Secularists invited.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Ground): R. Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6 30, "The Failure of Christianity."

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Steps): Gilbert Manion, 11, "God"; 3. "The Bible"; 6.30. "Christian Socialism Exposed." Monday, June 30, at 7.30, R. Mearns, "The Philosophy of Secularism"; Saturday, July 5, at 7.30, "The Churches and Modern Thought."

BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Place): Joe McLellan, 3, "Is Religion a Barrier to Progress?" 6.30, "Mistakes of Jesus Christ."

COLNE BRANCH N. S. S. (Skipton-road): 6.30, Arthur Thompson, "The Sermon on the Mount."

FARNWORTH (Market Square): Monday June 30, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

NELSON BRANCH N. S. S. (Chapel-street): 6.30, Arthur Thompson, "Wanted, a New God."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7, F. M. Wilkesbarre, "Saviors."

WIGAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Steps): Matt Phair, 3, "Socialism and Christianity"; 6.30, "Will Christ Save Us?"

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VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 27 SUNDAY, JULY 6, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Children are travellers newly arrived in a strange country: we should therefore make conscience not to deceive them—JOHN LOCKE.

Brockwell Park Theology.

UNDER the heading of "Park Theology," a Brixton paper devotes a column to the report of a lecture in Brockwell Park by the Rev. A. J. Waldron. The ostensible subject was the Resurrection, but Mr. Waldron is not a logical speaker, and he appears to have talked a great deal at random. He seems to have made a number of old-fashioned statements, which show that he has not got beyond the Paleyan criticism of the New Testament, and a number of foolish observations which show that nature has fairly well fitted him for his present occupation. We say this quite advisedly,—for it has been held that to call a parson a fool is not libellous as it is no detriment to him in his profession. It would be impossible, we imagine, to improve Mr. Waldron's brains at his time of life, but it should still be possible to improve his knowledge; and we suggest that his friends—or perhaps his congregation—should buy him a few pounds' worth of up-to-date Biblical literature, beginning with (say) the *Encyclopædia Biblica*,—if that is not too dry and wearisome for Mr. Waldron's intellectuals; which is a point on which, perhaps, the donors might consult him beforehand.

Mr. Waldron has just been reading *Quo Vadis?* He appears to have got to know of it through a picture show advertisement. He speaks of it as though it were not a novel but a work of great historical importance. There was a passage in it which hit what passes as Mr. Waldron's mind right in the bull's-eye. A converted Roman said he believed that Christ rose from the dead because people who knew him said so, and these people spoke the truth, and he must believe them. Mr. Waldron does not see any logical hiatus between "they said so" and "they speak the truth," whereas the two propositions may be as far asunder as the poles. Nor does Mr. Waldron see that *Quo Vadis?* is founded on the New Testament, and that the New Testament cannot be quoted in support of itself. But even if we waived that canon of criticism, what would become of the argument in question? People who knew Jesus believed that he rose from the dead; yes, and more people who knew him disbelieved that he rose from the dead. It is a curious thing that all the early Christian documents, including the Gospels, were written in Greek, and none of them belong to the first century. They were written, also, in all parts of the eastern Roman Empire. It was not at Jerusalem, where it was said to have happened, that the resurrection of Jesus found any great number of believers. The descendants of the Jews of that day deny the Resurrection still; it is affirmed by the descendants of people who lived hundreds and thousands of miles from the spot. Which, by the way, is the common law of supernatural stories. Inquire about a ghost at the house which it is said to haunt, and the people turn up their noses at you; inquire in the next street, and people shake their heads,—with all that is in them; inquire a mile off, and people know all about old Jack-in-the-Box, and are nearly ready to secure you an appointment with him. We may, indeed, end this paragraph by reminding Mr. Waldron—though it is probably not reminding but informing him—that much greater Christian apologists than he is, both by nature and attainments, have remarked on the curious dispensation of providence that Christianity was rejected in the land of its birth, and was only embraced in distant countries. We refer, in particular, to Cardinal Newman and Mr. W. E. Gladstone.

"The Jews," Mr. Waldron says, "are the cleverest people in the world." But it does not follow that they were so in the time of Jesus. Their financial aptitude in our age is largely the result of centuries of Christian persecution. The Jews used to be confined to their own districts in Christian cities, they were compelled to wear a special garb, they were prohibited from engaging in "lawful" occupations,—but, as being damned already, and incapable of further damnation, they were allowed to lend money on interest, which the Catholic Church regarded as a deadly sin,—as indeed it is, according to the Bible. Natural selection, therefore, under the animus of Christian persecution, bred a race of "business" men. The result is that in "business" countries you find no Jew farmers but plenty of Jew financiers. In any case, it would not follow that even if the Jew were the cleverest man on earth in money matters he would be the cleverest man on earth at everything or anything else. He might be a poor historian and a bad judge of evidence. But suppose we unreservedly grant that the Jews are the cleverest people in the world. What then? Mr. Waldron doesn't see that he has digged a pit for himself. We have simply to pitch him into it. The cleverest people in the world have, for eighteen hundred years, rejected Christianity. They reject it still. They show not the slightest inclination to accept it. It costs about seven thousand pounds to convert one of them, and the character of the convert nearly always justifies the taunt that a bad Jew is turned into a worse Christian.

Turning from Mr. Waldron's silliest of silly arguments relating to the Jews, we note his statement that "the greatest of German historians said a man who had any reputation to lose could not doubt the history of the New Testament." What is the name of this greatest of German historians? And while Mr. Waldron is getting it ready we leave him to settle the rest of the sentence with (say) the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

"Let us," Mr. Waldron said, "take the four books of St. Paul. No one challenged that Paul lived, and they all admitted that these books were written within twenty-eight years of the death of Christ." Now if this were true it would not prove the Resurrection. Paul did not witness it himself. All that he wrote was hearsay. He says that he *saw* Jesus, but it was in a vision, several years afterwards. He expressly says that the vision was quite enough for him—as it ought to have been for everybody else. He did not commune with flesh and blood about the matter; that is, he attached more importance to his own subjective experience than to the objective testimony of actual witnesses; which shows an utterly

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hopeless state of mind as to the nature and value of evidence. But let all that pass for the sake of argument, what of the rest of Mr. Waldron's statement? He speaks of *four* epistles of Paul. There were *fourteen* when Paley wrote. What has become of the other *ten?* They have been rejected: ten out of fourteen in a hundred years! And it is not true that the four are not challenged. There is a large literature on the subject. Neither is Paul himself unchallenged. His very existence is called in question. The Acts of the Apostles is widely considered as an early Christian romance, and may be called the *Pauliad*. But we have neither time nor space to attend any further to Mr. Waldron's neglected education. We refer him to an accessible book already mentioned, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. We dare say he will find it in some local Free Library; if not, there is the British Museum, or even that friendly presentation we have already suggested.

Mr. Waldron has not the remotest idea of the sceptics' real position. "The Secularists," he says, "ask you to believe that the first Christians preached the biggest lie in the world. They say Christ lent himself to the biggest fraud on the human race." They ask, and they say, nothing of the kind. Their position is that the Christ story is a product of the early Christian mind through several generations. It is a work of imagination; it is not history, but romance; it is not true, yet it is not a lie, any more than the *Morte Darthur* or *Don Quixote*, or *Hamlet*, or *Robinson Crusoe* is a lie. Whatever lying—that is, conscious falsehood—there was in the matter, was *about* Christ and not *by* him,—by his followers (if he ever lived at all) and not by himself.

We will not waste space, at this time of day, in dealing with Mr. Waldron's pitiful nonsense about the "Romans" not producing the corpse of Jesus, when, according even to the story, it was handed over to one of his disciples. The Romans never saw it afterwards, and were naturally as indifferent to its fate as to that of any other executed malefactor. Mr. Waldron's final argument for the historicity of the Resurrection is that he communes with Christ, like all "the best people in London." That modest argument is powerful enough to dispose of every sceptical objection to the story of the risen Christ. A man so great and so good as Mr. Waldron could hardly exist if the Resurrection were not a fact. He is really inexplicable without it. And it is out of such rich hearts and brilliant brains that music comes. There is no poetry and no music, Mr. Waldron says, in scepticism. We don't quite see what this has to do with the Resurrection. But we do see that Mr. Waldron's impudence is a good match for his ignorance. He overlooks Shelley and Swinburne, and Beethoven and Wagner, to begin with—and a further list is unnecessary.

G. W. FOOTE.

Dr. Hollander on Atheism.

IT is a safe game to misrepresent Atheism. Comparatively speaking, it has few friends, and it is blessed with a large number of active enemies. Hardly one in a hundred of its enemies are scrupulous in finding out what Atheism really is, and the remaining ninety-nine are only too anxious to discover occasions for misrepresentations. And these misrepresentations are not easy to correct. There is seldom opportunity given to correct them in the places where they occur; a paper such as the *Freethinker* is the only channel of correction open, and this reaches but few of those who read the original misrepresentation. It is, thus, a safe game. It is also a cowardly game. To misstate an opinion that enjoys popular favor is wrong; but the wrong is soon righted, and one runs the risk of exposure. But there is no risk in misstating Atheism. You may deny it every decent quality, endow it with the capacity for producing every conceivable vice, and make it as mentally stupid as it is made morally obnoxious. The overwhelming majority of those who read will either agree with it as a statement of fact, or feel that Atheism deserves all that has been said. That is why it is a cowardly game. A sense of chivalry might lead one to refrain from throwing a brick at an unpopular opinion. A nice sense of honor would insist upon careful examination before attack.

This is not an appeal *ad misericordiam*. I am not asking that people should not attack Atheism, or suggesting that it cannot survive misrepresentation. Atheism has always been subject to both, and has survived. It has more than survived; it has grown. Its position to-day is not reminiscent of past greatness; it is pregnant with the possibilities of assured growth. I have written the above in consequence of a passage in Dr. Hollander's recently issued work on *The First Signs of Insanity*. To the higher sentiments belong, says Dr. Hollander—

> "The feelings of wonder and awe aroused by the sublime and vast in nature, the feeling of veneration and reverence awakened by the recognition of the exalted influence of authority, faith and belief aroused by appearances for which the intellect can find no natural causes, and the *spiritual feeling* arising from appearances which suggest another life existing besides that known to us.....In some men these, which may be termed religious feelings, are all-powerful. Such are given to contemplating the spiritual state, and seldom turn their attention to gross matters and mere animal pleasures. Men in whom these feelings are lacking tend to be sceptical. They have faith only in their own experience, and think more of an animal existence than of spiritual life. However much the modern intellect trained in strictly scientific pursuits may try to curb the spiritual inclinations, there can be no doubt that the religious sentiment through long generations has become an element of our nature. Even the Atheist, as a rule, experiences its emotions when circumstances arise which appeal to his feelings rather than to his intellect—that is, when he allows his nature free play."

Here in a few sentences are all the time-honored, vulgar misconceptions, or misstatements, connected with Atheism. We have the religious man endowed with qualities of mind or nature that is denied the Atheist. The former seldom bothers with "gross matters and mere animal pleasures"; the latter, because of the assumed deficiency of nature, "tends to be sceptical." "The religious sentiment" has become an "element" of our nature; and finally the unhappy Atheist, when he is off his guard and gives vent to his nature, experiences religious feelings "allee samee Clistian." A larger number of demonstrable fallacies has never been crammed into a smaller compass in a presumably scientific work. The religious professor who could discern "on the untrodden paths of the past the footprints of an unseen hand" was an amateur at the side of Dr. Hollander.

Let us examine them very briefly. First, "There can be no doubt that the religious sentiment.....has become an element of our nature." I deny it absolutely. I deny it, for the simple and sufficient reason that there is no such element in our nature. Wonder and awe and veneration and faith and belief are not religious qualities, they never were religious qualities, and they can never become so. They may be exercised in connection with religion, but so may love and hatred and cruelty and kindness and cleverness and stupidity. Human qualities are human qualities, and their nature is quite unaffected by the object in connection with which they find expression. A sunrise on the Alps, or a storm at sea, may awaken all the veneration and awe that a mystically drunken godite feels at the contemplation of the character of his incomprehensible deity. Religion does not initiate a single feeling, it does not absolutely control a single feeling. It only utilises feelings developed apart altogether from religion.

There is no religious sentiment, there is only a religious idea. And even that has not become an "element of our nature." Dr. Hollander ought really to know better than talk in this loose, unscientific manner. There is a religious idea because, as he says, "Surrounded by the forces of nature which he could neither comprehend nor control," natural

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forces "became for uncritical man superior animate beings whom he endowed with qualities like his own, whose favor was to be courted and whose wrath appeased." It is this idea, born of primitive ignorance, that is perpetuated by primitive fear and subsequent cunning. It has persisted through the ages, but even as an idea it has not become an element of our nature—ideas never do become that. What has happened is that it has become a permanent factor—up to the present—in the social environment. It is there when each newcomer arrives, and each newcomer is taught to express his feelings in a form consonant with the religious idea. The perpetuation of religion is a phenomenon of social heredity. So is the phenomenon of loyalty to a king. And Dr. Hollander might, with just as much scientific warranty, when he sees a crowd cheering the passage of the king, say that loyalty to the king has become an element of nature, and that cosmic evolution had as one of its supreme objects the creation of a feeling of devotion to George the Fifth. It is the social environment that perpetuates the religious idea, and it is the gradual weakening of the religious idea that is steadily bringing about such a modification of the environment as makes Atheism practically inevitable.

Dr. Hollander's remark that the Atheist experiences emotions usually characterised as religious, when he lets himself go, is very ingenuous. It reminds one of Artemus Ward's description of the English innkeeper's surprise on finding than an American could be trusted with a knife and fork. If my assurance is worth anything to Dr. Hollander, I may comfort him by saying that all the Atheists of my acquaintance are quite normal. They get pleased or angry, they laugh or cry, they have faith—of a sensible kind — belief, reverence for greatness in human nature, and a feeling of awe in face of natural phenomena. The Atheist differs from the Theist in no quality of mind or body; the difference lies in the way in which the nature of each is expressed. Belief is not a consequence of inability of the intellect to find natural causes, it is rather a degree of knowledge that falls short of absolute certitude. And it is common to both Theist and Atheist. The difference, again, lies in the object of belief. The Theist posits a God as the cause of natural happenings. The Atheist declines to use such a synonym for ignorance, and prefers to believe that, as natural causes have explained all the phenomena, the conditions of which we know, the same will be found true of phenomena whose conditions are unknown.

Of course, it is flattering to the vanity of the believer in God to assume that the Atheist is one whose finer qualities and perceptions are either undeveloped or atrophied. It enables any Bible-banging, microcephalous local preacher to feel exalted without undergoing the toil and discipline to become genuinely so. In moments of compassion they will pity the poor Atheist, and, when specially sympathetic, will condole with him on his spiritual blindness. But there is really nothing in it. The Atheist laughs at both the pity and the condolence. It is not worth while being angry. He knows that the belief in God is not a frame of mind that people grow toward, it is a frame of mind they outgrow. The Atheist knows this, because he has been there. He sees in every believer a picture of himself in an earlier and less complete state of development. The sympathy of the believer with the Atheist is that of the blind man for the one who is put to the trouble of wearing spectacles. The Atheist has lost nothing of his human qualities in growing out of them. He has merely learned to look at things with a clearer and truer gaze, and face facts with a courage born of undimmed vision.

Lastly, there is Dr. Hollander's antithesis of the sceptical character which is concerned with "gross matters and mere animal pleasures." If Dr. Hollander meant here by "spiritual" supernatural, and by animal existence, natural existence, the statement might pass. But he clearly does not mean this. The words carry, and I fancy are intended to carry, an ethical implication. And this implication is altogether false. If I may use the word without being misunderstood, the Atheist is more concerned with spiritual matters than the Theist. To begin with, his whole life is devoted to an idea. He cannot hope to gain the material for "animal pleasures" by professing Atheism. If he thought that, he would be too stupid to ever leave church or chapel. He is daily made aware of paying some price for the rejection of religion, and his only consolation is found in the enjoyment of a feeling of mental integrity that is as far as possible removed from close attention to "gross matters." If Atheism were of no other value to the world than this, the possession of a body of men who yield devotion to an idea, without any possibility of material gain, is a social asset of the greatest possible value. And what Dr. Hollander means by "spiritual" matters—that is, supernatural matters—has always tended to the encouragement of a decided, ethical Materialism. It has taught men to estimate the value of truth in terms of material loss and gain. If the personal gain was not here, it was hereafter. And when, as was inevitable, faith in the hereafter began to waver, the same standard was applied to the life here. This is one reason why the most "materialistic" people in the civilised world are Christian. That is one reason why we in this country are so given to measure our greatness in terms of fighting strength or trading aptitude. A nation is great because it sells or slaughters, or sells *and* slaughters, not because it thinks and lives. That is why the millionaire is idealised and the thinker ignored; the dead plutocrat loaded with columns of an admiring obituary, and the dead philosopher dismissed with a contemptuous sneer. It is also why Dr. Hollander, a man with no very definite or strong religious beliefs himself, is so affected by the prevailing religious cant as to write disparagingly of a frame of mind that Samuel Taylor Coleridge said not one man in ten thousand had either the strength of mind or goodness of heart to possess.

C. COHEN.

The Morality of Jesus.

ONE is astounded beyond measure to find it deliberately stated in cold print, at this time of day, that "the ascendant morality in our land has been the morality of Jesus," and that "indeed, it has been regarded as the only morality." No one can make such a statement unless he is the victim of "a kind of ethical lunacy," which, of course, disqualifies him both intellectually and morally from setting himself up as a teacher of morals. The guilty party, on the present occasion, is the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall, a Baptist minister, who is just now publishing a series of sermons on "Christ in the New Times" in the *Christian World Pulpit*. This reverend gentleman quotes from a certain magistrate to the effect that "the law of England bases itself upon the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ." Whether made by a magistrate or by a clergyman, the statement is totally erroneous. The morality of Jesus is a figment of the Christian imagination, and what is popularly known as Christian morality, or the morality which is supposed to be binding upon Christians, does by no means emanate from the Gospel Jesus. Dr. Marshall contends that much of our law "has been built up in the conscious effort to embody the will of Christ in legal enactments." It is reasonable to assume that the will of Christ is expressed in the alleged words of Jesus. Well, Jesus pronounced a beatitude upon the meek, promising them the inheritance of the earth. Will anybody aver that our law "has been built up in the conscious effort to embody" that beatitude in a legal enactment? Jesus prohibits the laying up of treasures upon the earth—is this prohibition embodied in any legal enactment of Great Britain? Jesus enjoins non-resistance to evil or the evil one—does the law

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of England endorse that commandment in a single legal enactment? Jesus forbids his disciples to go to law, to swear by anything whatsoever, to bear the sword, to kill or even get angry with one another, and recommends indiscriminate giving and lending to all that ask—has British "law been built up in the conscious effort to embody" his will in regard to all such things "in legal enactments"?

Dr. Marshall is extremely irrelevant in his examples, which number only two, the one being Sunday observance and the other marriage. We have never come across anything more inept than the following extract from his discourse reported in the *Christian World Pulpit* for June 25:—

> "Sunday is an institution which we owe wholly to Christ; not that he actually imposed it. He himself accepted the Jewish Sabbath, but he changed the Jewish Sabbath by his teaching and conduct. But the Spirit of Christ led his followers to adopt the first day of the week, the day of our Lord's resurrection, as the Christian Sabbath. The result was that in due course Sunday became, as the Lord's day, a legal holiday in England."

As a matter of fact we owe Sunday, neither wholly nor yet in part, to Jesus of Nazareth. He did not accept the Jewish Sabbath, but publicly broke it. There is nothing in the Four Gospels to indicate that Jesus contemplated, however remotely, the setting apart of a day to commemorate his own resurrection, and that this day should be adopted as a substitute for the Jewish Sabbath. It is a remarkable fact, which Dr. Marshall discreetly ignores, that Paul, who made so much of Christ's resurrection and claimed to be in possession of his mind, was on principle a vigorous opponent of Sabbath and Sunday observance. To him all days were alike. Equally irrelevant is the reverend gentleman's allusion to marriage. We know that under Jewish law the wife was owned by her husband, who enjoyed certain cruel rights over her person and property. The ancient Roman law was similar, the main difference being that under this the husband's rights over his wife were conferred on him, not as husband, but as father. She was his daughter, and all her property became absolutely his. But during Rome's period of greatest splendor the position of woman vastly improved. Whether married or single, her state was one of great personal and proprietary independence. But, as Sir Henry Maine points out (*Ancient Law*, p. 129), "Christianity tended somewhat from the very first to narrow this remarkable liberty"; and we know that under Christian rule the condition of woman, whether as wife or spinster, worsened rather than improved, and was superior in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, in pre-Christian times, to what it is under Christianity even to-day. Touching marriage, Dr. Marshall takes sides with those who signed the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Divorce, forgetting that such a view on the marital tie is directly responsible for an infinite amount of unnecessary suffering in Christendom.

Now, on the assumption that Jesus did institute the puritanical Sunday, and utter the words attributed to him about divorce, we maintain that the attack now being made upon both is justifiable on the highest moral grounds, and that, if successful, as it is bound to be, it will inevitably result in a decided betterment of social conditions. If these were fair samples of the morality of Jesus we would have no hesitation in declaring that such a morality, so far from being the way of life, is "inevitably the way of loss and death." The Bishop of Oxford admits that the indissolubility of marriage, as he believes it to have been taught by Christ, "may press hard on individuals in exceptional cases"; but, he adds, "press it hard or softly, the words of our Lord are quite unmistakable." But these two unfortunate samples apart, we assert that the so-called morality of Jesus does not exist. The Sermon on the Mount might as well have never been delivered so far as its effect on Christendom is concerned. It is a back number, and as dead as Queen Anne. Its commandments are embodied neither in the law of the land nor in the life and character of the people. It is highly amusing, however, to note how Dr. Marshall takes war as "one instance in which Christ is habitually and arrogantly disobeyed." He says that "no one will deny," while we do positively deny, "that the rule of Christ would mean the adoption of a policy of international peace." Look at the past, we reply, and see what the rule of Christ has ever meant. The Gospel Jesus is many-sided, and so we are not surprised to see the following barbarous utterances ascribed to him:—

> "I came to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I if it is already kindled?.....Think ye that I come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division; for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law" (Luke xii. 49-53).

From such a passage, and there are others like it, the sentiment of the popular hymn is a natural deduction:—

> "The Son of God goes forth to war,
> A kingly crown to gain;
> His blood-red banner streams afar!
> Who follows in his train?"

Surely, then, there was nothing unchristian about the Balkan war. So far were the Christian allies from wantonly disobeying Christ that they were literally fulfilling his own prophecy. It was the Cross against the Crescent, and the Cross has won because it was more efficiently equipped. You remember the story of Constantine's conversion? He was on the march, approaching Rome for the first time. Being a devout Pagan, he was in prayer, when, "about noon, as the day was declining," a fiery cross appeared in the sky with the words, "In this Conquer," and the following night the figure of Christ appeared to him in a dream bearing a standard. No wonder, then, that he and his successors were such fierce fighters, and won such countless recruits to the army of the Cross at the edge of the sword. Such has been the so-called morality of Jesus in active operation in the history of the West.

What is the ideal of Christian morality? Saintliness; and of saintliness the world has had enough and to spare. The saintliest century was the wickedest. Saintliness has often developed into a dangerous form of insanity, especially in women like Madame de Guyon. The tenderness of it is beautiful, but through the tenderness there usually runs a strong vein of sensuality, a half modest and half unconscious longing for a *unio mystica et physica*.

> "In many cases it appears, curiously enough, as the the disguise of a girl's or youth's puberty, here and there even as the hysteria of an old maid, also, as her last ambition. The Church has frequently canonised the woman in such a case" (Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 70).

Over against this pretty sentiment and useless ideal of the Church, and in vigorous opposition thereto, is set the modern, scientific, or as some prefer to call it, Hellenistic ideal, intelligence, prudence, sagacity, or wisdom, the well-known Greek for which is *phronima*. In the Dark Ages you had saintliness in great profusion, but the Hellenistic *phronima* was conspicuous by its absence. You had faith luxuriating like a green baytree under summer sun and rain, but the sane and cheerful outlook on life of "fugitive and exiled Greece" was lacking. "Fugitive and exiled Greece" had not where to lay down its foot until, in the fifteenth century, "it found a refuge beyond the Alps," where Hellenism and Teutonism joined hands, and gradually delivered Europe from the cruel clutch of priestly rule. Well, it is Western intelligence, Hellenism revitalised by the Teutonic spirit, or born again in modern science and philosophy, that is working all the "havoc," of which Dr. Marshall so sorrowfully, if not angrily, complains. He wants the Sunday all to himself, free from pleasure, free from theatres, restaurants, hairdressers, and every form of trade, and he wants

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the three toll-bars—birth, marriage, and death—kept under the thumb of the all-grasping Church; but the whole lot is slipping from him, and the tide of *phronima* is flowing too strongly to be stemmed by any human power, while the supernatural supply of power can no longer be drawn upon. J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—VIII.

(*Continued from p. 406.*)

> "Seeing that the only *bond-fide* convert to Protestantism, certainly made, devastated thirteen out of the eighteen provinces in his endeavors to Christianise his fellow-countrymen a little more rapidly than the missionaries were doing, the Chinese may deem it fortunate that not more enthusiastic converts are made. 'Hung-shui-shuen,' the Taiping king, accepted the example and teachings of the old Jewish captains, in all their literal ghastliness, and slew the idolators without mercy. Sixteen years of desperate fighting (1848-64) passed away before his bandit hordes were broken up, and his capital, Nanking, given to the flames, in which he and all his household perished."—ARCHIBALD LITTLE, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges* (1888), pp. 308-9.

> "From the sociological point of view, the whole missionary system, irrespective of sect and creed, represents the skirmishing-force of Western civilisation in its general attack upon all civilisations of the ancient type,—the first line in the forward movement of the strongest and most highly evolved societies upon the weaker and less evolved. The conscious work of these fighters is that of preachers and teachers; their unconscious work is that of sappers and destroyers. The subjugations of weak races has been aided by their work to a degree little imagined; and by no other conceivable means could it have been accomplished so quickly and so surely. For destruction they labor unknowingly, like a force of nature. Yet Christianity does not appreciably expand."—LAFCADIO HEARN, *Japan*, p. 519-20.

THE fact which arises from a consideration of the authorities we have cited on the opium question is, that what the Chinese objected to was not so much the injurious character of the opium—for, as we have seen, they cultivated vast quantities of it themselves—but the officials feared the competition of the foreign opium with the home produce; while the Government feared the depletion of the silver currency in payment for the imported article.

Another reason why the Chinese singled out opium for attack was because opium was the main staple of the foreign trade. For when Commissioner Lin—acting under orders from the Chinese Government—required "'every particle of opium' to be surrendered, he adduced the loss of silver by exportation as the ground of his 'commands,'"* and not because it was a noxious drug. But when Captain Elliot, the representative of the Queen, ordered the British merchants to surrender their opium, and over 20,000 chests—valued at two million pounds—were delivered over to the Chinese, and the merchants had pledged themselves to deal no further in opium, it was found, to their pained surprise, "that the suppression of the opium trade was but a fraction of Lin's policy: he aimed at the total expulsion of Europeans from China and the closing of foreign trade." And when, in attempting to carry out these orders, twenty-nine war-junks were sunk by two British men-of-war, the Chinese declared all trade at an end, and called upon every British subject to leave the country. War was declared on December 6, 1839, says Lane-Poole, "not because England insisted on 'forcing' opium upon the innocent natives, but because China resolved to rid herself for ever, 'bag and baggage,' of the hated barbarian." †

Mr. Lane-Poole, who shows no sympathy for the Chinese, observes that the only alternative to a declaration of war by the British "was to accept our dismissal humbly and leave China alone for all time." Such a policy, he adds, "has been seriously argued," and he admits that there is no reason in the abstract order of things why a nation should not so isolate itself, but, he objects,—

> "put in practice, such isolation is never permitted, and it would be bad for the world at large if it were. Had it been attempted, the needs both of the Chinese and of the English would have soon broken the artificial barrier, and an unauthorised trade would have surely led to international difficulties" (p. 12).

In reply to this, it may be observed that none of these Oriental nations have been permitted to isolate themselves, simply because they have not possessed the military power with which to assert their independence. As a matter of fact, Japan—after a terrible experience of the evil wrought by Jesuit missionaries—expelled all foreigners from Japan and remained a closed country for two hundred years; no Japanese was allowed to leave, no foreigner to land; any person attempting to do so were either put to death or imprisoned. Fundamentally—as Mr. Michie, the historian of *The Englishman in China*, has observed—the international problem was identical in Japan and China, for Japan was forced to sign a treaty of commerce under the guns of the American fleet; it was a conflict between aggression and resistance:—

> "Rational dread of, and natural repulsion to foreigners, inspired alike the policies of both countries. Where they differed was in the manner of meeting the invasion. Japan braced herself nervously to the effort, and, distinguishing between what was feasible and what was not, organised a counter-invasion unsuspected by foreign nations, whom she subdued by her own strength. China, on the other hand, opposed a fatalistic and unreasoning resistance, making no intelligent counter-stroke and showing no true anticipation of the issues of the struggle." ‡

If China had possessed the arms and fighting capacity of modern Japan, along with her own enormous population, Britain would have thought twice before declaring war, even to please her merchant princes. And as for Mr. Lane-Poole's contention that the *needs* of the Chinese and the English would have made the carrying out of the isolation impracticable, the Chinese had no need to go outside their own country for anything. As Sir Robert Hart, the famous Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, has remarked:—

> "Many regard China as a far-distant land, with an immense population, but so wanting in all that others possess as to be ready to purchase, in unlimited quantities, whatever is offered for sale; whereas, what is true is this: China needs neither import nor export, and can do without foreign intercourse."

And although trade with China has grown, yet "The sanguine expectations which were expressed when treaties first regulated intercourse, a cycle back, have never been realised." The truth is that the Chinese did not require our trade. As Sir Robert Hart further remarks:—

> "Chinese have the best food in the world, rice; the best drink, tea; and the best clothing, cotton, silk, and fur. Possessing these staples, and their innumerable native adjuncts, they do not need to buy a penny's worth elsewhere; whilst their Empire is in itself so great, and they themselves so numerous, that sales to each other make up an enormous and sufficient trade, and export to foreign countries is unnecessary. This explains why sixty years of treaty trade have failed to reach the point the first treaty framers prophesied for it." †

The fact is we forced our trade upon China at the mouth of the cannon; the only *need* recognised being the need for our merchants to make money. If China had been allowed, or had been strong enough, to sever all connection with the outer world, many millions of Chinese lives and untold treasure would have been saved, as we shall see.

War being declared—by the British Government—troops were landed, Chusan captured, several cities stormed, finally Nanking being threatened, a treaty was signed there, by which five ports, Canton, Amoy, Fouchou, Ning-po, and Shanghai, were opened to British trade.

Before this—in 1808—Dr. Morrison, the missionary—not the Dr. Morrison who supplied such a

* Lane-Poole, *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, vol. i., p. 10.
† *Life of Sir Harry Parkes*, p. 13.

* A. Michie, *The Englishman in China During the Victorian Era* (1900), vol. ii., p. 131.
† Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim* (1901), 60-61.

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powerful antidote to missionary enthusiasm in his book, *An Australian in China*—had founded the first Protestant mission in China, and gathered a small band of assistants around him, some of whom made journeys along the coast attempting mission work at various places east of Canton, where they always found themselves received with disfavor, and often with active opposition. Says Mr. Eames, the historian of the English in China:—

> "Now that Five Ports had been thrown open to trade, the supporters of missions in England expected that a much wider field would be available for missionary operations, and that an entrance would soon be gained in the interior itself. Their joy was unbounded and unconcealed. One school of philanthropists showed what can only be described as unseemly delight, that any cause, even one so intimately connected with the opium trade as the warlike operations of 1841 and 1842, should have given them an opportunity to send out a larger number of mission workers. At a meeting held at Exeter Hall in 1843 by the London Missionary Society, one of the largest of its kind that had ever assembled, Dr. Liefchild moved a resolution 'expressive of thanksgiving to God for the war between China and Great Britain, and for the greatly enlarged facilities secured by the treaty of peace for the introduction of Christianity into that empire.' This resolution was seconded by the Rev. Dr. Adler, and carried unanimously." *

The history of Christianity shows that war has always been sanctified by the Church when it has had for its object the advancement of the Christian faith.

Lord Curzon, in his *Problems of the Far East*, tells us that a friend of his, an eminent divine in the English Church, speaking at Exeter Hall in answer to some observations of his upon Christian Missions, thus stated the case from the Church's point of view:—

> "The gain or loss to civilisation from Christianity is not the question for the missionary. He is subject to a Master higher than any statesman or diplomatist of this world. It is not the missionary who has to reckon with the diplomatist, but the diplomatist with the missionary."

Lord Curzon remarks upon this:—

> "That governments should fight, or that international relations should be imperilled over his [the missionary's] wrecked house or insulted person, would strike him as but a feather's weight in the scale compared with the great final issue at stake—viz., the spiritual regeneration of a vast country and a mighty population plunged in heathenism and sin." †

Yes, as Lord Curzon's eminent divine stated, the ultimate object of Christian missions to the heathen is not civilisation, but conversion; and, if a few millions are swept off the face of the earth by fire and sword, what does it matter, provided the remainder are brought into the fold? Civilisation, the welfare of the body, is nothing compared with the soul in the eyes of these fanatics.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued*)

If instead of the "glad tidings" that there exists a being in whom all the excellences which the highest human mind can conceive exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that "the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving" does not sanction them, convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say, in plain terms, that *I will not*. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do—he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go.—*J. S. Mill.*

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* J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, p. 550.
† Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, pp. 284-5.

Acid Drops.

You never know what the Bishop of London will say, except that it will be something foolish. Speaking the other day at the Mansion House, on behalf of the British Columbia Church Aid Society, and rambling about as usual, his lordship (according to the *Daily Mail*) came to what Carlyle used to call "the condition of England question," and stated that "the great cure for our ills at home was a properly arranged and properly assisted scheme of emigration." This is presumably the other side of his lordship's policy of stimulating the birth-rate. "Get plenty of babies" is the Bishop's motto. When they grow to maturity his motto is "export them." We shouldn't object to the exportation if it began with the episcopal superfluities, and then went on to the clerical parasites generally. It would be a great relief to England. But we are afraid it would be a great calamity to the dumping grounds.

"The popular idea," the Bishop of London says, "is that you have only to put threepence in the slot—or, rather, in the offertory—and you get a handsome vicar, two good-looking curates, and a peal of bells." Carlyle said that the people of England were mostly fools, but are they fools enough for that? Handsome vicars and good-looking curates are not so plentiful. And who wants any more church bells? Heaven save the mark!

"As I live in the West End I am suspicious of everybody," said the Rev. W. H. Gibbons, senior curate of St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, in an action at the West London County Court. We presume he includes the clergy.

The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, Mr. Campbell's successor at Brighton, is at his old game again. In the *Christian World* for June 26, he repeats once more what he has been persistently asserting for the last fifteen years or more, namely, that "in the world of culture to-day the Agnostic attitude is giving way." In the past, when asked for his authorities for such a statement, he used to name Lord Kelvin, Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Dr. Russel Wallace. His present appeal is to Professors Eucken and Bergson, who seem to have strong leanings towards the religious position, though neither of them can be claimed as a Christian, even of Mr. Williams's ambiguous type. But there have always been writers of that nebulous, metaphysical order, who weave their strange illusions out of their own brains, and they were much more numerous yesterday than they are to-day; but two or three swallows don't make a summer. Mr. Williams pretends to speak for "the world of culture," and gives us only two names as his authority. Eucken and Bergson represent, not the world of culture, but merely a comparatively small *coterie* of metaphysical Idealists. The biologists are almost to a man against them, and so are the great bulk of psychologists, while among physicists it would be difficult to mention anyone in the front rank, besides Sir Oliver Lodge, who supports them. If the world of culture signifies the scientific world, it is a black lie to say that its Agnostic attitude is giving way. The truth is that Agnosticism is more general and more pronounced now than it ever was, as was abundantly shown at the last meeting of the British Association. Why does Mr. Williams persist in rehashing his hoary-headed old lie? Surely, he doesn't do it for the glory of his God?

The most interesting fact in this connection is that Professor Eucken, for one, does not agree with Mr. Williams. According to the President of the Free Church Council, the Rev. Mr. Connel, Professor Eucken "deserves well of all the Christian Churches for his gallant effort to recall the modern mind to a spiritual interpretation of life"; but the distinguished *savant* assures us, in his *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, that, "from the beginning of the seventeenth century, forces have been at work creating a new type of life which is fundamentally different from the Christian type, a type according to which the direction and control of individual and social life are in the hands of man alone." Dr. Russel Wallace testified to the same effect in an interview granted a few years ago to the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*. In reply to a question he stated, with deep regret, that the overwhelming majority of scientists were strongly opposed to a spiritual interpretation of the Universe. Clearly, then, by "the world of culture" Mr. Williams must mean the circle in which he happens to turn, which, in relation to the subject under consideration, was never other than it is now, and which certainly does not constitute "the world of culture" in any intelligent sense of the terms.

The Rev. Rhondda Williams says that the religion needed "is a religion that will establish practical righteousness in

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life." The only possible inference from such a statement is that Christianity is not the religion that is needed, because, though it has been in existence for nineteen hundred years, "practical righteousness in life" is yet to be secured. Indeed, no religion has ever succeeded in bringing about so desirable a consummation; and whatever approximation to such a state of things has been made in recent years is solely due to the spread of scientific knowledge.

We cannot confess to feeling a very keen interest in the proposed Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. On principle we are against the State subsidising or patronising religion in any form, and so far the Bill has our best wishes. But the Bill really disestablishes a Church only, and still leaves religion where it was. It is really a Bill to place Nonconformists and Episcopalians on an equality, and is, therefore, more or less of a domestic controversy. But religious ceremonies will still continue in connection with State and municipal functions in Wales, and none would howl louder than Nonconformists were it proposed to abolish them. When Nonconformists say, "We object to the State patronage of religion," what they really have in mind is the State patronage of one sect to the detriment or disparagement of other sects. Which is, we repeat, a question in which we are not keenly interested. We want to see the State leave *all* sects severely alone. And not only leave the sects alone, but their opinions likewise. A favor conferred upon all sects equally is as much an infringement of the principle of genuine Disestablishment as is a favor conferred only upon one.

Will those who are clamoring for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales advocate, or even agree to, the abolition of religious ceremonies in State functions and municipal affairs? Far from being in agreement with this, they clamor for recognition, and complain if they do not get it. But instead of resenting non-recognition by the State, they ought, if consistent, to reject its offer as an insult to their principles. Wherein lies the distinction between using the prestige and money of the State in aid of the opinions of a sect, and using the same in aid of a number of sects? The distinction is one that affects sectarian prejudice alone, and leaves those who put the rights of rational citizenship above the interests of a sect quite unaffected. That is why (we are really replying to a query put by a correspondent) we have shown so little interest in the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales. To disestablish one Church in order to establish all, seems to us to be progress of a very doubtful kind.

As reported in the *Catholic Herald*—

> "Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., told a capital story at the Scottish Liberal Club, Edinburgh. He said: 'Mrs. M'Gerraghty, of Belfast, was asked recently why her son had emigrated, and she said—Poor Hughie worked on the Island, and when he was going to his work one day he met one of them Papists, and he knocked him down, and then he kicked him, and after that a big policeman came along and arrested poor Hughie, and he was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment, and when he came out he said he was d——d if he would live in a country where he had to suffer for his religion.'"

Comment, even by Shakespeare himself, would spoil that.

Mr. Harry Lauder says that the training of the Sunday-school is invaluable. He says he is sure of this because he went to Sunday-school himself. Would it be unkind to suggest that this evidence may be taken by some to fall a little short of a complete demonstration?

We are not surprised to learn from the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* that "Christian Science" is now one of the most influential religious bodies in America. Mark Twain prophesied that this would be so in his book on Christian Science, although those who could see nothing in Twain but a mere humorist failed to take him seriously. Christian Science has seized—accidentally, we believe—on just that amount of sense sufficient to float a colossal absurdity. No small proportion of our complaints are nervous in origin, and all are more or less affected by our mental condition. Consequently, all are benefited by a discipline that teaches them to preserve a serene disposition not to take their ailments too seriously, and when they are ill to keep cheerful and hope for the best. However this discipline is enforced, the results are almost certain to be beneficial. But between this and what is called the philosophy of Christian Science there is a wide difference. The first is sound sense, admitted by all who think about the subject, and ignored by Christian Scientists. The second is sheer absurdity, and the one topic on which Christian Scientists love to dwell.

At present, however, there appears to be a split in the ranks of the Christian Scientists. A Mrs. Augusta Stetson claims to be the spiritual successor of Mrs. Eddy, and from the *Telegraph* account it appears that she pretends to be a reincarnation of Mrs. Eddy. Mrs. Stetson asserts that the people who have gained control of the finances and machinery of the movement have grown terribly heterodox, and have made one concession after another to Rationalist criticism, until at present Christian Science is hardly distinguishable from a belief in mental healing. One thing seems plain; which is, that although Christian Science has a firm disbelief in the non-existence of evil, it has a firm faith in the intense reality of hard cash.

One consequence of the Balkan War was the conversion of the Monastery of Mount Athos into an independent republic—the smallest republic in the world. As the monks cannot very well go to war with any other community, they have started a little war amongst themselves. Some of its members have been proclaiming views which the Synod declares to be heretical. The heresy consists in some fantastic idiocy about the "name of God," not worth the trouble of explaining. The consequence is that one half the republic is keeping the other half in a state of siege, and seeking to bring it to submission by famine. Christian brotherhood is a hardy plant, and thrives under the most unfavorable circumstances.

A Hull chemist has just invented a new gun to be loaded with a chemical substance that is warranted to set fire to whatever it strikes, nor can the flames be extinguished with water. We suggest that a fitting reward would be take the inventor, his plans, and chemical formulæ, and drown the lot. The inventor would probably plead in extenuation that inventive genius applied to weapons of destruction is more certain of reward than if applied in other directions. We believe this is to a large extent true, and it is a grim satire upon our Christian civilisation that it should be so. The Government showed little concern over aeroplanes until it was seen that they might be useful in warfare. And the Christian Governments of Europe make military charges the first call on the pockets of the people. And meanwhile we have dinned into our ears the teaching that Christianity and peace and brotherhood go hand in hand.

Lord Roberts, whom we saw described the other day as a type of the Christian soldier, is still busily pursuing his campaign in favor of conscription. The position is a curious one. On the one hand, we are told we must keep a colossal Navy in order to prevent an enemy landing on these shores. On the other hand, Lord Roberts assures us we must have a huge Army ready to destroy the invading armies that our battleships have prevented landing. The position is one of sheer insanity, and is again an illustration of how sane and humane Christianity makes men.

Here is one more instance of the value of Christianity as a civilising factor. Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, in his book, just published, on *How the Laborer Lives*, says, as the result of personal observation, that a large proportion of our agricultural laborers are receiving "not much more than three-fourths of the nourishment necessary for the maintenance of physical health." And the same may be said of too large a proportion of the population of our towns and cities. One might well question whether any nation has the right to call itself civilised so long as such a condition of things exists. But when that country parades its Christianity as the cause of its progress and humanity, we simply have the snuffle of hypocritical piety added to the tragedy of social injustice.

Even theologians confess that they are sick and tired of sermons. Professor Peake, who is a trainer of candidates for the pulpit, admits, in the *Christian Commonwealth* for June 18, that he scarcely ever reads them, and rarely hears them except in the church he attends. The fact is that sermons are simply relics of the times of ignorance and superstition, upon which the more intelligent folk of the present day are rapidly turning their backs. A popular preacher sorrowfully acknowledged quite lately that the pulpit of to-day has to address itself to deaf ears; but he would have been nearer the truth had he stated that preachers are humiliated in having, every year, to confront a growing number of empty pews.

Professor Peake makes the further depressing confession that even church and chapel-goers are now woefully ignorant of the very text of Scripture. It appears that the only people who really know the Bible are those who reject

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it as a revelation from God, and treat it simply as an interesting mythological document.

Mr. Harold Shepheard says, in a valuable paper on "The Higher Criticisms," that "the preacher must be honest in all that he says"; but where will you find an honest preacher? Is not preaching the art of lying to the glory of God? Having read an official sermon which had been delivered before the Synod, a friend said to the preacher, "Surely, you don't believe all this awful stuff?" "No, I don't," he answered; "but, you know, the Synod is composed of extremely narrow-minded men, and I could not afford to displease them." As they are always talking about things concerning which they have no knowledge, it is almost impossible for preachers to be honest even with themselves, not to mention their hearers.

Canon Hartley Carnegie solemnly announced, in a recent sermon, that "1900 years ago God himself came down and lived as a man among men"; but if he "lived as a man among men," how did anybody find out that he was God? The Canon forgets that, if the Four Gospels are true, Jesus did not so live. He lived as one who was in possession of all power in heaven and on earth. No man ever lived as he is reported to have lived. If he was not a God-man, nobody can ever tell what he was, or whether he was at all or not. In other words, if the Four Gospels, in the form in which we know them, are not historically true, it inevitably follows that, historically considered, they are of all documents the most unreliable. In any case, the Canon's idea of God coming down and living as a man among men strikes us as extremely irrational and ludicrous.

The British Museum authorities have just published a translation of a *Book of the Resurrection*, the authorship of which is attributed to the Apostle Bartholomew. The book gives a detailed account of the descent of Jesus into hell, his conflict with Satan, his enthronement in heaven, etc., etc. The work, says the *Christian World*, illustrates the extraordinary activity of the imagination of the early Christians. Quite so. And at this kind of imaginative work Christian writers have always been adepts. They have always been good at constructing imaginary narratives to suit theories, from the days of the apostles down to the Christian Evidence Society. Only in later days people of such riotous imaginative capacity have been called by a very disagreeable name. Not but that there exists a world of difference between the constructive imagination of the true artist and the wild, half-crazy, superstition-saturated mind of the early Christian writers.

Father H. Day, S. J., Holy Name, Manchester, has been preaching a series of sermons at Bolton on the subject of "The New Morality," and in the second in the course he alluded to Freethought, and characterised it as "neither free nor thought at all." Of course, if it is not thought at all it can be neither bound nor free—what doesn't exist can have no qualities or attributes. But the curious thing is that Father Day made not the slightest attempt to justify his definition. As reported in the *Catholic Herald* for June 21, he declared that the essence of Freethought is the repudiation of authority, whereas, in reality, Freethought only means the substitution of *true* authority for *false*; the substitution, that is, of the authority of reason for that of tradition; of common sense for that of superstition; of facts for that of assumptions; of man for that of the priest. What really annoys this Father-in-God is, however, not that the people are discarding authority, but that they recognise as authoritative teachers, writers, and speakers who are not in subjection to the Church. The truth is that authority, in Father Day's sense, is departing never to return; that the deathknell of priestcraft has already been sounded; and that the emancipation of the human intellect is steadily progressing.

Mr. R. J. Campbell has at last discovered that there is no hell-fire for anybody beyond the tomb. Jesus says there is, but he didn't mean it. He adopts the apocalyptic language of his day, but throws into it a new signification of his own. He doesn't say so, but Mr. Campbell can read it between the lines. It has lain there all through the centuries until now, but from this day forth the whole world shall see and read it, and recognise it as the special discovery of the great oracle of the City Temple.

The *Glasgow Observer* is evidently a Roman Catholic paper, since it complains of the late Lord Archibald Campbell's will penalising his widow and son by stipulating that if they "ever profess the Roman Catholic religion they shall forfeit every interest in his estate." Freethought papers *always* protest against such bigotry. But Protestant papers don't protest if the victims are Roman Catholics, and Roman Catholics don't protest if the victims are Protestants. So we put the *Glasgow Observer* down as an Irish Catholic organ. We are not surprised to see that it answers questions—even theological and Biblical questions. One of these, in the issue dated June 28, relates to that venerable question about Cain's wife. Who was she? "She was a daughter," our contemporary says, "of Adam and Cain's own sister, God dispensing with such marriages in the beginning of the world, as man could not otherwise be propagated." We suppose that settles it—though this explanation is dirtier than the old one. It used to be said that Cain married his sister, but it now appears that Adam married her, and Cain married the result. "An ounce of civet, good apothecary!"

There is a Bible recipe for consolation in misery which runs thus:—

> "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs xxxi. 6-7).

Here is a recipe from the Greek poet Hesiod, who flourished hundreds of years before the Christian era:—

> "For if to one whose grief is fresh, as he sits silent with sorrow-stricken heart, a minstrel, the henchmen of the Muses, celebrates the men of old and the gods who possess Olympus; straightway he forgets his melancholy, and remembers not at all his grief, beguiled by the blessed gift of the goddess of song."

Which is the finer poetry? Which is the nobler morality?

That irrepressible "Brixton vicar" has been enlightening the world on Spiritualism through the columns of the *London Budget*. His opinions on this subject are not of any particular importance, and his English is susceptible of great improvement. He is fond of winding up with a poetical tag. We once heard him (it was many years ago, when his west-country accent was "all very fine and large") quote some lines from Browning, which we ventured to think were the only lines of that poet he was acquainted with. "I shall arrive," Browning said; and Mr. Waldron brought it out as "Oi shall arroive." Which, by the way, has turned out to be true—in a sense. Well, the poetical tag on this occasion is as follows:—

> "To God again the enfranchised soul must tend,
> He is her home, her Author is her end;
> No death is hers: when earthly eyes grow dim,
> Starlike she soars and Godlike melts in Him."

When the reverend gentleman "melts in Him" the Brixton district may lose one of its "great thinkers," but the rational people in the world at large will hardly put on mourning. Nor, perhaps, will the reverend gentleman need such appreciation. He will be in the starlight soaring business. We never saw a star soar, and don't know what it is like; but the "Brixton vicar" vouches for the astral phenomenon, and as old Omar Khayyam says "he knows—he knows."

According to the verdict of the coroner's jury, Hugh Davies, of the Bungalow, Southborne, near Emsworth, murdered his wife and committed suicide while insane. He attributed the "sad affair" to the "continuous nagging" of his wife. "May God have mercy on us both" he said. We hope so, if there be a God, and mercy be necessary. But it would have been a better mercy to stop the woman's nagging and let husband and wife live in greater happiness.

"God have mercy on me," wrote Ernest Winckler, a Greenwich chemist, before going out to poison himself in Borstal Woods, Plumstead. This sort of thing is getting too common. This "God" seems to play a very sorry part in the human tragi-comedy.

"Providence" has been showing the Balkan people that all the destruction in that part of the world is not to be left to them. An earthquake in the middle of Bulgaria has just wiped out two towns and hundreds of lives. "Providence" may follow up this performance with something still bigger, to take the cheek out of the Christian Brigands over there.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged. £155 2s. 11d. Received since:—H. Good, 10s.; F. Whatcott, 1s. 6d.; A Friend (per G. L. Alward), £1; H. Organ, 2s. 6d.

T. SHORE.—It is impossible to avoid forcing a highly composite language like English, if one wishes to avoid a finicking accuracy which loses more than it gains. Shakespeare had to say "too too" in Hamlet's first great soliloquy, and the "most unkindest" in Mark Antony's oration over the murdered Cæsar. The emphasis and intensity thus produced could not be achieved in any other way. Let anybody try for a week and see if he can succeed. Generally speaking, language has to give way to meaning, and the question is, What is permissible? We all say "sleep well"—therefore, to "sleep badly" cannot be kept out. Moreover, audacities of expression are more allowable in private correspondence than in writing intended for publication; just as greater audacities still are allowable in conversation.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for useful cuttings.

F. WHATCOTT.—Pleased to read your letter. We share your wish with regard to Miss Vance "that she may be with us many years yet."

H. MORTON REID.—It delights us to see that the Christians in London attach so much importance to the utterances of the Rev. A. J. Waldron. It is one of the most promising signs of Christian decadence.

E. B.—Thanks for all your trouble.

MISS VANCE acknowledges:—Benevolent Fund: Bethnal Green Branch, 5s. General Fund: Tunbridge Wells, 2s.

F. NIBLETT.—The reason you have not heard anything of Dr. Aveling for many years is because he is dead.

H. ROBERTS.—Pleased to see the letter in the New Zealand paper. It is, as you say, a sign of the spread of our views. We hope you are right in thinking that Mr. W. W. Collins, after nearly thirty years' hard work, now "sees a tangible result."

G. L. ALWARD.—Mr. Foote is really getting more and more his old self. Not only strength, but, the best symptom of all, serenity.

S. H. ALLSON.—We have put the unfortunate man on our free list for the present. You can advise us again later on.

VICTOR B. NEWBURG.—The Paine verses are capital, and shall appear in our next. Why don't you write more in this vein? The gift of song is a great thing. Would that all who have it might learn something from Whitman's declaration that "The business of great poets is to cheer up slaves and horrify despots."

J. KING.—Your criticisms are quite sound, but they do not touch us personally. Glad you were so pleased with Mr. Cohen's last week's article.

REFORMER.—We have nothing to do with domestic differences between Christian Churches and their supposed Founder.

H. ORGAN.—Glad to hear that our Meredith article gave you a permanent introduction to the *English Review*.

J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham) writes: "It is pleasant to know you remember the Stratford-on-Avon trip as a 'golden day.' It was a never-to-be-forgotten day to us all."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We have already said that Mr. Foote is taking as much holiday as he can compatibly with a minimum of work. The date of this number of the *Freethinker* will find him at the Isle of Thanet, the air of which has hitherto always agreed with him extremely well. He proposes to remain there for a fortnight, after which he will spend a week at Yarmouth with his old friend Mr. J. W. de Caux, J.P. Mr. Foote will take his work with him; not all of it, but as much as he cannot very well evade.

One of Mr. Foote's peculiarities is that when he has once written a thing he can take very little interest in it—at any rate, for a great length of time, when he can view it with a certain mental detachment, as though it were written by someone else. One result of this peculiarity is a carelessness in preserving pamphlets and other matters proceeding from his pen. He ought to have preserved them all for business reasons; but, as a matter of fact, he didn't—and there's an end of the matter. He is now trying to get a set of his things together. One of them is the *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought*, written as far back as 1875. This work was published in twopenny sixteen-page parts. Is there any reader who has a set (or any of the numbers) and is willing to part with it? Mr. Foote will be glad to hear from him or her. Of course he is willing to pay a reasonable price.

Mr. J. W. Gott sought Mr. Foote's advice on behalf of Mr. Thompson, who was summoned for using "profane and disgusting language" at Blackburn. What the "profane and disgusting language" was we are not informed—as usual. The point on which we are asked to give advice does not concern the defence. It is whether the defendant should pay a fine or go to prison in default. Our reply is that advice cannot be offered in such an alternative. The defendant must always decide that question for himself. We declined to advise Mr. Boulter on the point, and we gave the same reason then. The question is a purely personal one, and must be answered personally.

Mr. J. W. Gott organised what appears to have been a successful demonstration at Blackburn on Sunday evening in protest against the recent prosecution for "profane language" under the Police Clauses Act. The defendant was Arthur Thompson, a cotton operative, who has been lecturing a good deal in the district lately. He appears to be too weak for such work, and the police frightened him into giving an undertaking not to lecture on Atheism again in Blackburn. This document has not the slightest validity. The magistrates appear to think that preaching Atheism is illegal, whereas it is quite as legal as preaching Christianity. Chief Constables, of course, violate the law every day of their lives, but Magistrates, with Chief Clerks to aid them, ought to know better.

Mr. Gott states that the expenses of the defence in this unheroic case are on the road to five pounds, and he applies to the N. S. S. through us for that sum. We are not able to request Miss Vance to send it. Mr. Gott must really take his own responsibilities in these matters. The N. S. S. cannot follow up his missionaries with a cheque-book. We have also to say another thing—reluctantly but firmly. He must stop using the name of the National Secular Society in his announcements and advertisements. Mr. Gott's courage is undoubted; his discretion is far to seek; and his want of sensibility leads him to do things that make other people shiver. We hope he will understand that this is serious. The N. S. S. simply will not allow Mr. Gott to use its name without its permission.

A flying visit was paid to Tunbridge Wells last Sunday by Mr. W. Davidson, who is assisting to expose the machinations of Mr. H. A. Marsh, of the C. E. S., in relation to the scandalous statements this gentleman has been making about the late Mr. J. M. Wheeler. Mr. Marsh, who has shifted his ground very often since his first pronouncement, but has still much to withdraw, was announced to lecture on Tunbridge Wells Common on Sunday afternoon. Mr. Davidson, who clearly explained that the object of his visit was to refute Mr. Marsh's statements, was courteously allowed to speak for half-an-hour by the chairman, the Rev. Stather Hunt, a local clergyman. Several other clerical gentlemen were present, and all must have been greatly edified by hearing Mr. Marsh, when confronted by his opponents, describe them as "Dirty dogs, who had followed him from London," and who were in the habit of engaging "thousands" to rush him from his platform in the London Parks. A crowded audience listened to Mr. Davidson in the evening, who addressed them until he was compelled to run for his train. Many requests were made for a return visit, and a local clergyman offered to debate with Mr. Davidson. This offer will in all probability be accepted, and Mr. Marsh may rely upon further attention until he makes the *amende honorable* to Mr. Wheeler's memory.—K. B. K.

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE NARRATIVES IN THE SYNOPTICS.

THE first three Gospels, as everyone knows, give an account of the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ, from the time of his baptism in the Jordan to that of his crucifixion and resurrection, so that in these Gospels (which are called Synoptics) we have three versions of the same sayings and doings. It may also have been noticed that, in a great number of cases, these Gospel events are recorded by all three Synoptists in nearly the same words. Another remarkable fact in connection with those incidents or discourses, is that, in the majority of cases, they are related by each Synoptist in the same order of sequence. Thus, we find that Matthew and Mark relate seventy-five of these events or circumstances in exactly the same order; next, we find that Mark and Luke relate seventy-two in the same order. Lastly, we find that Matthew, Mark, and Luke record sixty events or circumstances in exactly the same order. Some of these, it is true, would naturally be placed in the order given by all writers; as, for instance, the arrest of Jesus before his trial, the trial before the crucifixion, and the resurrection to follow: but that three independent writers should record such a number of unconnected, undated, and unlocated incidents in exactly the same order is one that calls for some rational explanation.

To make this matter clear, I subjoin a list of the various circumstances recorded in the same order by all three evangelists. These are the following:—

Ministry of John the Baptist—Baptism of Jesus—Temptation of Jesus—Jesus goes to Galilee after imprisonment of John—Jesus commences teaching—Healing a leper—Healing man sick of palsy—Call of Matthew—Levi's feast—Discourse on fasting—Patching of garments and bottles—Disciples plucking ears of corn—Healing man with withered hand—Parable of Sower—Herod believes Jesus to be the Baptist—Feeding five thousand—Jesus asks what men say of him—Jesus foretells his death—Taking up cross to follow Jesus—The Transfiguration—Disciples unable to cure demoniac—Jesus again foretells his death—Disciples contend who should be greatest—Jesus blesses little children—the Rich young man—The camel and needle's eye—Reward for following Jesus—Jesus again foretells his death—Healing blind man near Jericho—Two disciples sent for colt—Public entry into Jerusalem—Cleansing of temple—Authority of Jesus questioned—Tribute to Cæsar—Woman with seven husbands—How Jesus was son of David—Warnings against scribes and Pharisees—Jesus foretells destruction of Jerusalem—Priests take counsel against Jesus—Judas turns traitor—Disciples sent to find a room—Passover and Last Supper—Jesus foretells Peter's denial—Agony in Gethsemane—Jesus betrayed and made prisoner—Jesus before High Priest—Peter's denial of Jesus—Jesus before Pilate—Jews demand release of Barabbas—Simon bears cross—Jesus crucified—Casting lots for garments—Jesus mocked and reviled—Darkness all over land—Veil of temple rent—Testimony of Centurion—Women beholding afar off—Joseph of Arimathea—Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre.

To the foregoing may be added fifteen additional circumstances, omitted by Luke, which Matthew and Mark record in the same order; also twelve other circumstances, omitted by Matthew, which Mark and Luke give in the same order—bringing the total up to eighty-seven. Now, it is simply impossible that three independent writers—two of whom, Mark and Luke, had never seen nor accompanied Jesus—could record such a number of trifling, and mostly unconnected, incidents in exactly the same order. And, if to this order of sequence, we add the fact, already stated, that a large portion of these narratives are related in nearly the same words, we arrive at the only conclusion possible—that behind the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there lies an earlier and more primitive Gospel from which these evangelists took the discourses, events, and other circumstances that are now common to two or to the three. This common matter comprises nearly the whole of the Gospel of Mark; but Matthew and Luke give many additional narratives which they took from other primitive writings of their time, the most important of which are: the Birth stories (Matt. i. and ii.; Luke i. and ii.), the Temptation (Matt. iv. 1—11; Luke iv. 1—13), and the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v., vi., vii.; Luke vi. 20—49). This supplementary matter I leave for the present, being concerned now only with the narratives common to the three, as represented by the Gospel of Mark.

According to the orthodox view, the three Synoptical Gospels are independent accounts of the sayings and doings of Jesus. Matthew, it is said, was an apostle, and therefore a witness of what he relates; Mark is stated to have been a companion of Peter, and to have committed to writing all the narratives preached by Peter; Luke, it is declared, was a colleague of Paul, and accompanied that apostle in many of his journeys, and composed his Gospel from the substance of Paul's preaching. All this is apologetic nonsense, which is disproved by merely reading the following short sample of the teaching of Jesus:—

MARK x. 14—15.	LUKE XVIII. 16—17.
"Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."	"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

Now, assuming that Jesus uttered these words, as represented in the Gospels, neither Mark nor Luke was there to hear them; nor was Paul. Peter, supposing he was historical, might have heard them spoken *once;* but no reporter was present, and it is admitted that nothing which Jesus is recorded to have said in the Gospels was ever written down at the time. Neither, again, were any primitive Gospels in existence in Paul's day. Yet, more than half a century later, Mark and Luke reproduce the passage verbatim—the only difference being the word "and," which Luke or some copyist has added. How did these two evangelists, who never saw or heard Jesus, become acquainted with the words they record? To this question there can be but one answer—that which I have stated.

Rational criticism is, however, now beginning to gain more recognition. During the last two decades a closer examination of the Gospels has proved to many Biblical critics that the three Synoptists drew their accounts from a pre-existing *written* Gospel—which is called the Common Tradition or the Common Source. Upon this subject the Rev. J. J. Scott, Canon of Manchester, says:—

> "Scholars are now of opinion that the likeness between the Synoptic Gospels is due to the fact that St. Matthew and St. Luke wrote with St. Mark's Gospel before them, and embodied in their Gospels such portions of St. Mark's Gospel as they deemed suitable for their purpose."—"St. Matthew embodies in his Gospel nearly the whole of the subject matter of St. Mark, and St. Luke includes about four-fifths of St. Mark."

Other critics, including Dr. Carpenter, take the same view. But even Canon Scott afterwards admits that "there are indications that St. Mark made use of a written record" in chapters xi. to xvi. It cannot, however, be shown that any portion of Mark's Gospel is original. The truth is that all three Synoptists took their accounts from the same Common Source, and living, as they all did, in post-apostolic times, they could not do otherwise. Not one of the three was an apostle or the companion of an apostle. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were merely editors who, in copying their narratives from an older Gospel, made additions or verbal alterations wherever they thought they could improve the narratives. This is why the Gospels they produced were said to be "according to" the first, second, or third editor—it being understood by the Christians of the time when they appeared that they were simply more accurate copies of the primitive Gospel then in use. (See Luke i. 1—4.)

I will now take a short example of verbal agreement from all three Synoptics in order to illustrate the method employed by these editors. The words in italics indicate their additions or alterations.

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Matt. viii 2—4.—"And behold, there came to him a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway his leprosy was cleansed."

Mark i. 40—42.—"And there cometh to him a leper, *beseeching him*, and kneeling down to him, and saying *unto him*, If thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And *being moved with compassion*, he stretched forth his hand and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him, *and he was made clean*."

Luke v. 12—13.—"And *it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities*, behold a man full of leprosy: and *when he saw Jesus*, he fell on his face, *and besought him*, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him."

Here it appears evident that Matthew's account is the nearest to that in the primitive Gospel, to which, apparently, he has in this case made no addition. The "kneeling down" of Mark and the "fell on his face" of Luke are the equivalents of the "worshiped him" of Matthew.

Now, in these three examples, there is nothing to indicate that Matthew or Luke wrote with Mark's Gospel open before him; but rather the contrary. Had such been the case, we might expect one or the other to copy Mark's phrase—"being moved with compassion"—which was evidently not in the original Gospel. I have not space in this paper for further examples of the verbal agreements; but any readers who wish to make a comparison themselves may commence with those that follow. The Revised Version should be used, if available, as it is nearer to the Greek than the Authorised Version.

Matt. ix. 9—13 ...	Mark ii. 14—17 ...	Luke v. 27—32
,, ix. 14—17 ...	,, ii. 18—22 ...	,, v. 33—39
,, x. 2—4 ...	,, iii. 16—19 ...	,, vi. 14—16
,, xii. 1—8 ...	,, ii. 23—28 ...	,, vi. 1—5
,, xii. 46—50 ...	,, iii. 31—35 ...	,, viii. 19—21

From the foregoing facts we obtain the following results: (1) That for the historicity of the threefold events recorded in the Synoptics *we have no evidence whatever*. This is obvious: the writer of the Common Tradition is unknown; so also is the source whence his narratives were derived. As to the latter, the probability is that the writer simply committed to writing a number of hearsay stories in circulation in his time—the originators being unknown. (2) That the orthodox assumptions respecting the writers of the canonical Gospels being apostolic, and their Gospels written under the influence of "the spirit of God," are now exploded for ever. We are therefore at liberty to examine the so-called Gospel "history" by precisely the same methods as any other ancient history.

ABRACADABRA.

Correspondence.

THEOSOPHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You have already effectively commented on what Dr. Horton said in his attack on Theosophy, but there was one statement made by that gentleman which struck me as being very peculiar, and even awkward, from his point of view. He is reported by the *Daily Chronicle* to have said that he thought "the doctrine of Theosophy must have been invented by people who had no conception of the depth of human love, who did not understand that it was eternal, and could not be broken even by death." This statement seems to me to be rather general, and I should like to offer a specific case for consideration.

There was a certain old Israelitish king named Solomon, of whom it was recorded (1 Kings xi. 1-3) that he "loved many strange women, together with [or, *beside* (margin)] the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;.....that Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods....."

Now, if, according to Dr. Horton, love is eternal, and cannot be broken by death, how does the case stand with regard to the love between Solomon and all these women? Is it still existing, and how? For in applying Dr. Horton's theory, there would appear to be some very knotty points to settle, to which the question as to the woman who had seven husbands would be a mere bagatelle.

I am not in any way defending Theosophy, for I have never been able to discover any basis for it; but I should think Dr. Horton will find his hands more than full in defending his own religious beliefs without going outside to attack those of others. And when one reads that Mr. Harry Lauder has been enlisted in the service of the pulpit, one may well open one's eyes and ask, "What next?"

J. TOMKINS.

PORTUGUESE POLITICAL PRISONERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. C. M. Tenison's letter in the *Freethinker* of June 29 will not deceive anyone who is not deceived already. The four articles from my pen which appeared in the *Freethinker* issues of April 27, May 4, May 11, and June 8 of this year, made a long series of specific adverse comments and criticisms upon the fulminations of the crusading Duchess and the assertions of the "British National Protest." Neither the *Daily Mail* nor any of the British Manoelists have ventured to controvert my position of absolute scepticism concerning the validity of the charges and allegations made against the Republic. Instead of meeting my counter statements and refutations with a direct frontal attack, Mr. Tenison, writing as the honorary secretary to the Committee of "the British Protest," falls foul of my attribution of the pamphlet to Royalist authorship, and attempts to cover the mixed motives and ideas of the "British Protest" by the *ipse dixits* of Mr. Trevelyan.

Certainly I was not present at the Æolian Hall meeting on April 22, and, having regard to the brutal maltreatment which Senhor Gomes received for venturing very politely to ask permission to meet the statements of the Duchess with categorical refutation, I am not sorry that another engagement spared me from the fury of Mr. Trevelyan's Portuguese friends of "justice, humanity, and law."

I do not think that the citation of Mr. Trevelyan's uncorroborated opinions quite meets the necessity of the case. Does Mr. Trevelyan pretend to speak of his own knowledge when he states that "many" of the political prisoners in Portugal "are put there [*i.e.*, in prison] because of their opinions, not because of their acts"? Because, on that point, Mr. Trevelyan ought to know that opinions, *qud* opinions, are no more liable to penal repression in Republican Portugal than in Monarchical England. Indeed, I am perfectly clear as to this, that in England opinions, *qud* opinions, will lead a man more speedily to prison than in Portugal

I am glad to hear, even at the eleventh hour, that Mr. Trevelyan "protested against the execution of Ferrer," but I do not recall any protest that he made at the prison indignities and cruelties inflicted upon Ferrer when in prison, nor do I remember any public meeting of protest that he addressed when Ferrer's life was in peril, nor when his assassination had become an accomplished fact.

Ferrer did not fall under the distinguished patronage of live lords or dowager duchesses; and Spanish prisons, with Montjuich as their fateful emblem, never stirred the sympathetic breasts of aristocratic committees.

And now for the pamphlet and its authorship. Mr. Tenison is quite mistaken in supposing that I derived from *O Mundo* my impression that the British National Protest was made in Portugal. As a matter of fact, I first knew of the pamphlet by reading a notice of it in *O Mundo*, and quite believed at the time that the Protest was of undoubted British manufacture. The perusal of the pamphlet at once wounded my patriotic pride. The Portuguese spirit of the Manoelist oozed out from every line of the production, and this impression I made clear not only in my *Freethinker* article of June 8, but in the translation thereof which appeared in *O Mundo* of June 16.

I found that the writer speaks (p. 3) only as one living on the spot in Portugal could pretend to speak. Only a Portuguese Royalist, as it seemed to me, with an inner knowledge of the Carbonaria could speak (p. 10), on his own authority, mark you, of their "initiatory oath"; could count the number (23,000) of those dreaded adepts in "massacre by bomb, poison, or dagger," or put forward (p. 37) a claim for "amnesty for all the Royalist prisoners *without exception*," especially as amongst those prisoners were rebels caught, arms in hand, against the constituted authority of their native country. These internal evidences, together with the passages cited in my last article, seemed to be so many cloven hoofs left carelessly on the trail to mark the

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nationality of the gay protestor. And now what do I see and hear? Why, the statement that "an English author is responsible for the pamphlet"! This statement, of course, I unreservedly accept *au pied de la lettre*. And I submit, this time for the purpose of eliciting information, that this "responsibility" will not carry us very far as to the veracity of the pamphlet until we hear definitely whether the English author who framed this British Protest did more than polish up into literary form the polemical materials made for him in Portugal. A mere Englishman, writing in Fleet-street or living in Tooley-street, could scarcely produce these thirty-nine pages of Manoelist protests from his inner consciousness.

The Duchess of Bedford, who contributes an eleven-lined "Foreword," only claims that "the writer" had exceptional opportunities of *collecting* "information"—so that until we know whether the English author "received" the "information" "collected" by another, or "collected" the "information" with his own hands, and attempted to verify his "facts" by critical examination and inspection on the spot (all which may, *or may not*, be the Duchess's meaning when speaking of his "exceptional opportunities")—until, I say, this is known, the ascription to an English author of our controverted pamphlet leaves its infallibility as much open to doubt as before, especially in view of Mr. Swinny's personal testimony and the detailed refutation of his charges in *O Seculo*.

As I have already stated in my previous article, amnesty is a blessed word and an excellent principle to adopt, but the Portuguese Government cannot be expected to carry out a policy of universal amnesty while the Royalists make murderous inroads from Galicia, or ally themselves with the bomb-throwers who, a few days ago, scattered death and destruction in the streets of Lisbon when patriotic citizens were celebrating the genius of Camœns, the great national poet of the country. The road to amnesty is through submission to the *statue quo*.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Mission to the Heathen.

IN this German possession of Kamerun, West Africa, there are four lots of missions: Baptist (German), Basler (German Swiss), Roman Catholic (German), and the American Presbyterian. The two latter missions hold the field in South Kamerun, and, as is customary, each devotes part of its time in crying "stinking fish"—about the other one's goods. The following incident will throw a little light on the methods used by these Apostles of Peace in converting the heathen: A few weeks ago, in the district referred to, a Yankee soul-saver discovered that a native, upon whom he had his eye, had joined the Catholic mission. He thereupon approached the native and told him the Catholic pretensions were false, its theology all lies, and, indeed, that the holy Virgin Mary, about whom the Catholics made so much fuss, was really no better than she should be. As an extra and immediate inducement to the native to join the only true Church, the astute Yank promised him he might take a little strong drink, and that strict monogamy would not be insisted upon. These offers made it evident to the native that American Presbyterianism was *the* thing, so he promptly became converted to it.

This, of course, did not suit the Catholic missionary, so he went round to the American mission to speak to the native and with the missionary, but the latter, being evidently a man of deeds, promptly laid hold of the Catholic, gave him a severe shaking, and then knocked him over! The Lord, having failed to protect his holy Roman Catholic servant, the law was invoked, and a summons for assault issued. According to German custom, a "first trial" took place, at which endeavor was made to settle the matter; but, desiring to make a big blasphemy case of it, the Roman Catholic Bishop issued instructions that the case should not be amicably settled, but must be fought to the bitter end. The case was tried, and, to the utter astonishment of the Catholics, the judge refused to hear anything from the religious point of view, and, treating the case as one of simple assault, found each party to blame and dismissed it. I believe endeavor is being made to work a case up for blasphemy.

What a disgusting farce are these missions to the heathen, and what fairy tales are told in Europe about the devotion and sacrifice of these brave men, etc., etc.—instead of which ——the Catholic priests are very partial to a good cigar and a whisky and soda, and I have seen a "lay brother" in a condition that would have secured for him in England a verdict of "five bob and costs." The Catholics are, of course, celebates—that is to say, there are also nuns or sisters out here.

The Basler mission have a large trading concern, but I believe the departments of soap-selling and soul-saving are kept separate. The egregious American missionaries are, perhaps, the worst of the lot—for the most part snuffling ignoramuses, and nearly all ten-a-penny "doctors." Most of them are married, and the natives are not a little pleased to find the missionary *bring a wife with him*.

Of course, we must credit the missions with teaching trades to the natives; but the youth of Europe are taught trades without the help of missions, and let us hope it will soon be discovered that in tropical Africa and other "heathen" countries the technical school would make a really excellent (and cheap) substitute for the missions.

R. D. MORRIS.

A Score of Epigrams.

TOLSTOY.

WEARY of being a progenitor,
Tolstoy found children were against God's law:
Fatigued with courts, he found his God agrarian:
Bored epicure, he found God vegetarian:
Author and teacher for a whole life long,
He found that God thought novel-writing wrong:
Sated with love, when his old reins grew slack,
The Devil was an aphrodisiac:
The vainest egotist for centuries
Mistook his ennui for the world's disease.

THE JOURNALIST.

Such far-fetched metaphor! Such stern invective!
Such brilliant verbiage! Such noble rage!
If he's a worm, why are you so vindictive?
Because, old man, they pay me by the page.

GOD AND I.

If I were God, I'd not accept the apology
Offered for my existence by theology.

CHESTERTON.

Our Chesterton doth bless and damn,
According to his Beer and Joint:
He is our age's epigram,
Excepting that he has no point

THE LADY NOVELIST.

"You may decry them, but you find my novels
Enjoyed at once in palaces and hovels."
"True. Hut and hall two kinds of room are rich in—
One never mind, the other one's the kitchen.
And, by the way, your sales would rise like vapor,
Were you but printed upon thinner paper."

THE THEOLOGIANS.

"God is a spirit." Then the stern Freethinker:
"I'm a Teetotaler; you, Sir, are a Drinker.
It follows then that Catholics are fuddled,
Whereas the Protestants are merely muddled;
Protestants have *one* spirit, though it stinks,
Whereas the Catholics all mix their drinks."
However fair the theologic weather,
The Pope and Mr. Foote can't dine together.
How sad it is that cranks in drink and food
Militate so against true brotherhood.

CHRISTIAN POETS.

The theory that life on earth's a proem
Prevents the accomplishment of any poem.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

When Doctors differ, where to find salvation?
Our Paul backs love, and Origen castration.

THE JEW.

The star-lit desert did my fathers range,
And found their God. For me the Stock Exchange
Serves as a temple. Sheep and Goats? My prayers
Divide all mankind into Bulls and Bears.

"PUNCH."

When poor old dotard *Punch* sacked E. T. Reed,
He showed why he'd so sadly run to seed:
He'll not employ those artists that can draw,
But those that live according to the law.

AN EPITAPH.

'Gainst scorn and blows
And all his mortal pain
Not once he rose,
So cannot rise again.

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THE SCANDAL.

The violet, who shyly droops her head,
Sleeps out at night, in a mixed flower-bed!

TO THE PHILISTINES.

That part of mankind that is most delectable
Respects most those who are not too respectable.

DEGENERACY.

Olympus ruled, and Art was firm and rigid,
For love was free: now a reverse is come—
Our poets, sordid in their lives and frigid,
Write their "free verses" in a London slum.

THE PHILANTHROPIST.

All day he ponders with a smile seraphic
Unwanted Babies and the White Slave Traffic.
At night he teaches, unctuous and demure,
Christian young men the Art of Being Pure.

RATIONALISTS.

Religion's lies
We fight with all our faith;
We dogmatise
Only on Life and Death.

THE MOURNER.

"History's writ in blood!" Of course, old man.
D'you think your God's a vegetarian?

TACT.

"They slew their tactless Poet." "Tactless they:
Thanks to his martyrdom, he lives to-day."

OUR NOVELISTS.

Does everyone who writes to-day a story
Dwell 'twixt the surgery and lavatory?

NIETZSCHE.

Nietzsche, who laid on all the gods a ban,
Succumbed at last—and to the Superman!
Strains Dionysian replaced the Orphic,
Apotheosis of the Anthropomorphic!

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

Renan on Himself.

LET us be austere to ourselves, but do not let us impoverish life. Let us not deprive humanity of its joys; let us take pleasure in beholding its enjoyment. The joy of others is a great part of our own; it constitutes that great recompense of a good life, which is gaiety.

I have been reproached with too much parade of this religion, so easy in appearance, but the most difficult of all in reality. Wishing will not make one gay. One must belong to an old race, not *blasée;* one must also be satisfied with one's life. My life has been what I should wish, what I conceive as the best. I would not alter much if I had to live it over again. On the other hand, I have little fear of the future. I shall have my biography and my legend. My legend? Yes. Having myself a little of the trick of ecclesiastical writers, I can trace it out in advance. The legends of the enemies of the official Church are all cast in the same mould. The fate which the book of Acts attributes to Judas is its essential feature. For one party of tradition I shall finish like that, in a fashion compounded of Arius and Voltaire. God, how black I shall be! All the more because when the Church feels herself lost, she will go down maliciously, biting like a mad dog.

In spite of all I have confidence in reason. The enlightened part of humanity, the only part I care for, will hold me in some esteem. Five hundred years hence the Committee of the Literary History of France, in the Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, will redact my biographical notice. It will have to discuss some singular documents. It will read in the books approved by the Church, that I received a million from Rothschild for writing the *Vie de Jésus*, and nearly as much from Napoleon the Third, who, afterwards, having reduced me to destitution, gave me a fine pension on the *Journal des Savants*.—[Footnote—I joined the *Journal des Savants* in 1878, the fixed salary being 500 francs (£20) a year.] The committee will disentangle all this as it can, according to the rules of criticism; I am sure that its judgment will be an authority to sensible people in the future.

The only thing I really fear is apocryphal texts. There is already a considerable mass of phrases, sayings, and anecdotes attributed to me, which amuse the Catholic press. The clergy quote in general at second-hand; they take their citations from little, low clerical reviews. Almost all that the religious polemists father upon me is sophisticated or full of absurdity. I implore the friends of truth only to count as mine which has appeared in the volumes published by the firm of Levy. When I gave to the world the *Vie de Jésus*, the journals subventioned by the Jesuits published pretended autographs of mine, which I never took the trouble to denounce. It is in this respect that the Committee aforesaid, in the twenty-fourth century, will have an opportunity to display its sagacity. If criticism, instead of making progress, should decline—then I shall be lost. But if humanity is doomed to cretinism, I no longer covet its esteem; it may think of me all the nonsense it pleases.....

I am thankful for my life. It has been sweet and precious to me. I have not been without sin; I have had the defects of all men; but, whatever may be said by those who call themselves God's priests, I have never committed any very bad action. I have loved truth, and made sacrifices for it. I have desired the diviner day, and I believe in its advent. When my old beliefs crumbled away, instead of weeping and feeling irritated, I faced ill fortune with a stout heart. Weeping would have been cowardice, and irritation the greatest absurdity.—*Translated, with slight alteration, from "Feuilles Détachées."*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JUNE 26.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davies, Davidson, Heaford, Lazarnick, Leat, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, F. Wood, Miss Kough, and Miss Stanley.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. the monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Colne, Leeds, and West Ham Branches and for the Parent Society.

This being the first meeting of the new Executive, the following officers were elected:—General Secretary: Miss E. M. Vance. Monthly Auditors: Messrs. Leat and Samuels. Benevolent Fund Committee: Messrs. Davey, Leat, Roger, Samuels, and Wood.

The Secretary formally reported that the L.C.C. had reissued the permits for collecting in the Parks, withdrawn in June last, and was instructed to settle the account for the solicitor's charges in connection with the case so far as it had gone.

The President reported the receipt by him of a letter from the Bolton Branch and also a letter from Mr. J. W. Gott, reporting that a speaker, unconnected with the Society, had been prosecuted under the Police Clauses Act at Blackburn, and after a general discussion, the following resolution, moved by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mr. Moss, was carried unanimously:—

> "That the Executive endorses the warning of the Bolton Branch against outside speakers who collect money on the pretence that they represent the N. S. S.; and that the Executive also warns all whom it may concern that irresponsible advocates of Freethought at outdoor meetings must not expect to be seen through their trouble by the N. S. S. if they cannot keep from using language which brings them under the 'profanity' clause of the Police Clauses Act."

The following resolution, remitted from the Annual Conference, was then discussed.

> "That the N. S. S. be represented as far as possible at the forthcoming International Freethought Congress at Lisbon, partly as an encouragement to the Portuguese Freethinkers who have taken such a great part in the recent work of progress in Portugal, and also as a protest against the malicious falsehoods so industriously circulated to their detriment by religious bigots and political schemers in England."

Mr. W. Heaford, the N. S. S. delegate to the International Freethought Bureau, was instructed to inform the Lisbon Freethought Association that the N. S. S. would be represented by at least three delegates, and it was further resolved that arrangements should be made to include in the party any members or friends of the movement who contemplated being present at the Congress.

The outdoor propaganda was discussed and further arrangements made.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

We deeply regret to learn of the death of Mrs. H. M. Hyndman, and our sympathy goes out to Mr. Hyndman in his great loss. Mrs. Hyndman was in every sense of the word a "helpmeet" for her husband, and her death will leave a void in his life which only those who knew how devotedly attached they were to each other can understand and sympathise with. Mr. Hyndman has never concealed his Freethought views, which were shared by Mrs. Hyndman.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Neary's, 94 Lordship-road, Church-street, Stoke Newington): Monday, July 7, at 8.30, Business Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Miss Kough, "The Futility of Prayer"; 7.30, R. Rosetti, "The Pathway of Faith."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, E. Burke, a Lecture.

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

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Annual Picnic. From Snow Hill Station, 10.5; luncheon, 12.30, at the East Gate Restaurant, 15 Smith-street, Warwick. Return from Warwick, 8.5.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Ground): Gilbert Manion, "Why Free Speech is Necessary"; 3, "God"; 6.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Steps): Monday, July 7, R. Mearns, at 7.30, "The Latest 'Profanity' Prosecution"; Saturday, July 12, at 7.30, "The Four Gospels Analysed."

FARNWORTH (Market Square): Monday July 7, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Why I am an Atheist."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7, F. M. Wilkesbarre, "What I Offer in Place of Christianity."

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): R. Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): Matthew Phair, 3, "Socialism and Christianity"; 6.30, "A Prosecution for Profanity: How it is Conducted."

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Principles and Objects.

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Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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THE
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History tells us that the good cause triumphs in the end, though the individuals may not live to see it. But we strive for the cause, not for ourselves.

—GEORGE MEREDITH.

"Honest Doubt."

TENNYSON started the talk about "honest doubt." He said that there "lived more faith" in it than in "half the creeds." He meant well. But he was mistaken. What is more, he was in a confusion. The whole passage was perhaps the weakest platitude in *In Memoriam;* and platitude so easily runs into sheer ineptitude.

It is assumed, in this unfortunate passage of Tennyson's, that there is some special virtue in "faith" and some special vice in "doubt." But it is perfectly clear, when you come to reflect, that "faith" and "doubt" must both have an object, and that the value of either depends upon what they are related to. If you have faith that the moon is made of green cheese, and I doubt the proposition, the difference is not one of transcendent importance. But if you have faith that a certain man will keep his word, and I doubt his fidelity, and the life or liberty of both of us depends upon his being true to his pledge, our difference is of tremendous importance. If you are right, we both gain; if I am right, we both lose. But the issue does not establish your moral superiority over me, or mine over you; it simply establishes the fact that your judgment was superior to mine, or mine to yours; and judgment is an intellectual process, which a bad man may sometimes perform better than a good one.

It is absurd to speak of "faith" in the abstract. When we are told that a man has faith, we should ask "faith in what?" He may have faith in a God of vengeance, or faith in a God of mercy; he may have faith in "grace" or faith in "good works"; he may have faith in moral rectitude or faith in Papal indulgences: he may have faith in reaching heaven through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ, or faith in reaching heaven through the gracious favor of the Virgin Mary; he may have faith in the Holy Trinity or faith in Mumbo Jumbo; he may have faith in holy water, faith in transubstantiation, faith in priestly pardon, faith in extreme unction, and faith in prayers for the abbreviation of purgatory, or he may have faith in simple human virtues, and regard all those things as superstitious inventions.

You may tell me that a man has faith, I may trust myself in his hands, and I may find that he is a Thug. By an act of faith he murders me. The deity he worships is pleased with human blood, and mine is shed for his gratification. The contents of my pocket may, at the same time, fall into the hands of the assassin; but the agent is entitled to some advantage as well as the principal.

John Huss trusted himself in the hands of the Catholic party, and they burnt him alive, because they had a faith against keeping faith with heretics.

A man may doubt the wisdom of peace, or doubt the wisdom of war. A man may doubt the value of parliamentary government, or doubt the value of autocracy. A man may doubt the sense of free trade, or doubt the sense of protection. A man may doubt anything, or doubt its opposite. And what is the use of counting his doubts as moral or immoral? They are nothing of the kind. They are simply opinions, which he forms according to his information and intellectual capacity.

If one man works a sum and gives the right answer, he is not moral, he is accurate. If another man works the sum and gives a wrong answer, he is not immoral, he is inaccurate. And the bad arithmetician may be the better citizen of the two.

Learned and able judges try cases and give judgments, and their judgments are sometimes reversed by other judges. There is a difference of opinion in the two separate hearings. But it would be absurd to infer that the judge in the first instance was wicked, and the judge in the second instance virtuous.

Faith is but an opinion, and doubt is an opinion; and by no possibility can an opinion be moral or immoral. These terms only apply to actions and agents. Opinions may be sound or unsound; in other words, they may be accurate or inaccurate. They cannot be anything else.

This philosophy teaches charity. Although we cannot all see eye to eye with each other, we can dwell together in peace and goodwill. A fellow citizen may differ from me and not deserve locking up; and I may differ from him, without deserving the gallows.

People differ on the most important practical questions, and still regard each other as gentlemen; yet when they differ on speculative questions, as to which they are all very much in the dark, they scowl and hiss and spit at each other, and call each other vile names, and do each other terrible injuries, and sometimes cut off each other's heads, or break each other to pieces, or burn each other to death.

All bigotry is bad, but religious bigotry is the worst of all. It is rare to find a Christian who admits that an "infidel" may be as good a man as himself. The priests and parsons naturally minister to this evil spirit. They treat unbelief as a sin. They represent those who reject their teachings as enemies of God. They speak the word Atheist as if it were the name of a monster. The better sort of them still talk of "honest doubts"—as though there could be dishonest doubts. Whenever they see an opponent they say (or look) "I am holier than thou." And the police reports often show that they are not.

Even the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, M.A., D.D., one of the "great" Free Church divines, in a *Hibbert Journal* article some time ago, ventured to express himself in the following manner:—

> "Much more doubt is voluntary and culpable than it is the fashion to admit. The mental confusion is due to some moral weakness and discursiveness. It is not wholly mental error, but to some extent moral dulness (to say the least), which causes so many to pass over the historic Christ as lightly as they do in their survey of the field of fact."

It is only the professional exhorters who are allowed to talk in that way. Once they flung around the lightnings of persecution. Now they only wield stage thunders. But they look what they cannot execute. "Sir," they say to the infidel, "consider yourself blasted." And the infidel lifts his hat with an ironical smile.

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Dr. Forsyth has not mastered the elements of psychology. Otherwise he would know how absurd it is to speak of doubt as voluntary. The will has nothing to do with the matter. A man cannot believe as he would; he believes as he must. It is impossible for him to disbelieve what he sees to be the truth—and impossible for him to believe what he sees to be a falsehood.

When a man passes over anything lightly he does so because he thinks it is unimportant. And when Dr. Forsyth speaks of "the historic Christ" he should remember—for he surely knows—that many sceptics do not believe in the historicity of that personage. They have looked into the matter and have found a different conclusion from that which is propounded by Dr. Forsyth. Were they to call him a scoundrel, he would be justly indignant; but it appears that he feels at liberty to suggest that they are no better than they should be.

Considering that at least a half of the people of this country never darken the doors of church or chapel, it seems high time that the men of God dropped these impudent airs of superiority. They are not wiser men, they are not better men, than their fellow citizens. And people are beginning to laugh at the clerical "swelled head."

G. W. FOOTE.

The Medicine Man, Ancient and Modern.

IN a savage tribe the medicine man and the magic worker are natural and inevitable figures. They are natural because they are of a piece with the rest of the social structure. They are inevitable because in his gropings after knowledge man learns by trial and failure, only finding the truth after many experiences of the false. Moreover, these experts in the supernatural have plenty of work on hand. Being in direct touch with that world of spirits which play so large a part in primitive life, they arrange for success in war and prosperity in peace. They procure good crops and avert disease. They interpret all the signs and wonders that surround man, and subdue him to order or inspire him to action. They interpret omens on the birth of a child, and prescribe the proper methods of attending to the ghost after the individual is dead. If the rest of the tribe has to support the primitive priest, he can at least be said, in a sense, to earn his keep. For the savage does not see how he could get along without him. The primitive community begs the priest to help *it*, the modern priest begs the community to help *him*. The positions are reversed; and herein lies a very important moral.

Time passes, and the relations of the priest to the community undergoes a profound change. Things that the priest alone could do other people accomplish without him. Strength, skill, and organisation in warfare are seen to be more important than incantations. The gods, ancient and modern, are on the side of the big battalions. The army chaplain is not invited to the council of war. He blesses the guns, but no one blames him if the gunner misses his object or praises him if the gun shoots straight. He blesses the Army, but if it is unsuccessful it is the generals who are blamed, not the parsons. If the crops are bad, we blame the weather or the soil. We don't say that the gods have nothing to do with the case, but we act as if we believe it. If disease rages, we appeal to the doctor, not to the priest. Even the pious Mr. McKenna, when called on to deal with an outbreak of cattle disease, took the opinion of scientists, and never once consulted any of his highly esteemed Nonconformist ministers. We do not go to the priest to find out the cause of an eclipse, or explain the significance of an epidemic. Nature, as a whole, has put off the livery of the gods, and their uniformed servants wander about without any definite or reliable instructions from their masters. All that God does, apparently, is exist. What he does no one knows; and a large number have ceased to care.

In civilised countries the conditions that gave birth to the priest no longer exist. The frame of mind that called for his help is gone; his function, as a priest, dead. He is as much a rudimentary organ in the body politic as the caudal appendage is in the human body. But he is still with us, still prominent in our social life, still demanding support from the community, and accusing it of lack of duty when it is not forthcoming. It is not important to inquire how many of him there are still with us, nor is it important to find out just how much he costs. The really important inquiry is the part he plays in life. Obviously, he cannot exist on the same terms that governed his existence in primitive communities. He may exert much the same influence—I believe he does—but the outward reasons for his being must be different. He no longer pleads supernatural reasons for his existence; he does not threaten supernatural penalties if we suggest his abolition. Both the justification and the penalties are social in form; and, although this is really giving up the ghost, it is on this ground that he must be met.

One curious feature about an attack on the priest is that he has so few open defenders. (I am using the word "priest" in a very comprehensive sense as embracing all varieties, from the Roman Catholic at the one extreme to the "advanced" Nonconformist at the other). A great many people will join with the Freethinker in denouncing the priesthood, but they will point to the good men among them as proof of the value of religion, to bad ones as evidencing the weakness of human nature, or offer the correction that the evils we ascribe to religion are really due to theology. There are three fallacies here in as many statements. Good and bad men are found in every direction, and in any case I am not concerned with whether the clergy represent good or bad types of human nature. I am only concerned with the influence of the clergy as an organised body; and that, too, only so far as it is a necessary influence. So far as it is accidental, it may be set on one side altogether, whatever its nature may be. To attempt to draw a distinction of any consequence between religion and theology is stupid. The bare belief in supernatural beings or in God, by itself, would be neither good nor bad. It is what man believes to be the relations existing between the gods and himself, and the way in which this influences conduct, that is of importance, and it is the statement of these relations that constitute a theology. There never has been a religion without a theology, and there never will be one. And, as a religion implies and involves a theology, so a theology involves some sort of a priesthood. The three hang together, an inseparable trinity in actual fact.

Now, it is a truism that the organised priesthoods of the world have been hostile to progress. I need not labor the point; it is conceded in the mere fact that each one admits it as true of all the others. Special individuals may here and there have taken the side of reform; special circumstances may for a season have ranged a body of the clergy on the side of reform; but, special circumstances aside, the truth remains that the clergy of all denominations and in all countries are found the supporters of retrogressive ideas. This phenomenon is so general and so uniform that it cannot be accidental. It must be due to something that has its origin in the very function of a priest in all societies immediately above the lowest stage of culture. Personally, I believe it will hold good even there; but I confine myself to the more easily demonstrable proposition.

This proposition is a very simple one: it is that the existence of every clergy, every priesthood, is bound up with the perpetuation of certain ideas quite irrespective of their truth or utility. Progress, we may say, depends on a continuous readjustment of opinion to new needs and a widening circle of information. No man and no society is truly progressive unless he and it holds beliefs as subject to whatever modifications increased knowledge may

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demand. To the true progressive the past is a book to be consulted, not an oracle to be slavishly obeyed. A new truth is something to be sought for; an opponent one to be welcomed for whatever light he may shed, not an enemy to be repulsed at all costs. On the other hand, the existence of the priest, as priest, depends upon the maintenance of beliefs that all verifiable knowledge tends to discredit. Although he exists in the present, he belongs to the past, and his power is exactly proportionate to his success in keeping the present in line with the past. His function is to hand on established opinions, not to create new ones. His is not only "not to reason why"; it is his task to prevent others reasoning why, or even to feel the necessity for so doing. Instinctively he feels, with an acuteness of perception that is curiously manifested by all vested interests, that a new idea is a ferment that may react disastrously on his position. Self-preservation, the first law of existence for institutions as for organisms, sets the priest in opposition to reform. Oppose it he must; to promote it is an act of class suicide.

The evil does not end here. A class that merely became identified with retrogressive ideas would exert but little influence. It would be known for what it was, and valued accordingly. Their success in safeguarding their status and function is really dependent upon the degree to which they are able to mould character. An historic tradition — little honored by the wisest teachers in all ages—gives them a prominent place in this matter. In that, and in matters of education generally, they still claim a prescriptive right to express an opinion. And yet the fact remains that of all classes in the community the priesthood is the worst possible for the work. Men who commence their career by pledging themselves to a set confession of faith, and continue teaching it by setting upon it an interpretation quite at variance with its plain meaning, must make the worst possible teachers and moulders of character. The secular teacher may be inefficient, but in that case he merely fails. The priestly teacher really aims to distort, and where he is allowed a free hand he rarely fails in his work. Their object is to give a decisive bent to the mind, and one that is fatal to a really healthy citizenship. Men who think more of where an opinion may lead than of the evidence for its justificatian can never either be genuine seekers for truth themselves or train others to the task. They would far rather see people grow up timid and credulous than strong with the strength that is born of fearless questioning and honestly expressed doubt. The purpose of every medicine-man, from the savage to the Nonconformist preacher, is to train people to become dependent on their ministrations, not to walk boldly in a path of their own choosing. By tradition and by training, by love of ease and lust of power, the clergy are thoroughly unfitted for the work of education or the healthy moulding of character. Every good teacher is interested in the ideas he gives his pupils; but the teacher whose existence, as a teacher, is bound up with the perpetuation of a special set of ideas is the most dangerous of all social forces.

Consider the character of those feelings aroused and maintained by religious discipline. The most generous of them are limited by the boundaries of a faith, the less generous by puny sectarian divisions. So far as people outside the faith or sect are considered, they are thought about as potential converts. The larger, healthier, humanitarian note is quite lacking. Unconsciously, this is admitted by the appeal to "Christian men and women" and "Christian feeling" when religious leaders are striving to rouse their followers to a sense of duty. Of course, it may be said that Christian feeling represents the highest to these people. This may be so, but the apology carries its own condemnation. For that, surely, is not the *best* teaching, which owes all its influence to appeals to what is essentially a sectarian feeling. It is but a poor defence of clerical training to argue that under its influence people are so poorly developed that appeals based on a sense of common humanity falls upon practically deaf ears.

It is the system, not the individual, that I am attacking. Systems and castes mould men, just as surely as men create castes and systems. The medicine man, ancient or modern, is not born but made. He is the creature of a system, just as he strives to make others its victims. Each class has its own special code of honor, and the mischief is that the clergy possess a caste morality of its own that tends to subvert the workings of a healthier social consciousness. For the "greater glory of God" almost anything becomes permissible; moral responsibilities that obtain elsewhere break down here. The story — probably apocryphal — told of Bunyan may be fitly applied. "There but for the grace of God go I," he said, on seeing a criminal led to execution. Were any of us in the pulpit, bound by its traditions, and swathed in its teachings, we all might behave as does the priest. It is not the man that spoils the religion, it is the religion that spoils the man. And that is the ultimate reason for its destruction.

C. COHEN.

The Virgin Birth.

A FEW weeks ago we called attention to a grotesque attempt to explain away great Biblical doctrines, such as those of the Edenic Fall and the Virgin Birth. With reference to the Genesis story the Rev. H. S. M'Clelland, B.A., B.D., asks, "What more beautiful legend could there be than this, which typifies humanity dwelling in that blissful garden of innocence, until the dawning of the moral consciousness, and the beginning of our long struggle with evil, for the conquest of the soul?" According to Mr. M'Clelland, he who takes the narrative of the Fall literally lacks spiritual discernment; he is a dullard, like the Apostle Paul, for example. It was not a deplorable fall, but a marvellous rise, that took place in the Garden of Eden. So, likewise, the Virgin Birth is nothing but a beautiful legend. The following are the reverend gentleman's own words:—

> "Apply the same method of spiritual interpretation to the Nativity stories that surround with their aureole of mystery the birth of Jesus, and you will see that there is more truth within those legends than you were at first aware of. Remember that more than fifty years had passed since that wondrous day, before any record of its events was written down. Remember, also, what Jesus had been to the simple men who wrote them. Is it very strange that they should consider that so unique a life *must* have had a dramatic entry, even though Jesus himself said nothing about it? They simply could not express what Jesus had been to them without the help of poetry and symbol. So we find his coming attended by the strangest of heavenly portents. A new star appears in the sky and hangs over Bethlehem, wise men come from afar, the heavens are literally opened, the angelic hosts become visible and audible.....To regard these statements as the record of actual facts is to deprive them at once of their spiritual significance for thousands of devout and holy men who simply cannot believe that they ever took place. To hold them as the expression of profound ideal truths is to find them rich in ethical and spiritual store."

If we bluntly characterise the spiritual interpretation of the Nativity stories as groundless and false, we shall be described as spiritually blind, and consequently incompetent to judge; but honesty compels us to declare that if Mr. M'Clelland is right all the Creeds of Christendom are wrong. If the Evangelists were poets, is it not strange that they were never recognised as such until the beginning of the twentieth century? So long as the people could believe the story of the Virgin Birth no one dreamed of regarding it as poetry. Matthew and Luke "could not express what Jesus had been to them" without saying that he came into the world without a human father. In order to tell us how he had changed the world for them by the mighty passion of his life they had to affirm that his mother had never known a man. In other words, the only way to make the

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truth about Jesus known was to tell a gigantic lie. This is scarcely complimentary to the Evangelists, to say the least; but what we wish to emphasise is the fact that what is actually false cannot be poetically true, or that an event that never took place cannot be "rich in ethical and spiritual store."

Now, the Virgin Birth is or is not a reality; it happened, or it did not happen. If it happened, it is an actual fact; if it did not happen, the only possible interpretation of it consists in the statement that it is a pure myth. If it is only a myth, as Mr. M'Clelland seems to assume, how can it be "rich in ethical and spiritual store"? And what is the good of treating what never occurred as poetry or symbol? A lie can never serve the cause of truth; and a virgin birth that never happened can never show forth the glory of Christ, nor tell the world what he did for his disciples. We maintain, therefore, that by repudiating the Virgin Birth Mr. M'Clelland has considerably weakened the case for the Bible and for Christianity, forgetting that there can be no shadow when the substance causing it has been withdrawn. It is the height of absurdity to speak of the spiritual interpretation of what never took place. To a believer in God and the Deity of Jesus Christ the Virgin Birth is neither impossible nor improbable, and certainly he cannot dismiss it as absurd. Professor Peake, writing from the standpoint of such a believer, puts the case as follows:—

> "We are speaking of one whom we regard as the Son of God, and whose earthly career closed with the still more stupendous miracle of the Resurrection. We are speaking of the central Figure of all history. Approaching the story along these lines, we may feel that in a person so supernatural the Virgin Birth was natural" (*Christianity: its Nature and its Faith*, p. 190).

When we read the story as related by Matthew and Luke, the impression made upon our minds is that the writers are dealing with a real incident, or at least wish us to believe that they are doing so; and when we come to the Apostles' Creed the impression is deepened. Here Jesus Christ is described as God's only Son, "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." Tertullian states that "God, the Son of God, was sent by the Father into the Virgin to be born of her"; that "when Mary conceived, she conceived as a virgin"; and "that what she conceived was God as well as man, the Son of God, who himself, sent by the Father, entered her womb to be born." This does not sound like poetry, does it? This second century Father tells us, further, that the "Son of God was not only sent down of the Father into the womb of Mary the Virgin, but was *made flesh* there by the agency of the Spirit and power of God." Irenæus is equally positive that the Son of God was made flesh and became man, though he does not mention the agency of the Holy Ghost. In his famous *Apology*, Justin says that "the Word, who is the first-born of God, was produced *without sexual union*"; and he assures his readers that the Virgin Birth is by no means an extraordinary thing, as they were constantly meeting with it in Pagan mythologies. There is no trace of poetry or idealism here. There were Christians in the early Church who denied the Virgin Birth, such as the Ebionites, who held that Jesus was only a man, and the Gnostics, who distinguished between the man, born Jesus, and the Christ, that descended upon him, and took possession of him afterwards; but they denied it absolutely, and found no ideal truth whatever in the story. In the Nicene Creed, two centuries later, the Virgin Birth is affirmed with greater clearness than ever. Having described Jesus Christ as "the Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, the only begotten [that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made," the Creed continues: "Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The Virgin Birth is here a dogma of the most definite and rigid kind, upon which the Muses never breathed. These two Creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene, with the Athanasian, the Anglican Articles of Religion inform us, "ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by certain warrants of holy Scripture." We fully agree, and cannot understand the position of those who boggle at the Virgin Birth while cheerfully swallowing the Resurrection. The one is not one whit more believable than the other. More irrational still is the attitude of those who endeavor to impose upon both a spiritual interpretation. Many New Theologians do not believe that Christ rose from the dead *bodily*, but *spiritually*; but what about his death? Are we to understand that he did not die physically, but ideally? Because it inevitably follows that if he died a bodily death he must have undergone a bodily resurrection, because it was that which died which was declared to have come to life again. Similarly, if Jesus was not born of a virgin he must have had a human father; and if he had a human father there is no intelligible sense in which the Virgin Birth can be true.

We reject the Virgin Birth simply because we believe neither in God nor in Christ, or because we have discarded supernaturalism in all its forms. We do not believe in the Divine Incarnation because we do not believe in Divinity. The late Professor Charles A. Briggs, of New York, imagines, in his *Fundamental Christian Faith*, that he has "hunted the opponents of the Virgin Birth out of all the holes and corners in which, like rats, they take refuge"; but in reality he has done nothing of the sort. For one thing, they do not take refuge, like rats, in holes and corners, but boldly take their stand upon stubborn facts which cannot be denied. It is utterly immaterial to us whether the word *begat* in Matthew's genealogy is used in the sense of legal or of physical descent, because we base no argument against the Virgin Birth upon such texts as "Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus, called the Messiah." Our opposition to that dogma, as well as to all other Christian dogmas, rests upon the total lack of evidence in support of the belief in the supernatural. For all phenomena known to us we can account without going outside Nature; and certainly Jesus can be fully explained without bringing in any supernatural agency. The Christ of Paul and the Church has never done a single thing to prove his own existence. Like his much belauded Sermon, he has been a dead letter in the history of Christendom; and to the Church itself he has been mostly a bone of contention, a man of war rather than a Prince of Peace. But Nature is at last dethroning Supernature, and becoming supreme in human life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—IX.

(*Continued from p. 422.*)

> "The thin end of the entering wedge destined to split China into fragments, unless anticipated (as in fact it has been) in its disruptive work by some ruder allied agency, was clearly discerned by Consul Alcock while at Shanghai. Under cover of the first French treaties in 1844 and 1846 missionaries effected a legal lodgment on the coast of China, from which they cast longing eyes on the vast interior of the country. Rivalry between the Christian sects brought fresh pressure to bear on the Plenipotentiaries, and the 'toleration clause' was introduced into all the treaties negotiated at Tientsin in 1858 and in the German treaty of 1861."—ALEXANDER MICHIE, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 224.

> "Fancy a Chinese Buddhist mounting on the roof of a hansom cab at Charing Cross and preaching Buddhism to the mob in pidgin English! That would give some measure of the effect produced on a Chinese crowd by a missionary I have seen perched upon a cart outside the great gate of the Tartar city at Peking, haranguing a yellow crowd of gapers in bastard Chinese."—A. B. MITFORD, *The Attaché at Peking*, p. 37.

OUR next war with China—in which the French took part—occurred in 1856. This arose through the seizure by the Chinese of the lorcha *Arrow*, trading under the British flag (a "lorcha" is a light vessel with a European hull, rigged like a Chinese junk) from which incident it is known as the

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"*Arrow* War," and not, as I was informed in all good faith when I was a child, because the Chinese fought with bows and arrows. This was concluded in 1858 with the treaty of Tientsin. Other treaties were also concluded with Russia, the United States, France, and, in 1861, with Germany. In all these treaties a "toleration clause" was inserted, allowing Christianity to be taught in China. Says Mr. Michie:—

> "What the Chinese would have said had they been free to discuss the demand made upon them, we can hardly conjecture, but in the position in which they actually found themselves they would have subscribed to any form of words submitted to them, their sole anxiety then being to get rid of the barbarians on any terms. Had the preamble run, 'Whereas the Christian religion as practised for 1800 years has not brought peace but a sword upon the earth, has set the father against the son, nation against nation, instigated crimes without number, sided with the oppressor and the unrighteous judge, and is daily prostituted for political ends,' the Chinese would have signed the toleration clause just the same. The phraseology was nothing to them, whence it follows that the responsibility for the consequences rests on the Powers who imposed the form, as well as substance, of the obligations." *

As the same historian further remarks:—

> "The mediæval solicitude for 'saving the heathen' survives, and the statesman has to reckon with it. It can neither be reasoned with nor turned aside, and is the more intractable in that the logical effect of its inspiration is to place it above civil law, but under a divine law of its own interpreting, the interpretation varying indefinitely with the divisions of the force."

Therefore, he says:—

> "To introduce such a complex ferment into the Chinese body politic was a psychological experiment on a colossal scale, and also irrevocable. It was, therefore, an experiment which demanded the kind of precaution used in handling dangerous chemicals. Yet absolutely no thought was bestowed on the subject, the explosive was imported with less ceremony than is bestowed on a bale of long cloth, and left to spread according to its own laws in the living tissue into which it was injected." †

Sir Rutherford Alcock spoke of "the futility of grafting on to a treaty of commerce, forced upon the Chinese under circumstances which left them no power to refuse, a proselytising agency for the conversion of the nation to Christianity."

As Mr. Michie further remarks:—

> "A rose-cutting would not be grafted with the insouciance with which this spiritual element was incongruously inserted in a commercial treaty. Commenting directly upon the toleration clause itself, Sir Rutherford wrote: 'It is only necessary to read carefully the words of the article to be aware that, in the whole range of the treaty, from the first to the fifty-sixth article, there is nothing stipulated for so difficult to secure as the fulfilment in its integrity of this one clause.'" ‡

Sir Rutherford was a clear-headed and far-sighted man, as after events have proved.

We now come to one of the blackest pieces of treachery and forgery ever perpetrated, even in the annals of religious history.

We have seen how the missionaries were turned out of China some centuries before, entirely owing to their quarrels and interference with Imperial affairs. Of course, they could not take the churches, houses, and land they had acquired—in teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, who, according to the Bible, had not so much as a place to lay his head—so they disposed of them in the best manner they could, probably selling them for what they could get.

The aim of the priests was to obtain possession of this property again by one bold stroke, and this is the way they went about it. To cite the same able historian—Mr. Michie—again:—

> "There was one treaty stipulation which has not been left to chance for its fulfilment—the additional article inserted in the French Convention of Peking in 1860. An astute missionary, acting as interpreter to Baron Gros, managed to interpolate in the Chinese text a clause of their own which had no place in the French—the ruling version—and was quite unknown to the French Envoy. By that clause full permission was accorded to French missionaries to purchase land and erect buildings throughout the empire; and, further, all churches, schools, cemeteries, lands, and buildings which had been owned by persecuted Christians (Chinese) in previous centuries were to be paid for, and the money handed over to the French representative in Peking for transmission to the Christians in the localities concerned. This astounding demand, in our eyes at once so truculent and so impracticable, seems to have been to the Chinese neither more nor less oppressive than the rest of the treaty, and they signed without demur, under the usual mental reservation." *

Mr. Michie does not mention the name of the wretch who was responsible for this piece of perfidy; but we learn from M. Eug. Simon's able work on China that it was M. Delamarre, a French priest belonging to the French foreign mission, who was employed by Baron Gros—the French plenipotentiary—as his chief interpreter. Another proof that a priest can never be trusted and should never be employed in public affairs. A man who perpetrated such a fraud in any matter of daily life, not connected with religion, would be covered with shame and ignominy; he might, like the forger Piggot, blow his brains out when discovered. But religion sanctifies every wickedness when it has a pious motive in view. M. Eug. Simon tells us that not only did M. Delamarre admit to him that he was the author of this pious fraud, but he "boasted of it." †

"Some effort of imagination is required," says Mr. Michie, "to realise what is implied in this surreptitious article," and it cites an analogy made made by Sir Rutherford Alcock, who says:—

> "We must suppose a French Army entering London and there dictating the conditions of peace, and among others one that all church property confiscated by Henry VIII. should forthwith be restored to the Roman Catholic Church by the present holders, however acquired, and without compensation, and that the French Government could be appealed to in order to enforce the rigorous execution of the stipulation."

How the stipulation was enforced is thus described by Prince Kung in his circular of 1871, who declared:—

> "During the last few years the restitution of chapels in every province has been insisted upon without any regard for the feelings of the masses, the missionaries obstinately persisting in their claims. They have also pointed out fine, handsome houses (belonging to, or occupied by, the gentry or others) as buildings once used as churches, and these they have compelled the people to give up. But what is worse, and what wounds the dignity of the people, is that they often claim as their property *yamêns*, places of assembly, temples held in high respect by the literates and the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Buildings which were once used as chapels have been in some cases sold years ago by Christians; and, having been sold and resold by one of the people to another, have passed through the hands of several proprietors. There is also a large number of buildings which have been newly repaired at very considerable expense, of which the missionaries have insisted on the restitution, refusing at the same time to pay anything for them. On the other hand, there are some houses which have become dilapidated, and the missionaries put in a claim for the necessary repair. Their conduct excites the indignation of the people whenever they come in contact with each other, and it becomes impossible for them to live quietly together." †

This was the work of a Catholic priest, but what was the attitude of the Protestant missionaries towards this abominable treachery? Did they denounce it and decline to take advantage of the forged clause? Not a bit of it; they took full advantage of the forgery and advanced further claims of their own. Says Mr. Michie:—

> "The fraud was more than condoned by missionaries of all nations and sects, whose legal title to residence in

* A. Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 225.
† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 226.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

* Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 230.
† M. Eug. Simon, *China—its Social, Political, and Religious Life* (1887), footnote to p. 160.
‡ Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 231.

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> the interior of China, distant from all authority, rests solely on the interpolated French clause, the benefit of which accrues to them under the most-favored-nation privilege. British Protestant missionaries, not altogether satisfied with this tainted title, in a long letter to their Minister, Sir Rutherford Alcock, claimed the right of inland residence on another ground. They adduced the public declaration of Mr. Burlingame, that 'China invites Protestant missionaries to plant the shining Cross on every hill and in every valley,' to which the answer was simple, that the Chinese Government disavowed the promises of the Envoy, and repudiated the implied obligation." *

This so-called Burlingame "mission," which provides one of the very few touches of the comic element in the tragedy of China, came about in this way. When Mr. Burlingame was paying his farewell visit to the Chinese Ministers before retiring from his post as Minister for the United States of America, Prince Kung made the polite remark, "Now, why cannot you, when you are again in the West, represent our views of what is taking place in China, and of what we would wish to have done in our country?" Mr. Burlingame replied, "Should I visit any of the Courts of Europe, I shall have much pleasure in doing so." Mr. Burlingame seems to have taken a polite speech—and China is the country of polite speeches—too literally, and presently entered upon his comic-opera mission to the Courts of Europe, which is now chiefly remembered, says Mrs. Archibald Little, in her *Life of Li Hung Chang*, by its leader's public declaration that "China invites Protestant missionaries to plant the shining Cross on every hill and in every valley," a statement, she indignantly remarks, "which leads people of certain temperament to form so stern a judgment of the speaker that I refrain from touching further on this episode" (p. 64).†

Mr. Burlingame must have known the statement to be perfectly false when he made it, or, if he did not, he was unfit to hold his position as representative of the United States; he was, therefore, guilty of bad faith towards the Chinese Government in misrepresenting their wishes. The missionaries also knew, from personal experience, that the statement was false, but this did not prevent them from using it as a lever by which to force an entry into the inland parts of China. While they are loud in denouncing the Jesuit maxim that "the end justifies the means," they always practise it when they have the opportunity.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Paganism and Christianity.

AN unusually interesting article appears in the June *New Church Monthly* (Swedenborgian) on the subject of "Paganism and Christianity," written by the Rev. J. R. Rendell, B.A. The reverend gentleman has been paying a visit to Rome, the result being to bring to his mind in "an astonishingly vivid way" the fact, "known to every student," of the close connection which exists between the old Pagan worship of Rome and Christianity. It is certain, says he, that Pagan temples were used as Christian churches. Ancient ceremonies like the burning of the lamp before the altar were retained. Incense was burnt before the Gods of Rome. The worship of the Virgin is not far removed from the adoration of one of the Roman goddesses. Even the robes of the Pagan priests were worn. Archæologists, says he, assure us that nearly all the details of the dress of a cardinal were to be found on the dress of the Assyrian priests. As Mr. Rendell visited the chief monuments of the city he "was often reminded of the close relations between the ancient civic life of Rome and the customs of Christianity." The popes did not hesitate to despoil the ancient Forum to add to the glories of the Church. The great bronze doors of St. John's Lateran were formerly the doors of the Senate House. Professor Reynaud said that if by some divine power all that belonged to the Pagan temples of the Forum and its civic buildings were to be restored, St. Peter's itself would be the very first to move to the centre of the city. This, however, is more particularly interesting to the archæologist. What is more serious from the Christian point of view is the "naked and unabashed" way in which Rome has borrowed Pagan ideas and ceremonies. Mr. Rendell was present in St. Peter's on the occasion of some important ceremony at which the Pope was to have officiated, but did not owing to illness. The service occupied about two hours, but the vast congregation seemed to take no part at all in it. There was nothing for the congregation to sing, not even a response. No seats are provided. The people crowded and crushed as they might on entering some place of entertainment. Mr. Rendell could not help being struck by the irreverent manner of the priests. None of the crowd could hear a single sentence of the service.

A bronze statue of St. Peter is of special interest to the worshipers. It is blackened by age, with the exception of the great toe on the right foot, which is kept bright by the lips of the faithful. A line of worshipers was waiting the opportunity of kissing the toe. "What are we to think of it?" exclaims Mr. Rendell. No wonder, says he, the Churches of Italy are deserted and that they are forsaken by the intellect of the nation. Indeed, in Northern Italy, there is scarcely a good word for the priests. In Italy, as in France, the Government has found it necessary to suppress the monasteries.

Most of the Churches boast the possession of some relic of a saint. Mr. Rendell hopes he was willing to believe what the custodians told him, but even his powers of credence gave out when he was shown the bones of the whale that swallowed Jonah!

Another relic was a piece of the rock that Moses struck. Mr. Rendell (who is a Swedenborgian) is not particularly enamored of typical Protestant Christianity, but, at any rate, it is an advance on such besotted superstition as this. Moreover, Protestantism is an elastic term which may be stretched even to the extent of covering the position of the non-historicity of the gospel Jesus. *Vide* sundry reverends who are attending to the obsequies of historical Christianity. But the most striking instance of Paganism, says Mr. Rendell, is the Bambino, which he was shown in the Church of Araceeli. This object is a large and somewhat ugly doll, covered with gold chains and jewels, and is kept in a glass case to protect it from theft. Not so long ago it was carried through the city as a means of staying an epidemic disease. At the present time children are often brought to it as a means of healing.

Mr. Rendell tells us that the great monuments of the city are a reminder of the divine honors paid to the Cæsars. These honors could only be conferred by the Senate by vote, and he recalls that Faustina was the first Roman lady to enter heaven, and she was smuggled in by a snatch vote. Mr. Rendell asks, is not this election to divine honors just what takes place on the canonisation of a saint? The cardinals assembled in the Sistine Chapel determined by vote whether a person was to be recognised as a saint or not. This, by the way, was the method adopted by the Church to decide which of the mass of Gospels and Epistles afloat in the fourth century should be regarded as inspired and which not. It suggests the question whether those who decided really cared whether the documents they selected were authentic or not so long as they put an end to a much debated question; for it surely must have occurred to the meanest intellect that the intrinsic truth of a book could not be demonstrated by a mere show of hands.

It has not yet dawned on Mr. Rendell that the facts he has personally vouched for are not the only reminiscences of Paganism in Christianity. If he extends his researches he will discover that practically the whole system is Paganism under another name.

* Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 232.
† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 232.

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Mr. Rendell strikes a really good note in winding up his article. He says had he been compelled to choose between a religion that trusted to such ceremonies as he had witnessed at St. Peter's, and certain almost equally superstitious forms of Protestant worship at Rome, he fears he would have been constrained to join the crowd of those Italians who are utterly dissatisfied with religion and who have become Agnostics. Never before had he so fully realised the causes of Italian scepticism. A deeper penetration into the origins of Christianity may enable him to realise the causes, not only of Italian scepticism, but of that cosmopolitan scepticism which is undermining the Christian religion throughout the world.

SIBLEY.

Acid Drops.

We can't help saying "I told you so," although the telling required no supernatural, or even remarkable, insight into matters. Still, when the religious press was publishing special articles on "China's appeal for prayer," and writing fantastic accounts of how Chinese statesmen felt the need for Christian help, we pointed out how absurd the whole business was. The Chinese did not want Christianity, and do not want it. It suited the missionary game to pretend otherwise, and the British public—surely the most gullible public in Europe!—were led to believe that if only people would subscribe liberally, within a very little while the Chinese Empire would be practically Christianised. It was not clear why these subscriptions were necessary. If the Chinese were really crying out for Christianity, and prostrating themselves in admiration before the types of Christians they saw—evidently a much different lot to what we have at home—there was nothing in the world, as far as we could see, to prevent their adopting Christianity offhand. But lavish subscription is always essential to missionary work. You must subscribe to help an Almighty God do his work, and you must subscribe to induce a people to adopt a religion they are clamoring to secure.

From recent articles in the daily press we find that the cat is now out of the bag. Yuan-Shi-Kai, who spoke well of Christianity, has been elected President of the Republic, and one of the earliest of his edicts has practically re-established Confucianism as the official creed. He cites Confucius's teaching that after war comes peace, and with peace real tranquillity and happiness, and declares that to be "the function of republicanism." And he adds that Confucius "must remain the teacher of China for thousands of generations." For thousands of generations! After that Christianity may be given a chance. And the poor fools in England were subscribing in the hope of an immediate conversion of the Celestial Empire! Of course, the religious leaders who worked the yarn of China's immediate conversion have remained quiet. That is only to be expected. People who lie for the glory of God usually remain silent under exposure.

Public bodies in China have been ordered to revive the ceremonies of Confucius, and the President will worship, officially, as Patriarch at the Temple of Heaven. The *Daily Telegraph* says that the appeal of the Government for "Christian prayers for the Republic throughout England and America only, two months ago, now assumes a particularly ugly look," and adds that the history of official China since 1911 may be "expressed in one pregnant word—bluff." We may point out that the Chinese did not ask for Christian prayers "throughout England and America." That was a Christian distortion of the truth. All it asked for was the prayers of Christians in China. That, we agree, was bluff. It deceived no person of common sense or knowledge. We do not believe it deceived even the missionaries themselves. But it suited their game to accept the bluff at its face value, and we expect the Chinese officials were sufficiently cute in their estimate of missionary psychology to realise that the missionaries would be their best helpers at the game.

Six of Dr. Orchard's "Modern Tracts on Religion" have now been published in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The sixth is entitled "Why Go to Church?" and, like its predecessors, it contains several observations which are obviously true. It is true, for example, that "the church's call to worship no longer possesses any Divine or natural right in the estimate of the majority." It is true, also, that if the tendency to non-churchgoing "continues our churches will soon be standing as forsaken and ruined as the monasteries." It is true, further, "that communal worship and religious fellowship are essential to religion, and particularly to Christianity." Then there follows a series of assertions that are palpably false. It by no means necessarily follows that "the decay of a social custom is due to the decay of the social sense." It is, on the contrary, a demonstrable fact that the custom of church-attendance has never tended to the cultivation of the social sense; as a matter of fact, it has, rather, fostered the spirit of division and snobbishness. It may safely be affirmed that the overwhelming majority of scoundrels, in all ages, have been noted for their devotion to religious exercises. It was stated that the notorious criminal, Charles Peace, had a pew in a South London church. We differ totally from Dr. Orchard, and without fear of contradiction from history reverse his statement thus: "It is much more likely that the notorious sweater will be found on Sunday singing hymns about entire consecration, rather than raising clouds of dust upon our country roads, or sunning himself for the week-end at some luxurious seaside hotel." The truth is that even Dr. Orchard fails to make out a good case for the superstitious and antiquated custom of church-going. It is a thoroughly bad case, and no amount of eloquent writing can ever make it good.

The religious bodies at Lincoln plied the Town Council with deputations against the Sunday cinematograph shows. We are glad to note that they failed in this professional effort. The continuance of the shows on Sunday was carried by a majority of twelve to six. Unfortunately, however, the Council started a censorship of the pictures, besides refusing to let the shows open till after "divine service" in the evening, thus limiting the performances to an hour and a half, from 8.30 to 10, and practically preventing the attendance of children. The censorship provides that "on Sundays only religious, historical, scientific, landscape, maritime, or select topical pictures shall be exhibited." This is pure Sabbatarianism, and we should like to know what right Town Councils have to impose that burden upon the public. The cream of this wretched joke is yet to come. Legal opinion at Brighton has been given in favor of what we have always maintained; namely, that Town Councils have no power to grant Sunday licences at all—that their legal control over the picture shows begins on Monday morning and ends on Saturday night. Why don't the picture theatre people in some town pluck up courage and defy the "authorities"? They would be sure to win if they stuck together.

"The Scythe" was the title of a column sketch by Basil Macdonald Hastings in the *Daily News* of July 2, and as it was placed next to the leading articles it must have been considered of some importance. We have only one fault to find with it; what William Cobbett might have called its "base and bloody" theology. A shocking motor-car accident is related, in which two attractive young people, bride and bridegroom, are crushed to death, besides other unfortunate victims of the unforeseeable. A peasant who had come over the hedge to lend a hand goes back to his grass-mowing, and the article winds up thus:—"Man scythes on one side of the hedge; God on the other." Is this what the *Daily News* wants people to believe? Mowing down the grass is honest and useful labor. Mowing down human beings is sheer massacre. The peasant was earning his living—and perhaps his wife's and children's. God was simply amusing himself.

What a pity it is that God (if there be a God) does not look after the world better. A Clerkenwell magistrate, the other day, asked a woman, "What is your husband?" "A druokard, sir," she replied. Poor woman! Yet even according to orthodox Christianity the world has been under God's management for six thousand years! He might have done better in that time by what commercial advertisers call "strict attention to business."

Rev. Dr. Alfred Rowland, who is retiring from the ministry, has gone over the manuscripts of his sermons and destroyed over two thousand of them. We believe the public has reason to be thankful. Suppose he had published them!

"If Christian men," says Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., "will not perform the duties of citizenship, you may be quite sure that other men will pour into the gap and bring selfish motives and unclean hands to the work." Mr. Henderson is named as the next president of the "Brotherhood" movement. Apparently his conception of brother-

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hood is to associate all who are not Christians with "selfish motives and unclean hands." We should have thought that Mr. Henderson's experience of churches and chapels would have shown him a deal of both in close connection with the most fervent Christian belief. At any rate, if his experience has been so curiously limited as to be otherwise, we shall be happy to put him on the track of getting evidence. The real vice of our public life is that it has been so largely in the hands of Christians; and Christianity has, along with the mouthing of superficially admirable sentiments, always had the effect of encouraging a type of mind fatal to a healthy social life. We might even suggest Mr. Henderson himself as evidence. For when a man has reached the point of ranking people as desirable citizens on the ground of whether they believe in Christianity or not, and so slandering a large number of his fellow citizens, he himself is helping to lower the standard of citizenship in no small measure.

"Why should we be ashamed of emotion and feeling?" asks the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury. We do not know that anyone desires that people should be ashamed of expressing emotion; and whether they are ashamed of it or not, it remains an inescapable fact. Freethinkers only complain when religionists take a burst of emotion for the conclusions of impartial reasoning. And above all, they object to the manner in which a highly emotional state is deliberately cultivated in some religious meetings; and while under its influence, people are induced to say things they would never dream of saying in their cooler moments. Such conduct is pure quackery. From a reasonable point of view, opinions expressed under such conditions are of no more value than those expressed under the influence of alcohol. There are many forms of intoxication, and there are many kinds of intoxicants. Perhaps the most dangerous form of all is that of lashing oneself into a frenzy of emotion in order to reach a conclusion that could not be attained otherwise. Emotion has its legitimate place in life, but a good thing out of its place becomes a veritable nuisance.

Mr. Parton Millum, in the Methodist magazine, the *London Quarterly*, says of Darwin's method of working that "the pivot upon which evolution has rested, and the means by which it has conquered men's minds, was a train of thought, a logical syllogism, rather than an observed sequence of events in outward nature." Mr. Millum should be more careful as to his facts, especially when the facts are so easily ascertainable. For instance, Darwin spent some twenty years in experimenting and observing before he published his great work on earthworms. His works on the fertilisation of orchids and insectivorous plants are also monuments of close observation and the careful checking of theory by facts. On the *Origin of Species* Darwin began to write in 1837, and did not publish for twenty-two years after. There are not many who observe and reflect for over twenty years in order to test a theory. One may safely say, if that were a general rule, many theories would be abandoned before publication. For a Christian to urge the complaint approaches very near impudence.

The Rev. George M. Searle, C. S. P., may be an excellent Catholic priest, but he is either profoundly ignorant of science, or he wilfully misrepresents it. In the *Catholic Herald* for July 5, the reverend gentleman asserts that there is "no real science" in Darwinism, that "the real inner ring of scientists have no real expectation that any further advance will be made in it," and that "some of them, who are opposed to religion, are trying to find some substitute for it, such as the production of life by artificial means." Every one of these assertions is wholly false. If Darwinism is "no real science," no real science exists. In point of fact, Darwinism is the accepted science of to-day, even for "the real inner ring of scientists." Will Mr. Searle kindly name five first-class biologists who are not Darwinians? The truth is that he does not know what he is writing about. Fancy his imagining that any biologist or even physicist can be silly enough to suggest the possible artificial production of life as a substitution for Darwinism. Why the two have absolutely nothing in common. Darwinism does not trouble itself about the *origin* of life, but with its *evolution*, with special reference to the origin of species. The curious thing is that Mr. Searle gives his readers nothing but bare assumptions and assertions, as if the mere word of a priest were sufficient on every point. It is not sufficient, however; and now at last even Catholics are beginning to find this out.

It is interesting to note that a writer in the Catholic organ of the Anglican Communion, the *Church Times* for July 4, candidly admits that "Darwinism (transmutation of species) is taught everywhere as a dead certainty." Here we have one Catholic giving another the lie direct on a simple question of fact.

To serve the will of God simply means to exhibit piety, to be devout, and take delight in religious exercises. According to the *Burton Evening Gazette* for June 30, the Rev. E. Gilmour told the Red Cross Society and the Territorials, on the occasion of their annual military parade recently, that everything depends upon our attitude to God's will. We may be the best people in the world, doing all the good we can from the purest human motives, and yet, unless we are pious and show our piety by our attendance at public worship, we shall be accursed for ever. The vicar went to the length of saying that "God will disown all service that is done without any regard to his will." This may be sound Gospel teaching, and certain emotionally religious people may welcome it because it panders to their vanity; but as a matter of fact, it is nothing but arrant nonsense, and they who indulge in it are reaping their reward—emptying churches and chapels.

We agree with the Dean of Durham (Dr. Hensley Henson) that the secularisation of Christianity would be its destruction, and that they who take part in that process are its worst enemies; but after stating that truth, the *Manchester Guardian* for July 1 represents him as proceeding to make a savage and libellous attack upon Secularism and its effects upon character. Losing his temper, he thundered out that "in the English-speaking communities the spread of Secularism had been accompanied by sinister demonstrations of moral decline." Such a statement is absolutely false; and the reference to "the far extended corruption of American politics" is at once irrelevant and in very bad taste. It is generally admitted that the last Presidential Election in the States was the purest in the history of the country. Dean Henson had better stick to the truth and crucify his blind prejudices.

"Divine service" was held lately at Buddon Camp for the second Lowland Brigade. Chaplain R. M. Adamson officiated. The pulpit was extemporised from a gun limber. An excellent way of honoring the Prince of Peace!

The proprietors of the *Christian Herald*, at one time edited by prophet Baxter, have a curious sense of humor. They issue pictorial contents-bills, and the one for last week represented a battleship with big guns sticking out in all directions. Underneath were the words, "Entente Cordiale." A truly Christian idea of friendship!

Glad Tidings.

Down in the soul-swarming region of Hades,
Down in the lurid recesses of hell,
Christians—except a few humbugs and ladies—
Tell us that sceptics for ever will dwell;
Calling on God in vain,
Writhing in swoonless pain,
Senses unblunted and nerves all awake;
Dowered with hellish might
Meet for the endless fight,
Swathed in the flames of the sulphurous lake.

Up through the sky on the line of the plummet;
Up in the star-swarming region of space,
Christians will each have a harp, and will strum it,
Praising for ever God's love and his grace;
Grandly their hymns will swell,
Drowning the shrieks from Hell.
Mothers above, and their children below:
What though our children roast,
Praise Father, Son, and Ghost!
We have been rescued, and share not their woe!

Some of a family chanting God's praises;
Some of them, tortured, despairingly cry;
Some of them endlessly shrieking in blazes;
Some of them joyously singing on high—
Out on the heartless knaves!
Comfort their foolish slaves!
Sow what is true, if contentment you'd reap;
Cast heav'n and hell away!
Work! and let noodles pray!
Then shall your children say:
Life is a summer's day; Death is a sleep.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged. £156 16s. 11d. Received since:—W. Cromack, 5s.; H. M. Ridgway, £1.

G. FROST.—We don't understand what you want. If meetings of 5,000 are held in Leeds already, as you say, what special "help" is required. London headquarters spent a good deal of money on Leeds a year or more ago, and the local Branch ought to be running well "on its own" now. If it wishes for the services of London lecturers now and then, it should apply for them in the ordinary way.

W. MATHIAS.—Glad to hear the *Freethinker* has been of so much use to you. With regard to the other matter, we are not going to have the question of the suffrage, which is purely political, either for men or women, discussed in these columns. The rest of your observations commit you to nothing. Do you mean that political or social parties have a right to practise arson in order to advertise their cause or terrify the community? Or do you confine this privilege to women? And why do you mention Byron? He assisted Greece against Turkey; true, but it was in open warfare; he did not live amongst the Turks, enjoy all the advantages of doing so, and do them all the injury he could in an anonymous and surreptitious manner. As to "God defend the right," we should laugh at it on *any* banner; in fact, we have often done so. It invites ridicule. God defend the right! Whoever found him doing it?

A. MILLAR.—Glad to see the letter of which you enclose copy. We repeat our wish that Freethinkers would make more use of their local newspapers. You omitted the name of the paper from which the larger cutting was taken.

W. L. DEWAR.—Your compliments to the *Freethinker* are appreciated. Thanks for your effort to promote its circulation amongst your friends.

RAGGED ROBIN.—The verses are not one of your happiest efforts. Nothing atones for the lack of simplicity and sincerity. You cannot really mean that the working classes are "fed on stones."

D. MANNING.—We suppose it was left to the publishers; anyhow, we have not been favored with a review copy of the Rationalist Peace Society's new volume of Essays. You know now.

C. F. B.—Yes, we *were* right over the latest Eastern Question. The Balkan war has, as you say, followed the course we predicted at the very beginning. The Christian brigands are fighting each other for the lion's share of the spoil. The cutting you send us is one proof amongst many that the ordinary newspapers are following in our wake—after the event.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—What you may wish to see on Sunday, and what you may have a right to impose upon other people by Sabbatarian legislation, are entirely different things. And how on earth do picture shows interfere with cricket and other outdoor games? We fail to see any serious rivalry—for the games are played in the day and the picture shows are most patronised in the evening. Anyhow, the law of liberty is the best law in all such cases.

W. CROMACK says he is glad to see that Mr. Foote is better in health. He takes two *Freethinkers* a week, and wishes all readers who can afford it would do the same.

E. B.—Much obliged.

J. J. WARDHAUGH.—Shall be sent as desired. Much obliged for the list.

J. BLACKHALL.—Shall have attention. But 'tis impossible for us to regulate all the Freethought platforms in England. The local Freethinkers should move first in such matters.

ROBERT KENNEDY.—The names and addresses we really want are not those of hardened bigots, but those of persons who show liberal-minded tendencies. Sorry you misread the announcement.

W. J. RAMSEY.—See paragraph.

A. H. P.—It has no merit as verse.

J. A. R.—Apply to J. R. Holmes, Hanney, Wantage, Berks.

G. CHRISTIAN.—Mr. Foote will write you on the matter of your letter.

FREDERICK DIXON.—Our paragraph on Mrs. Stetson and her relation to the Christian Science movement was based, as was stated, on the account given by the *Daily Telegraph*. We cannot take further responsibility for its accuracy. Still, as you say that Mrs. Stetson's connection with the movement was brought to a close "several years ago," and as she is now running an opposition body, calling it a "split" doesn't seem a very grave abuse of language. We did not say that Mrs. Eddy taught reincarnation, only that Mrs. Stetson claims, or it has been claimed for her, that she is a reincarnation of Mrs. Eddy. We are not very much interested in the question of whether reincarnation is correct Christian Science teaching or not.

"AN OLD BRADLAUGHITE," in sending us an account of last Sunday's annual pilgrimage to Bradlaugh's grave at Woking, expresses his disgust at the behavior of a well-known Christian Evidence speaker and his supporters, some of whom must have travelled to Woking for the express purpose of misbehaving themselves. The graveside is a place that has a restraining and sobering effect upon all with a spark of decency in their composition, but those C. E. S. gentlemen who went to Woking for the purpose of attacking the N. S. S. and its work must have lacked even that solitary spark. A meeting was organised outside the Cemetery gates, and the public treated to the customary slanders of the N. S. S. and those who carry on its work. The effort does not appear to have met with great success, and we hope that thoughtful Christians present made due note of the place and method of attack and the type of those who engineered it.

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. M. H. Donohoe contributed a good article to the *Daily Chronicle* (July 2) on the death of Henri Rochefort. When the great French journalist left the *Intransigeant* in 1907, after being connected with it for twenty-seven years, he transferred his pen to the *Patrie*—a journal of a very different color. On this point Mr. Donohoe writes:—

> "His departure from the *Intransigeant* set Paris talking. The old Atheist, it was said, had seen the error of his way, and had decided to die in the bosom of the Church.
>
> "Well do I remember calling on Rochefort on this occasion to ask his opinion. His mop of white hair stood bolt upright. The face was pale, but the eyes had lost none of their fire and the body little of its vigor. The man himself possessed that silvery speech, that vivaciousness and charm of manner which combined to make him the most dreaded, albeit the most admired, man in France. In his vigorous fashion, M. Rochefort denied that he had taken the road to Canossa. 'My convictions,' he said, 'religious or anti-clerical, whichever you wish, have undergone no change, neither have my political views. I am still as anti-clerical as ever. My enemies say this is my one consistent attitude. When I ceased attending church, I did not become anti-religious. It was only that my way of viewing things religious had become changed. It was quite a mistake to suppose that I am thirsting to kill all the priests in France. When I meet a good fellow in the shape of a curé, I have not the slightest objection to cracking a bottle of champagne with him."

Rochefort's nature was evidently less vitriolic than his pen. "The old Atheist" was no bigot.

Professor F. T. Del Marmol, writing to the *Star*, says that Henri Rochefort had a free hand in the *Patrie* and his articles were most distasteful to the Clericals. "So strongly did he feel on the subject of religion," Professor Del Marmol continues, "that he said to me, not many months ago, that he could never understand how any thinking man could accept the dogmas of any of the existing religious creeds."

We have pleasure in calling attention to the excellent July number of the *English Review*. Mr. Henry Newbolt's article on "John Milton" is extremely well written. His position is one that we have ourselves maintained in the *Freethinker*, especially during the late centenary; namely, that the Puritan ossification of Milton's genius prevented his fulfilling the promise of his exquisite early poems. Mr. Newbolt smiles broadly at Addison's assurance that the theme of *Paradise Lost* could never lose its interest, as "all will, through all ages, bear the same relation to Adam and Eve." That statement might have been generally endorsed so recently as fifty years ago, but we belong now to "a generation which does not number Adam and Eve among its ancestors." This is followed by a further instalment of the deeply interesting correspondence between Nietzsche and Brandes. Mr. Arnold Bennett's article on "The Writing of Plays" is written with intellect and authority. Professor Rémond's scientific article on "The Sexual Correlations of Poetic Genius" is calculated to flutter the Suffragette dovecotes. Its conclusion is that the qualities and functions of men and women are determined by physiology; and as it is the male generally, who wears and wields the sexual decorations amongst the lower animals, so it is the human male who paints the pictures and writes the poetry. The other

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articles include a noticeable one on "Women and Morality," by a Mother. It is strongly written and remorselessly points out social evils. But the writer seems more plain-spoken than she really is. She hints at her solutions, but does not actually state them, and we are left with a feeling of frustration. Mr. Norman Douglas's "Pioneer of Aviation" is brightly and vividly written — and humorous; and the editor's monthly notes are, as usual, stirring and suggestive. Freethinkers should not neglect the *English Review*.

The Leeds Branch of the N.S.S. recently applied for permission to renew its meetings on Woodhouse Moor, where the same conditions appear to govern the sale of literature and the taking up of collections there that obtain in the London Parks. That is, permission of the Council must be first of all obtained. At the request of the local secretary Miss Vance, the Society's general secretary, applied to the Parks Committee of the City Council, asking that such permission should be given. As the request came from headquarters, there could be no question as to the *bonâ-fides* of the organisation. The reply to the application was that the Parks Committee had advised the Council "not to accede to the application of your Society for permission to make collections and sell literature at meetings on Woodhouse Moor." We are not aware of the ground on which permission is given by a City Council to some societies to do certain things and withhold from others. It appears to be a gross usurpation of power, and the Leeds Branch is taking steps to make a public protest against such differential treatment. We hope that this public protest will be as effective in Leeds as it has been in London, and the local Society may rely upon headquarters' assistance in any legitimate effort it may make to vindicate its right to just treatment at the hands of the public authorities.

The July number of the *Humanitarian* (organ of the Humanitarian League, price one penny) is well up to its usual excellent level. There is a moderate but firm protest against some of the cruder cinematograph shows, in which cruel violence (of men to animals or animals to each other) is represented. Young people, especially, cannot be improved by such pictures. This is followed by a spirited protest against Child Beating—a matter in which "God's Englishman" is miles below the heathen Jap. How this brutal practice degrades even superior men is shown by Mr. John Burns's reply to a question put to him in the House of Commons by Mr. O'Grady respecting the flogging of convalescent boys in the Camberwell workhouse infirmary. "My attention," Mr. Burns said, "has been called to this matter. The punishment does not seem to have been excessive, and I see no necessity for a public inquiry." Who would have thought, when John Burns was imprisoned in connection with the "Battle of Trafalgar Square," some twenty-five years ago, that he would sink into giving such pompous and callous replies to questions in the House of Commons? We ought to be grateful to the *Humanitarian* for turning the searchlight of publicity upon these exhibitions of brutal stupidity. We do not speak in haste to repent at leisure. Beating children at all is a moral offence; and beating them deliberately in public institutions is a social crime.

Mr. M. M. Mangasarian has delivered his farewell address for the 1912-13 season to the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist) at Chicago. The first lecture of the 1913-14 season will be delivered on October 5. In the Program for May 25 Mr. Mangasarian wrote:—

> "And now let me utilise this opportunity to express once more my deep appreciation of the loyalty of the members to our platform; of the devotion of the Trustees to the interests of the Society; of the activity of the ladies who have so admirably kept up the study classes and the evening meetings, which have done so much to cultivate the social spirit among us. I am also greatly indebted to the ushers, who, with wonderful regularity and commendable disinterestedness, have given their Sunday mornings to the care of the audience, which frequently overflowed the house when hundreds had to be turned away. No public speaker in Chicago is more fortunate either in the number or in the character of his colleagues as is—Your grateful lecturer, M. M. MANGASARIAN."

We are delighted to read this favorable report.

The *St. James's Gazette* (July 2) was tolerant enough to publish a letter from Mr. Joseph Lebois-Carey, of Cardiff, against the cruel sport of otter hunting. "I have travelled widely," he concluded, "and in my varied experience I have found as much, when not more, kindness and downright honest regard evinced among professed Freethinkers, Agnostics, and Atheists than among those Christians who profess to serve an all-merciful God."

"Quo Vadis?"

I WAS in the mood of Kipling's camel; I had got the hump, the double hump; I had to wash and dress, tie and collar, and clean boots, and walk all the way into the town to worry about a blessed pump valve; leave my books and everything and pad the hoof over a newly tarred road; no trams, no penny 'buses, shanks's pony all the way; so I had the hump, and when I had seen about the pump, and had half-an-hour with one of the most tempting bookshops (and bookseller's) in the kingdom, I did not feel like sitting down to write or read.

So I decided I'd go on for a bust, and recklessly dashed down sixpence to see what the film really could make of *Quo Vadis?*

It was the early show, and some of the *élite (moi aussi)* had been moved to attend, but particularly to be noted, was a considerable delegation from the two grammar schools.

As they filed in in batches, it would seem that this must have been a special bit of 'cute managership (reduced prices for schools, perhaps), seconded by the goody teachers and chiefs.

It was rather droll later on to note the very evident dilemma as to whether they should clap when the ghost of Christ walked along the Via Appia, or whether they should be particularly grave and quiet; I think the clappers had it.

As a sample of film-making, there is no doubt it deserves all that has been said about it.

The acting, or posing, is as perfect as one can think possible; the pictures of the men and women really look as if copied from actual living, breathing men and women, not mere dolls or dummies; and the architectural construction and details seem as near perfection as any theatrical scenes can possibly be. The pictures look as if photographed from real marble and stone. It may be that the duplications of transference, from the built-up wood and canvas to the first photo and then from that to the film photo, gives opportunities for touching-up and solidifying; I cannot say, but the final effect is very, very real.

So, also, is the fine scene—the burning of Rome; it is an exceedingly clever bit of stage craft, and some of the incidents really grip.

Another detail worth note, too, is the completeness of every picture, calling for big, busy, masses of people; the crowds are real crowds; it is difficult to specify and say which is the best when each is so good, but certainly the great banquet scene, with the dancers, is worth notice.

But, having said all this of the production, as a wonderfully complete bit of workmanship, what is to be said of the idea of making a public show of such a series of incidents, no matter be they true or false?

How the clergy of this enlightened land of ours can ever have been brought to consider such a show of any advantage to *them* is beyond comprehension.

As something to read, Sienkiewcz's clever novel, no doubt, has been read by thousands without more than the usual satisfaction or realisation that graphic writing gives, but with a really well done film there comes a something which, for a moment, must move almost the most cold-blooded and captious of critics.

Without any doubt, the moving picture bites into one with a keenness that not even Dickens or Zola can touch, and, by the same token, the feelings of disgust and ludicrousness are enormously intensified also.

Great Nero! what can these fool Christians be thinking of, to boom up this *Quo Vadis?* film in the way they do, while to any thinking being—to even the most careless thinker it seems almost—the outstanding feature of the show must be an echo of the old cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

There is no single phase of the whole so many thousand yards of film, where the religious part is made prominent, that does not positively glow with

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the abounding futility, the absolute puerility, of the God or the Christ to whom they appeal.

It is to see a marvel of impotence to compare the ferocious completeness of Nero with the conduct of the apostle Peter when he meets the ghost of Christ on the Appian Way.

Peter has had enough of Rome, so he and a disciple are doing a best on record "Down to Dixie" or elsewhere, and have just got on to a straight stretch towards safety when they meet a shadow; they are asked where they are off to in such a ragtime hurry, and told that if *they* do not go back and attend to things, "he" will have to go, and be a second time made a sacrifice.

The thought seems to jump at one, on the very minute, why the plague he does *not* go, if he be "he"? why, if the first sacrifice was any sort of good, his chosen ones should be in such deadly strait as they are said to be? But no; the shadow fades away, and, as Peter and his mate turn on their tracks, we match the *Quo Vadis?* with *Cui Bono?* A lot of his chosen ones get burned in the general conflagration; some are soaked in the Roman equivalent of kerosine, and set up on tall poles and used as torches; and another lot are kept for what is a really fine bit of scenery—the arena and the lions.

A mob of men, women, and babies—bowing, crouching, horror-stricken—some with arms uplifted towards the sky, praying to their damnably idle or careless God, the mock of the effective, potent Nero, the one real dominating force of the whole show, every nerve and sense plainly at bursting point with a surfeit of the pleasure of almost unlimited power.

The horror grows as the animals come up into the arena, and prowl around, and draw near the "chosen ones"; and, as Carlyle said, "God does nothing."

A sudden flash and blank—and—some little heaps dotted about, a scuffle over the last mouthful—and —— Well, what price that for a living, loving God?

What everlasting blithering fools these Christians must be to allow this to be seen.

The final duel between Ursus and the bull seems almost tame compared to the previous one, although the bull has the heroine strapped on. The leap of the hero down into the arena, and the baring of his bosom, is acting—and looks like it; and the death of the butcher of Rome leaves one unmoved—he deserved something slow, with burning oil, unless the last joke of Petronius could be made effective.

Just when dying he read a letter which was to be sent to Nero, and in it said to be a matricide or to burn a city was nothing, but for Nero to read his poems to his guests was something in the way of a refinement of cruelty; and so it almost seems to me that for the poor Christians of to-day to be invited to see *Quo Vadis?* as a means of Christian propaganda is really taking a mean advantage of their supreme ignorance and want of logic. It is a low-down, mean sort of trick to play on them.

It would almost pay for Freethinkers to circulate a small leaflet to annotate the *Quo Vadis?* program. Will someone try it?

T. SHORE.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE TIME WHEN JESUS LIVED.

THE period in Jewish history at which Jesus Christ is supposed to have appeared as a teacher is thus recorded in three of the canonical Gospels:—

> Matt. iii. 1, 13.—"And *in those days* cometh John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judæa.....Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan," etc.
>
> Mark i. 4, 9.—"John came, who baptised in the wilderness.....And it came to pass *in those days* that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee," etc.
>
> John i. 6, 29.—"There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.....On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him," etc.

Now, it is quite clear from the foregoing extracts that the unknown writer of the primitive Gospel from which the Synoptists took the main portion of their narratives, did not know at what period in history Jesus and the Baptist commenced their public ministries; he therefore placed it "in those days," which is the Gospel equivalent for "once upon a time." Coming now to Luke, who wrote later than the others, and who had consulted the *Antiquities* of Josephus for historical facts connected with the Gospels, we find details added which fix the time.

> Luke ii. 1, 2.—"Now in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness," etc.

This addition was, of course, inserted to make the Third Gospel appear historical; but it does not affect the older primitive source of the Synoptic narratives. Now, if the writer of the primitive Gospel had no knowledge of the period when Jesus first appeared, neither would he be likely to know the time of the alleged Crucifixion. This period, as we have seen, was supplied by Luke when he named Annas and Caiaphas as high priests and Pilate as governor of Judæa in "the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar"—that is to say, in the year A.D. 28.

In the case of one of the last-named individuals, however, Luke was mistaken. Pilate was procurator, and Caiaphas was high priest, from A.D. 26 to 36; but Annas, or Ananus, held the latter office from A.D. 7 to 14, and at no later period.

In the primitive account of the trial of Jesus, the names of the high priest and the procurator, being unknown to the writer, could not have been given. In accordance with this fact, we find no name of the high priest in Mark's or Luke's Gospel. Luke, though he names two high priests in chapter iii., does not mention either again. In the case of Matthew, the house or palace of "Caiaphas" is twice referred to (xxvi. 3 and 57); but the high priest himself is not named. That "Caiaphas" was not in the primitive account we know from Luke xxii. 54 and Mark xiv. 53—in which latter passage (and in Matt. xxvi. 57) the word "house" is implied.

With regard to the procurator, the name "Pilate" is now found in all four Gospels; but in that of Matthew—which is the nearest to the Common source—we find both "Pilate" and "the governor." The following extract from the latter Gospel may be taken as a sample of the reading given in the primitive account:—

> "Now Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews.....And he gave him no answer.....insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner," etc. (Matt. xxvii. 11, 14, 15).

In the parallel passages in the other three Gospels only the name "Pilate" is used; never "the governor." Of course, after Luke's Gospel became known, the name "Pilate" found its way into all new copies of the other Gospels, and the original reading "the governor" was omitted; but in that of Matthew the proper name was probably only inserted in the place where the governor was first mentioned—"delivered him up to Pilate the governor" (xxvii. 2). In the course of time, however, "Pilate" came to be inserted in other passages by copyists; so we now find the procurator in some places called "Pilate," and in others "the governor."

LYSANIAS.

Another misstatement of Luke in the foregoing Gospel extract is that relating to Lysanias. In "the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" that tetrarch had been dead sixty years. This Lysanias was the son of Ptolemy Menneus, the ruler of a kingdom in the north of Palestine, its principal city being Abila. In the second or third year of the reign of Herod the Great (38 B.C.—4 B.C.) Ptolemy died, and Lysanias succeeded his father as ruler. After reigning for three or four years, Lysanias was put to death by Mark Antony (32 B.C.). His successor is uncertain;

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but the kingdom was leased to Zenodorus, a man in league with a band of cut-throats, who robbed and murdered all who passed through the country. Complaints at length reached the ears of Cæsar, who, to stop the evil, bestowed part of the kingdom on Herod, and placed the other part under the rule of the president of Syria.

There is no need to go into this matter further, for one fact is beyond doubt. No other Lysanias ever ruled over the province whose capital was Abila. After Herod's death, that king's portion of "the kingdom of Lysanias" was given to his son Philip, the tetrarch of Trachonitis, etc., the other portion remaining under the governor of Syria.

But, how came Luke to fall into such an error? Well, Josephus, later on, having several times occasion to mention the district once ruled by Lysanias, calls it "the tetrarchy of Lysanias" or "Abila of Lysanias" (*Antiq.* 18, 6, 10; 19, 5, 1; 20, 7, 1). Luke, in searching through these *Antiquities*, noticed these statements, and took them as meaning that Lysanias was "tetrarch of Abila" at a later period. He had not looked so far back as *Antiq.* 15, 4, 1, where the death of that tetrarch is recorded, nor had he seen what became of that kingdom.

THE MARTYR ZACHARIAH.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is represented as saying to some of the chief men among the Jews:—

> "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! .....Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers..... that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, *from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah*, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matt. xxiii. 29, 33, 35).

In the parallel account in Luke's Gospel (xi. 50, 51) the words "son of Barachiah" are omitted. With regard to the justice of punishing the Jews of Jesus Christ's day for "all the righteous blood shed on the earth" up to their time, I have nothing to say, being now concerned only with the words in italics. From these it is quite clear that the reference is to "*all* the righteous blood shed" from the earliest recorded instance (Abel) down to the latest notable example —"Zachariah the son of Barachiah."

Who, then, was this recent martyr Zachariah? Upon this question Christian commentators throw no light. In 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21 we have an account of the martyrdom of "Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada"; but this took place more than 800 years B.C., and could not be the one referred to. We have therefore to look for a much later Zachariah, and, of course, we find him. He was "Zachariah the son of Baruch," who was foully murdered (A.D. 68) by the Jewish assassins called Zealots in the temple, or court of the temple, during the siege of Jerusalem (Josephus, *Wars*, 4, 5, 4). Barachiah and Baruch are merely different forms of the same name. No other historical martyr of the first century named Zachariah is known.

In the Gospel passage, then, Jesus is represented as referring to an event that occurred thirty-eight years after his death: or, to put it another way, this Gospel paragraph was one of the little hearsay stories which the writer of the primitive Gospel collected and committed to writing at some unknown period. This period now appears to have been a decade or two after the destruction of Jerusalem —say, between A.D. 80 and 90, or later. The four canonical Gospel writers all lived in the first half of the second century.

THE PROPHECY OF THE LAST DAYS.

One of the longest and most important of the threefold narratives which the three Synoptists took from the primitive Gospel is that now called "the prophecy of the last days" (Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xxi.). In this so-called "prophecy" Jesus is represented as predicting the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of that city and the temple, with all the attendant horrors that should come upon the Jewish nation (A.D. 66—70). After reading this long chapter of predictions, the question naturally arises: Whence did the primitive writer get all the words which are there ascribed to Jesus?—which words, assuming they were actually spoken, were certainly not taken down at the time. Neither, again, could any disciple, assuming he heard them spoken *once*, commit them to memory, or afterwards reproduce them in writing—even if we further assume that fishermen and such people *could* write in those days. The old orthodox plea that the evangelists wrote their Gospels under the influence of the "spirit of God," which brought the words of Jesus to their remembrance, is now exploded. Whence, then, did the primitive Gospel writer obtain this long oration? The answer is, He had no report of the speech from anyone. The words were simply fabricated for the occasion, and then piously placed in the mouth of Jesus. This was, of course, done some time after the fall of the holy city; for, needless to say, the primitive Christians possessed no prophetic powers: they were all, without exception, extremely ignorant and credulous men.

There need, however, be no mystery as regards the source. The chapter, upon examination, will be found to be a purely literary composition, made up of a dozen or more passages pieced together, these passages having been taken from the Old Testament and apocryphal writings. It can, therefore, be safely said that this grand "prophecy" was never spoken by Jesus, as represented in the Gospels, but was laboriously compiled by the primitive Christian teachers from the source I have named. Moreover, the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew (or either of its parallels in Mark and Luke) is itself a proof, not only of systematic fabrication, but of the fact that the earliest known Gospel was written after A.D. 70. After Jerusalem had been destroyed, and a large proportion of the Jews had been slaughtered or carried away captive, the primitive Christians (who had taken no part in the war) imagined the end of the world to be at hand. Hence, it is stated in this pseudo-prophecy that "immediately after the tribulation of those days" the "Son of man" should come with his angels to judge the world. This "immediate" coming is afterwards modified into "before that generation should pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 29, 34)—the generation referred to being that of those living at the time of the "tribulation" mentioned. It was during this period (A.D. 70—90) that the primitive Gospel was written. The time when Jesus is said to have first appeared—"in those days"—was, of course, before the holy city was besieged by the Romans: but how long before we have no evidence to show.

ABRACADABRA.

FAITH.

A teacher wrote two separate sentences on a blackboard. They were: "The hen has three legs," "Who done it?" the object of one being to exemplify a misstatement of fact, and the other to illustrate bad grammar. Then a boy was called up, and the teacher said to him: "Harry, go to the blackboard and show where the fault lies in those two sentences." The boy went up, studied the sentences diligently, took up the chalk, and wrote: "The boy never done it. God done it."—*Western Mail.*

"Now, to business!" said the Chevalier Terence Theophrastus O'Shaughnessy. "I have here a schedule of certain studies. Each day in the week, of which five are educationally important, and two relatively independent—I propose to devote to one or more of these studies. The sixth day is to be observed as an opportunity for recreation. The seventh, I need hardly tell well brought up Christian young ladies, is appointed for attendance on holy rites and conventional ceremonies such as make this good land so notable for hypocrisy."—*Rita, "A Grey Life."*

It is usually supposed that children are ingenuous, frank, and outspoken. But the modern child has a reserve hardly in keeping with this character. A little fellow had helped himself to two apples in his father's garden and afterwards told his sister. She was shocked and inquired, "Did you tell God about it?" "Yes," was the slow reply, and then added, "I didn't tell him I had taken *two*."—*English Illustrated Magazine.*

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In Bull Lane.

THOMAS PAINE,
B. 1737; D. 1809.

Author of "Common Sense,"
"Rights of Man," and "The Age of Reason,"
A Founder of American
Independence with Pen and Sword.

LIVED IN THIS HOUSE
As Exciseman and Tobacconist.
1768—1774.

—Inscription on a house in Bull Lane, Lewes.

Here in the heart of the Sussex hills,
Green young Summer hath stayed to sing
The chalky pits and the shallow rills,
And the footprints left by the feet of Spring.
In Lewes town there is Summer again,
As under the eaves in old Bull Lane
We linger to dream of one Thomas Paine.

Out on the hills dance the nymphs with Pan,
Fresh from the woods and the brisk, bright streams;
But here in Lewes the Rights of Man
Were born in a brave Exciseman's dreams.
And see, here is Summer! Here Summer hath lain,
Waiting and waiting and to live again,
As she lived in a brave Exciseman's brain.

Oh, here in Lewes who would have wist,
As he strolled for his shag in the years of yore
To the vigorous young Tobacconist,
That far away, on a strange new shore,
Where Washington strove, and the English ran,
That a Freethinker and a Republican,
One Paine, would herald the Rights of Man?

One Paine, one born in Thetford, knew
That the world, not England, would blare his fame;
So Albion, Gaul, and Columbia drew
A lighted torch from his lambent flame:
For he served his land, and his land was the world;
And wherever Freedom, with banner uncurled,
Strides through the earth, Paine that banner unfurled.

Pure was his brain from craft and creed,
His hope was centred alone in Man;
As pure was his life from graft and greed,
A Freethinker and a Republican!
Joy for the Man! And the rest may go—
With God above and the Devil below,
With the Church of Christ, with last year's snow.

The streams are stirred by Summer's breath,
The hills are green over Lewes town!
Here dwelt one fearing nor life nor death,
For he hated the Cross as he hated the Crown.
In Lewes town there is Summer again;
Under the shadows in old Bull Lane,
We stay to wonder at one called Paine.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

"All These Things....."

Two there were on a mountain peak,
Who stood and gazed on the world around
In silence, for neither cared to speak,
Viewing with rapture the waste profound.

The mountain range upon either hand,
Its cloud-capped peaks reared to the sky,
While away from their feet the pasture land
Sloped down to a river rippling by.

"All this is grand," the younger said;
"The hills, the vales, the woods, the stream;
The gorgeous colors God has spread
Seem like a wild, fantastic dream."

"You call it God;" the old man smiled,
And paused, and in a while began,
"Your God is naught but Nature, child,
And Nature neither God nor man.

"This fair expanse of vale and hill
Is but a battlefield of blood,
Where Nature's lovely creatures kill
The lesser, weaker ones for food.

"Each has to kill to keep alive;
Each has a life he must defend;
Each feels the pain he must survive:
All is a struggle from start to end.

"Did God in his love create all this,
This war, this battle of weak and strong,
And cloak behind his tender kiss
His jaded sense of right and wrong?.....

"God neither made this world of pain,
Nor us, its grandest product, man;
Nor sent his first-born to be slain,
To mitigate an ill-made plan.

"Like yonder waters as they flow
To lose their ripples in the sea,
One day we come, another go,
And slip into eternity,

"Leaving no more to mark our course
Than bubbles scar the river bed:
Ripples from the very source,
Fading away when life had fled."

JAMES L. RAYMOND.

Sunday Pleasures.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REV. FATHER BERNARD VAUGHAN.

DEAR FATHER,—I have read with much pain your dismal and pathetic wail which appeared in the *Daily Mail* of the 27th ult. You are quite right, and you have my sincerest sympathy. People are really taking to motoring on Sunday instead of going to church and counting their beads as they should, but you can comfort yourself by reflecting that your Church is not the only one that suffers in this respect. It is chronic. All the Churches have the same trouble.

When I started the gun works at Crayford, I employed a large number of men, most of them trained mechanicians. We had only been running a short time when a very pious Protestant lady came down from London with the laudable intention of saving the souls of my poor benighted workmen. I gave my consent, for which she thanked me. She then started a little mission hall, and, after several weeks of strenuous effort, she came and told me that she had not met with the least particle of success; she had been fishing for souls that really ought to be saved, but had not had a single bite. She was discouraged and disheartened, and asked me if I could give some reason why the men failed to be interested in religion. I told her that perhaps they had found out that it was not true. She said she thought I was quite right; I had diagnosed the case correctly. This was twenty-four years ago. Quite recently I learned that this one-time very pious and God-fearing lady had given up religion altogether; in fact, she appears to have all the characteristics of that horrible, wicked, and detestable gang known variously as Agnostics, Infidels, Atheists, and Freethinkers, who have no faith and obstinately refuse to believe anything except the truth.

A dreadfully wicked infidel, now happily dead, and no doubt receiving his just deserts, said: "The way to be happy is to make those about us happy; the place to be happy is here, and the time to be happy is now." These unholy words were uttered by that arch-infidel, Colonel Ingersoll; but, wicked as they are, they cannot at all be compared with the following, which I quote from the Chinese System of Ethics:—

> "Do not dream of a life beyond this, for you will find no other, nor of a heaven beyond the universe, for beyond the infinite universe there is nothing. Earth is heaven, and paradise is on earth; it is for you to realise it. Cultivate your mind, honor your ancestors, respect your traditions, let the past and the future be both a living present to your mind. Identify yourself with one and the other through humanity. Never forget that you are one with the earth, with the universe, and take care no act of yours offends against this unity....."

Can we imagine anything better calculated than the above to demonstrate the necessity of sending missionaries to that benighted people?—Mournfully yours,

HIRAM S. MAXIM.

"Please, sir, ought I to be punished for something I have not done," inquired a boy of his form master. "Why, certainly not," he replied. "Well, then, ought I to be punished because I have not done my sums?"—*English Illustrated Magazine.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss K. B. Kough, "The Futility of Prayer."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "The Pathway of Faith"; 7.30, Miss H. Pankhurst, "The Suffragette in Heaven."

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

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

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, R. Townley, "The Principles and Objects of Secularism."

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN (Market Place): Matthew Phair, 3, "Thought the Great Want of the Age"; 6.30, "Why I Reject Christianity."

BOLTON (Town Hall Steps): R. Mearns will lecture on Secularism every Saturday and Monday night at 7.30.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7, F. M. Wilkesbarre, Christian Socialism: An Impossibility."

PRESTON (Market Square): Gilbert Manion, 11, "God"; 3, "Why Free Speech is Necessary"; 6.30, "A Dying Creed."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): R. Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

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THE
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Evil must be removed before good has a place.
—GARTH WILKINSON.

Views and Opinions.

"KING FERDINAND MURDERED" was a big headline in Sunday's edition of a paper called the *People*. I never bought it before, and I scarcely think I shall buy it again. That headline was a "fake." King Ferdinand was *not* murdered. There was not a particle of evidence in support of the statement. The sole authority for it was "rumor"—which may mean anything or nothing to suit the circumstances, in case of a challenge and an inquiry. But the penny-catcher's announcement opened in this decisive manner:—

> "A military revolt has broken out in Sofia, the King of Bulgaria has been assassinated, and an unsuccessful attempt has been made to kill Dr. Daneff, the Premier.
> "The Government offices have been stormed, the Royal Palace is surrounded, and many persons have been shot down by soldiers."

This was modified by a qualification, in smaller type, that the report lacked confirmation, but was nevertheless probably true.

Monday's newspapers treated this "report" with disdain. Few mentioned it; one alluded to it as utterly contemptible. Yet this *People* is a highly moral Tory newspaper, with a great (professed) belief in Church and State and Altar and Throne.

Having no other Sunday newspaper (so it happened) than this *People*, I was obliged in common prudence to wait till Monday before writing about this alleged "assassination." And it was lucky that I did so, or I should have wasted my time. But I could not help thinking, "Suppose this be true! Is it not one of Time's conspicuous revenges? This story of the assassinated assassin proves that poetical justice is not entirely absent from the universe. It reminds one of the awful consolation of Swinburne's 'Night hath but one red star, Tyrannicide.'" For the King of Bulgaria *was* an assassin—though not more so than his fellow-Christian Kings of Servia, Montenegro, and Greece. He started on one of the most cruel and wanton wars of modern times with a religious service in the capital church of his capital city; he received the Primate's blessing; he dedicated himself as a soldier of Christ; it was to be a war of the Cross against the Crescent, and its immediate and practical object was to liberate oppressed populations from the intolerable tyranny of the unspeakable Turk. It was a beautiful picture. But how different is the reality! The oppressed populations have suffered more from the Christian Allies than they did from their Mohammedan overlords. Myriads of them have been wiped out of existence by hunger, outrage, and massacre. The liberators have turned out to be brigands. They took to fighting each other over the division of a larger spoil than was contemplated in their preliminary agreement. Not only have they turned their arms upon each other—Christian thief against Christian thief!—but they are calling each other the most abominable names and accusing each other of the most infamous crimes.

King Constantine has telegraphed as follows from the head of his army to his Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Athens:—

> "Protest in my name to the representatives of the civilised Powers against the acts of these monsters in human form. Protest also to the entire civilised world, and say that to my regret I see myself compelled to wreak vengeance in order to inspire terror into these monsters and to make them reflect before they commit any more crimes of this sort. The Bulgarians have surpassed all the horrors of barbaric times and have proved that they have no longer the right to be reckoned among civilised peoples."

This is a terrible indictment, and it is drawn up by the responsible head of the Kingdom of Greece. On the other hand, King Ferdinand has drawn up a similar indictment against Greece and Servia. After referring to various places where the civil population had been driven out by the thousand, the Bulgarian monarch adds that "These refugees gave terrifying accounts of the horrible deeds committed by the Servians and Greeks."

Each side denies its own guilt. Each side affirms the other's guilt. Is one to believe them both—as Voltaire said he believed both the old ladies he heard giving their opinion of each other in the public thoroughfare? King Ferdinand suggests "an inquiry." We should like to see it instituted, but we fear that such news is too good to be true.

* * *

Roumania, the other Christian Power in the Balkans, has taken no share in the war. She played a meaner part. She stood by as a neutral, and claimed her share of the victors' spoils, as the price of her neutrality, at the finish. She has invaded Bulgaria now that her neighbor is beaten to the ground. She would be mild and placable enough if Bulgaria had beaten her Christian rivals. Such is Christian chivalry! Who can imagine the "unspeakable Turk" acting in such a contemptible manner?

* * *

The religious mind, and especially the Christian mind, is always peculiar. There is no connection between the Balkan war and the express train disaster at Colchester; only the beauty of religion is displayed in both—and on the same page of the holy and veracious *People*. A Clapham engineer told the reporter how "the driver was already dead when extricated from beneath the engine, whilst the guard was in a dying condition, and the fireman was disembowelled." Then came this gem of piety: "Another passenger," the reporter relates, "said it was nothing but a miracle that all the passengers in the first carriage were not killed." A miracle was it? Performed, of course, by God. And what a God! Why was not the miracle of the "saved" extended to those who were "lost"? God *is* a respecter of persons, after all. But his discrimination appears to be only a whim. He has mercy on whom he *will* have mercy. He is on the moral level of Caliban's deity in Browning's wonderful poem. In short the Christian "God" is a relic of the religion of barbarism, and should be dropped by all humane and intelligent people.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Religion and the Child.

IT is a part of the case for religion that man is a religious animal. In opposition to this it has been affirmed that man is by nature an Atheist. No less a person than John Wesley held this opinion, meaning by Atheist a man unsaved by grace or revelation. It is a futile speculation in either direction. By nature man is neither an Atheist nor a Theist—that is, if we attach to either term certain definite beliefs for or against the belief in God. Indeed, by nature man is very little—far less than any other member of the animal world. Other animals are born into the world with fully formed instincts sufficient in number to preserve their lives. Man has least of all. The education of other animals lies chiefly in the direction of exercise; with man the chief work is acquisition. And herein lies the secret of man's superiority, and his capacity for continuous progress. The world of the animal varies but little. One generation succeeds another, and the adaptive actions essential to life are repeated in endless monotony. The world of man varies constantly. It changes with time and place, and puts on a growing complexity. Man is continually called on to make new adjustments, and to effect these his nature must be plastic and educable. Many instincts and less educability; fewer instincts and great capacity for education; these are the cardinal and all-important distinctions between man and the rest of the animal world.

But this advantage over the animal world has its drawbacks. The fact of man having everything to learn places him at the mercy of his surroundings. The fundamental functions of life are all right because they can be ignored by none, and so form part of every person's experience. But above these, what the child will become is mainly a question of the educative influences of his environment. He may be educated into becoming an ardent Republican or a fanatical Royalist; a strenuous Atheist or an uncompromising pietist. His code of honor will be determined in the same way—either that of the merchant, the gambler, the criminal, or the man of science. His native capacity will, of course, find expression under any conditions. It will determine the eminence attained, but the social environment will decide the form in which this capacity is expressed.

These principles give the reply to the propositions at the beginning of this article. Man is born neither an Atheist nor a Theist; but his capacity for, and his dependence upon, education makes him one or the other. It is theoretically not a harder task to bring up a child an Atheist than to train it as a Theist, given the same educational opportunities. It is only harder in practice because the dice of social life are loaded in favor of religion, and the two phases of thought do not fight under equal conditions. Inside the home one set of tendencies may be supreme, but outside other forces are encountered. The child is subjected to the incidence of other ideas and ideals. Opinions it is taught on the one hand to respect, it is taught on the other to despise. It sees certain beliefs held in admiration, and sees the social status of people determined by their adherence to these beliefs. And the child is naturally imitative; that is the source of both its strength and weakness. Exposed to the influence of an environment making at least for conformity to religious beliefs, one need not be surprised that the majority profess some form of religious faith.

In what way does religion utilise the native capacity of children? First of all, in a rough-and-ready way, children reproduce in their mental growth those stages covered by the race in its intellectual development. The fear of a child in face of the unknown, the indistinct sense of causation, the readiness to ascribe life to all around with the small development of the larger racial feelings, bring us very near to the mental condition from which religions originate and to which religions still appeal. One may, therefore, say that if children are not born religious, their capacity for education, with their general mental endowment, hands them over, unresisting subjects, to their religious instructors. They commence with the capacity for fetishism, and there are those who take full advantage of the fact. Of course, there is no reason why children should not pass through this period with safety. Many do, just as they pass through those physical disorders incidental to childhood. But in a great many instances, in the hands of parents acting from a mistaken sense of duty, and of a priesthood that possesses a keen sense of self-interest, a passing mental phase is seized, strengthened, and converted into a permanent possession. This in turn becomes a part of the environment that reacts, educationally, on every newcomer; while the priest appeals to the existence of an artificially prolonged mental phase as a proof of man's natural craving for religious belief.

All religions in civilised countries have been quick to seize upon the plastic nature of childhood as the right period for the inculcation of religion. It is not the case among uncivilised peoples, because the whole of the environment does then what is afterwards left to be done by special instructors. But in civilised countries, when certain forces make for the destruction of religion, it is recognised that childhood is the most favorable period—perhaps the only favorable period—for the inculcation of religious beliefs. Even with adults it is only when a sense of the mysterious is strong, and is enforced by a feeling of helplessness and a consciousness of ignorance, that religion grips them strongly. At other times it may appeal to one here and there as a plausible speculation, but it does not produce a strong conviction. Religion *must* get the child, if it is to live; it must utilise the child's capacity for receiving impressions. To wait until the individual reaches maturity is to lose everything.

Religion, be it observed, is the only subject that is compelled to do this. Every other subject can wait. If we try to teach a child simple principles of mathematics, or of physics, or of any of the sciences, and the child does not understand, we wait for a time until its understanding has developed. We say the thing is beyond the grasp of the child, and we wait for it to understand until we resume our teaching. A capacity for understanding what is taught is taken as an essential condition of the teaching. With religion this capacity is never considered. The child must be habituated to religious phrases, religious forms, and a religious atmosphere. Let it alone until it reaches years of understanding, and ministers of religion are the first to assure us that the task is then a hopeless one.

It may be granted that a policy of creating sentiments in favor of certain beliefs not *wholly* understood by the child is legitimate enough in its proper place. We do not wait until the child is old enough to appreciate rationally the grounds of good conduct to give it ethical instruction. We seek to bring out certain tendencies for good and suppress those of an opposite character, and so fashion the child's nature in accordance with an accepted standard. But, at least, these are things for which a reason *can* be given, and we are sure of the child's approbation when it is old enough to understand the subject fully. But, in the case of religion, the situation is quite different. We dare not wait until the child is old enough to understand, because by that time reason would be against us. The mystery does not decrease as understanding develops; it remains to the end. Moreover, among adults it is freely admitted that the religious hypothesis *may* be wrong, and there is clearly a very wide and vital difference between cultivating in a child certain feelings, the validity of which may be rationally demonstrated at any time, and teaching it to regard as true things that all admit might be false. In the one case, we have in view the child's future welfare; in the other, we are forcing upon it certain speculations of our own, on which there exists no common agreement.

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I come back to the point at which I set out. Man is born neither religious nor atheistic. But, unlike the rest of the animal world, which is furnished with instincts adequate to its self-preservation, man is born with an immense capacity for acquiring habits and information. It is this that makes him, in a very peculiar sense, the victim of the educational force of his environment. For good or ill that fact remains as the most important truth concerning him. Given a society in which knowledge of all kinds were allowed to develop naturally and express itself freely, there would be no struggle to capture the child, such as now exists in all civilised countries. But, given a society where religious ideas maintain an artificial existence by the deliberate cultivation of a frame of mind favorable to its claim, and religious organisations are forced to concentrate their energies upon the capture of the young. That is why the clergy make so fierce a fight for the schools, it is also why, alarmed at a declining adult church attendance, both Church and Chapel are driven to paying renewed attention to Sunday-school development.

The child is the raw material out of which Church and Chapel create their future patrons. The adult is in one or other class mainly because of habits formed and impressions gained during childhood. Secure the child and the rest is easy. The tenacity of early impressions is notorious; the man dying of delirium babbles of his childhood's days, the criminal on the scaffold has his recollection carried back to far-off years when he received lessons at his mother's knee; the religious lessons received in youth seldom entirely disappear. We may not always be conscious of their force, but they are there, like the scar of a wound long since received. Even when the positive belief in religion is outgrown, the fear of it remains. There is often a lurking timidity in opposing it. And if the clergy have to face the fact that a great many do escape their control, they have the consolation of knowing that their policy has diffused a certain general impression as to the value of religion in the social life of the community.

But the child is also the raw material out of which the future citizen is fashioned; and, therefore, the question of who shall possess the child—the priest or the community—involves more than a mere contest of rival teachers. It is really a struggle for the direction of civilisation. The issue is a simple but profoundly important one. Are we to pay more attention to the temper of mind induced in a child than to the inculcation of specific beliefs? Are we to value the habit of finding reasons for beliefs——of criticising received opinions freely and without prejudice—more than a slavish re-echoing of hereditary doctrines? The inherited capacity of a child can be exercised in whichever direction seems preferable. We can turn it out a mere transmitter of established opinions or a new and healthy force for rational progress. The essential issue is whether the developing mind of the child is to be directed by agencies to which the growth of civilisation is entirely due, or by organisations that are bound to perpetuate the delusions of the past as the sole condition of their power in the present and the future.

C. COHEN.

Are Agnostics Cowards?

IN the issue of this journal for June 8, we animadverted upon a sermon by the Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Melbourne, upon "Courageous Agnosticism," in which the reverend gentleman endeavored to depreciate knowledge in order to place the crown on the brow of faith. We have now before us, in the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 9, his previous discourse upon "Cowardly Agnosticism." In itself this oration deserves no notice, being flippant, superficial, and illogical; but inasmuch as the preacher seems to be a great luminary in the Australian religious firmament, it may serve a good purpose to examine his present utterances somewhat in detail. Flippancy and arrogance are in evidence from beginning to end. Mr. Spurr imagines that he is a very superior person who can afford to look down disdainfully upon those who are impudent enough to deny the possibility of supernatural knowledge. Listen to the following:—

> "So long as any person honestly remains in doubt concerning God and the highest things, and at the same time keeps an open mind to all light and truth, and an open heart to receive these when they appear, so long must we extend to him or her the most hearty sympathy. Sympathy, however, disappears when Agnosticism belies its name and becomes dogmatic. It is one thing to say 'I do not know God; would that I did; I am not certain; would that I were.' It is quite another to dogmatically assert, as did Mr. Spencer, and as do our Rationalists to-day, 'The whole thing is inscrutable and beyond us. God is not only unknown, he is unknowable. We cannot know. Those who say they know are simply mistaken. Knowledge is impossible.' It is this dogmatism that is offensive, and, as I shall show you, cowardly."

This promise, "as I shall show you," this cocksure dogmatist signally fails to fulfil. He contrasts Christianity and Agnosticism by affirming that the former presents certain facts while the latter deals with pure ideas; but this contrast is wholly imaginary, and puts the preacher in a bad light. What are the facts which Christianity is said to present? These: "That God, although invisible and incomprehensible, has sufficiently revealed himself—his life and power—to enable men to enter into fellowship with him"; "the fact of Christ, and the fact of the Divine action in human life." It is passing strange that it has never dawned upon Mr. Spurr that these are not facts but theories, conjectures, ideas, the very points in dispute between Christians and Agnostics. God, Christ, and the Divine action in human life are metaphysical hypotheses, not ascertained facts. To say that "our own nature is a text from which we may preach to ourselves a sermon about God," is not to state a fact, but to propound a speculative dogma. It is a gross misrepresentation to assert that Agnostics refuse to face the facts. In their estimation the facts of life are the only things that really matter; but their earnest contention is that such facts do not embrace God and Christ and the Divine action, these being not facts but theological fancies, which the divines, without rhyme or reason, offer to the world as facts. If we decline their offer they charge us with a lack of seriousness and call us cowards.

At this point Mr. Spurr allows his cocksureness to run away with him, and he raves thus irresponsibly against Agnosticism:—

> "It is cowardly because it is impertinent, and all impertinence is a form of cowardice. For a man to say, 'I do not know God,' may be perfectly true for him and modest withal'; but if he continues, 'I deny that anyone else can or does know him,' he is impertinent, for he makes his lack of knowledge the measure of the knowledge of others. More than this, he gives the lie direct to that accumulated Christian experience of the best kind which is witnessed to by men and women of all times."

The reverend gentleman is fundamentally mistaken. There is no more impertinence in maintaining that no one can or does know God than in claiming that he can be known by all and is known to millions. Indeed, if there be impertinence at all it lies in the claim to knowledge, not in the assertion of ignorance. Mr. Spurr admits that God is both invisible and incomprehensible, and yet proclaims him as an object of knowledge, which is plainly a contradiction in terms. Here the reverend gentleman trots out what he calls a parallel case. He draws a vivid picture of husbands and wives living together for many years in perfect love and harmony. "Through years of sunshine and storm, through joy and sorrow, in wealth and in poverty, in health and in sickness, their mutual love has suffered no diminution, no shock. Rather it has grown ever stronger, and after half a century of wedded life they are more completely lovers." Now, if anybody, say a dramatist, comes along and pronounces such a case impossible, he richly deserves to be laughed to scorn

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for giving expression to such an inane, brutal judgment. Unfortunately, however, this is in no sense a parallel case. Husbands and wives are veritable people of flesh and blood whose lives are objective realities that can be watched and examined, whereas God is admittedly an invisible and incomprehensible being, with whom we have no means whatever, except by faith, of getting into any sort of touch. Christian experience of communion with heaven possesses no evidential value, because the object with whom the alleged communion is held is a creation of faith, or imagination, but by no means an object of knowledge. Tennyson was much wiser than Mr. Spurr when he said, "We cannot know, for knowledge is of things we see."

The minister of Collins-street Baptist Church, Melbourne, is a perfect treat whenever he turns scientific. Having exhausted logic in defence of his strange thesis, he appeals to science for a final confirmation of it. Agnostics are coolly informed that "the scientific spirit in the name of which they speak entirely condemns them." This is a brand-new scientific discovery, the honor and glory of which belong to Mr. Spurr alone. Listen: "What is the scientific spirit? It is a spirit that leads men to seek until they find." We are prepared now for the following brilliant ray:—

> "Had explorers, chemists, astronomers, and others accepted the Agnostic faith—'we do not know, nothing can be known'—the world would never have progressed. Scientists have always refused to be Agnostics in science, and to their indomitable efforts we owe our progress."

This is a miserable travesty of the Agnostic position, and it is impossible to take it seriously, or to believe that the preacher was awake when he penned it. It is a truism that scientists are not Agnostics in science; but they are, almost to a man, thorough Agnostics in relation to theology or Supernature. They are resolved to seek until they find within the limits of the mechanism of Nature, but they know of nothing beyond or above those limits. Without fear of intelligent contradiction we hold that science inevitably tends to foster Agnosticism in the minds of its students, in relation to all matters of a superhuman or supernatural character. To our forefathers Romulus and Remus, King Arthur, and Hengist and Horsa were historical personalities, but the science of history has relegated them to the sphere of myths. Mr. Spurr says that "God is found by all who seek him as he should be sought." Of course, we all know that God is sought and found only by faith. But why should it be necessary to seek him with such diligence? Surely, if he existed, there would be no necessity to seek him. Children do not have to seek in order to find their father. To show how utterly unscientific the Christian doctrine of God is we need only point out that it at once represents God as seeking man with quenchless desire, and man as instinctively and passionately engaged in the quest of God, and that yet, in spite of this mutual seeking, in a great number, perhaps in the majority, of instances, the two never find each other, while in the comparatively few instances in which they do presumably meet they are for ever losing, or in danger of losing, grip of each other. We have no hesitation in averring that as touching such a God every sane person is bound to be an Agnostic, which is only Atheist writ large. No science would ever encourage the quest for such a Deity.

No, Agnostics are not cowards; nor are they impertinent. Why, the cowardice and impertinence are characteristics of Christian believers, who never fail to vilify all who differ from themselves; and like Mr. Lloyd George, when hit we are instinctively impelled to hit back. Is it not impertinence of the worst kind to call such great men as Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Haeckel, Schafer, Chalmers Mitchell, and Ray Lankester cowards because of their attitude of unbelief towards the Christian religion? There are hundreds, if not thousands, of genuine Agnostics in Melbourne, many of them endowed by Nature with plenty of brains; but the minister of Collins-street Baptist Church, a professional representative of a God of love and mercy, denounces them all as impertinent cowards. How very sweet of the dear man! Fancy his audacity in oracularly declaring that "no man can courageously remain an Agnostic." That is an unqualified falsehood, and it is difficult to believe that the preacher, in uttering it, did not know that he was lying. The fact is that the public avowal of Agnosticism implies the possession of an exceptional amount of courage. A weak man cannot possibly make such an avowal; and besides strength of character there must be a considerable quantity of mental power. It requires practically no courage to make a profession of faith in Christ and join a church, and multitudes do both without seriously thinking at all. Until quite lately the conventions rendered the life of an Agnostic extremely uncomfortable. He was looked upon and treated as an Ishmael. He was shunned as if he were a pestilent fellow and threatened the moral health of the community. But the triumph of science is slowly providing for him a respectable place in society. In Germany it is already the fashion not to attend a place of worship, only about three per cent. doing so. France, Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, and even Great Britain rapidly follow suit, thus proving that Mr. Spurr was radically wrong when he added that it cannot be denied but that man is "incurably religious." He is not, but we can honestly say of him that he is incurably social, which is the most hopeful sign for the future.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—X.

(*Continued from p. 438.*)

> "Since the treaties have permitted foreigners from the West to spread their doctrines, the morals of the people have been greatly injured" (Memorial "On the Restriction of Christianity," addressed to the Throne of China in 1884 by the High Commissioner Pêng Yu-Lin.)—DR. MORRISON, *An Australian in China*, p. 192.
>
> "As to the opinion of the [Chinese] Government, an Imperial Edict of July 2, 1900, states clearly: 'Ever since foreign nations began the propagation of their religion there have been instances throughout the country of ill-feeling between the people and the converts.....The truth is that converts.....have relied on the missionary for support, with the result that they have committed many misdeeds.' An Edict published three days after this states: 'The reason for the fighting between the Chinese [Boxers] and the foreigners sprung from a disagreement between the people and the Christian converts.' Not a word, so far as I have yet ascertained, has been uttered either by the Boxers or the Imperial or Provincial Governments respecting opium in this connection."
>
> "In his utter disregard for the conservation of human life, the views of Jonah closely resemble those of the present-day missionary and his supporters in England. After the wholesale torture and massacres in China, they set forth the doctrine that it is impossible to convert a nation to Christianity without rebellions, riots, and bloodshed, basing themselves on quotations from Scripture, such as: 'Not peace but a sword'; 'These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also,' and other isolated texts."—A. DAVENPORT, *China from Within*, pp. 36-66.

WE have remarked that China has been twice on the verge of being Christianised: First, by the Jesuits—the conditions under which they were so successful have passed, never to recur again—the second occasion was at the time of the great Tai-ping Rebellion, a movement about which very little is known by the vast majority of people, and that little is mostly erroneous.

Most people who have heard anything at all about the Tai-ping (sometimes written Ti-ping, Taeping, etc.) Rebellion, think that the Tai-pings were a band of brigands who aimed at overthrowing the Manchu rulers and reducing the empire to a state of anarchy, from which the Chinese were only rescued by that great Christian hero, General Gordon. You will not find much light thrown on the subject by studying missionary literature, unless you can get back to the missionary literature written at the time when the Tai-pings first took the field, then you will be surprised to find that the missionaries were backing them

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for all they were worth. Even English histories of China seem to be struck dumb when they reach the period dealing with its origins and aims. Just staying long enough to record Gordon's exploits, and then hurrying on like skaters over thin ice. Yet the lowest computation of lives lost through this rising is twenty millions, other authorities giving thirty-nine millions, fifty millions, and even one hundred millions! If twenty million Christian lives had been sacrificed in any European country in the attempt to introduce a foreign religion, we should have heard something about it. We dealt with this episode in these columns some five years ago (October 25, 1908). Given concisely, the facts are as follows:—

"The great Tai-ping Rebellion," says Mr. Archibald Little, "broke out after the empire had enjoyed a long peace of over two hundred years, and the leader of which, Hung-siu-chuen, was one of the very few genuine Christian converts ever made in China." *

This Hung-siu-chuen (or tsuen) was the son of a well-to-do farmer living about thirty miles from Canton. Coming to Canton to sit for a government examination, he received nine tracts from a Protestant evangelist who was giving them away in the street. Upon arriving home and discovering their character, he threw them on one side, but some time afterwards, upon the advice of his brother-in-law, who had borrowed them, he studied them and became converted. This was in 1843. He immediately began to exhort those around him to accept Christianity, and in 1846 received an invitation from J. J. Roberts, an American missionary at Canton to come there and study. He remained with Mr. Roberts for two months studying the new religion. Returning home, his followers rapidly increased in numbers until, upon one occasion while a congregation of about five thousand were deep in prayer, the leaders were overcome by what they believed to be "a Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit" in the most approved style of religious revivalism as experienced from St. Paul down to Evan Roberts. They were now ripe for mischief.

As might be expected by those who know anything of missionary teaching, they soon began to fall foul of the idols and persecuted the religion they formerly professed, but which they now denounced as idolatry, in the usual intolerant style of that religion when it has the power. Says Mrs. Little:—

> "With fierce and fanatical missionary zeal they at once set to work to break up one of the most esteemed images in the neighborhood — would not many Europeans on their first entrance into China wish to do likewise? — destroyed the vessels of spice and incense burning in front of it, were arrested and imprisoned." †

Released by friends, and emboldened by numbers and success, the Tai-pings formed an army and went on the march to convert the empire to Christianity.

All the inhabitants of the towns they captured who refused to accept the new faith were killed, in imitation of the Jews when they conquered the land of Canaan. Their leader, says Mr. Archibald Little, "modelled his action on that of the Jewish leaders, his war-cry being 'Sho Yao' ('Slay the idolators.')" ‡ The Tai-ping insurrection, says James Freeman Clarke, "has shown its religious character throughout." He observes: "Hymns of praise to the Heavenly Father and Elder Brother were chanted in the camp. And the head of the insurrection distinctly announced that, in case it succeeded, the Bible would be substituted in all public examinations for office in the place of Confucius." §

In every household throughout the Tai-ping territory, the Lord's Prayer, printed in large black characters on a white board, was hung up for the use of the children. The Sabbath was religiously kept on the seventh day. They celebrated the communion once a month by partaking of wine, and everyone admitted to their fellowship was baptised after an examination and confession of sins.

The missionaries, who thought their business was booming splendidly, were enthusiastic over their new converts, and, as Demetrius Boulger observes, "took the Taepings under their very special protection, and strained all their influence to the adventure of espousing the cause of these spurious Christians." * Why Mr. Boulger should brand the Tai-pings as "spurious Christians" we do not know—and he gives no explanation—unless it arose from a servile pandering to the official pretence that the Tai-pings were robbers and brigands. Evidently the missionaries did not regard them as "spurious Christians," and the missionaries were the originators of the movement and intimate with it from the very commencement. It is very certain that the Tai-pings had very much more faith and belief in the Bible and Christianity than the cosmopolitan historian of the Far East, Mr. Demetrius Boulger, or of many prominent men of the type of Sir Oliver Lodge, who allow their names to be used as supporting a belief which has nothing in common with the crude and unscientific ideas of those before whom their names are paraded. "Nothing succeeds like success," says the proverb, and all those whose adherence to the faith would tend to its credit are, by hook or by crook, made to testify to the creed; while all those who are discreditable are "spurious Christians." But the facts of the case are not so easily burked in the case of the Tai-pings.

An Englishman, who held a command among the Tai-pings, observes:—

> "I have probably had a much greater experience of the Ti-ping religious practices than any other European, and as a Protestant Christian I have never yet found occasion to condemn their form of worship. The most important part of their faith is the Holy Bible—Old and New Testament entire. These have been printed and circulated gratuitously by the Government through the whole population of the Ti-ping jurisdiction." †

Of one of the Tai-ping books, Dr. Medhurst, the missionary, declared: "There is not a word in it which a Christian missionary might not adopt and circulate as a tract for the benefit of the Chinese." ‡

The attempt to realise the devastation and slaughter wrought by the Tai-ping revolution would stagger the strongest imagination. Says Mrs. Little, it "was to devastate China for over thirteen years with a destruction of human life far exceeding that of the whole Thirty Years' War in Germany." § Lord Curzon, in considering how the missionaries acquit themselves in China, observes:—

> "A hostile critic might retort that the leader of the Tai-ping Rebellion, who was a Christian convert, and as such was hailed by many of the missionaries as the herald of a new dispensation, succeeded in nothing better than in devastating thirteen out of eighteen provinces of China, and in sacrificing the lives (at the lowest computation) of 20,000,000 men." ||

On another page he says, "it lasted for fourteen years, [and] cost China from twenty to fifty million lives" (p. 400).

The missionary organ, *China's Millions*, for January, 1903, describes the devastation suffered in the single province of Gan-hwuy, as follows:—

> "No idea can be conveyed to the mind of the English reader of the sufferings endured by the people of this province during the Reign of Terror. Twice did the rebel hordes sweep through its fertile valleys and plains, carrying off its possessions and multitudes of people, never to return. Those who survived these onslaughts endured fresh suffering when the rebels were driven back by the Imperial troops, who completed the destruction the rebels had commenced."

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* A. Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p. 136-7.
† Mrs. A. Little, *Li Hung Chang*.
‡ A. J. Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p. 3.
§ J. A. Clarke *Ten Great Religions* (1871), p. 64.

* Demetrius Boulger, *The Life of Sir Halliday Macartney* (1908), p. 41.
† Lin-Le, *History of the Ti-ping Revolution* (1866), vol. i., p. 306; cited by Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, pp. 64-5. We have seen Lin-Le's history, the only work, we believe, dealing with the Tai-ping Revolution from the inside.
‡ Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 69.
§ Mrs. A. Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, p. 7.
|| Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 286.

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> "Thirty out of thirty-nine millions were swept away, and in districts so complete was the desolation that not a man, nor a woman, nor a child, nor a hamlet, nor a cottage, not even a hut was left to mark the site of a once flourishing place."

Mr. Davenport, who cites the above testimony in his *China from Within* (p. 258), observes: "Seeing that thirty millions thus disappeared in one inland province, the figure of one hundred millions as the sum of all the inhabitants who lost their lives during this prolonged rebellion is evidently too low an estimate" (p. 259).

Perhaps it will be asked why the British Government went against the Tai-pings, and sent General —at that time Captain—Gordon to help suppress them if they were Christians? The fact of the matter is, our Government's sole consideration was our merchant trade with China. They had just concluded an expensive war with that object solely in view; they had, with the help of the French and modern firearms, brought the Chinese Government to its knees (the Chinese dispatches complained that "contrary to all the rules of war, instead of coming on from the front like an honorable foe, [they] had attacked the Taku forts from the rear")* and had put it in the irons of a commercial-religious treaty, and now meant to maintain its authority against all comers. As Scarth says: "Sir John Bowring's policy was that the British trade with China depended upon the present dynasty being maintained."†

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

By 44 votes to 39 (quite a narrow majority) the London County Council has rejected the recommendation of the Parks Committee that golf should be permitted on the Hainault course on Sundays. It was not a party discussion, however, nor a party vote. Lord Haddo, for instance, said that only a few members of the Hainault Club were in favor of Sunday golf, and this was flatly contradicted by Mr. A. O. Goodrich. The latter gentleman said that he was against Sunday picture shows, but in favor of opening golf links on Sundays, though he did not say why. At least, the reason was not recorded in the report. We should say that the real reason, in all probability, was the fact that he is vice-president of the Hainault Golf Club—and wishes to play the game on Sundays himself. It may also be that the sense of a coming defeat induced him to turn upon the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, "whose Sunday was like the tradesman's Saturday—it was his busy day." This would have sounded awfully wicked in the *Freethinker*, but it was greeted with roars of laughter on the London County Council. More laughter was due to the next speaker, Mr. G. A. Hardy, though we are afraid he did not get it. This gentleman declared that Sunday golf "would, in the end, result in a terrible blow to the workers of this country." We will end at that. It was the climax of the debate.

There is little respect for poets and poetry in this Christian country. At Southport, the other day, they got eight hundred little girls in white to greet the Queen. They were not able to manage anything original for the children to sing, so they prepared a parody of a famous and beautiful Scottish song, which turned out thus in the Southport rendering:—

> "Kind, kind, and queenly is she,
> Kind is Queen Mary;
> With honor, love, and loyalty,
> We breathe the name of Mary."

The man who perpetrated that hideous parody ought to be memorialised. He deserves to be stuffed and placed in a public museum, as responsible for the worst atrocity of the twentieth century. We dare say he belongs to the clerical profession.

We have hesitated to publish reports of the accounts of the new "Bulgarian Atrocities," not because we doubted their occurrence, but because these Christian Allies have shown themselves to be such colossal liars that one could never feel quite sure which story was correct. Eastern Christians generally have a high reputation for lying and dishonesty, and the "Allies" well sustained this character in their conflict with Turkey. Freethinkers at least will remember the way in which the Christian papers and preachers in this country slobbered over the lofty aims of the gallant Crusaders who were bent on liberating a suffering population from the yoke of the Crescent. It was a war of the Cross against the Crescent. That is quite true, so far as England was concerned. That was all our preachers saw in it—the chance of beating a Mohammedan Power, and utilising the victory to advertise Christianity. Only the other Day Canon Peyke carried, in Convocation, a resolution that—

> "This House is further of opinion that it will be the duty of the Church to avail itself of any opportunity that may arise in consequence of the recent victories of the allies in the Near East for the presentation of the Gospel of Christ to the Mohammedans in Europe and Asia Minor."

That is all Christians were concerned about—the chance of new markets for their spiritual wares. Many of them publicly described the ceremonies that would take place when the unselfish crusading Allies would celebrate Christian prayers in Santa Sophia.

Now, all this Christian humbug is blown into the air. It was no war of the Cross against the Crescent so far as the Allies were concerned. It was no war of liberation. It was a purely piratical expedition by Christian nations intent on nothing but plunder, and ready to get it by any amount of lying and cruelty. It is even admitted that the Turk may have been preferable to the Christian, and that the conquered territories will benefit little by the change. So little of the Cross against the Crescent element was there that Bulgaria—from whence the phrase originated—would be only too pleased to enter into a defensive alliance with Turkey against the other Balkan States. Some of the writers of the press are beginning to recognise the truth of what we have said above—which is only a repetition of what we said at the beginning of the war—but with singular fatuity they say the crusading element was not present. We beg to differ. It was present. The Crusades were conspicuous above all wars for their greed, cruelty, and internal dissension. And in this respect, at least, the most recent Crusade has lived up to the name.

To return to the stories of massacre. A week or so back Mr. Herbert asked in the House of Commons whether the Government had any information to give the House concerning religious persecution of Mohammedans or Moslems in Macedonia. Of course, no information was forthcoming, but it was admitted that complaints had been received. Directly after the Allies began their unofficial war, stories began to appear of outrages on captured villages, of women violated and exposed to all sorts of indecency. On July 10, the *Daily Telegraph* published a long account from its correspondent at the front, who had been invited by King Constantine to visit the town of Nigrita, just recaptured from the Bulgarians, and report his experience. Summarised, the correspondent's report is as follows:—Nigrita was a town of 8,000 inhabitants and 1,450 houses. "To-day it is a reeking heap of smouldering ruins, and the acrid stench of burning flesh and bones overpowers the nostrils as I write." Only forty-nine houses are left standing. "1,500 villagers have been foully murdered. Scores of women are still living who were violated, and every house was looted." The correspondent examined and cross-examined witnesses, and tested their stories in every way. His conclusion is that "seldom in the history of warfare has the barbarity of the Bulgarians been surpassed." And the contemptible religious press of Great Britain, after parading the Bulgarians and other Allies as noble-minded liberators, sacrificing themselves for the benefit of others, has not even the manliness to confess their error—if it was an error. Anyhow, they remain silent, only regretting the "fratricidal war." War in any case is bad and brutal, but when religion is there as an inspiring force it becomes indescribably barbarous.

We beg our readers to note well the following extract from an article, headed "A War of Hate," in the *Daily News* for July 9:—

> "We do not doubt that our correspondent is right when he says that the mutual antagonism to the Turk was mild in comparison with the mutual savagery revealed by the new turn of events. The war against the Turk was a war against an alien tyrant of another race, another religion, another civilisation. It was a war against an oppressor, not against a rival. The new conflict has all the bitterness of a conflict between relations infuriated by jealousy and mutual ambitions. We do not recall a struggle in which the element of sheer hate has played so hideous a part as it is doing in the Balkans to-day."

Doesn't this bear out all that we have written about the Turks and the Balkan States? It is easy to see now that

* Mrs. Little, *Li Hung Chang*, p. 13.
† John Scarth, *Twelve Years in China* (1860), p. 265.

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the Turks were controlling wasps' nests. They had a frightful task in keeping the various Christian nations from flying at each other's throats. We now see these Christian nations in their true colors. It is because they are Christians that they love each other so.

Rev. Vaughan Charles Turner, of Kettering, for forty years rector of Little Oakley, left £12,885. He would have taken it if he could. "Blessed be ye poor."

More of them! Rev. John Kipling Quarterman, of Blackheath, for some time Chaplain of the Woolwich Union, left £9,651. Rev. George Alexander Skinner, of Hove, Sussex, left £6,714.

At the recent annual conference of the United Methodist Church, at Halifax, the new President, the Rev. W. Redfern, of Rochdale, declared that their Church had always had a passion for freedom. It may be so, but the fact had escaped us. We never heard of United Methodists having a passion for anybody's freedom than their own,—which is not really freedom at all, but a selfish share of privilege. It would be news to us, for instance, if they passed a resolution in favor of the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. Freedom? Yes. But not for Freethinkers.

The United Methodist Church Conference resolved to make further efforts to obtain chaplain representation in the Army and Navy. This is one of the Christian bodies which profess to believe that there should be no connection whatever between Religion and the State. That is the theory. In practice it depends on *what* religion and *what* connection. Nonconformists do not object to the State patronage of Religion when it serves their turn. In elementary schools, for instance; or in the exemption of chapels, as well as churches, from rates and taxes.

Mr. Harold Spender should really try to omit the pious gags from his political articles in the *Daily News*. In a diffuse column on "Fratricide in the Balkans" the other day, he said that "the spectacle is as miserable as it is horrible." And he might have stopped there. But he must go on to say that "the folly and crime of it cry to Heaven." It does not appear, though, to reach the ears of the Boss, who takes no notice. Mr. Spender assures us, however, that "it is one of those things over which the angels weep." Shakespeare's poetry is grand in its proper place; it is poor stuff when degraded to a newspaper announcement.

"Sub Rosa" is rather a wearisome humorist, but he might write English. He calls old Spelman "a great antiquarian." What is an "antiquarian"? There is no such substantive in the English dictionary. "Antiquarian" is an adjective. We suppose Mr. Hughes means *antiquary*.

It is not of very great consequence, only one might as well be exact, and there is a slovenly habit abroad of tacking familiar sayings on to any well-known name. Thus Mr. Philip Snowden remarks that "One French monarch was safe from assassination because his heir was more detested than himself." The story really belongs to our Charles II. His brother James had been remonstrating with him on his habit of wandering about without guards. "Fret not that I go unattended," he replied, "for they will never kill me, James, to make you King." Charles was a shrewd judge of men and circumstances, and very much wiser than most people have imagined. The popular estimate of his character which he so carefully fostered is, perhaps, the best proof of this.

Dr. Campbell Morgan tells us that God is "a God of action, reigning over the Universe in every form so that nothing escapes his government." Then, of necessity, he is still a man of war, delighting in scenes of bloody cruelty and horrible carnage; and Jesus Christ, instead of being the Prince of Peace, is the most heartless of warriors. There is absolutely no escape from this conclusion. If God governs this world, he is a God of unspeakably cruel and bloodthirsty action. Dr. Morgan has unwittingly supplied us with an unanswerable argument for Atheism.

The Bishop of Exeter has sent a friendly letter to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference which has opened at Plymouth. This is thought so unusual that the letter is called "very striking." It is almost a miracle when Christian denominations have a good word for each other. Such is the upshot of nearly two thousand years of the religion of love!

Sabbatarianism is naturally rampant at Cambridge. By a majority of thirty-three votes to ten the Town Council refused to sanction a Trades Union demonstration on Parker's Piece last Sunday, under the auspices of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. Several members declared that such an assembly would be "a desecration of the Sabbath." Mr. Hawkins, a Conservative Churchman, said he had had experience of such Sundays in London, and they were "more like Bedlam than Sundays." He was balanced by a Liberal Nonconformist, Mr. Sturton, who declared that it would be a disgrace to Cambridge to begin to allow these demonstrations. Every sort of religion is the same when it comes to common sense and common justice.

The following is from the *Daily News* (July 11):—

> "Sir Lewis Dibdin, Dean of the Arches, yesterday delivered judgment in the Court of Arches on the appeal by the Bishop of Ely against a decision by the Chancellor of the Diocese. The Chancellor held that the writing and posting of an admittedly obscene letter by a clergyman to a young lady parishioner was not an offence under the Clergy Discipline Act, 1892, and dismissed the case. The defendant is the vicar of St. Matthew's, Littleport, and Sir Lewis said he had been in orders for more than forty years, and must therefore be above sixty years of age. He was also married. His Lordship held that the writing and sending of the letter was an immoral act within the meaning of the Clergy Discipline Act, 1892. The appeal was therefore allowed, and remitted to the Consistory Court of the diocese of Ely in order that further proceedings might be taken."

Before the passing of the Clergy Discipline Act, under Gladstone, it was impossible to get rid of a peccant clergyman. His bishop could inhibit him from preaching, but he remained a clergyman and retained his benefice. Many influential Nonconformists opposed the Bill in order to leave the Church of England with all the trouble of its black sheep. Mr. Gladstone was very angry at this, and called it blackguardly—which indeed it was. It was another illustration of "How these Christians love one another!"

We were under the impression that Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* had been withdrawn from use at the Universities, but it appears that we were mistaken. According to "Cambridge Notes" in last week's *Athenæum*, Paley still holds the field:—

> "It is a matter of speculation whether Paley's *Evidences* will be finally killed by the proposed scheme. That immortal work, though a trifle out of date, has hitherto managed to survive all attempts to destroy its study. Years ago the Divinity Professors tried to abolish it, but the present Dean of Wells—then, I believe, Norrisian Professor—spoke up so eloquently for Paley as a sound theologian and an honored member of the same college as himself, that the *Evidences* once more survived the ordeal. At present it is easier than the alternative—Logic and Chemistry, and it is studied in the analysis, as of yore, without much benefit or injury to the faith of the candidates. One thing may be said in its favor: now that Euclid has gone, it is the only compulsory subject which gives the slightest idea of the meaning of an argument; and, if Paley's premises are granted, his conclusions are hard to refute."

"A trifle out of date" is really rich. Paley never was actually up to date. It was a masterpiece, but a masterpiece of sophistry, which would have to be rewritten to be effective now,—and who could rewrite it but Paley himself? Take, for instance, his treatment of Celsus. Paley based an argument on the silence of Celsus. He was bound to allude to the fact that the writings of that keen opponent of Christianity are not extant; but it would never do to state that they were deliberately destroyed by the Christian Church by means of an imperial rescript; so Paley stuck to the truth as far as it served the turn. "The writings of Celsus," he said, "are lost." It was extraordinarily clever. But it reminds us of the appeal the American lawyer made on behalf of his client who was indicted for murdering his own parents. He besought the jury to have compassion upon the orphan prisoner.

The writer of these "Cambridge Notes" is hardly accurate, we believe, in his reference to David Hume. He relates that when Hume's "old servant" called him "Saint David" the philosopher-historian—who, by the way, had a pawky humor of his own, running easily into irony—replied "Better men than I have been called Saints." On the face of it there is something wrong with this variant of the story. We fancy the following is more like the original. Hume's reputation for scepticism was common in Edinburgh, and one day a lively street urchin chalked "Saint David" on the great man's by no means luxurious dwelling. The maidservant came running in full of indignation to tell her master of the outrage. "Never mind, lassie," he answered, "many a better man has been made a Saint." We are writing from memory, a long way from books of reference.

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We do not allow political questions, as such, to be discussed in the *Freethinker*. But there are political questions which have definite religious aspects. Welsh Disestablishment, for instance. There are also religious aspects of Home Rule. Sir Edward Carson and the Ulsterites (who, after all, only represent a little more than half their province) constantly parade the religious aspects of Irish self-government. They never tire of declaring that Home Rule means Rome Rule. Without wishing to discuss Home Rule on other grounds, we unhesitatingly repeat what we have plainly asserted before, that Home Rule does *not* mean Rome Rule, but the very opposite. Irish nature does not differ intrinsically from other human nature. It is not endowed with a double dose of original superstition. What the priest wants in Ireland is not Home Rule but a perpetual agitation for Home Rule. Home Rule would rob the Church of half its power and profits in the time that it takes for a new generation to grow up. This decadence of the Catholic Church is common in all Catholic countries in which representative government triumphs. Look at Italy, look at Portugal, look even at Spain, look above all at France. Catholic France has gradually developed into Freethinking France. Protestantism can scarcely be said to exist there. So it will be in Ireland. It is only a question of time.

We have as much right to say that of Ireland as we have of any other country. That it is a part of the United Kingdom makes no difference at all. The argument is not political or social; it is independent of frontiers; it rests upon an historical law of mental development. That is the great thing. The passions of the hour die out and are forgotten. The laws of human progress are eternal. Catholic and Protestant have fought each other for centuries. Behind them both is the slow but irresistible movement of civilisation, which is overwhelming them both, and will leave them behind as landmarks of antiquarianism.

Our denial that Home Rule meant, or could possibly mean, Rome Rule, some time ago cost us the fairly liberal subscription of one of our readers to the President's Honorarium Fund. We regret the fact—for the subscriber's sake. No financial consideration, in such a connection, never weighed with us more than a feather does on a railway weighing machine. We never wrote for money, and we do not think we ever shall. We trust our career has shown that we are above bribes or intimidation. When we cannot gain a hearing for what we think we shall remain silent.

We are sorry to see Sir Edward Carson descending so much to Billingsgate. We should not allow such language to appear in the *Freethinker*. We believe that Sir Edward Carson is quite in favor of prosecuting us, simply because we displease his fellow Christians; but we are far from returning the compliment; what we preach we practice; we would allow him the liberty of speech that he would deny us. We believe in freedom. He doesn't. We don't know what he does believe in. He professes to believe in religious toleration, but he rarely opens his mouth without stirring up religious bigotry and hatred.

"Alfonsus," writing in the *Catholic Herald* for July 12, admits that some popes, though by no means as many as Protestants allege, have been bad men. To us such an admission seems fatal to the claim of papal infallibility, but "Alfonsus" regards it as quite harmless. Indeed, he accounts for the existence of unworthy pontiffs by saying that "our Lord never promised that the supreme heads of the Church should always be holy men," and that "God permits the frailties of the popes in order to show that the Church is a Divine institution, and that it survives all, no matter how terrible shocks, by its inherent supernatural power." They must be exceptionally gullible who will find this explanation satisfactory. How on earth can corrupt popes show forth the Divinity of the Church? Whether they be many or few, the Church is disgraced by having unworthy heads. Fancy the most Holy God being represented on earth by unholy men! The very thought is impossible.

The most curious thing of all is that bad popes are yet infallible. "Alfonsus" assures us that "our Lord" did promise to make them infallible teachers of the truth, and no pope has ever taught heresy to the Church. History, however, informs us that successive popes have promulgated contrary doctrines, and that not a few have contradicted themselves; and we all know that papal schisms have been notoriously numerous. We readily grant that the dogma of infallibility is implied, if not actually taught, in the New Testament; and we are convinced that no one can be Biblically orthodox without believing it. The only fault that can possibly be found with it is that it isn't true.

Canon Masterman, in the exercise of that Christian charity which is so characteristic of the Pulpit, calls the New Theology "a Pantheistic and anti-Christian hash." This delightful bit of polite, elegant language occurs, not in a newspaper report of an extemporaneous address, but in a published volume, entitled *The Challenge of Christ*. We have no sympathy with the New Theology, any more than with the Old; and we employ the quotation merely as an illustration of the ardor with which Christians love one another when their opinions are in conflict.

Canon Masterman is a Socialist, and, like all other Christian Socialists, he is convinced that Socialism, "apart from the Christian ideal of personal character might prove a colossal disaster." Why? Is not Socialism itself an ideal of personal character? Whether true or false, Socialism is represented to be an infallible remedy for all existing evils. The Socialist is declared to be the ideal man, ideal in his own character and in his relations with all his fellows. Does Canon Masterman mean to convey the conviction that, after all, the Socialist ideal of character and conduct is defective, and that it must be supplemented by what he calls the Christian ideal? To our mind nothing is more indisputable than the fact that Christianity and Socialism are fundamentally opposed to each other. The Gospel Jesus is without doubt an Individualist, and under Christianity a stupendously cruel form of Individualism has almost invariably prevailed, and still prevails.

In connection with the Anglo-German Exhibition it is proposed to open the Crystal Palace on Sundays. The Archbishop of Canterbury has promptly written to the Imperial Sunday Alliance advising its secretary to write to the Lord Mayor warning him that this may affect the fund now being raised for the purchase of the Palace and grounds. We do not think that the threatened financial boycott will have much effect, as the fund appears to be well on the road to completion. But if the Palace is to become public property, there is every reason why it should fall in line with London museums and art galleries and open every Sunday for the benefit of the public. If Christians had a healthy and sensible concern for family life, they would realise that Sunday is the one day in the week in which a man and his wife and children could comfortably spend a day at the Palace. Any other day is difficult for most, and for working men practically impossible. Something in this direction might help to raise English family life to the level of family life on the Continent, where united parties are much more common than they are in this country. But, of course, all the Archbishop has in view is the sectarian question of how it will affect Church attendance.

The Congregational Union has decided to collect £50,000 in order to provide a minimum salary (of how much?) for its ministers. What was the maximum salary of the first twelve apostles—if they ever existed? Just what they could get into the common dish, which is mentioned in the story of the last supper. Sometimes, we dare say, it was thick with solids; at other times, we also dare say, it was thin for the want of them. Such as it was, they had to be contented; not even Judas seems to have been dissatisfied. How many Congregational ministers would accept a job in the Lord's vineyard on the same terms? How many of them, that is, are real Christians?

Now that organised Christianity is rapidly dying, its ministers assure us that unorganised or spiritual Christianity is making amazing progress everywhere. Dr. Horton states that "while it is true that *religion* seems to lose ground, it is equally true that *Christianity* is gaining ground." Religion, he admits, is not in itself a good thing, and its passing away may not mean a serious loss; but Christianity, he is confident, is taking a vital hold of the world, and slowly transforming it into the image of Christ. What evidence is there of the truth of such a statement? The Old Age Pension and the Insurance Acts. All we can say is that the case for Christianity is a desperately bad one when this is all that can be said for it. A little more than a year ago Dr. Horton sadly complained that the current of things was dead against the Christian faith, and that in consequence spiritual work was dreadfully handicapped. Can the trend of things have been so radically reversed in so short a time? It is Dr. Horton that has changed; and this is his new plea: "If religions decay, Christianity marches ever forward, for Christianity is Christ." And, at this rate, nobody can tell what either Christ or Christianity is; but never mind, both are marching to—death.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1918.—Previously acknowledged, £158 1s. 11d. Received since:—J. H. (Liverpool), 5s.; Mrs. A. W. Hutty, 2s. 6d.; A. Hacke, 10s.

F. J. VOISEY.—We congratulate you, but don't see anything in the vicar's remarks of special interest to us or our readers.

E. B.—Many thanks for useful matter.

C. F. BUDGE.—You assume that Nature is bound to justify herself to you. She is under no such obligation. There are many theories, of which reincarnation is one, that are logical because they are *made* logical, and may all be false. Nothing is more logical than Presbyterianism, with its heaven, hell, and predestination. Logic, after all, means nothing but self-agreement or the absence of self-contradiction.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are very welcome.

NEOPHYTE.—The explanation is that Stephen Grellet was a liar—like ninety-nine per cent. of all the Christians who have written about "infidels." William Cobbett, who had an immense respect for Thomas Paine as a political writer, investigated that "Mary Ross" story when he was in New York in 1819; he called on the woman herself, and proved her to be a liar of whom the Devil might be proud. His conclusion was that her whole story of Paine's recantation, etc., was "a lie from beginning to end." Cobbett was not an "infidel." He was a Christian. See Conway's *Life of Paine*.

E. GWINNELL.—When we say that political questions cannot be discussed in the *Freethinker* it must not be assumed that we have not thought about them ourselves. We simply mean that our pages are not the place to ventilate them.

L. B. WARDEN.—"Absolute freedom of discussion" may refer to the treatment or the choice of topic. You confuse them. We never closed, because we never opened, our columns to essentially political discussions. What you call "militancy" is a question of policy. If you want to discuss whether arson and murder are legitimate political and social weapons in a civilised community, we can only reply that this journal is not edited and published at a lunatic asylum. We have never said a word against Woman Suffrage, or any other suffrage, in these columns. All we have objected to is violence of method,—from the initial interference with free public meeting up to arson, which easily passes into homicide. Violence is like a drug: it satisfies only by means of ever-increasing doses. For the rest, you do not surprise us by cutting off your weekly "tuppence." We have weathered other calamities, and we hope to weather this one.

A. H. DUNSTAN.—You do well to write again about the matter. Mr. Foote is away from the office for a day or two, and, as the question is obviously one for him to deal with, your letter has been forwarded.

MRS. A. HUTTY.—Subscription received and acknowledged. Mr. Foote values your good wishes for his health, and appreciates your high opinion of his *English Review* article. Articles of that class from his pen might appear more frequently were there not other calls upon his time, and it is a case of the most urgent work first.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We do not know that Box Hill is exactly a memorial to George Meredith, although he lived at Flint Cottage so many years. The best Meredith memorial, of course, is his collected writings. Nevertheless, we are glad to hear that the rumor that the speculative jerry builder was to be let loose on Box Hill has been set at rest for ever. Sir Robert Hunter, at the recent annual meeting of the National Trust, announced that a gentleman who wished to remain anonymous had proposed to purchase Box Hill and hand it over in trust for public use and enjoyment in the future. The idea might now be consummated by the preservation of Flint Cottage.

"A reasonable facility of divorce" has, for ever so many years, been one of the immediate practical objects of the National Secular Society. We are delighted to see that this object is attracting more and more support amongst thoughtful people. This was shown in the late Majority Report of the Divorce Commission. It was also very strongly displayed by a recent speech of Mr. Plowden, the well-known London magistrate, to a meeting of the Actress's Franchise League. The following report of Mr. Plowden's speech is from the *Daily Chronicle*:—

> "Mr. Plowden said legislation to extend the grounds for divorce was bound to come. He had authority to say that a Bill had been drafted to carry into action the proposals of the Majority Report of the Commission. The Bill was in the capable hands of Sir David Brynmor Jones, and he believed it was laid on the table of the House of Commons the previous day.
>
> "No feverish agitation was required — no mammoth demonstrations in Hyde Park, not even the destruction of a single window-pane. What was required were a few penetrating lines in a short Act of Parliament, and there would be lifted an immense load of misery from thousands and thousands of homes which were at present rent asunder by conjugal strife.
>
> "Referring to his police-court experience of separations, he said it was his sympathy with the poor that caused him to take an interest in the divorce question.
>
> "'I live amongst the poor,' he added, 'and I don't believe a more patient and more long-suffering class are to be found than in the slums and alleys of London.'
>
> "In many cases, he continued, separations led women to the gutter or workhouse through no fault of their own. What was wanted was not medicine, but a surgical operation. When a woman discovered that she had married a drunkard who terrorised her, or her partner became a lunatic, some people held that she should be bound to him, 'because the sanctity of the tie forbade divorce!' Others said: 'Whom God hath joined——.' But he was not going to confound God with a curate. (Laughter and cheers.) He would rather say, 'Whom God has ceased to join let no man keep together.' Besides holding that divorce should be granted by mutual consent, he would like to see no marriage legal unless it was peformed before the registrar.
>
> "Without divorce, marriage—at the best an experiment—was reduced to a gamble, for it punished the innocent. That a couple, whose confident hope of a happy union was replaced by a decision after marriage that they were not suited, could not break the fetters which they had innocently forged was a cruel barbarity and a positive disgrace to civilisation."

Miss Gertrude Kingston approved of divorce, but she did not wish to see it too easy. Which also is a point of view that should not be lost sight of.

We regret to hear that Christian rowdyism has been developing at the open air meetings of the Edmonton Branch of the N. S. S. Last Sunday evening Miss Kough was subjected to continuous interruption during the whole of her lecture; not satisfied with this, some of the pious hooligans present took to the Biblical pastime of stone-throwing. One struck her on the back; but, fortunately, no injury was done. After she had concluded her lecture, and left the meeting, the rowdyism became still greater. Perhaps Freethinkers who have a little time to spare on Sundays will feel moved to pay a visit to the Edmonton Branch meetings. There is nothing that so effectually checks the cowardly ruffianism of these Christian Evidence supporters as the sight of a goodly number of Freethinkers round the platform

A book of what should be very great interest is promised through the Oxford University Press. It is *Autobiographical Notes* by the late William Hale White, the author of the "Mark Rutherford" series of novels and a few other volumes. He was a powerful writer and a thorough Freethinker.

The following is from last week's *Athenæum*:—

> "*The Early Life of Mark Rutherford (W. Hale White), by Himself*, will be published by Mr. Humphrey Milford this month. These autobiographical notes were written by Mr. Hale White when he was 78 years old, not primarily for publication, but 'to please two or three persons related to me by affection.' The volume, which has been seen through the press by Miss Mary Theodora White, is uniform with *Pages from a Journal* and *More Pages*, already issued by the Oxford University Press, and includes portraits of Mark Rutherford and his father, and views of old Bedford."

We shall welcome this book and introduce it to our readers. But we must deny at once that it can be *uniform* with the two volumes mentioned, for those volumes are dissimilar from each other. We speak without hesitation, for they are both in our own library.

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE TWO VIRGIN BIRTH STORIES.

THE earliest Gospel legends of which we have any knowledge—viz., those from which the three Synoptists derived the main portion of their Gospels—commenced with the preaching of John the Baptist, as in the canonical Mark. Later on, new stories came into circulation relating to the births of Jesus and the Baptist, and to the infancy and childhood of the Savior—the originators of the legends being unknown. From this later class of literature two of the Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, have given us revised versions of the Birth stories, derived in each case from primitive narratives now called apocryphal (Matt. i., ii.; Luke i., ii.).

Matthew, in chap. i., introduces Joseph and Mary, and speaks of the latter as being "found with child of the Holy Ghost." In chap ii. he says:—

> "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of *Herod the king*, behold there came wise men from the east," etc.

Further on, we find this king to be Herod the Great, who reigned thirty-four years (38 B.C.—4 B C), and also that the birth is placed towards the end of his reign. Next, it is stated that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus went to Egypt, and did not return until after the death of Herod. Furthermore, Herod is stated to have slaughtered all the male children of Bethlehem "from *two years old* and under, *according to the time* which he had carefully learned of the wise men." It is implied in the narrative that the time of the appearance of the star coincided with that of the birth. These statements are all the data we possess for fixing the year of the birth of Jesus Christ; whence we have but to consider the following alleged circumstances: (1) Herod did not massacre the babies until nearly two years after the first appearance of the star; (2) he lived for some time, long or short, after the massacre; (3) he died in 4 B.C. Hence, according to Matthew, the birth of Jesus could not have been *later* than 6 B.C.; but it may have been earlier.

We come now to Luke's account, which commences as follows:—

> Luke ii. 1—5.—"Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the inhabited earth should be registered. This registration [first] took place when Kurenios was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem.....to register himself, with his betrothed wife," etc.

Luke, as already stated, took the first two chapters of his Gospel from apocryphal writings, in one of which—the Protevangelium of James—it was stated (par. 17): "And there was an order from the emperor Augustus that all in Bethlehem should be enrolled." The words "enrolled" and "registered" are merely translations of the same Greek word, which in the Authorised Version is rendered "taxed."

Now Luke, in consulting the *Antiquities* of Josephus for historical data connected with the alleged Gospel events, noticed among other matters the statement that Quirinius (therein called Kurenios) came to Judæa to superintend a registration; but not taking time to properly understand the matter, that evangelist wrote, as we have seen, that all the inhabitants of countries subject to Cæsar were to be registered for taxation—which registration explained, he thought, why Joseph had to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem. But Luke was mistaken. There was no such decree made by Cæsar Augustus: the facts are simply as follows.

Ten years after the death of Herod the Great, Archelaus, who had governed Samaria and Judæa, was deposed by Augustus, and his kingdom was made a Roman province. As a preliminary to this change of government, Cæsar, after appointing Quirinius president of Syria, sent him into Judæa "to take account of the people's substance," and with him went Coponius as procurator. This was all. A registration was made of the people living in those two provinces, who would be required to pay tribute to Cæsar, and the list doubtless included those who had previously paid to Archelaus (*Antiq.* 17, 11, 4; 17, 13, 2 and 5; 18, 1, 1). As to "Joseph the carpenter," if he was then living in Galilee, as Luke states, he would pay his tribute to the tetrarch of Galilee: the registration related only to the two provinces that had been governed by Archelaus. But, in any case, there would be no rushing about of the whole population to cities in which some remote ancestors had once lived. The names would be taken in each city as it stood, where the residents, and their social position and property, were known. The idea of Joseph journeying from Galilee to Bethlehem to pay a tax not required of him is nothing less than idiotic.

Furthermore, all Luke's statements in chap. ii. respecting the birth and childhood of Jesus are but a revised version of fictitious narratives which he found in the apocryphal Gospels of his time. The story of the child Jesus, for instance, being found by his parents in the temple, sitting surrounded by learned rabbis (Luke ii. 41—52) is still found, almost verbatim, in one of the few apocryphal writings that have come down to us—the Gospel of Thomas.

There is one word in the foregoing Gospel statement for which Luke is not responsible: this is the word "first" in the sentence, "This registration *first* took place when Kurenios was governor of Syria." The word should have been expunged by the New Testament Revisers; but, instead of so doing, those Christian scholars made the passage read: "This was the *first* enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria"—a statement which implies that at least *two* enrolments were made during the governorship of Quirinius. The reason for this misrepresentation is obvious. In Matthew's account, the birth of Jesus took place in the reign of Herod the Great, in the year 6 B.C., or earlier; in Luke's account Jesus was born during the registration under Quirinius, in the year A.D. 6—that is to say, twelve years later. The only way to reconcile these conflicting narratives is by first boldly asserting that *two* registrations were made under Quirinius, the first in 6 B.C., the year of the Birth, according to Matthew; next, by brazenly asserting that Quirinius was governor of Syria in that year also. Now, astonishing to relate, both assertions are actually made, and the historical registration recorded by Josephus, A D. 6, is declared to be a *second* enrolment, and *not the one referred to by Luke*. This method of harmonising shows the lengths to which Christian advocates will go to conceal obvious Gospel fictions, as well as their utter disregard for truth. For, needless to say, there was no registration in Judæa in the latter part of the reign of Herod the Great, nor in any later years, save that mentioned by Josephus in A.D. 6. Neither, again, had Quirinius been governor of Syria before the latter year. Josephus speaks of him as new to the presidentship, though he had held "other magistracies" (*Antiq.* 18, 1, 1).

It is further a fact of history that from 12 B.C. down to 3 B.C., the office of president of Syria was filled by two persons only, Saturninus and Quintilius Varus, the latter succeeding the former in 5 B.C. (*Antiq.* 17, 5, 2). During this period—which covers the "Birth" of Matthew—Josephus refers to the ruling president thirteen or fourteen times, and in each case mentions the one or the other by name. There was therefore no place for Quirinius between 12 B C. and 3 B.C. If further proof be needed of the registration to which Luke referred, it is given by Luke himself, who represents a Jewish rabbi as saying (Acts v. 37):—

> "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of *the* Registration, and drew away much people," etc.

Here it is clear that Luke knew of but *one* "registration" or "enrolment," namely, that made by Quirinius (or Kurenios) in A.D. 6, as narrated by

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Josephus, who in the same paragraph (*Antiq.* 18, 1, 1) records the insurrection raised by Judas of Galilee against the payment of tribute to the Romans. Here, too, we have proof that the word "first" in Luke ii. 2 is a later addition.

But the Christian falsification of history is not yet ended. In a Christian text-book called *Aids to the Student of the Holy Bible* I find a "Historical Epitome" arranged in tabular form, from which I make the following extracts:—

6 B.C.—"*The census or registration of the Roman world* (*Luke* ii. 2) *begins.*"
5 B.C.—Antipater "is convicted before Herod and Varus, legatus of Syria.....Birth of Christ.....*Quirinius legatus of Syria the first time.*"
4 B.C.—"Local rebellions, *especially under Judas of Galilee*, plunge Palestine into anarchy and bloodshed..... Varus, legatus of Syria, restores order with fire and sword, crucifying 2,000 Jews."
A.D. 6.—"Augustus banishes Archelaus.....Quirinius, *again* legatus of Syria, makes a taxing-census."

From the foregoing, it will be seen: (1) that the two conflicting "Birth" stories are merged into one, and placed in 5 B.C.; (2) that Quirinius is fraudulently represented as legatus, or imperial governor, during that year; (3) that Judas of Galilee, who is named in the Acts as an agitator "in the days of *the* Registration" (*i.e.*, A.D. 6) is transferred to 4 B.C. Here we have a sample of the methods employed by Christian reconcilers to nullify the results of adverse Biblical criticism.

In the foregoing "Epitome" the words I have placed in italics are nothing less than falsifications of history. In Luke ii. 1—5, Jesus Christ is said to have been born at the time when a registration was being made in Judæa: this is the one great fact to be borne in mind. Now the first statement in the foregoing extract (under 6 B.C.)—that "the census or registration of the Roman world (Luke ii. 2) begins"—is untrue, and is made simply to support Luke's error respecting "a decree.....that all the inhabited earth should be registered." As already stated, there was no such decree by Cæsar Augustus: neither was there a historical registration *of any kind* in 6 B.C.—or one begun in that year—nor in 5 B.C. or 4 B.C. If a census at Rome be referred to, there was one in 29 B.C., in 8 B.C., and in A.D. 14; but none in 6, 5, or 4 B.C. But, even had such been the case, it would not affect Palestine, or any other country. The Epitome statement could only deceive the very ignorant.

Next, with regard to "Judas of Galilee," that individual only became known, even according to the Acts, "in the days of the Registration," at which time he raised an agitation against paying tribute to the Romans. There was no registration in 4 B.C., where Christian falsifiers have placed him, and no question of paying tribute to the Romans: he has therefore no place in history but A.D. 6, when that tribute was about to be paid.

Lastly, in this Epitome, Quintilius Varus is president of Syria all the time. He is named as *legatus* both before and after the "Birth of Christ"; and when anarchy arose in Judæa during the absence of Archelaus in Rome, it was Varus, *not* Quirinius, who marched with a legion from Antioch, and put down the disturbances. Varus was the governor of Syria: Quirinius is but an interpolated name. It is almost needless to say, there is no historical record of this Quirinius being president of Syria prior to A.D. 6.

One other question remains to be noticed. Luke states in his Gospel (iii. 23) that "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" (*i.e.*, A.D. 28) Jesus "was about thirty years of age." This statement places the "Birth" in the year 2 B.C.; that is to say, four years *later* than the time given by Matthew, and eight years *earlier* than that previously given by Luke himself. There are thus *three* conflicting dates to be reconciled instead of two. And, after all this investigation, the evidence for the historicity of the Virgin Birth stories remains the same: Matthew and Luke found them among some lying apocryphal writings of their time, and made revised copies of them—the original concoctors of the stories being unknown. If to this lack of evidence we add the conflicting dates, the flat contradictions of the stories themselves, and the utter improbability of a Virgin birth, we arrive at the only conclusion possible—that both were early Christian fabrications.

ABRACADABRA.

Jesus on Holiday.

THEY went to church; I came down to the sea; and now I am wondering whether they are enjoying the service as much as I am enjoying the sunshine and sea-air. Somehow, I think the balance falls on my side. They are attending the old kirk with a different name. The main portions of the worship will certainly be identical to what they have respected throughout their lives. The form of the service will be similar. At the same time, many little distinguishing traits will crop up occasionally, and, methinks, their minds will readily be led from what they themselves term the reality, to the superficial. Comparisons will be worked out mentally; and not all the power of God will be able to dull to extinction the feeling that *their* method of worshiping God is by far the better. And so I conclude that they, despite their beliefs, are not so much worshipers as observers; and the suspicion steals over me that practically the same may be said of all the holidaying Christians in Britain.

Easily can I imagine the members of a small church being really imbued with the spirit (so-called) of worship. They know each other. They are more or less actuated by the same desires, and feelings, and ideas. Worshiping together, they may truly experience the fellowship that robs conflicting characteristics of their sharpness. They will draw together and taste the happiness of fellowship. Paucity of numbers makes for comradeship; and they will delight in it, saying it is one of God's great gifts. But I cannot imagine a crowd, gathered from all corners of the land, basking in the sunshine of such a fellowship. Nor is it possible that every sub-lieutenant of Jesus Christ possesses the wonderful power of linking together human units that have no mental relationship except their vaunted love of God. Consequently, the eloquence poured over pulpit bulwarks is blarney, if I may be so rude as to use the word; church attendance in holiday resorts, as in cities, hypocrisy, and, necessarily, a base insult gratuitously offered to, and never refused by, the Lord of the Heavens; and the happiness derived from it absolutely fictitious.

Besides, people on holidays usually determine to enjoy themselves to the utmost. They go for pleasure; and pleasure is not to be found within the walls of a church. "But," Christians object, "the enjoyment we receive in church is completely different from that which we indulge outside." Decidedly; and because it is so there is written above the entrance to every seaside and city church the words, "The Temple of Whited Sepulchres." For the enjoyment obtained therein is not the fellowship of worship, or the Freethinker's tasks, arduous enough, would be sterner and more troublesome: it is no more than the gratification of the demands of a weak-kneed custom and pleasure, hollow, ephemeral, more imaginary than real, and the real portion of it fraught with disaster to their own little creed.

To-day the disaster is more apparent than it was yesterday; for the saving grace of Christianity, as of all creeds, the fellowship of worship, has become a memory of the past, even in villages. The Church is too big. Through the gaps in its body, slashed open by the swords of Freethought and Science, rushes in the wind. The Church is troubled with an ailment from which it will never recover.

Thinking of the gaily dressed congregation, and recollecting what I had heard about the famous church parade, I smiled. It is too lovely a day for me to feel the anger that generally surges over me

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when my mind takes to noticing these things. Perhaps I am too sensitive to the seriousness of it to see the humorous side. But to-day I fancy I can see the Lord Jesus Christ, great broad-minded man as he is claimed to be, shoot down on a sunray to this summer resort, just for an hour's fun. Of course, being a broad-minded man, he is able, at times, to enjoy the funny aspect of things. I can imagine him standing in a corner of the church, and enjoying the farce immensely. I can see the laughter-tears roll down his white cheeks, and see the nail-pierced hands lift the thorn-crown from his head so that it may not fall off in his glee. One hand is pressed to his side; not to stay the flow of blood; it is the characteristic attitude of the merrymaker. And then I can see him sitting on a seat on the "prom.," watching the gaudily dressed church crowds, listening to their remarks, and enjoying the religious pantomime hugely.

The Man of Sorrows becomes, for an hour, the Man of Merriment. He chuckles at the play of his puppets. Amusement lights up the carewornness of the age-grey eyes. The wrinkles of loving-kindness contract into ripples of mirth. The sorrow-laden brow shines, even in its whiteness, with light-heartedness. Jesus is as happy as a boy who pulls a bottom stone from a castle he himself has built, and it topples over to confusion. He shouts, for he does not recognise it as failure, knowing not that endurability is success.

The low, sonorous music of the waves, as they rise to kiss the sunshine, then falling in millions of bright beads of creamy splendor, is more marvellous to my ears than the inspired, sickly, slavish hymns that are being sung by thousands of Christians at this moment. On the waters the wonderful colors and movements appeal more to my sense of beauty than all the verbal pictures of God, Christ, and the angels. The sunrays pressing their hot loving lips to the wave-crests, transforming them into a foaming mass of drops of light, are more lovely than the visioned white face of Christ.

I have often been told that God gave us beauty; but sometimes I think that when God and his shadow are flung from the minds of men Nature's beauty will be seen as it never was seen before.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Chamfort, the Friend of Mirabeau.

NEARLY a hundred and twenty years ago (April 13, 1794) there expired at Paris a Freethinking wit of the first order, Sebastian Roch Nicholas Chamfort. Born in Auvergne, 1741, he knew no parent save his mother, a peasant girl, who was "companion to a lady." When the lady saw another companion was coming, Chamfort's mother was turned out of doors. Her son, however, consoled her with his love, and in after life he often denied himself necessaries to supply her wants. He was placed at the College des Grassins. Here he studied hard, though he said, "What I learned I have forgotten, and the little I know was guess-work." Yet he carried off all the prizes. Some fellow-students proposed to travel over the world. He remarked: "Before making the tour of the world, suppose we were to make the tour of ourselves." For his attainments he had the offer of an abbey, but he said: "I will never become a priest for three reasons—I like honor and not honors; philosophy, not hair-cloth; the fair sex, not money." He sought, often in vain, for literary employment, and at first found nothing better than writing sermons. In time, however, he gained a prize at the Academy for an *éloge* on Molière, and, coming under the patronage of Mdme. Helvetius, attained a seat at the Academy himself. Offered a secretaryship by the Prince of Condé, lack of money forced him to accept, though he spent his time in devising means of leaving without giving offence. "My life is a tissue of striking contrasts with my principles. I do not like princes, and yet I am attached to a prince; my republican maxims are known, and yet I live among courtiers; I like poverty, and all my friends are among the rich; I fly from men, but men come after me; literature is my only consolation, and yet I am never with men of letters; I wished to be a member of the Academy, and now I never go there; I think that illusions are necessary to my existence, and yet I live without illusions." One friend he found at court, the Titanic Mirabeau; and, curiously enough, the man of action treated the man of thought as his master. In a letter to Chamfort, whom he called *une tête electrique*, Mirabeau says: "I left off my swaddling clothes too late. The conventions of mankind have fettered me too long; and when my bonds were somewhat loosened (for broken they never were) I still found myself bedecked with the liveries of opinion. But I was too passionate, and had sacrificed too much to fortune ever to become a man of nature. It is not in the midst of dangers that one can follow a regular route. Oh, if I had but known you ten years ago, what precipices and ravines might I not have avoided! Never a day passes, and never does anything serious occur, without my saying to myself, 'No, Chamfort would frown; let me not do so, let me not write that'; or, 'Chamfort will be pleased; for Chamfort's mind and soul are tempered in the same water as my own.'"

Chamfort embraced the revolution with ardor. His sympathies had always been with the poor, whom he called "the negroes of Europe." Rivarol said there would be no patronage of men of letters in a Republic. "So," replied Chamfort, "you are one of those who forgive all the harm the priests have done, on reflecting that, but for the priest, we should not have had the comedy of 'Tartufe.'" Rivarol reminded Chamfort that he was formerly one of those who pleaded the cause of nobility. "It was, you said, an intermediary between the king and the people." "Yes," replied Chamfort, "but I added something else; true, an intermediary, but as the hound is an intermediary between the huntsman and the hare."

Chamfort took part in the leading events of the Revolution, and became secretary of the famous Jacobin Club. He disliked windy speeches. Once he rose and said that he would speak on despotism and democracy. The following is his entire speech. "I everything; the rest nothing: there is despotism. I another; another I: there is democracy." To those who advocated slight reforms, he said, "You would have the Augean stables cleaned with a feather broom! Society must be refounded, as Bacon said the understanding must." Chamfort said that priests and kings prescribed suicide in order to rivet servitude. When thrown into prison by Robespierre, he found it intolerable. "It is neither life nor death; for me there is no middle course—I must either open my eyes on the blue expanse of heaven, or close them in the tomb." He regained his liberty, but had scarcely had time to breathe the free air, still watched by a gendarme, when his prison doors again opened to receive him. He swore that he would elude his pursuers; and, on their coming to seize him, placed a pistol against his forehead and fired; the ball shattered his nose and destroyed one of his eyes. Astonished at still finding himself alive, he took up a razor and tried to cut his throat; but death rejected him. It was in vain that, maddened by pain, he slashed at his breast and cut himself in every part of his body. His blood flowed from his wounds in streams, and he fell down exhausted, but still living. He dictated to those who came to drag him to prison: "I, Sebastian Roch Nicholas Chamfort, declare that I wish to die a free man, rather than be led like a slave to prison." He signed this thoroughly Roman declaration with a steady hand and a flourish traced in blood. Strange to say, he still lived on for many days, and when at length he succumbed he said: "I am at last about to quit this world, where the heart must break if it be not brazened."

WISE AND WITTY SAYINGS OF CHAMFORT.

It is asserted that Madame, the king's daughter, playing with one of her nurses, looked at her hand, and after counting her fingers, exclaimed, "What! you have five fingers too, like me?" And she counted them again to be sure.

La Fontaine, hearing someone mourn over the lot of the damned in the fire of hell, said, "I flatter myself they get used to it, and at last are like fishes in water."

A countryman divided his little property between his four sons, and went to live, now with one and now with another. He was asked on returning from one of these visits, "Well, how were you received? How did they treat you?" "They treated me like their own child," he replied; and from the lips of such a father the answer was sublime.

Monsieur de ——, who saw the source of human degradation in the establishment of the sect of Nazarenes and in Feudalism, said that, to be worth anything, it was necessary to un-French and un-baptise oneself, and become Greek or Roman in spirit.

Marmontel, in his youth, much sought the society of old Boindin, who was famous for his wit and his scepticism. The old man made an appointment with him at the Café Procope. "But we cannot speak there on philosophic matters." "Oh, yes, by means of a special language, a kind of *argot*." Then they made up a vocabulary: the soul was called *Margot*; religion, *Javotte*; liberty, *Jeanneton*; and

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God the Father, *M. de l'Etre*. A man dressed in black, with an unpleasant countenance, joined in the conversation, and said to Boindin, "Sir, may I venture to ask you who is that M. de l'Etre that behaves himself so badly, and gives you such dissatisfaction?" "Sir," replied Boindin, "he was a police spy." One can imagine the roars of laughter, the man being himself in that profession.

Louis XV. inquired of the Duke of Ayen (afterwards Marshal Noailles) if he had sent his plate to the mint. The duke replied, No. "But," the king said, "I have sent my own." "Ah, sire," rejoined the duke, "when Jesus Christ died on Good Friday he knew very well that he would rise again on Sunday."

Diderot was asked what kind of man was M. d'Epinay. "He is a man who has eaten two millions, without saying a sensible word or doing a good action."

A lady ninety years of age said to Fontenelle aged ninety-five, "Death has forgotten us." "Hush!" said Fontenelle with finger on lip.

Fontenelle had composed an opera in which there was a chorus of priests that scandalised the devout, and the Archbishop of Paris wanted to suppress it. "I don't meddle with his clergy," said Fontenelle, "and he shouldn't meddle with mine."

Monsieur —— begged of the Bishop of —— a country house which he never visited. The bishop replied, "Don't you know that one should always have a place one doesn't go to, but where one thinks he would be happy if he did go?" After a moment's silence Monsieur —— said, "That is true, and it is that which made the fortune of heaven."

A man of letters who was made to feel a certain nobleman's superiority of position, said to him, "My lord, I am not ignorant of what I ought to know; but I also know it is easier to be above me than beside me."

I have heard a devotee, speaking against those who discussed the articles of faith, say, "Sir, a true Christian does not investigate what he is ordered to believe. It is like taking a bitter pill; if you chew it you will never swallow it."

There are well-dressed follies as well as well-dressed fools.

The physical world appears the work of a powerful and good being, who has been obliged to leave to a malignant being the execution of a part of his plan. But the moral world seems to be the capricious work of a devil gone mad.

What is a philosopher? A man who opposes nature to law, reason to custom, his conscience to opinion, and his judgment to error.

The most wasted of all days is the one in which we have not laughed.

Society is composed of two great classes; those who have more dinner than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinner.

Live and let live, without hurting yourself or anyone else; that, I believe, is the sum of morality.

International Federation of Freethought.

LISBON CONGRESS—OCTOBER, 1913.

IT being the desire of the Executive of the N. S. S. to make such arrangements as will enable any members or friends of the movement who may wish to be present at the Lisbon Congress to travel with the official delegates of the N. S. S., I wish to call attention to the following particulars:—

The cheapest and most direct way of reaching Lisbon is by the Nederland Royal Mail Line from Southampton. The President of the Positivist Society, Mr. S. H. Swinny, who has made the journey, recommends this route.

The return fare from Southampton to Lisbon (second class) is £8 5s. For the convenience of those residing in the provinces, the Company issues a return ticket to Southampton from all important provincial towns at a fare and a quarter, available for forty days.

The shipping company do not provide hotel accommodation. This may be reckoned, from the time of reaching Lisbon, at about 11s. per day.

The Congress opens on October 4, and continues on October 6, 7, and 8; therefore, the only available boat for the outward journey is the one leaving Southampton at mid-day on September 30, the connecting train from London leaving Waterloo at 10 a.m. For the return journey the earliest boat leaves Lisbon on October 15, thus allowing ample time for sight-seeing. Tickets are also available by a boat leaving on October 17.

As the sea journey takes three days each way, friends must reckon on an absence from England of practically three weeks.

These particulars should assist in forming a rough estimate of the cost, but it may be possible to secure some reduction per head when the number of the party is definitely ascertained. I must, however, request that early notice be given me by friends proposing to join the party, as I am informed by the shipping agents that passages must be booked well in advance, and this applies also to hotel accommodation.

As has already been stated, the opening day of the Congress (Oct. 5) coincides with the date of the third celebration of the proclamation of the Portuguese Republic. Senhor Magalhaès Lima, the President of the Republic, I understand from Mr. Heaford, has expressed his pleasure at the prospect of the attendance of English Freethinkers, and our party will be included in the invitation to take part in the fêtes organised by the Government to celebrate the occasion.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

WHY DON'T HE LEND A HAND?

You say there is a God
  Above the boundless sky,
A wise and wondrous Deity
  Whose strength none can defy.
You say that he is seated
  Upon a throne most grand,
Millions of angels at his beck—
  Why don't he lend a hand?

See how the earth is groaning,
  What countless tears are shed!
See how the plague stalks forward,
  And brave and sweet lie dead.
Homes burn and hearts are breaking,
  Grim murder stalks the land;
You say he is omnipotent—
  Why don't he lend a hand?

Behold, injustice conquers!
  Pain curses every hour!
The good and true and beautiful
  Are trampled like the flower!
You say he is our father,
  That what he wills doth stand;
If he is thus almighty,
  Why don't he lend a hand?

What is this monarch doing
  Upon his golden throne,
To right the wrong stupendous,
  Give joy instead of moan?
With his resistless majesty,
  Each force at his command,
Each law his own creation—
  Why don't he lend a hand?

Alas! I fear he's sleeping,
  Or is himself a dream,
A bubble on thought's ocean,
  Our fancy's fading gleam.
We look in vain to find him
  Upon his throne so grand,
Then turn your vision earthward—
  'Tis *we* must lend a hand.

'Tis we must grasp the lightning,
  And plough the rugged soil;
'Tis we must beat back suffering,
  And plague and murder foil;
'Tis we must build the paradise
  And bravely right the wrong:
The God within us faileth,
  The God *within* is strong.

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Miss Mary Warner in the seventy-fourth year of her age. She was for twenty-five years the faithful housekeeper of Mr. Ed. Parker, 50 London-road, Plaistow, and remained to the end a firm and consistent Freethinker. Mr. Parker is a well-known and diligent worker in connection with the West Ham Branch, and we tender him our sincere sympathy in the loss of his old friend. The interment took place on Tuesday afternoon, July 8, when a Secular Service was conducted in the presence of a very large number of friends.—J. T. L.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): a. and e., Miss K. B. Kough, Lectures.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, M. Hope, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, "Beelzebub," "Creation or Evolution"; 7.30, J. Bellamy, "Who Knows? Who Cares?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. Rosetti, "From Lutheran Mission to Atheism in Holy Russia."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, A. Potts, "The Religion of Intolerance."

OUTDOOR.

CHORLEY (Market Square): Gilbert Manion, 3, "Christian Socialism Examined"; 6.30, "God."

LEIGH (Town Centre): Matthew Phair, 3, "A Prosecution for Profanity"; 6.30, "Socialism and Christianity."

WIGAN (Market Place): Robert Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6.30, "Why I Became a Secularist."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 30 SUNDAY, JULY 27, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

I have the confidence, which began with hope and strengthens with experience, that humanity is gaining in the stores of mind, and that the signification of this gift of life, that we should leave a better world for our successors is being understood.—GEORGE MEREDITH.

Christianity and Force.

IT is quite in accord with the policy of the religious press that not a word has appeared therein concerning the reported brutalities and massacres by the Christian powers in the Balkans. They have expressed regret that Bulgaria cannot agree with its late allies, and professed much sorrow over "this fratricidal war"—as though any war could be called brotherly—but for the rest there has been silence. I have only come across one implied exception to this, and with that I will deal in a moment. Meanwhile, those who know the readiness with which accounts of massacres are published, when it is a non-Christian power that is guilty of the crime, will appreciate the silence in this instance. The truth is, of course, that the first Balkan War made its primary and strongest appeal to Christian feelings; and before this every other consideration was of small weight.

What Christians in England expected was doubtless a wholesale conversion from Mohammedanism. Reports of such conversions actually appeared. Readers of the *Freethinker* may remember that, some weeks back, there were given in the "Acid Drops" columns some quotations from a writer in the *Christian World* describing how a number of villages had come over, practically in a body to Christianity. He assured his readers that no force was used in the conversion, the Mohammedan villagers had simply been hungering for an opportunity to embrace Christianity; doubtless attracted by the nobility of character exemplified among the Balkan Christians. The true story of those conversions appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of July 17, in connection with an account of the new "Bulgarian Atrocities." The account is from a statement by Mohammedans of standing, countersigned by several Bulgarian priests. The report states that, first of all, the Bulgarians converted the mosque into a church. This was at Doiran, the place of the reported conversions. Some thousands of people were also slaughtered.

> "The Musulmans at Guirian, Bala, and other villages were forcibly baptised by priests from Sofia. Many women and girls were outraged at Doiran. Others working in the fields, planting tobacco and maize, were assailed and dishonored in the daytime by Bulgarian soldiers."

The document is signed "in the name of the whole population of Kaya Doiran" by the Mufti and sixteen nobles. Then follows this statement, signed by Bulgarian priests:—

> "We Bulgarian priests declare and testify the above to be the pure truth, and that this is a free and unconstrained declaration, due simply to the love of truth."

This account puts a very neat finish to the elaborate story of the conversion of crowds of Mohammedan villagers, although we do not expect the correction will appear in the journal which published the original narrative.

It was said above that only one implied reference to the massacres had appeared in the religious press. This was to the effect that when the war spirit was aroused the better influences of Christianity were nullified, but that while the actions of Christians gave pleasure to the enemies of Christianity, others would discriminate between "the lofty and beautiful teachings of Christ" and the practice of some of its professors acting under the influence of racial hatred sharpened by a state of actual warfare. This is a very familiar apology for the misbehavior of Christians, and it has the fatal weakness of heavily discounting the value of Christianity as a civilising or even a moralising force. The lofty and beautiful teachings of Christ break down at the very point where they are most needed. Instead of curbing the passion of racial hatred, and humanising, so far as it can be humanised, the barbarous practice of warfare, we are warned that in such cases we must expect Christian principles to be completely ignored. The apology is thus bad enough as it stands, it is still worse when one examines it more carefully. Then it will be found that there is no more prolific cause of hatred and ill-will—not only in times of war but also in times of peace—than religion, and no worse offender in this respect than Christianity.

Let us look at a few facts. We will take them apart from the question of war, so that the subject may be looked at with a little less prejudice than would otherwise be the case. It will not be denied that Christians have quarrelled with each other, fought with each other, and murdered each other as the result of differences of religious opinion, nor will it be denied that differences in religion are the most intractable of all disagreements. Neither will it be questioned that usually people can express different opinions concerning science, or literature, or politics without a tithe of the ill-feeling aroused in religious discussions. And even though Christianity had no part in the perpetuation of this savage spirit, it, at all events, has been unable to abolish or even to restrain it. And it is a yet more strking fact that refinement in controversy and toleration of opposing opinions does not commence with religion and then pass on to other subjects. The movement is in quite an opposite direction. It commences with non-religious subjects; and habits engendered elsewhere exert a gradually refining influence on religion. It is life that humanises religion. Religion does nothing to humanise life.

Here is still another fact that hardly admits of dispute. Christianity has not only failed to induce people to exercise a common courtesy in differences of opinion, but intolerance and persecution have been more intense and more sustained under Christianity than under any other religion in the civilised world. The Balkan War gave Christians the opportunity of holding up Mohammedanism as a religion of persecution. That it has persecuted none will dispute. It is a religion, and carries the iniquity common to the species. But, as an historic fact, it has been far more tolerant than Christianity. Jews and Christians were allowed to live at peace under Mohammedan rule—under trifling restrictions—were allowed the exercise of their religion, and permitted to hold public office at a time when unbelievers were

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being hunted down like vermin by the Church and Jews compelled to wear a distinguishing dress so that they might be the more easily exposed to public outrage. Moreover, in Europe all laws against heresy were of Christian origin. In the old Roman Empire liberty of worship was universal. So long as one treated the religion of the State with a degree of decency, one might worship any god one pleased. And when Christians were proceeded against under laws that were not primarily aimed at liberty of worship or opinion, the procedure was formal, the trial public, time given for defence, and the behavior of judges showed their dislike to the prosecution.*

But with Christianity, instead of persecution being spasmodic, it was persistent. It was not taken up by the authorities with reluctance; it was inculcated by them as one of the chief virtues. Nor was it directed against a sectarian power that threatened the power of the State. The worst periods of Christian persecution were precisely those when the State had least to fear from internal dissension. The people persecuted were not men and women who were guilty of neglect of social duty. On the contrary, they were serving the State by the encouragement of literature, science, philosophy, and commerce. One of the Roman emperors, the great Trajan, had advised magistrates not to search for Christians, and to treat anonymous communications with contempt. Christians carried the search for heresy into a man's own household. It used the child in order to obtain evidence against the parent, the wife to secure the condemnation of the husband; it tortured to provide dictated confessions, and placed boxes at church doors to receive anonymous accusations. It established an index of forbidden books—an institution unknown to the whole of the ancient world. The Roman trial was open, and in accordance with established form. The accused could hear the charge, examine witnesses, cite witnesses in his defence. The Christian trial for heresy was usually in secret; special forms were used, no witnesses for the defence were allowed, special punishments were created. Persecution was raised to a fine art. Under Christian auspices it assumed the most damnable forms known in the whole history of mankind.

To what was this development of all that is most ugly in human nature due? One cant reply is that it was due to the natural intolerance of human nature. This, however, hardly meets the case. It is the same human nature that meets us in religion that we are familiar with in sociology or in science. And yet people hold different opinions in these fields without it ever dawning on the minds of the vast majority that the method of the persecutor should be invoked. Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists may be seen walking, talking, and eating together. It is significant, by the way, that the political question on which feeling is most bitter, that of Home Rule, is the one in which the subject of religion enters largely. Darwinists and anti-Darwinists have never suggested imprisonment for each other as a way out of their differences. Human nature behaves itself with tolerable decency in its different views of other subjects; why should religion form the solitary exception? Is it the subjects that have humanised men and women. If so, why is it that religion has not had an equally favorable influence? Or is it that men and women have raised the subjects to a better level? In that case, why should religion prove itself so intractable to civilising influences? In either case the verdict on religion must be condemnatory.

Another cant reply is that people have misunderstood, or have failed to rise to the level of Christian teaching. The reply is really a condemnation. There must be something radically wrong about a religion that is so persistently misunderstood. And not for a day or generation, but for hundreds of years. Neither is it so misunderstood by one here and there, by men of little weight or influence. The greatest of Christian leaders, right up to modern times, have upheld the right of persecution. The forcible suppression of heresy has been taken by them to be one of the primary duties of the Christian State. It is strange that Christianity from the outset should have been so subject to this fatal misconception. It is the reverse of the usual order of things. Usually a teaching is best understood at the beginning; it becomes corrupted later. But Christianity was, we are asked to believe, never understood at all. It was misunderstood at its inception—it was misunderstood by both its teachers and its followers; it was misunderstood right up to our own day. And yet, wonder of wonders! it is this religion, continually misunderstood, mistaught, wrongly used, that has never really existed in practice, but which has yet exerted a supremely moralising influence on the world. That is the greatest miracle of all.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

* I am taking the persecutions of the early Christians for granted; but, as a matter of demonstrable fact, they have been very much exaggerated, and many of the related ones never occurred. The whole story of Christian persecution is so foreign to the Roman temper of government that it must be regarded with the greatest suspicion. It is a pity that someone competent does not subject the story to a critical examination. The story of ten persecutions is obviously mythical, being avowedly based upon there having been ten plagues in Egypt.

Experiment and Experience.

IT is frankly acknowledged by many prominent divines that "there never was a day when it was easy to believe the Christian Gospel." The late Principal Rainy was in the habit of saying that "God never meant it to be an easy thing to believe." Belief is thus treated as a voluntary act, an act of which every human being is supposed to be capable. Volumes have been published in which the Will to Believe is regarded as a reality. The will to believe is possessed by all, though comparatively few put it in operation. In the New Testament, the refusal to believe is the one sin that damns the soul to all eternity. As a matter of fact, however, belief or unbelief is an intellectual necessity, over which the will has no control. A man believes or disbelieves simply because he must, neither act being a matter of choice. Every statement made is either true or false. If we know it to be true, we cannot disbelieve it; if we know it to be false, belief in it is an impossibility. This is a fact from which there is no escape, no matter what the preacher may say to the contrary. Now, religion begins in faith. Religious beliefs precede and are the cause of religious emotions and practices. The divines often appeal to what they call the consciousness of God; but whether such a consciousness is real or imaginary, it certainly does not exist in the absence of the belief in God. This being the case, the question naturally arises, Are religious beliefs verifiable? Can the Christian religion be proved to be true? What are the evidences upon which its apologists rely?

Two new Handbooks of Christian Apologetics have recently been published by two first-class Christian scholars, Principal Garvie and Dr. T. R. Glover. Dr. Glover entitles his book *The Christian Tradition and its Verification*. It is a work of distinct merit, and has been welcomed by the theologians as a fully convincing defence of the Christian faith. We may rest assured that the arguments advanced by Dr. Glover are the very best available, and that if he does not make a thoroughly good case for Christianity, the task is impossible of accomplishment. This is how he puts the problem:—

> "There are three questions which we may ask about any religion—quite simple questions. What will it do for you? What will it do to protect other people against you? How far does it hold open the door for the future?" (p. 56).

Unfortunately, in dealing with those questions, Dr. Glover allows his judgment to be warped by prejudice. He admits that things are deplorably bad in

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European and American society; but he rejoices in the conviction that "they are bad, nevertheless, with the continual correction of a Christian background" (p. 61). In the absence of this background, we are told industrial enormities, flagrant cruelty, and open uncleanness would continue unchecked, and gain rather than lose in volume. We do not believe it, and our author does not justify his assertion. He alludes to the ancient world as containing noble-minded and good-hearted characters, but denies that they exerted much influence upon their fellow-beings. In spite of them, the gladiatorial shows continued to flourish. Well, what has the Christian background done for Christendom? Has it put a stop to the bull-fights in Spain, or to fox and deer hunting in our own land? Has it rid us of sweated industries, flagrant cruelty, and open uncleanness? We affirm, without a moment's hesitation, that Christianity has never done anything for Europeans and Americans which has tended to establish its claim to Divine origin and power.

Dr. Glover is grossly unjust to the Buddha and the Stoic. Fancy a scholar, at this time of day, charging Gotama with taking the worth out of life, and characterising every non-Christian religion as follows:—

> "The plain fact is that, in the long run, despair is at the heart of every religion without Christ; and if man or woman is to get through the world at all, it must be by the hardening or deadening of the more sensitive parts of human nature. Marcus Aurelius' *Diary* is a sort of breviary of despair" (p. 63).

Buddhism is pre-eminently a religion of hope. Has our author never heard what the Dhammapada says about Right Rapture, or the state of bliss to which every true Buddhist attains? "It is in very bliss we dwell," "Among men full of worries we continue calm," "We will become feeders on joy"—such are the phrases in which the followers of the Buddha describe themselves. Confucianism, likewise, teaches that man is master of his own destiny, and can by complete sincerity give its full development to his nature. Mohammedanism urges its devotees to observe justice, to banish hatred, to resist evil, and to strive to excel each other in good works. Dr. Glover avers that "the belief in Jesus has given men a keener insight and a warmer and quicker sympathy, waked the dedicated spirit, and taught new ways of service." It would be more accurate to say that the belief in Jesus has made men so overweeningly conceited that they are everlastingly singing their own praises and vilifying the characters of all others. It is a notorious fact that Christians are the most intolerant and cruel people on the face of the earth. If you want to know what Christianity has done for the world read the history of the Church. You will then learn with what colossal cruelty the Lamb's bride pursued for years and exterminated the Albigenses and how horribly brutal was the administration of the Holy Inquisition in Spain. And what do you see to-day? Christian Europe an armed camp, more war-like and war-prepared than ever before, Christ's people, with the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, slaying one another by the thousand under the banner of the Cross. If we are to judge Christianity by what it has done for Christendom, it stands utterly discredited and deserving of speedy extinction.

Dr. Glover's supreme appeal is to Christian experience. He tells us how Paul felt under the spell of the Nazarene, how the love of Christ flooded his whole being and constrained him in and out of season to preach the Gospel, and how in the Master's service he considered it a privilege to endure persecution. We have no desire to throw any suspicion upon the sincerity of the Apostle's passion of love to Christ, or upon the reality of his zeal in his service; but we are persuaded that his ecstatic experience cannot be adduced as an argument for the objective existence of a God of love and a redeeming Christ. It was not God, but Paul's faith in God, that threw him into such raptures of delight. God has never been seen or heard, but the belief that he is accounts for every religious experience. Experiments are not possible in this region, while in science they are the main road to knowledge. Dr. Glover says:—

> "The results of scientific experiment are patent to sense. Of course, the values of these results are not so patent. They require sometimes a vastly higher power of intellect to grasp them in their relation to one another, and to the whole body of established fact, than is required to make the experiments from which they are gained. But in the main the results of scientific experiment are patent and clear, and they lead to the establishment of facts which any competent person can verify" (p. 41).

Religion takes us into a realm in which experiment is absolutely out of the question and experience is the only form of verification furnished. A well-known psychologist explains religion as a matter of auto-suggestion, and we know that auto-suggestion may occur without any reference to external facts. Dr. Glover makes merry over this theory; and asks, "Why should auto-suggestion, when it takes the form or direction of the Christian religion, work so uniformly towards sanity and morals?" and we answer that it does not work so uniformly towards sanity and morals. Religious experience and morality are not vitally related. Devout people are not necessarily sane and moral; sometimes they are quite the reverse.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XI.

(Continued from p. 454.)

> "This is an era of competition; and if it be true, as I have read, that there are now over fifty distinct societies, representing as many forms of Protestantism, contending for the credit of bringing the Chinese within their respective folds, the antagonism of interests must be somewhat severe. In the race for results which have to be presented to meetings at home, and to form the subject of 'reports,' the precepts of justice which form Article VIII. of the treaty are liable to be lost sight of, and to yield to considerations of a more strictly mundane character.
>
> "This is exactly what the Chinese complain of. They urge that they never get a fair hearing. The people lament the supineness of their rulers, which permits their interests to be sacrificed. The governing classes feel that as between the people and the central authorities they are apt to be between the devil and the deep sea. The central authorities have before their eyes Ministers Plenipotentiary with ultimatums backed by ironclads in the offing."—T. C. HAYLLAR, *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895.
>
> "Looking upon their [Catholic missionaries] polished, gentle, and courteous demeanor, they appear the best of men, and listening to their patriotic conversation, it is not to be wondered at that their influence, however problematical, should appear desirable. But they are not to be trusted, and however devoted and good they may seem, they lose their heads the instant that the interests of their religion or congregation appears in danger. They then become false egoists, hard and covetous, shrinking from no means, not even the sacrifice of *your* life, to enable them to reach either their own ends, or those imposed upon them by their position."—ERN. SIMON, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life* (1887), p. 165.

THE Tai-ping Rebellion—which attempted to substitute Christianity for Confucianism in China—was eventually suppressed by General Gordon. No one but a Christian was considered capable of exorcising the seventy devils of Christian fanaticism which the missionaries had loosed on China.

The popular "lives" of this Christian hero contain wholesale suppression of the truth and suggestion of the false. The truth as to the Christian origin, and the missionary support, of the Tai-pings is suppressed.

It is falsely claimed that Gordon raised and trained the Chinese troops of the "Ever-victorious Army" (which was not ever-victorious), whereas it was an American named Ward, a brave and fearless leader, who, after being several times severely wounded—the palate of his mouth being destroyed by a bullet upon one occasion—was at last killed in action, Gordon only taking over the command of the force after his death and against the wishes of the Chinese, who wished to appoint Macartney to the command. Macartney, who had entered the Chinese

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service, and in whom the Chinese Government placed every confidence, was also largely instrumental in Gordon's ultimate success, for by almost superhuman exertions he founded an arsenal at Sunkiang for the manufacture of ammunition, and himself raised Chinese troops and took part in the operations in the field.

It would take us too far afield to deal with the real life of Gordon in these articles. It is time an independent life of Gordon (for which there is now plenty of material) was undertaken by a competent authority. It would present a very different picture to the melodramatic-Sunday-school-prize version which now prevails.

For instance, we read of Gordon leading his Chinese troops to the attack, armed only a walking-stick, himself unharmed among the storm of bullets, while his followers fell thickly round him. Quite on a level with the Theosophical fairy tales of the Mahatma, who, when fired at with rifles, calmly waved the bullets to right and left.

Now, Gordon—with the colossal egotism of all fanatics, who believe that the Creator of fifty million suns spends his time in watching over, guiding, and protecting them—thought that this escape was clearly due to the interposition of Providence, and was thus still further confirmed in his religious beliefs. But there is always a rational explanation for the supernatural, and this was no exception to the rule.

It should be borne in mind that the Tai-pings are the only important body of Chinese, in modern times, to extend a welcome to Europeans. The Englishman who served with them, and whose work we have quoted, observes: "To those who have experienced the ordinary dislike of foreigners by the Chinese, the surprising friendliness of the Tai-pings was most remarkable. They welcomed Europeans as 'brethren from across the sea,' and claimed them as fellow-worshipers of 'Yesu.'" And this friendliness remained unchanged, he says, "even when their dearest relatives were being slaughtered by my countrymen, or delivered over to the Manchoos to be tortured to death." *

And this is the secret of Gordon's seemingly miraculous escape. Of this we have very definite evidence, for Mrs. Archibald Little, in her *Life of Li Hung Chang*, cites a letter from a contemporary paper at Canton, giving the testimony of an actual eye-witness, who declares:—

> "Often have I seen the deadly musket struck from the hand of a dastardly Englishman (tempted by love of loot to join our ranks) when he attempted, from his place of safety, to kill Gordon, who ever rashly exposed himself. This has been the act of a chief, yea, of the Shield King himself; how then can we be accused of blind hatred even to our enemies?" †

So it was the hands of the men he was fighting against who preserved Gordon's life from his own countrymen.

The story of the capture of Soochow and the capitulation of the Tai-ping leaders to Gordon, who pledged his word for their safety—Li Hung Chang, and Ching, the Chinese commander, offering them a free pardon and Government employment—is better known, from the treachery of Li Hung Chang, who, in the absence of Gordon, ordered the chiefs to be hamstrung upon their declining to kneel, and then had them beheaded. It is often stated that Gordon went in search of Li Hung Chang with a loaded revolver; this is not true, but it is true he searched for him. The wily Li—who had received warning, probably from Macartney or Hart—was not to be found, or most probably that astute diplomatist's head would have made acquaintance with the famous walking-stick.

Unsuccessful in his search, Gordon wrote a furious letter denouncing his cruelty and breach of faith The principal passages, says Demetrius Boulger:—

> "were that Li Hung Chang should at once resign his post of Governor of Kiangsu, and give up the seals of office to Gordon, so that he might put them in commission until the Emperor's pleasure should be ascertained; or that, failing that step, Gordon would forthwith proceed to attack the Imperialists, and retake from them all the places captured by the Ever-Victorious Army, for the purpose of handing them back again to the Taepings." *

Macartney, acting the part of peacemaker, took a letter from Li Hung Chang to Gordon, who had gone to Quinsan on board the *Hyson*. Macartney arrived in the middle of the night. To cite Boulger again:—

> "Before day had really broken, Gordon sent down word that he would see him, and Macartney went upstairs to an ill-lighted room, when he found Gordon sitting on his bedstead. Hen fond Gordon sobbing, and before a word was exchanged, Gordon stooped down, and, taking something from under the bedstead, held it up in the air, exclaiming:—
>
> "'Do you see that? Do you see that?'
>
> "The light through the small Chinese windows was so faint that Macartney had at first some difficulty in discerning what it was, when Gordon again exclaimed:—
>
> "'It is the head of the Lar Wang, foully murdered!' and with that burst into hysterical tears." †

Seeing that it was useless to attempt to reason with Gordon in this highly hysterical condition, Macartney retired; later, at breakfast, Gordon would listen to nothing, but ordered the *Hyson* to be got ready, with a party of infantry, to attack Li Hung Chang and the Imperialist forces. Macartney borrowed a horse and rode post haste to Li Hung Chang to warn him, and also to bring up his own troops ready to oppose the advance of Gordon, who actually moved out of Quinsan with the intention of carrying out his threats, but returned there when the flotilla had proceeded half-way to Soochow, by which time, says Boulger, "he had fortunately reflected on the situation, and a sanguinary struggle was averted" (p. 108).

So far, Gordon's indignation, however hysterical and melodramatic it might be, was worthy of all praise. But one would think, after this terrible experience, that Gordon would be more careful how he delivered the captured Tai-pings into the hands of their enemies. It is quite evident that he did not regard them as the common robbers and brigands of popular imagination. For it is a fact that the very night after the treacherous murder of the Tai-ping leaders, as Boulger records, "The principal captor of Soochow [Gordon] was thus a prisoner in the hands of the Taepings during the evening and night of December 6" (p. 102), and was allowed to depart unharmed in the early morning. Lest we be thought guilty of exaggeration, we give the sequel, in the words of Mrs. Archibald Little, as given in her *Life of Li Hung Chang*:—

> "People with a taste for bloodshed can certainly get enough of it in the Tai-ping Rebellion.....the ground soaked, the rivers choked, the dogs gorged, the stench and all the rest of it. Mr. Howard puts it forcibly, as usual:—
>
> "'Two weeks afterwards we stormed and captured their position, driving out the rebels into the Imperialists' lines. 10,000 were taken prisoners; about 4,000, old men and boys, were stripped entirely naked and sent adrift; the others, about 6,000, were put in a large compound and beheaded. It was an awful sight to see Li Hung Chang's men hacking at them. The bodies of the eight foreigners taken by the rebels were found with their heads off and their bodies mutilated.'
>
> "This was after Gordon and Li had become friendly again, Mr. [now Sir Robert] Hart having persuaded Gordon that he had judged Li too harshly. So Gordon had led his men to victory, and this was the outcome of it all. Certainly, war is not a kid-glove affair, but it is incredible that this was the highest use to which to put a hero-saint—to win victories for the Chinese Imperialists' forces who acted after this fashion, and then unconditionally to hand the poor conquered nation over to the Manchu dynasty, from which the Tai-pings had sought to free it. They, poor people, were certainly imperfectly enough instructed in the doctrines of Chris-

* Lin-Le, *History of the Ti-ping Rebellion*; cited by Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 67.

† Mrs. A. Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, p. 21.

* Boulger, *Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, p. 105.

† *Ibid.*, p. 106.

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tianity from the outset, and power and luxury not only had temptations for them, but also attracted to their side nearly all the needy daredevils in China. But what was the Imperialist side that we should send our men to fight for them, and watch Li Hung Chang's men hacking 6,000 men to death, after turning 4,000 old men and boys out naked to perish? And these were small numbers compared to those that were often killed. Captain Roderick Dew, R.N., tells how, in the great populous city of Ningpo, he found not a living soul, and Mr. Archibald Little has often told me how, as a young man, he has ridden through large cities and found only corpses." *

This throws a somewhat different complexion upon the actions of General Gordon to that given in the popular "lives" of him. A great deal concerning Gordon has yet to be revealed. Sir Henry Norman observes in this connection:—

> "Opinions differ among students of Chinese history as to whether it would not have been better for China had the Tai-pings succeeded. I came upon many curious reminiscences of General Gordon up and down the coast of China. He was a man of remarkable virtues and of no less weaknesses, and the stories of him which survive in the Far East would make very interesting reading. I do not give them, however, because public opinion seems to have determined that this many-sided man shall be known under one aspect only of his life—that of Hero. I will only say that there is correspondence of his, still in existence in China, some of which I have read, which should in the interest of history be published." †

There has been too much of this burking of facts regarding the life of Gordon, and, indeed, of the whole Tai-ping Rebellion from beginning to end. *But the inexpugnable fact remains; and by no artifice can it be explained away—that, but for the missionaries, there would have been no Tai-ping Rebellion. Therefore, the missionaries are solely responsible for the awful carnage which ensued.*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Another Leeds Fight.

WHILE we were away from home last week we heard from the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, that the trouble with the police and the Town Council at Leeds was taking a serious development, and a public demonstration was being organised to take place on Woodhouse Moor the next Sunday (July 20). The time was then too short for intermediate correspondence; and as our advice was sought we were obliged to write to Mr. E. Pack, on behalf of the Leeds Branch, direct. We wrote a long and careful letter dealing with every aspect of the matter at issue, and we learn that it was found useful and highly appreciated. We also sent down some 200 copies of the *Freethinker*, by request, for sale at the demonstration.

* * *

This Leeds matter has been mentioned in our columns before. The Leeds Town Council went one worse than the London County Council. The latter refused *all* permits for collections at public meetings; the former refused a permit only to the local Branch of the National Secular Society. This singling out of one Society on which to impose a disability was tried at Chicago some twelve months ago, but the bigoted despotism of the police was foiled at last by an upright and courageous magistrate who declared that public rights and rules should be the same for all citizens, otherwise the police and not the law would govern the United States. He found that the action of the police was unconstitutional, and dismissed the case before him. That ended, once for all, we hope, the singling out of movements the police do not like to be deprived of a common right of citizenship. Some such lesson as this is needed at Leeds.

The Leeds N. S. S. Branch was bound to *do* something. The simplest thing was to set about exercising the right which the police assumed a power to suppress. A demonstration was organised for Sunday on Woodhouse Moor, by way of testing the alleged power of the police, and bringing the question before a court of justice. But in the meantime the police attempted a flank movement. And a very pretty movement it was.

* * *

They issued one of their old summonses against Mr. Pack for "language." When they got him in court they proceeded to develop some strange charges. They represented him as using language that could hardly occur to anyone who was not mad or drunk; language which no English audience would stand from any speaker for a single minute. They also alleged that he was inebriated,—which must have been an afterthought, or they would have arrested him on that charge in the first place; moreover, there was no suggestion of drunkenness in the summons, as Mr. Pack very properly pointed out. But, after all, what we think of the police evidence is of less importance than what the Stipendiary Magistrate thought. Mr. Atkinson dismissed the summons and passed on to the next business.

* * *

The demonstration was held on Woodhouse Moor. There was a tremendous crowd of orderly people who voted unanimously for the following resolution:—

> "That this mass meeting recognising that constitutional methods have failed to secure for the Leeds Branch of the National Secular Society the same privileges accorded to other public bodies, endorses its action in challenging this grossly inequitable attitude of the governing authorities and condemns that attitude as a public menace and unworthy of the best traditions of the City of Leeds."

Mr. Pack acted as chairman. He informs us that everything was done in the spirit of our letter of advice and encouragement, portions of which were read to the meeting and greatly applauded. Messrs. Jackson, Weir, Killip, and other Branch members took up the collection, sold the literature, and delivered the speeches. Everything went off with gratifying enthusiasm on the part of the crowd and self-control on the part of the organisers and speakers.

* * *

The next move lies with the police, who took the names and addresses of the "chief conspirators." If they issue summonses for collecting money and selling literature without the permit, which is granted to every other Society in Leeds, the case will come before Mr. Atkinson. We have great hopes of his intelligence and impartiality. But if the case has to be carried farther the Leeds Branch is going to fight it as far as possible, and it will have our best assistance as well (we feel sure) as the best assistance of the N. S. S. Executive.

G. W. F.

TREE-ISMS.

To be oneself is the greatest luxury in the world, and the most expensive.

A reverence for buttons is one of the most curious attributes of our common humanity.

Philosophy is a filly got by Common Sense out of Misfortune.

A gentleman is one who does not care whether he is one or not.

Napoleon's most useful contribution to the happiness of mankind was the constitution he gave to the Comedie Francaise.

The really strong man is unconscious of his originality.

It is men like Christ, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Goethe, rather than the heroic slaughterers of history, who have the abiding influence in the advancement of mankind.

People wear the habits of their mind ready made.

A certain amount of injustice must accompany all great reforms.—*Sir Herbert Tree, "Thoughts and After Thoughts."*

* Mrs. A. Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, pp. 41-2.

† Sir Henry Norman, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East* (1900), p. 6.

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Acid Drops.

"It goes without saying," the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to his "Dear Mr. Lansbury"—"that anything relating to the well-being of those upon whom our industrial conditions press with harshness will always enlist my deep interest and sympathy." If it goes without saying, why say it?

We never thought the Bishops were fools, nor is it one of the charges we ever suggested against them. We know they were clever enough. They don't surprise us by the new line they are taking in defence of their big salaries. Some of them hint what the Bishop of London declares. That right reverend father in God's salary is £10,000 a year, and he says that he loses on his job. Others plead that it costs them half their salary, and sometimes more, to keep up their positions and palaces. But it costs every man with a good income a terrible lot of it to keep up his residence and social position. That is where most of the money goes. In this respect a bishop does not differ from other people. To deduct all such expenses, and to treat the balance as his income, is to confuse salary and pocket-money.

The Bishop of Winchester has a glorious old palace and grounds at Farnham, situated on a natural terrace commanding a magnificent view over half the county of Surrey. The gardens and hothouses—with their beautiful flowers, and rich grapes, and other fruit—match the lovely grass which springs under your feet like three-piled Turkey carpet. Only a vandal would propose the destruction of such a place, and when the Church has to give it up some of us will know what to do with it. Its upkeep at present is said to be between £2,000 and £3,500. This is not a very precise estimate. Suppose we split the difference and call it £2,750. How, we ask, does that justify the Bishop's groans? His stipend, paid to him with the regularity of the seasons by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, is £6,500 a year. This leaves a balance of £3,750 a year. That sum his lordship has at his absolute disposal. Only £3,750. Think of it! What a martyrdom the poor man's life must be! Yet a lot of men would jump at his lordship's chance if it were floating their way. If it were not for the preaching, the praying, and the other nonsensical "duties" of the Bishop's post—if it were merely a question of keeping up the noble building and its beautiful grounds at a cost of £2,750 per annum, with £3,750 per annum in addition as personal pocket-money—we rather think we should be inclined to accept the post ourselves. If we refused it we should certainly not do so with any murderous violence. But we don't suppose there will be any vacancy at Farnham Palace until the Bishop of Winchester is *taken* away to *make* room for another martyr. Bishops grumble, but they "stick it." Bless them!

It is rather a pity that the Protestant Churches have not the practice of canonisation. If they had we feel certain that there would soon be a Saint Pierpont Morgan in the calendar. We have read no end of eulogies as to his religious convictions, and in the July *Century* there is a further testimony from Mr. J. B. Gilder. He was a man of faith, it appears, so completely so, that it appeared to him a real and tangible thing, transmissible by legal process. Religion was "fundamental in his own nature, and as potent a force as any that shaped his actions." We do not doubt it. We believe it is equally true of Rockefeller. And in both cases it pays. The pity is, we repeat, that Protestantism cannot perpetuate the memory of men such as these in a Saints' Calendar. The Catholic Church has the calendar, but, to do it justice, it does not lay itself out to exalt to religious eminence multi-millionaires. That it leaves to Protestantism.

It is quite a long time since a blasphemer was struck dead by Divine Benevolence. According to the *Universe*, a Catholic paper, the thing has happened in America, the land of tall buildings and tall statements. The story goes that a miner, named Angelo Rotundo, at Trinidad, Colorado, U.S.A., parodied the death and resurrection of Christ, and lost his balance and never rose again. The tale is vouched for by Father Principle, S.J. If the tale had been told without principle we could hardly have believed it.

The *Daily Sketch* has been discussing childrens' names, and says the old-fashioned titles are dropping out. There are no Sarahs and Marys nowadays. Maybe, some up-to-date commentator will alter these Biblical names to Sally and Marie.

Citizen Rockefeller, the Christian multi-millionaire, visited the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, Cleveland, and the parson described him as "a rosebush in the Lord's garden." That parson never calls the fellows on the rocks blush-roses.

The *Montreal Star* of June 30, reported a Catholic meeting held at Three Rivers. The theme of discussion—if discussion it can be called where they all think as the priest does—was elementary education, and the summary of Dr. Baril's speech is decidedly interesting. We make the following extract:—

> "Dr. Baril spoke of the public school as the battleground on which were arrayed the contending forces of the Church and the body of Freemasons, Freethinkers, and Atheists, whom he classed together, and whose object, he alleged, was to strike at the Church through the school. He charged them with making efforts to secure Godless schools for Canada, and said such efforts should be vigorously resisted by faithful Catholics.
>
> "The speaker defined the leading principles of the Association in regard to education as first and foremost absolute unquestioning submission to the Church and its right to control in moral and religious education; secondly, the assertion of the parents' duty to watch over the child; lastly, the exclusion of the Government from the sphere of education.
>
> "'The Church,' he said, "has the sacred right to direct the education of its youth and to see that none of the books of instruction are allowed to contain anything in the least injurious to the doctrines of the Catholic Church. It is the business of the State to give protection and financial assistance, if need be, but not to take charge of national education.'"

All the State has to do with education is to find the money. The Church will see to the rest. A fine thing—for the Church. But those who find the money are apt to have ideas of their own, and even to demand control of the expenditure. Which is awkward—for the Church.

In connection with that same gathering, Mgr. F. X. Cloutier bewailed the fact that the Church was in danger from "the growth of an anti-Christian civilisation." He was specially severe on Freemasons and Jews. The latter ought never to have been allowed to enter Canada. French-Canadian Catholics would be able to retain their rights if they only stuck together instead of splitting up over political divisions. What those "Catholic rights" are is not difficult to see. They mean that the Catholic Church, that is the Catholic priests—for it must be remembered that the Catholic laymen are no part of the Catholic Church, which is a pure Ecclesiasticism — should govern the whole Province of Quebec, and, if possible, the whole of Canada. We note that this arrogant priest denounced "the mistaken idea that religion must be kept out of politics." "A good Catholic," he said, "in private life must be a good Catholic in public life"—and obey the Church's orders in both cases. That is what his lordship, like all other priests, means by "the rights of our faith."

Sir Griffith Boscawen, M.P., speaking at a Church Protest meeting against the Welsh Disestablishment Bill at Southend-on-Sea, poured scorn on the suggestion of employing "God's" money for washhouses and museums. Evidently, this gentleman thinks cleanliness a very bad second to godliness.

Is it wicked to play whist? is the question asked in a religious periodical. It is—the way some people play it.

According to tradition, if July 15 is wet, the next forty days will be rainy, and we suppose that the same principle should apply to a dry St. Swithin's Day. There have been many wet St. Swithin's Days, but there is no record in which all the forty following days were wet. The record of the days following a dry St. Swithin's Day is, if anything, worse. Cold statistics prove that superstition and fact are in direct conflict; but, as usual, it has no effect upon the believers in the nonsense.

The Bishops of St. Albans and Barking have left their work of soul-saving for extended holidays. Times have changed since the fishing-nets of the Apostles were sold to the rag and bone dealers. "Blessed be ye poor"!

Dr. Horton tells us that in 1880 the great names were Huxley, Tyndall, and Spencer. Then he adds, "Haeckel still lives, representing the thought of 1880, a somewhat pathetic and antiquated figure, from whom all interest has disappeared, because his point of view has become practically meaningless for the modern world." A bigger lie was never told. Dr. Horton must know that Haeckel's works are read in this country at the present time by tens of

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thousands of admirers, and that his point of view, so far from being "practically meaningless for the modern world," is the point of view of practically every living biologist. Indeed, less than a year ago, this reverend gentleman complained that the intellect of the Protestant world was now engaged on the task of getting rid of God and Christ. That was immediately after the "strange proceedings" at the Dundee meeting of the British Association, when Haeckel's point of view was all-dominant. Dr. Horton is anything but consistent.

In the *Christian Commonwealth* for July 16, there is an article entitled "The Reinstatement of Prayer," in which we are assured that the old-fashioned view of prayer is no longer tenable. That is to say, the Biblical conception of prayer is out of date. "*Laborare est orare* (to pray is to work) is the motto of our age." Prayer originated in fear, and fear was the offspring of ignorance. In proportion as ignorance and fear vanish the inclination to pray ceases, even among those who still nominally believe in God. Atheism excludes prayer altogether.

The Education Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference says in its report that it stands "for Christian education under public control." The position is quite unjustifiable, and the phrasing is simply dishonest. *Christian* education ought not to be a public matter at all. It is a private concern. The only difference between advocating Christian education or Mohammedan education as matters of public concern, is a difference of numbers. There are more Christians than Mohammedans, hence the Christian claim. And the "Free Church" Wesleyan Methodists ought to realise that the number of people who support a speculative opinion has no bearing upon the question of whether that opinion should be made a question of public policy. Moreover, public control here means, very clearly, *Christian* control. The word "public" is a cant word, only introduced because the majority of the population are Christians—nominally so, at all events. Clearly, Methodists do not mean that Christian education is to be controlled by Buddhists, Jews, and Freethinkers. What they really mean is, that public power and public money is to be used to teach Christianity, and that all other beliefs are to be ignored. We do not desire that any other form of religious or non-religious belief should be considered. We are only desirous that all should be put on one side.

The *Catholic Times* put the logic of the situation in a recent issue in the following sentence:—

> "Either all religious teaching must be allowed public money in support, or none. And evidence is forthcoming that the secular solution is making its way in favor with the Wesleyans. If Free Churchmen nail their flag to the Cowper-Temple mast, they will certainly lose the mast, and probably the ship."

We believe the ship will be lost any way. But to cry out against State patronage of religion, and demand the State enforcement of religion in the schools, only hastens its destruction.

Six years ago the Rev. Frank Ballard was appointed by the Home Mission Committee of the Methodist Conference as a travelling infidel-slayer. Since then he has been travelling up and down the country—he himself says that he has travelled 50,000 miles and addressed a million and a half of people—and glowing accounts of his successes have appeared from time to time. The Committee is now recommending to the Plymouth Conference that a Committee should be appointed to look into the whole question of the Christian Evidence Mission, and that no new appointment be made at the present Conference. This, we may safely assume, is the Committee's way of reporting that the Mission has been a failure. And what otherwise could it be? Mr. Ballard could not hope to convert Freethinkers. They know the substance of his arguments before he gives them voice. That the growth of Freethought can be stayed by a Christian Evidence missioner is as wild and fantastic an idea as ever existed. He may save one here and there from straying out of the fold; but, on the other hand, he is all the time suggesting doubts to the others. The growth of Freethought is part of a world-process of development, and if the whole of the Methodist Church turned itself into a Christian Evidence Mission it would make very little difference. Religion carries within itself the seed of dissolution, as surely as Freethought contains the germ of certain growth.

Amongst those who escaped alive from the Cromer express smash a fortnight ago was the Rev. Len Broughton, of Christ Church, Westminster. Dr. Broughton informed his congregation the morning after the accident that "had it not been for the direct providence of God," he would not have been preaching to them. Dr. Broughton, as a preacher of the gospel of poverty and self-sacrifice, was travelling in a first-class reserved compartment with his secretary, and had only just dined. Five minutes after he left the dining-car came the smash. Hence the proof of the "direct providence of God." Providence, we must assume, kept its eye on Dr. Broughton, waited until he had finished his dinner, and said, "Now that my servant Broughton has dined, and is back in his first-class reserved compartment, let her go," and the car was smashed into "worse than kindling wood." There is no other conclusion possible that we can see. The direct providence of God saved Dr. Broughton and let the rest of the travellers go to the Devil as rapidly as possible.

The *British Weekly* has been inviting correspondence on the ten men in England who would be most missed? A large number of people have plumped for Dr. Clifford. Only one reason is quoted; this is, "Because of the doughty championship of religious equality. He regards a parliamentary religion as a pharisaic anachronism." This might almost have been written by Dr. Clifford himself. When has Dr. Clifford worked for a genuine equality of opinion? We know he has worked to get Nonconformist opinions favored by the State to the same extent as is Episcopalianism. But that we believe is all. And the enemy of a parliamentary religion is, to-day, one of the most ardent advocates of a form of religion to be created by Parliament and paid for out of public funds. What slaves to phrases most men are!

Thomas Paine has been dead more than a hundred years. Yet the Wesleyan Methodists are just discussing a heresy-hunt against the Rev. George Jackson for entertaining doubts about Moses and Jonah. And they call Christianity a progressive religion!

The Methodist heresy-hunt fizzled out. The Conference President ruled the motion against Dr. Jackson out of order as being too late, the Conference having no authority to deal with an appointment when it is once made. This was a clever move. It averted an inconvenient discussion.

Rev. Irvine Lister, pastor of Ebenezer Congregational Church, Uppermill, near Oldham, has resigned his pulpit because his opinions on religion are now such as to prevent his continuing to be a Christian minister.

There is a row going on in one of the monasteries on Mount Athos, and the Holy Synod has sent Archbishop Nikon there to make peace—on a Russian gunboat!

Bible subjects are *tabu* at the Lord Chamberlain's office but it appears that the licensing is to be less rigid in future and the censorship is to make a start in relaxation with the voluptuous story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The play of "Joseph and his Brethren" is to be produced at His Majesty's Theatre in September. Miss Maxine Elliott is to play the part of Lady Potiphar. We should hardly think Sir Herbert Tree will play the part of Joseph. In any case, the interview between madame and the private secretary will have to stop short of the naked truth. These oriental stories are all right in the Bible, which is an oriental book; but they are rather embarrassing on a Western stage. The severity of *il casto Giuseppe's* temptation will have to be largely taken for granted—even in the days of the hobble skirt and the consumptive blouse.

The new President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, the Rev. Samuel Francis Collier, in his official address, declared that "the Methodist Church had a message for the twentieth century." His audience thoroughly agreed with the declaration. Here and there, perhaps, a very thoughtful one may have wondered when it was going to get delivered. A whole eighth of the century has gone by already. Wonder may have been felt, too, at Mr. Collier's declaring that "the late Canon Barnett had said that 'the Lord loveth a cheerful taxpayer.'" We know from Holy Writ that the Lord loveth a cheerful giver, just as we know that whoso giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord—though a good many rich Christians appear to mistrust the security. But a cheerful taxpayer! The word "publican" in the New Testament means a taxgatherer, and "the Lord" brackets "publicans" with "harlots" and "sinners." Canon Barnett is dead, but Mr. Collier might think this matter over again—with the aid of this paragraph.

How easy it is to twist the Bible into teaching anything under the sun. In last Sunday's International Sunday-school Lesson, the words "I will harden Pharaoh's heart"

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occurred, which one reverend commentator explained thus: "The hardening of Pharaoh's heart simply means that he became the more determined or stubborn in his refusal [to let the children of Israel go]. It was not that God made him wicked; it simply means that God foresaw that he would not give way." Now, the Apostle Paul interpreted Exodus iv. 21 in a perfectly natural way, and founded upon the words his wonderful argument for the absolute sovereignty of God (Romans ix. 14-24). Modern divines may regard such a doctrine as utterly unbelievable, but it is entirely dishonest to pretend that it is not taught in the Bible.

A bitter controversy has arisen at Hull regarding the propriety of Sunday flying. As usual, the friends of Jesus are relying upon the police, regardless of the story in the Gospels of Christ's attempt at aviation.

A recent issue of the *Weekly Dispatch* contained a picture of the King's youngest son, with the touching inscription. "The Human Boy-Prince." It won't do! All the scribes of Carmelite House cannot deify royalty nowadays.

Eighty thousand pounds has been raised by the Church Missionary Society towards clearing off its deficit of £100,000. With a fourth of that sum to be expended on Freethought we would guarantee to knock a greater hole in the missionary man's religion in this country in a twelve-month than the whole body of the clergy could repair in a generation—or ever again.

Speaking at a British and Foreign Bible Society meeting at Southend-on-Sea, the Rev. Barclay Buxton said the Japanese were attached to the Bible even before they could read or understand it. It's about that way in England, anyhow.

S. Verdad, who writes the "Foreign Affairs" column for the *New Age*, referring to the fight between the Bulgarians and the Greeks and Servians, says that "the slaughter was appalling, and the outrages unprecedented. These Christians showed more savagery towards one another than the Turks had ever shown towards them. No trick was too contemptible if only the enemy could be lured into a trap; and no form of mutilation and torture was too vile once he was safely in it. We shall never hear the full story of this savage war."

What a terrible irony on the professed civilising influence of Christianity is contained in the Annual Report of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. In England, Ireland, and Wales the number of offenders dealt with by the Society numbered no less than 74 678. Of these, 38,798 were males, and 35,880 females. The total shows an increase of 889 more than in the previous year. Of the victims, there were 79,366 boys, 80,041 girls, and—terrible to think of—23,175 babies under two years of age. The Christian religion has been in existence many centuries, and, despite the hypocritical boasting of its defenders, has done nothing to inculcate kindness in the treatment of the most helpless members of the community. One Freethinker, Colonel Ingersoll, did more to foster humanity in dealing with children than all the millions of professional followers of Christ.

Dr. Robert Bridges, who has been appointed Poet Laureate in succession to the late Mr. Alfred Austin, is a Doctor of Literature. The degree is indicated by the letters D.Litt., and, when Mark Twain had the same honor conferred upon him, he laughingly said he "cared D.Litt. about it."

At the United Methodist Conference at Halifax tearful reference was made to the huge decline in Sunday-school membership and other young people's organisations. The decrease was attributed to the falling birth-rate, emigration, Christian Science, Socialism, and other absurdities. Not one of the many sleepy theologians at the Conference woke up and suggested that the spread of Freethought had anything to do with it.

Rev. Hugh Fleming, of Rayrigg, Windermere, left £25,672. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, the distinguished actor, has published a little volume, entitled *Thoughts and After Thoughts*, in which he has some thoughtful and inspiring remarks on a multitude of subjects. He expresses his belief in the dawn of a "new religion," and writes forcibly and eloquently. We are glad to note that the religion he refers to is that of humanity. It is only right that a Tree of knowledge should bear rare and refreshing fruit.

Dr. Hoskyns, the Bishop of Southwell, has been condemning caste in the Church. He found, in colliery villages where pitmen were called upon to mix with other classes, they were looked down upon by the classes who thought they were above them. The Bishop might notice that, in spite of twenty centuries of the religion of the carpenter-god, caste is just as prevalent in England as in India.

Christians are never weary of persecuting and defaming Freethinkers; but they do not want too much religion themselves. Pious ladies nowadays feel too tired to carry complete Church Services to "God's" house, and small booklets containing selected portions only are much in favor. A few more years and the worshipers will feel too tired even to carry that.

It seems that, like an electric bell, the Church must be re-charged periodically with spiritual life and power. At present, she is devoid of attractive and preservative energy, with the result that the crowds, instead of flocking into, are actually rushing out of her. Recognising this fact, the Rev. David Adams, Chairman of the Congregational Union of Wales, declares that the Church is in serious need of re-endowment. In view of such a declaration one naturally asks, What has happened to Jesus Christ, the Church's head? Has he taken offence at something and left her in a huff? Or where is the Holy Ghost, who was to dwell within her always, and lead her into all knowledge and complete efficiency? Merely to ask such questions is to fully expose the deceptive character of the Lamb's Bride.

We are indebted to the New York *Truthseeker* for the following choice specimens of eloquence from "Billy" Sunday, the American evangelist, who is drawing more than a Prime Minister's salary from his soul-saving crusade:—

> "A young man or women who fights against the Christian life cannot measure character with a grizzly ape or yellow dog."
>
> "It takes a little weazen-headed, jug-headed man to doubt God—I've sure got down to the size of some of the mute of your town this morning."
>
> "Let me say that when you little, vile hounds attack me you are a liar and a coward, for it is at the cause of Jesus Christ and all the Churches united in these meetings you are striking over my shoulders. You little hum, I'm calling your bluff."
>
> "If any minister believes and teaches evolution he is a stinking skunk, a fraud, a hypocrite, and a liar."
>
> "The statement has been made by some dirty little puppet of the pulpit that there is no harm in the dance, the theatre, or cards. To hell with that kind of a minister. I am not swearing, brethren, I am praying. A preacher of that sort is worse than a bull-necked bar-tender."
>
> "If a woman on the avenue plays a game of cards in her home she is worse than any blackleg gambler in the slums."

We do not think that in any profession in the world, save that of Christian evangelicism, language of this sort would be tolerated. Sunday is a converted prize-fighter, but even that profession must have gained in decency by his conversion. Some clergymen, it is only fair to say, have publicly protested against Sunday's language, and some of the above expressions were in reply to their protest. Dr. Washington Gladden is among the number, and relates how, when a clergyman on the same platform with Sunday, had expressed a belief in evolution, Sunday shook his fist in his face, and yelled:—

> "Stand up there, you bastard evolutionist! Stand up with the Atheists and the Infidels and the whoremongers and the adulterers and go to hell."

It is not reported that the clergyman went. He might have felt inclined to say "After you, Billy."

"J. B." has a long article in the *Christian World* for July 17 on "The Heart of Things," but after reading it most carefully we do not know what he means by the phrase. He tells us that the Christian Gospel is "the nearest approach to the heart of things which has yet been opened to our race"; but how does he know that? No one can tell what the heart of things is, not even that they have a heart; and consequently it is simply absurd to say of this, that, and the other that it is a nearer, or the nearest approach to it. Every religion, "J. B." informs us, is a more or less successful attempt to find the heart of things; but, of course, his own religion is the most successful of all, whilst Buddhists and Mohammedans think the same of their religions. We are convinced, on the contrary, of the utter futility of all religions alike, and stoutly maintain that science is the only agency that can lead us to the heart of things. In other words, it is by observing, examining, and listening to Nature herself that we have any chance of getting her secret out of her.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £158 19s. 5d. Received since:—R. Lancaster, £1; T. S. (Wimbledon), 2s. 6d.; W. Dodd, 10s.

A. H. DUNSTAN.—We have neither a private secretary nor an office clerk. Every bit of our business has to be done with our own hands—from writing articles to acknowledging subscriptions for the various objects appealed for from time to time in the *Freethinker*. Elaborate book-keeping is absolutely impossible; and, as a matter of fact, we never charged a halfpenny for expenses against any fund that we "ran" in these columns. We are as careful as we can be, and we make a mistake occasionally, but very seldom considering the circumstances. To the best of our belief we acknowledge every subscription that arrives, writing out the acknowledgments when we open the envelopes containing them. Letters are dealt with, when necessary, at the same time; they are then torn up and thrown into the waste-basket. We could trace a cheque, of course, afterwards; but not a small postal order, which is not individually identifiable in the pay-in to the bank. What is not acknowledged we are bound to treat as not having reached us. Many things, it must be remembered, are lost in the Post Office—and are sometimes heard of in the police-court. This is a long answer concerning a very small amount, but the principle is the same whatever the size of the subscription.

W. MATHIAS.—We have read your letter carefully, and in many ways it does you credit. But you did not read our paragraphs as carefully as we read your observations. So far from recommending that hunger-striking Suffragettes should be allowed to starve to death, we blamed Mr. Bernard Shaw for making such a foolish and impossible suggestion. Our own personal opinion is that the whole situation is pathological, like so much else in present-day society. We call this our personal opinion, because we only state it by the way without offering it as a topic for discussion in the *Freethinker*. To return. You failed to notice that the words "There are plenty of cemeteries" were printed in inverted commas. They were not our words. We do not think we are capable of such brutality. Those words were what we said that the authorities would address to the Suffragette prisoners if the "militancy" policy were pursued by a working-class women's movement. We have but one thing more to say. Many people abuse the word Determinism. You, for instance, apply it to the violent aggressor; you forget that it is equally applicable to the rest of mankind. Society has a right to protect itself against anti-social conduct on the part of its members. We admit, of course, that this should be done with as much common sense and humanity as possible.

G. SMITH (Montreal).—Thanks for your letter and cutting. The latter is dealt with elsewhere. We quite understand what a hotbed of bigotry you are in.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. TAYLOR.—An opinion without its grounds is of no particular value. It does not enlighten or help us in any way. Nor should it. We listen to facts and arguments, but we allow no man's judgment to weigh against our own.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are very welcome.

A. M.—You are by no means "an empty shell." Clear your head of that nonsense and smile again. Not that a little self-depreciation now and then will do you any harm. But let it be only now and then. Most men suffer in the opposite direction.

J. F. AUST.—"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" occurs in Luke ix. 27. You would find our *Bible Handbook* useful for all such references.

N. LEVY.—We have not neglected "the report of a great victory for free speech in Scotland." We have not seen it. Perhaps you will explain your impolite postcard.

W. DODD, subscribing again, wishes to see the President's Honorarium Fund "going stronger."

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a long article by Mr. Foote on the new edition of Mr. H. S. Salt's monograph on Shelley.

Loving Christians tried to break up the Edmonton Branch meeting on Sunday evening, but they failed in their amiable attempt. Mr. Max Hope was the lecturer, and an able one too. The next evening he ventured to ask a question of the speaker on the platform of the West London Mission. A pious constable arrested him, and he was bound over to keep the peace he had never broken! By the way, a lady lecturer (Miss Pankhurst) should be well supported at Edmonton this evening (July 27).

We are exceedingly sorry that in our issue for July 20, we inadvertently attributed the description of the New Theology as "a Pantheistic and anti-Christian hash" to Canon Masterman. We ought to have stated that it occurs in a review of the Canon's book, *The Challenge of Christ*, which appeared in the *Church Times* for July 11. We tender to Mr. Masterman our sincerest apology, and beg to observe that the reviewer, who employed the offensive characterisation of the New Theology, warmly eulogised the Canon's treatment of the subject. With this correction the paragraph stands.

Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book, by Sir Hiram Maxim, is causing the greatest possible consternation among the Christians in China. The missionaries are beside themselves with indignation against the author and his book, and would burn both had they the power they once had. The Shanghai *Times* could not find terms strong enough to denounce the wicked volume, although its command of Billingsgate is exceedingly great. The ire of the *Times* was fanned into leaping flames by a long and powerful letter from Sir Hiram, which the *Republican Advocate* had the courage to print. In this letter were quotations from many eminent authorities, notably from the writings of the learned Jesuit missionary, Père Le Comte, who was honest enough to tell the truth about the Chinese. It is a significant fact that no Missionary Society has ever made use of the valuable information contained in the letters of this famous Jesuit. It is interesting to note that Le Comte gave the Chinese a splendid character, decidedly superior to that of Europeans. And this is really the damning fault of Sir Hiram Maxim's book—it gives the Chinese such a good character that the presence and labors of Christian missionaries among them can only be regarded as an insult and a crime. This book is also unpalatable to the missionaries because it shows the Chinese what Christianity is in itself, and what it has really done in all the ages of its dominance in Christendom. Sir Hiram is to be heartily congratulated upon the fact that his *Scrap Book* is already doing much to discredit the Christian superstition everywhere, and particularly in China.—J. T. L.

From the *Daily News*, Saturday, July 12:—

"PRISON RELIGIOUS CENSUS.

"The Home Secretary has informed Mr. Hay Morgan, M.P., that a recent census of the religious persuasions of inmates in England and Wales as stated by the prisoners on reception were as follows:—

"Church of England	13,691
Roman Catholics	3,273
Wesleyans	442
Baptists	96
Presbyterians	93
Methodists	87
Congregationalists	41
Jews	133
Freethinkers	109

"Personal inquiry, Mr. McKenna adds, resulted in some change of the figures, the chief alterations being that 13,957 were ascertained to be of the Church of England, 669 Wesleyans, and 209 Baptists."

Using the amended figures in the three instances given we find 18,329 Christians to 133 Jews and 109 Freethinkers. On the face of it this overwhelmingly refutes the common orthodox statement that "infidelity and immorality are the same thing." Not only in England and Wales, but in other countries, it is found that Freethinkers contribute less, not more, than their proportion of criminals to the general total. If may even be less than it looks. One would like to know whether the whole 109 Freethinkers in this list professed *themselves* Freethinkers or were placed in the list simply because they belonged to no Christian denomination.

Napoleon, like Cæsar (both, by the way, were Freethinkers) had a strong keen pen. It was as potent as his

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sword. When we speak of his pen we must include his tongue—both worked by the same strong brain. Some of his sayings are as immortal as his deeds. Even about the general run of them there is something of the great general's sagacity and the good soldier's brevity. Many sarcasms, some of them very witty, were expended upon Mme. Tallien, a famous frail beauty of the last days of the French Revolution; but which of them can be compared to Napoleon's that she "had two or three husbands, and children by everybody"? Compared with such a sentence ordinary journalism and oratory are as flat ginger-beer to a fine and fresh champagne. Even religious journalism and oratory are poor things, with all their inspiration, after the speech of the "Corsican atheist" who did not wait for the Pope to put the crown upon his head at Nôtre Dame, but took it between his own hands and clapped it upon his own head.

Mr. J. W. Gott resents our references to him in recent numbers of the *Freethinker*, and he has published an appeal against what he seems to regard as our tyranny. It appears that he started some "missionary" work in Lancashire, paying the missionaries themselves at the rate of a shilling a lecture, which must be highly conducive to efficiency. One of these missionaries got into trouble with the police at Blackburn by the use of indiscreet language in a place of public resort. Mr. Gott prints two of his missionary's expressions. We see no reason for reprinting them here. What we have to say is that if Mr. Gott thinks this sort of language proper and useful at public meetings his ideas and ours are too far apart for useful correspondence.

Mr. Gott wrote to us in a great hurry when his missionary got into trouble at Blackburn. He requested our advice as to whether Mr. Thompson should pay the fine or go to prison. We can hardly conceive a meaner request from one human being to another. We have hinted this before; we say it plainly now, and once for all. Left to himself, Mr. Thompson chose the fine; he also gave an undertaking not to repeat his offence, or even to lecture on Atheism again in that district. This news was forwarded to us with a further request that we would pay Thompson's fine and costs, amounting in all to something like £5. Had we done what Mr. Gott requested there would have been no tyranny about us. We declined to exercise the presidential authority, which must sometimes be exercised between Executive meetings, on such a matter and in such circumstances. Mr. Gott still had it open to him, however, to apply to the Executive at its monthly meeting. And he still *has* it open.

The statement with which Mr. Gott seeks to cover himself and gain sympathy is that "the lectures were delivered under the auspices of the N. S. S." We reply that Mr. Gott has no right to employ lecturers—at a shilling a time or otherwise—to represent the National Secular Society. He has no such commission himself, and how can he impart it to others? The idea that the illicit use of the Society's name saddles it with responsibility is one that could hardly enter any head but Mr. Gott's. He says that his use of the Society's name is *not* illicit. He is one of the Society's members, he says, and that gives him a right to use the Society's name as he pleases. There is, of course, an easy practical refutation of that sophistry. Meanwhile we may notice another specimen of Mr. Gott's logic. "I tell Mr. Foote," he says, "that as long as I remain a member of the N. S. S. my work will be for the N. S. S., whether he likes it or not." This ridiculous outburst does not touch the point at issue. That point is whether Mr. Gott shall use the Society's name without its permission. He says that he will. We say that he shall not. And if he does not desist out of regard to common sense and common decency, there are ways of compelling him to desist, and they will be employed. He will not bluff the N. S. S. Nobody has ever attempted that very successfully.

Mr. Gott aims a parting shot at the despotic President of the N. S. S. "Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner," he says, "has sent for full particulars of the Thompson trial, with a view to having some questions put in the House of Commons." What a contrast to the do-nothing Mr. Foote! But it happens that Mr. Foote was at the bottom of that movement. He introduced the Thompson case at a meeting of the National Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. No other member present had heard of it. It was unanimously agreed that Mrs. Bonner, who occupies the chair, should be requested to obtain further details, with a view to several procedures, of which a question in the House of Commons was one. It is never safe to assume that Mr. Foote is doing nothing because he is not doing it himself before the footlights. Those behind the scenes know better.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE NAZARENES.

IN the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, as we have seen, the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ is narrated as having taken place at three different periods of history. We have also seen that the Virgin Birth story had no place in the primitive Gospel from which Matthew, Mark, and Luke copied the main portion of their narratives. That this story is an early Christian fabrication is further proved by the following facts relating to the Nazarenes.

1. The Christian religion took its rise amongst the Jews; its first believers were also Jews. This fact is admitted by all critics.

2. The name by which these primitive Jewish believers were first known was "the sect of the Nazarenes"—as stated in the Book of the Acts (xxiv. 5). It must not, however, be thought that in citing "the Acts" as evidence I thereby assume that book to be historical. I do nothing of the kind: but this particular fact is not dependent upon the accuracy or veracity of Luke; it is one that would be known to all Christians of any standing in Luke's day. This name, too, was employed from the earliest times throughout the entire East to designate believers in Jesus Christ, and is still applied to Christians in some Eastern districts at the present day. We are also incidentally told in the Acts (xi. 26) that these believers were first called Christians at Antioch. This may be true; but the name was applied only to Gentile Christians, and at a much later period than that implied in the Acts. The primitive sect of Jewish believers were known from first to last (*i.e.*, to the fourth century A.D.) as Nazarenes, though those of the sect who remained faithful to the Jewish ritual received the name Ebionites (from *ebion*, poor). It was probably the latter who were referred to in the text—"Blessed are ye poor," etc.

3. Before the appearance of the Greek canonical Gospels, the Nazarenes had a Gospel of their own, in Aramaic, called the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," which was also the Gospel of the stricter members of the sect who were called Ebionites. Now, we have evidence that this Gospel contained no Virgin Birth story, but commenced, like the canonical Mark, with the preaching of the Baptist. We also know that the Nazarenes and Ebionites believed Jesus to be merely a man, begotten by Joseph. Thus, speaking of the Ebionites, Eusebius says (*Eccl. Hist.* iii. 27):—

> "They cherished low and mean opinions of Christ. For they considered him a plain and common man, justified only by his exalted virtue, and that he was born by natural generation.....They use only the Gospel according to the Hebrews, esteeming the others as of but little value. They also observe the Sabbath and other rites of the Jews."

Treating of the same subject, Irenæus, who first mentions the four Gospels, says (*Her.* v. i. 3):—

> "Vain also are the Ebionites.....who *do not choose* to understand that the Holy Ghost came upon Mary, and that the power of the Most High did overshadow her."

Thus, these two kindred sects, that had been the first to embrace Christianity, came to be regarded by the Gentile churches (in the last quarter of the second century) as heretics. They were quite aware that a Virgin Birth story was recorded in the Gentile Gospels; but they could not be induced to believe or adopt it: so that in the time of Epiphanius (A.D. 374—377) their Gospel commenced, as at the first, with the preaching of the Baptist.

Looking, now, at the foregoing facts, there cannot be the smallest doubt as to the deliberate fabrication of the story of the supernatural birth of Jesus Christ. The first generation of Jewish Christians, who for some unknown reason revered the name of Jesus, knew nothing about a Virgin Birth, and gave no credence to it when they afterwards heard the

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story. And *no other early Christians*, save the Nazarenes, were in a position to judge of the truth or falsehood of that alleged event. If *they* rejected the story, it was because they knew it had been concocted after their Gospel was written, and concocted by Gentile Christians who knew nothing about their Jesus. The sect, it is true, narrated stories of that personage working miracles; but this was because it was believed that the "spirit of God" had descended upon him at his baptism: then he became a prophet like Moses and Elijah—who were reported to have come down from heaven to converse with him.

Christian apologists and reconcilers, as might be expected, assert that the Nazarenes were a sect of heretics that arose after the appearance of the canonical Gospels; but the fact that "the sect of the Nazarenes" is named in "the Acts" as the first society of Christians proves the assertion to be a Christian misrepresentation. The name "Christians" had, of course, come into general use in Luke's time; but the appellation "Nazarenes," which preceded it by many years, was known in that day to have been the original name. The Nazarene sect appears to have been a branch of that of the Essenes, whose doctrines and practices upon many points were in agreement with those afterwards ascribed to Jesus. The Nazarenes were therefore practically Christians before they knew anything about that personage—the belief in the latter as a prophet being probably the only new matter added to their articles of faith.

JESUS THE NAZARENE.

One of the most important facts in connection with Jesus Christ is that he is called in the Gospels and the Acts "Jesus the Nazarene"—a title which is mistranslated "Jesus of Nazareth." In no less than seventeen passages the Jewish Savior is called "Jesus the Nazarene," the word employed in some places being Nazoraios; in others Nazarenos. By a comparison of parallel passages, we find both referring to the same person or sect, as in the following examples:—

> Matt. xxvi. 71.—"This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene" (Nazoraios).
>
> Mark xiv. 67.—"Thou also wast with Jesus the Nazarene" (Nazarenos).

The first appellation might be translated Nazarite, and the second Nazarene; but Epiphanius, in his book on Heresies, quotes both as the names of two distinct sects among the Nazarenes of his time—one of them, apparently, being the proper name of those called by the Gentiles "Ebionites." Hence, in conformity with Matthew's statement—"he shall be called a Nazarene"—Jesus *is* so called in the Gospels. The only question remaining is the origin of the name. Was Jesus a member of the sect when he first appeared? or, Did his Essene followers give themselves that appellation to glorify his name?

Well, in the first place, there can be no doubt that "Jesus the Nazarene" was in some way connected with "the sect of the Nazarenes." Why, otherwise, have our translators *and Revisers* deliberately miscalled him "Jesus of Nazareth"? We may be quite certain that this was not done without some good reason. In the next place (as will be shown later) there appears to have been no city in Galilee called Nazareth, from which "the Nazarene" could take his name—and the latter appellation *has to be* accounted for. Why, then, was Jesus so called? To this there can be but one answer: Jesus must have been a member of the sect, and possibly one of some authority in it. The name "Jesus the Nazarene" was evidently employed in the same way as that of "John the Essene," who is mentioned by Josephus as a general in the Jewish war. Had the Jewish historian had occasion to refer to "Jesus the Nazarene," it would have been *by this name*; but his not having done so clearly shows that Jesus must have been almost unknown outside his own sect. The Gospel of the Nazarenes was not composed until some years after the death of Jesus, and the latter, being then esteemed a prophet, it is not surprising that in those times fictitious sayings and doings were ascribed to him. It should, however, be remembered that miracles were then believed to be possible, either by magic, the agency of Satan, or the power of God. Why, then, should not Jesus be credited with the power to work them?

Assuming the Epistle to the Galatians to be authentic, Paul refers in it to James, John, and Cephas, who, he says, were "reputed to be pillars" of the primitive Jewish Church, the president being "James, the Lord's brother." These—whom we may assume to be historical—were, of course, Nazarenes: from which fact it appears evident that these three so-called "apostles" of Jesus were simply elders of the sect—the society having arisen some time before Jesus came to be regarded as a prophet. The other "apostles" named in the Gospels were probably only ordinary members of the sect, of whom nothing was known except the names. As to Peter, it is doubtful whether he was the same person as Cephas (John i. 42); for the Synoptists appear to have never heard of the latter name.

The Nazarenes, being Jews, required their converts to be circumcised and to conform to all the Mosaic ritual—except animal sacrifice. These conditions Paul found to be a stumbling-block to the would-be Gentile converts; he therefore set them aside as unnecessary—making the simple belief in Jesus—whom he exalted into a divine being—the sole condition of salvation. Needless to say, that "apostle" had no authority for so doing: for one of the traditional instructions of Jesus to his disciples was to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; while the last twelve verses in Mark's Gospel—including the command to go to "all the world" and preach salvation by faith only—were a later addition to that Gospel, written long after the time of Paul. The last-named "apostle" was an unscrupulous innovator, and the real founder of Gentile Christianity, which in a short time spread from Asia Minor to Greece, Rome, and Alexandria; but the first sect of Christians, the Nazarenes, who merely regarded Jesus as a prophet, "having remained beyond the reach of the great current which had carried away all the other churches, were treated as heretics" (Renan).

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS.

The Biblical critics who admit that the narratives in the Synoptics were drawn from a primitive *written* Gospel make no attempt to identify the latter Gospel; but it appears that it was the "Gospel according to the Hebrews," used by the Nazarenes. Epiphanius says in his work on Heresies (xxx. 18) that the Ebionites had a Gospel "called the *Gospel according to Matthew*, not entire and perfectly complete, but falsified and mutilated, which they call the Hebrew Gospel": after which he quotes the opening paragraph—of John baptising in the Jordan, and of the baptism of Jesus.

Again, Jerome, presbyter of Antioch, who lived at the same period, says in his Commentary on Matthew:—

> "In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated from the Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by very many *the original Gospel of Matthew*, the man with the withered hand is described as a mason," etc.

This statement is in agreement with the fact that the canonical Matthew (omitting the first two chapters) is considered to be nearer to the primitive Gospel than any of the others, besides containing more Hebraisms. Moreover, the Gospel of the Nazarenes appears to have contained all the threefold narratives which the Synoptists took from the Common Source, besides several others not found in the canonical Gospels. The statement of Epiphanius that this Gospel was "falsified and mutilated" refers to its not containing the Virgin Birth story, which, as we know, the last-named editor added from an apocryphal source. All the so-called Christian "fathers," from Irenæus downwards, assumed as a matter of course that the canonical Gospels were

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written in apostolic times, and were the originals from which all other known Gospels were derived; whereas, as a matter of fact, they were the last written.

ABRACADABRA.

George Borrow.

1803—1881.

"I claim no place in the world of letters; I am, and will be, alone, as long as I live and after."—LANDOR.

THE small but fierce tribe of Borrovians will be delighted at the news that the city of Norwich has been honoring that bright and particular genius, George Borrow, the scholar-gipsy, who deserves the tribute of the town as much as that other great writer, Sir Thomas Browne.

It was one of fate's little ironies which imposed on the pagan George Borrow the function of colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The story of Borrow's introduction to the officials of the Society is characteristic. Hearing of the possibility of work for the Society, the young man tramped from Norwich to London, walking one hundred and twelve miles in twenty-seven hours, and spending less than sixpence on the way. On arrival, he told the surprised secretary that he could translate Manchu, and this was his first work for the Society. Borrow went to St. Petersburg, and, facing great difficulties, translated the New Testament into the Manchu-Tartar dialect. There was nothing he was not ready to do, even to setting up type, teaching wooden-headed compositors, buying paper, and hustling Russian officials. Later, he went to Spain on behalf of the Society, and the adventurous career he led in the Peninsula while hawking Bibles in this most bigoted of Catholic countries forms the groundwork of one of the most vivacious travel-books ever written, *The Bible in Spain*. "*Gil Blas*, with a touch of Bunyan," the volume has been called wittily. For the author pays small attention to the evangelical business of the Society that dispatched him, and he writes of thieves, murderers, gipsies, bandits, prisons, wars, and kindred subjects, with all the gusto of a Burton. Addressed to the narrow-minded Victorian religious public, it was a wonderfully stimulating drink to unaccustomed palates. It was the time when strict evangelical parents forbade secular books on Sunday, and Mr. Augustine Birrell has told us how, as a boy, he rejoiced in the old pagan's writings, the innocent title of which had passed the unsuspecting critics on the hearth.

As may be imagined, the correspondence between Borrow and the Bible Society officials is delicious reading. For Borrow worshiped at many shrines from that of Christ to that of Tom Sayers. We see the old Adam peeping out in the evangelist, as Dr. Jeykll changed into Mr. Hyde, and the growing distrust of the authorities, who saw their official boxing the compass, and forgetting the narrow channel which they wished him to pursue. At times, Borrow quite forgot the theological jargon of Earl-street, and it all ended in his being recalled and being given no further employment.

This strange agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society commenced his literary career in London by writing the *Newgate Calendar*, which bears so marked a resemblance to the earlier books of the Holy Scriptures sold by the Society. He was ever a fighter, even when his Flaming Tinman days were over; and his animosities extended from popes to parsons. When a Canon of St. Paul's ventured to criticise *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow sent a saucy note to his publishers, calmly stating that the ecclesiastic was a jackass, and that he would be doing better by minding his own business in his ugly cathedral.

Borrow had a real passion for adventure, and a love of language. Whilst an articled clerk to a solicitor at Norwich, he translated a volume of ballads from the Danish. Later, at St. Petersburg, he published his *Targum: Translations from Thirty Languages and Dialects*. In the course of his travels through France, Germany, Russia, and Eastern Europe he learnt languages as he went. With the exceptions of Sir Richard Burton and Prince Lucien Bonaparte, he was probably the most enthusiastic linguist who ever lived. During a few years of travelling activity he translated portions of the Bible into many languages and dialects, he produced a Turkish version of *Bluebeard*, and rendered Danish, Russian, and Welsh tales in English.

For the last forty years of his life he lived on "emotions remembered in tranquillity," passing his existence between Oulton Broad, Norfolk, and London. *Lavengro*, *The Romany Rye*, *Wild Wales*, were all written amid the peaceful Broads, and his tranquillity was only broken by fierce paper warfare with publishers, critics, and reformers, who aroused the old lion's wrath. Borrow was always furious at the want of public appreciation; but his fame has grown since he died at Oulton, and Norwich has done the right thing in purchasing Borrow's house.

Nature mixed George Borrow in a moment of magnificence. Only those who have realised for themselves the inadequacy of a pen when brought in contact with the rich and tumultuous glow of life can appreciate to the full the wonder of his achievement; the imagination, the insight, which are required to bring before us those unforgettable incidents of human life. Besides all these gifts, he possessed in a great degree the sense of the significance of life apart from any personal liking or disliking, of the beauty and continuity of the great stream. A little aloof, a little inscrutable he will ever remain, but magnificent because of his greatness as an artist. Borrow was impatient of the narrow standards of civilisation and society, and loved the men and women of the wayside. He recognised in these vagrants the true sons and daughters of "The Great Mother who mixes all our bloods." Listen to his exquisitely phrased Pagan glorification of existence: "Life is sweet, brother. There's night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, brother—all sweet things; there's likewise the wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother; who would wish to die?"

MIMNERMUS.

Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Brown Virgin of Mexico.

WITHIN half-an-hour's ride of the City of Mexico, in a pretty and romantic situation on the top of a hill, may be found a fine cathedral, of Spanish design, which is the headquarters of the Brown Virgin of Mexico, better known to the faithful as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

We are informed by sacred history that for many centuries it has been the custom of the Mother of God to appear occasionally in Catholic countries for the edification of the pious, and it would have been a sad omission on her part to have neglected to put in an appearance in such a devout country as Mexico was in the time of the Spaniards.

It is reported that in the year 1531 the Blessed Virgin appeared to a poor "peon" named Juan Diego on the exact site where the present cathedral now stands. Astonished at so wonderful a revelation and so great an honor, the poor Indian, after saying a prayer and devoutly crossing himself, rushed breathless to the nearest church and informed the clergy of the miracle he had witnessed. Like the unbelieving disciple, they were not readily convinced, and sent him back again for further investigation. This time the Virgin not only favored him with an "encore," but caused a beautiful rose-bush to spring out of the sand, which, in ordinary circumstances, would have been a most unsuitable place for it to grow.

This confirmation settled the matter in the mind of Don Juan. He returned to the church in holy fear, and, whilst explaining his second adventure to the astonished priests, they suddenly observed in the folds of his "Ayatl" (a rough cloth used by poor Indians to carry their goods or cover them on a journey) a beautiful picture of Our Lady surrounded by celestial objects.

The final corroboration put matters entirely beyond doubt. A church was soon built on the site, and solemnly dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. Unfortunately, like love, the course of true religion does not always run smooth.

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Many difficulties had to be contended with from the start. Our Lady, like some others of less exalted position, had a rival. The proud and haughty Castilian who came over with the conquerors, Nuestra Senora de Remidios (Our Lady of Help), was not at all inclined to give place to her tawny rival. The Spaniards patriotically stuck to their own Queen of Heaven, and looked down on the Queen of the Dagoes as they would have done on a daughter of Moctezuma. For many long years this royal rivalry existed, but the time came at last when the Mexicans rose in revolt. Goaded by the cruelty of the Spaniards, they threw off the hated yoke, and in the year 1810 established their independence. After ridding themselves of their oppressors, they lost no time in packing off Our Lady of Help, and sending her after them. With solemn ceremonies they excommunicated her, and banished her for ever from the Republic. The Mexican Senora then reigned in peace, and rewarded her patrons with innumerable miraculous cures.

Every year pious Indians come from distant villages on a pilgrimage to the shrine of their saint and, after painfully crawling up a long flight of steps on their bare knees, present their humble offerings to their protectress.

The walls of the little chapel at the back of the cathedral are covered with testimonials to the power of the Virgin; scores of pictures are hung round, showing the blind restored to sight, cripples throwing away their crutches, and the sick jumping from their beds. Names, date, and place are given, and everything is most convincing to those who believe. But to the sceptic there is a certain amount of pathos in it all; it seems sad to reflect how degraded human understanding may become through the influence of superstition—to see the poor untutored Indian put his trust in such sorry means, and pin his simple faith to the priests' decoy duck.

S. SODDY.

Correspondence.

FLYING FISH AND PHARAOH'S WHEEL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The article by "Sibley" in the *Freethinker* of July 13 on "Paganism and Christianity" is full of interest, and the part in which he refers to relics reminds me of the story about the orthodox old Scotswoman whose son became a sailor. On his return after a long absence, she plied him with questions about the various things he had seen in different parts of the world. At length he told her that on several occasions he had seen "fleein' fish." "Noo, noo Jock," said the old lady with a knowing smile, "dinna try tae tak aff yer auld mither. I've heard afore o' the lees you sailor chields come hame wi', but ye'll no catch me." Jock smilingly let this pass, and further on in the course of their conversation he told about his experiences coming through the Red Sea. The old lady's features at once assumed a look of reverent awe when that Scriptural name was mentioned, and she waited with eager interest for all her son had to tell. "An' then, mither," he remarked, "just as we got aboot the middle we drappit the anchor, and when we hauled it up to start again we found we had fished up ane of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot." "Ay, laddie," said the old lady in a subdued voice, "Dae tell me that? What positive proof o' the truth o' the guid auld Book. I wish I had been there tae see't!"

SIMPLE SANDY.

God and Immortality.

SELECTED BY E. B.

The hope of a future state is that which our wise men do promise, but do not prove.—*Seneca.*

I hope to go hence to good men, but of that I am not very confident. Nor does it become any wise man to be positive that so it will be. I must now die, and you shall live, but which of us is in the better state, the living, or the dead, only God knows.—*Socrates on his dying bed.*

Neither soul nor body has any more sense after death than before it was born.—*Pliny.*

I can deliver nothing as fixed and certain regarding a future life, but only something as probable, and as having some likelihood of truth. Which of the sentiments of the various philosophers is true, some god must tell us; which is most like to truth is a great question.—*Cicero.*

If there are gods they certainly pay no attention to the affairs of men.—*Quintus Ennius.*

Whence and why is evil, and whence and how is man, and whence is God?—*Tertullian.*

The immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible.—*Archbishop Tillotson.*

If God made made man in his own image, man has certainly returned the compliment.—*Fontenelle.*

If God did not exist, it certainly would have been necessary to invent him.—*Voltaire.*

Science has conducted God to its frontiers, and thanked him for his provisional services.—*Caro.*

God does nothing.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

The only excuse for God is that he does not exist.—*Stendhal.*

If there be a presiding intelligence in the universe it certainly suggests "some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not perhaps bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he has caused it."—*W. H. Mallock.*

Those are the elect of God, his best and most useful servants who teach *science* and *wisdom.* They are the luminaries and legislators of the world which, without their help, would fall back into ignorance and barbarism.—*Al Mamoun, Arabian Philosopher.*

Gods are even more changeable than men. In the course of a century a god will become almost unrecognisable. The God of the Christian has changed more than any other.—*Anatole France.*

An honest God is the noblest work of man.—*Ingersoll.*

The truth is that no human being knows anything of what is beyond the grave. If nothing is known, then it is not honest for anyone to pretend that he does know. If nothing is known, then we can only hope for the good.—*Ingersoll.*

While one does not yet know what life is, how should we know what death is?.....While you cannot serve man how can you serve spirits?—*Confucius.*

Death is not so great a matter when you don't make it the gate to a heaven or to a hell.—*E. Temple Thurston.*

What went before, and what will follow me, I regard as two inpenetrable curtains, which hang down at the two extremities of human life, and which no man has drawn aside.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

An Epitaph.

HERE lies Jehovah, once the God Supreme,
Now but the memory of an empty dream.
The fell disease that brought his end about
Is quickly told,—Jehovah was found out.

His life was long. His fortunes rose and fell
Like those of men. At first he did but dwell
Among the household Gods of some wild clan,
Perhaps, at first, the ghost of their head man.

Successful battles fame and honor brought
To him the victors worshiped. Men were taught
By cunning priests his friendship to procure,
And by rich gifts their welfare to ensure.

'Twas said that Jupiter his place had gained
By conquering Saturn, who before had reigned.
A paltry boast, beside the ample claim
With which Jehovah's priests adorned his fame.

The God who once, with other oddments, rode
Inside a box, or in a tent abode,
Who once to win a paltry fight had failed,
Creator of the Universe was hailed.

When, 'neath Imperial Rome's corrupted sway,
The classic nations fell into decay,
And learning withered till it almost died,
The Jew God's worship triumphed far and wide.

Through ten long centuries of darkest night,
All Europe knew and feared Jehovah's might.
On God was centred every heart and mind,
To every other subject men were blind.

But when the dawn of science lit the earth
And ushered in the cultured world's re-birth,
The knell of ghosts and Gods was surely rung,
Whose fate on ignorance and darkness hung.

God died not suddenly, but pined away,
His priests with every art prolonged his stay.
They strove with all their heart and soul and might
To stop the progress of the fatal light.

No deed too vile, no lie too gross they found
To keep their useful phantom safe and sound,
But all their foul conspiracy was vain.
Jehovah's dead, and ne'er will rise again.

As "essence immanent" Jehovah's ghost
Still haunts his former strongholds, and a host
Of priests exploit his shadow for their bread,
Who know full well the Bible God is dead.

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Darby, a Lecture; 6.15, Miss Keogh, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, Mr. Gallagher, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Pankhurst, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "The Empire of Man"; 7.30, F. Schaller, "Science *v.* the Bible."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Debate, H. Donovan and W. Davidson, "The Riddle of the Universe." Finsbury Park: 6.30, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

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

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, G. Glaister, "The Reformation."

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Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

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THE
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Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts.
—LONGFELLOW.

The Use of Missionaries.

IT is naturally denied by the more zealous Christians that the missionaries are at the bottom of any of the troubles in China or in other parts of the East. The secretary of the Chinese Legation in London said that they were; indeed, he declared that there would be no peace, and no prospect of peace, until the missionaries were recalled. But the friends of the missionaries say that this is all nonsense. The Protestants admit, however, that the Catholic missionaries are an obtrusive and intriguing lot, and that the Chinese have at least *some* reason for hating them and trying to clear them out of the Celestial Empire. On the other hand, the Catholics broadly hint that all would go well if the Protestant missionaries would go back to Europe and take with them their absurd and narrow dogmatism. For our part, we believe both sides; that is, we believe what the Protestants say of the Catholics, and what the Catholics say of the Protestants. Probably they know each other if they do not know themselves; and, as lookers-on often see most of the game, it is quite possible that we see through both parties in this interesting dispute.

The Chinese do not appear to draw a distinction in favor of either set of Christian soul-savers. They love them so that they dote upon their very absence. Nevertheless, it must be allowed that there was no particular opposition to the missionaries when they first visited China. The Jesuits were almost welcomed, and they seem to have taken care that their welcome was not worn out too rapidly. They taught the Chinese a good deal of useful knowledge, translated Euclid into their language, gave them lessons in astronomy, and put them up to many wrinkles in the mechanical arts. Christianity was insinuated as they went along. But the Dominicans appeared upon the scene and quarreled with the Jesuits; and then the Protestants came and quarreled with both —and with each other; and the Chinese began to wish them all to the devil. But unfortunately they stayed there and played the devil with the Chinese.

What is the object of these missionaries? In the first place, they are getting a living, and some of them a good one. It is a mistake to suppose that they are all burning with disinterested zeal. For the most part the missionary societies are well-organised agencies for diminishing the pressure of the unemployed in the clerical labor market at home. Millions of souls still need saving here, but there are too many gentlemen engaged already in the business, and it is found advisable to send off a number of them every year to save souls in heathen countries. Ostensibly, of course, their object is to save the souls of the said heathen. To save them from *what?* The only possible answer is that the heathen are going in streams to hell, and that it is an act of infinite charity to arrest their headlong flight to everlasting perdition. Well, if the missionaries really believe that, and are actuated by such a tender motive, they are worthy of our admiration from a moral point of view, whatever we may think of their intelligence. But they betray at least the mixture of their motives when they clamor for protection. They proclaim themselves as a species of traders. Missionaries should go on their own responsibilities, take their own risks, and accept martyrdom, if they meet it, as the crown of their enterprise. But when they claim to be protected as citizens of the countries they have left, and call for naval and military assistance in the extremities they have deliberately occasioned, they range themselves with the other commercial classes who seek openings in foreign lands. Moreover, they exhibit an additional hypocrisy; for Jesus Christ told his apostles that they should be delighted when they were persecuted for his sake, and that a great reward was awaiting them in heaven. It is, therefore, a gross insincerity on their part to fly from persecution, often with indecent haste, and seek shelter under the Union Jack. They say that Christ is their captain, but when their persons are in danger they trust to Admiral This and General That.

Even if the missionaries were perfectly sincere and absolutely disinterested, we might still ask them whether their game is worth the candle. China contains more than four hundred millions of inhabitants. Some fifteen millions of these die every year. Now, it is doubtful if the missionaries succeed in converting one thousand per annum. Would it not be just as well to let such a few die in their national faith, and make themselves as comfortable as possible in the other world with their own countrymen? It seems to be overlooked that converted Chinamen are expected to live in the other world with Europeans, and that a great many Celestials do not regard the prospect as alluring.

Some time ago the Rev. Dr. Clifford, the famous, energetic Baptist, delivered a very fiery speech on the subject of Missions to China. He more than admitted the "greed" of the Catholic missionaries for "political power," but he denied that "our Protestant messengers have created troubles." Anyhow, he said, they mean to continue their work. Their object is to "carry to men redemption and renewal, and peace and joy, the new life that is in Christ," and "nothing will hold them back." This, however, is untrue. Something *does* hold them back. Protestant missionaries have often fled for safety to places guarded by British and other European troops. They held back until they felt they could preach Christ again with the prospect of regular meals and sound sleep.

Dr. Clifford affirmed that "the undecaying strength of missions is the perpetual miracle of conversion." Miracle, indeed! Why, if conversion were a matter of miracle the whole world ought to have been converted long ago. Omnipotence should not be as slow as a missionary society. There are really no degrees in the miraculous; to God one act must be as simple as another, and the conversion of millions as easy as the conversion of units. The very paucity of converts is a proof of the absence of supernatural agency. Indeed, the phenomenon is rather surprising even on purely natural grounds. Considering the number of missionaries, their advantage of education, the money spent upon them, and the prestige they enjoy in belonging to the conquering races of Europe; con-

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sidering also the curious worldly temptations so frequently offered to the lower classes of heathen; it is quite astonishing that so few are "brought to Christ." How many *real* converts there are it is hard to calculate, but the *nominal* converts can be counted, and the total is a satire on Christian pretensions.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Force.—II.

(Concluded from p. 466.)

WHY should religion be the one topic that defies tolerance and courteous controversy? In addition to the replies already given it is said that religious persecution is due to an intense conviction of the value of right religious belief. They are convinced that "the issue of the controversy is of the most momentous importance. Man's highest moral and spiritual welfare hinge upon the acceptance or rejection of the teaching." This strikes one as no more than a roundabout way of repeating the question. Theologians quarrel violently, Christians persecute bitterly, because they believe their teachings to be of paramount importance. In other words, because they are Christians. We knew this much at the start; what we want to know is, why it should be so? Why should Christians have got into a chronic state of mind which results in the belief that their opinions on religion are of so much greater importance than their opinions on other subjects as to warrant treating those who differ from them as either criminals or lunatics? Why should disbelief in religion call forth an exhibition of *moral* repugnance? This is not the case elsewhere; why should it be so here?

So far as tradition counts in the affairs of men everything is on the side of the Christian persecutor. The earliest appearance of groups of Christians is as rival sects fighting over fantastic points of doctrinal differences, and quarrelling with a ferocity that caused the tolerant Pagans to open their eyes in astonishment. Church councils as often as not ended in a fight; the election of a new Pope left the Church in which the succession was decided littered with corpses. In the election of Pope Damasus, according to Dean Milman, there were a hundred and thirty-four dead bodies left when the election was concluded. Over and over again, Roman Emperors had to stop the murderous quarrels of the sects. No other disputes can show the same barbarous scenes as those between Arians and Athanasians, Catholics and Protestants, Lutherans and Anabaptists. Luther, in the very act of pleading for tolerance, did not ask it "for such as deny the common principles of the Christian religion." The intolerance of Calvin has become a byeword, and his apology for the murder of Servetus, *A Defence of the Orthodox*, bore on the title-page the sentence, "In which it is proved that heretics may be rightly coerced with the sword." His follower, Knox, illustrated the same principle in declaring that "provoking the people ought not to be exempt from the punishment of death." All over the Christian world imprisonment or death were the common punishments for heresy. Even in America, a country, so to speak, in which Christianity made a fresh start, Fiske says:—

> "Anyone who should dare to speculate too freely about the nature of Christ, or the philosophy of the plan of salvation, or to express a doubt as to the plenary inspiration of every word between the two covers of the Bible, was subject to fine and imprisonment. The tithing man still arrested Sabbath breakers, and shut them up in the town cage in the market place; he stopped all unnecessary riding or driving on Sunday, and haled people off to the meeting-house whether they would or no."

Force in matters of faith is the one principle to which every Christian sect has yielded undeviating obedience, given the conditions for exercising it.

Persecution in matters of religion does not manifest itself as something sporadic, due to an outburst of human ferocity in a special direction; it is, indeed, inherent in the nature of religious belief. The reason for this is to be found in the character of the ideas that govern respectively religious belief and social affairs. In all matters of social life, so soon as man emerges from the overpowering mass of superstitions that clouds primitive life, discussion plays a part. Just in proportion as fighting, hunting, or the various affairs of a tribe are liberated from superstitious beliefs, they become affairs that are amenable to knowledge, and their course to be decided on a basis of human experience and knowledge. No matter how valuable one person might believe his opinion to be, there exists not alone the recognition of the existence of other opinions, but that of their legitimacy and right of expression. The result is, that on the social side there is an element of toleration from the outset. The appeal is to what men know, to their judgment, a general recognition that the final course is to be decided by the weight of evidence and a balancing of opinion. And all this involves an appeal to man's reason instead of to his prejudices; to his sense of comradeship rather than to feelings of hostility.

With the religious idea the influence exerted is entirely in the other direction. Here all difference of opinion is discouraged, and this for one very strong reason. In purely social matters man is master of his fate in proportion to his knowledge of the forces with which he is dealing. If he blunders he pays the penalty; he knows it is due to his want of knowledge; and, generally speaking, he profits by his failure. In religion he is not master, but slave. It is not what he sees to be right, but what the gods declare is right. No purely social consideration could suggest the punishment of death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath, stoning to death for worshiping other gods, or make offences of a hundred and one other doctrinal lapses. The only reason for these things is that the gods have so decreed. Their decrees admit of no question, there is no room for asking why, there is simply a punishment for disobedience. Religion cannot be made a subject for discussion; there is nothing to discuss. It is only a question of discovering what the gods desire. And their will does not come under the control of human reason.

There is still another reason for the inherent persecuting spirit of religion. This lies in the fact of what Sir Henry Maine declared to be a cardinal feature of all primitive society, namely, a strong sense of corporate responsibility. The gods are not only quick to punish, they punish indiscriminately. If one member of the tribe offends the whole may suffer. In the story of Jonah, God is about to drown all the sailors because he is offended with one person, and this fairly represents savage notions on that point. The unbeliever is thus a social danger. His suppression becomes an act of social necessity. This idea, although primitive in point of origin, is modern in so far as it still exists with a large number of religionists. Thousands still believe that national calamities are judgments upon us for desecration of the Sabbath, or similar religious offences. It is this element that gives to religious persecution the character of a social or moral duty, as well as a religious obligation. It also marks religion as something that must be protected from discussion, and so fenced in from the more humanising influence of social life.

It is not true, then, that religious persecution owes its existence and perpetuation to either the inherent intolerance of human nature or to the incursion into the religious domain of the secular power of the community. Exactly the reverse of this is the truth. So far as the secular power has affected religion, it has influenced it for good. When a government has wished to persecute, whether it was a Mohammedan or a Christian government, it has nearly always invoked religious prejudice as its principal ally. The secular power of Spain would never have committed suicide by expelling Mohammedans and Jews, France would never have impoverished itself by expelling the Huguenots, had it not been for the power of religion. In the whole

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history of the world one may challenge the production of a case in which the religious influence in the State has made for greater tolerance and a decrease in persecution. All available instances are in the other direction. Man has humanised his gods; society has civilised the creeds; the whole impulse to toleration has come from the social and secular side of life. To-day toleration is most complete in precisely those civilised States wherein religion has the smallest share in a conscious direction of the social forces.

As an apology for religious intolerance, it is sometimes pointed out that it invokes intense earnestness. But this is, if anything, an aggravation of the evil. No doubt the men of the Spanish Inquisition were earnest men. Calvin was the embodiment of earnestness. Men do not fight and imprison and kill unless they are in earnest. But it really does not compensate if, after breaking a man's head because he differs with you on the question of the Trinity, you plead that you feel very earnestly on the subject. Your victim might reply that with less earnestness and more judgment you would make a much better companion. A Christian may honestly believe that a Freethinker is an immoral person, or that a rejection of religion spells social disaster, and feel that it is his duty to suppress Freethought at any cost. All this may be admitted; but the essential point is not whether he believes these things or not—the point is that he has no right to believe them; that if he were guided by social considerations, he would not believe them; and that he only believes them because his judgment is decided by purely religious considerations. We do not act thus in science or art or literature or politics; we only do so where religion is in question, because it is fundamentally a non-social, non-moral force. Earnestness with judgment is a good thing; but earnestness without judgment, without those controlling elements that operate in secular affairs, is one of the most dangerous forces that can be let loose on society.

Savagery and persecution does not, then, result from a misunderstanding of Christianity. It is inherent in Christianity, as it is inherent in all religion. So long as people believe that salvation hereafter is determined by right belief, so long we retain the germ from which has developed persecution in the past, and from which persecution springs in the present. The brutalities of Balkan Christians occur, truly, because a state of war exists; but it is because the feelings excited by war are sharpened by religious prejudice that this war has provided us with some of the most horrible butcheries of modern times. The war is being waged by people who are habituated to persecution by religious hatred, who have behind them the tradition that religious differences rob a man of social rights, and dispenses with the necessity for courteous or considered treatment. Every religion carries this tradition with it, and a nation or a people does not outgrow a tradition in a single generation. And behind this tradition of hatred based on religious differences lies one of the oldest and deepest of social customs. Something has been done to weaken its force. The growth of science, the rationalising of one institution after another—in a word, the gradual secularisation of life—is slowly creating more rational, and therefore more tolerant, relations between people. But religion is still with us; and so long as it remains it will never fail to make its most secure appeals to passions of which the best amongst us are heartily ashamed.

C. COHEN.

Criticism Caricatured.

THE last chapter in Dr. T. R. Glover's book, *The Christian Tradition and Its Verification*, is entitled "The Criticism of Jesus"; but the chapter is remarkable, not for any criticism of Jesus, but for the entire absence of it. To the author, the reputed founder of Christianity is immeasurably above criticism. Throughout its history, in all its varied experiences, the Church has carried within its bosom a direct challenge to the critic. In a word, the critic is rigidly excluded. Within the Church everything depends upon Christ:—

> "In every phase of its life the one thing that decisively differentiates its experience from that of the world around is its relation to him. He is the historical source of the whole movement; he is the moving factor still;—such, rightly or wrongly, is the fixed belief of the Christian Church, after a great deal of experiment, both in trying to minimise the place he must hold, and in trying to avail itself of what it calls 'the unsearchable riches of Christ'" (pp. 193-4).

Consequently, the moment the critic turns up he is denounced as one incapable of doing justice to Christ because he does not understand him. If he did understand him his attitude to him would be identical with that of the Church. In other words, only a Christian is competent to judge a Christian. Or, as Dr. Glover puts it, "our business is to realise before we judge; and however odd the fundamental conviction of others may sound to us, we have to see for ourselves what they really mean, and what they are trying to express—not least when this conviction is strongly held by a community the thoughts and lives of whose members have so profoundly affected human history." We have no hesitation in characterising this account of the essential qualifications of a critic as wholly erroneous and irrational, although we are persuaded that there are critics of Christianity not a few who comply with the conditions laid down by Dr. Glover. They know by a past experience of their own "what it is that drives the Church back on to him [Christ] in every age and in every situation," and while thus knowing it they are bold enough to affirm that the Church has always been wrong.

It is true that "we are confronted by the historical Christian Church, and cannot get away from it, however much some of us may wish to be rid of it;" but, surely, the existence of the Church proves nothing. Personally, we have succeeded in cutting ourselves off from what our author calls "the deepest force mankind has known," because we have discovered that Christianity is not, nor has ever done, what its apologists claim on its behalf. Furthermore, we have found out that the alleged dependence of this religion on an historical Jesus is insusceptible of verification. In his treatment of this point, Dr. Glover resorts to blind dogmatism because the facts are all against him. He says:—

> "If the ordinary canons of history, used in every other case, hold good in this case, Jesus is undoubtedly an historical person. If he is not an historical person, the only alternative is, that there is no such thing as history at all—it is delirium, nothing else; and a rational being would be better employed in the collection of snuff-boxes. And if history is impossible, so is all other knowledge" (p. 198).

In our judgment, this is a piece of delirious reasoning, "nothing else; and a rational being would be better employed in the collection of snuff-boxes." It is simply because we *do* employ the ordinary canons of history in the case of the Gospel Jesus that we pronounce him an unhistorical character. You cannot get away from the fact that the Gospel Jesus is an unnatural, chimerical being, with a human mother and a Divine father. He is supernaturally born, leads a life that teems with supernatural events, dies a supernatural death, and then undergoes or accomplishes a supernatural resurrection. Without a doubt, if you apply the ordinary canons of history to the study of such a being, you will be bound to regard him as either a mythical or largely legendary character. The ordinary canons of history positively declare that such a being never existed.

According to Dr. Glover, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the Savior of the world. Through the Church, "he has forced himself upon the world—quite quietly." As a matter of fact, he has not forced himself upon the world, whether quite quietly or otherwise, but only on a small fraction of

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it, and even upon this most superficially, as every clergyman knows very well; and as history testifies, this forcing meant making thousands upon thousands of converts at the point of the sword, as Dr. Glover cannot but be aware. Is he proud of the record of the Englishman, St. Boniface, through whom Christ forced himself upon Germany? It was at the head of armed troops that that representative of the meek and lowly Jesus made converts. But that is only by the way, our present concern being with the personality of Christ as the alleged head of the Church. Our author informs us that we are made or unmade by our judgments upon him. That is to say, we disbelieve in and reject him to our own undoing. This is only another way of saying that Christ is above criticism. "He is the central figure in all human history," says Dr. Glover, "and on our attitude to the centre all depends for us":—

> "On our judgment rests in great measure our use and place in society—as we ignore or admire, turn away or follow, hate or love, him who has meant and means most for all mankind" (p. 208).

Those are the words of a special pleader, for whom the subject of Christ is not an open question. And yet, strangely and inconsistently enough, our author says that "we have to remind ourselves again and again that we have to touch the fact independently of preconception, to know it from within, and to know it in its full significance and its true perspective." No true critic could indulge in such twaddle as that. To say that we must love Christ before we can understand him is to beg the question, because before we can rationally love him we must find out by means of criticism whether or not he is worthy of our affection. In order to touch the so-called fact of Christ "independently of preconception" we must touch it absolutely unaffected by love or hate, admiration or contempt. Impartial criticism of the Gospels is making it quite impossible for ever-growing numbers of people to accept and love Christ, or to regard him in any other light than that in which they regard all the Pagan Christs. This is what Dr. Glover contemptuously calls judging him "from the Stoic and Epicurean standpoint after all." We prefer to characterise it as judging him from the standpoint of reason and common sense. Dr. Glover says:—

> "The general teaching of the Gospel is intelligible and simple, and it is amazing how, if you let people alone with the Gospels, they will understand Jesus Christ, if they are simple enough and true enough" (p. 212).

We maintain that the Gospel of salvation by faith in the efficacy of the blood of the Cross is neither intelligible nor simple, and that in proportion as the people become intelligent they spurn it as at once immoral and degrading. Dr. Glover asserts that "sympathy is the highest mode of intelligence," and we agree if it be sympathy with truth and virtue; but sympathy with error and falsehood and superstition is, surely, the highest or lowest mode of unintelligence. We cannot possibly have sympathy with the Gospel Jesus, because we do not believe that he ever lived. We neither love nor hate the Christ of the Churches, because we look upon him as nothing but a creation of the theological imagination. Of course, in Dr. Glover's opinion, this is the criticism of the "outsider" which "is everywhere recognised as worthless." We hold, on the contrary, that the criticism of the "outsider" alone is worth anything, because the "insider" is too prejudiced, too infatuated, too blinded by fanaticism to play the part of a critic at all. Dr. Glover himself is not in any legitimate sense a critic. As an "outsider" he does criticise Buddhism and Mohammedanism; and even as an "outsider" his criticism of these is not reliable, because it is biased by the fact that he is a Christian "insider." The only fair critic is he who stands outside all religions alike, for he holds a brief only for truth.

Dr. Glover makes use of an exceedingly thread-worn fallacy which has done service for countless generations.

> "Is a critic of Jesus to be trusted who has no essential sympathy with religion; who does not see how native it is to man, like art and music; whose instincts for religion have become atrophied? Is he not, rather, like a color-blind person, who has not studied pictures, let loose in a picture gallery? What can he say without giving himself away?"

We would be genuinely sorry for a color-blind person let loose in a picture gallery, for he would be a truly pitiable object; but his case is not in the least parallel to that of an outsider criticising Christ and Christianity. When a man is outside all religions he is precisely where all others would be were it not for persistent religious teaching and training during childhood and youth. Religion is not native to man, else all men would be religious. Its origin has been traced down to ignorance and fear, to the "primal stupidity"; and it is as true to-day as ever that unless a child can be induced to take to it in its teens it will never have anything to do with it at all. The other day we had the pleasure of meeting three bright and intelligent young people, the youngest of whom is fifteen, who are free from every vestige of religion, because it was not taught to them in their younger years; and what they are all young people would be in the absence of religious instruction in home and school. No, religion is not native to man, nor do even the divines believe, at bottom, that it is, for if they did they would not so vigorously oppose the adoption of the secular system of education in Government-supported schools. The religious outsider is, therefore, the only natural man, the only man who has a right to be a critic of religion, because he is the only man who has an open mind when its claims are set before him.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XII.

(*Continued from p. 469.*)

> "Our missionaries go forth to earn the crown of martyrdom. But if they gain it their societies demand vengeance in blood and coin from the murderers. The Gospel of Love becomes the Doctrine of Revenge. 'Forgive your enemies!' O ye saintly missionaries who are so shocked at the ungodly lives of your sinful fellow-countrymen in foreign lands, will you not practise what you preach? Think of the divine precept of the Master you profess to serve and pardon the blind rage of the ignorant heathen!"—CAPTAIN GORDON CASSERLY, *The Land of the Boxers*, p. 291.

> "If I were a missionary I do not see why I should object to persecution. A soldier takes his wounds, or his possible death, as part of his day's work. Even in the nondescript capacity of war correspondent, I had to go through three diseases which are incidental to campaigns, and be twice wounded. And if the soldier takes his killing as kindly as may be, I do not see why the missionary should not do so. Or, if he is not prepared to do so, I do not think he is worthy of the high calling he has adopted, for inconceivably higher is the vocation of the missionary to that of any soldier. I do not understand this muddling of things. There have been more helpless Chinese laborers killed in North America alone than there have been Europeans killed in the whole of China."—GEORGE LYNCH, *The War of Civilisations* (1901), p. 257.

IT is not our intention to go into all the cases where missionary aggression has been answered by Chinese retaliation, resulting in bloodshed, riot, and murder, followed by the demands of Christian Governments upon the Chinese for indemnity or the confiscation of territory. To deal with all of them would extend these articles to an interminable length. As Mr. Michie observes:—

> "The fruits of this war of the social elements began to be harvested in 1868, as Sir Rutherford Alcock observed; but that was only the beginning of a long series of conflicts which have marked the progress of missionary work in China up to the present day. Riot, outrage, and massacre are its regular landmarks."*

On June 21, 1870, occurred the massacre of Tientsin, by which sixteen French sisters of charity—including an Irish girl, Alice Sullivan—a French Consul, several French subjects, and a Russian merchant and his wife, lost their lives. This was

* *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 238.

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entirely owing to the operations of a Catholic orphanage, or institution for obtaining Chinese children in order to Christianise them, entitled the Society of the Sainte-Enfance. Says M. Eugene S mon :—

> "In 1870 the Society of the Sainte-Enfance had, after several years without success, collected at Tientsin a certain number of children whose parents had been compelled to abandon them by the floods of the Yellow River. The parents, having recovered from their misfortunes, reclaimed their children, but, as they had been baptised, the Sainte-Enfance refused to give them up, and for greater security dispatched them to another province. The consequence was the massacre not only of the missionaries, but of the French residents at Tientsin and of the Consul." *

The missionaries—who do not believe in returning good for evil—demanded retribution and the punishment of the perpetrators of the massacre. Under pressure, "not without hints of stronger measures," says Mr. Michie, it—

> "resulted in the offer of fifteen of the mob to be executed, which being unanimously rejected, the Chinese Government, apparently thinking it was the number that was inadequate, threw in five more, making twenty in all. Sixteen were actually beheaded, the remaining four being saved by the timely arrival of the Russian Minister, who (to his eternal credit) protested against the execution of the men accused of murdering the Russians, because he did not believe in their guilt. Compensation was paid by the Chinese officials to the families of the executed men, which, with the honors done to their dead bodies, showed that they were sacrificed not for crime, but for reasons of State. Of course, pecuniary compensation was made on account of the victims of the massacre, the Chinese Government being never hard to deal with where money is concerned." †

This cost the Chinese Government £160,000. "It is generally believed," says Mr. Davenport, that upon this occasion, as upon others, "the innocent have suffered for the guilty, who were too powerfully protected to be arrested." ‡

This punishment of the innocent for the guilty again took place in the province of Shantung. On November 1, 1897, two German Catholic priests, who had thrust themselves into a far-off village, twenty-five miles west of Chi-Ning-Chou, in Western Shantung, were suddenly set upon by a band of twenty men, armed with swords, both priests being killed. It has never, we believe, been satisfactorily settled as to the motives governing this double murder. Says Mr. Arthur Smith :—

> "Many theories were advanced to account for the act, such as that it was committed by banditti, who abound in that part of Shantung, that it was done in revenge for a failure to secure employment, or for help given to certain Catholic converts who had a lawsuit, or that it was instigated by the Ta Tao Hui, or 'Great Sword Society,' between which and the Catholics there had even at that time been a bitter feud of some years standing. Whatever the occasion for this outrage may have been, it was certainly not in any way due to official connivance, as the local magistrate happened to be well acquainted with one of the priests, and was much affected at the terrible sight, when he arrived in his capacity of coroner to make an official inspection." §

There is not much doubt that the murder was the result of some aggression on the part of the priests, due to their religion, for "No one else in the compound received any injury," which is not likely to have been the case if the attack had been made by brigands.

Again the pound of flesh was demanded. Two priests were killed on this occasion, and seven innocent men paid the penalty. Upon this point we have the express testimony of Father Stenz, the German Catholic priest, who wrote in 1898 :—

> "Up to this date, May 10, consequently more than half a year afterwards, not one of the actual murderers has been arrested. Two individuals have been beheaded. Seven others have been found guilty; for, although innocent, they were tortured until they decided to make false confessions." *

Mr. Davenport, who cites this letter, observes :—

> "Our missionaries tell us that persecution and death frequently await the natives whom they have converted; while, in addition, far too large a number of Chinese have been beheaded during the past half century as supposed murderers of foreign missionaries."

And yet they "persist in sending missionaries to China, knowing full well that under the present system either some of them, or of their converts, must from time to time necessarily be killed; and that other Chinese, innocent or guilty, must be beheaded in consequence." †

The Germans, who had long been waiting for a pretext for getting a footing in China, eagerly seized the opportunity. Within two weeks of the murder of the two priests, German ships of war made their appearance and seized Kia-chow, on the coast of Shantung. Says Mr. George Lynch :—

> "From conversation with intelligent Chinamen and a few Europeans who have any sympathetic insight into things Chinese, it appears that there is nothing in later years which has made a more profound impression on the Chinese than this seizure by the mailed fist of the Kaiser of those ports of their Holy Land."

The Emperor of China—

> "felt it so keenly, and for a time was so overcome, that he spoke of abdication. It broke the heart of the aged Prince Kung; he died in consequence in the year 1898. More than the loss of Formosa or Wei-Hai-Wei was the loss of this section of their Holy Land. It naturally worked on the religious and imaginative feelings of the people, and hallowed the aspirations of the Boxers with the sanctity of a crusade." ‡

There is no doubt that this seizure was one of the determining causes of the Boxer rising two years later. The same writer observes :—

> "If two Chinese missionaries had been killed in a German village, would the German Emperor have consented to the cession of a Baltic port as compensation for the outrage? And if through force of circumstances he had to consent, would it have been surprising if his subjects had risen indignantly in arms to wrest it back?" (p. 8).

Another great grievance to the Chinese is caused by what is known as the "Extra-territoriality" clause inserted in the treaties forced upon China. Sir Robert Hart remarks :—

> "The most striking among the treaty clauses are those which, under the heading 'Extra-territoriality,' withdraw foreigners from Chinese control and place them under their own national officials in China; and, under the heading of 'The Most Favored Nation,' provide that whatever is accorded to new-comers will be enjoyed by their predecessors." §

The missionaries have taken advantage of both these clauses to the very utmost. Mr. Davenport quotes from a Parliamentary paper the letter addressed by a missionary to a naval commander, from which we extract the following :—"Why not bring a few gunboats to Nanking, and order the Viceroy to stop the nonsense in his district with the alternative of a bombardment?" Mr. Davenport continues :—

> "The same Blue-book contains a letter from the then Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty, wherein he states :—
>
> "'Having looked in vain for the authority under which English missionaries establish themselves throughout China outside Treaty limits, I applied for information to H.M. Minister at Peking, and the explanation is that no such stipulation was contained in the Treaty of Peking at all, but that the present state of affairs arises from Art. VI. of the Convention between the Emperor of France and China, signed at Peking, October 25, 1860, and that England has to claim for her subjects equal rights under the most-favored nation clause.....It seems altogether unreasonable that the Societies should exercise absolute freedom in going where they please,

* Eug. Simon, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, p. 161.
† Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 241.
‡ Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 291.
§ A. H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, p. 106.

* Davenport, *China from Within*, pp. 291-2.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 291-3.
‡ G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, pp. 7-8.
§ Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, pp. 65-6.

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and that their agents should look to H.M. Government for protection.'" *

Mr. George Lynch illustrates how these clauses would work out in our own country :—

> "If we were endeavoring to evolve a combination of circumstances which would absolutely ensure Christian missionaries being thoroughly hated by the Chinese, we could not have surpassed the present position. Assuming the principle of 'Do as you would be done by,' apply the position of our missionaries in the East to England, for instance. Say that Chinese missionaries had obtained an entry into this country by a clause in a certain treaty, and a clause which, parenthetically it must be remarked, is a forgery. Thus, as a matter of fact, every missionary passport to China at the present day bears upon it the seal of Ananias, the indelible stain of as low a piece of cheating as ever diplomacy can show. When the missionary starts preaching his strange doctrine, one of its immediate effects is that any converts he makes are practically exempt from the laws of the country in which they are living. The converts that a Chinese missionary would make around Covent Garden would *de facto* be outside the jurisdiction of the police magistrate sitting at Bow-street, and for the judgment of any legal dispute, or the punishment of any misconduct, would have the right to have their cases tried before the representative of the Chinese Minister in Portland-place." †

That very high authority upon Chinese history, Mr. Michie, observes :—

> "But if toleration be the note of Chinese polity—concerning not religion alone, but almost every matter affecting government—it may be asked, what is it in the propagation of Christianity that excites the hostility of people and rulers? It is that the missionaries present themselves to Chinese view as the instruments of powerful nations bent on the ruin of the empire. They enter the country with a talisman of extra-territoriality; their persons are sacred: the law of the land cannot lay hands on them. That is the first stage. The second is, that they seek to extra-territorialise their converts also, whose battle they fight in the provincial courts and in the rustic communes, and so make it of material advantage to the people to bear the banner of the Cross. Many missionaries are really zealous in the work of alienating the Chinese from their natural allegiance, and of encouraging them to seek the protection of foreign Powers against the native authorities. Thus a revolution of the most vital nature is in progress, and is being pushed on with all the energy which Christian, combined with ecclesiastical and political, zeal can throw into the work. Village is set against village, clan against clan, family against family, and a man's foes in China are too often they of his own household." ‡

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

A PRINTER'S ERROR.

In the *Brighton Herald* of Saturday, July 12, there was, among the list of Church Services for the following day, a notice that, at the French Reformed Church, M. Le Pasteur Joye, B.A., B.D., would preach in the afternoon on "The Pleasures of Immorality." It seems only fitting that Parson Joye should discourse on Pleasures; but that the theme should be that of *Immorality* is testimony to the courage of this conventional cleric. Although the title of the sermon was not correct to a *t*, yet, as printed, it unwittingly conveyed the true character of the type of pleasure discoursed. So, on occasions, good cometh out of even a printer's devilment.—E. B.

SOME MEN.

'Twixt modest man and egotist
The difference is wide:
One thinks he never would be missed
If he to-morrow died.
The other thinks, when he sheds tears,
That every scene is bleak,
And fancies that the whole world hears
When he wears shoes that squeak.

* Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 294.
† G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 255.
‡ Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 233.

Acid Drops.

The doings of the Bulgarian Crusaders continue to form ghastly reading in the daily press, with still not a word from the religious press that held them up to admiration while they were maltreating Mohammedans. A very circumstantial account of Bulgarian massacres has been supplied by Commander Cardale, an officer on the active list of the British Navy. Commander Cardale visited Doxaro immediately after the Bulgarian departure. His story eclipses all that has yet been told concerning these gallant liberators. In one courtyard 120 women and children were massacred. The walls were spattered with blood to a height of six feet from the ground. In one corner he saw huddled together the bodies of six little children. In one room a woman and her child had been crucified. In a stovepipe he found the body of a little girl wedged, who had tried to escape, but who had been killed with bayonet thrusts from below. Throughout the town Commander Cardale personally counted no less than 600 bodies still unburied, mostly of women and children. Bands of dogs were feeding on human remains, and the town presented a loathsome picture of burning and ruined homes and murdered bodies. For cold-blooded barbarity these Christian liberators appear to have eclipsed all records.

"Warfare in the Balkans," a leaderette in the *Catholic Times*, contains the following admission :—

> "The Balkan Powers have destroyed for ever the reputation they gained when undertaking the war against Turkey. They appeared to be cordially friendly with one another, and their announcement that their troops were taking the field as crusaders bent on delivering the Christians throughout Turkey in Europe from an intolerable servitude secured for them enthusiastic admiration. Misgivings were laid aside, and it was generally believed that the desire to improve the position of the Christian subjects of the Porte was one of the motives, if not the chief object, for which the campaign was commenced. From the moment when the Turk lay vanquished and the question of dividing the spoil arose, it became evident that their aim was entirely self-aggrandisement. Jealous of the predominance of Bulgaria, the three other Powers—Servia, Greece, and Montenegro—have turned their arms against her, and in the battles that have just taken place there has been fearful carnage. The belligerents have been betraying a stronger determination to give no quarter than when they were fighting against the Turks, and the devastation is now almost as great in their own territories as that caused in the Sultan's dominions by the invasion."

The Protestant journals in England are less candid. They try to hide the greedy blackguardism of the Christian Powers.

Here is another striking extract from another page of the same number of the *Catholic Times* :—

> "History repeats itself in little in the sordid rivalry of the Balkan Allies. In the four great crusades against the Saracen and the Turk lust and avarice and brutal enormities covered with shame and dishonor Christian arms, and made the Crescent shine by comparison with chivalrous lustre. With broken pledges and fratricidal hate the Balkan barbarians 'reel back into the beast,' and make their unhappy lands once more the menace of the world's peace, and themselves the silly puppets of rival Powers who pull the strings. In the history of civilised nations the state of the Balkans to-day is without parallel."

We fancy the editorial knuckles will get well rapped by the Catholic dignitaries. This is plain speaking with a vengeance.

One of the most interesting conversions on record is that of John-street Congregational Church, Aberdeen, into a picture palace. At one time this church was eminently prosperous, with crowded congregations; but, ere long, as a House of God it ceased to attract, and now it is about to try its luck as a place of amusement.

Is There a Hell? is the title of a shilling volume just published by Cassell & Co. The question is answered by sixteen Christian divines, who cannot all be speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost, since they differ from each other very considerably. We shall have more to say about this burning question next week. We believe we know quite as much about it as all those sixteen Christian divines put together. Still, we shall let them have a look in, though they wouldn't let us appear in *their* company.

Dr. Farquhar McRae should have known better. He became surety in the sum of £20 for the reappearance of Mrs. Susannah Watson, described as a Christian missionary and the wife of a Presbyterian minister in Canada, who was remanded on a charge of shoplifting. The lady disappeared;

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it was thought she had gone for a holiday to Germany. Anyhow, she did not answer the call, and Dr. Rae was asked to find that £20. He pleaded for mercy, and Mr. Plowden let the poor innocent off with a fine of twenty shillings. He will beware of pious grass-widows in future.

The second Plymouth Conference of the Wesleyan Church may recall to some one incident of the first Conference held there in 1896. It was at this Conference that the admission of women as delegates was first raised. To the honor of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes it has to be recorded that he was in favor of their admission. On the other hand, the Rev. W. L. Watkinson said that, if admitted, they would be like poppies among the corn. The obvious meaning of this was that they would be pretty but useless; although a long while afterwards Dr. Watkinson explained that he meant very few would attend. A committee was appointed, we believe, to report on the question, and did so in its favor. This recommendation the Conference summarily threw out. Thus the matter remained until 1910, when the Conference decided that it was quite in accord with Christian principles that women might attend a Methodist Conference as delegates. That is the way Christian progress is achieved. After nearly two thousand years, some Christian discovers a truth that is generally recognised in non-Christian organisations. He brings it forward and there is some years spent in fighting the question before the pressure of public opinion converts other Christians. Then the reform is admitted—or, rather, the injustice is removed—and Christians assume the airs of devil-may-care, up-to-date reformers. Genuine reformers, meanwhile, only smile at these attempts of stage coaches to masquerade as motor-cars.

The Freethought analysis of the social function of religion was unconsciously endorsed in the presidential address to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The President quoted with approval a writer who said, "The social service that Wesley accomplished was not the least of its triumphs, for Methodism diverted into religious channels a vast volume of social discontent which in France swelled the tide that submerged Church and State in 1789." This is quite true; but the service is not peculiar to Methodism; it is true, in measure, of all forms of religion. Its function has always been to direct social unrest into religious channels, and so help to keep things as they are. That is one reason why the powers that be have always encouraged religion and discouraged unbelief. And it is not without its significance that some of the worst features of the English factory system, and some of the vilest robberies of the land from the English people, succeeded the Methodist revival. As a religious movement, the revolt against the established form of religion was socially retrogressive. But it had other and indirect consequences—consequences that the Dissenters worked hard to suppress. The revolt against the Established Church led indirectly to a questioning of authority. Social causes, amongst others the French Revolution itself, directed attention to social ills and the prospect of remedying them; and many who had commenced with a break from the Established Church went on to break from religion altogether. But Methodism, no more than Episcopalianism, aimed at social reform, and, so far as its influence can be clearly traced on social and political life, it was wholly unhealthy.

The President of the Conference fell back upon the familiar argument that many of the social reformers of the last fifty years were born of Methodist stock and trained in Methodist schools. It would be surprising were it otherwise. John Wesley was born of Church of England stock and trained in Church of England schools, but we have never heard Methodists claim that they owed all that was good in Methodism to Episcopalian influence. Martin Luther was born of Roman Catholic stock and trained in Roman Catholic schools, and, by a parity of reasoning, Roman Catholicism is to be thanked for the Reformation. In a Christian country most people are naturally born of a Christian stock and trained under Christian influence. The significant thing is not that in a Christian country some leaders in social movements come from a Christian stock, but that so large a number of social leaders and workers break definitely from all Christian organisations and reject Christian doctrines. More significant still is the fact that practically every movement of social reform for the last hundred years has begun and developed apart from Christian influence and Christian teaching, and often enough in the teeth of Christian opposition. And it is tolerably certain that even now, when the Churches have been driven into professing an interest in progressive movements, if non-Christians were to withdraw from them the vitality of these movements would be reduced to a very low ebb indeed.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the African missionary, about whom some fuss was made a little while back, and who is returning to Africa because he prefers a non-Christian country, told a Y. M. C. A. meeting the other day that before Henry Drummond died he took back all that he once wrote in *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. We do not know whether there is anything in the statement, and it does not much matter anyway. The book is now dead as a doornail, and was a shoddy performance at best. Its chief significance lies in its having been one of the many works that was to harmonise Christianity with science, and which in due course went the way of its predecessors. After Drummond came Kidd; after Kidd, Balfour; after Balfour, Bergson. All have their day, and in a few years are forgotten. Christians confess their plight by the eagerness with which they greet every attempt, and its failure by the readiness with which they turn to a new one. Meanwhile, science is extending knowledge in all directions, and so providing the material that will one day expel all religion from civilised society.

Peace has been secured in the new Christian Republic of Mount Athos. Six hundred and sixteen of the monks have been arrested and deported to Russia in a transport of the Russian Volunteer Fleet. The fighting among the monks all arose over a quarrel concerning the name of God. Some said that the name, being part of God, was divine. Others denied it. And they proceeded to settle the dispute on the plan of starving those that could be seized and shut up, after considerable fighting. And now there is peace on Mount Athos—thanks to the gunboat.

Professor's Bury's new *History of Freedom of Thought* was reviewed by R. Ellis Roberts in the *Daily News* (July 23). Our contemporary should keep such ignorant insolence out of its pages. The reviewer has the impudence to sneer at Gibbon—the greatest of modern historians—and to call Buckle "the most shallow of writers." Vulgar outrages of this kind are unworthy of a journal that was established by Charles Dickens.

The *Daily Sketch* reports one of the Rev. G. Jackson's dribbles thusly:—

> "It is a significant fact that neither Charles Bradlaugh in England nor Colonel Ingersoll in America has had any successor. Again, it is safe to predict they never will. And why? Because our changed methods of interpretation have robbed them of the miserable wares which formed their whole stock in trade."

This pretence of never having heard of the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker*, not to mention Mr. Foote, is simply ridiculous. And what is to be thought of the following?—

> "As it was given to the Greek to teach men art, and to the Roman to teach men law, so to the Jew it was given to teach men religion."

Where is the *art* to be found? In many splendid galleries. Where is the *law* to be found? In courts of justice all over Europe. Where is the *religion* to be found. In the blood-soaked Balkans. On the whole, the world might dispense with the *religion*, and even with some of the Jewish gentlemen who keep it alive for our sakes.

"Preaching is vain without the Holy Ghost," exclaimed a preacher the other day. We know nothing about the powers of the Holy Ghost, but we do know that preaching is vain. At best preaching only helps to prolong the night of superstition and retard the advent of the day of enlightenment and freedom. The pulpit has always been and is now a spoke in the wheel of progress. Hence the knowledge that its influence is visibly declining fills our heart with joy. The members of the Black Brigade are very loath to admit that their glory is departing; but even they are obliged reluctantly to acknowledge that they are by no means the deep force they used to be in days gone by.

Little Dombey asked, "What are the wild waves saying?" At this season of the year, owing to the travelling evangelists on the sands, it would appear to be something warm.

Mr. A. C. Benson has just spoken on the subject of immortality. Of course, he had nothing new to say about it. He intimated that he had been converted to a belief in a future life by a "personal experience." The experience was that of a general breakdown through overwork. "The machinery of the brain was out of gear"; but his mind or spirit criticised and was sorry for the poor unfortunate organ of thought. Hence he jumped to the conclusion that his mind or spirit "was the thing untouched by illness or disability"; but had his mind been able to think a little

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more logically and deeply he would have learned that paralysis of the brain is accompanied by a total loss of consciousness. Is the mind or spirit then "the thing that is untouched by illness or disability"? Clearly, Mr. Benson was not at his best when the said conversion took place.

Mr. A. C. Benson says that so far as we can follow the records of history and archæology, the funeral arrangements of humanity testify to the belief in a life after death. This is true, but it is not the kind of truth it is assumed to be. The beliefs of primitive mankind do not testify to a belief *after* death, but to a continuance in living. This may sound an unnecessarily subtle distinction, but in reality it is a vital one. A child, for instance, finds it a matter of great difficulty to conceive a cessation of life—we doubt if any child could have any adequate conception of this—but it has no difficulty in thinking of people living, because that is a continuance of things as they are. The dead person is, to the child, asleep; and it is a quite acceptable explanation that he or she has gone away somewhere. It is the same with early humanity. Life is a continuous fact; to group the conception of death as a cessation of living, implies no small degree of mental effort. The truth is that the savage does not think of people dying and living again, but as continuing to live. Death as due to the cessation of organic functioning, is the other side of the conception of life as the outcome of organic functioning, and neither conception is present in primitive thought. Thus it is that man has not to grow towards the conception of a continuous life, but towards the scientific conception of death. Modern religious theories on the subject are due to the persistence of the primitive idea, modified by the pressure of more exact knowledge. Mr. Benson in no sense troubles the non-believer by proofs that people have always believed in a continuance of life—he rather supports their position. Even to-day it requires an effort to think of people as really dead. "Could we think that death was death indeed," the main strength of religion would be gone. Here, as elsewhere, it finds its main support in human weakness and incapacity.

At a reception given by a bishop, visitors of one rank were admitted by blue cards, and those of a lower caste by white tickets. A nobleman, who had married an actress, received a blue card, and his wife a white one. When challenged at the entrance, the lady insisted that they could go in together. "What do you take us for," she shouted to the astonished flunkey, "a blooming Seidlitz powder?"

"D. V." (*Deo Volente*, God willing) are initials that have dropped out of public announcements, except in the case of certain ignorant communities that still follow in the dreary old paths of the ages of faith. Nowadays, the public generally does not care a D. whether D is V or not.

As a rendezvous in cold and wet weather the British Museum finds favor with many people. One of the official guides has been telling of parents who send children from homes where there is infection in order to "get them out of the way." Fancy Pharaoh waking up at the call of the "mummy." If he caught the measles, he might think that he was back in the old Bible days, and faced by the ten plagues.

"It is a waste of time," says Professor Josiah Boyce in his new work *The Problem of Christianity*, "to endeavor to prove the usual theses of dogmatic Christology by any collection of accessible historical evidences. Such historical evidences are once for all insufficient." Thus is the second death of Christ gaining recognition even in Christian circles. The mythical Christ is doomed, and the historical Christ never existed.

The most rowdy students in Edinburgh, with one exception, are the "medicals." The exception is the "theologicals." It appears to be much the same further south. The non-militant Suffragette pilgrims met the "theological students" at Durham (the *Daily News* says), and the embryo divines "attempted to cause a disturbance." Of course they did. But the more gallant miners, with less godliness and more manliness about them, defended the women and ducked some of the future Bible-bangers in the river.

John Wesley indignantly denounced that blasphemous mockery called "lying in state." But the Salvation Army puts "business" before everything else. Mrs. Booth's dead body was exhibited to the crowd, so was William Booth's when his turn came, and the late Commissioner Railton's corpse laid in state for two days at the Regent Hall, Oxford-street, London.

A confused witness in a King's Bench case, before taking the oath, carefully examined the Testament, explaining that he was "looking for Joshua." Most professing Christians do not know one part of the Bible from the other; but they are so certain of their faith.

To enliven the big gooseberry season, the pious *Daily News* has published correspondence on "Ladies Who Smoke," and not a few of the writers were horrified at the very idea. A few years ago the pious world was charmed to think that men and women smoked—in the "next world."

The Southend Justices recently sentenced a man to fourteen days' imprisonment for sleeping out of doors. It would be interesting to hear the unfortunate prisoner's views concerning the blessings of poverty.

Jesus Christ and his Apostles were in the habit of sleeping out of doors. Fortunately, they lived a long time ago and in another country. If they lived now they would have to avoid Southend.

Father Hopkins, the sailor's chaplain, giving evidence in a recent law case, stated that he was "a sky pilot," and "had given his services for twenty-five years without stipend." Was this because his ship never started?

In the course of a discussion on emigration at a recent meeting of the Rochford (Essex) Board of Guardians, it was stated that children in Canada had to sleep in stables, and had been frost-bitten. A Mr. Leonard, one of the Guardians, retorted that "Jesus Christ slept in a stable." It is more certain that many of his followers behave as if they were brought up in such places.

Last week's *Church Times* had a long article on "Open Air Apologetic" in which both Christian and Freethought meetings were dealt with as impartially as could very well be expected. "What is wanted," the writer says, "is an organised band of hecklers to worry the rationalist speaker." We have no objection to that. At present organised *hecklers* are simply organised *interrupters*. Certainly the change would be very much for the better. Nor should we object to the hecklers doing all they can to "turn the laugh against" the Freethought lecturers. They will probably find it a difficult thing to do, but in attempting it they must allow the Freethought hecklers to turn the laugh against the Christian lecturers—which is comparatively easy.

Mr. John Francis, Mayor of Southend-on-Sea, speaking at the stone-laying of a new Baptist Church, said "The success of religion meant that the police force would have less to do." As the police are overworked all over England, we conclude that religion is a failure.

That up-to-date prophet, Old Moore, writing last year, declared that the weather this July would be "uncertain, causing some disappointment." This is not too precise, but it is to be wished that Biblical prophecies were half as accurate.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan declares, *ex cathedra*, that "the Bible must be retained in the schools of the nation." Why? Because he knows that if the Bible is taken out Christianity will die. He is quite right, and we do not blame him for his zealous opposition to secular education. All we wish to point out at present is that his and his brethren's attitude on this subject clearly shows that, even in their own estimation, religion's hold upon the human mind is purely accidental. What a humiliating confession on the part of those whose boast is, when they are not discussing religious education, that man is "incurably religious." Religious apologists are perpetually contradicting themselves, and they have been doing it for so many ages that they no longer blush for it.

The ban on Biblical subjects is to be removed from the theatre; but apparently it has already been lifted from the music-hall stage. Miss Marie Lloyd, one of the most popular of comediennes, has a song, "Mother Eve," which she sings in a dress symbolical of leaves. It contains the pious couplet:—

> "When once I ate an apple the whole universe was stirred,
> Now girls eat bananas and no one says a word."

The *Daily News* recently printed a paragraph relating to a woman attending school at the age of seventy. It is not a record, for Methuselah and other patriarchs must have attended school far beyond that trivial term.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £160 11s. 11d. Received since:—Frederic W. Walsh, 2s.

C. F. BUNDE.—You take the trouble to write us a long letter to persuade us of the uselessness of troubling about anything. Perhaps you'll see the joke of it all when it is pointed out. Seriously, you have fallen into the fallacy of supposing that it is of no use striving at all because man and his dwelling-place will never be perfect. We are neither Pessimist nor Optimist, but (adopting George Eliot's nomenclature) a Meliorist.

"A."—It doesn't seem to call for any special notice. "Liberal Christianity" is a shockingly hybrid expression.

J. MCCLELLAN.—It certainly is the poorest alleged Freethought production we have ever seen.

GOCHURCH.—The Welsh revival was not alone in being followed by a reaction which set religion farther back than ever. It is rarely if ever noticed, but it is an obvious fact that John Wesley's revival in England was followed by the great fight over Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. It was all the worse for religion in the end.

J. WRAIGHT.—You knew, of course, that matter posted on July 24 was four days too late for that week's *Freethinker*. It appears this week.

E. PARKER.—We note your correction—that in last week's Obituary *Miss* Mary Ann Warner should have been *Mrs.*, and her age 76. The other point is hardly worth raising now.

J. F. AVAR.—A printer's blunder. It should have been Luke xix. 27.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. L. B. (Johannesburg).—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

E. B.—Your weekly cuttings are always welcome.

W. J. RAMSEY.—Thanks for the newspaper extracts, but we have got the book and shall notice it at some length.

"SUB ROSA," with no date, address, or name, writes us a letter on our criticism of *the* "Sub Rosa's" use of the word antiquarian some weeks ago. We do not happen to know Mr. Spencer Hughes's hand-writing, and are therefore unable to tell whether this letter comes from him or not. We could not deal with it this week in any case. Perhaps we may hear as to its authorship in time for our next issue.

MRS. FLEMING.—Accept our best thanks for your trouble in the matter. Lord Rosebery's lament over the decay of good manners seems only too true in many directions.

A. B. MOSS.—We hope you will have a good time at Clacton, and shall be glad to see you on your return.

F. COLLINS.—You forget that our advice was requested.

E. PACK.—Pleased to hear the meetings and the sale of literature continue good at Leeds.

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS are once more warned that their letters cannot be dealt with. We act upon the common rule of journalistic etiquette in this matter.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

At a very large meeting held on Edmonton Green on Thursday, July 24, protesting against the recent attempt to suppress free speech, the following resolution, supported by the several Secularist and Socialist speakers—Mr. J. Hecht, Mr. W. Davidson, Mr. F. Charters, Mr. C. Dilthey, and Mr. J. Summers—was carried without dissent: "That this meeting of Edmonton citizens expresses its disgust at the cowardly and unfair tactics displayed by certain religious elements in attempting to destroy the right of free speech, and pledges itself to maintain that right at all costs."

We are glad to hear that Miss Pankhurst had a most orderly meeting at Edmonton on Sunday.

There were lively times at Parliament Hill Fields last Sunday. Miss Vance has written an equally lively account of them, which we regret we must hold over till next week, the copy reaching us too late for inclusion in this week's *Freethinker*, the make-up having already been settled.

We are glad to see that one Leeds paper, at least, sympathises with the local N. S. S. Branch in its fight with the police for its common rights of citizenship in the holding of public meetings. We take the following paragraph from the Editor's "Review of Current Events" in the *Leeds and District Weekly Citizen* (July 25):—

> "The Leeds branch of the National Secularist Society is making a fight for the same freedom given to other societies in the public parks of the city. The present position is that anyone can speak in the parks, but if it is desired to give or sell literature, or to take a collection, special permission must be obtained. The Secularists have applied for this permission, and have been *refused*. Last Sunday they sold literature and took a collection on Woodhouse Moor, in spite of the by-laws. In this fight for liberty we are entirely with them, and fail to see any consistency in the position of the Parks Committee."

Another paragraph reproduces the resolution which was "carried unanimously" at the Woodhouse Moor demonstration.

There was a slight confusion of names in our report of the Woodhouse Moor demonstration last week. The point is not one of great importance, but we may as well be correct. It was Mr. Pack who took up the collection and Mr. Jackson who sold the literature, and the veteran Mr. Sollett's name should have been in the list of speakers.

The Leeds police are apparently not going to take up the local N. S. S. Branch's challenge *re* the "permits" for Woodhouse Moor. Up to our going to press no summonses have been issued on account of the Demonstration on July 20. They have prosecuted three lads, instead, for larking on the Moor and using obscene language.

We are delighted to see that the High Court at Edinburgh has dismissed the appeal of the Edinburgh magistrates against the decision of the lower court. It will be remembered that the magistrates took it upon themselves to issue a proclamation forbidding public meetings at the Mound. Mr. John M'Ara refused to obey this proclamation. Litigation followed, and the Court held that the magistrates had no right to make laws on their own account. They appealed against this judgment, but the higher court has confirmed it. The victory remains with free speech, and Mr. M'Ara and his supporters are to be congratulated.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, our much-tried brave friend at Leamington, insists on sending his mite to the President's Honorarium Fund. "It is very little," he says, "but after all every little helps, and if all enthusiasts for 'the best of causes' gave what they could, the Fund would not drag on through a whole year." If this won't stir up the laggards, nothing will; so we say no more at present.

Mr. Walsh sends us an interesting page or two about the late W. Hale White, with whom he was brought into contact by correspondence.

Mr. Walsh has since called our attention to Miss Durham's "ghastly record of atrocities" in the *Nation*. "You are one of the very few," he adds, "who foresaw all this." Referring to our prophecy of how the Christian warriors would act if they had the opportunity.

Mr. Cohen is holidaying. He will be back about the middle of August. We hope he will find the change beneficial. The work of a Freethought lecturer and journalist is more trying than most people imagine.

Abbot Gasquet, addressing the Catholic Congress at Plymouth, said that—"The Bible of the northern working classes was a certain blasphemous, yet well-written, weekly Rationalist newspaper."

Sir Robert Anderson, formerly head of the Criminal Investigation Department, in an interview published recently in the *Daily News and Leader* said, "The Humanitarian League had more influence than all his Majesty's judges." This is a well-deserved compliment to an institution which, under the guidance of Mr. H. S. Salt, has done so much to awaken the national conscience.

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

The Fourth Gospel.

THE three Synoptists, as we have seen, were editors who re-wrote and revised a long series of narratives which they found in a more primitive Gospel. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, however, was a born fabricator who could not copy a reputed historic event from an ancient document without so altering the details as to make a practically new story—and with an utter disregard for truth. Not content with taking some of the primitive narratives and transforming them almost beyond recognition, he boldly fabricated some new ones himself; to which, at the same time, he added a number of new sayings and long discourses, which he piously placed in the mouth of his Savior. Next, he altered the plan of the public ministry of Jesus, and placed it in Judæa instead of in Galilee, as recorded in the three Synoptics. Finally, though he took his account of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus from the same primitive records as the Synoptists, he could not refrain from altering and making additions to those alleged events also. He has placed the trial a day earlier than the Synoptists—on the day for eating the passover in the evening—so that the accusers of Jesus could not go into the Pretorium where the trial was held, lest "they might be defiled," and Pilate is represented as repeatedly going out of the court to speak to them outside—a thing which no Roman procurator would have done. The writer has further introduced new incidents at the Crucifixion, and has fabricated new appearances of Jesus to his disciples after the alleged resurrection. Space will not allow me to go fully into all these matters here; I shall therefore content myself with giving some brief examples.

The Call of Peter and Andrew.

The call of these two brothers, as revised by the first two evangelists from the primitive source (Matt. iv. 18—20; Mark i. 16—18) is thus recorded by Matthew:—

> "And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him."

Mark relates the incident in nearly the same words. We now turn to the Fourth Gospel, and find the event completely transformed. According to this writer, Jesus came to the Jordan the day after he had been baptised. The writer says (John i. 35—42):—

> "Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold the lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye?.....*One of the two* that heard John speak, and followed him, *was Andrew*, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first *his own brother Simon*, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah. He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of Joanes: thou shalt be called Peter. On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee."

The writer of this account knew that in the primitive document Jesus did not go into Galilee and commence preaching until *after* John the Baptist had been cast into prison (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14), and that the call of Peter and Andrew did not take place until *after that*; also, that the two brothers were strangers to Jesus when called to be apostles. These facts he knew quite well; but he could not resist the temptation of trying to make a better story of it, as in the case of casting lots for the garments at the Crucifixion (John xix. 23—24). We find, further, that this fraudulent writer has put his own words and ideas in the mouth of the Baptist. This will be seen by comparing the following paragraphs: Mark i. 4—11; Matt. iii. 1—17; Luke iii. 7—17, 21, 22; John i. 6—7, 15—51; iii. 28—36. Here Matthew and Luke have evidently made additions to the primitive account; but these are small in comparison with those made by the accomplished fabricator of the Fourth Gospel.

The Pool of Bethesda.

In John v. 2—9 we find the following extraordinary narrative, piously fabricated by the writer himself in order "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God" (xx. 31):—

> "Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered [waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden]. And a certain man was there, which had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he said unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? The infirm man answered him, Sir, I have no man, *when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool:* but while I am coming, *another steppeth down before me.*"

There is no need to read further; Jesus, of course, healed the infirm man. But the method employed by the writer's God to show his love and compassion for his afflicted people was, to say the least, godlike. That deity possessed the power, if he thought fit to exercise it, to heal all the sick people around the pool; but, in his loving-kindness, he chose to heal but one. Moreover, the writer's Savior, like the writer's God, never gave a thought to the healing of more than one person, but went away leaving all "the sick, blind, halt, and withered" unhealed.

Now, that the foregoing story is a fiction is beyond the shadow of a doubt. In the first place, the account was not in the primitive Gospel from which the other three evangelists drew the main portion of their narratives. In the next place, no such pool at which an angel agitated the water for the cure of sickness or disease is mentioned by any writer known to history. Josephus, in his description of Jerusalem, states that there were places within that city called "Bethso" and "Bezetha," and mentions "the fountain of Siloam" and "Solomon's pool"; but he knew nothing of a periodical intervention of heaven for the cure of disease at a pool in Jerusalem. It is probable that Bezetha was the locality which the Fourth Gospel writer selected for his imaginary pool. Writing, as he did, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, he had no fear of his fraud being detected.

The Christian Church would be glad to get rid of this miracle; but not being able to do so, they have in the Revised Version omitted from the text the words I have placed within brackets, and relegated them to the margin, though they admit in doing so that "Many ancient authorities insert wholly or in part" the words they have erased. The reason for this action was to get rid of the statement that "at certain seasons" an angel agitated the water of the pool—which they all knew to be a fabrication. But these apologetic efforts to conceal the fraud are vain; for the words I have italicised in the reply of the infirm man prove that the words within brackets were originally an essential part of the narrative, which is not only founded upon them, but cannot be understood without them.

The Raising of Lazarus.

In the same questionable Gospel, chapter xi., we have the story of Jesus restoring to life a man named Lazarus, who was not only dead, but his body "had been in the tomb four days," and putrefaction had commenced. This miracle Jesus is stated to have performed by "crying with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth"; whereupon the putrescent corpse came out of the tomb restored to life and perfect health. The only evidence we possess for such an astounding miracle is that it was written by the man who fabricated the story of the Pool of Bethesda. No one

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ever witnessed it, and the three Synoptists never heard of it.

The same pious fabricator excogitated the little story of Turning water into wine (John ii. 1—11), a miracle which no one ever beheld, and of which the Synoptists had also never heard.

NEW INCIDENTS AT THE CRUCIFIXION.

In his account of the Crucifixion, the same fraudulent writer says that "there were standing by the cross of Jesus" his mother and other women, besides the disciple John; that Jesus, looking down upon them, said to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son," and to John, "Behold thy mother"; and that "from that hour the disciple took her to his own home" (John xix. 25—27).

This mendacious writer next represents the Jews as asking Pilate to have the legs of the three persons who were crucified broken (xix. 31), in order to have a pretext for making one of the soldiers pierce the dead body of Jesus with a spear, and by so doing, fulfil two Old Testament "prophecies"—"A bone of him shall not be broken," and "They shall look on him whom they pierced"—after which he has the hardihood to say: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe" (xix. 35). This last statement is implied to have been made by the apostle John, in whose name the Gospel was written.

A NEW PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS.

According to the Synoptics, Jesus came to Galilee and commenced preaching after the Baptist had been cast into prison (Matt. iv. 12; Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 14), and remained in the northern province teaching and working miracles until within a fortnight of his crucifixion. He was arrested six or seven days after entering Jerusalem. The writer of the Fourth Gospel has, however, represented Jesus as spending nearly all his time in Jerusalem or Judæa, with only three flying visits to Galilee, the latter recorded in John ii. 1—12, iv. 43—45, vi. i.—vii. 9. The first of these visits was to "Cana of Galilee" where the water was turned into wine, which visit was made *before* John was cast into prison; that is to say *before* Jesus had commenced preaching in Galilee, and *before* he had chosen any of his disciples. Yet this writer represents Jesus as having all his disciples with him, and says that they "believed on him" after witnessing the miracle. The events in these three visits are equivalent to the following paragraphs in the Synoptics: Matt. xiv. 13—34; Mark vi. 30—53; Luke ix. 10—17—that is to say, less than one chapter in each—which scarcely affects the public ministry at all. Hence, while Jesus is preaching in the cities and villages of Galilee, according to the Synoptics, another Jesus is represented as declaiming and wrangling in Jerusalem or Judæa, in the so-called "Gospel of John." Two such conflicting ministries cannot both be historical: one account or the other must be a fabrication.

Christian apologists endeavor to reconcile the two by saying that "the apostle John" had read the other Gospels, and wrote his own to supply circumstances which they had omitted. This is simply apologetic nonsense; for not one of the canonical Gospels was written in apostolic times, and not one of them by an apostle. The forger of the Fourth Gospel lived in the second century, in the days referred to by Luke in his Preface (i. 1—4), when "many" Christian scholars were making revised copies of the primitive Gospel, and when the new Gospels, after they were made, circulated singly in different districts. Later on, when the four canonical Gospels had become known, fresh forgeries would be impossible. But the unprincipled Christian who wrote the Fourth Gospel—probably, John the Presbyter, a friend of Papias—succeeded in getting his forgery received as the evangel of the apostle John.

I have no space for noticing the sayings and discourses of the Fourth Gospel. It must suffice to say that they were *all* composed by the writer himself, and placed by him in the mouth of Jesus. This fact is beyond all doubt, but it would take too long to deal with the matter in this series of papers.

ABRACADABRA.

Mr. Salt's "Shelley."

Percy Bysshe Shelley—Poet and Pioneer. By Henry S. Salt. Revised Edition. Watts & Co.

I AM indebted to Mr. Salt for a presentation copy of this excellent little book. I have not gone through it carefully with the former edition, but there does not appear to be much alteration in the text. That does not, however, affect the justification of this reissue, for the former edition had, I believe, been long out of print; and the book is certainly not one that should remain inaccessible to the new generation of readers that is always coming along.

The really novel feature of this revised edition is the frontispiece, in the shape of a portrait of Shelley, reproduced from a painting by William Edward West, a young American artist, who was living at Florence in 1822, and met Shelley at Byron's villa near Leghorn. He had no commission for the portrait, but he was so struck by Shelley's personality that he "made a surreptitious sketch of him which he afterwards completed and took back to America." It was preserved, after West's death, by his relatives, and is now in the possession of Mrs. John Dunn. The oil painting is eight by nine inches in size, and is very beautiful. "The soft, light-brown hair," Mrs. Dunn says, "the blue eyes, the youthful texture of the flesh, the freshness of the coloring, the strength and beauty of the soul within, charm the eye and fill the imagination." Of course the reproduction in Mr. Salt's new volume is in black and white, and we miss the "coloring" that the lady praises.

"It seems to me," Mr. Salt says, "that we get a better understanding from this portrait of Shelley's human qualities than from the more familiar pictures." I cannot say it makes quite the same impression on me. It certainly corrects the "inspired lunatic" portrait which adorns so many editions of Shelley's poems; but, on the other hand, it rather suggests an extremely refined doctor than the most ethereal of English poets. The head seems to outweigh the face. Now the head of Shelley was not large, though beautifully shaped. The nose, likewise, in West's portrait, looks too thin, and the nostrils look too close, for those of the "poet of poets." The eyes are better, and there is in them something of the sadness—an intellectual and moral sadness—of the rich and noble nature that bruised and broke itself against the hard world, and at last found its merciful Nirvana, in less than thirty years.

We ought to thank Mr. Salt, however—we lovers of Shelley—for giving us the opportunity of seeing this fine picture. It possesses a haunting quality, there must be something of Shelley in it, and it should help our realisation of him "in his habit as he lived."

I have called Mr. Salt's book excellent. Beyond all question it is the best succinct biography of Shelley ever written. There is the warmest eulogy; there is also the criticism of an independent thinker, in whom worship does not extinguish sagacity. I recommend this volume, above all others, as an introduction to Shelley. Here and there I should hesitate to endorse Mr. Salt's view without qualification; but I am confident that, in the main, his conception of Shelley as man, poet, and reformer is perfectly sound. Neither is there any slipshod or feeble writing in this volume. Mr. Salt maintains a high level of vital efficiency from beginning to end.

It should be added that if he is not always fair he always tries to be. He recognises that it takes a lot of people to make up a world. There has been

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too much mere partisanship in Shelley criticism and biography. Shelley was not always right, and those he came into conflict with were not always wrong. His side of the case may have been very strong, but there was something to be said for theirs. I repeat that Mr. Salt is fair. And he is never bitter. He sees, with a great French thinker, that to know all is to forgive all. Take, for instance, his treatment of the quarrel between Shelley and his father, and indeed with the whole family. Mr. Salt's remarks are eminently sane:—

> "No verdict of 'bad son' or 'bad father' is to be given in such a case; the pathos of the position—a typical position—lies far deeper than that. Estrangement, whether veiled or recognised, must inevitably result between those who, albeit blood-relations—are by temperament strangers from the first; and it is worse than useless to allot praise or blame when there is no single feeling in common. On the one side is the Family, with its constant demand that each and all of its members shall think and live in subjection to the domestic ideal; on the other side is the young and ardent spirit, possessed of larger aspirations and wider aims, which realises that the true piety of life consists neither in gratifying nor in mortifying self, but in faithfully following the highest line of self-development."

The same sanity marks Mr. Salt's attitude towards the Harriet question. Shelley *was* young, but he *did* blunder. For my part, I agree with Matthew Arnold as to the quality of Shelley's letter to Harriet, after the separation, inviting her to accompany him and Mary on a tour of Europe. Shelley meant well, from his own point of view the invitation was an act of benevolence; but he ought to have learnt enough of human nature by that time to be aware that nothing could be better calculated to fill her with disgust and agony. It is literally true that Shelley was too good for this world. Experience brought him knowledge without taint, and the knowledge enlightened his sympathies. It is from his own point of view alone that a sufferer can be soothed and comforted. Shelley knew all that when he wrote the *Cenci*. He is not to be blamed severely for not knowing it at the age of twenty. Some virtues cannot belong to youth; they depend upon experience. A very young man is as much qualified as an old one to pronounce upon the truth or falsity of the Christian religion. But his opinion (say) on the institution of marriage (other things being equal) is sure to be of far less value and importance. In practical matters a power of *weighing* the facts is necessary, and that power only comes through vital experience. According to the proverb a bachelor's children are always well brought up. Which means, of course, that nothing but the experience of fatherhood enables a man to understand the real nature of the family problem.

Here is Mr. Salt's charitable account of Harriet:—

> "Harriet was a schoolgirl of sixteen, pretty and pleasing in appearance and manners, but utterly destitute of any real strength of character, the mere reflex of the surroundings in which her lot was cast; at first a Methodist in religious creed, and looking forward to some day marrying a minister, though at the same time confessing in her own mind that the military were the most fascinating of men—afterwards an easy convert to Shelley's revolutionary arguments. It is true that she was far from being actually illiterate; but her interest in literature was a mere passing illusion, derived at second-hand from opinions which she chanced to hear expressed. Neither in religion nor in culture had she any fixed principles or convictions which might prove a guidance and support. And though at this early age she was bright, winning, and compliant, there was a fibre of obstinacy and worldliness in her nature which was destined to make itself felt as the years went on."

And here is Mr. Salt's judgment on Shelley:—

> "'Foolish but generous' has been the usual verdict of Shelley's biographers regarding the marriage with Harriet, the unhappy consequences of which were apparent to the last day of his life. Let it be frankly recognised that the folly was greatly in excess of the generosity, and that we miss in this disastrous action the clear-sighted and faithful adhesion to rational principles which was conspicuous in the other great turning-points of his life. Had it not been for the restless, excited condition of his mind at this time, he would have seen, as he saw afterwards, that it could be no duty of his to devote himself to a girl whom he did not love, and of whose fitness to be his permanent companion he had by no means satisfied himself. From such a blunder there could only ensue a life-long crop of calamities, which, though insufficient to warp the main purpose of his strong and indomitable will, would yet have the power to cause him and others much acute suffering."

Mistakes are vices only when they are repeated and prolonged. There was not an atom of vice in Shelley's composition. He blundered — and he suffered—and others suffered. For nature makes no difference between mistakes and crimes. Whatever the motive, we have to face the consequences of our actions. We are moral beings. She is non-moral.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

One World at a Time.

MANY Christians are brought up to regard all those who reject their faith as wretches who have thereby put themselves outside the pale of all that is good, and discarded the very foundations of morality. When, however, they mix in the world; when they study its history; when they read its best literature; they discover what a petty item even the widespread Christian faith appears. They find that noble lives have been lived where it was never heard of, and that even in Christian nations some of the brightest minds reject the Christian faith. If they come into intimate contact with unbelievers, they discover they are no whit worse than their neighbors; nay, that they are among the most earnest in seeking to improve the common lot. And this is after all only what is reasonably to be expected. Morality is not dependent on the will of an arbitrary being with "right divine to govern wrong," but has its natural foundations. It is based on the relations of man in society. It implies recognition of reciprocal rights and duties. These relations remain, whatever views may be held concerning our origin and end.

The Freethinker, as much as the Christian, recognises the value of love, sympathy, and mutual helpfulness. The elements which have given vitality to the old faiths have been all human, and in discarding supernatural dogmas we by no means throw away anything that gives life its dignity and value. Take God away, the universe remains. Cease to regard Christ as divine, you still have the heroes of entire humanity. Have no special reverence for the Virgin Mother, and there is still womanhood to evoke love, tenderness, poetry, and chivalry.

The Freethinker can, and does, accept all of worth in the Bible, as in any other book. But he also knows that it contains much that is barbarous and false. Viewing its books as human products of the past, they have a new significance and value from the light they throw on past history, anthropology, and human evolution. But he knows the world has outgrown the polygamy, slavery, witchcraft, intolerance, persecution, and superstition sanctioned by the Bible, and he refuses to treat as divine that which but represents a lower phase of humanity, and objects to such a dogma being thrust on the plastic minds of innocent children.

History proclaims that those who have most concerned themselves with celestial business—priests, monks, and inquisitors — have been scourges of humanity. The ages of faith were ages of darkness. The Church has had its chance. It set itself in opposition to the happiness and welfare of this world, which it held to be doomed to speedy destruction. Its theory of endless futurity elsewhere necessarily dwarfed all mundane duties. Yet, does anyone now suppose the eternal salvation of any being was assured by the ascetic, ignorant faith and misrule which prevailed for a thousand years in Europe when the Church was supreme? No; the

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world is becoming secularised, and the Church with it.

It is learning that it is better to make a clock than to go in search of perpetual motion; better to dig up coal than seek to transmute iron into gold. The poorest hut gives better shelter than the finest castle in the air. So the Freethinker loses not, but gains by giving up some cherished illusion to concentrate his effort on the actual and the real. By resigning the vain hopes of alchemy, valuable effort was saved, and true science advanced. A like gain is made when human intelligence ceases to concern itself with a miraculous hereafter, but turns its attention to realising a better life here and now. Concentration on the attainable is the secret of success. The present age is literally full of important secular problems pressing for solution. Its progress is only hindered by what George Eliot called "that impiety towards the present and the visible which flies for its motives, its sanctions, and its religion to the remote, the vague, and the unknown."

This world is our home. Who is likely to make the best of it—those who regard it as such, or those who sing, "I'm but a stranger here, Heaven is my home; Earth is a desert drear, Heaven is my home"? Here at any rate for a while we may live. Let us make the best of it. We cannot sow and neither can we reap in the skies. This earth may be a desert drear to many of us, but it is at least improvable. If we cultivate our garden we may reasonably expect a few blossoms. The worst scourges of mankind—poverty, crime, war, slavery, oppression, and much of disease—are removable evils. Here is something definite. There is no limit to *may be's*. We may have pre-existed; we may be in purgatory now. This at least is certain, if we waste our thoughts on unverifiable speculations and our energies in seeking to serve a being who can have no need of our services, we shall be in danger of missing the plain duties nearer hand. One at a time is good fishing, and one world at a time is a very good motto to ensure right living.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER

Letter by Mr. Foote to the Leeds N.S.S. Branch

Re the Proposed Demonstration Against the Arbitrary Action of the Police and the Town Council.

[One unimportant paragraph of this letter is omitted. The rest is printed in order to show the principles on which Mr. Foote is prepared to assist in protecting the rights of Freethought.]

Ramsgate, July 17, 1913.

DEAR MR. PACK,—

I quite understand that you have an unchallenged right of meeting on Woodhouse Moor. What the Council refuses you is a permit to take up collections and sell literature.

According to the "Extract from Bye-Laws" you send me, the Council has clearly a right to grant or refuse such permits. But it is also clearly its duty not to do so arbitrarily or out of mere whim or prejudice; its action must be governed by a principle which is capable of being stated, and which is to be applied to all citizens with absolute impartiality. To deny citizens justice, and refuse them the rights guaranteed to all other citizens, except on obvious grounds of statute or common law, is to leave them to such redress as they can obtain by themselves, whatsoever that redress may be. And the original wrongdoers are responsible for any disorder that ensues.

If the Town Council refuses you the permit which it grants to all other applicants, it must justify the difference of treatment. It is not enough to say "we refuse your application because we choose to, and that is an end of the matter." Public bodies must give public reasons for their actions. And the reasons must be just and wise reasons that would satisfy sensible men. This has been pressed upon the licensing magistrates again and again by the Judges of the Supreme Court. I do not say that you (or anyone else) will always *get* your legal rights, but you are entitled to them, and it is bad citizenship to let yourselves be robbed of them. You are morally bound to resist the exceptional treatment to which the Council seeks to subject you and to resent the insult which it involves. And in that direction you shall have my fullest support as President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*.

You have two courses open at the moment. You can hold your Demonstration and collect money and sell literature in defiance of the police; not out of *mere defiance* (you should explain that) but in order that the matter may be brought before a Court of Law, to which citizens must appeal, and to which alone they can appeal for the protection of their rights against arbitrary power.

If, however, there is any reasonable hope that a fresh application for the permit would meet with a better fate, I think you should make it. Citizens should not flaunt the public authorities unnecessarily, and if there has been a misunderstanding you should give them (if they will accept it) an opportunity of remedying any mistake.

If you decide to go on with the Demonstration, I advise you to be very careful in what you do. Mr. Atkinson is a wise and just magistrate, but he is not omnipotent. He may inflict fines and tell you that you have taken the wrong method of redress. It would be well, then, to have as few as possible actively engaged in challenging the police; say *one* to collect and *one* to sell literature. The Chairman and speakers are also responsible, but the Chairman would probably be the one proceeded against as *obviously* responsible.

Mr. Atkinson's dismissal of the case might end the prosecution. But he may not dismiss it. He may find the police a loophole by saying, as Mr. Taylor told us in London, that the proper method of procedure was by mandamus. In that case you should plead for the very lightest fines as your action was not fractious but a serious attempt to ascertain and defend your rights.

I think you ought to have a competent Solicitor—one generally respected, if possible, and not a fanatic in any way whatever. Towards the expenses of this policy I will engage to contribute a substantial support.

If you remember, it was our threat of a mandamus and my prompt action in the *Freethinker* that made the London County Council pause. I believe the battle will ultimately have to be fought on those lines.

Be firm and dignified. Don't let the fool friends of our movement spoil your good case. Good manners and decent speech do not cause any harm. It is possible to be very effective without ill-breeding. Severe things can be said without vulgarity. The language of the smokeroom is out of place at a public meeting. Let us think of our cause, as a good man thinks of his wife or his sweetheart. We are things of an hour; it is "the best of causes," as Meredith called it, that is immortal. I don't want to preach, but I do want us all to be as sensible and self-controlled as we can in these emergencies.—Yours faithfully,

G. W. FOOTE.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Mrs Smart, the wife of Mr. T. Smart, of 20 Pelling-street, Limehouse, which occurred in the forty-sixth year of her age. Though brought up in an orthodox Christian home, Mrs. Smart became, soon after her marriage twenty-five years ago, a firmly convinced Freethinker; and her subsequent life was given to the practical exemplification of the glorious principles of Secularism. Her noblemind dness, her love of truth, her loyalty to convictions, and her diligent discharge of all her wifely and motherly duties, endeared her to all who knew her. The funeral took place on Thursday, July 24, at the Woodgrange Park Cemetery, when a secular service was conducted at the graveside. Mr. Smart is a life-long Freethinker, and was a member of the old East London Branch of the N.S.S. To him and his three sorrowing children, we tender our sincere condolence. J. T. L.

I regret to record the death of Augustus Williams, who passed away at the age of 67, and was buried at Bow Cemetery on July 25. He was for many years an active Secularist, a frequent attendant at the Hall of Science, a member of the Central London Branch of the N.S.S., and, in later years, of the Bradlaugh Fellowship. He was one of the rank and file of the movement, and was always ready to champion the cause and its leaders when attacked. It was his expressed wish that there should be no religious ceremony at his funeral. A brief and simple address was given by George Standring in the presence of a large number of sorrowing relatives and friends.—H. REEVE.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Davidson, "Thomas Paine: A Study in Christian Blackguardism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss K. B. Kough, "Lying for the Glory of God." Finsbury Park: 6.30, Miss K. B. Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Darby, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, J. J. Hegan, "War."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 32 SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Charity enlightens.—SWEDENBORG.

A Floundering Apologist.

As a matter of fact, it is utterly impossible for a Christian apologist to do anything but flounder, and he generally does so, as the great preacher, Robert Hall, said of the readers of the voluminous Puritan writer, Dr. John Owen, "in a continent of mud." There is in this statement, however extravagant it may sound, no intended reflection upon the ability or dexterity of the apologist, but, rather, a conviction of the fundamental weakness of the cause he sets out to defend. "Viator," a regular contributor of the *Church Times*, is an exceptionally clever, fair-minded, and interesting advocate of the faith "which was once for all delivered unto the saints." He is free from the spirit of bitterness and bigotry, and he never intentionally misrepresents the views and arguments of opponents. If his own arguments are not always relevant and convincing it is certainly no fault of his, but wholly of the system he undertakes to champion. In the issue of the *Church Times* for July 11, he gives an account of a Christian Evidence lecture delivered, not by a theologian, but by a well-known electrician, whom he calls Braine, and particularly of the general discussion that followed it. Braine, he frankly acknowledges, is not in his element as a lecturer, but commits the fault of being at once diffuse and illiptical. He is confessedly not an adept at answering questions. A dark man asked for an explanation of the contradictions contained in the Four Gospels, specially in the narratives of the Resurrection, on the assumption that the men who wrote them were Divinely inspired. Braine said:—

> "I will answer, like a Scotchman, with another question. On the hypothesis that God dictated the Four Gospels to the men who wrote them—I do not for one moment believe that he did, but just on that hypothesis—doesn't it seem probable that he knew his own business better than you or I can know it?"

"'You are evading the question, sir,' said the dark man sternly; 'I asked why this was done.' 'Ah! that is a plain question,' replied Braine, 'and my plain answer is that I don't know.' The dark man sat down triumphantly." A soft-spoken man was of opinion that the lecturer really knew nothing at all about God, God being, according to the Athanasian Creed, incomprehensible. This was Braine's illuminating answer:—

> "To say that a thing is incomprehensible is exactly the same as saying that you can't put a quart into a pint pot; but the pint pot will hold half the quart, and you can drink it. A thimble won't hold the sea, but I can dip a thimbleful out of the sea, and taste it, and know that it is salt. I have told you that I know very little about God. I can only dip with my thimble in that vast ocean, but I do know my thimbleful, and it tells me something about the whole."

The soft-spoken man pronounced that "very pretty, quite poetic, in fact," but declined to accept it as a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. In point of fact it is not an explanation at all. For one thing it takes the existence of God for granted, just as if it were as self-evident as that of the sea. The sea is there in full, irrefutable evidence, and you can easily dip your thimbleful out of it and drink it; but God is not there as a self-evident, indubitable fact, but merely in imagination, or in exactly the same sense as the Olympian Gods were real to the pre-Socratic Greeks. The cases mentioned are, therefore, in no sense whatever analogous. It is true that you cannot put a quart into a pint pot; but the quart is there, and so is the pint pot, and you can put half the former into the latter; but God can be there only by being brought there imaginatively, and your little thimble is there in precisely the same manner.

Braine employed another false analogy, quite as misleading as that about the boundless ocean. He said:

> "'I am certainly incomprehensible to my dog, and to all dogs. Yet my dog knows me; he understands half-a-dozen words that I use; he knows when I am angry'—'because you lick him'—interrupted the rough fellow in front. Braine leaned forward and said, almost in a whisper, 'I think that is one of the ways in which we know God.' 'So we may consider ourselves whipped curs,' said the soft-voiced man, looking round the room; 'I am sure we are much obliged to the lecturer. It is one of the truly comforting doctrines of Christianity.' 'That is so,' said Braine; 'we Christians like to compare ourselves to the little dogs eating the crumbs that fall from our Master's table. We know that we have a good Master, who sometimes whips us, and we can't always see why. We understand some of his words; not many, but enough to get on with. And,' he concluded, 'we are very sorry for a lost dog.'"

Anyone who takes the trouble to think can see at a glance how absolutely fallacious that reasoning is. The dog sees his master and hears his voice, and in countless instances there naturally spring up between them the closest friendship, the deepest affection, and the clearest understanding; but no one has seen God at any time, or heard his voice. Throughout all the ages of time he has remained both invisible and silent. In no respect whatever, then, is the relationship between a dog and his master analogous to that supposed to exist between man and God. It is perfectly true, as "Viator" avers, that a man is not an Agnostic because he doubts whether God spoke with Moses face-to-face; but it is equally true that many a man is an Agnostic because of the total lack of any convincing evidence that God has ever spoken to anybody in any way whatsoever. Consequently, the conclusion to which we have been inevitably driven is, not that God is unknown or unknowable, but that there are no grounds in reason for believing that he exists at all. And, with all due deference to "Viator," we venture to declare that to give expression to this conclusion is *not* "to talk nonsense." We go further still, and maintain that when "Viator" assures us that if he knows enough about "the works of God" to be able to catch a train he is "not entirely ignorant of God," he is decidedly not talking sense. On what authority does he assume that the phenomena of Nature are "the works of God"? It is easy enough to assert that "we observe in Nature certain activities which point with overwhelming probability to an intelligent and personal agent," but we beg to remind "Viator" that there are hundreds and thousands of scientific thinkers who, to say the very least, know fully as much about the activities of Nature as he does, but are not able to discern the slightest trace or sign of "an intelligent and personal agent." He informs us that "from a man who is not either Theist or Pantheist he is separated by a chasm of thought." We are aware of it, but we have looked to him in

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vain for a single argument that even tends to invalidate the Atheistic position.

In an article in the *Church Times* for July 4, "Viator" commits himself to several extremely curious and, in our judgment, foolish statements. For example, he declares that God was never less evident to him than the world, or that the world was never evident to him "otherwise than as a revelation of God." If we interpret him aright he claims to know God and the world separately, and to have known the former before he knew the latter. When he first became aware of the world he recognised it as a revelation of God; but he omits to mention how and when he acquired his knowledge of the latter, though he is quite sure that it enabled him to hail the world as a visible reflection of his invisible being. This is a stupendous claim which cannot possibly be substantiated, and the more we examine it the more irrational it becomes. Fancy a man saying in cold blood that as soon as he reasoned with himself about the world, as soon as he was conscious of a sort of unity in the world, he "was conscious of God." By "the world" this writer presumably means the universe, and we ask him to tell us how his reasoning with himself about the universe made him conscious of God? The scientists have succeeded in demonstrating the fact that life and matter are alike controlled by purely physical and chemical forces. These forces are alone responsible for the production of matter as we know it, and for the innumerable changes that are continually taking place in the physical universe. Of this every student of astronomy and geology is inalterably convinced. The biologists, likewise, account for the origin and maintenance of life in the same mechanistic manner. Biological experimenters, like Dr. Loeb, are beginning to say openly that "we ourselves are only chemical mechanisms," and that all our activities are explicable without any reference to supernatural agency. Even psychology is classed with the natural sciences. "Viator" says that he has discovered "a sort of unity in the world"; but is he not aware that Atheistic scientists are always talking and writing about the unity of the universe without becoming "conscious of God"? As a matter of fact, we seriously question "Viator's" consciousness, as we would very probably deny the validity of his self-consciousness.

The universe teems with awful tragedies. Cosmic disasters are almost of daily occurrence. The order and beauty of Nature are ignorant, unfounded fancies. Even stars not infrequently collide and are destroyed as they rush through illimitable space. When we enter the kingdom of life the anomalies that we meet with are of the most shocking character. For millions upon millions of years the struggle for existence was a fearful and unbroken carnage. All through her history Nature has been "red in tooth and claw with ravine," shrieking with all her might against the Christian creed. And yet "Viator," face to face with the indescribable horrors and monstrosities of existence, and "conscious of a sort of unity in the world" whose hall-mark is cruelty, announces his consciousness of God; and being a Christian divine he doubtless has the hardihood to define the God of whom he is conscious as compassionate and redeeming love. Well, we are thankful that we can honestly say that from a man who fondly imagines that he has such a consciousness we are "separated by a chasm of thought." The more we study Nature the more impossible it becomes to believe in God; and the more familiar we get with history the more convinced we are that the hope of the world is centred in man. It is beyond controversy that we are indebted for all improvement, for all real progress that has ever taken place, to the intelligence and consequent goodness of men and women.

Are we not justified, therefore, in describing the theological apologist, in the words of Robert Hall, as "a double Dutchman floundering in a continent of mud"?

J. T. LLOYD.

Science and God.

I HAVE been spending an hour or two in the company of a dead man. This does not mean that I have been calling up spirits at a spiritualistic *séance* or experiencing visions of a more or less weird description. But the man is dead in the deadest sense of the term. Once upon a time he was very much alive. His apologetic on behalf of Christianity was hailed as a valuable contribution to the armory of faith; he had shown a way in which science and religion might be harmonised; more, he had shown how scientific religion was, and that in the most important respects it had really forstalled science, proclaiming in the world of human life and emotion truths that science, with its slower and more cumbersome methods, had only established within recent times. The basis of science and the basis of religion were one. Properly understood, the laws of the spiritual and the laws of the natural world were one. They were merely working in different spheres of existence. For a time, the Rev. Professor Henry Drummond was a very live man in the world of religion. Orthodox men were afraid, but those who are called "advanced thinkers" in theology rejoiced. And in less than a generation the orthodox had lost cause for fear—from this quarter, at least. Professor Drummond was dead—before even he was buried. *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* was forgotten. Some new apology was discovered, and learning nothing from past experience, the Bourbons of the world of thought were worshiping at the shrine of a new idol doomed to the same fate that had overtaken its predecessors.

Away from home, and with my weekly article—thanks to a habit of never writing to-day what can be put off till to-morrow—unwritten, I find among the books thoughtfully provided for holiday reading, a volume of the late Henry Drummond's on *Evangelical Christianity*. One of the essays in the book is entitled "The Contribution of Science to Christianity," and it has been annotated by someone who was evidently an ardent admirer of the author. The essay itself points out that there are two main contributions made by science to Christianity. One is the doctrine of evolution. The other, and the greatest, is a contribution of failure. Science, says the twice defunct Professor, "tells us candidly it has failed—and the failures of science are among its richest contributions to Christianity—it has failed to discover any clue to the ultimate mystery of origins, any view which can compete for a moment with the view of theology." We are invited to consider the impressive silence of science on the question of origins. Science took these questions from theology, "and proclaimed that it would try and answer them." It has now handed them back. "Science has not discovered a substitute for God." More:—

> "It has seen plainly that Atheism is unscientific. It is a remarkable thing that after trailing its black length for centuries across European thought, Atheism should have its doom pronounced by science. With its most penetrating gaze science has now looked at the back of the phenomena. It says: 'The Atheist tells us there is nothing there. We cannot tell what it is, but there is certainly something. Agnostics we may be, but we can no longer be Atheists.'"

Now, I should not dream of inflicting Henry Drummond upon my readers, even at holiday time, if these opinions were peculiarly the author's. But they are not. They are really the commonplaces of apologists of every school. And when theologians agree, it is usually upon something that is incurably stupid. Is there, for example, anyone but a theologian who would hail failure, a confession of ignorance, as the most valuable of contributions? "The ultimate mystery of origins" is as great with theology as it is with science. Neither knows more about it than the other. I question, indeed, if anyone could say clearly and intelligibly what it means. At any rate, failure, if temporary, is good cause only for fresh effort, and if irretrievable, cause only for regret. But the

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rejoicing of the religionist is that we are doomed to ignorance. No one can remove it. So he believes, and in effect he says, that so long as ignorance remains, so long there is territory over which religion may hope to rule. And so every Freethinker believes also. Hence the desire of the one to limit that territory as much as possible, and the instinct of the other to guard it as his dearest possession. To the one, knowledge is *the* symbol of power; to the other, it is the instrument of destruction.

Really, the "mystery of origins," in the religious sense, is not a scientific question or problem at all. It is the creation of religion, and a late creation at that. Early religion has no problem of origins. The facts of the religious life are there found in such phenomena as now admittedly belong to the scientific sphere. The gods are seen in the everyday activities and facts of life. It is when these gods are pushed farther and farther back, out of the world and over the edge of the beyond, when that organised knowledge which we call science holds the world in its grasp, and promises to explain things of which we are ignorant as it has already explained things we know, that religion falls back upon the "mystery of origins." Then the religious apologist bethinks himself, and says, "It is true that there is no safe place for God in the world that is known, or in the larger world that is to be known; but away beyond either the known or the knowable, in a region where knowledge can never penetrate, there God sits in absolute security. We feel he is safe because science can never get at him. We know he is there, because no one can tell us anything about it." Ignorance is the mother of Devotion, midwife to the gods, and stands in jealous guard over those whom she brought into being.

I do not know where science performed the remarkable feat of looking "at the back of phenomena." It seems quite a light and easy performance, as Professor Drummond describes it. But having got at the back, it really might have found out with some degree of certainty whether there was anything there or not. That is the worst of the theologian turned scientist. Either he gives science credit for performing greater things than it has accomplished, or he endows it with a degree of folly that properly belongs to his own department. Science has neither looked at the back of phenomena nor did it take in hand theological conundrums and "proclaimed that it would try to answer them." It found them engaging human attention, and *examined* them. And having examined them, it handed them back as futile and spurious. They were not genuine problems at all; they were manufactured mysteries that vanished into air just so soon as they were submitted to analysis. How many pseudo-scientific minds have been interested in the problem of what would happen if an irresistible force encountered an immovable object? This was a problem worthy of theology itself. And the correct reply is neither to formulate an answer nor hand it back as an unsolved mystery, but to point out that it is a meaningless jumble of terms, and has no reason for its existence. Ten minutes' careful analysis of most of these theological mysteries yield a precisely similar result. They are mysteries only because people do not trouble to find out whether they have any genuine claim to an existence. To pure science they simply do not exist. And if science has handed them back unanswered, it is as fairies and ghosts and the like have been handed back. They simply do not exist.

This is also the reason why "science has not found a substitute for God." It has not provided a substitute because it has nothing for God to do. A God who is in phenomena, or who regulates phenomena, is conceivably useful, and employment may be found for him. But a God who is merely at the back of everything, doing nothing and saying nothing, simply existing, is the most useless of all conceivable things. Early religionists were more intelligent than to believe in such a being. Their god, or gods, did something. He, or they, regulated the weather, the crops, disease, life and death. Civilised man alone is unintelligent enough to pay homage to a Deity whom, he insists on, does nothing—as though unemployment were as signal a proof of divinity as it is of an aristocracy. Nearly two thousand years ago Lucretius undertook to prove that the things attributed to the gods were brought about by natural means. The submergence of ancient civilisation by Christianity prevented that proof being made popular; but modern science has reverted to the Lucretian point of view. Problems there are yet unsolved, questions still unanswered; but of one thing modern thought is assured, and that is that science alone can give adequate and intelligible replies.

The science that has made Atheism unscientific is as remarkable as the science that gets round to the back of phenomena and discovers that there is certainly something there. Why the whole of modern science is a triumphant vindication of the sanity of the Atheistic position. What is Atheism? It is not concerned with idiotic conundrums concerning the back of phenomena, and what may or may not exist in a probably non-existent region, and which is certainly beyond the reach of even human thought. It depends upon the invalidity of every alleged proof of mind animating or controlling nature. It denies that any such evidence will ever be discovered. Science does not categorically affirm this, but it certainly acts on the assumption that it is the only justifiable position. There is not a single branch of science that allows for the remotest possibility of "divine interference," and the man who suggested such a likelihood to a scientific assemblage would be looked upon as a lunatic. The universe disclosed by modern science is an Atheistic universe. The world of science is a world without God. A religious man the scientist may be—the human mind presents, often enough, a strange jumble of mutually destructive ideas—but he leaves his religion behind him when he enters the scientific workshop. He *acts* as though the Atheist was right; and the Atheist may well be content to wait for opinion to square itself with practice in this direction as it has already done in others.

Atheism "trailing its black length" across European thought may be dismissed as a piece of theological impertinence. One may only remind Christians that the European dark ages were not Atheistic, but Christian. It was not Atheism that buried ancient civilisation under mountains of superstitious ignorance, but religion. And it is not Christianity that we have to thank for freeing European thought from this incubus, but a succession of men, from Roger Bacon onward, whose dominant characteristic was their dissent from the prevalent forms of Christian teaching. These men not only beat back the churches of their day, they and their successors banished the Deity in whose name the Churches existed. The world exists without God's interference, and between a God who does nothing and one who does not exist, the distinction is merely verbal.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

The Wonder-Spirit.

A SOFTLY colored mist lay over the water. Greyish white it was; and it hung all around us like—oh! like a crowd of departed, spiritualised Christians, an assemblage of souls. Our boat seemed to be lying perfectly motionless, for the sea-swell, to all appearances, had died, and forgotten itself. Where we were the sea had a peculiar brown color, deep, dark brown that shaded away into black, and then brightened into a grey that became one with the mist. The strange peace of the waters contrasted strongly with the weird restlessness of the mist. It heaved around us sometimes like the expansion and contraction of a woman's bosom, when the arrows of sorrow penetrate her heart. Sometimes there were spasms of tempestuous anger, when it curled and rose in white columns that seemed engaged in inter-

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necine warfare. It would surge forwards, and retreat from our boat, as if attempting to show its resentment at our presence. Occasionally it would make as if to disappear, giving us a glimpse of a round yellow disc not far above our head, the sun; and then it would fall, in heavy masses, upon us, determined to make our stay as unpleasant as possible.

Without warning, in two or three seconds of time, it disappeared completely, and we were drifting slowly out into the bay, the hot rays of the sun pouring down upon us as they did but ten minutes before.

We enjoyed the fleeting, moving picture immensely. Once, many years ago, we had been nearly trapped on a hill by the mist. So keenly eager were we in its progress through the valleys that we failed to notice it had already begun to encircle us. We escaped in the nick of time.

In the evening, after supper, we related the pleasure we had enjoyed on the sea that afternoon; and the conversation turned upon the "wonderful" in nature and in life. Happily, or perhaps unhappily, the church-goers of the party had been sermonised on the subject at the evening service; and one lady gave us a synopsis of the sermon: Christianity developed the "wonder"-spirit of man; nay, more, Christianity *was* the Wonder-Spirit itself.

Naturally, we retorted we quite agreed with her and the parson. Christianity had never been anything but Wonder-Spirit. To-day, we said, it was the purest form of that mental commodity we had come across. For a long time it had been undergoing a process of distillation. Improving civilisation was gradually and very effectually eliminating all the more poisonous foreign substances from it. The black grains of bigotry, hate, murder, and hundreds of other social vilities that had, in the past, discolored the Wonder-Spirit, were being precipitated. We understood that all right; and we had often observed Christians holding up the glass jar to the light, and admiring the purity of the purified contents—when the precipitate had been removed!

We were quite delighted at our agreement with the minister and his hearers. What mattered it if our interpretations of "Wonder-spirit" *were* somewhat conflicting. Whatever the practical man may say, wonderment is a valuable mental condition at times; but when we get it in too frequent and too prolonged spasms pathology proclaims the necessity of a rest cure. Judging from the remarks of our holiday acquaintances and friends, and from the attitude of the preacher as revealed by them, we came to the conclusion that they were all wonder-mad.

We learned that the Christianity of to-day was the most wonderful thing that ever human beings had been blessed to enjoy. Men gazed in amazement up to the stars, the jewels of God's throne, and from their wonderment they gave us astronomy. Looking out upon the great sea, searching in the earth, turning his eyes upon his own delicately made body, seeing the wonderful beauties of the blue veins of his hand, the ineffable loveliness of the lines in a leaf, the exquisite softness of a violet, etc., *ad lib.*, *ad nauseam*, man saw and wondered at the great and glorious power of God. God gave man wonderment, and the spirit of wonderment gave man knowledge.

Had not wonder, they said, peopled and pictured the future?—to say nothing of the religious past, we said. Had not wonder brought us within the everlasting arms of the great Father?—they said—not to mention within the swing of the Devil's tail and the kick of his hoofs, said we.

Wonder had given us heaven—and hell; hope everlasting—and eternal damnation; fountains of love—and oceans of blood; noble-hearted martyrs—and ignoble, mean-hearted murderers. It had given us big-brained legislators, this Christian wonderment—and pew-holding, rack-renting, sweating capitalists. There was no end to the wonderful things this wonderful Christian spirit of wonder had given us—and taken from us.

And then they took us into child-life to prove that our contempt and unbelief were nothing but prejudice. They told us, in Marie Corellian language, that a baby's big blue eyes were mirrors of heaven. The pastor had said something about it. Grandly had he remarked that a child's wonderment was full of prophesies of paradise. They thought we were frivolous when we suggested that the child's paradise ran a bad second to a be-ribboned rattle. And when we insinuated that the affair was reversed in after years, that heaven, with its hierarchy of God, Christ, Holy Ghost, and angels as the dried peas, became the rattle, running a bad second to the realities of life, they intimated, in polite phraseology, it was time to terminate the conversation.

We went out into the fresh air, down to the sea, and tramping over the moist sands we wondered at the magnitude and beauty of the waters; but we wondered more at the mental powers that discovered the relationship of sea and moon. While Christians were dry-rotting in the Wonder-Spirit, great men were working out bravely, against great odds, the problems Nature set them. Had they been praising the Lord we would have had less knowledge. Had they not been restricted in their labors by the children of the false Wonder-Spirit we would have had more.

The real Wonder-Spirit, if such a thing there be, prompts men to know, not to dream. It is Science.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XIII.

(Continued from p. 486.)

"It will probably startle many good people who fancy they are sending out a message of peace and goodwill, to be told further that 'every missionary in every part of China is an element of more or less disturbance in the civil affairs of his neighborhood.'* Yet this is a missionary's verdict on the situation.

"The Chinese have a culture of their own—defective in our eyes—but of which they are intensely proud; they have classics which are remarkable at least for their purity of thought and expression, and a cult which has served as a bond of social union through untold generations. It is fantastic to suppose that the first European commissioned to inform them that Christianity is superior to Confucianism will be able to convince them that his impression must necessarily be true. Only men of wide education and large sympathies, men sufficiently acquainted with the religious thought of China to understand what they are attacking, and sufficiently familiar with a difficult language to preach and argue without exciting ridicule, can hope to gain a sympathetic hearing. The day is past when public opinion approved proselytism by force. Yet is little less to insist that missionaries of every conceivable sect and of every intellectual standard shall be allowed to establish themselves and their buildings in the teeth of popular dislike, and to expect that that dislike can be hindered from finding expression."—R. S. GUNDAY, "Missionaries in China," *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893, pp. 251-3.

LORD CURZON has remarked upon the ill-feeling caused by the special privileges the missionaries—

> "are disposed to claim on behalf of native converts engaged in litigation or other disputes; and by their interference in the civil affairs of the neighborhood in which they reside. Just as in Southern India many a native becomes a Christian in order to get a situation as a servant or a clerk, so in China it not infrequently happens that a shady character will suddenly find salvation for the sake of the material advantages or protection which it may be expected to confer upon him."

And, as he further remarks, the thoughtful Chinaman "sees in missionary enterprise the existence of an insidious *imperium in imperio*, of a secret society hostile to the Commonwealth, of detriment and damage to the State."† He also remembers that the Tai-ping Rebellion was a Christian enterprise.

Mr. Eugene Simon gives a good illustration of the constant irritation caused by the missionaries; the protests of the Chinese against their methods being

* Rev. J. Ross, "The Riots and Their Lessons," *Chinese Recorder*, August, 1892.

† Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, pp. 298-9.

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denounced in the missionary journals as persecution. He says:—

> "A child has been converted, for example, and in consequence renounces ancestral worship and his contribution to its expenses. His brothers and relations demand that he shall give up his share of his inheritance, which he refuses to do. A lawsuit follows, with which the missionaries interfere; they in their turn are requested to take their departure. This is called persecution in the annals of the propagation of the faith. A criminal is being pursued and requests baptism, which is granted, together with a temporary asylum. The magistrate continues the pursuit and arrests the guilty person. This, again, is called persecution in the annals. The dream of most missionaries is to possess the right to administer justice to their converts, and they would not hesitate to bring about a new war if they could hope to obtain in a new treaty a clause giving them this right, even if they gained it after the fashion of M. Delamarre."*

Mr. George Lynch says of these missionary extra-territorial rights:—

> "I have discussed this with several conscientious and intelligent missionaries. One of them, a man of many years' experience of mission work in China, expressed the opinion, which was also held by many others, that if the rights were done away with, they would lose more than half their converts; but that the moiety that remained would be worth the larger number, because these would unquestionably be genuine, and would have no ulterior motive for continuing to profess Christianity."

We believe that if these rights were withdrawn, together with free education and free medical aid—and every missionary is now required to have a knowledge of medicine as part of his stock-in-trade—"the moiety" remaining would not be worth considering.

In September of 1878, an attack was made upon the mission at Woo-Shi-Shan, near Foochow, the mission buildings being burnt down. As usual, compensation was demanded from the Chinese Government, backed up, says Boulger, "by threats of the old 'gunboat' type"†—this being remarkable, says the same writer, "as the first expression of China's intention to refuse to pay compensation for attacks on missionaries when their own acts had contributed to the occurrence." Mr. Boulger gives the dispatch—a most interesting document, but far too long to give here in full—of the Marquise Tséng, for the Chinese Government, to the Marquis of Salisbury.

The dispatch begins by recounting the well-known facts as to the toleration of the Chinese Government for all religions of a peaceable and non-aggressive type. He then deals with the causes which led to the destruction of the mission, as follows: "A Christian church was opened in the very buildings of a temple situated on a hill, which the people for ages had viewed with peculiar veneration." After a time, action was taken, on behalf of the public, in the courts of the country, with a view to the church being removed.

The result of the action was a compromise, the purchase of the premises—

> "was ruled to be illegal, but in virtue of extenuating circumstances the Mission was granted a lease of twenty years, at the expiration of which the premises should again revert to the public, from which they had been secretly alienated. This produced much dissatisfaction and occasioned great popular excitement; whereupon the Governor, in order to prevent disturbances, proposed that the site of the Mission should be changed, and in terms which Her Majesty's Government characterised as very fair, offered another site to the Mission."

This proposal was submitted by the missionaries to their chiefs in England, who rejected the proposal.

The Chinese authorities, who continued to urge the danger to the public peace caused by the mission, submitted the same proposal to Her Majesty's Government:—

> "While still under consideration, and before any reply had been received, Mr. Wolfe, the Superior of the Mission, regardless of the dissatisfaction which already existed among the people, proceeded to erect a new building on land asserted to be beyond the boundary of the premises which he had hitherto occupied. Whether this were so or not does not appear to have been clearly determined, but, whether within or without, his act must nevertheless be stigmatised as highly injudicious and utterly inexcusable. The people who had been patiently waiting the result of the reference which had been made to Her Majesty's Government, seeing the chief of the Mission taking the matter into his own hands became enraged, and, forgetting themselves, set fire to the premises which were the subject of contestation."

The dispatch goes on to ask:—

> "Who was the most to blame, the teacher who, disregarding the principles of forbearance which he came to teach, acted thus, or the ignorant people whom he goaded on to fight themselves? I cannot but consider the conduct of the missionary authorities most reprehensible. Whilst missionaries feel themselves at liberty to pursue their avocations without taking any of the precautions which common prudence may dictate, you will continue to find them, as at Woo-Shi-Shan, pushing their conquests into quarters where the result must inevitably be trouble of the gravest nature. Who can doubt that had they been made to feel that their occupation of the Tan Shan-quan was at their own risk, and might be attended with the sacrifice of the Mission premises, they would have hesitated before thrusting themselves into the temple, into the very sanctuary of the religion which it was their avowed object to overthrow? In no part of the world would such preposterous indiscretion be tolerated; and, except in China, in no country would a claim be made for compensation when, as in the present instance, it led to its necessary consequences."*

Many of the missionaries deliberately seek to irritate and provoke the religious sensibilities of those they come to convert. It is a missionary who boasts that—

> "standing with his back towards the tablet of Confucius, he (or his companions) addressed the assembled crowd on the folly and sin of worshiping deceased men perhaps the first Gospel discourse ever delivered in a temple dedicated to the worship of the Chinese sage."†

The same thing is going on at this very day, notwithstanding all the misery and bloodshed caused by such conduct in the past. For, at the annual meeting of the China Inland Mission, held in London last May, the papers record: "The annual report of the mission alludes to the preaching of the Gospel on 'the Altar of Heaven' in Peking—a spot for many centuries sacred to the worship of heaven by the Emperor alone."

Suppose a Chinese missionary came over here and attempted to harangue the people in St. Paul's, or Westminster Abbey, upon the folly of worshiping a man who died on a gibbet. He would stir up a pretty hornet's nest about his ears. Yet his conduct would differ in nothing from that of our missionaries in China.

Another great cause of irritation to the Chinese is the erection by the missionaries of their ugly and foreign-looking (to Chinese eyes) churches and chapels, in the most commanding positions, and quite out of harmony with their surroundings. Moreover, it comes in collision with the curious belief entitled "Feng-shui." Lord Curzon observes:—

> "To the European an elevated or commanding site is always, both for picturesque and sanitary reasons, preferable to a lower position; while for purposes of privacy or protection, a high enclosure wall is superior to a low one. But to the Chinaman, with his extraordinary ideas about the *feng-shui*, or Spirits of Air and Water, and his geomantic superstitions, a building in an elevated position appears to have an effect like the 'evil eye,' and is a source of genuine suspicion and alarm; while anything appertaining to secrecy suggests to his depraved imagination the ambiguous character of Eleusinian mysteries. It is strange that missionaries of all sects and creeds seem to be quite unable to resist these easily surmounted temptations. At Tokio, in

* Eug. Simon, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, pp. 163-4.

† Boulger, *Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, p. 329.

* Cited in Boulger's *Life of Sir Halliday Macartney*, pp. 328-32.

† Rev. Justus Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, ch. xiv.; cited in *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893.

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Japan, the most commanding edifice in the entire city is the Russian Cathedral that crowns one of its timbered heights. At Canton, the twin towers of the French Gothic Cathedral, erected under circumstances that should bring a blush to every Christian's cheek, may been seen for miles across the level country. At Peking, one of the French Cathedrals, the Peitang, actually overlooked the sacrosanct enclosure of the Forbidden City; until at length, after prolonged negotiations, and the gift of a superior site elsewhere, the French authorities were persuaded, in 1895, to acquiesce in its removal."*

Mr. Gundry, in his article on "Missionaries in China" (*Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893) quotes Mr. Michie as saying, "hateful as the invader is, *per se*, he becomes tenfold more so when he is seen erecting, on some commanding and salubrious site, beautiful (in his own eyes), but outlandish, buildings which bring ill-luck to the whole district." He also cites Mr. Little, who instances—

> "two distinct riots caused, of late years, in Chungking, by attempts to build churches on prominent sites in that city. The Roman Catholics had succeeded, in one case, in tempting some Taoist priests to sell a beautifully situated old temple, which they proposed replacing by one of their 'hideous bastard-classic brick and plaster piles,' while a Protestant missionary was about to build, on another conspicuous site, one of the 'distractingly ugly whitewashed' structures that are so painfully out of harmony with their surroundings, instead of contenting himself with the Chinese house in which he had been temporarily located."

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

The taste of these religious people! Dr. Knox, Bishop of Manchester, began his mission on Blackpool sands last Saturday (Aug. 2) by blubbering over his dead mother. He told his audience that when his mother was dying she was moved to the window of her room, so that she could see the fields which she had always loved; and as she "gazed at the sunlit vista" (note the sentimental—that is, insincere composition) she said: "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." At that point the Bishop broke off his address, and was silent for several moments, with clasped hands and closed eyes and tears trickling through them. Nothing, the French proverb says, is sacred to a sapper—and nothing seems sacred to a Bishop. An ordinary man, with no boasts and pretences, but just plain decency of mind and character, would keep his mother's last hours and words to himself. Working them up for a public audience would never occur to him, and the very suggestion would be utterly nauseous. But these Christian preachers have no sensitiveness and no reticences. What should be the most sacred private experiences are fully available for business purposes. Perhaps the Bishop of Manchester thought himself a monument of pathos. But the truth is that he was the most vulgar entertainer on Blackpool sands that week-end.

What on earth did Bishop Knox imagine that this anecdote proved or illustrated? Had his mother been an important public character, of whose end falsehoods had been concocted and imposed upon the world, there might have been a reason for relating what actually occurred. But to blubber in public over her death, merely *as* her death, is childish and contemptible. We repeat our question. What did Bishop Knox think his anecdote achieved? We should really like to get at something solid in the pious slush of his mind.

The taste of these Christians was further displayed at St. Paul's Cathedral last Sunday. During "divine service" between thirty and forty Suffragettes stood up and chanted: "God save Emmeline Pankhurst. Spare her, spare her with her life and set her free. Hear us while we pray to Thee." Presumably "Thee" means God. The supplicants were therefore asking the Deity to take their side in what they insist on calling a political struggle. They gave him the tip as to which side he should espouse—if he had any intelligence and self-respect. They wished to prevent his making a mistake. It was good of them, of course, and it if to be hoped that the Almighty is duly grateful. It is conceivable, however, that the Almighty wondered what the ladies meant. Whether the militant policy is wise or otherwise, it is certain that Mrs. Pankhurst pursues it voluntarily. What has "God" to do with it? Why is he called upon to "spare" her? They should call upon the lady to spare herself. But religionists were always muddle-headed.

Someone wrote to the *Church Times* suggesting that what was wanted to counteract Secularist propaganda is "an organised band of hecklers." The secretary of the Bishop of Southwark's Diocesan Evangelical Council agrees with the suggestion, and asks that all who would like to undertake such work to communicate with him. He adds that the essential qualifications are a sense of humor and a good temper. We wish this gentleman all success in his endeavor to form a band of hecklers to fight Secularist propagandists, but we think a sense of humor is rather a dangerous qualification. A man with a genuine sense of humor wouldn't keep at the job for a month. The absurdity of the position he was defending would become so apparent that he would soon throw the job up. We notice that nothing is said about possessing knowledge. Probably the less they have of that the better.

The Rev. C. L. Drawbridge joins in the discussion, but only to condemn the proposal. He confesses that he tried the policy of heckling, and "soon found that I did a great deal more harm than good to the cause I had at heart." From what we know of Mr. Drawbridge, we should think this extremely likely. The man who was convinced of the truth of Christianity by Mr. Drawbridge's heckling or speaking would only cause surprise as to how he had developed sufficient intelligence ever to leave the fold. Mr. Drawbridge advises speakers to take notes of what the Secularist speaker has to say, and then "hold a rival meeting close to it." That is quite in character with what we know of Mr. Drawbridge. It is so much easier to reply to a Secularist when he is not present, and the lavish use of the speaker's name may induce unwary listeners at the other meeting to cross over and see what it is all about. But having listened once, we should hardly think they would care for a second visit. Mr. Drawbridge advises, also, that Christians should be organised to ask questions at the Christian meetings. Evidently he wishes the public to be deluded into believing that the questions so asked are suggested by the lecture itself, and to be gulled by pretended attack and defence that is really a put-up job. And that is *quite* like Mr. Drawbridge.

Dr. J. H. Moulton, Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Didsbury College (Wesleyan Methodist), recently treated his listeners to a new version of one of the main ideas in Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Dr. Frazer had showed, he said, the existence of a practically universal belief in God becoming incarnate and giving his life for the benefit of mankind. Thus the way was prepared for the Christian teaching of the Atonement. This is a queer distortion of the truth. What Frazer shows in the section of his work referred to is not that gods become incarnate for the benefit of mankind, but that men make gods for their own benefit. The god was not killed; it was the man who was killed, and being killed became a god. Of course, this belief and practice prepared the way for Christian teaching, for the killing of the man-god Jesus was only another example of the general practice of god-making. To put it more correctly, the Christian practice was a simple continuance of the primitive savage rite of god-making. The beliefs of savages prepared the way for Christian beliefs only in the sense that essential Christian beliefs are based upon them, and without them they would never have existed. Banish the savage from religion and it disappears entirely. Christian beliefs are only savage beliefs with the veneer of a more civilised language and a more dignified ritual.

The Rev. Dr. Horton is nothing if not extravagant and self-contradictory. One day he tells us that all great scientists believe in God and bow before him, and recognise Christ as his highest expression in history; but the next he is equally convinced that the intellect of the Protestant world is now engaged on the task of getting rid of God and Christ as unnecessary encumbrances on the uniformity of Nature. Now he assures us that "we are obliged to revise the geography of the spiritual world"; and of course Dr. Horton will be a member of the revision committee. We prefer to follow Shakespeare, who describes the spiritual world as "*the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.*"

The Rev. Dr. Dixon, of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, believes in and preaches the hell with the vivid description

* Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 302.

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with which Mr. Spurgeon used to frighten his hearers forty and fifty years ago. Of the sixteen well-known ministers and clergymen who express their views in the volume, *Is there a Hell?* Dr. Dixon is the only one who clings to the old-fashioned conception of a material hell-fire, in which the damned are to burn to all eternity. And yet, if the Bible is true, and if the Church is a Divine institution, Dr. Dixon is right, while the other fifteen are guilty of suppressing, or misrepresenting, an essential portion of the counsel of God.

"An Average Man" waxes hilariously merry in the Manchester *City News* for July 26, over the heresy hunt so vigorously indulged in for many months within the Wesleyan Church in connection with the appointment of the Rev. George Jackson, an exceedingly mild Higher Critic, to a theological chair at Didsbury College. The hunt turned out a perfect fiasco, a ludicrous failure. The following quotation is much to the point:—

> "As an Average Man I sometimes marvel by what special mandate the so-called Orthodox call all who do not agree with them Heretics. The Jew calls me a heretic if I am not a Jew, the Christian calls me a heretic if I am not a Christian, the Moslem calls me a heretic if I am not a Moslem, and the Buddhist calls me a heretic if I am not a Buddhist. So we must all of us be heretics according to somebody else, but who made Somebody Else the Judge? Besides, all these Orthodox people are Heretics also from the standpoint of the rivals, and really they cannot all be infallibly correct. Religion is largely a matter of temperament and race. We are, as a rule, of the religion of the country in which we are born—the place of our birth decides that—and we believe that our own religion is the only religion that is true. If you tell a Mohammedan he is in error, he slays you in righteous indignation. If a Mohammedan tells a Confucian he is wrong, the Chinaman slays him in turn. And so it goes on. As for ourselves, we used to slay each other in the old days for what now seem to be the merest trifles. The orthodoxy of yesterday is by no means the orthodoxy of to-day, and that is why it is additionally difficult to say who is a heretic and who is not."

Writing of this kind would have been impossible twenty or thirty years ago in *any* newspaper. Galileo was right. The world *does* move.

Dr. Clifford is getting more and more reckless in his public statements. In his inaugural address as President of the second European Baptist Congress held at Stockholm on July 21, he asserted that "there are sufficient reasons for believing that the modern mind in its scientific and philosophical activities is coming to the aid of spiritual religion." The statement is a monstrous falsehood, though often brazenly repeated. Dr. Clifford must be culpably ignorant if he is not aware that the modern mind is *not* "moving towards the supernatural and the spiritual with increasing sureness of step and certainty of conviction." We are getting tired of nailing this hoary lie to the counter. This rhetorical Baptist divine could not quote from a single scientist in support of his assertion. The only men he dared to mention were two famous metaphysicians, Eucken and Bergson, neither of whom can be claimed as an evangelical Christian. If Dr. Clifford were in the habit of perusing scientific works he would learn that the modern mind is moving away from "the supernatural and the spiritual with increasing sureness of step and certainty of conviction"; and were he to heed the signs of the times he would realise that Christianity has one foot in the grave already.

A correspondent informs us that on the Notice Board outside a church in the New Kent-road he read "Affliction of God." "I am not surprised," our correspondent says, 'seeing the crowd of humbugs pulling his ear down every Sunday."

A mass of manuscripts in the autograph of Walt Whitman has just been sold for the paltry sum of £16 10s. Pork, iron, and copper "kings" in the Great Republic prefer spending their thousands on chorus girls and "spread-eagle" philanthropy.

The Lunacy Commissioners' Report states that there are 138,377 persons under care in England and Wales. Defenders of the Benevolent Design Argument, please note.

"The Christian Church does not rest on theology," says a recent apologist for Christianity. Maybe *perhapsology* would be a more correct guess.

Writing in the *Labor Leader*, Mr. S. B. James says, "Socialism is a religion." One religion, more or less, will make very little difference. "Let them all come!"

The following elegant extract is from the *Johannesburg Star* (July 2):—

> "ILL-TREATING A CAT.
>
> "Kimberley, Tuesday.
>
> "In the local Magistrate's Court to-day a clergyman was fined 20s. for ill-treating a cat by forcing the prongs of a fork through the animal's body, pinning the cat to the ground.
>
> "The accused was the Rev. George Mitchell, and witnesses stated that an attempt to drown the cat had evidently failed, and that the accused drove a garden fork through the animal's body. The cat remained alive about half an hour. It was eventually despatched by the police, who found it screaming with agony.
>
> "The accused, in defence, said he had no intention of torturing the animal. Having failed to drown the cat, he thought the other method adopted to dispatch it would be immediately successful."

What a product of nearly two thousand years of Christianity!

Miss Durham's letter to the *Nation* (July 26) is a document of such importance that we venture to call our readers' special attention to it. Her subject is the frightful barbarities of the Montenegrin troops; not accidental, not committed in an access of passion, but designed beforehand and deliberately inflicted. Miss Durham knows what she is talking about. She is an observant and a truthful person, and she is a Christian and not a Mohammedan. Common honesty bids her speak out. She cannot possibly have any other motive. Her denunciation of the Balkan "Holy War for the True Faith" is wrung from her. "Tsar Ferdinand," she says, "spoke the truth when he said that the war was one of Cross *v.* Crescent. The Orthodox Cross drips red with the blood of victims. They are not all Moslems. Orthodox fanaticism has not spared the Roman Catholics." Miss Durham tells how the Montenegrins "liberated" the Catholic village of Gajtan from Turkish tyranny. Entering the village as "friends" they pillaged it of everything movable; then they felled the olive and fruit trees, on which the inhabitants largely depended for a living, and even lighted fires at the roots of the olives to ensure their not growing again. "A flourishing little community was completely ruined to the cry of 'Long Live King Nikola!'" And having completed this glorious work the "Liberators" marched away.

The poor Moslems were treated not only with the worst brutality, but even with refinements of cruelty. Impalement used to be thought a Turkish monopoly. Some of our readers will remember the stories of impalement in the old "Bulgarian Horrors" in the late 'seventies, when Holy Russia fell upon the Turks in the name of humanity (heaven save the mark!) and Mr. Gladstone swept England with a deluge of passionate eloquence against the "unspeakable Turk" who was to be swept "bag and baggage" out of Europe. Canon McColl, if we recollect aright, swore he saw, with the aid of a field-glass, a Bulgarian stuck on a pole; and gallons of ink were spilt over that doubtful story. Only the Turk, it was said, could possibly do such things. But listen! The Montenegrin soldiers who fell outside Scutari, when time was found to bury them, were all completely clad; while the Turkish corpses were all stripped and plundered. There was even worse than that. "Outside Scutari," Miss Durham says, "two half-naked bodies of Moslems were found, bound with cords and extended, showing that they had been tortured, and they appeared to have died in great agony. Two others were clearly seen through field-glasses, impaled on poles near the Montenegrin lines." So the good Christians enjoy the luxury of impaling their enemies just as well as the wicked Mohammedans ever did.

We have seen photographs from Constantinople of Turks mutilated in a most diabolical fashion. They gave us the shudders for weeks. Judging from what Miss Durham says, they were not faked but authentic. She heard a professor of the Boys' School of Podgoritza say, a few days before the war broke out, "Now you'll see plenty of noses!" He said it gleefully. Noses were to these beastly Christian "liberators" what scalps were to the North American Indians. Miss Durham describes what she saw on one occasion. "Among the crowd of wounded," she says, "were eight Nizams, whose noses and upper lips had been cut off by Montenegrins." She calls this a "peculiarly hideous mutilation"—as indeed it is. It strikes us as about the most atrocious mutilation conceivable. Words fail to represent it. It must be seen.

Miss Durham heard Montenegrin wounded in the hospital boast of the number of noses they had taken. "They described," she says, "the fun of transfixing a Turk on a bayonet, grasping his moustache, cutting off the coveted portion, and bidding him go home and show his wives how

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pretty he was. It was considered, however, more honorable not to leave him alive." These soldiers of Christ also boasted that they had castrated their enemies; the "trophies" being taken to their commander. How it reminds one of the dower that King Saul demanded of David for the hand of Michel.

One fact mentioned by Miss Durham is of the most sinister significance. Scarcely any Turkish prisoners were brought into Podgoritza during the whole six months' campaign, nor were "any Turkish wounded brought into the hospital while I was there." "We cured them all with our bayonets" was the Montenegrin boast. No wonder that Miss Durham calls upon the Great Powers not to let any Moslems or Catholics come under the rule of these fiend-warriors of the Cross.

The devilries that Miss Durham records were deliberate. That is the worst of them. The war was not one of "liberation" but of "vengeance and plunder":—

> "It is time that the foul savagery with which this war has been waged should be made clear; that the public should realise that the real reason why no correspondents and no foreign doctors were admitted to certain districts was because of the brutalities, planned in cold blood beforehand, which were to have no witnesses. A strict censorship was intended to suppress such details as might leak out."

Montenegro means to exterminate all Albanian or other populations handed over to her. Believing this, and with good cause, Miss Durham calls on the civilised world to take precautions against such an abominable catastrophe.

There is still no word of comment from the religious press on the subject of the Christian massacres in the Balkans. So far as they are concerned, they might never have occurred. Their chief concern appears to be lest any of the territory conquered from the Turks should again pass out of Christian hands. The *Guardian*, for example, says that the duty of the Powers is perfectly clear. If Turkey proves obdurate, she must "be turned out of Adrianople neck and crop." It is gracious enough to say that they do not "think the Christians who reconquered Turkey's Balkan possessions are a particularly admirable type"; but still they are Christians, and that is everything. The Balkan Christians are "amenable to the spirit of the West." "To Turkey civilisation, as we know it, is utterly foreign."

This is a double-barrelled sectarianism. First of all, a Christian as a Christian is preferable to a Mohammedan, even though the latter may be the better man. We hold no brief for the Turk, but no man of sense and fairness will hold that during the past six months the Balkan Christians have shown themselves in any way superior to their Mohammedan neighbors. If one half the barbarities recorded of Christians in both the first and second Balkan Wars had been recorded of Mohammedans, the English press would have been shrieking for immediate intervention. But they are Christians, and that atones for a deal. In the next place, we have the usual British stupidity that because the civilisation of the West suits us it must not only be the best form of civilisation for the rest of the world, but it must be forced upon all people at the point of the bayonet. It never dawns upon these wiseacres that a form of civilisation suitable to some people may be totally unsuitable to others. Friendly intercourse between peoples will enable each to absorb from the other all that is beneficial to them. Institutions and ideas forced upon them result in nothing but evil. And it is by no means certain that the West has not as much to learn from the East as the East has to learn from the West.

Mr. J. H. Ritson, secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, is greatly alarmed, as are other missionaries, at what they are pleased to call the menace of Islam in Africa. On examination, the menace only means that, in spite of Christianity occupying the more favorable position, it cannot compete with Mohammedanism in evangelising the natives. The missionary of Islam, without huge funds from home, and without his religion being that of the governing race, beats the Christian missionary at his own game. Mr. Ritson says that each missionary teaches the blacks Arabic, and opens the way to a religion "which sanctions the sins men love." It is seldom, indeed, that a Christian can refer to opponents without slandering them, and Mr. Ritson is no exception. We should much like to know what "sins" are sanctioned by Islam? It does not teach men to lie, to steal, or to commit murder. It does sanction polygamy—not very generally practised, however—but so does Christianity for that matter, and at any rate it is stupid to call that a sin. As an institution it may be good or bad—we firmly believe it is the latter—but it is a social institution, and must be judged as other institutions are judged. And travellers of repute have testified over and over again that the native who becomes a Mohammedan shows a marked improvement in character and cleanliness over those who become Christians. At any rate, Islam manages to keep its converts free from the unquestionable evils of prostitution and drunkenness—two things that Christian civilisation carries into every country it conquers.

"Are these the people to make England great? Why, if they were sunk into the depths of the sea to-morrow morning, England would not be the poorer for it." These terrible people had been visiting the Holland Park Skating Rink on Sunday instead of attending church, and so the Rev. T. Phillips treated his congregation to his opinion of them. Mr. Phillips does not think that any people who spent their Sunday in this way would be found doing social work in the slums. We do not know; but we feel pretty sure that a great many of those who do not go skating on Sunday, but regularly attend church or chapel, are partly responsible for there being any slums to visit. And we do not think that Mr. Phillips would care to say from the pulpit that *they* ought to be drowned in the sea. It might thin his congregation somewhat. It is perfectly safe denouncing absentees to a chapel congregation.

Professor John Milne, the famous inventor of instruments to detect earthquakes, who died last week, spent the best years of his life in Japan, which experiences about 500 shocks yearly, often accompanied by great loss of life. The Professor, who was a Christian, married a Japanese lady who kept a large statue of Buddha in his home, to which she made offerings. Maybe, the devoted pair hoped to square the Divine Benevolence between them.

Laurel wreaths picked from the garden of the late Mr. W. T. Stead were dropped from the liner *Franconia* over the watery grave of the *Titanic* on Sunday, whilst the ship's band played "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Fifteen hundred men and women stood at the *Franconia's* side with bowed heads during the sorry business. It would be hard to beat this example of misplaced piety.

The recent publication of Charlotte Bronte's letters to Professor Heger in the columns of the *Times* makes interesting reading. There are, however, some matters that require further elucidation, as, for instance, Charlotte Bronte's statement that her writings had received the approbation of Shelley and Coleridge. Shelley died when Charlotte was six years old, and Coleridge was dead before she was eighteen.

An Exmouth lady has left the whole of her fortune to a Cats' Home in Whitechapel, because "cats are daily made footballs of by roughs of that locality." It is a pity that ladies so seldom leave money for the intellectual emancipation of the race.

An immense swarm of locusts has been doing enormous damage in Corsica, devastating the crops. The inhabitants must have had as jolly a time as the Egyptians with the plagues.

According to an Education Blue Book, there are nearly seven millions of scholars attending the elementary schools of England and Wales. Clerically controlled schools included nearly three millions of these children. In spite of kid-glove Rationalists, the N. S. S. has plenty of work in front of it.

A gold repeater watch, formerly belonging to Charles Dickens, was sold last week for £44 at a London saleroom. Priests who get high prices for relics of people who never existed will smile.

THE CATHOLIC RELIGION.

Of course, my Church is the best, said I, but that is not the reason why I belong to it; I belong to it because it was the faith of my house; I wish to take my chances with my own people, and so should you. If it is a question of going to hell, go to hell like a gentleman with your ancestors.—*Robert Louis Stevenson, "St. Ives."*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £160 13s. 11d. Received since:—T. Hibbott, 5s.; S. Clowes and Father, 2s.; J. White, 2s.

R. J. DE L—— (S. Africa).—Your friend is not the author of the *Parson's Idol*. We printed it in the *Freethinker* some thirty years ago, and it was a bit of an antiquity then. It was written by that copious author Mr. Anonymous. We are pleased to receive your own letter.

G. GILETTE (S. Africa).—Glad to hear you have read the *Freethinker* since 1890 and "never found a dull item in it." We will consider your suggestion about publishing Mr. Cohen's article on the Witch Mania as a pamphlet.

T. HIBBOTT.—We note your wish that the pace of the President's Honorarium Fund might be quickened. Kindly forward the book you refer to.

S. CLOWES.—Pleased to have your congratulations and good wishes.

W. BRADBURN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. DAVENDALE.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. Sorry to say the verse is not quite up to our level for publication.

H. D. A.—Shakespeare is omitted as well as Burns. Your friend's verses want correcting by a grammarian. They are not without a certain merit. But, after all, they are not really poetry.

A. N. KOHN.—There is a Benevolent Fund connected with the N. S. S., with its own Committee, to which access is gained through the Secretary (Miss Vance). We understand that the gentleman you mention has several times been helped. We take no part ourselves in the administration of this Fund.

E. B.—Much obliged.

W. A. YATES.—Thanks for your successful efforts to promote our circulation.

R. F. M.—Naturally.

J. H. KENWARD.—Tyndall's statement was surely a truism. But it is a hypothetical statement, as all "ifs" are. It is the logic of thought, though not necessarily the logic of fact, that makes the conclusion follow the major and minor premises. Comte said truly that science is prevision. If we knew enough of causes we should be able to foresee results. It is a very questionable thing, however, to assert that what was *evolved* was originally *involved*. The case is one of confused metaphor.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

G. DURDEN.—Next week. Thanks.

W. H. HARRIS.—Thanks for the cutting, but we are going to review Professor Bury's book ourselves.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The trouble with the London County Council is now completely over. The unheard summonses against the N. S. S. London Branches, which had been standing over from August, are all withdrawn, and the collections and sale of literature go on as before in the case of *bonâ-fide* Societies. The legal bill has been discharged, including counsel's services in court and at consultations, and the whole of the Fighting Fund, with these deductions, is available for the ordinary work of the N. S. S. We gave subscribers an opportunity of objecting to this disposition of the balance of the Fund, if they wished to, but there has been absolutely no response to the paragraph which appeared in the *Freethinker*. The matter must, therefore, be now considered as ended. Perhaps we ought to add that "All's well that ends well"—and to thank the Freethought party for backing up our plan of campaign.

Mr. Lloyd takes the anniversary services at the Failsworth Secular Sunday School (Pole-lane) to-day (Aug. 10). His address at 2.45 will be on "The Making of Heroes" and at 6.30 on "Religion and Morals."

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Mr. Salt's *Shelley*" stands over unavoidably till next week.

Cupid laughs at everything but his own bow and arrows. He knows that he is the master of the world. Emperors, czars, kings, and princes are very secondary beings in comparison with him. Realising this, we are not surprised that we have to announce the marriage of Mr. R. H. Rosetti and Miss H. Pankhurst, which took place at the Registrar's office, Stratford, on Saturday (Aug. 2). Both belong to the West Ham Branch, the bride being its secretary and the bridegroom its president. We wish them a long life of private happiness and public usefulness.

Mr. Davidson paid a flying visit to Tunbridge Wells on Sunday. His object was to lecture, but accident brought him into a public debate with one of the most offensive Christian Evidence lecturers. The subject Mr. Davidson was invited to debate was "The Athiest and the Child"—which quite covered the two disputants. Neither the chairman nor anyone else could keep the C. E. S. speaker to time or from vulgar personalities. Mr. Davidson's matter and manner were evidently much more to the taste of a large and interested audience.

Dr. Arthur Lynch, M.P., reviewing Professor Bury's new book in the *Chronicle*, says that "laws against blasphemy exist which are a disgrace to the Statute Book."

Summonses have been issued at last at Leeds on account of the demonstration held by the Leeds N. S. S. Branch,—against Mr. Pack for taking up the collection and against Mr. Jackson for selling literature. The summonses are returnable at the Town Hall, on Wednesday, August 27, at 11 a.m. We have sent on an additional letter of advice to Mr. Pack on behalf of the Branch. There is no doubt, of course, that the demonstration was held, as to the collection and the sale of literature, against the strict letter of the bye-law. This is understood. But it was necessary to bring an all-important question to the test; the question, namely, whether the local authorities possess a discretionary power to favor the advocates of some opinions and put disabilities upon the advocates of other opinions. This has not yet been decided in a court of justice. It is high time that it were decided; otherwise the Leeds police will govern the city at will by successive acts of usurpation. There can hardly be a difference amongst Freethinkers as to the duty of opposing such intolerance; and if the fight has to be carried beyond the Leeds Police-court we shall make a confident appeal to the Freethought movement for proper support in this emergency.

The *Positivist Review* for August opens with an article by Sir Henry Cotton on "A Tragedy of the Gallows in India," which we commend to the attention of those who fancy that British government out there is perfectly ideal. Mr. Frederic Harrison writes on the late Mr. Goldwin Smith's recently published Correspondence. The article is interesting, for Goldwin Smith was a man of distinction, and Mr. Harrison wields a bright and facile pen. Mr. Swinny deals with M. Paul Sabatier's book, *France To-Day: Its Religious Orientation*. Like all that Mr. Swinny writes this article is worth reading. There is a curious touch in it, however, of what we may call Positivist partisanship,—a thing which we have often detected in this excellent little magazine. It is evident, we are told, that M. Sabatier has studied Comte; so Comte is quoted, and Guyau, and Bergson, as to the idea of an ever-advancing Humanity which is carrying all of us along. We do not "take much stock" in Bergson, but we very much admire Guyau, and we have always regarded Comte as one of the great seminal thinkers of the modern world. But our Positivist friends have quite a craze for quoting French writers and tracing every good thing to France. It was a great Englishman, Thomas Paine, who first used the expression "The Religion of Humanity." It was a still greater Englishman, the poet Shelley, who drew Leigh Hunt's attention in the Cathedral at Pisa to what a glorious religion men might have if its principle were humanity instead of theology. Even the "barbarian" Carlyle, as some reckon him, expressed the idea that Mr. Swinny refers to—as long ago as when he wrote *Sartor Resartus*. And we venture to say that he expressed it with greater eloquence and enthusiasm than Comte or Guyau (we will drop Bergson) ever had at command. We could quote several passages, but this one must suffice:—

> "Spake we not of a Communion of Saints, unseen, yet not unreal, accompanying and brother-like embracing thee, so thou be worthy? Their heroic Sufferings rise up melodiously together to Heaven, out of all lands, and out of all times, as a sacred *Miserere*; their heroic Actions also, as a boundless everlasting Psalm of Triumph."

Carlyle's graphic power has hardly ever been excelled, and this quotation is no bad sample of it.

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Christ on the Cinema.

A WEEK or so ago I went to a picture palace in Peckham, and witnessed a representation of the famous film entitled "From Manger to the Cross." I went on a Saturday, as that was the only evening I had vacant that week. Naturally, I expected to find the hall crowded, as it was the last night's representation of the "sacred drama" of the life and death of the supposed Founder of Christianity. The building, however, was far from full, and so little interest did some of the members of the audience take in the performance that they left before half the length of the film had been shown, as though the subject bored them, or had no real attraction for them.

The story is told in five parts, and although one or two girls giggled during some portion of the representation, the majority of the audience listened attentively, and treated the subject in what Christians call a reverent spirit. During each scene an American organ played well-known hymn tunes appropriate to the occasion. I regret that I did not arrive in time to see the scene depicting the alleged birth of Jesus; so that I did not see the young Messiah, as the ladies say, "before he was shortened"; nor did I see the wise men watching the stars, and being directed by one of them to the place where Jesus was to be born. But I saw Jesus as a boy, and a very nice-looking chap he was. I also saw Joseph and Mary and the Mother of Jesus, and I wondered why Mary was dressed like a modern Sister of Mercy, and whether such a costume was likely to have been worn by a lady who had no official connection with any Church close on two thousand years ago. Every scene was supposed to illustrate some text, or some alleged teaching of Jesus, and this text was thrown upon the sheet for the spectators to read.

The picture illustrating young Jesus being taken by his parents to the Temple and being lost, and the parents returning in three days and finding him confounding the wise men by his wonderful sayings, struck me as extremely unconvincing—especially the unsympathetic manner in which he treated his parents, who had been vainly seeking for him for some days, and who were broken-hearted with grief and despair at his loss.

There were two boys who played the part of young Jesus, one when he was twelve and the other when he was a little older; they were both good-looking boys, and contrived to look the character as near as possible. In the next scene we saw Jesus, the wandering missionary, grown to manhood, and I rather regretted that we did not have one scene with Jesus working at the carpenter's bench; but I suppose that was too commonplace and risky from a dramatic point of view. For many years I have maintained that the story of Jesus as told in the Gospels is purely a dramatic story, probably based upon some old morality play coming down to us from a Greek source years after the beginning of the Christian era.

On seeing this film I was more than ever convinced of the dramatic character of the story, although in some of its details it lacks the true dramatic grip, and is almost entirely destitute of female interest. Now, if Jesus had fallen in love with a pretty Greek maiden, and the Devil, in the person of Satan, had lured her away from him, and made Judas a rival, and then tempted Judas to betray Jesus, and thus to lead him step by step to his arrest and crucifixion, the story would have some vital dramatic interest. But Jesus apparently had no love for woman, although he had several female acquaintances who followed him about constantly; and on the cinema we saw two of these lovely females, who came and emptied bottles of oil over his feet and wiped them with their wavy long hair. Jesus did not seem to be particularly moved by this performance, but he turned and gave them a gracious smile, as though he was not displeased with their conduct.

When we saw Jesus in the act of delivering his Sermon on the Mount, the young man who played the part committed what used to be considered by the old school of actors the unpardonable offence of turning his back entirely upon his audience—that is, the audience in the picture theatre—while he addressed the multitude. The young actor who played the part of Jesus was a tall, handsome fellow, with Greek countenance, rather effeminate in appearance, with fine aquiline nose and long flowing hair, and the orthodox moustache and beard after the well-known pictures of the Nazarene; while his disciples, on the other hand, possessed strongly marked Jewish faces and general characteristics. I thought perhaps that the promoters of this religious film would scarcely risk putting on the screen the representations of the chief miracles said to have been wrought by Jesus. But they did. And when one comes to think about it, what would the life of Jesus be without the miracles? A series of Sermons on the Mount, of which not one word could be heard, would have little or no interest to the ordinary spectator. In drama, you must have action, and plenty of it; and, therefore, the managers have no option but to put on the sheet the representation of some of the most important miracles narrated by the writers of the Gospels. And so we have the miracle of the healing of the centurion's servant; the opening of the eyes of the blind; but as Jesus had merely to pass his hands over the eyes of the blind man and say "Receive your sight," the thing was simple enough, and, as the doctors would say, involved no complications.

We saw Jesus calling his disciples out of their fishing smacks from the useful occupation of fishermen, and getting them to join him in the missionary business as "fishers of men." And though we saw him casting devils (whatever they are) out of men, we did not see the devils come out and enter into the bodies of swine, whose constitutions were so disturbed by these new tenants that they rushed furiously down a steep pit into the sea, and were drowned. Whether the devils shared the same fate as the pigs, Matthew does not say. No doubt the manager found this one of the impracticable incidents in the miracle series; he could not get actors to play the part of pigs, nor devils to set them on the run, so that they could go scampering along to their destruction.

Such miracles as the healing of the withered hand, or making the lame to walk, were easy enough, especially when we knew that the actors were not lame, but only pretending, and did not have withered hands to heal. In like manner, it was an easy matter for Jesus to turn water into wine, especially as we did not see any of the disciples drink any of the water; but it was much harder for Jesus to walk upon the sea, without Boyton boots, and any man with a knowledge of stagecraft and stage carpentry could see that he was walking upon a solid plank, although the waves of the sea appeared to be close upon him. But the real dramatic incidents began to manifest themselves when the villain—Judas—showed his willingness to betray Jesus; and the scenes representing Judas selling his Master for thirty pieces of silver; kissing Jesus, as a sign to his enemies that he was the man they were seeking (as though they did not know him when they had witnessed all his alleged miracles, and had been lashed by him out of the Temple)—attending the last supper, taking the sop with the Master, these scenes were played with real dramatic effect.

So, also, were the scenes of the Trial and Condemnation. Pilate did all he could to save Jesus, but the mob was against him. When we came to the scene of the crowd assaulting and ill-using Jews on the way to his execution, we could not help feeling for the poor fellow in his extremity, and in imagination we could realise what poor, despised Freethought martyrs like Bruno and Vanini must have experienced under similar circumstances. In the case of Jesus, I could not understand how he

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could allow this ignorant rabble to strike him on the cheek, to spit upon him, to tear his robes from off him, to give him vinegar and gall to drink, and to subject him to other forms of indignity, when, by merely holding up his hands, he could have silenced and paralysed them all with fear. But, then, I was only a poor Freethinker, allowing my thoughts free play, and forgetting for the moment that I was only witnessing a play and being moved by a scene of human helplessness amid the passion and violence of a savage mob. The scene of the Crucifixion was, indeed, a great triumph of the art of the cinematograph.

We saw Jesus on the Cross, moving his head and body, opening his eyes and mouth, and expressing in his countenance great grief and anguish. Yes, we saw him there between the two thieves, and they all moved to show that they were actual human beings who were stretched upon the cross, and not mere puppets. How it was all worked, I do not know, but it was a great triumph for the actors.

There were no scenes of the Resurrection or Ascension, so I suppose these were considered unnecessary to the completion of the drama, or impracticable from the point of view of the manager. Be that as it may, I quite expected to see Jesus come again, in form like the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, and, though I did not expect to witness an ascension, I have no doubt it could be managed easily enough on the cinematograph.

On the whole, I am satisfied that the exhibition of this film will lead thousands to think, and to think on the subject of miracles is always liable to lead to doubt, and doubt leads to investigation, and investigation to truth. And, as we all know, "the truth will set you free."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE STORY OF THE BAPTIST.

THIS narrative is one of those which the three Synoptists copied from a more primitive Gospel; but the way Matthew and Mark introduce the subject is somewhat peculiar. Taking Matthew's account, that editor says (xiv. 1, 2):—

> "At that season Herod the tetrarch *heard the report* concerning Jesus, and he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead."

Mark commences his account in precisely the same way (vi. 14). Matthew, next, makes use of the error into which the tetrarch had fallen to introduce the story of the imprisonment and death of John. He says:—

> "For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife."

Mark likewise makes this mistake of Herod the introduction to the story of the imprisonment of the Baptist, and in nearly the same words as Matthew. The latter editor goes on:—

> "For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her."

Mark, following the same plan, put this statement a little plainer—"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Both editors, in fact, commence telling the story backwards, after which they narrate it more in order. This story is as follows: That Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had taken to himself Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and, being reproved by the Baptist for so doing, he had cast that baptiser into prison. Then, later on, "when Herod's birth-day came [Herod made a feast, at which] the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist.....And Herod sent and beheaded John in prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (Matt. xiv. 8—11).

This Gospel story is a Christian fabrication, though it contains a small grain of truth. John the Baptist was a historical person—a crank who preached and baptised near the Jordan—whom, after a short public ministry, Herod Antipas placed in confinement, and subsequently put to death. But the silly statements of John rebuking Antipas on account of his marrying his brother Philip's wife, of the dancing before him, of his oath, of the demand for the Baptist's head, and of John's immediate execution in consequence—these are pure fabrications.

In the first place, Antipas did not take his brother *Philip's* wife. He did, however, induce Herodias, the wife of his half brother *Herod*, to leave her husband and live with him. To make this clear, we have but to glance at the sons of Herod the Great who were living in the time of the Baptist. They were the following:—

> Herod—who had married Herodias, and lived in private life.
> Antipas—Tetrarch of Galilee, who had married the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea.
> Philip—Tetrarch of Trachonitis, who had married Salome, the daughter of Herodias.

These three sons of Herod the Great were by different wives, and therefore only half-brothers. The first, Herod, was named after his father, by whom (in his will) he was disinherited. Herod the Great, though a hard and unprincipled man, was great as a king, and his name was honored throughout the Roman world. For this reason, Antipas assumed the name as a title (like that of Cæsar), and was called "Herod Antipas," or "Herod the tetrarch." Philip never assumed the name, though he could have done so, had he chosen.

Now, the concoctor of the Gospel story thought that the wife of Philip the tetrarch was Herodias. He says that Herod the tetrarch had taken "his brother Philip's wife," and he gives her name as Herodias. He had evidently never heard of the "Herod" who was living unnoticed as a private gentleman in Rome. The concoctor of the story, again, was not aware that the daughter of Herodias, whom he represents as dancing before an assembly of half-intoxicated men, was Salome, a grand lady, and the young wife of Philip the tetrarch, who would not be likely to demean herself by dancing before such an audience (Mark vi. 21)—even were her husband willing to countenance such an act.

In order to conceal the Gospel misstatement respecting Herodias being the wife of Antipas's "brother Philip," Christian reconcilers have elected to call the disinherited son of Herod the Great "Herod *Philip*," though they knew perfectly well that not one of the seven sons of Herod the Great had a second name. If we turn to a table of the "Herodian Family" in any Bible text-book, we shall find the disinherited son called "Herod Philip I.," and Philip the tetrarch called "Herod Philip II." As already stated, Antipas assumed the name "Herod" as a title, as did also, later on, king Agrippa; but Philip the tetrarch did not, and was never known as "Herod Philip." Josephus never calls the disinherited son by any other name than "Herod," nor Philip the tetrarch by any other name than "Philip." Luke also says (iii. 1)—"Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and *his brother Philip* tetrarch of," etc. This was the "brother Philip" of the Baptist story.

There can thus be no doubt as to whom the primitive Gospel writer referred when he said "his brother Philip." The giving to Philip the tetrarch the honorary title "Herod" might, perhaps, be allowed to pass; but to give to the disinherited son Herod another name, "Philip," which this Herod never possessed, and to do it for the purpose of deceiving the uninformed reader—such a dastardly action is one which only a Christian reconciler could stoop to perform.

Coming now to the Gospel story, Luke tells us that "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar" (*i.e.*,

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A D 28), Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan; shortly after which John was cast into prison, and Jesus began to preach. Now, if the Baptist had rebuked Antipas for marrying his brother's wife, it must have been *before* he was cast into prison, and Herodias must have gone to live with Antipas *before that*. The latter event, then, could not have been later than A D. 28.

Leaving dates for the moment, we find that Antipas, when in Rome, saw Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod, and falling in love with her, he asked her to become his wife. To this the lady agreed, provided he first put away Aretas's daughter. But the latter, having been secretly informed of the compact, asked her husband for an escort to take her to Macherus, a castle on the borders of Arabia, subject to her father Aretas—which Antipas was pleased to grant. Arrived there, she made rapid journeys under Arabian escorts to Arabia Petrea, and informed her father of her husband's intentions. Upon hearing of such perfidy, Aretas sent a strong force against his faithless son-in-law; a battle was fought, and Antipas's army was annihilated. After giving a detailed account of the foregoing circumstances, Josephus says (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2):—

> "Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John that was called the Baptist.....For Herod, fearing lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion.....thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause.....Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death."

Josephus does not say how long the Baptist had been dead when the battle between Aretas and Antipas took place. We have now to ascertain the date of the battle. When Antipas received news of the loss of his army, he wrote informing the emperor Tiberius, "who being angry at the action of Aretas, sent orders to Vitellius [the president of Syria] to make war upon him." Upon receipt of this command Vitellius set out with a large force for Arabia Petrea, and, on his way, came to Jerusalem, where he stayed to confer with Antipas for four days. While there, he received official notice of the death of Tiberius, so he returned with his army to Antioch. Tiberius died on March 16, A.D 37; hence, the little domestic arrangement between Antipas and Herodias, and the battle that resulted from it, would be in the year A D 36.

We are now in a position to compare the Gospel story with the foregoing facts of history. In A.D. 28, Herod Antipas hearing of the influence which John the Baptist had obtained over the common people, had him arrested and confined in the fortress of Macherus. Some months later (A.D 29), he caused the Baptist to be beheaded. Six or seven years afterwards, Antipas paid a visit to Rome, and took lodgings in the house where his half-brother Herod was staying. During this visit he became acquainted with this brother's wife, Herodias, and made certain overtures to her, which she accepted on one condition —to which he agreed. After a short stay he returned to Galilee; but here, one of his attendants who had overheard or discovered the little matter planned with Herodias, mentioned the fact in strict confidence to her highness the legitimate wife of Antipas. Thereupon, that lady fled as fast as horses could carry her to Arabia Petrea, and informed her father Aretas—the result being a battle, fought in the same year (A.D 36), in which the army of the tetrarch was destroyed.

Now, looking at the Gospel narrative, it is quite clear that no reconciliation with history is possible. John the Baptist had been dead six or seven years when Antipas married his brother Herod's wife; hence, the little stories of the Baptist reproving that tetrarch, of the daughter of Herodias dancing at the feast, of Antipas promising on oath to give her whatever she asked for, and of John's head being brought to her in a charger—these are all pure fictions, fabricated by the primitive Gospel-writer to account for the imprisonment and death of the Baptist. Matthew, Mark, and Luke found the incidents recorded in the primitive Gospel, and merely made revised copies of them.

But, if we set aside all dates, the conclusion we arrive at is the same.

1. Herod Antipas had *not* taken Herodias to be his wife when the daughter of Aretas set out for Arabia Petrea, and some weeks later, when the battle was fought, John the Baptist had been dead some time.

2. Herod Antipas would only have been allowed to use the fortress of Macherus as a prison while he and his father-in-law, Aretas, were upon friendly terms. It must therefore have been *before* the flight of Aretas's daughter, when the Baptist was arrested, and sent there, and some time later put to death.

An Example of Inadvertence.

The editor of Matthew's Gospel represents Jesus as saying (xi. 12):—

> "And from the days of John the Baptist *until now* the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."

These words are said to have been uttered while the Baptist was alive, and at a period when "the kingdom of heaven" can scarcely be said to have begun. No time had elapsed between "the days of John the Baptist" and the day upon which Jesus is represented as speaking: they were the same days. Only a writer who lived many years after Jesus and the Baptist could have employed the words here put in the mouth of the Nazarene. These words, too, could not have been used until the Christians had become a well-known sect, and had suffered persecution—a fact which again points to post-apostolic times.

ABRACADABRA.

National Secular Society.

Report of Monthly Executive Meeting held on July 31.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Brandes, Cunningham, Davidson, Heaford, Judge, Leat, Lloyd, Neate, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, and Miss Kough and the Secretary (Miss Vance).

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the Edmonton, Kingsland, and West Ham Branches and for the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported that the L.C.C. had definitely decided to withdraw the adjourned summonses against the several members of the N.S.S. for taking collections while the permits were suspended, and the final account for legal charges incurred was ordered to be paid. The President announced that as no objection had been raised by subscribers, the balance of the "Fighting Fund" raised in the *Freethinker* would be handed over to the N.S.S. General Fund.

The correspondence with Mr. J. W. Gott was referred to, and the President's action endorsed; and the following resolution, moved by Mr. Davidson, and seconded by Mr. Heaford, was carried:—

> "That this Executive repudiates all connection or association with Mr. J. W. Gott's propaganda, denies that he has ever had permission to use the name of the N.S.S. on the announcements or advertisements of his meetings, and calls upon him, as a member of this Society, to desist from such outrageous conduct. This Executive further repudiates responsibility for any literature sold at such meetings by Mr. Gott, unless the book, pamphlet, or paper bear the Society's imprimatur or guarantee."

Messrs. Davidson, Roger, and Thurlow were then elected as a sub-committee to consider and report upon certain printed matter falling under the previous resolution.

The question of the delegation to the International Congress at Libson was then reviewed, and after some discussion, particularly in regard to the prolonged absence from England that would be entailed, it was unanimously resolved:—

> "That we retire from the position of the previous resolution on this matter."

Correspondence from Preston and other matters having been dealt with, the meeting adjourned until September 25.

E. M. Vance, *General Secretary.*

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Christian Evidences.

MR. MARSH, the redoubtable Christian Evidence lecturer, who has recently gained an unenviable notoriety by his scandalous statements about a dead Freethinker, has been complaining bitterly of being followed about by Secularists, who have confronted him with his statements, and whom he describes as "dirty hirelings."

As he has continued to reiterate, deny, and repeat these slanders, and finally to make blustering challenges, I wrote him offering to accept his challenges and to produce persons who had heard the statements he now denies, or to expose his particular type of Christian evidence.

Mr. Marsh was announced to give a lecture at Parliament Hill on Sunday, July 27, and notified me he would re-read his former statements, and promised to answer any questions of mine.

On my arrival, I found Mr. Marsh on a brake, with the Rev. C. N. Drawbridge acting as chairman, supported by Mr. Baker, the Rev. O. D. Brown, and other representatives of the C. E. S., either to take care of or repress him. Mr. Marsh's performance consisted of reading a twenty-year-old article from the *Freethinker* (which he insisted upon describing as a "letter"), reading *extracts* from a letter, examining at some length a Mr. Richards on trivial matters which were never in dispute, and behaving generally like a hooligan, to the intense delight of a large and carefully packed crowd of his well-known followers. On his conclusion, the Rev. C. N. Drawbridge magnanimously allowed me five minutes in which to correct Mr. Marsh, put my questions, and produce my witnesses—having permitted Mr. Marsh to inquire of the audience whether he had not proved his case, before I opened my mouth.

I commenced, and was interrupted by Mr. Marsh. I requested the chairman to call him to order, and waited whilst they wrangled for some minutes. At the end of half-a-dozen sentences, during which time Mr. Drawbridge made no attempt to stop the howlings of Mr. Marsh's friends, he informed me my time was up.

Messrs. Davidson and Hope (who were there to answer the charge of "following" Mr. Marsh about) kindly waived their time in my favor, and I recommenced. In the next ten minutes, Mr. Drawbridge himself interrupted me no less than three times, whilst he descanted upon the unfairness of the Editor of the *Freethinker* in not printing in his paper the scholarly epistles of Mr. Marsh. In the meantime, the latter conveniently forgot his promise to reply to my questions. On being reminded of this, I received a partial and shuffling reply to one of them, with a piteous regret that he could not treat me as he would a man. No opportunity was given to Messrs. Judge, Cunningham, Hopkins, and others, my witnesses, whom Mr. Marsh had so desired to hear, as Mr. Drawbridge then announced that they were now "full up" of the other side. This was undoubtedly true; but, feeling that the other side had not had their innings, I called upon those who desired to hear me without interruption to follow, and my friends escorted me to the adjacent N. S. S. platform, accompanied by quite half of the C. E. S. audience, where I was able to hold them for upwards of an hour, to the evident discomfort of our fair-minded opponents. I hope, however, they are compensated by the snapshot they obtained of me on their brake. An incident worth snapshotting was, I am told, the expression on Mr. Marsh's face when a lady in the audience, who, whilst avowing herself a Christian, accused Mr. Marsh of being the aggressor in a disorderly scene at Edmonton on the previous Sunday (when he left his own platform to attack the N. S. S. speaker) and flatly told him she was ashamed of him, and, later on, the spectacle of another lady who, enraged by Mr. Marsh's vicious and untruthful statements about her husband, seized and shook him vigorously.

Mr. Marsh's swaggering and ludicrous challenge to Mr Foote to debate with him was made in the full knowledge that it would never be accepted; but there are others who would condescend to refute him under ordinary conditions. When he can screw up sufficient courage to face this music, minus the assistance of a brake and a C. E S. demonstration, the "following about" to which he so much objects will cease.

EDITH M. VANCE.

"Have you said your prayers?" inquired a mother of her little son. "No, I haven't," was the prompt reply, "and I didn't say 'em last night, nor the night before, and if nothing happens to-night, I shall never say 'em again."—*English Illustrated Magazine.*

Conductor: "Excuse me, but this is a bad nickel."

Lady Passenger: "Oh, I beg your pardon. That was a mistake. I was saving that for the church collection."

THE SERMON.

First prayer, then praise, then comes the [preachin':
Nae modern theologic teaching
To suit the taste o' warly folk;
But plain, auld-fashioned orthodox,
Wi' hell a'maist in ilka sentence,
To fricht the sinner to repentance.
The rich, the usurer, the cheat,
The harlot, and the hypocrite,
The sot, the glutton, and the thief,
The suicide, o' sinners chief,
Wi' unbelievers a' are doomed
To burn, and never be consumed,
In brimstane fire and burning marl
Doon yonder in the nether warl'.
Lood and lang the preacher rails,
Flings his airms aboot like flails;
Stamps and raves like ane possessed,
Bangs the Bible, dauds the desk,
Gars the stour flee oot in clouds
Wi' sic unmercifu'-like thuds
That sleepers wauken wi' the soun',
Sit up at last and glower aroun',
Wi' dazed-like luks that seem to say,
"Guid Lord, is this the judgment day?"

—*George Cunningham, "Sunday."*

THE GLOOMY DEAN.

They've christened him the Gloomy Dean,
For oft he vents his learned spleen
By scoffing, in sardonic mood,
At dreams of equal brotherhood.
Ah, well we know his cultured school
That breeds the Philosophic Fool,
Who, stuffed with ancient lore, decries
The nascent, live Humanities!
Now, with some ponderous paradox,
The gentler hopes of man he mocks;
Now, flattered by the smiling Press,
Acclaims the old Vindictiveness.
A Gloomy Dean! Benighted he
By his own dim theology—
Deep versed in doctrines of Saint Paul,
Of modern vision heedless all—
No second Swift is here, we trow;
The gloom that beetles on his brow
Is of the dull, belated kind
That haunts the mediæval mind:
For the Dark Ages best had been
The birth-time of this Gloomy Dean.

—*The Humanitarian.*

Husband (sarcastically): "Well, my dear, did you derive much consolation from your attendance at church this morning?"

Wife (enthusiastically): "Rather! Mrs. Gibbs had on that old blue hat of hers—and I sat right in front of her the whole morning."—*London Mail.*

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. John Oram, of Bath, which occurred on July 22, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. For upwards of forty years Mr. Oram was a prominent Freethinker, who worked faithfully against superstition and for the dissemination of the grand truths of Secularism. He acted as secretary of the Branch of the N. S. S. which existed at Bath some twenty years ago. He died in the faith in the service of which he had spent his life; and although all the members of his family were not of his way of thinking, they loyally carried out his wish that only a Secular Service should be conducted at his funeral, which took place on Monday, July 28. We express our sincere sympathy with the family in their bereavement. —J. T. L.

It is with deep regret that I record the death of Mr. Alton C. V. Bonvouni, of Pembroke Dock, the son of Mr. D E. Bonvouni, of Letterstone, Pembroke. Our friend, who was in the prime of his life (being only twenty-one), unfortunately lost his life while bathing on Sunday, July 20. Brought up in a Secular home, he was always ready and willing to assist in every possible way the advancement of the Secular movement. His nobleness of mind and his sterling qualities as a man endeared him to all that knew him. His god was science and his ideal was to know the truth. The funeral took place on Thursday, July 31. Owing to great difficulties, it was not a Secular funeral. To his father, mother, sister, and brother we tender our sincere condolence.—F. J. F.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington): August 11, at 8, General Meeting. All members requested to attend.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine-street, near Town Hall): 7, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss K. B. Kough, "God and Morality."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "Science and Dogmas"; 7.30, "Beelzebub," "Science and Superstition."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 11.30, E. M. Vance and M. Hope, "Christian Evidences"; 3.15, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): J. T. Lloyd, 2.45, "The Making of Heroes"; 6.30, "Religion and Morals."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 33 SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

A wise and honest man has other guides than superstition to direct his conduct.—MACAULAY.

Principles and Persons.

"VANOC" of the *Referee* is a facile writer, but a man who undertakes to write on anything and everything must write a good deal of nonsense in the course of a year. There was a fine specimen of such nonsense in "Vanoc's" last week's article. The subject of the article was "Cranks"—of which there are three species,—the useful cranks, with whom "Vanoc" agrees; the mischievous cranks, with whom he disagrees; and the indifferent cranks, in whom he takes no interest at all. This classification is purely personal; that is to say, an active and earnest promoter of any principle whatever is a crank in the first, second, or third category, just as he happens to please, displease, or fail to affect "Vanoc." Such a criterion may be a good working one at the *Referee* office; from the nature of the case, however, it cannot be of the least use anywhere else.

"Vanoc's" signs of crankyism, by the way, are abundantly displayed in the Gospel life of Jesus Christ. One of the charges against that personage was that he was a public upsetter. He was so much so, in fact, that his own disciples forsook him and fled when he was arrested by the public authorities, and the very mob that acclaimed him with "Hosannahs!" when he rode into Jerusalem turned against him only a few days after and clamored for his blood. He became "this fellow" at the last. One can imagine the contempt with which the "Vanocs" of that day uttered the withering expression.

But that is not the special point to which we desire to draw attention in "Vanoc's" article. The point is this. It will be remembered that Christian apologists have always made much use of the "great man" argument. They run off a list of great men, in various branches of human knowledge and activity, who were or are Christians, at least by profession; they then ask the "infidel" how he can have the impudence to set up his own judgment against that grand army of *authorities?* Were all those mighty geniuses, of all European countries and centuries, in the *wrong?* And is he, the puny opponent of all of them, in the *right?* People who are Christians themselves regard this as an unanswerable argument. They overlook the fact that the same argument, in different conditions of time and place, could be employed to prove the truth of every religion in the world. It would justify Mohammedanism at Constantinople, Brahmanism at Calcutta or Bombay, Buddhism in Ceylon or Tibet, and Judaism in all parts of the civilised world where the spirit of commerce prevails. The truth is that this so-called argument against the "infidel" is a sheer fallacy. Neither the size nor the number of the supporters of any opinion gives it an iota of validity. An opinion rests entirely on its evidence,—which is the same whether its adherents are counted by units or by millions. Could anyone conceive a medical congress, for instance, taking a vote to decide whether any biological or physiological theory is true or false? It is only in theology that such ridiculous practices obtain. Voting what shall be *done* is proper and necessary; voting what shall be *believed* is simple fatuity. The whole world may be right against one man; but, also, one man may be right against the whole world. Such a case happened when the great and noble Giordano Bruno was burnt alive at Rome. He was one of the "cranks," and his name is immortal. And where are his persecutors now? Nothing but his fate and personality saves them from absolute oblivion.

"Vanoc" makes his own use of this foolish "great man" argument. He employs it in behalf of what he calls Research Defence; which is a very pretty euphemism for cutting up animals alive. We are not going to discuss vivisection just now, but we always like things to be called by their proper names. It is beside our purpose even to question the statement that "a great saving of human and animal life and health is already due to the Research people." We wish to deal with "Vanoc's" method of avoiding personal responsibility in this matter. "I have always found it a safe plan," he says, "to weigh personalities when facts are in dispute. The Chairman of the Committee of the Research Defence Society, Mr. Sydney Holland, is also Chairman of the London Hospital and the Poplar Hospital. The fact that Mr. Holland, who has devoted his life to the saving of human health, takes a responsible part in the Research Society's labors is good enough for me, because I know, on the best of evidence—experience, that there could be no inhumanity in any campaign in which he is a leader."

Now what does this contention amount to? It amounts to this—that no good man can be in the wrong, that no generous man can be mistaken, that no disinterested man can do any injury to his fellow men.

But this is flatly contradicted by personal experience and universal history. We all know honest people in private life who are a constant source of trouble and annoyance to those around them,—and even to others who are *not* around them. And is it not a commonplace of historical criticism that well-meaning men have been the authors of a very large part of all the mischief and misery in the world? Victor Hugo wrote almost a plea for Torquemada. The great poet made the great Inquisitor human by explaining his point of view. Lecky did a similar thing, in a more abstract way, in his *Rationalism;* and George Eliot (a woman of genius and a thoroughgoing Freethinker), in reviewing Lecky's work, dwelt on the wisdom of recognising and avowing that persecution was not due to "man's inhumanity to man" but to the damnable doctrine of salvation by faith.

Is it not obvious that "Vanoc's" trust in Mr. Holland would apply equally well to Torquemada? Suppose the question were, should the Inquisition and its work be countenanced? The "Vanoc" of that day might argue in this manner: "I know that cruel sufferings are inflicted on heretics in the dungeons and torture-chambers of this institution; I know that heretics' wives and families are deprived of their property and thrown into destitution—for no apparent fault of their own; I know that the ordinary laws of evidence are flouted and defied in the examination of these poor prisoners. I know all this, and in ordinary circumstances I should condemn and denounce it. But there is that good man Torque-

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mada. How can I mistrust him? He tells me that all these cruelties and other outrages—for such they are on the face of them—are necessary to the spiritual "health" of the community. I cannot overlook that great consideration. Christianity is the religion of sacrifice. True, the victims in this instance do not sacrifice *themselves;* but what does it matter, after all, as long as they *are* sacrificed? The act itself depends neither upon the motive nor the means. Anyhow, I put my trust in the honor and humanity of the great and good Torquemada. I am satisfied from experience that there can be no *real* inhumanity in any campaign in which he is a leader."

"Vanoc's" fine gospel ends with "Three cheers for Torquemada."

We decline to join in that acclamation. We beg all the readers we have the honor to address not to join in any such chorus. Think for yourselves. Put your conscience in no man's keeping. Accept your own intellectual and moral responsibilities. You have moral, as well as legal, duties to perform. If you cannot do your fellow men, or the lower animals, any particular good—which is generally a rash assumption—you can at least refrain from doing them any injury, or letting others do them injury in your name. Remember the sublime exclamation of Macbeth under the agony of his wife's temptation to the murder of his king, his friend, his benefactor:—

> "Prithee, peace:
> I dare do all that may become a man;
> Who dares do more is none."

G. W. FOOTE.

Science and God.—II.

(Concluded from p. 499.)

THE copy of Drummond's lectures to which I referred in my previous article, has been, if not exactly enriched with notes by some reader, at least annotated. And to the passage in which Drummond says the doctrine of Evolution has in itself been a contribution to religion, an anonymous passage has been appended. I think the passage is taken from one of Mr. Balfour's writings, but its origin is immaterial. The substance of the note is that Evolution has provided two arguments: one in favor of religion in general, the other in favor of Christianity in particular. The first is, that if Evolution be true we should expect the principle of growth to express itself in religion as it does in other directions. The second, that by the fact of its survival, Christianity has demonstrated its fitness to survive, and so must answer to some real need of the human spirit. Either we must grant this or we must surrender the principle of the survival of the fittest, since, in the case of Christianity, the fittest has not survived.

Let us consider first of all the analogy of growth. In ordinary instances growth implies three things. Either there is growth in stature—a mere increase in size—or there is an enlargement in function, or there is an increase of knowledge. Government may be said to grow when its powers are extended over a wider area. Knowledge grows when our information concerning a subject becomes more precise. So long as we keep to these plain meanings of growth there is no confusion; and if by religious growth was intended either of these meanings, or all of them, all would be clear likewise. The truth is, however, that none of these meanings fit the case of religion. It has not grown to be a larger part in life; on the contrary, it has become more and more negligible. One need not go back to the earliest period of human history or culture for proof of this. Three or four centuries ago religion was still counted of sufficient importance to mark a boundary between nations, and within its scope secular affairs could still be subordinated to right religious belief. To-day a Christian "Jehad" is no longer possible; not because there are no fanatical Christians left, but because in all civilised countries there exists a large body of opinion that definitely relegates religion to a subordinate position.

Neither has there been growth in the functions exercised by religion. Its function as lawgiver in the physical world is definitely abandoned, and all it asks now is for science to let it alone. In ethics and sociology it still maintains a precarious kind of an existence, but even here it no longer claims supreme position. It is content to urge its utility as a source of inspiration, to rank as one among a number of other forces that are frankly secular and utilitarian. Finally, there has been no growth in the shape of an extension of knowledge. Even the religious man is now amused at the precise character of the information earlier believers had about God. The affairs of God, his aims and intentions, were discussed with the same degree of confidence that one might now discuss the proceedings of the House of Commons. The modern believer is far more anxious to impress upon the world how little we know about God, or how little we can ever know. There is nothing surprising about this; the surprising thing is that he should call this process of realisation growth in religion. A process that removes the operation of deity from one department of the universe after another, which deprives religion of any peculiar or exclusive function in the social structure, and, finally, which brings home to people the conviction that all their assumed knowledge of God is a delusion, is characterised as growth, and as being on all fours with the growth exemplified in the process of Evolution! If this be growth, one wonders what decay would be like. The truth is, that religion quite lacks the quality of growth. Its whole history is one of decline. The only growth connected with it is that which leads the instructed mind to realise the utter futility of claims made on its behalf.

Much of the strength of the argument that Christianity has survived because of its "fitness" is derived from an unexpressed identification of "fitness" with an ethical significance with which it has no necessary connection. It is a truism that survival shows fitness to survive, but whether that which survives is ethically admirable is quite another question. In a thieves' kitchen honesty and truthfulness are not qualities that would lead to survival. In an environment of an opposite kind greed and cunning would lead to suppression. It is indisputable that Christianity survived, but it is very disputable that its survival was either a good thing for the race, or that it survived because of ethical or intellectual superiority over forms of belief or modes of life that were suppressed. The triumph of early Christianity over Paganism was not due to its inherent ethical or intellectual superiority, but precisely because it strengthened and utilised some of the worst elements in the life of the ancient civilisation. The truth of this is demonstrated in the fact that the decay of Roman civilisation proceeded with increasing speed as Christianity gained more complete control.

Further, when we come to Christian times, we see that the survival of Christianity was not a question of demonstrating its fitness to survive, but one of preventing any kind of competition. And there can be no question of the survival of the fittest when competition is not allowed to exist. In the world of science there is a survival of the fittest, because there all opinions are permitted, and the ones that live have to prove their worth. In religion, for many hundreds of years, no opposing opinions were permitted, and the survival of one opinion was proof only of a forced and artificial culture. The Church carefully weeded out all undesirable variations, and at the same time maintained an environment that placed a heavy premium upon the Christian type. Under such circumstances the survival of Christianity was no more proof of its ethical or social value than the existence of a heavily subsidised business house would be proof of its commercial soundness. How little genuine survival value Christianity possessed was shown by the fact that so soon as changes in the environment were effected—first, by the influence of the civilised Mohammedan world

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from the ninth to the thirteenth century; then, by the revival of the classical culture; and, later, by the rebirth of the scientific spirit, Christianity was faced by the choice of modification or disappearance.

The same lesson is seen in contemporary life. Christianity is so little able to live in open and fair competition with other forms that the energies of its professional advocates are mainly expended in the maintenance of an artificial environment. We have a special literature created to ward off attack, there is a careful shielding of believers from Freethought teachings, social influences are maintained that place a premium upon faith and attach a penalty to unbelief, anti-Christian literature is banned or boycotted, thousands of Christians — the majority, probably—pass through life without finding their beliefs ever brought into healthy antagonism with opposite opinions, and thousands confess openly that they avoid such encounters for fear it will unsettle their faith. The whole of the quarrel over education is an illustration of the same truth. The child must be surrounded with an artificially sustained religious atmosphere, because the normal play of social life will leave them void of inclination towards religious belief. The whole of the special paraphernalia attached to religion—the special form of language, dress, mental attitude, etc.—are all so many admissions that once Christianity is placed on the same level as other opinions, subject to the same free criticism and open competition, it would hardly survive a single generation of civilised life.

In what has been said it has been taken for granted that Christianity has survived. But this is really conceding too much—for more than is warranted by the facts. As a matter of fact, in spite of the wholesale elimination of non-Christians, in spite also of the maintenance of an environment favorable to Christianity, hostile influences have been too strong to be permanently denied. In what part of the world has Christianity really and honestly survived? Something near the original thing may be met with in Abyssinia and parts of the South-East of Europe—notably among people who have made little progress—but where else? Christianity is in other places in name, but in teaching and in doctrines the modification has been so great and so profound that it is really a different faith altogether. There has been a continuity of possession, even of formula; but to point to the Christianity existing in England, or America, or Germany, as proof that Christianity has survived, is absurd. Every one of the orthodox doctrines of Christianity has been successfully challenged in its own pulpits. Preachers have made reputations by voicing the heresies for which better men suffered. A religion that becomes so modified cannot really be said to survive. One might as well talk of the Eohippus surviving because its descendant, the horse, is still with us. An organism or an institution that can only survive by a complete change of character has really demonstrated that in its original state it could not have survived at all.

Finally, neither Christianity nor religion in general meets a deep and indestructible need of human nature. The best men and women are always more or less uneasy under religion, not because it imposes restraints, but because these restraints are of the wrong order. Men are comfortable enough under all sorts of social or ethical restrictions, but they are in more or less continuous revolt against religion. And this is because religion, in spite of the enormous conservative power behind it, is continuously coming into conflict with the more progressive and humanising tendencies of contemporary life. In civilised countries it is not man that seeks religion; it is religion, in the shape of many organisations, that seeks man. Man can get along well enough without his gods, but his gods cannot get on at all without him. For, apart from all metaphor, it was man's belief that first gave the gods their being; their life continues only so long as that belief remains, and its cessation puts a period to their existence.

C. COHEN.

"An Average Man" Caught Napping.

WE have no intention of reviewing, in the present article, Professor Bury's eminently sane little book, entitled *A History of Freedom of Thought*, which is one of the most recent volumes in the Home University Library; but we wish to call special attention to certain errors into which "An Average Man" has fallen in his references to this work in a breezy article in the Manchester *City News* for August 2. Usually this popular writer is delightfully sensible and fresh; but every now and then he gives us reasons to suspect either that he has not been fully emancipated himself from the traditions of the past, or else that he yields to the temptation of pandering, more or less, to the prejudices of his readers. Yet, while there are statements in the article under consideration upon which we feel bound to animadvert, we rejoice to say that we greatly admire the wholesome tone and broadening tendency of his writings in general.

Early in his review of Professor Bury's book, "An Average Man" says: "It will be a bad and sad day for the nation if it ceases to believe." Ceases to believe *what?* During the last three hundred years, and particularly during the last fifty, the nation has ceased to believe in a vast variety of things. Three hundred years ago the nation believed in witchcraft and in burning witches. During the seventeenth century trials for witchcraft in this country were frightfully numerous. In 1634 seventeen Lancashire witches were condemned on the evidence of one boy. From 1645 to 1647 some three hundred were indicted in Suffolk and Essex alone, of whom nearly two-thirds were convicted. Who can ever forget the famous trial of the Suffolk witches at Bury St. Edmunds, when Sir Matthew Hale acted as judge and Sir Thomas Browne as medical expert witness? And is it not on record that in 1712 some Hertfordshire clergymen prosecuted a poor woman named Jane Wenham for the same alleged crime? The judge did not believe in witchcraft, and charged the jury strongly in favor of the accused; but the rector of the parish testified, "on his faith as a clergyman," that he believed her to be a witch, and the jury, composed of men tyrannised over by the parsonry, returned a verdict of guilty. John Wesley was a firm believer in witchcraft, and, writing in 1768, he maintained that those who disbelieved in it did so "in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations"; and he went to the length of holding "that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible." To-day that belief is extinct, though the Bible fully justifies it. Does "An Average Man" mean to say that it was "a bad and sad day for the nation" when it threw that foolish superstition overboard? Certainly not.

Fifty years ago the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible was held by the nation as an essential article of the Christian faith. Again and again have we heard preachers declare that every word—every punctuation mark even—in the Sacred Book was God's. But you can count on the fingers of your two hands all the prominent people who cherish that view now. Ten years ago we did hear a preacher declare from his pulpit that he believed every word between the two covers of Holy Writ; but the same preacher admitted, in conversation with the present writer a few months ago, that such a belief is no longer tenable. Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden have vanished from history; and in a book recently published we are informed that hell has lost all its Dantesque terrors. Even the Devil has been dropped by the majority of the people. Is the nation any the poorer for the disappearance of all these beliefs?

The startling fact is that for the last two hundred years the theology of the Church has been undergoing a process of impoverishment. How much less in quantity it is now than it was then. And the process is still going on. "It will be a bad and sad

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day for the nation if it ceases to believe," says "An Average Man"; and again we ask, ceases to believe *what?* If "An Average Man" admits, as we know he does, that the loss of the beliefs just mentioned has done the nation no harm, will he kindly tell us which of the beliefs that still remain are essential to its wellbeing? On what grounds does he indulge in such a dogmatic assertion? Take, for example, the belief in God and a future life, or even the belief in Christ as the Savior of the world, and inform us of what benefit it has been to this nation. Why, according to a report in the *Daily News and Leader* for August 7, the Rev. S. J. Whitmee told a meeting at Chipperfield that "Heathenism is as dense in the villages of Hertfordshire as in the South Sea Islands"; and in an interview with a representative of the same newspaper the reverend gentleman explained that by "Heathenism" he meant a growing disregard of God and religion. This man of God is doubtless pessimistic, and exaggerates, in consequence of the scanty support given to his motor-car mission up and down the country; and yet there is a great deal of truth in what he says. Everywhere religious belief is decidedly on the decline, and has been so for the last fifty years; but we must point "An Average Man" to the fact that during the last sixty years, whilst the population of England and Wales has more than doubled, crime has decreased by almost one-half. This fact cannot serve as a firm basis for our friend's lugubrious prophecy; and we are confident he cannot enlist any other fact in his service.

We take it for granted that by "belief" "An Average Man" means belief in the supernatural, for no one ever ceases to believe in the natural. He advocates universal toleration, because, in the long run, scepticism, even unbelief itself, tends to cleanse and refine faith. "The age of reason," he says further, "need not be the age of unbelief, but it must be the age of 'intelligent' faith"; but, surely, there can be no "intelligent" faith in the supernatural, because the supernatural is not an object of intelligence. If it be, as Shakespeare so subtly defines it, "the undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns," it follows, of necessity, that faith in it must be blind. It is a realm from which not a scrap of intelligence has ever reached our shores, and both logically and ethically we are forced to the conclusion that faith in it can never be intelligent.

What does "An Average Man" mean by "religion" and "Christian principles"? Are Confucianism and Buddhism religions, and if they are, do they embody "Christian principles"? If they do, then Christian principles do not stand for anything that is unique and distinctive, but for something that is common to all periods and countries. In other words, religion and Christian principles confine their attention to this world and life alone, and do not embrace supernaturalism in any shape or form. But we are afraid, after all, that "An Average Man" employs the terms "religion" and "Christian principles" in the same sense as the theologians. In some vague, undefined sense he evidently believes in God and immortality, and that in some way freedom of thought is bound to strengthen and refine such a belief. Freedom of thought, of course, is only another word for toleration. Well, we Atheists are zealous believers in and advocates of toleration; and, in fact, we are its only genuine champions *in practice*. Even "An Average Man" is not really tolerant towards Freethinkers. He either does not know us, or regards us as a negligible quantity, when he says that "it will be a bad and sad day for the nation when it ceases to believe." Be that as it may, the fact remains that, in the estimation of this clever journalist, doubters, heretics, unbelievers, scientists prove, ultimately, invaluable servants of religion. Whatever discoveries scientists and philosophers may make are destined to redound to the glory of religion. He says:—

> "I am concerned with the fact that heresy, so called, has always existed, and that the heretics have been the men of new ideas, the advanced thinkers, the scholars, and the scientists. But I have found also that when the truths were established they have been incorporated in religion, though it must be admitted, only tardily. Yet their final acceptance is the best vindication of freedom of thought that we can have, and the one great fact to regret is that this freedom was so often denied or rigorously penalised."

What "An Average Man" fails to realise is that the incorporation of natural knowledge in religion results in its gradual disintegration. Take an example. The sciences of astronomy and geology have robbed the first three chapters of Genesis of their historicity. This is now admitted by practically all Christian critics. But the loss of the first three chapters of Genesis carries with it the loss of the foundation upon which the Christian conception of redemption has always rested. If the third of Genesis is not historical, the fifth of Romans is a house built upon the sand; and if the fifth of Romans is not true the Christian Church in all ages has borne witness to a lie, and is itself the supreme lie. Instead of strengthening religion science has fatally emasculated it. All the heretics of the past were the precursors and heralds of modern science; and modern science and religion are absolutely irreconcilable. They attempt to interpret the Universe on opposite principles. Now, Rationalism is only another word for science. Rationalism, according to "An Average Man," is doubtless an excellent thing, but it has its limitations. It fails because it does not "confirm us in any idea of existence after death." But what right has anybody to expect Rationalism to do anything of the kind? Science recognises no hereafter at all, and this is the reason why it throws no light upon it. It is not accurate to say that it "abolishes hell with costs," because not recognising a hereafter it knows nothing about either heaven or hell. "An Average Man" says: "Does it provide us with a higher morality, a truer idea of goodness and virtue, a nobler gospel? I think not." From this we totally differ. Morality is a sphere in which reason is the sole umpire; and religion has degraded morality by supplying it with false motives and sanctions. What, then, is wrong with modern unbelief? Nothing, except its rarity; nothing, except its being misunderstood and misrepresented by those who attack it. We have a great admiration for "An Average Man," and we tolerate him gladly; but we do wish he would take pains to acquire a more accurate and reliable knowledge of the principles of Rationalism.

J. T. LLOYD.

Cockney Christianity.

> "Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest."
> —MATTHEW ARNOLD.

To the superficial observer, not skilled to penetrate beneath the surface of things, there is probably but one thing in the world more solemn than a funeral; and that is religion. Short of death itself, nothing seems more awful than the Christian Scheme of Salvation. Only think of it! To Mr. John Smith, simply the most stupendous thought that can engage the attention of the watery custard which he is pleased to consider as representing the human mind. For it is not alone the weal or woe of all living human beings, including Mrs. Smith and the children, but also of generations of Smiths unborn, that may be involved in the awful issue.

The very perpetuity of the Scheme, in a vanishing world, where all things are passing away even as a dream, seems to impart a quality of awe to the dwarfed perception of the average believer. To a superficial observer all this must seem most solemn and impressive. But appearances are deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. A more philosophic view of the matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being a serious affair, it is simply a joke. An expensive and ela-

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borate jest it may be, but none the less a jest. You cannot tell what the religious circus is like by looking at the highly-colored posters on the walls. For in all nations it has been customary from time immemorial to invest religion with an air of gloom. So it was "in the beginning," is now, and must be, even in the byeways of the great Metropolis.

The mere circumstance of that respectable ratepayer, Mr. John Smith, "finding Jesus" in his fiftieth year is enough to set his numerous friends and acquaintances on the alert. They know that when he goes psalm-smiting his countenance will exhibit the tragic expression of a tired cab-horse, and that his every word, look, and action will eclipse the gaiety of the spectators.

Mr. John Smith, junior, is compelled to check the tide of his laughter with a sigh. Miss Henrietta Smith, his sister, finds that pa's condition clouds the delights of sweethearting. Like Banquo's ghost at the feast, the blear-eyed picture of melancholy imbecility overawes the flow of soul. But if "finding Jesus" is but a laughing matter, how dire are the after-effects. Resplendent in his best clothes, Mr. John Smith conveys his family to the nearest jerry-built church or tin tabernacle. If he has the disease badly, this will become the rule every Sunday. He is under the spell of religiosity, and as proud of it as a corpse with two tombstones. Master Johnny can hardly contain himself for speechless transport as he finds that his Sunday fishing excursions are no longer to be tolerated. He turns green with envy when he passes the splendid pageant of the greengrocer's boy and the postman's son with rods and bait-cans, on their way to the still waters of the nearest pond. Miss Henrietta, who is neither so blind as a bat nor so deaf as an adder, may easily envy 'Arry and 'Arriet treading the primrose path of dalliance. What would she not give for the chance of starting the stitching in 'Arry's heart herself? As for Mrs. Smith, she is firmly convinced that all this piety springs from the idea of her lord and master to be considered "respectable," and, incidentally, to extend his business. In one of her confidential chats over the tea-table with Mrs. Jones, she expresses her private opinion with a powerful metaphor: "Find Jesus, my dear! I had as soon go to sea in a ship afire."

What does Mr. John Smith himself gain by this finding of the "Blessed Savior"? The Bible? He reads it daily, and his verbal knowledge is nearly perfect; but what he apprehends is but a purblind parson's conception of what is written. The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the glory of the hills about Jerusalem, the beauty of the daughters of Judæa, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the reader. Under what restrictions, and with what explanations, the pictures of the Orient are adapted to the requirements of uneducated Londoners. Mr. Smith cannot usefully adopt Oriental thought with his ordinary business avocation. He cannot, with any success, apply Eastern ethics to everyday life. Hence his admiration for the sleek parson who shepherds the flock at the church he attends. The minister instructs poor Mr. Smith as if the Bible were of yesterday and the legends but the facts of fifth-edition journalism. Hence the delight of the professional soul-saver and the limitations of poor Mr. Smith, who rapidly becomes the perfect expression of the self-opinionated Englishman, a figure at which all educated foreigners raise their eyebrows and politely smile.

MIMNERMUS.

Where art Thou, God?
Reckless of thunderbolts, my soul sends up the cry—
Where are the threads of Justice that should be
The warp of Thy Creation? Show it me!
Thy Plan is æons long and universes wide.
I, but a mortal crying in the dark,
Where art Thou, God? —FRANCES WILSON.

Mr. Salt's "Shelley."—II.

(Concluded from p. 492.)

THERE is one point of Shelley criticism which I think has been overdone, and overdone by Mr. Salt himself (if he will allow me to say so) in his admirable opening chapter on "Rival Views of Shelley." From the "fiend" of the early criticism of 1821 to Matthew Arnold's "ineffectual angel," from damning Shelley to smothering him with pity, is a long way; and Mr. Salt is rightly humorous in relation to both extremes. We are with him, and always have been with him, in holding that Shelley has to be taken seriously as the herald of a new age and a new state of society. The notion that "materialists" aim at destroying the "ideal" is the very acme of ridiculousness. They have feeling and imagination like other men, and need both to be fed and stimulated. Mr. Salt remarks that it is, of course, as Poet that Shelley "holds the surest claim to immortality." Those who accept his evangel love him with a double love, and to them "one single spirit-song from the tumultuous harmonies of his lyrical masterpiece is more precious than all the 'systems' that the mind of democrat can devise." We endorse this, and we add that the "systems" that anybody can devise are of very little importance, and that so far from being delightful they are only too apt to taste like sawdust. For my part, as a lifelong lover of Shelley, I protest that I cannot imagine his caring to sing one single note for a Bellamy paradise. He sings the ideas and sentiments that are necessary to man's happiness; without which "the paragon of animals" may be as ill off as any lower animal,—may be well-drilled, and decorous, and outwardly altruistic—yet all the time essentially undignified and miserable. Mr. Salt knows all this at least as well as we do, and his passionate love for Shelley led him, as we think, into overdoing his denunciation of the mostly insignificant critics who wielded their pens against Shelley, both as a man and as a poet. They only acted after their kind. Why not let them drop into their natural oblivion? What, after all, does it matter, that the geese hissed at Shelley, and the asses brayed against him? Too much attention to these creatures spoils the critical perspective. Shelley was never without admirers amongst capable judges. Byron knew that Shelley was a great poet; so did Keats—and Landor, and Browning, and Tennyson—and Meredith, and Swinburne, whose longevity tended to conceal the fact that they belonged to a much earlier age than that in which they died. I have been astonished of late years at recognising what a long list of eminent writers one could compile—such as John Mill, Alexander Bain, Macaulay, and George Eliot—who gave Shelley their deep if discriminating admiration. Moreover, original critics are nearly as scarce as original poets. The ordinary journalist is simply a man with a pen—though he may write in a way that overawes the ordinary reader. How many critics, if Shakespeare himself came along again, would "feel the touch of his electric hand"? Is it not true, as Wordsworth said, that a great poet has to create the taste by which he is appreciated? A great poet is always an original poet. He simply *must* wait for adequate recognition. Shelley was a great original poet, and he had to wait, and what more is there to be said? That he was assailed with hatred and abuse only means that Christianity was rampant when he offered the world a philosophy which, if it is to be called a religion, was the religion of humanity.

In answer to the better sort of Christians—some of whom fancy that Shelley was a Christian without knowing it, and others that he would have become a Christian if he had lived longer—Mr. Salt writes as follows:—

> "It may be said that the gospel preached by Shelley was, like that of Christianity, a gospel of love. But here again the distinction between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of his followers is a vital one. And it must be noted that the love which Shelley incul-

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cates is represented by him as resulting from the innate goodness, the natural benevolence of mankind, and not from any sense of religious obligation. Freethought and liberty are the very basis of Shelleyan morality, it being Shelley's contention that virtue results from the intuitive desire to promote the happiness of others, and that morality must languish in proportion as freedom of thought and action is withdrawn. This code of morals can scarcely be held to be compatible with the doctrines of Christianity."

One is pleased also, to read Mr. Salt's plea for *Queen Mab*:—

"I cannot follow Mr. Forman's example of relegating *Queen Mab* to the *juvenilia*, as if it were unworthy of the serious attention of Shelley students. It is in many ways a crude and ill-considered performance, but its defects lie more in the style than in the conception—to repeat what Shelley said of it in later years 'the matter is good, but the treatment is not equal.' The views expressed in *Queen Mab* on religious and social topics are practically the same as those held by Shelley to the last day of his life, and, as Mr. Forman himself tells us, 'the poem and its notes played a considerable part in the growth of Freethought in England and America, especially among the working classes.' For both of these reasons it seems to me that *Queen Mab* will always maintain an honorable place in the records of its author's achievements."

This is extremely well said. I agree with every word of it. I would even go further. What on earth do some critics expect from young poets who have only just passed boyhood? Shelley's *Queen Mab* is faulty in one way just as Keats's *Endymion* is faulty in another way. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* showed youth and inexperience. But a sagacious eye might see the beginnings of a great poet in each of them.

This last quotation from Mr. Salt's book is a long one, but it could not well be broken.

"However justifiable our dread of mere sentimental eulogy, we may surely venture to speak generously and unreservedly in our praise of a man whose great primary qualities of unworldliness and sincerity drew unstinted tributes of admiration from those who knew him personally, even when they chanced to be cynical lawyers, satirical novelists, bluff sailors, retired cavalry officers, or misanthropic poets.

"Such homage paid to such a character does not imply that we are blind to the many foibles, eccentricities, and minor blemishes by which even the noblest nature may be crossed and chequered, and from which Shelley was certainly not exempt. We are well aware that his life, except in its one dominant feature, was a strange mixture of contrary tendencies and varying moods. He was hopeful and despondent, strong and weak, graceful and awkward, frugal and lavish, serious and playful, wise and whimsical, forbearing and charitable to a single degree in his intercourse with friend or foe, yet on rare occasions hasty and unjust in his judgments; by habit candid and trustworthy, yet sometimes led on by a predilection for mystery, and by an extreme dislike of causing pain or disappointment, to be evasive and circuitous in his dealings. But while he was thus, to some extent, the creature of conflicting moods and circumstances—'chased by the spirit of his destiny,' as he himself expressed it, 'from purpose to purpose, like clouds by the wind'—it is important to remember that these contradictions and weaknesses lay on the surface of his nature, and not at its core; for his character in all vital and essential points was strikingly firm and consistent, his innate and solid virtues standing him in good stead at all the great and fateful crises of his mature life."

I call that beautifully written, and I believe it is true. It is justified by all that Shelley said and did during the last twelve years of his life. But words fail to describe what he had grown into when blind fate cut short his career in the Bay of Spezzia, and English literature suffered an immeasurable loss.

"There was the very Best of men, and he was treated as the very Worst," said Trelawny to Swinburne, fifty years after that dramatic cremation on the Italian seashore, fifty years after Trelawny snatched that "heart of hearts" from the funeral flames. A similar tribute was wrung from the better nature of Byron. "I never knew another man," he said, "who was not a beast in comparison with him."

G. W. FOOTE.

The Warfare of Truth.

THEIR *image* of Truth—the dead form, the mere shell
Whence the spirit escapes them—men worship too well;
But the goddess herself, all unknown to their gaze,
They shrink from with horror, they dread all their days:
And if vision grew not with renewal of youth,
The world would ne'er witness the triumph of Truth.

In their systems on earth, in their dreams of the sky,
Men love the delusion, they cherish the lie;
Who dares undeceive them they hang and they burn,
And only of martyrs will man ever learn.
Dead sea apes still enchanted, with nail and with tooth
Men rend the rash brother who brings them new truth.

Fair Science arose and she read the dim past,
The ascent of our species through periods vast;
She taught us new lessons of thought and of act—
Not guesswork of fiction, but guidance of fact.
From Protestant Oxford, from Popish Maynooth,
Came the howl against Science, the shriek against Truth.

Who sees the sad city where, weary and worn,
The victims of want wish they never were born,
Let him delve to the root and proclaim the true cause
And the means of controlling stern Nature's grim laws:
Him they stone as of old, they revile without ruth,
For seeking strange knowledge and speaking new truth.

The poor are too many, competing to death;
Yet tell them, with ever so earnest a breath,
To limit their children, to limit their dead,
To limit their horrible struggle for bread,
And straight you're a fiend, a foul monster uncouth,
To dare be so vile as to teach precious truth.

All truth must be pleasant—the edict so runs—
And never must point to a path that man shuns
Or else 'tis a madness, a crime, a disgrace,
A heresy hell-born that flaunts in our face:
For the world never welcomes such wisdom, forsooth,
As shows the strait way of salvation by truth.

Men talk of their Savior, hung high by the priest,
Of Socrates martyr'd for teaching the Beast—
That beast the great Public that crushes true friends
And crouches to flatterers seeking their ends;
But this only they see: In the world's cruel youth
The wisest and bravest were martyr'd for Truth.

How many have died but for seeing too well,
Have swooned on the rack and have sighed in their cell!
Men honor such brave ones, such heroes of old;
They can worship the past with devotion untold:
But they see not that *now*, in *this* age, forsooth,
Victims still suffer for speaking new truth.

So age after age is Truth's triumph begun;
So battle by battle the war must be won.
Pioneers must push forward ahead of the host,
And the foremost and bravest must suffer the most.
Must it always be so? Must the Fetish, forsooth,
For ever take toll of the vanguard of Truth?

Not if manhood survive, not if wisdom endure,
To teach life's true lessons to rich and to poor.
For the dawn is upon us, the daybreak is near,
The evil deciphered, the problem grown clear.
Even now men are learning the wisdom that smooths
The pathway of brothers who bring them new truths.

W. P. BALL.

AN ACTOR'S PHILOSOPHY.

Is it not possible that the peoples of the earth will arise in the might of a new-born religion and will knock at the gates of the world's conscience, singing in unison the hymn of humanity, and crying "Thou shalt do no murder—even for the divine right of kings"; when frontiers shall be swept away and there shall be one brotherhood of man, one flag, one language, and one religion, the religion of Humanity; when the people shall be generalled by the dreamers, the poets, the philosophers, the seers and singers, the artists of the world?—*Sir Herbert Tree, "Thoughts and After Thoughts."*

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Acid Drops.

Dean Inge, preaching on Sunday at St. Paul's Cathedral, made the ignominious confession that doctors were supplanting the clergy, even in moral and spiritual matters. Dr. Ryle said the same thing in the evening sermon. He affirmed that the doctor was going to be "a more effective teacher than the clergyman," and he was "already the first person confided in." This must be pleasant news for Dissenting clergy, who subsist but partially on endowments, and have already to collect their salaries from doubt-smitten congregations.

The International Medical Congress could not break up without discussing what the newspapers call the Social Evil. One speaker declared that the very existence of the English nation was threatened. Another declared that there were half a million fresh infections each year. Compared with this, the subjects discussed in Parliament, and written about in the newspapers, are of trivial importance. Christian nations are all syphilised. Piety and filth run together, as they always did, and always will; and the filth is all the worse for being internal. Christianity poisons the mind while syphilis poisons the blood. And what is the remedy? The destruction of Christianity. That is the universal remedy. And we are engaged in applying it.

While this "social evil" is ravaging England, and imperilling its very existence, the clergy are discussing "Where is Hell?" We wish they could speak from experience. If they all cleared out of this world the rest of us would be able to do something with it.

Many who have taken part in the "Where is Hell?" correspondence are certain there is a hell and equally certain that all sinners and unbelievers (don't forget the unbelievers) will be cast into it. But hell isn't for *them*. Oh, dear no. They are booked for the other place. They admit, however, that they *ought* to be damned. Their next step should be plain enough. Carlyle urged that the duty of a man who felt that he *ought* to be damned was to go and *be* damned. We agree with him.

Our old friend Mr. J. W. de Caux, of Yarmouth, whose pen is known to our own readers, took it into his head (in a moment of aberration) that the *Daily News* was an honest paper and that its recent correspondence on "Where is Hell?" was an honest correspondence; so he took the trouble to send in a letter from a newer point of view than any disclosed in the nicely selected budget already printed. It ran as follows:—

> "The opinions of the Men of God respecting Hell that you have published are both amusing and instructive. Amusing—because of their puerile contradictions. And instructive—because they innocently prove that these wiseacres are simply living by false pretences. According to the Gospels, Christ taught explicitly that there is a Hell, and that in its 'everlasting fires' the great bulk of mankind will be tortured throughout eternity. If Christ did not tell the truth in this instance what becomes of his teaching? One *fact* is beyond all doubt, and that is, as Thomas Carlyle has written, that at the two extremities of human life there are two impenetrable curtains behind which no one has ever seen."

That letter never appeared. Mr. de Caux ought to have known it wouldn't. We fear he is getting too optimistic in his old age—looking for journalistic virtue in an old literary prostitute.

He was a Christian clergyman. His name was George Shackleton Boys. He had been curate of St. Peter's, Oldham. He made violent love to Mrs. Travis, wife of Mr. J. M. Travis, of Saddlesworth, Yorks. She yielded to his blandishments. The upshot is that the husband has lost his wife, and the wife her husband, while the man of God is off "to begin a new life in some dark corner of the earth"—which will probably be light enough for him to play the same old game again.

Benjamin Jewell, a Stroud Green builder, has lost his little girl, seven years of age, after Christian Science treatment for diphtheria. But he still holds that "illness is a false belief." You are not really ill—you only believe you are ill. We suppose that little Norah Annie Jewell is not really dead; they only believe she is dead. Perhaps they only believe she is buried.

There is a sect called "the Old Believers" in Russia, and we fancy the vicar of Chesbunt must be well qualified for its membership. Officiating at the funeral of the four men killed in the motor-bus disaster near Hoddesdon, Herts, he told a congregation, which included several bandaged survivors of the accident, that God was speaking to them through the catastrophe. There was too much swearing, too much drinking, too much blasphemy, too much dishonesty, too much of everything that was bad in the district. "God is speaking to us," the reverend gentleman said," "bidding us turn from our evil ways. This is the meaning of this, and it has all been done in love." We do not contradict the Rev. C. B. Law, but we do not believe that his testimony would be listened to in any coroner's court. Morally speaking, his Deity is nothing but a criminal lunatic. Killing one lot of people in order to make another lot of people buck up is as foolish as it is wicked, though we admit that it is worthy of the religion of the Atonement.

The city of Hull has been having an up-to-date inquisition, and has decided to enter upon a campaign against evil. The Watch Committee have adopted thirty-two suggestions, which should, if enforced, make the town the dullest in England. In their anxiety to prevent Hull becoming Hell they have censored everything that gives life a taste of the other place.

What quaint ideas of human happiness Christians possess? At Southend-on-Sea, which is at present crowded with holiday folk, religious persons are industriously circulating a booklet, entitled "The Southend Monthly Messenger," with the text, "Prepare to meet thy God," boldly printed on the cover. What an attractive advertisement of the town!

Divine Benevolence keeps one holy eye on the fall of the sparrows; but the other optic takes no notice of the many mishaps to holiday folk. As the newspapers sagely remark, the drowning season has commenced.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) prints the following letter from a correspondent at New Mexico:—

> "One of my friends in the South-west has recently had a stirring experience. He sought the hand of an eminently respectable woman, and was accepted. The prospective husband was a 'good Catholic,' although he had not attended church for fifteen years. He desired that a priest should perform the marriage ceremony. The reverend father would have to consult with the bishop. That eminent functionary refused a dispensation unless the woman would agree in writing to become a Catholic, which she refused to do. The priest then said: 'If you marry this woman you will be excommunicated; if you marry her out of the Church and have children by her they will be bastards. Do you want to bring up a brood of bastards?'
>
> "'You take your d——d church and go to hell with it!' was the prompt and correct response of the future husband. The couple were united in marriage by a Protestant minister.
>
> "Really, the thing is admirable. For cold-blooded insolence, calculated malice, and impudent bravado, the religious machine for graft, of graft, and by graft, has the rest of the world left at the quarter pole. Meanwhile, the bull-necked 'fathers' and the 'sisters' continue to thrive on Protestant money whenever they can lay their greedy hands upon it."

This is strong language, but unfortunately it is true. The New Mexico policy is pursued by the priests in England—as far as possible. They have to be a little more cautious over here. That is all.

The Rev. Dr. Orchard is still issuing his "Modern Tracts on Religion." The seventh is entitled "Why Pray?" and having carefully read it we are still at a loss to know why anybody should pray. The reverend gentleman says "it is astounding how few people pray, even among those who desire to be reckoned religious," but to our mind the most astounding fact is that a single person has the audacity to pray, even on the assumption that the Christian God exists. Prayer is certainly the worst possible form of blasphemy. A God who needs to be instructed, besought, and cajoled, as is always the case in public prayer, is but the merest travesty of a deity. Dr. Orchard thinks that "the fact of prayer is a proof of God." All we know is, that if there be a God who hears all the millions of conflicting prayers that are daily addressed to him from all parts of the globe, he is of all beings the greatest to be pitied.

In this tract Dr. Orchard rants and raves a good deal. After all, it is very childish and silly to begin and not to finish such a sentence as this: "Personally, I would sooner be reckoned among the babes who pray that God may make pussy's tail straight, or with peasants who bother the Virgin Mary about every blessed ——." That is a feeble echo from one of Wordsworth's sonnets, but it is none the less

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nonsensical for all that. All little children's prayers are excusable, because they are natural expressions of what they have been taught by their seniors concerning God's power. Of course, Dr. Orchard will never ask his God to straighten his cat's tail; but why not? Simply because he knows that his God neither does nor can do such things.

Dr. Orchard says: "Why don't men pray? Because they don't want to." That is perfectly true; and men don't want to pray simply because they have discovered how utterly futile all prayer is. They are not quite certain that there is anyone who hears; but they are absolutely convinced that there is none who answers. A young man of twenty-nine is on a visit to London. He is conscious that he has a failing, and that, in consequence, he may go utterly astray. Being a firm believer in the efficacy of prayer, he earnestly beseeches the Almighty, for Christ's sake, to keep him from falling. No one ever prayed more sincerely and passionately; and yet when the great temptation assailed him, he eventually yielded to it and was covered with confusion and shame. Had he been strong enough to resist, he would have concluded that God had graciously answered his prayer; but his fall was interpreted as a sign that, for some mysterious reason of his own, God had withheld from him the requisite power to stand. Is it any wonder that, in the long run, that young man became an Atheist, and instead of relying on supernatural strength which never came, learned to develop and discipline his own?

The late Mr. Gladstone affirmed good breeding to be the result of Christian civilisation. One would suppose he had never read Plato and Marcus Aurelius. If the Grand Old Man were alive now we might ask him to preach a sermon on courtesy from the text of the new "Bulgarian Horrors."

How the "Liberal" newspapers, and especially the dear *Daily News*, began working up "Turkish atrocities" again when the Turk took advantage (as he was entitled to) of the mess in which his Christian conquerors had got themselves into by their mutual hatreds and jealousies. But it is too late in the day to play that old game successfully again. The civilised world knows now that the Balkan States can massacre just as well as Turkey; on the whole, indeed, rather better, and with no sort of excuse. The *Daily News* was quickly on the job. First of all, it printed bad news of the wicked Turk from Mr. Noel Buxton—of all men. Two days later our pious contemporary confirmed the news "from a source which places its authenticity beyond question." And what was this infallible "source"? It was the Assistant Bishop of the Metropolitan of Rodosto. This Christian gentleman had four other Christian assistants. The five of them went out "investigating" and their report is, of course, beyond question! Yes, by a Christian newspaper. But who else believes what the Balkan Christians say about the Turk? These soldiers of Christ have proved themselves the biggest liars in the world.

Now and then the *Daily News* lets truth get the better of its partisanship. In a leaderette on the "Peace" which Rumania forced upon the Balkan Allies (heaven save the mark!) our contemporary let the cat out of the bag, tail and all:—

> "The result of the new arrangement, according to calculations at Bukharest, is that Rumania will have 7,600,000 inhabitants, Bulgaria 5,000,000, Greece 4,500,000, Servia 4,000,000. Rumania will be the greatest of the States, which is what she desired; and the other States, having made the sacrifices from which she profits, will be sufficiently near equality to hold out a prospect of permanent rivalry and unrest, which is what Russia and Austria want. Speculation is venturesome, but it can hardly exclude as the outcome of such an arrangement an ultimate division of the Balkan Peninsula between Austria and Russia. There is here no triumph of peace or of nationalism, and for that the folly of the ex-Allies in allowing their bitter jealousies to be fomented to the point of war must bear the fatal responsibility."

Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Servia, Montenegro, Austria, and Russia, are all Christian Powers. How they love one another! And how the Turk must admire them!

A religious contemporary has an article on "Seaside Complexions." That is an ephemeral matter; but the complexion that won't come off should be found in the establishment that contains no water.

In the course of a sermonette in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, the clerical writer quotes some Latin tags. It is appropriate that a dead religion should be bolstered up by a dead language.

The following sample of religious superstition is taken from the *Daily Chronicle* of August 9:—

> "Paris, August 8.
>
> "Religious fanaticism caused a terrible tragedy at a farm at Ponmieux, near Avignon, yesterday.
>
> "The farmer Julien, his wife, their three children, Marius, Rose, and Julie, aged 25, 19, and 20 respectively, and the grandmother, of 80, lived there. The family was well-off and the farm in a prosperous condition.
>
> "One day the eldest daughter, Julie, declared that she was possessed by Satan. Every day she had another tale to tell about the demon in whose power she believed herself to be.
>
> "The other members of the family, with the exception of the grandmother, seemed to have been so worked upon by her statements that at last they believed her.
>
> "Yesterday she lay on the floor and began crying out, 'Go away, Satan, go away!' Suddenly her brother, sister, and parents joined in the performance, and all began to cry out for the 'demon' to go away. The grandmother tried to comfort them, but they bound her to an armchair.
>
> "Then they returned to the daughter with chairs and sticks, shouted to the demon to go away, and beat the poor girl's head till it was an unrecognisable mass of broken bones, brains, and blood.
>
> "When the girl was dead the brother and sister called at the house of the local abbe to tell him they had succeeded in driving Satan away. The priest informed the police, who arrested the family."

Comment is unnecessary.

The clergy do not read the Bible so much as they ought to. Writing in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, the Rev. A. W. Robinson says that Christ "chose to live long years of his earthly life in the sequestered retirement of a Galilean village." The reverend gentleman is mixing his Master with Methuselah, for we have the idea that Christ died whilst still a young man.

In an article headed "The Peril of Thought," a contributor to the *Daily Chronicle* writes: "The only Atheism is denial of the truth." There is no peril of thought to the man who wrote that.

The clergy are considerably disappointed with the religious results of the Brotherhood Movement, which they fondly hoped would "rope in" the working man to the Christian fold. They will have to offer better inducements than loquacious lay-preachers and sentimental cornet solos.

It appears that the sale of the Revised Version of the Bible and the New Testament during 1912 was 28,000 copies. No less than 1,200,000 copies of the Authorised Version of the Bible and New Testament were sold. Evidently the Christian world doesn't care for accuracy. It wants "the old, old Book." Or, as it is often put more pathetically, the book that was read at mother's knee.

There are considerable differences between the Authorised Bible and the Revised Bible. Everybody knows the hymn "Almost persuaded." It is founded on Acts xxvi. 28, where King Agrippa says to Paul "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." That is how the text stands in the Authorised Version. In the Revised Version the admission is made that Agrippa really says the very opposite. It is not a compliment, but a sneer. In the English of the man of the street, Agrippa asks Paul if he thinks he is going to make him a Christian with such rotten stuff as that.

Highgate Police Court has furnished a contemptuous comment on the old declaration that England is a Christian country. The Benjamin Jowell referred to in a previous "Acid Drop" has been arrested on a charge of manslaughter. This will bring Christian Science into the law courts. It will now have to be decided whether Christian Science or Medical Science is obligatory on parents in case of their children's sickness.

SELF-CONGRATULATIONS.

An Irishman, in order to celebrate the advent of a new era, went out on a lark. He didn't get home till 3 o'clock in the morning, and was barely in the house before a nurse rushed up, and, uncovering a bunch of soft goods, showed him triplets. The Irishman looked up at the clock, which said three, then at the three of a kind in the nurse's arms, and said:—

"Oi'm not superstitious, but thank hivins that Oi didn't come home at 12!"

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £161 2s. 11d. Received since :—Margaret Robinson, 2s.; E. V. G. (third sub.), 10s.; Henry Holt, 5s. C. E. Bourchier, 9s. 6d.; R. C. P., 2s. 6d.; W. A. Yates, 2s. 6d.

E. W. COOPER.—Your remittance, 2s., passed over to shop manager. We note your sorrow that you were not introduced to the *Freethinker* long ago, and the fact that you owe your recent introduction to an occasional reader. No doubt more copies would be sold at one penny than at twopence, but not so many as some people fancy. Besides, we should have to sell, not twice but thrice, as many to leave the present financial position unchanged.

W. J. RAMSEY.—Clotted bosh, indeed. The clergy's letters on hell in the *Daily News* correspondence are not even worth Old Nick's supervision. He is reputed to be clever, but no ability could revise their letters into sense or consistency. One professional soul-saver cries "Let God be true and every man a liar"—including the professional soul-saver himself, we presume.

MARGARET ROBINSON.—We have done our measure of justice to the Turk in our own way. We cannot take part in political meetings, which are bound to trench on matters with which, as editor of the *Freethinker*, we have nothing whatever to do.

C. E. BOURCHIER.—Glad to have the high appreciation of one who has read this journal for so many years. We also remember the grand old fighting days that you refer to. We were young then, for a young man's work; and that particular work does not need to be done again.

HARRY HOLT.—Pleased to hear that you look forward eagerly for the *Freethinker* every week; also that you have learnt "lessons in composition" from it as well as lessons in thinking.

H. GEORGE FARMER.—Thanks. Shall appear. Will you send us your address for proofs? You move about a great deal, and the last proofs failed to overtake you.

E. M. BRITTEN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. DAVIDSON.—Glad to see you on the track of the C. E. S. "scholars."

ESPRIT FORT.—We cannot refer you to such a French paper. We used to receive *La Raison* from Paris, but we have not seen it lately and do not know whether it still exists. We could not supply it, anyhow.

W. A. YATES.—Glad to hear you appreciate "Abracadabra's" new series of articles so highly.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are well-selected, therefore useful, and therefore welcome.

J. PARTRIDGE.—The note you refer to did not reach us.

E. B.—Many thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Edward Clodd was the only critic of the Meredith Letters, as far as we remember, who mentioned Mr. Foote as a recipient of some of them. Mr. Clodd also mentioned that Meredith's letters to Mr. Foote were letters of "encouragement." We are not surprised, therefore, at Mr. Clodd's speaking out plainly in his *Daily Chronicle* review of the English edition of M. Constantin Photiades' volume on Meredith, written originally in French and translated (apparently well) by Mr. Arthur Price. Mr. Clodd quotes a saying of Meredith's only a fortnight before his death—"Nature is my God, and I trust in her." "We may not name him pagan," Mr. Clodd adds, "because the epithet carries a reproach which, oddly enough, still clings round 'freethinkers,' surely a name to stand to a man's credit." Mr. Clodd thinks so, because he is a good Freethinker himself, as Meredith was; but we are sorry to inform him that the bulk of his countrymen still regard "Freethinker" as meaning what "Infidel" used to signify.

The principal article in the August number of the *English Review* is by Anatole France. It is entitled "Pour la Paix" and is written in his own beautiful French. It is a fine plea for European peace, and a confident prophecy of its coming; but one smiles at some of the references to Rudyard Kipling towards the end. It is certainly odd to find the author of "Pay, pay, pay!" amongst the members of the peace party. This appears to be the result of a compliment of his to the French nation. Another article from a foreign pen is a translation of a description by Turguenev (with reflections) of the execution of the famous murderer Troppman in 1870. It is a very powerful piece of writing. We have not seen the original, but Mary Gough's translation into English seems extremely well done. Mr. Cunninghame Graham follows with one of his fascinating, if exotic, short stories. There is a longer story, even still more exotic, though not without power of a sort, by Sir Hugh Clifford, called "The Further Side of Silence." Tragic, of course. Mr. Harrison, the editor, writes—too severely, we think—on "The Poetry of Francis Thompson." The article is strongly written, and some of the criticism is sound enough, but occasionally it forgets that the poet's genius is precedent to the poet's opinions; that genius, after all, is genius; and that all genius is of the blood royal. It appears to us, for instance, that what Thompson says of Byron (see p. 115) is quite intelligible, and quite just from the religious point of view, and that the image in which it is conveyed is of admirable force and illumination. The same thing, but not with the same power, has been said of Byron by other Christian critics; notably—and in this case *with* power—by Coventry Patmore. One need not agree with a writer in order to appreciate his intrinsic merits, and Thompson should have the benefit of this canon of criticism. We agree with Mr. Harrison, however, that Thompson has been immensely overpraised by certain pious and sentimental critics. He lived too much in the crypts of Catholicism. He is out of the direct line of English poetry. He is, if we may speak so bluntly, a side-show in the great exhibition. Poets like Crashaw and Vaughan have their place in the original plan. Thompson wrote some things that are likely to live long. But is there one of them that quite equals the very best of Vaughan's or even the second best of Crashaw's, in the highest qualities of imagination, logic, music, and workmanship? Time, that discovers all things, will tell.

The highest price paid for a picture during the recent art sale season was £39,400 guineas for Romney's "Lady de la Pole." Romney was a great portrait painter. He was also a Progressive after the manner of Thomas Paine. He painted Paine's portrait, but what has become of it is unknown. It lives in Sharpe's fine engraving, of which there is a good reproduction on the cover of the Twentieth Century *Age of Reason*, edited by Mr. Foote, and issued by the Secular Society, Ltd. This publication has been for some years out of print, but thousands of copies were put into circulation, and many of them must be still extant.

The Birmingham Branch has lost a good working member in Mrs. Bolt, who left England on Saturday, the 9th inst., for South Africa. A large gathering of members and friends assembled at the station on Friday to see her off and wish her good-speed. The week previous Mrs. Bolt was the recipient of a present from the members of the Branch of a travelling trunk. On returning thanks for it and the good wishes of present and absent friends, she expressed her intention of carrying on the work of our cause in her new home.—J. P.

HIS REVENGE.

James, four years old, had been naughty to the point of evoking a whipping from his long-suffering mother, and all day long a desire for revenge rankled in his little bosom.

At length bedtime came, and, kneeling beside her, he implored a blessing for each member of the family individually, she alone being conspicuous by her absence. Then, rising from his devout posture, the little suppliant fixed a keenly triumphant look upon her face, saying, as he turned to climb into bed:

"I s'pose you noticed you wasn't in it."

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

The Public Ministry of Jesus.

According to the first three Gospels, the whole of the public ministry of Jesus, with the exception of a few days preceding his arrest and trial, was carried on in Galilee. And here the primitive writer's ignorance of the topography of the northern province is manifest. If we attempt to follow the alleged wanderings of Jesus through Galilee, we soon come to an *impasse*. Thus, taking Matthew's account, Jesus, after visiting Nazareth and Capernaum, and walking by "the sea of Galilee," went up into a mountain; after which he "entered into Capernaum" (viii. 5) and afterwards departed "unto the other side" (viii. 18) and came into "the country of the Gergesenes" (viii. 28)—which district is in some MSS. called "the country of the Gadarenes"; in others, that of "the Gerasenes"—after which he came by boat to "his own city" (ix. 1). Next, he "passed from thence" to some unnamed place (ix. 9), and again "passed by from thence" to another unnamed place (ix. 27; after which he "went about all the cities and villages" (ix. 35). After this, "he departed thence to teach and preach in *their* cities" (xi. 1), and "at *that* season" he went through the cornfields (xii. 1), after which he "departed thence and went into *their* synagogue" (xii. 9), and afterwards "withdrew from thence" (xii. 15), and "on *that* day" he "sat by the sea side" (xiii. 1). Next, after discoursing at some unnamed place, he "departed thence" and came to "his own country" (xiii. 53, 54); but soon "he withdrew from thence in a boat to a desert place" (xiv. 13), then he "went up into a mountain apart" (xiv. 23), and, after walking on "the sea," came to "the land of Gennesareth" (xiv. 34). After this, he "withdrew into the *parts* of Tyre and Sidon" (xv. 21); but he soon "departed thence" towards "the sea of Galilee" and "went up into a mountain" (xv. 29). Next, he "came into the *borders* of Magadan" (xv. 39)—which Mark calls "the *parts* of Dalmanutha"—and, after orating, "he left them and departed" (xvi. 4). After this, he "came into the *parts* of Cæsarea Philippi" (xvi. 13) and "after six days" ascended "a high mountain," shortly after which he entered Capernaum (xvii. 1, 24), and finally "departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa" (xix. 1)—which completes the ministry in Galilee.

The accounts of Mark and Luke follow the same plan, and are of the same indefinite character. Now, after reading the foregoing, it at once becomes apparent that we have merely a number of unconnected, undated, and unlocated hearsay stories, more or less clumsily pieced together, which were certainly not taken from a biography written by an eye-witness. It is also clearly evident that the stories contained no other names of places visited by Jesus. The foregoing sketch contains all the cities or villages named in Matthew's Gospel. Of these, the words "his own country" refer to Nazareth; "his own city," to Capernaum. It is not stated that Jesus entered Tyre, Sidon, or Cæsarea Philippi—which were beyond the limits of Galilee—but only that he went into the neighborhood of those cities. Again, "the country of the Gergesenes" and "the borders of Magadan" have reference only to districts. Hence, the primitive writer knew of but two "cities" which had been visited by Jesus—Nazareth and Capernaum. The writer, it is true, says that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (Matt. iv. 23; x. 35; etc.); but this could be stated by anyone who had no knowledge of any cities in the northern province. Yet Galilee, in the reputed time of Jesus, had a large number of towns and villages, as may be seen by the following list, mentioned by Josephus:—

Cities.—Sepphoris (largest and strongest); Tiberias (next in importance); Tarichem, Jotapata, Zebulon (strong); Garis, Scythopolis (large); Gischala, Arbela, Bethmaus, Asochis, Magdala, Besara, Garisme, Gabara, Kadesh, Gaba, Salamis, Jamnith, Julias, Bersabe, Sennabris, Sigo, Seph, etc.

Villages.—Japhia (largest), Gabaroth, Dabaritta, Baca, Jamnia, Meroth, Achabare, Saab, Cana, Simonias, Emmaus, Meloth, Caphar-ecbo, Caphar-naum, Chabolo, Ruma, etc.

In Perea (east of Sea of Galilee), which Jesus is stated to have often visited, were: Gamala, Gadara, Gerasa, Julias, Solyma, Bethenabris, Bezemoth, Ginnibris, Arpha, Selucia, Sogana, Golar, etc.—the last six being villages.

How many of the foregoing places did Jesus visit during his public ministry? Well, according to Matthew, he entered one—the village of Capernaum.

The City of Nazareth.

According to the first three Gospels, Jesus Christ passed his childhood and early manhood in "a city of Galilee named Nazareth," where, it is said, he and other members of his family were well known. Now, as a matter of history, so far as can be ascertained, there was no city in Galilee named Nazareth, either in the reputed time of Jesus or at any other. No such city is named in the Old Testament, in the apocryphal books, or in the Talmud, nor in any Jewish literature known. The historian Josephus, in his War in Galilee and in his *Life*, goes again and again over the ground where this city is supposed to be located, without ever once coming across it; hence, the only rational conclusion possible is that the city is purely imaginary, and was so named by the primitive Gospel writer through ignorance of the country and misapprehension.

The province of Galilee, as everyone knows, has for its eastern boundary the Jordan and Lake Gennesareth, the latter being called in the Gospels "the sea of Galilee." Speaking of the western side of this lake, Josephus says: "Now the lake of Gennesareth is so called from the country adjoining it.....The length of this country extends itself along the banks of this lake that bears the same name, for thirty furlongs, and is in breadth twenty" (*Wars*, 3, 10, 7 and 8). Thus, on the Galilee side of the lake, the land for nearly four miles along its banks was called Gennesareth. This fact the writer of the primitive Gospel appears to have known (Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53), but not that "Gennesareth" was also the name of the lake; for the latter he calls "the sea" or "the sea of Galilee" (Matt. iv. 18; xv. 29; Mark vii. 31, etc.). Luke, however, had ascertained the correct name (v. 1); but he wrote later, and had consulted Josephus. The land was named "Gen-nesareth" on account of its great fertility and of the large number of fruit trees it contained: its appellation in Hebrew signified "garden of the prince"—the prefix *gen* or *gan* denoting a garden, and *nasi* and *sar* a prince.

The primitive writer, however, would seem to have imagined that the land of "Gen-nesareth" took its name from some city in the neighborhood called Nesareth—that it was the garden or fertile land surrounding the city—so after making Jesus a native of that place, he represented him as visiting it several times during his public ministry, and as going into the synagogue there, and astonishing his relatives by reading from the Book of Isaiah.

Capernaum.

From the way in which this "city of Galilee" is spoken of in the Gospels, it is generally supposed to have been one of the largest and most important of the cities in that province. Here Jesus is stated to have expelled a demon from a man in the synagogue, and also to have cured a man "sick of the palsy" (Mark i. 23; ii. 3; Luke iv. 33; v. 18). Now, as a matter of history, there certainly was a place in Galilee called Capernaum; but it was a mere village, noted only for having "a most fertile fountain" which watered the three or four miles of garden ground of Gennesareth in which it was located. Josephus states that when upon one occasion he was thrown from his horse, he was carried "into a village named Caphar-naum" (*Life*, par. 72). The name signifies in Hebrew "the village of Nahum," *Kaphar*

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or *Caphar* denoting a village. As to whether every village in Galilee possessed a synagogue I am unable to say, but I think it more than probable that they did *not*, more especially since nearly all the towns and villages in that province contained a large proportion of Gentile inhabitants. In any case, the going into an insignificant village, and holding forth to the few rustics found loafing about there, was not the way to make the new gospel known to the people of Galilee—and this appears to have been the only place that Jesus ever actually entered. The reiterated statement that he went through all the cities and villages, preaching and healing the sick, is merely an editorial addition, and goes for nothing. It would thus appear that there was really no public ministry at all, and that all the primitive narratives from which the first three canonical editors took their accounts were simply pious fabrications.

CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA.

In the First and Third Gospels, Jesus Christ is represented as upbraiding "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." He is described as saying:—

> "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13).

In the same category of unrepentant cities Jesus also places Capernaum. Now, as to Chorazin, there is no mention of Jesus having ever visited that city in any of the Gospels: indeed, its existence as a city of Galilee appears to be more than doubtful.

With regard to Bethsaida, the case is different. There really was, at one time, a village of that name near the sea of Galilee; but it had been rebuilt, enlarged, and "raised to the dignity of a city" by Philip the tetrarch, at the beginning of his reign, and its name had been changed to "Julias" in honor of the emperor Augustus's daughter (*Antiq.* 18, 2, 1). Hence, many years before the appearance of Jesus as a teacher, the stately city of Julias had taken the place of the little fishing village of Bethsaida, and everyone living in Galilee in the reputed time of Jesus would know that there was no place in that province then called Bethsaida: nor is there any evidence that there ever were two places named Bethsaida near the sea of Galilee.

Bearing these circumstances in mind, we find it stated in Mark (viii. 22, 23):—

> "And they come into Bethsaida. And they bring to Jesus a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village," etc.

This miracle is not recorded by any of the other evangelists: several other blind men are said to have been healed, but not at Bethsaida. Again, in the same Gospel, after the feeding of 5,000, it is stated that the disciples "entered into a boat to go unto the other side to *Bethsaida*" (Mark vi. 45). In the parallel account in the First Gospel, the disciples merely go "unto the other side" (Matt. xiv. 22). But Luke, in his account of the miracle of the loaves, says that Jesus and his disciples "withdrew apart to a *city* called *Bethsaida*," and that "the multitude perceiving it followed him" (ix. 10), from which it would appear that the miraculous feeding took place within that city: but two verses further on it is said, "for we are here in a desert place," as stated in the parallel accounts of Matthew and Mark. Moreover, the writer of the Fourth Gospel tells us "on his own" that the three disciples Philip, Andrew, and Peter were natives of Bethsaida (John i. 44; xii. 21). It thus seems evident that stories were related of Jesus performing miracles at Bethsaida in some of the primitive Christian writings in existence in the time of the four canonical evangelists, and that Mark has recorded one of them. It should also be stated that Christian reconcilers, as might be expected, have placed another Bethsaida near the sea of Galilee in maps of Palestine of the so-called apostolic times.

ABRACADABRA.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XIV.

(*Continued from p. 502.*)

> "The presence of the foreign missionary element acts as an irritant to the whole body politic in China, and produces such terrible maladies as the Boxer movement of 1900. The reasons for this are somewhat intricate, but when it is remembered that the same treaties which record the humiliation of China, the payment of compensation for the surrendered opium, and the free admission of the drug into the 'Flowery Land,' are also the basis of what the missionaries regard as their 'rights,' it will be seen how different is the aspect of this question to the Chinese mind from that which presents itself to the conventional Englishman. Opium, Missionaries, Men-of-War are the agencies of European civilisation that have most impressed themselves on the Chinese imagination."—J. B. EAMES, *The English in China* (1909), p. 581.

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

THEN, again, there are the innumerable points upon which the missionaries offend against the complicated code of Chinese etiquette, morality, and good manners. As Mr. Lynch has remarked: "Chinese civilisation is such a mass of complicated and intricate manners, customs, and prejudices, that the average man is really like a bull in an intellectual china shop with regard to them."* And yet, says Professor Giles,—

> "Correct behavior is regarded as of such extreme importance—and breaches of propriety in this sense are always so severely frowned upon—that it behoves the foreigner who would live comfortably and at peace with his Chinese neighbors, to pick up at least a casual knowledge of an etiquette which, in outward form, is so different from his own, and yet in spirit is so identically the same." †

For instance, the Chinese are very strict as to the separation of the sexes before marriage. Even after marriage, a Chinese gentleman is never seen in public in company with his wife. We remember reading of a foreigner, travelling in inland China, who wished to hire a sedan-chair to convey his wife and himself to another town, but found that no bribe was sufficient to induce the coolies to be a party to what they considered such a breach of decorum; they declared they would be mobbed. As Lord Curzon well says:—

> "The spectacle of unmarried persons of both sexes residing and working together, both in public and in private, and of girls making long journeys without a responsible escort, are sources of a misunderstanding at which the pure-minded scoff, but which in many cases has more to do with anti-missionary feeling in China than any amount of national hostility or doctrinal antagonism. In 1893, at the remote inland town of Kuei-hwa-cheng, a friend of mine encountered a missionary community consisting of one male and of twenty Swedish girls. The propaganda of the latter consisted in parading the streets and singing hymns to the strumming of tamborines and guitars. The society that had committed the outrage of sending out these innocent girls allowed them $200 (£27 10s.) a year apiece, for board, lodging, and clothing. As a consequence, they were destitute of the smallest comforts of life, and could not even perform their toilette without the impertinent eyes of Chinamen being directed upon them through the paper screens. Can anything more futile than such an enterprise be conceived, or more culpable? The popular feeling against female missionaries was illustrated in the recent massacre at Kutien [August, 1895], where out of ten persons that perished, eight were women." ‡

The same writer says that a steamer rarely sails from America for China and Japan without a bevy of young girls fresh from the schoolroom, to say nothing of the stream which flows in from the United

* G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 259.
† H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, p. 222.
‡ Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East* (1896), p. 301.

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Kingdom and the Colonies. Of course, they do not know that in China an unmarried girl who leaves her father's house without being married is looked upon as a concubine.

The Rev. E. J. Hardy, at one time Chaplain to our forces at Hong Kong, says plainly that these unmarried girls shock Chinese notions of morality, and to them "can have but one meaning." He also throws some light on the quality of the teachers thus imported, and says:—

> "Before leaving Hong Kong, I saw an annual consignment of female missionaries land in order to be distributed throughout China. Their physical appearance did not impress me. What waste of money to send out people whom a fever or two may sour and depress and necessitate their becoming returned empties! True, those who select female missionaries are on the horns of a dilemma. Well-favored girls marry and leave the business. Anæmic, unladylike, partially deformed ones, who have no chance either at home or abroad in the matrimonial line, do not physically adorn the Gospel or make its message attractive to the heathen. If the beauty of holiness were always underneath an ugly exterior, we would not have made the above remark."*

It would take too long to go into all the points where foreigners offend against the manners and customs of the Chinese. All writers upon the subject are agreed as to the courtesy practised by the Chinese in their social life, and which is so conspicuously absent in the foreigner, with his direct, brusque, and off-handed manner. And it has been remarked that the manners of the lower classes are much better in the inland parts of China, where foreigners have not penetrated, than in the treaty ports, where they are well known.

Lord Rosebery has been making an appeal for more courtesy and better manners.† After remarking that the English and Scotch have never been famous for good manners, and that there has been a tendency to despise them, he observes:—

> "That was a false view. Good manners were the sign of charity towards their fellow-men, a part of their duty to their neighbors, and also a sign of self-respect. A man who respected himself was always well-mannered to others."

Courtesy is the oil that makes the wheels of life run smoothly, and in this respect the Chinese and Japanese are far ahead of us. Nor is this confined to the upper classes, for if a man of the lower orders becomes wealthy, he takes up his new position with natural ease and dignity, as if to the manner born, and does not make himself the laughing-stock of his newly made acquaintances like our own newly made rich, who try to assume a dignity and manners to which they are unaccustomed.

This national gift is well brought out in a Chinese tale given by Mr. Arthur Smith in his *Chinese Characteristics*, which he says "not inaptly" illustrates the characteristic:—

> "A visitor is represented as calling clad in his best robes, and seated in the reception-room awaiting the arrival of his host. A rat which had been disporting itself upon the beams above, insinuating its nose into a jar of oil which was put there for safe-keeping, frightened at the sudden intrusion of the caller, ran away, and in so doing upset the oil jar, which fell directly on the caller, striking him a severe blow, and ruining his elegant garments with the saturation of the oil. Just as the face of the guest was purple with rage at the disaster, the host entered, when the proper salutations were performed, after which the guest proceeded to explain the situation. 'As I entered your honorable apartment and seated myself under your honorable beam, I inadvertently terrified your honorable rat, which fled and upset your honorable oil jar upon my mean and insignificant clothing, which is the reason of my contemptible appearance in your honorable presence.'"

And, as Mr. Arthur Smith observes:—

> "Inability to conform to Chinese ideas and ideals in ceremony, as well as in what we consider more important matters, causes the Chinese to feel a thinly disguised contempt for a race whom they think will not and cannot be made to understand propriety.....the foreigner, even in his own eyes, makes but a poor figure in comparison with a ceremonious Chinese. Compare the dress, flowing robes, and his graceful motions with the awkward genuflections of his foreign visitor. It requires all the native politeness of the Chinese to prevent them laughing outright at the contrast."*

Says Professor Giles:—

> "We can easily see from pictures, not intended to be caricatures, what were the chief features of the foreigner as viewed by the Chinaman. Red hair and blue eyes, almost without exception; short and extremely tight clothes; a quick walk and a mobility of body, involving ungraceful positions either sitting or standing; and with an additional feature which the artist could not portray—an unintelligible language resembling the twittering of birds. Small wonder that little children are terrified at these strange beings, and rush shrieking into their cottages as the foreigner passes by."†

Black hair and eyes are universal throughout China. Devils and bogeys are always depicted with red beards in the picture books. This accounts for the fact that, at Tientsin, a little Chinese girl went into "convulsions and literally died of dread when a German soldier harmlessly, as he thought, chucked her under the chin."‡

The clothes of foreigners are thought by the Chinese, says the Rev. E. J. Hardy, "to be melancholy, undignified, and generally absurd." And "For a woman to show her shape is considered in China most immodest. Even upon a man tight clothes can only be explained if the poor fellow have not enough cloth to cover himself properly."§

The same writer observes:—

> "But, indeed, we have to consider not only how the Chinese see us, but how they smell us, for what they call our European odor is quite as nauseous to them as their yellow smell is to us. Think of that, ye well-tubbed Britishers! A missionary friend, who is a very clean man, told me that he has often been pained by seeing Chinese hold their noses when talking to him. They say we smell rank because we eat beef."‖

Even the animals in China dread the foreigner. Says Professor Giles:—

> "The Mongolian pony has such a dread of the foreigner, and usually takes time to get accustomed to the presence of a barbarian; some ponies, indeed, will never allow themselves to be mounted unless blindfolded."

The same writer speaks of the unfailing attack of the dogs, so familiar to every foreigner who has rambled through country villages in China,—

> "who rush out and bark, apparently without rhyme or reason, at every passing foreigner.....The solution of this puzzle was extracted with difficulty from an amiable Chinaman, who explained that what the animals, and indeed his fellow-countrymen as well, could not help noticing, was the frowsy and very objectionable smell of all foreigners, which, strangely enough, is the very accusation which foreigners unanimously bring against the Chinese themselves."¶

Considering all these things, is it any cause for wonder that foreigners in China are known as "barbarians" and "foreign devils"? And what must have been the feelings of the Chinese when they learned that (in March, 1899), under compulsion, the Emperor of China signed a decree conferring official rank on missionaries, by which a bishop ranks with the governor of a province.** As Sir Robert Hart remarks:—

> "The arrangement by which missionaries were to ride in green chairs and be recognised as the equals of Governors and Viceroys had its special significance and underlined missionary aspiration, telling people and officials in every province what they had to expect from it."††

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* E. J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, p. 309.
† Speech at prize distribution, Guilford Grammar School, July 28, 1913.

* *Chinese Characteristics*, pp. 102-3.
† H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, pp. 214-5.
‡ E. J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, 323.
§ *Ibid.*, 324.
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 235.
¶ Giles, *Civilisation in China*, pp. 215-6.
** J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, p. 581.
†† Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 5.

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M. Eugene Simon tells us how the missionaries enforced their claim to these new dignities. He says:—

> "M. Delamarre [the French priest] himself told me that on one occasion, not being received by the Viceroy with all the honors reserved for mandarins of high rank, he entered in a rage, struck the usher whose business it was to see that the countersign was respected, and, violently crossing the courts and apartments, presented himself before the Viceroy with threats in his mouth."*

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

Correspondence.

"RECANT OR RESIGN."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I beg to ask the favor of space to draw the attention of Freethinkers and Rationalists to the latest example of the old cry of the bigot, "Recant or Resign."

There will no doubt be some readers of "ours" who will recall meeting Professor Bickerton some thirteen or fourteen years ago, when he paid a visit to his native land.

He is back again in England, as keen and full of fight as ever—in spite of his old saying that he never fights—and with more warrant than ever, for the fight he has been carrying on so long.

I have just lately had the opportunity of a day or two with him, discussing men, women, places, and things, and feel impelled to bring the matter before the notice of Freethinkers, for they to-day, as ever, should be keen to take up the cause of any man or woman who is forced to stand alone against all the forces of bigotry and prejudice.

As to the variety and deviousness of these forces, I have just been reminded by a re-read of Dr. William Lawrence's *Lectures on Comparative Anatomy, Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* (1844), which in several ways matches our latest case, but more particularly the deviousness and far-reaching methods of the orthodox.

The Lawrence I have is the ninth edition, 1844. Chap. i., the "Introduction to the Course Delivered in 1817," is devoted to "A Reply to the Charges of Mr. Abernethy; Modern History and Progress of Comparative Anatomy."

Abernethy's charges of Materialism had been made in lectures delivered before the Royal College of Surgeons, and published as *Physiological Lectures, Exhibiting a General View of Mr. Hunter's Physiology and of his Researches in Comparative Anatomy.*

Lawrence here takes the gloves off for the benefit of his old master Abernethy and his idol Hunter. In clear and frank terms he states his position, and claims that, speaking as a scientist, a physiologist, he has nothing to do with religion or soul—that mind depends on matter. He does not build on the "unsafe grounds of abstruse metaphysical researches."

It was an interesting re-reading; and now for the "deviousness" of method.

Thinking to refresh my mind on some further details of the old controversy, I took down Thompson Cooper's *Biographical Dictionary* (Bell, 1883), and was then reminded of another of the ways in which orthodoxy works.

Lawrence, when he died, was a Baronet and Sergeant-Surgeon to Queen Victoria, having long been Surgeon-Extraordinary. He was for years F.R.S. and Member of the Institute of France, and of almost all the principal scientific societies of the world. But there is no mention of him in Thompson Cooper—though the less useful General Lawrence or the portrait painter can have several columns.

Some years ago, after much handling of this book, I made a note opposite the title page, after studying the passages dealing with Hume, Voltaire, and others of that ilk, "This Thompson Cooper is a man to beware of."

Then I turned to another Dictionary of Biography, and another, and presently arrived at another item in *Men of the Reign* (Routledge, 1885), an item, however, which seems to err by something like misstatement—perhaps even a lie.

In this notice it is stated that *The Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* gave rise to very severe criticism, especially from Abernethy, who denounced his pupil as a Materialist, and accused him of misusing his office of lecturer to the Royal College of Surgeons to promulgate false and pernicious doctrines. The Governors of the Royal Hospitals called upon Lawrence to resign his opinions or his appointment, *and he accordingly withdrew the papers complained of, and did not again touch on similar subjects.*

I have no means at hand at the moment to test that statement, but I feel rather confident that the last part of that passage is not correct.

He was repeatedly elected to high positions in connection with the faculty, and always held in high regard. The edition I have is dated 1844, and I presume is authorised; and in the valuable but too brief *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, by our J. M. Wheeler, there is no mention of any recantation. Lawrence died July 5, 1867.

I am hoping to extend my exact knowledge of Lawrence later on in connection with the "Recant or Resign cry," and in the meantime perhaps some other reader may be able to give us some new details.

It is rather pitiful to think how, in spite of the forty years of active scientific work done since Draper wrote his *Conflict*, that even to-day scientists should have to waste so much time as is done in side issues and demands for a fair hearing.

But worse still is the seriousness of the idea that, inspired by religion, there are men who can be moved to use their scientific knowledge to bolster up a faith which they know quite well all their scientific knowledge is in conflict with.

Who to-day pays a moment's regard to Professor Sir G. G. Stokes, Bart., and his dreary word-spinning on "Natural Theology," and who, twenty years from now, will pay any regard to the pages of wearying drivel spun out by Sir Oliver Lodge on similar subjects, or to the other titled or highly placed semi-religious, semi-scientific fatuities of to-day, who, flagrantly trading on social status and invertebrate science, foist on the public views which they know they would not defend on scientific grounds.

The Infallibility of the Pope has gone; the infallibility of religion has gone; but recent events and law cases suggest a new danger, a popedom of science—the infallibility of science.

There are scientific men, doctors, and others, who seem dominated by the idea "When I ope my mouth let no dog bark," and it is emphatically the duty of Freethinkers, as it has ever been, to doubt, and to claim for all the same right to doubt, to inquire, to criticise.

And so, at last, I get back to Professor Bickerton.

Forty years ago, after some brilliant work in London, he was elected to the Professorship of Chemistry of Christchurch, New Zealand, where he taught with success, with such success, in fact, that he seems to have aroused a spirit of keen jealousy.

He was not a professional astronomer, but chemist, engineer, and physicist, and so when, in 1877, he made some discoveries in astronomy, some opposition was aroused, and a fight began which has gone on without ceasing until to-day.

In 1894 an attempt was made to oust him from his Chair, but his record of successful work stood the strain, and the attack failed; but a renewed attack in 1902 succeeded. The old cry, "Recant opinions or resign your living," proved effectual. He was not built on resignation lines; he was deprived of his Chair, at sixty years of age, after twenty-eight years of splendid work for the colony, without redress, pension, or consideration.

After some years of struggle, a new turn was given to the film, for eight years later, Earl Dudley, Governor-General of Australia, became interested in the matter, and started with £100 a fund to which the Government of New Zealand added £300; a further £300 was raised by the scientific societies, college offices, and colleges of the Dominion, to which fund the Board of the University which had ejected him also subscribed.

By this fund he was enabled once again to visit England, to put before the scientific men of the Old World a full statement of his views and claims.

It is to be hoped that there will be found in our ranks some, if only one or two, adequately equipped with the special knowledge demanded, who may be able and willing to take a part in what must be, to all Freetbinkers, for many reasons, an important event in the scientific record of the century.

Although we have lost our Symes, there may be yet one or two, such as Mr. Coppock, who might be able to take some hand in this latest development of the old, evil game of "Recant or Resign," and I feel very sure that the editor will give attention to any views which may be submitted to him.

T. SHORE.

A SURE THING.

"Well, I see old man Moneybags gave Lord de Noodles a cheque for $500,000 the day he married Minnie Moneybags," said Dubbs.

"Yes," said Dumpkins. "And I suppose the lord loved the cheerful giver, as usual."

* Eug. Simon, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, p. 164.

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "What and Where is God?" 7.30, F. Schaller, "Atheism and Christianity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture.

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

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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My religion of life is always to be cheerful
—GEORGE MEREDITH.

Views and Opinions.

Rev. A. J. Waldron, who continues to prove himself an excellent self-advertiser, is evidently interested in the question "Should the Woman Tell?" He has written a one-act play with that title, and apparently in considerable haste, for he boasts that he wrote it in two days, and according to his preliminary puff in the *Daily Chronicle* it takes nearly half an hour in the representation.

* * *

We hope Mr. Waldron's play is better written than his contribution to the shilling "shocker" *Is There a Hell?*" just published by Cassell & Co. It passes our comprehension how such slovenly stuff is allowed to appear under that respected imprimatur. Look, first of all, at the reverend gentleman's quotations. He cannot quote even the Bible accurately. "Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?" he asks in inverted commas. Now the Authorised Version, which is the only one appointed to be read in the Church to which Mr. Waldron belongs, reads thus in Genesis xviii. 25—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" This is a famous text—and a fine text from the point of view of composition. Yet see what Mr. Waldron makes of it! "All the earth" is musical. "The whole earth" is cacophonous. Where are Mr. Waldron's ears? They were fairly well developed the last time we saw his photograph.

* * *

If a clergyman cannot quote the Bible correctly, one need not wonder at his treating Tennyson in the same fashion. Mr. Waldron represents Tennyson as saying that "God will be the final goal of every ill." Where, we ask again, are this gentleman's ears? And what right has he to treat his betters in this unceremonious manner? And why do Cassell and Co.'s readers let such slipshod work pass their hands unchecked? Whatever else Tennyson was or was not, he was an exquisite artist. He would have been horrified to find himself accused of writing such a line as Mr. Waldron ascribes to him. He was a big, powerful man, and he might have tried the reverend gentleman's boasted pugilism. Anyhow, he could have proved that he had been libelled. What he really wrote was this—in the opening stanza of the fifty-fourth section of *In Memoriam*:—

> "Oh yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood."

The word "God" does not occur in this passage. Mr. Waldron drags it in—professionally. What is he without his "God"? And, for that matter, what is he without "Hell"? A man of his mental and moral size would not find it easy to make a good living in any other than the clerical profession.

* * *

Mr. Waldron winds up by declaring that "Of course there is a hell." We could almost hope so—for his own sake. We should be sorry to see him disappointed. Meanwhile we may express a wish that, wherever he goes, he will not meet Robert Browning, whom he quotes as saying: "God! Thou are love." The most learned of poets would want the wretched sciolist's blood. "Thou *are!*"

* * *

Let us turn to another good Christian—Mr. Keir Hardie. We do not propose to follow him in his "Queenie Gerald" crusade. It is an unsavory subject, and we fail to see how publishing the secrets of a brothel can be any aid to virtue—though we can easily understand its gratifying political partisanship. Our object is far different. We want to correct Mr. Hardie's statement that "the late Queen Victoria told us 'the Bible is the secret of England's greatness.'" This is more slipshod work. Christians seem to be almost constitutionally inaccurate in these matters. Mr. Keir Hardie should really know better. Queen Victoria never made that declaration about the Bible being the secret of England's greatness. She knew better herself, and she was a truthful woman. Her private secretary contradicted the story on her behalf. The whole thing was a pious effort at "edification" on the part of a goody-goody paper called the *British Workman*. A picture was printed in that journal, representing Queen Victoria as presenting a Bible to a black chieftain, who knelt at her feet to receive it; and the letterpress below contained that legendary royal utterance to which Mr. Hardie gives fresh currency. The incident never occurred, Queen Victoria never presented that Bible to that black chieftain, and she was not responsible for the nonsense that was put into her mouth. We do not for a moment suppose that Mr. Keir Hardie will express regret for giving a new lease of life to this silly story, but we hope he will never attempt to promote its longevity again.

* * *

Another good Christian is the editor of the *Walsall Observer*. This gentleman "highly compliments" the Chief Constable for attempting (vainly, however) to "put down blasphemous oratory" and "wicked talk." But why should the Chief Constable take such a gratuitous interest in the religion of the town? Would he not be better employed in looking after criminals and disturbers of the public peace? That is what he is paid for. To go beyond it is mere impudence. And why does the *Observer* talk about the Atheistic orator's "wicked purposes"? It is high time that the Lord Chancellor issued a notice that Atheism has the same legal right of propagation as Christianity.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Christianity and Morals.

A MARKED tendency of contemporary religion is to emphasise—usually to over-emphasise—the importance of morals. I do not mean by this that too much importance can be attached to morality, but that an over-emphasis of morality often leads to an ignoring of numerous other factors, upon some of which morality depends for its sanity and serviceableness, and is apt to result in an aimless and fruitless form of moral aspiration. So far as many preachers are concerned, one might conclude from their sermons that doctrines are of no importance whatever, right beliefs of small consequence, and that what the older theologians contemptuously called "mere morality" is all-in-all. Matthew Arnold said that conduct was three-fourths of life; an attractive but not very helpful pronouncement, since the real problem is what kind of conduct is of importance. But to attend to many preachers one would conclude that there is nothing else in life but conduct.

A noticeable thing is that this continuous striking of the ethical note in preaching does not lead to an understanding of ethical theory, nor does it result in any marked improvement in conduct. It is a striking fact that during the period in which doctrines in the pulpit have been subordinated to moral exhortation, no contribution of value to the philosophy of ethics has come from any of the mouthpieces of the various Churches. The last contribution of value from a clergyman in this country came from Bishop Butler. But, apart from Butler, ethical philosophy and ethical science have been built up by laymen, and often enough, by Freethinkers. Mill's *Utilitarianism*, Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, and Spencer's *Principles of Ethics* will teach an inquirer more of the nature of morality than all the sermons of all the parsons in Great Britain could accomplish in a lifetime. And this result has been accomplished by a total surrender of the theological spirit and method. Morality has been treated as something organically connected with life as a whole. It has been studied just as any other series of natural facts are studied. The supernatural has been eliminated—even in the fashionable form of transcendentalism; and the consequence has been light instead of darkness, mental clarity in place of verbal fog.

Mr. R. J. Campbell is one of the modern ethico-religious preachers who usually succeeds in leaving an ethical subject a little more confused than he found it. His habit of using philosophical terms, and of seizing some well-recognised aspect of life as though it were quite an original or new discovery, doubtless persuades his City Temple hearers that they have been receiving enlightenment, but better-informed listeners will only smile. A man who dwells on a given fact or a certain state of mind, only to end by attributing it to some principle in man apart from his animal nature or earthly habits, is losing himself in a cloud of words, and leaving his hearers in that dangerous frame of mind which mistakes a phrase for an explanation. A fact is explained only when it is merged in some wider group of facts. To say that it is quite unlike any other fact is to abandon all hopes of understanding it.

In a recent sermon, Mr. Campbell treated his hearers to an account of what he calls the "naturalistic origin" of moral feelings, but with a curious shortsighted view of what that process really is and what it involves. This is mainly due to his desire to find a religious basis for sacrifice, which, owing to Christian bias, he regards as a good in itself. Self-preservation, he says, lies at the root of our morality—that is, so far as the naturalistic conception of morality is concerned. It creates the family, the tribe, the nation; it forces man into modes of combination. But suddenly—the "suddenly" is Mr. Campbell's—there arises something that strikes right across our instinct of self-preservation. This is "the impulse to give ourselves, destroy ourselves, crush our own personal interests at the bidding of something that we feel to be higher, and to have the right to compel the sacrifice." Where does this impulse come from? "It is impossible," says Mr. Campbell, "to explain it on any merely naturalistic hypothesis.....The instinct of self-preservation is still the leading motive from this point of view, and yet we see this instinct utterly repudiated when the higher call.....takes possession of the soul."

Now, all this mystery and confusion and would-be profundity is quite unnecessary. And if Mr. Campbell properly appreciated, not merely the naturalistic theory of morals, but the bearings of his own observations, his bewilderment would disappear. Granted that the desire for self-preservation drove men to combination—this is Mr. Campbell's very crude way of putting the case, not mine—combination or co-operation implies the play of other factors, not the least of which is some concern for others quite apart from the direct perception of immediate personal gain. As a matter of fact, however, the desire for self-preservation does not drive man to combination with his fellows. Man is a gregarious animal under all stages of human culture. He is born one of a family, and the family is a unit in a larger cluster—the tribe. And being a gregarious animal, his feelings are from the outset inextricably bound up with the feelings of others. He admires what the tribe admires, he hates what the tribe hates, his code of conduct is that furnished by the tribe, his individual conscience a reflection of the social conscience that antedates his birth and survives his death.

One need only properly appreciate the nature of this process to understand the meaning of "the impulse to give ourselves," etc.; or, in other words, to prefer the welfare of the whole to the apparent interest of self. For it is not the direct or immediate outcome of the instinct of self-preservation, but the product of social selection which in turn makes in the surest manner for individual preservation. The process is two sided. On the one side society itself sets a selective value on the type of individual that harmonises with the canons of social right. And selection in this direction is much more rigorous in primitive societies than it is at a later date. On the other hand, the societies in which the units are more closely welded together, are inspired by the same ideals and animated by the same motives, have a survival value greater than that possessed by communities more loosely knit. And because this is so, individual preservation is the more surely accomplished. In other words, regard for the welfare of others is not something that conflicts with our "instinct of self-preservation and self-advancement," it is a development of the primary impulse under the pressure of social evolution or social selection. Regard for others is, indeed, not a phase of self-sacrifice at all; it is rather one of self-realisation. It is just part of the hopelessness of all Christian morality that it nearly always treats regard for others as involving a deliberate sacrifice, just as it regards morality as a series of restraints upon our natural impulses. A saner view treats *all* impulses as equally natural, and equally explainable in terms of man's social evolution.

Mr. Campbell's conception of man's moral evolution appears to be that, at certain stages of his development, certain new factors begin to operate. But this is quite unlike what really occurs. In nature the great thing is not a new creation, but a transformation. Thus, the sexual impulse is operative in both man and the lower animals. But while in one direction the crude animal impulse is there without any disguise, in man it undergoes a substantial transformation through the accretion of numerous factors, ethical, æsthetic, and social, which ultimately determines the mode in which it is to find expression. There is, consequently, no need to assume, with Mr. Campbell, that at a certain stage of human history a spiritual principle—whatever that may mean—makes its appearance and tames the

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more animal impulses. There is no more in the problem than the play of these impulses throughout, but becoming more and more complicated in their mode of expression as social life and institutions become more complex. Loyalty to the family becomes loyalty to the group, thence to the nation, and finally to the ideal of humanity. The difficulty is almost entirely one of analysis, but the analysis is not impossible to those capable of sane and serious thinking.

Mr. Campbell's exhortations on morality are fundamentally as worthless as those of Christian preachers in general. There is, indeed, no wilder fallacy than that of assuming that improvement is to be effected by a mere preaching of right and wrong. Two thousand years of Christian history ought to have been enough to make this clear to the dullest understanding. For the Churches have never ceased preaching morality. The Catholic Church gave its followers little else; and if all these centuries of moral preaching has not resulted in the elimination of moral evil, it is obviously time that the method was dismissed as useless. The truth is, that in spite of all the preaching, there is no other body of educated people that have shown so small an appreciation of the real nature of morals as have the clergy. They were the last to realise—the majority do not realise it even now—that conduct has a purely physiological basis, and that good food, pure air, and healthy social environment are potent forces in the moulding of character. You can much more certainly lessen a man's resistance to evil impulses by lowering the tone of his nervous system, than by any possible preaching of evil; and the converse holds with equal truth. Of late, it is true, some preachers have begun to dwell upon this aspect of ethics. They have seen the absurdity of preaching purity in thought and deed to families living in a single room, or of preaching "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods" to a man when his wife and family are starving around him. But this is proof only that even Christians cannot remain quite uninfluenced by the spirit of the age. Unfortunately, the mass of preachers keep in the old ruts, even when a slightly different terminology is used. If man is no longer presented as wholly vile and incapable, apart from grace, of decent conduct, he is presented as made up of a material body and a "spiritual principle" in a constant state of conflict. At the City Temple, as at Spurgeon's Tabernacle, mere natural man is still represented as incapable of the highest forms of conduct. There is only a difference in the way the teaching is expressed. And that difference of expression is quite immaterial beside the substantial fact that in depicting human nature as destitute of the essentials of the highest morality, these preachers are not only reducing man to the level of the beasts, but are unconsciously preventing his transcending their condition.

C. COHEN.

The Art of Misrepresentation.

"J. B.," of the *Christian World*, is a dogmatist whose delight is to denounce dogmatism. He abhors the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, and the dogmas of the orthodox Church are an abomination in his sight. He has his own conception of Christianity, and in his statement and defence of this he is as dogmatic as any schoolman. There is not the remotest possibility of his being in error on the subject of religion. He writes about God, Christ, and the human soul as if they were self-evident realities. He champions what he calls the spiritual interpretation of the Universe, and characterises every other interpretation of it as utterly untenable and false. In the issue of the *Christian World* for August 14, his article is entitled, "Of Deep-rooted Souls," and his contention is that Materialism cannot produce such souls. It never occurs to him that the existence of souls is a pure assumption which never has been and never can be verified. To say that "mind is as old as matter" is to betray the grossest ignorance of the evolutionary process. According to the teaching of science, matter had been in existence for countless millions of years when life first appeared; and mind came long after life. When "J. B." adds that "there could never have been matter without a mind to know it as matter" he dogmatises without a single scrap of knowledge wherewith to bless himself. The majority of physicists believe in the eternity of matter, but we do not know of one accredited biologist who maintains that mind is eternal. The assertion that the Universe begins with mind and rests on love is absolutely incapable of being proved or demonstrated, and nothing is gained by making it.

Now, why cannot Materialism produce "deep-rooted souls," or the best men and the best women? As a matter of fact, neither Idealism nor Materialism can accurately be represented as the soil in which the right kind of character is grown, because people of equally good characters are to be found under both. How can the belief in "a creative intelligence," or in a "Divine purpose in the world," help or hinder the cultivation of the right affections or of high and noble ideals? Why should a mechanistic or materialistic interpretation of the Universe exert a degrading and cheapening influence upon character? Idealism and Materialism are only theories the truth of which is open to question. Whether we swear by the one or by the other the fact that love is the greatest thing in the world remains unaffected. And yet one would infer from "J. B.'s" misrepresentation of it that Materialism is such a deadly poison that justice, truth, and virtue cannot possibly thrive under its shadow. We admit that there is no room, no nourishment in it for "the spiritual life of man," if by that is meant the religious or supernatural life; but we declare there is ample room and rich nourishment in it for man's "highest exercises; for reverence, for love, for purity, for self-sacrifice." On the materialistic assumption, according to the reverend gentleman, the world has nothing in it but "soulless atoms, with chance as their governor, and nothing in front of it but blank annihilation." We challenge him to give his authority for such a statement, to name a single so-called Materialist who holds that the Universe is governed by chance and has nothing but blank annihilation in front of it. No scientist has ever been guilty of promulgating such a silly heresy, and no Atheist has ever been so foolish as to ignore the invariable laws by which the mechanism of Nature is controlled.

"J. B.'s" defence of the design argument is comical in the extreme. Admitting that the Universe is imperfect, he says:—

> "So we are to believe that because the thing may be bettered, there is no design. It is curious reasoning. Would any man conclude of a watch, because it was possible to produce a better, that there was no design in it? Would a Helmholtz hold that because the watch was imperfect, it was the work, not of an optician, but of the mindless operation of a nebulous mist? If he did say that, would it suggest to us anything beyond the enormous faith of philosophers in search of an Atheistic conclusion? Has it occurred to these philosophers that in creating an imperfect world, the mind behind it—supposing a mind—may have reasons of its own for a temporary imperfection?"

"It is curious reasoning." Fancy, if you can, a perfect being producing imperfection. If a watch is defective it argues defective skill in the maker. So, likewise, an imperfect Universe implies an imperfect Creator. The mind behind the world, "J. B." tells us, "may have reasons of its own for a temporary imperfection." Alluding to the Atheistic philosophers, he asks:—

> "Has it occurred to them that if this mind was one which contemplated as a final end the development of human spirits, in strength and happiness, that the end would be better secured by putting us in a world where there was something for us to do, rather than in one where everything was done, and ourselves placed there, with our hands in our pockets, simply as idle lookers on?"

That is very plausibly put, but it is not a correct statement of the case, if the Bible is to be relied

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upon. The inference of this writer is that if we had been placed in a perfect world there would have been nothing for us to do but play the part of interested spectators. The world was made a scene of imperfection that we might be kept busy improving it, and improving ourselves at the same time. But there is no trace of this strange view in the Bible or in the teaching of the orthodox Church. God is represented as describing all his creative works as very good: "And God saw everything that he had made [including Adam and Eve], and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). Himself a perfect creature, in the image and after the likeness of God, man was put in command of a perfect world; but from the perfect state in which he originally stood he miserably fell, and became the just object of God's wrath. It was this fall that made the advent and work of Christ a necessity before he could be restored to the Divine favor. In point of fact, however, neither the world nor man possessed at any time anything like perfection. Indeed, so glaring and so gigantic has always been the imperfection of both that we can only look upon it as a terrible tragedy; and we cannot conceive it to be the designed work of a good and loving deity. This is what Helmholtz said of the human eye: "If an optician sent it to me as an instrument, I should send it back with reproaches for the carelessness of his work, and demand the return of my money." So, mentally, as well as physically, man is anything but a credit to his alleged Creator. Surely he could not have been designed by an all-perfect and almighty being. Darwin says that "where one would most expect design, viz., in the structure of a sentient being, the more I think on the subject, the less I can see proof of design" (*Life*, p. 62). Writing to Mr. W. Graham, in 1881, the great man said that he could not see that "the existence of natural laws implies purpose," though Mr. Graham seemed to endorse such a view in a book he had just published.

"J. B." says that there is no blunder in evolution." True; but it is a blunder to imagine that evolution is an exclusively upward and forward movement. During portions of the Middle Ages it was decidedly a backward and downward movement. Under Christianity there was a long period of arrest in the progress of knowledge, and of moral decadence. "J. B." asserts that it was not an arrest of humanity, but "a stay in the development of one side of faculty, that another, backward side might catch up." This again is an exceedingly plausible argument; but it is as fallacious as it can be. The idea that one side of humanity paused in its advancement in order that another backward side might overtake it, is altogether too ridiculous. The truth is that for some centuries, after Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire, there was a serious arrest, not only in the progress of knowledge, but in the evolution of morals also. Humanity not only stopped growing, but lost a considerable quantity of the intellectual and moral stature to which it had previously attained. Instead of going forwards, it went backwards until about the middle of the eleventh century. Need we remind our reverend friend of that dark chapter in the annals of the Church which has been stigmatised as "the Pornocracy"? Was that only a slight pause in the development of one side of faculty, that another, backward side might have a chance of catching up?

The conclusion to which "J. B." comes is this:—

> "Assuredly, we shall find one thing, that Materialism has never provided a soil deep enough and rich enough for high natures to reach their strength and stature."

We could hardly expect a Christian minister to come to any other conclusion. It is a conclusion eminently fitted to encourage and develop his sense of superiority. All high natures are said to be deeply religious, which is equivalent to affirming that the non-religious cannot attain to real greatness. With what pride our critic refers to Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot as mighty giants, with whom none of our "modern chatterers" can compare. What gave these their towering strength and stature? The fact that they were all "deeply religious spirits." Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and Bradlaugh, not having been "deeply religious spirits," are not ranked with the great of the mid-Victorian age. Of course, "J. B.'s" *Christian World* public will heartily endorse his dogmatic utterances; but there is a larger, science-fed public which is finding out that religious people are not the great, superior folk they represent themselves to be, and that the mechanistic conception of Nature is now firmly held by thousands upon thousands of people of the highest and noblest character on earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

EXORCISM AND MIRACLES.

"THE primitive Christians," says the historian Gibbon, "had their minds exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events. They fancied that on every side they were incessantly assaulted by demons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and delivered from danger, sickness, and sometimes even death, by the supplications of the Church." This is true; but long before a Christian Society or "church" came into existence, and for several centuries after that event, both Jews and Gentiles had a firm belief in the existence of demons and demoniacal possession. This belief was common to the peoples of Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and can be traced in the literature of those countries. Demoniacal possession is mentioned as an undoubted and well-known fact by the Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiq.* 8, 2, 5; *Wars* 7, 6, 3), and is found in the Talmud and other Jewish literature.

Such a wide-spread belief naturally brought into existence a class of healers who professed to be able to cure those possessed by expelling the demons—the latter being supposed to be invisible. Amongst the Jews, these exorcists were recognised as legitimate practitioners, and their power to eject the evil spirits was not disputed. If the disease grew worse or the convulsions were repeated, a plea was always at hand—the demon had returned. The case was then one for prayer and fasting (Mark ix. 29). This being the settled belief of the times, it is not surprising that Jesus was represented as going about expelling these imaginary demons, which beings were in some cases believed to be the cause of insanity, epilepsy, blindness, dumbness, and other infirmities; upon the ejection of which the disease or infirmity departed. The following are examples from the Gospels:—

> Mark v. 2—13.—"And there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.....and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain.....and no man had strength to tame him," etc.

This maniac Jesus is stated to have cured by the command, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." In this case, however, it was a "legion" that came out.

> Matt. ix. 32, 33.—"And as he went forth, behold, there was brought to him, a *dumb* man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man *spake*."
>
> Matt. xii. 22.—"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, *blind* and *dumb*; and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man *spake* and *saw*."
>
> Mark ix. 17—29.—"And one of the multitude answered him, Master, I brought unto thee my son, which had a dumb spirit; and whensoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down; and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth [etc.].....Jesus rebuketh the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and *enter no more into him*. And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out."

Here the command to "enter no more into him" indicates the plea of the exorcists when taxed with

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failure. In some of the Gospel cases the demon is represented as recognising Jesus and his divine power (Mark i. 23—26; v. 7; etc.); also, when upon one occasion Jesus is accused of expelling demons by the agency of Satan, he retorts by referring to the professional Jewish exorcists: "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do *your sons* cast them out?" Here, no doubt is expressed as to the expulsion of the evil spirit, the question being only as to the agency. It is unnecessary to cite further examples. The Gospel accounts of the casting out of evil spirits prove incontestably that both the primitive writer and the later editors shared the common superstition of the times. But these accounts prove more: they prove that the Gospel narratives which record the expelling of demons are deliberate fabrications. Demoniacal possession, as we know, was a delusion born of the crass ignorance and great credulity of the times—the so-called "apostolic age" being one of far greater mental darkness than that which gave birth to the belief in witchcraft. It is almost needless to say that no such events as those narrated in the Gospels ever actually occurred. The writers simply concocted the stories in accordance with the ideas prevalent in their days. If Jesus went about attempting to expel evil spirits, he was just as ignorant and credulous as the Gospel writers themselves, and he certainly never caused a dumb demoniac to speak, or a blind one to see: these fabrications were written for the credulous people of the Gospel times who believed in demoniacal possession.

I turn now to the other miracles ascribed to "Jesus the Nazarene." The upholders and defenders of these alleged miraculous works tell us that Jesus performed them by the power of God, and that "with God all things are possible"—which is the usual apologetic way of begging the whole question. Science knows nothing of the existence of God, or of the omnipotence with which he is credited. As Hume justly says:—

> "Though the Being to whom the miracle is ascribed be in this case Almighty, it does not upon that account become a whit more probable; since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being, otherwise than from experience which we have of his productions in the usual course of nature. This still reduces us to past observation, and obliges us to compare the instances of the violation of truth in the testimony of men with those of the violation of the laws of nature by miracles, in order to judge which of them is most likely and probable."

The soundness of this reasoning is proved by the fact that in every case in which a Bible miracle can be tested by history, the alleged miracle is found to be a fabrication. Of this fact the following are notable examples: the Three men in a furnace—the Writing on the wall—Daniel saved from the lions—the Destruction of the army of Sennacherib (Dan. iii., v., vi.; 2 Kings xix. 35). In the latter case we have also irrefutable evidence, which proves that the Hebrew deity was powerless to protect his servant Hezekiah from Sennacherib.

Hence, the question of the actual occurrence of miracles must, in the last resort, be decided by evidence. With respect to the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ, we are first asked to believe that all the superstitious ideas held by the people of the apostolic age were rational and correct. How, otherwise, could Jesus cast out demons, if demoniacal possession had not been an actual fact? We are next asked to believe that an ignorant and credulous man in that age possessed the power to cure any disease or infirmity by merely touching the person afflicted and commanding the distemper to depart. To ask any rational person of the present day to believe such crudities is simply preposterous.

Coming, now, to the Gospel miracles, what evidence do we possess for the actual occurrence of the following? Peter's mother-in-law cured of a fever—a leper cleansed—a ruler's daughter raised from the dead—a paralytic cured—a man's withered hand restored to health—two blind men made to see—a centurion's palsied servant cured—five thousand persons fed with five loaves—Jesus walking on the sea—Jesus stilling a tempest by saying "Peace, be still"—Jesus blasting a fig-tree by his word—and several other miraculous performances. What evidence have we that all or any of these alleged miracles really occurred? We have none whatever. All we know is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke—who did not live in apostolic times—found them recorded in an old primitive Gospel, and took the liberty of copying them, besides making sundry additions and improving the composition—that is all. Who the primitive writer was, or whence he obtained his accounts, nobody knows. The probability is, that he belonged to the sect of the Nazarenes, and merely committed to writing all the hear-say stories in circulation in his day.

What, again, are we to say of the twelve other miracles recorded by the Synoptists—one being the raising a widow's son from the dead (Luke vii.)—which were not taken from the primitive Gospel? These were obviously unknown to the writer of the primitive account, and must, therefore, have been concocted after his time. They were probably found amongst some apocryphal writings that have not come down to our day. To the foregoing may be added seven other miracles recorded only in the "Gospel of John"; but in the latter case there is no mystery—the writer piously fabricated these himself.

The Essenes and Nazarenes, as we know, spent much of their time reading the Old Testament scriptures, and must have noticed the following passage (Isaiah xxxv. 4—6):—

> "Behold your God will come with vengeance.....he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

The foregoing is figurative language; but the Nazarenes understood it literally, and ascribed such works to a deceased member of the sect who was esteemed a prophet—an exorcist named "Jesus the Nazarene," whom they called the "Anointed One" or "Christ," because the spirit of God *was said* to have descended upon him at his baptism.

Readers who think it unlikely that the foregoing passage in Isaiah suggested the stories of Jesus working miracles of healing are, of course, at liberty to reject the theory; but, whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt whatever as to the character of the Gospel miracles. They are, one and all, silly Christian fabrications. Moreover, when no evidence is forthcoming to corroborate a number of alleged miraculous occurrences, we are obliged to fall back on reason, common sense, and experience; and these tell us in the plainest language that—whether believed to have occurred or not—no such supernatural events ever really happened. The Gospel miracles were piously fabricated by different persons, and at different times, between A.D. 70 and 140; but were all concocted for one and the same purpose—to gain converts to the new Christian religion, or, as the forger of the Fourth Gospel puts it "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God" (John xx. 31). And that the early Christians *did* fabricate stories for this purpose is proved by the number of lying apocryphal Gospels that were in circulation before the canonical Gospels were written. Christian apologists, of course, assert that these were all the work of heretics; but no proof of such authorship has ever been produced. The only case in which one of these ancient fabricators is mentioned is that of the writer of "The Acts of Paul and Thecla," respecting whom Tertullian says (*Of Baptism* 17): "Know that, in Asia, *the presbyter* who composed that writing.....after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office." This presbyter was not a heretic; but he had the misfortune to live a little too late, and he had no friends in his church to declare at the end of his narrative "and *we* know that his witness is true" (John xxi. 24). Further-

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more, those who concocted the stories of the Virgin Birth, and of the infancy and boyhood of Jesus, believed in the divinity of that Savior; they were, therefore, orthodox Gentile believers. The Nazarenes and other so-called heretics, who believed Jesus to be only a man, could not have fabricated such narratives.

The historian, Mosheim, in his *Christianity before the time of Constantine*, says of the author of the *Shepherd* :—

> "He knowingly and wilfully was guilty of a fraud. At the time when he wrote, it was an established maxim with many of the Christians that *it was pardonable* in an advocate of religion *to avail himself of fraud and deception*, if it were likely that they might conduce toward the attainment of any considerable good."

The fact here referred to is historically true. And that this "established maxim" has been actually carried out, and fraud and deception stretched to their fullest extent, the existence of our four canonical Gospels is a conclusive and a standing proof.

ABRACADABRA.

"Our English Peacock."

1785-1866.

> "A strain too learned for a shallow age,
> Too wise for selfish bigots."—SHELLEY.

IN a letter written when the nineteenth century was young, Shelley tells his friend, Thomas Love Peacock :—

> "Your 'Melincourt' is exceedingly admired, and I think much more so than any of your other writings. In this respect the world judges rightly. There is more of the true spirit, and an object less indefinite, than in either 'Headlong Hall' or 'Scythrop.'"

Since that time three generations have passed away. To most readers "Headlong Hall" and "Melincourt" are names that awaken no associations. If they know Peacock at all, they know him as the friend of Shelley, who published his version of the separation of the poet from his wife. But of his own work they know nothing, unless, indeed, some Shelley enthusiast has hunted out "Scythrop," in order to gain an idea of the poet from the caricature. Yet Peacock was a scholar and a wit, and his tales are like those delightful stories of Voltaire in French, but like nothing but themselves in English. The humor is Aristophanic, Rabelaisian. He was, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, a profound anti-romantic, whose every sentence was filled with romance. A Freethinker with Tory prejudices, he lived through the days of the Oxford Movement, and died with an invocation to the gods of Greece upon his lips. Consider, too, his place in the world. Older than his friend Shelley, he was, with Byron, an executor of the drowned poet's will. He knew Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and Keats. He worked in the same office as James Mill, and dined once a week with Jeremy Bentham. As an old man, he greeted the fame of Dickens, and Thackeray owed much to his inspiration. He was the father-in-law of George Meredith, who dedicated his poems of 1851 to the old Pagan, and he lived long enough for people now among us to point at him as one who saw Shelley plain. Peacock may be a satellite of the great stars of literature, yet how his radiance brightens the heavens.

Common sense was the prime characteristic of Peacock. He loved a life of independence, and he would not sacrifice his freedom for profit or prospects. When it became necessary for him to settle down in life, he obtained a clerkship in the East India Company's office, and proved an excellent man of business. To his mother he was the best of sons; to Shelley a staunch friend. When he proposed to the lady who became his wife, he had not seen her for eight years. He would not ask her to share poverty with him; but when he had a home he at once gave her a place in it. Writing to Shelley at the time of his marriage, he casually mentioned the fact, without enlarging in any way upon it, so that Shelley was in doubt whether he was married or not. Not long after his marriage, his wife became a confirmed invalid. When his mother died, he was left in the charge of a family too young to help themselves, and requiring constant attention. Other domestic bereavements followed; but his serenity never gave way. To the end of his life he remained cheerful, witty, and agreeable, loving to see all around him bright and happy. No man ever lived who was more convinced that life was worth living for those who will accept the delight of reasonable desires and sober pleasures.

Peacock was often asked to write the life of Shelley; but he refused steadily. He wished that Shelley might be allowed to remain a voice and a mystery; but as this was not to be, he corrected the errors in what others published. With this view he wrote three papers in *Fraser's Magazine* between 1858 and 1862, and in these he stated that Shelley's separation from his wife was not the result of coldness or misunderstanding, but sudden and unexpected.

Peacock's literary activity extended over half a century, beginning with two small volumes of verse. His first novel was *Headlong Hall*, and his latest *Gryll Grange*, all packed with wit and satire. The novels are not smooth love stories, or analyses of vicious characters. They present us with a number of persons, each of whom is the exponent of some theory or other—a phrenologist, or an economist, or, maybe, a hypochondriac, or a fop. Parsons nearly always appear, and are subjected to much ridicule. We begin with "Gaster" and "Grovelgrub," and end with "Dr. Opimian." Peacock always looked on the clergy as maintaining, not wholly from disinterested motives, an order of society destructive of freedom and progress. They were beneficiares who slumbered and ate, and resisted every sort of innovation in the cause of humanity. This was no novel view of the Church, nor was it untrue; but Peacock brought a Voltairian wit to bear on the subject. He had a quaint love of fanciful names, such as Dickens used with great effect; and the creator of "Sir Oran Haut-ton," in this respect, was as successful as the historian of "Dotheboys Hall."

It would be easy to write a book on Peacock and his circle, but space allows only a thumbnail sketch. Many deeply interesting and well-known personalities were numbered among his acquaintances. He lived a pleasant, bookish life, through two great periods of English literature, and he was liked and esteemed by some of the very greatest of his contemporaries. Maybe, his own writings will be always "caviare to the general," for a liking for his witty stories is evidence of a choice literary palate, but his association with the immortals will always ensure a recognition of Peacock, the friend of Shelley and Meredith.

MIMNERMUS.

TRANSMUTATION.

A Jew turned Catholic, and the priest, sprinkling him with holy water, told him that would seal the transaction. Shortly after, the newly transmuted Jew gave a supper-party to some Catholics, including the priest. In the centre of the board stood a great, brown, juicy turkey. The priest lifted up his hands in horror at sight of it.

"My friend," he expostulated, "to-day is Friday, and we can eat no meat, only fish."

"We'll fix that," replied the Jew, giving a whispered order to the servant. The man shortly returned, bearing a basin of water. The Jew sprinkled a few drops over the turkey; then he turned to the priest.

"You can eat that turkey now, your reverence."

"But——"

"Never mind, interrupted the convert. "That basin contained holy water. If your holy water can make a Catholic out of a Jew, surely it can make a fish out of a turkey. Gentlemen, have some fish."

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Acid Drops.

Mr. A. E. Ashmead-Bartlett's letter from Constantinople, published in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 15, is another frightful impeachment of the Bulgarians. Listen to this :—

> "Of the Allies the Bulgarians have proved themselves utterly unworthy to pose either as champions of Christianity or of civilisation. They have acted with a cruelty and a barbarity even towards the subjects of their late allies which has shocked and disgusted a world long since accustomed to the horrors of the Balkans, and if you multiply a hundredfold the crimes committed against the Servians and Greeks it will only give a very temperate picture of the atrocities they have committed in Thrace since the Treaty of London was signed.
>
> "They have embarked on a vast campaign of extermination against the Mohammedan population which rashly chose to remain in Europe, they have destroyed every Mohammedan village they have visited, they have murdered the men and have murdered and outraged the women and children ; in fact, the full tale of their crimes which I shall send you in a few days constitutes one of the most wicked and appalling records of barbarity in the history of the world."

Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett points out that the Turks, according to all rules of warfare, are entitled to keep Adrianople if they can, now that they have taken repossession of it. We all remember Mr. Asquith's phrase in the House of Commons in the early days of the war when the Christian Allies were carrying everything before them. He said that they should not be robbed of the fruits of their victories. Will he explain now why the Turks should be robbed of the fruits of *their* victories? The Bulgarians captured Adrianople with some help from Servia and Montenegro. Owing to circumstances, chiefly of their own creation, they could not hold it; and the Turks marched into the city again, almost without striking a blow, the Bulgarians evacuating the place in a formal manner. For our part, we hope the Turks will hold it, not only against the Balkan Christians, but also against the "advice" of the European Christian Powers. Their advice to the Turks has always been to make peaceful concessions to Christian robbers. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett tells us that Adrianople is now held by 200,000 picked Turkish troops, who will fight to the last gasp before "handing back Adrianople and Thrace to the tender mercies of the Bulgarians."

Systematic butchery of civil inhabitants—the women being outraged first, and the children gashed with bayonets—and the destruction of villages; this has been the Bulgarian policy from beginning to end. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett asks why Moslems and Christians are not judged by one rule of morality? Why should every Turkish misdemeanor be denounced throughout the Christian world "when nothing is said when whole Mohammedan villages are razed to the ground, when men are slaughtered, and the women and children killed after being outraged." Sir Edward Grey's policy in the House of Commons is to give no reply to questions about "atrocities." He knows that an honest answer would damn the Balkan "liberators" to everlasting infamy—and he does not want to see fellow Christians damned in the sight of "infidels." The withering power of Christian bigotry is such that the outrage and murder of Mohammedan women makes next to no impression on the minds and hearts of the ladies and gentlemen who sing "Onward Christian Soldiers!" But it makes a great impression on Mohammedans throughout the East, and especially in India, whence money is being sent in a copious stream for the help of distressed co-religionists. Adrianople is now occupied by men who are burning to avenge the sufferings and indignities inflicted upon the women of their race. They mean business. They have their backs to the wall. They are mostly young men. And to capture Adrianople again would mean a deluge of blood. This is what Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett tells the readers of an important London newspaper. And it deserves consideration.

We are all for peace against war. But there is something higher than peace and something worse than war. Better die bravely than live like cowards. It may be worthy of a Christian not to resent, and, if possible, avenge, the rape of one's women-folk and the butchery of one's children. But it is unworthy of a man. And the Turk's worst enemies never called him a craven. At least they never found him so.

Once, if a man absented himself from church, he was fined, but nowadays the clergy are very anxious to get *any* male members to balance the number of females, who are the last support of the fast-emptying churches. A pathetic note to that effect appears in the last issue of the "St. George's Church Messenger" (Southend-on-Sea), where seat-holders are asked to be kind to "the small boy who comes in twos or threes" to the church. How are the mighty fallen! The bodyguard of Christ, which used to be composed of stalwart warriors, is now sunk to a handful of women and children.

Mr. Lloyd George with Celtic impetuosity has declared that the Insurance Act was doing the work of the Man of Nazareth. We were not aware that the Act insured against hell.

At the Medical Congress a story was told of an alleged Irish corpse which complained at the wake that he did not get a fair share of the insurance money. The tale has been told with greater point of the Bible character, Lazarus, who had two funerals.

The *Guardian* naturally seeks to "improve" the occasion of the recent International Medical Congress. It says that the "close connection" between Christianity and medicine is shown by two papers read at the Congress. One was a paper by Miss Stowell discussing whether St. Paul was a Roman, the other by Dr. Caparoni on the "Sepulchral Inscriptions of the Christian Doctors in the Catacombs." The connection seems to us as close as that between Macedon and Monmouth. Christian medicine is plainly enough particularised in the New Testament, and for practising it—and depending upon it—many a simple-minded person has been sent to Christian gaols. The prayer of faith shall save the sick—that is Christian medicine in a nutshell. It is the only medicine ever blessed by the Church, and many and many a doctor has been punished and imprisoned for defending secular scientific methods of cure. The early anatomists worked with the ban of the Church upon them. The greatest of them, Vesalius, came to an untimely end owing to Church persecution. Scientific medicine, like every other form of science, grew up in defiance of Christian prejudice, and the old maxim, out of three doctors two Atheists, gave a very good indication of the general position.

Dr. Caparoni came to the conclusion that many of the doctors of Rome were Christian slaves, basing this conclusion upon the inscriptions on the graves in the catacombs. It is doubtless true that many of the Roman doctors were slaves. This because the slave of Rome was nothing like the degraded slave of more recent Christian times. He was often enough an educated man, and enjoyed much that was taboo to the slave under Christian ownership. But Dr. Caparoni is on very delicate ground when he bases his conclusion on the catacomb inscriptions. For these inscriptions are not peculiar to Christianity. They were in common use among non-Christian religious sects. But, owing to Christian ignorance and cupidity, it has been the fashion to claim every grave bearing a symbol or an inscription such as were afterwards used by Christians as proof that the grave held a Christian occupant. It is in this way that thousands of martyrs have been manufactured to bolster up Christian pretensions. The best of Christian scholars are now chary of adopting this line of proof, and we are surprised that Dr. Caparoni was not more cautious.

"What the present position of medicine would be had Christianity never come to the world, may be a curious speculation," says the *Guardian*. It may be a curious speculation, it certainly is not an uninstructive one. Medical science was well on its way when Christianity came. The savage theory of possession, revived in full force by Christianity, had been abandoned by the doctors of Greece, Rome, and Alexandria. The causes and cure of disease had been studied and written upon. Had Christianity not come to the world, medical science would have pursued an unbroken career of development, and many discoveries of which we are still in search might have been ours. But Christianity came. Cures by faith, by miracle, and by relics became the rule. The priest took the place of the physician; the hospitals of antiquity were closed, the sanitary and hygienic science of old was forgotten, and for cities reeking with filth and disease, the Church gave its universal cure of faith and miracles. For over a thousand years, medical and surgical science lay under a ban, and they who would estimate what medical science might have been had Christianity never appeared, must add to the knowledge of antiquity at least the thousand years lost by the triumph of the Cross.

At last even Spain has insulted the Catholic Church, and her priests are, in consequence, in a towering rage. The Royal Decree of May 5 this year provides "for the inspec-

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tion of the schools and the instruction imparted therein, but in no way mentions the share of the ecclesiastics in the matter." Cardinal Aguirre has issued a circular urging the bishops to do their utmost to render the Decree practically null and void. How well these ecclesiastics know that the secularisation of the schools would result in the extinction of the Church! But the secularising process cannot be stopped even in Spain. It is in the air and must go on until every shred of superstition has disappeared.

Rev. George Atkinson, United Methodist minister, at Barrow, is a lucky person. Being found guilty of stealing stockings and gloves from a hosiery stall in the market-place, he was bound over in £10, with one surety of £10, to be of good behavior for twelve months. This lenity was in consideration of its being his first offence. Probably, also, because of his profession and the number of Free Church ministers who attended the court "to help Mr. Atkinson to bear the strain of the charge"—as the *Daily Sketch* so kindly puts it.

Rev. Cecil Frederick Blyth, aged sixty-one, came up to the great modern Babylon from his rural home at Recking, Suffolk. He took a lady to a West-end restaurant to dinner, and afterwards went to her flat, where he died suddenly of heart failure. There is no moral. There would have been a big one if he had been a Freethinker.

We have been giving the poor clergy a rest lately. Here are a few of them who turned up in one day's "Latest Wills." Rev. Dr. Francis William Tremlett, of St. Peter's, Belsize Park, London, N.W., left £7,689. Rev. James Barlow, Rahemy, Co. Dublin, £19,971. Rev. T. H. Austin, Queniborough, Leicester, left £2,595. This is not a big average—something under £10,000—but that is a fair-sized bump to go through the needle's eye.

Another brace of them! Rev. George Dowker Armitage, West Ayton, Yorkshire, left £26,347. Rev. Dr. Samuel Allen Shore left £8,434.

The Rev. C. Silvester Horne says that "sin never goes unpunished." If by sin is meant wrong-doing, the statement is entirely false. It would be much more accurate sorrowfully to admit that most sins escape punishment. Clever financial swindlers are seldom brought to book. There are hundreds of men whose one pleasure is to ruin girls under age; but not one in a hundred gets convicted and imprisoned. The sweaters of the poor are counted by the thousand, and they are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. Yes, alas, the great majority of sins go unpunished. This is not complimentary to God; but it is terribly true.

Pagans and Protestants go to hell-fire when they die, however strong their faith in Christ may be, unless they are in invincible ignorance of the Catholic Church. God may admit them to heaven, in that case, if they "carefully observe the natural law and the commands engraved by himself in the hearts of all." So teaches "Alfonsus" in the *Catholic Herald* for August 16. And this is his warning to all:—

> "The way of salvation in the Catholic Church is sure and certain for those who follow it; we cannot be sure and certain about any other way."

"Alfonsus" goes further, and holds that outside the Catholic Church salvation is impossible; but he makes the charitable admission that you may be in the soul of the Church without belonging to its body, which is surely a distinction where there is no difference. It follows from this, of course, that for Freethinkers there is no hope whatever, because they believe neither in the Catholic Church nor in any other. For us, poor things, not even God's "uncovenanted mercies" can be of any use.

Professor Bury's little book, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, seems to have got on the nerves of some Christian reviewers. "J. B.," of the *Christian World*—he is only one among others—is sorely disappointed with the book because "from beginning to end it is frankly materialistic." This, being interpreted, means that Professor Bury points out that during the last eighteen hundred years the great enemy to freedom of thought has been Christianity. The broad toleration of Greece and Rome was replaced by the narrow intolerance of the Christian Church. We do not see what else Professor Bury could have done. As Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and editor of Gibbon, he went straight to the facts; and the facts are too patent, when honestly stated, to bear more than one interpretation. Every historian worth mention has been compelled to record the same story, although it has not always been stated in so many words. And, free from all ambiguity, that story is that the greatest disaster that ever befel the principle of human liberty was the conquest of the civilised world by the Christian religion. Ancient Rome gave liberty to all religions. Christianity gave freedom to none. Professor Bury's book is far from exhaustive—it could not well be so, seeing its small size; but it is at least impartial, and tells the truth in a plain way. If it has a weakness, it is that it fails to do complete justice to the influence on the public mind of the propaganda of popular Freethought carried on by brave men and women whose names are unknown to the ordinary historian, but whose labors have borne fruit in our larger measure of intellectual freedom.

We are shocked! Rev. C. Benson Perkins points out in the *Methodist Times* that in the east end of Sheffield there is church and chapel accommodation for only about 1 in 40 of the population. This is very serious, but we have not heard of the churches and chapels there that are over-crowded. Mr. Perkins does not say that they are. He simply says that there ought to be more. But why? If the churches there already are not filled, why build more? Of course, every new church or chapel means a new post for someone, and that, so far as we can see, is the only reason for building them. And in the annual reports there is, perhaps, the additional reason that growth can be reckoned by the increased number of seats provided, without troubling whether people are sitting in them or not.

The British and Foreign Bible Society boasts of having circulated 936,346 Bibles; 1,266,919 New Testaments; and 5,696,297 Portions of Scripture during the year 1912-1913. These publications are reported to be in 450 different languages,—some of which, we suspect, must be rather lingoes than languages. This is, of course, a great achievement in its way. But it ceases to be wonderful when we recollect that the Society had command of an income of £171,947 last year, besides the income derived from sales of £95,271. Any book in the world might be pushed round by such an expenditure. The volume of Shakespeare's writings pushes itself round the world, without any adventitious aids in any shape whatever. It is translated into nearly all languages worth talking about. Nobody is tempted to buy it, nobody has it pressed upon him as a free gift. It takes its place amongst general literature, and makes its own way. Consequently its diffusion over all parts of the globe is more wonderful than that of the Bible.

The Vicar of Wellingborough, Northants, has been preaching against bazaars, whist drives, charity dinners, dances, and teas, as means of raising the wind for Church purposes. He felt it necessary to extend his condemnation even to Punch and Judy. But what is wrong with that entertainment? Is it more fantastic than many a New Testament miracle? Say, for instance, Jesus Christ's pedestrian performance on the rolling deep?

The clergy of Swanage would never allow Jesus to give a show within the three-mile limit in front of their town: certainly not on the Lord's Day. They are up in arms against the visit of an excursion steamer which brings people from Poole and other places on Sunday; and they have succeeded in getting the Town Council to protest against, and if possible put an end to, this diabolical invasion.

How the Christian clergy obey their own Scriptures! "Owe no man anything," the Bible says. Well, it transpires in the bankruptcy proceedings against the Rev. Arthur Henley Sharpley, vicar of Mangotsfield, Bristol, that he had borrowed £1,053 of no less than sixteen moneylenders, and was still indebted to every one of them.

The paper of the Actors' Church Union suggests that a certain charming musical comedy actress should act as churchwarden. If the lady will wear her theatrical war-paint and etceteras, the unregenerate outsiders might be persuaded to attend that place of worship.

LOST FAITH.

"Aren't you going to say your prayers, Willie?"

"No, I'm not. I'm tired of praying for this family without getting any results."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £162 14s. 5d. Received since:—*Per Miss Vance:* W. Milroy, 5s.; John Milroy, 5s.; F. J. King, 10s. Mrs. Clarkson, £3 3s.

R. KENNEDY.—Missing number forwarded. Every precaution is taken at our publishing office, but things will go astray in the post. We are always ready to send another copy in place of the one that was lost, if subscribers will advise us of the miscarriage.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

TRADE UNIONIST (S. Africa).—The reverend gentleman's sermon is of the flunkey order. He serves the powers that be, in conformity (by the way) with New Testament teaching. Your letter is exactly to the point. It would hardly get into any newspaper in the old country; so you are not as badly off as you imagine. We are glad to hear that Freethought is spreading amongst the "wage earning" classes in the Transvaal and other parts of South Africa.

R. IRVING.—Pleased that you so highly appreciate "the splendid way" in which we have spoken for the "downtrodden Turks and Moslems when the British Christian press was gloating over their death agony." Thanks for the paper.

E. STARLING.—Very much pleased to see the Walsall prosecution defeated.

T. W. STEWART.—See paragraphs. Our shop manager is communicating with you respecting the "specimen copies."

J. B.—Thanks for the cuttings. There is nothing, in the report of the Walsall case, alleged against the defendant, that would be considered outrageous on any topic but religion. We have always contended that this subject should be treated like any other. We pressed that view upon the jury in 1883. We uphold it now. And we have always been ready to help any man prosecuted for doing no more. We draw the line at reckless speech that ought not to be tolerated on *any* subject—at least in places of public resort. Equal freedom of speech on all subjects is our principle. Not *absolute* freedom,—that is impossible—but *equal* freedom.

F. M.—We had already written on the matter. Thanks, all the same.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for useful cuttings.

J. JOHNSON.—We have dealt with it, as you will see.

F. J. ROSE (Johannesburg).—Mr. E. B. Rose was never "connected" with this journal, we have not seen him for many years, and we know not his present address.

R. H. VICKERS.—Thanks for your good wishes.

MARK MELFORD.—We hope the medical prophecy in your case will not be fulfilled; but we note the serenity with which you face the apparent prospect. Your compliments on our own work since you saw us released from Holloway Prison are appreciated.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote will have an announcement to make next week with regard to his platform work during the approaching winter season.

Mr. Cohen is back from his holiday and all the better for three weeks' rest and change. Miss Vance is enjoying the stimulating air of Yarmouth. Mr. Lloyd is off for a brief holiday on the South Coast.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, of Leamington, whose pathetic case is known to our readers, has written a well-informed, able, and interesting essay on "Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity." This is being printed in pamphlet form, with a Criticism by the Rev. L. G. Berrington and a Rejoinder by Mr. Walsh. It is for private circulation only. But "saints" who would like to have a copy can obtain one by applying to Mr. J. Breese, 270 Ladypool-road, Birmingham. It would be a graceful act if applicants enclosed a penny for the postage. This is not essential; but we venture to make the suggestion.

Two summonses against Mr. Thomas William Stewart for using "profane language" at open-air meetings at Walsall have been dismissed by the magistrates. Mr. Stewart appears to have made a spirited defence. He argued that a summons for "profane language" at a Freethought meeting was simply a "blasphemy" prosecution in "disguise."

There were two really funny points in this Walsall case. When Mr. Stewart began his defence the presiding magistrate (Mr. Jupp) told him that "the Bench could not allow any argument." That is really worthy of Dogberry himself. The other point is this. Joseph James Betteridge, a tobacconist, said that the defendant's lectures had been a great source of annoyance to him—"He named Crippen and many other notorious criminals as examples of what Christians were, and generally spoke in contempt of sacred things"—including Crippen, we suppose. The funniest fools are generally solemn—and usually religious.

We understand that our *Bible Handbook* figured pretty largely in the course of this Walsall prosecution. The police seemed to think it a very dangerous publication—which in one sense it is, as it was intended to be. It was designed to be dangerous to Christianity.

The foolish action of the Walsall police has had the opposite effect to what they expected. For one thing it brought a crowd of people on Sunday night to hear a debate between Mr. Stewart and Mr. H. C. Orchard, one of the police court probation officers. An opposition religious meeting caused trouble, and the likelihood of violence induced the police to escort "the Athiest" to a place of safety.

On Mr. Foote's suggestion the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has sent a copy of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's little book, *Penalties Upon Opinion*, to every member of the House of Commons. This should be a great help to the Bill which we printed in these pages some two months ago.

We congratulate the *Dewsbury Reporter* on its courage in quoting (and mentioning) the *Freethinker*. It refers to our recent paragraph on the Charlotte Bronte letters published in the *Times*. She stated in one of them that her writings had received the approbation of Shelley and Coleridge; yet Shelley died when she was six years old and Coleridge died before she was eighteen. This seemed to require elucidation. The *Reporter* says that the explanation is perfectly simple. "Shelley" was a misprint for "Southey," and by "Coleridge" probably meant "Hartley Coleridge." We are afraid that the latter explanation is unsatisfactory. There never was but one "Coleridge."

Herr Bebel, the great Social Democratic leader, directed in his will that his body should be cremated. Bebel was an Atheist.

The *New Age* corrects the Chestertons, who have been blowing the trumpet too loudly over the *New Witness*, which they propose to turn into a Company, with an anticipated profit of £1,006, on a sale of 7,000 copies and 20 per cent. returns, and £30 worth of advertisements weekly; on the expenditure being £210 for directors' fees and £1,664 for editor's salary and contributions. The *New Age* remarks that £30 weekly is a big sum for advertisements, especially as the paper is to continue to indulge in "unfettered criticism"; in fact, one would imagine that the *New Witness* was the only paper in England devoted to its principles—which the *New Age* reminds it is not true. There are not many papers thus devoted, but "there *are* others." Moreover, 20 per cent. returns, the *New Age* says, is a "marvel of economic publishing"; indeed, it allows 30 per cent. in its own statement of accounts—of which more presently.

On this point of "returns" we have a word to say ourselves. The *Freethinker* is a wonderful paper in many ways, and in *this* way amongst them. Our "returns" are

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probably the least of any periodical that was ever published. They do not amount to more than about 7 per cent. on the average; which shows what a steady body of readers we possess. If it were not for that fact we must have succumbed long ago.

But to return to the *New Age*. Our contemporary prints its own statement of accounts, for the benefit of "posterity," if it should take an interest in such things. Here is the statement:—

Actual Revenue.	£
4,500 Copies, less 30 per cent. Returns	1,200
Advertisements at 5s. per week	13
	1,213

Actual Cost.	
Printing and Paper and Stationery	1,500
Editor's Salary	200
Staff, Literary, Secretarial, Publishing, Accountancy	350
Rent, Office Expenses, Legal Charges, Postage ...	200
	2,250

Actual Annual Loss ... £1,037.

The editor's salary in this statement is a very modest amount. The *Freethinker* editor's salary is more modest still. During a few years after 1899 it was £3 per week. During all the rest of the time, before and since, it has been nothing at all; and for a good many years he paid contributors *their* modest salaries out of his own pocket in addition,—the money coming mainly out of his Honorarium Fund or the Summer Holiday Fund which preceded it.

It is not our intention to follow the example of the *New Age* any further. We do not see what good could come of it. Besides, the *Freethinker* is printed and published under special conditions, in consequence of its insecurity until the Blasphemy Laws are entirely abolished. What we want to draw our readers' attention to is the fact that all honest "advanced" papers have a struggle for existence. We have maintained the *Freethinker* year after year for a whole generation. It has not been subventioned; on the contrary it has subventioned other enterprises. Only to take one instance, neither the National Secular Society nor the Secular Society, Ltd., is charged a single penny for editorial or commercial advertisements in our pages; nor has a single penny been charged for expenses against any Fund that we have raised in our columns.

We are not *boasting*. Far from it. We are simply stating facts that ought to be known. Those who do know them, and bear them in mind, will not wonder why appeals have to be made for the President's Honorarium Fund. We must live on *something*. We could earn enough to live on by outside literary work, but we should be obliged to devote less and less time to the *Freethinker*, which would never do —and none at all to the general interests of the movement.

What know'st thou, man, of Life? And yet, for ever 'twixt the womb, the grave,
Thou pratest of the Coming Life, of Heav'n and Hell thou fain must rave.

. . . . . .

While Reason sternly bids us die, Love longs for life beyond the grave;
Our hearts, affections, hopes, and fears, for Life-to-be shall ever crave.
Hence came the despot's darling dream, a Church to rule and sway the State;
Hence sprang the train of countless griefs, in priestly sway and rule innate.
For Future Life who dares reply? No witness at the Bar have we,
Save what the brother Potsherd tells—old tales and novel jugglery.

—Sir Richard Burton, *The Kasidah of Hajee Abdu Al Yazdi.*

God by God flits past in thunder, till his glories turn to shades;
God to God bears wondering witness how his gospel flames and fades.
More was each of these, while yet they were, than man their servant seemed;
Dead are all of these, and man survives who made them while he dreamed.

—A. C. Swinburne, *The Altar of Righteousness.*

Christian Beasts in China.

[Judging from the English newspapers, during the recent war in the Balkans, one would think that only Turks committed atrocities, or Christian armies unhappily corrupted by Turkish example. Students of history know how far this is from being true. The greatest atrocities in human history have been committed by the soldiers of the Cross. And we need not go back many years to find a striking example of the horrible and disgusting behavior of Christian soldiers. In 1900 a punitive expedition was sent out by the European Powers to China, to avenge the death of a few missionaries, who were sent to heaven a little prematurely by the Boxer rebels. Christian soldiers, from all Christian nations, were ordered to teach the Chinese better morals and better manners. The lesson was taught with rifles and bayonets, —and it was done in the way described in the following article, which we wrote at the time, and which is reprinted from the *Freethinker* of January 20, 1901. We feel like dedicating this reprint to the *Daily News*.—Editor.]

Sir Robert Hart ended his first article on China, in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review*, with a sentence that was very significant to those who had enough information to be able to read between the lines. "Meanwhile," he wrote, "the once crowded Peking is a desert, and the first few days of foreign occupation have seen much that need not have occurred and will certainly be regretted."

Since then all the i's in this passage have been dotted with a vengeance. The whole truth has not been told—for, as one correspondent said, the English papers would not dare to print it; but enough has leaked out to damn the Christian Powers (who are pretending to school and punish China) as the vilest malefactors in the sight of civilisation and humanity.

In the first place, the armies of the Christian Powers in China have proved themselves well-practised thieves. They are not even at war with China, for war has not been declared. Ostensibly they are there to enforce certain laws of international morality, which they allege that the Chinese have violated. Yet the first thing they do, after shooting down the Chinese who stand in their way, is to indulge in unlimited looting. It is agreed on all hands by correspondents at Peking and elsewhere that temples, palaces, and private dwellings have been rifled with Christian completeness; and that what could not be carried away has too frequently been wantonly destroyed. And the cream of the joke, as far as it is a joke, is the fact that the Christian missionaries have had a good share in the plunder. Mr. Thomas F. Millard, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, says that, "In all the loot phases the missionaries have had their share. The day after the Legations in Peking were relieved a prominent missionary, accompanied by a large number of Christian Chinese, invaded the residence of a prince and made a big haul. Incidents like this were numerous. When the purchasing period came, missionaries not only attended the sales, but opened loot marts themselves, sending their Chinese converts out to provide the stock." Dr. E. J. Dillon, in the January *Contemporary Review*, says that, under the pretence that civilised rules of war do not apply to barbarians, the looting was continued until "there was nothing left worth carrying off." The Japs left off looting first, but they had got most of the gold. After them came the Russians. The "civilisers," as Dr. Dillon facetiously calls them, burst into the imperial apartments of the Forbidden City, and took away what they called *souvenirs*. "Coolies carrying coals," he says, "to steamers in Hong Kong could not be more expeditious than was this respectable gathering of military and civil officials in stowing away the most unwieldy vessels, images, and ornaments between their coats and their skins." The looting, in fact, was so profitable that it became quite a fashion. Not satisfied with pillaging the Chinese quarters of the city they entered, the allied troops sometimes looted the houses of European residents, carrying every portable article away, and destroying what they could not carry. "Pianos," Dr. Dillon says, "were demolished with bayonets, mirrors shivered in a hundred fragments, paintings

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out into strips. This," he adds, "was done by Europeans in the houses of the people whom they had been sent to protect." Some netted hundreds and some thousands of pounds. Common soldiers, of course, did not get as much, but they had their proportion of the spoil of the Heathen Chinee, who did not know the bill he was running up when he shot a German Minister and sent a few missionaries to the kingdom of heaven.

It will not surprise any student of history, or of human nature, to learn that looting and destruction of property are by no means the worst inflictions upon the Chinese by the allied army of the Christian Powers. Sir Robert Hart only suggests the wholesale slaughter that has been going on. Dr. Dillon, however, does not shrink from telling the story. Mr. George Lynch, the special correspondent of the *Express*, had to some extent anticipated him. "The cry of 'Sha, sha!' (Kill, kill!)" he wrote, "which the Boxer mob shouted outside the Legations, has been answered from Europe by the German Emperor's speeches for 'Vengeance, vengeance,' and in paying a visit to the house of the prefect of the German section yesterday afternoon, the effects of his speeches were everywhere apparent." "Woe to the vanquished men, women, and children," Mr. Lynch added, "during the next six months." Dr. Dillon is far more precise. He gives details which are enough to freeze the blood or make it boil, according to the reader's temperament. Here is his most general statement:—

> "During the war which was waged, but not formally declared, no quarter was given to Chinese regular soldiers; in battles and skirmishes no prisoners were taken, and after easily gained victories wounded enemies, instead of being cared for, were put to death like venomous reptiles; nay, thousands of defenceless and well-meaning Chinamen were slaughtered in cold blood, and not always, it is said, with the swiftness or the minimum of physical pain with which the man of average humanity would snuff out the life of a wild beast. In Tungtschau and Peking, Chinese girls and women of all ages were raped first and bayonetted afterwards by men whose governments were wrapping themselves up in the soft wool of Mary's little lamb."

On leaving Tientsin, Dr. Dillon passed through what had been a happy, smiling, and prosperous district, until the "civilisers" from Christian Europe fell upon it. The result is best told in Dr. Dillon's own words:—

> "In the twinkling of an eye it had all been transformed, and fathers, sons, daughters, and mothers now lay hidden in the mould, covered with matting, buried in the rubbish or floating down the river. A wave of death and desolation had swept over the land, washing away the vestiges of Chinese culture. Men, women, boys, girls, and babes in arms had been shot, stabbed, and hewn to bits in this labyrinth of streets."

After relating a number of particular instances of wanton cruelty, Dr. Dillon tells us what he saw of the terrible massacre at Tungtschau:—

> "I speak as an eye-witness when I say that over and over again the gutters of the city of Tungtschau ran red with blood, and I sometimes found it impossible to go my way without getting my boots bespattered with human gore. There were few shops, private houses, and courtyards without dead bodies and pools of dark blood.....No native's life or property was safe for an hour. Men I had been speaking to before lunch were in their graves by sundown, and no mortal will ever know the reason why. The thirst of blood had made men mad. The pettiest and most despicable whipper-snapper who happened to have seen the light of day in Europe or Japan had uncontrolled power over the life and limbs, the body and soul, of the most highly cultivated Chinaman in the city."

The Japanese generals were the first to repress these bloody outrages. "In worldly wisdom," Dr. Dillon says, "as in their commissariat and hospital organisation, the Japs were considerably ahead of the best of the Christian allies." The Russians seem to have been the worst, as might have been expected, and next to them the French. No quarter was given by them to the Chinese, whom they shot down like dogs irrespective of age or sex. "The British forces," Dr. Dillon says, and one is glad to hear it, "took prisoners when possible and looked after the wounded." But down to the end of October none of the other European troops "approved the principle or imitated the practice."

Up in far Manchuria, over which the grim paw of the Russian bear has been laid heavily, the Chinese have been massacred in myriads. "An Eye-Witness," writing to the *Westminster Gazette* from Blagovestschensk, told a tale of horror that could scarcely be eclipsed by the worst records of the past. Whole towns were wiped out of existence. A district inhabited by at least 100,000 Chinese had been turned into a desert. Steaming down the Amour the ship's paddles were obstructed every minute by festering corpses of Chinese men, women, and children. "We shall never be able," this writer said, "to ascertain the exact number of those who perished by fire, by the sword, or by drowning; but we know now that nothing is left of those villages so animated a few days ago, and that a pall of deadly silence hangs over the whole countryside, which henceforth seems accursed for ever."

Students of Milton will recollect his terrible phrase of "Lust hard by Hate." The murderer and the violator are brothers, or at least first cousins. Where the Christian "civilisers" have gone they have paid no respect whatever to the Chinese women, whom they have too often treated like Jack the Rippers, violating them first and stabbing and slashing them to death afterwards. Let us hear Dr. Dillon:—

> "Females of all ages have been abused to death..... Wives and daughters hanged themselves on trees or drowned themselves in garden-wells in order to escape a much worse lot. Chinese women honestly believed that no more terrible fate could overtake them than to fall alive into the hands of Europeans and Christians. And it is to be feared that they were right. Buddhism and Confucianism have their martyrs to chastity, whose heroic feats no martyrology will ever record. Some of those obscure, but right-minded girls and women hurled themselves into the river, and, finding only three feet of water there, kept their heads under the surface until death had set his seal on the sacrifice of their life..... But a large number of ill-starred women fell alive into the hands of the allied troops. I saw some of them in Pekin and Tungtschau, but already dead, with frightful gashes in the breast, or skulls smashed in, and one with a horribly mutilated body."

But the infamy of this treatment of Chinese women, guilty of no offence whatever against their outragers, is best seen in a specific instance. We quote from Dr. Dillon again:—

> "'What in heaven's name is this?' I exclaimed, one day, thumping with my knuckles a very big black box in the house of a rich man, who may then have been in Abraham's bosom or in Dives' company. The house was in Tungtschau, the sombre receptacle in one of the largest rooms, and a torturing stench proceeded from it. 'It is the girls, sir; three girls," answered my attendant, who was a European. 'Their corpses are lying in the box there,' he explained. 'Who put them there?' 'Some officers.' 'Are you quite sure of it?' 'Yes, sir; I was here when it was being done.' 'Did you see the young women yourself?' 'I did. They were the daughters of the man who owns the house. The officers raped them, and then had them stabbed with bayonets. When they were dead they were put into this box, and it was covered up, as you see.' 'Good God, what a dismal state of things we are coming to.' 'That sort of thing happened before, sir. Very often, too, I can tell you. There were worse cases than this. These here were raped and stabbed; others have been raped to death, and got no stabbing.'"

Even in the month of September, Dr. Dillon says, three French soldiers entered a house in a respectable part of Peking which was then under Russian "protection." The father, mother, and daughter were all at home. Seeing the maiden, the scoundrels resolved to deflower her. First they shot the parents dead, to prevent their interference; but the victim's screams were heard by Chinamen next door, and they induced a European to go with them and see what was going on, and on the arrival of these unexpected visitors the three scoundrels decamped.

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Mr. George Lynch says that when the French general was remonstrated with about the frequent occurrence of disgraceful outrages by his troops, he replied: "It is impossible to restrain the gallantry of the French soldier." Gallantry, forsooth! Was there ever a worse prostitution of the word than applying it to the deeds of men more brutal than wild beasts in a state of rut? For even those beasts practise a measure of courtship with their females.

Dr. Dillon exonerates English and German officers from blame in this respect. On the whole, however, he says that "To compare nationalities in respect of the guilt of their representatives would be at once misleading to the historian and prejudicial to the cause of humanity." Outrages on women were frequent and heinous, and continued to be perpetrated long after looting and massacre were checked by the generals.

"The policy of the Powers," Dr. Dillon says, "is a sowing of the wind, and the harvest reaped will surely be the whirlwind." Chinese men prize the honor of their women as much as we do, and Chinese women are as chaste as our own. The exploits of these Christian beasts in China will, therefore, dwell like a consuming fire of vengeance in the hearts of thousands of Chinese husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. They will long for the day of retribution. And it may come a good deal sooner than many imagine. It is impossible to keep China from arming and drilling. Her population is too great, her territory is too vast, her resources are too prodigious. Christian Europe is driving her into militarism in mere self-defence. She has always desired peace, but she is being hounded into war. And when she realises Sir Robert Hart's prediction, and has twenty million soldiers, all equipped with the most scientific weapons of offence, let the Christian Powers look to themselves! For their own orgy of blood and lust may be repeated at their own expense.

Why is it, we have to ask in conclusion, that so little protest has been raised over here against the conduct of these Christian beasts in China? The first answer is that they *are* Christians. That fact seems to make all the difference in the world. It is only the sins of the "heathen" that stink in the nostrils of the devotees of the meek and lowly Jesus. The second answer is that the Chinese question is not being taken up by any great political party here for the sake of political capital. So slender is the real disinterested love of "righteousness" bred in the average Christian after nearly two thousand years of the "only true religion." This truth should be realised by Freethinkers, and it should make them more zealous than ever in attacking the Christian superstition. If we must have a religion, let us discard the Religion of Christ and try the Religion of Humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XV.

(Continued from p. 525.)

"The simple fact is, that there do not exist any reasons for the Christianisation of China, except from the standpoint of the missionaries themselves. Their superstitions, if ridiculous in European eyes, are, surely, perfectly harmless. Wherein lies the moral harm of Fêng Shui? or in that curious, widespread belief in the duality of nature? The errors they fall into as to the meaning of natural phenomena are not such as Christianity can dispel. The Bible itself has been shown to be full of similar errors. A deeper and wider scientific knowledge alone can cure them."—T. C. HAYLLAR, *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895.

"For the most part the 'religious world' is so occupied in hating and despising the beliefs of the heathen, whose vast regions of the globe are painted black on the missionary maps, that they have little time or capacity left to understand them."—DR. E. B. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture* (1873), vol. i., p. 420.

IT is hardly possible to understand the working of Christian missions in China without dealing in some degree with the character of the Chinese. Many high authorities assure us that it is impossible for a European to thoroughly understand the Chinese character in all its ramifications. This may be true—the Chinese experience the same difficulty in understanding ours—but still there are points of their character we can understand and appreciate. Generally speaking, with a few exceptions, the missionaries exaggerate the faults and peculiarities; deny, or belittle the virtues, and ridicule the religion of the Chinese.

The officials of the societies who send missionaries out expect them to write for the edification of the supporters of missionary work, upon whose subscriptions they depend. Therefore, the blacker the character of the Chinese, and the more ridiculous their beliefs are painted, the more need for the administrations of the missionary.

To deal with this mass of misrepresentation would require another series of articles, at the risk of wearying our readers. However, let those who are interested in the subject take the works of the Rev. J. Macgowan (of the London Missionary Society), *Sidelights on Chinese Life* and *How England Saved China*, and, after reading the character of the Chinese as portrayed there, let him, as an antidote, read the fine work of Mr. R F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (Murray: 1910). Mr. Johnston, as District Officer and Magistrate of Wei-hai-wei, has an intimate knowledge of the Chinese. So, also, had the late Sir Robert Hart, the famous Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, who knew and greatly admired the Chinese character, and whose book, *These from the Land of Sinim* (Chapman and Hall: 1901), shows how things appear looked at from the Chinese point of view. Professor H. A. Giles—Professor of Chinese at Cambridge University, and formerly one of our Consuls in China—is another authority whose works, *Chinese Sketches* and *The Civilisation of China* (Home University Library: 1s), form a corrective to missionary animadversions. Sir Hiram Maxim has also done great service by compiling, from many of the best books written on China, a damning indictment of missionaries and their methods, in his *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book* (Watts: 7*s.* 6d), which should adorn the shelves of every Freethinker. We ourselves are indebted to this work for our acquaintance with M. Eugene Simon's valuable work on China (now out of print), which should be read. Dr. Morrison's book, *An Australian in China*, is another eye-opener.

Another cause of the missionaries' bad opinion of the Chinese is, no doubt, because they are only acquainted with the dregs of the population. A foreigner in England who was only acquainted with the slum-dwellers of London, Liverpool, and Manchester, or of any of our great cities, and compiled a book dealing with our manners, customs, and religion, from the experiences so acquired, would not give a very faithful account of our character as a whole. Probably we should not recognise the portrait. Yet this is the position, generally speaking, of the missionary in China. As Mr. Arthur Diosy, in his fine work, *The New Far East*, has pointed out:—

"The modern Missionaries devote themselves, almost invariably, to the conversion of the lower classes. To appreciate the futility of this proceeding, we have only to imagine Britain governed absolutely by an administration composed of Newdigate Prizemen, men who had graduated high in Classical Honors, and Senior Wranglers. What would we think of the wisdom of Buddhists who, wishing to convert the whole of the British Empire to their faith, commenced operations with a mission to the costermongers in Golden-lane and Newport Market, and to the inmates of the Salvation Army's 'Shelters'? That is, broadly indicated, the position of Missionary enterprise in the Far East..... Unfortunately for the progress of Christianity in China, the very fact that it is there more than anywhere else, the religion of the lowly and oppressed, attracts to the Chapel a crowd of wastrels and social wrecks, who requiring, as they do, the consolations of the faith more urgently than their more prosperous brethren—yet do great harm to the Missionary cause. If dishonest, and they are often sad impostors, making a trade of their conversion, they bring discredit on the Missionaries and make them ridiculous in the eyes of the Chinese; if

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> honest, their sad plight and the low social scale to which they have fallen, make their better-situated countrymen hesitate to join the same congregation. The Chinese authorities are continually complaining that every Mission-house becomes a veritable Alsatia for all the vagrom men and shiftless fellows of the neighborhood. This complaint is exaggerated, no doubt, but there is a substratum of truth. In short, Christianity in China is not 'fashionable'; it is not even considered 'respectable,' and that is a great drawback to its success with a nation that prizes respectability—'face,' as it calls it—above all things."*

Mr. Dicey adds that the imperfect command of language leads to absurd and irreverent expressions where solemn words were intended. The insufficient acquaintance of novices with Chinese manners, customs, and thoughts, and the dictatorial interference of missionary societies and boards at home, totally ignorant of Chinese conditions, "have caused millions of Chinese to look upon Christianity and Western civilisation with scorn and loathing."

Mr. Archibald Little declared that "no respectable Chinaman would ever admit a missionary into his home." †

Sir Henry Norman tells us that:—

> "the ordinary foreigner carefully avoids the employment of the native Christian in any subordinate capacity, having found by experience that in many cases he has only lost his native virtues to acquire foreign vices in their place. Conversion to Christianity is looked upon by many natives merely as a means of an easier livelihood. A friend of mine asked a Chinese servant, whom he had previously known, what he was engaged in doing. He replied: 'My have got that Jesus pidgin.' He was no more intentionally irreverent in saying this than I am in quoting it; he merely meant that the profession of Christianity, with its comfortable concomitants, was his new occupation."‡

The Chinese have two great failings which have contributed a great deal to the siege of troubles they have endured of late years—their conservatism and their pride.

Unlike the Japanese—who foresaw the inevitable conflict with the Western Powers, and casting aside their antique weapons, borrowed the arms and the science of the West to repel the West—China made no effort to meet or to parry the approaching onslaught, made no effort even to understand the "barbarians" or "foreign devils," as she terms, and always has termed, the inhabitants of other countries. In her ignorance she did not know of the power or resources, or even the existence of the other nations adjoining and over the sea. Her pride would not allow her to acknowledge that any of the outer barbarians could rival her ancient civilisation or threaten her imperial majesty. Then, again, the inbred conservatism of the Chinese is against innovation or reform of any kind. No Chinaman would ever dream of doing anything differing from what his father and grandfather did before him; it would be in the highest degree disloyal, setting himself up to know better than his ancestors. The Chinese exist now, in inland China, exactly as they existed more than three thousand years ago. What China really wants is not religion—the Western nations are discarding it themselves—but science; a knowledge of geography, history, engineering, and the technical knowledge to place her upon an equal footing with her neighbors.

As Mr. Eames, the historian of the English in China, observes:—

> "The conception that the Emperor is divinely appointed has affected Chinese ideas of geography. These are based on the supposition that China is situated in the middle of the earth, while all the other nations, grouped around in a respectful circle, make obeisances in a manner not unlike that in which Joseph's sheaf was worshiped by those of his brethren. The name by which the Chinese prefer to designate their country is the Middle Kingdom. Sometimes they improve upon this by adding the word 'flowery.' They seek to impress upon the outer barbarian the fact that their land is peculiarly favored by Heaven by being bright and sunny, while all the rest of mankind have to dwell in the dark and desolate regions of the earth. In their opinion, the sovereigns of other countries, ruling over lands that have been wont to bask in the sunshine of Heaven's favor, are but vassals of the Son of Heaven, towards whom he exercises a benignant toleration. To this is partly due that feeling of contempt which every Chinese feels towards all foreigners."*

Until quite recently, says the same writer, the Chinese believed that they were superior in power to all the nations of Europe combined; and—

> "to this day the Chinese comfort themselves with the belief that they only have to develop their national wealth and they will be able to defy the world. When it comes to morality, the merest Chinese coolie shows by his look of conscious superiority, as he passes us in the street, that to his mind the best of us are but outer barbarians" (p. 228).

Another competent writer, who knows the Chinese intimately, says:—

> "The Chinese, whose education is confined to a study of their own classics and the acquiring of a good literary style, are often quite unaware that there are other nations in the world besides themselves. It is not that they think they are the finest nation, as we all do, every one of us, if we tell the hidden secrets of our hearts, but that they believe there are no others; only border tribes, sometimes turbulent, with wild sort of chieftains over them, who come to China either because they have no land and are weary of living always on the sea, or because theirs are such poverty-stricken districts that there is tea, no silk, no sunshine to ripen anything. Therefore, we come as suppliants to China, begging of them to trade with us and let us have some of their good things; and then, in a turbulent fashion, force them to take our opium or the like in exchange."†

It may be thought the Chinese must admire our mechanical inventions, but, as Mr. Arthur Smith observes, these things do not make the impression we should expect or desire. "They recognise the fact that we are their superiors in mechanical contrivances; but many of these contrivances are regarded in the light in which we should look upon feats of sleight-of-hand, curious, inexplicable, and useless."‡ The Rev. J. E. Hardy says the inventiveness of the white man, in the eyes of the Chinese is "no more worthy of respect than is the cunning of the fox or the strength of an elephant."§ Mr. Arthur Smith also observes that—

> "From a variety of causes the typical Chinese scholar regards all foreign ideals as inferior to those of the Chinese, and the effort to introduce them into China with the same mixture of amusement, contempt, and indignation which we should instinctively feel toward an organised attempt to import into a Christian land the religious system of Mohammed, to the displacement of Christianity. This is his most moderate and temperate view. When he becomes at all excited and intolerant, he views the advent of Western ways and moral teachings precisely as well-educated Westerners would the propagation of Anarchistic tenets and the inculcation of Nihilistic practises among the people of our own land."‖

Nor can we be surprised at this when we remember the series of terrible calamities the Chinese have experienced, due to missionary aggression. As Sir Robert Hart has remarked, the very presence of the missionaries—

> "has been felt to be a standing insult, for does it not tell the Chinese their conduct is bad and requires changes, their cult inadequate and wants addition, their gods despicable and to be cast into the gutter, their forefathers lost, and themselves only to be saved by accepting the missionary's teaching?"¶

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

* Arthur Dicey, *The New Far East*, pp. 221-2.
† A. Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p. 236.
‡ Sir Henry Norman, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, p. 307.

* J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, p. 105.
† Mrs. Archibald Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, p. 47.
‡ Arthur Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 103.
§ J. E. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, p. 330.
‖ Arthur Smith, *China in Convulsion*, p. 77.
¶ Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 136.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Howell Smith, B.A., 3.30, "Where are your Hospitals?" 6.15, "Christianity and Civilisation."

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "Christianity: Its Practical Value?" 7.30, Miss Kough, "Why Persecutest thou Me?"

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

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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The local traditions of Christianity are clear enough during the last 1,300 or 1,400 years. It is during the first two or three centuries that the chain fails.

—MACAULAY.

"Only a Woman's Hair."

ANY man who can take Bacon in one hand and Shakespeare in the other, having read them both, and say that they were written by the same hand and display the same faculties of mind, is almost past praying for—from a literary point of view. Mark you, having read them both is a necessary criterion. Catching at occasional words and ideas is futile. Such things were in the air for all men of brains and reading. No, it is the weight of the whole work that must tell. And, judged in that way, is it possible for anyone with even a moderate literary sense to hesitate in his verdict?

Many years ago the present writer pointed out the difference in the styles of Bacon and Shakespeare, and in their ways of thinking. Bacon's style, as may be seen by comparing the first and last editions of the Essays, tended to greater simplicity; Shakespeare's style, as may be seen by comparing the earlier with the later plays, tended to greater complexity. This was really because Bacon's mind did not *grow* like Shakespeare's. He lacked the creative energy. From first to last he had dignity, but no fire; but the blood of Shakespeare ran hot from *Venus and Adonis* to the *Tempest*. His restraint was not that of a cooling nature, but that of a great, patient, and perfected artist. And see how differently they *think*. Bacon's wisdom of life is open, worldly, and largely cynical; it is that of a very distinguished player in the great game. Shakespeare saw all that just as well, but he saw behind it; perhaps we should say below it—for the difference is really between superficiality and profundity. The great game palls in time; it is the more intimate things of life that outlast and outweigh the more public. When the doom falls on Macbeth, it is the death of his wife, more than the loss of his crown, that fills his mouth with ashes; and when Hamlet is at his last gasp he thinks only of his good name, and "the rest is silence"; but that silence held his love as it was to hold his life—the love that leapt to his lips as he leapt into her grave beside Laertes.

> "I loved Ophelia: forty thousand brothers
> Could not, with all their quantity of love,
> Make up my sum."

Precisely in their treatment of that very passion of Love, as the present writer observed so many years ago, lies perhaps the most fundamental difference between Bacon and Shakespeare. Bacon's essay on Love is cynical. The man of the world, the well-bred statesman, looked on Love "as the child of folly." To him it was a more or less inevitable nuisance; a tragi-comical perturbation of social life. Shakespeare saw in it the very mainspring of existence; in which he was true to nature—and evolution. Bacon says that Love speaks "in a perpetual hyperbole." Shakespeare knew that too. He said that the lover "sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt." But he knew more. Behind the hyperbole was the passion that made it, and that was the thing beyond price; not the "child of folly," but the inspirer, the chastener, the sustainer. "Conscience is born of love," said Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets; and this all-profound sentence, this full-inspired oracle, is like a glove flung in the face of Bacon's shallower philosophy.

The present writer was, long afterwards, delighted to see this very point raised in Colonel Ingersoll's splendid lecture on Shakespeare. Ingersoll quoted what Bacon wrote of Love, and added on his own part the simple words, "The author of *Romeo and Juliet* never wrote that." Only nine words. Yet they are enough. To the knowing reader everything is there.

Turning from the greatest of our poets to the greatest of our generals, the magnificent Marlborough, we may remark that by far the most important thing in the world to him was his Sarah; the beautiful, witty, termagant great Duchess, with a feminine brain to match the masculine one of her husband. When he died she opened a cabinet, in which he kept in secrecy all he most valued, and she found a mass of her own hair. Years before, when furious because he had disobeyed her, she had resolved to mortify him; and the rest shall be told in the words of Mr. Fitzgerald Molloy, who has written her Life under the title or *The Queen's Comrade*:—

> "Knowing that her beautiful and abundant hair was a source of pride and delight to him, she had impetuously cut it from her head. The shorn tresses had been left in a room through which he must pass, and in a place where he must see them. But he came and went, saw and spoke to her, showing neither anger, sorrow, nor surprise. When he next quitted the house she ran to secure her tresses, but they had vanished, and on a consultation with her looking-glass she saw how foolish a thing she had done. But she said nothing about her shorn locks, nor did he, and she never knew what had become of them until they were found by her among those things he held most precious."

Is it a wonder that the great Sarah asked with amazement if anyone imagined that she could marry another man after having been the wife of John Churchill?

One is reminded of a darker picture, connected with one who stands alone in English literature, as he really stood alone in life. After the death of Swift there was found a lock of Stella's hair. It was enclosed in a paper, on which he had written the words: "*Only a woman's hair.*" Could pathos go further? Is it not more touching than a storm of ejaculations or a deluge of tears? Thackeray moralised over it in his too facile way, but Swift frightened him, and he did not see to the heart of this mystery. Read the "Journal" with its "little language," then read that "*Only a woman's hair*," and then go your way, sobered and softened, as one who has lighted on an unspeakable tragedy.

Bacon would have smiled at that "*Only a woman's hair.*" Another proof (he would have said) of what he had declared of Love that "in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury," and that "great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion." Shakespeare would have had quite other thoughts. He would have understood how a lock of hair could be more to a man than the Lord Chancellorship of England.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Study of Religion.

NOWADAYS one does not care to rob clergymen of any little comfort they may find in the religious situation. There is so much to discourage and so little to cheer them. Church attendances steadily diminish, there is a general complaint as to the falling off in subscriptions, and heresies of all kinds find voice in the pulpit, while those who protest are plainly told they are old-fashioned and need to move with the times. Popular preachers are driven to political subjects to attract audiences, and there are serious proposals for adopting the cinematograph as a regular adjunct to the Sunday service. In America, a company has actually been formed for this purpose, although it naturally promises to restrict itself to religious and educational subjects. Still, the thing may grow, and we have no doubt that the younger portion of the congregation will find Samson's exploits with the Philistines, or Jonah's adventures with the whale interesting enough. Parsons must live, churches must be maintained; and if this cannot be done on the old lines new methods must be adopted.

No one, therefore, will grudge the Rev. Dr. Neville Figgis extracting comfort from the reflection that there are many signs of our living "once more in an age of faith." There is an awakened interest in religion. "The spirit of scientific research has become alive to the fact of religion as a human phenomenon, and it is studied with increasing enthusiasm and research among all kinds of races and in every stage of culture." Therefore, Dr. Figgis is pleased, because "once religion is seen to be a natural and inevitable fact.....an increasing minority will turn to that religion which is most pure, most emphatically religious, most representative—the religion of religions." The steps are simple. An awakened interest in religion leads to a study of religions among all races of people; having studied these religions, people are driven to the recognition of Christianity as the purest and most representative, with the result that we shall all end in being reunited to the Christian faith.

This is quite an idyllic prospect—from the Christian point of view. Only one can recall a time when the recognition of religion as a natural phenomenon was resented as gross infidelity. And so in truth it was; for religion in the doctrinal and Christian sense is not a mere natural phenomenon. It stands in a category of its own. The orthodox doctrine of revelation involved this. Religion was revealed to man because he could not have acquired it by any other means—at least, not true religion, and a false religion was worse than none at all. At any rate, Dr. Figgis's thankfulness appears to be excessive. It is not warranted by the facts. The greatest and most confirmed Atheist living does not doubt that religion is a natural—a human fact. It would be sheer lunacy to doubt it. In human thought there are only two ultimate categories. One is supernatural and the other natural. The Freethinker does not believe in the former; he does pin his whole faith on the supremacy of the latter. And certainly no Freethinker was ever lunatic enough to deny the existence of religion. He affirms it "as a natural and inevitable fact," only he explains it—and there is no surer way of killing religion than by explanation. A religion explained is a religion doomed. That is why all Churches, Christian and non-Christian, appeal ultimately to man's sense of mystery. Faith lives on the unintelligible, and churches are built on the unexplainable.

Dr. Figgis is quite right in saying that religion is now being studied with enthusiasm, and that this study is pursued among all races and in all stages of culture. In this direction, as in many others, the pioneers have been Freethinkers. In our own days the names of two such men as Tylor and Frazer are enough to prove this. Distinguished religionists such as the late Robertson Smith—dismissed from his post for heresy—have done valuable work, but the honor of leading the way rests with the unbelievers. And there are two reasons why unbelievers led the way. In the first place there was the necessity of meeting Christianity on its own ground and demonstrating the hollowness of its claims. Events have moved so rapidly during the last generation or so that we seem ages removed from the time when educated Christians really believed that the doctrines and teachings and symbols of Christianity were peculiar to that religion. It required a long fight to force from Christians a general recognition that Christian doctrines and symbols existed in other religions, some of them already ancient when Christianity was in its cradle. The Christian replied that all these were inventions of the Devil or copied from Christianity. To-day there are few educated Christians who would deny that the Christian miracles, the story of a crucified and resurrected Savior, a virgin birth, a day of judgment, heaven and hell, all have their counterparts in other religions. Christian preachers have not yet developed enough honesty in the pulpit to tell these things to their congregation, but they know that many of their hearers are aware of the truth, and, if pressed, would admit as true what has been said.

Secondly, there has been an enthusiasm for religious research, because it was seen that the truth concerning one religion could only be derived from a study of all. What can one make of the Christian doctrine of Deity by itself? Little or nothing. It is a mere incomprehensible jumble, or, at best, offensive and contradictory so far as it is understandable. But when we take this doctrine and relate it to the belief in God among other peoples, study its growth as a natural fact, and note the causes that have led to its development and modification, we see that the whole question is a historical and psychological one. The question is no longer whether there is a God; the vital question is how did people come to believe in one? The question of veracity gives place to one of origin. By examining the beliefs of all peoples we can in thought stand at the cradle of Deity. We can see the social and mental conditions that gave it birth. Gods are reduced to a species, with all the varieties classified and labelled in the anthropological museum.

Or the great Christian belief in miracles. Who now seriously bothers to prove that the Christian miracles were actual historic facts? It is with them as with Deity—no longer a question did they occur, but only one of how did people come to believe in their occurrence? Research showed the Christian miracles to be in no sense peculiar. Other religions had theirs, and of an exactly similar kind. Still further, miracle was pushed back to the region of magic, to a time when men in their ignorance of nature believed anything was possible, because nothing was certain. The magic-working of primitive mankind became the miracle-working of the later and more elaborated religions. And the miraculous element in religion persisted just so long as there existed a type of mind suitable to it. Again there is nothing before us but a problem of historical psychology. It is not a question of evidence at all. Evidence does not establish a miracle, and it very seldom disproves one; still less seldom does it disprove the possibility of a miracle. People either *outgrow* the miraculous or they continue to believe in it.

The enthusiasm for research has, then, made plain three things. First, the fact that all religions are fundamentally alike. They all originate in the same conditions, and involve the same fundamental beliefs. Second, that these beliefs owe their origin to human ignorance of natural causation; and until that ignorance is removed, religion is indestructible. Thirdly, the primitive mind persists under all stages of culture. In relation to religion, there are worshipers in twentieth-century churches who are as truly primitive as the uncivilised inhabitants of an African forest. To the student of comparative religion there is no vital difference between the incantations of a primitive medicine-man and the peti-

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tions of an Anglican, Catholic, or Nonconformist preacher. The prayers of a Church of England clergyman for the success of the British arms is upon precisely the same level as the religious dance of a North American tribe before setting out on a fighting expedition. Scientific research has indeed established the unity of religion, but it is a unity rooted in the uncivilised nature of mankind.

Finally, the scientific interest in religion is partly due to a perception of the truth that superstition plays a large part in determining the form of early society and of early institutions, and that no study of social origins can be adequate which ignores this factor. Far from belittling the influence of religion on life, the Freethinker has been foremost in pointing out the enormous range and extent of its influence. That it has been an influence for evil makes no difference to this fact. But early society is so beclouded with superstition that there is not a single institution that escapes its influence. Birth, marriage, and death—family, social and political life—are all fashioned under the denominating influence of religious beliefs and fears. The consequence is that a study of social life, an examination of the significance of many of our surviving institutions, drives the student to a study of the origin and value of religious beliefs. The cheap sneer of uninformed Freethinkers that the militant unbeliever is flogging a dead horse because so many people have given up a belief in current forms of Christianity is thus quite wide of the mark. You cannot understand what a thing is until you know how it became what it is; and it is ultimately in the interests of a wider and more scientific sociology that the Freethinker insists upon a complete and careful study of religion in all stages of culture.

We admit, then, that religion "is studied with increasing enthusiasm among all kinds of races and in every stage of culture." But how can this be converted into an increasing belief in the veracity and value of religion? That is really what Dr. Figgis wishes his readers and hearers to believe, although he does not say it in so many words. How many of the master names in anthropology are believers in the Christian religion? Very few, I fancy. Some may believe in a transfigured Christianity, which, on close examination would turn out to be not Christianity at all, but a misnamed humanitarianism. The vast majority of investigators too clearly realise the level of culture betokened by orthodox Christian beliefs to have any real faith in them. When a man has traced the idea of a God or of a soul back to their origin in the fear-haunted dream of a primitive savage, what is the use of all the fantastic arguments that have been invented in the name of philosophy to support those ideas? When scientific research takes in hand the study of a delusion, its days are numbered. The end may be delayed, but it cannot be averted. It does, indeed, point out that religion is "a natural and inevitable fact"; but so is many another delusion that has flourished during the history of mankind. But the inevitability of religion's appearance on the human stage is offset by the inevitability of its disappearance. The ancient salutation, "O king, live for ever!" never extended by a single hour the life of the individual to whom it was addressed. That the gods can live for ever is a belief just as surely rooted in delusion, and as certain of disproof by the logic of facts. The gods come and the gods go; and while the tenure of existence may be longer with some than with others, the same fate awaits them all.

C. Cohen.

Then and Now.

Thirty-two years ago a memorable debate took place between Colonel Ingersoll and Judge Jeremiah Black upon the subject of "The Christian Religion." That discussion is of interest to-day because it illustrates the method of attack and defence generally followed at that time both in America and this country. The first thing that strikes us is the comprehensiveness of Colonel Ingersoll's survey of the field to be covered. His statement of what he understood to be the fundamental doctrines of Christianity was such as to necessitate a critical examination of the whole Bible, because at that time the whole Bible was regarded as the Word of God. It is true that Bishop Colenso's great work on the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua was already in circulation; but it should be borne in mind that both Houses of Convocation had condemned it as heretical, and that Bishop Gray, of Cape Town, had publicly excommunicated him. It is also true that *Essays and Reviews* had been published ten years prior to the occurrence of the debate, but we cannot afford to ignore the facts that for the space of four long years after the publication of that famous book a violent storm raged in academic and clerical circles, and that two of the contributors to it were condemned in the Court of Arches. The truth is, that the Protestants of thirty years ago still believed in the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Hence to make his attack on Christianity effective, Colonel Ingersoll was obliged to begin by attacking the popular doctrine about Holy Scripture. This portion of the discussion has only an historical interest now. On critical questions the generality of Protestant scholars stand to-day where Freethought advocates stood thirty, forty, and even a hundred years ago. What the Colonel maintained was that there are "a few reasons for thinking that a few passages, at least, in the Old Testament are the product of a barbarous people," and that the moral code of which Jehovah was believed to be the author "is in many respects abhorrent to every good and tender man." There was nothing extravagant about that statement, and it is often made to-day from Christian pulpits; but its effect on Judge Black was to make him boisterously angry. Forgetting his manners and his logic he thus burst out:—

> "Does Mr. Ingersoll know what he is talking about? The moral code of the Bible consists of certain immutable rules to govern the conduct of all men, at all times, and in all places in their private and personal relations with one another. It is entirely separate and apart from the civil polity, the religious forms, the sanitary provisions, the police regulations, and the system of international law laid down for the special and exclusive observance of the Jewish people. This is a distinction which every intelligent man knows how to make. Has Mr. Ingersoll fallen into the egregious blunder of confusing these things? or, understanding the true sense of his words, is he rash and shameless enough to assert that the moral code of the Bible excites the abhorrence of good people? In fact, and in truth, this moral code, which he reviles, instead of being abhorred, is entitled to, and has received, the profoundest respect of all honest and sensible people" (*The Works of Robert G. Ingersoll*, vol. vi., p. 36).

There is a true Christian Evidence ring about that passage. The opponent is coolly set down as being neither good, honest, intelligent, nor sensible; and nothing is advanced but bare assertions, which Mr. Ingersoll characterises as "base and spurious coins." Then the renowned Freethinker delivers himself of the following wise and true utterance:—

> "We have a right to rejudge the justice even of a god. No one should throw away his reason—the fruit of all experience. It is the intellectual capital of the soul, the only light, the only guide, and without it the brain becomes the palace of an idiot king, attended by a retinue of thieves and hypocrites."

The supreme fault of Christianity is its remoteness from real life. That is why it is made to rest upon the immoral doctrine of the atonement and to base salvation upon belief. Colonel Ingersoll sketched the history of the sacrificial system of the Israelites and then said:—

> "This terrible system is supposed to have culminated in the sacrifice of Christ. His blood took the place of all other. It is necessary to shed no more. The law at last is satisfied, satiated, surfeited. The idea that God wants blood is at the bottom of the atonement, and rests upon the most fearful savagery. How can sin be

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transferred to animals, and how can the shedding of the blood of animals atone for the sins of men?"

Ingersoll's arguments against salvation by faith and through the atonement of Christ are logically and ethically sound. No honorable man, he contends, would be willing to let the innocent suffer for him. Such a willingness would amply prove that the man was utterly unworthy of the sacrifice. "What would we think of a man who would allow another to die for a crime that he himself had committed?" The curious thing is that the doctrine of the atonement against which Ingersoll fulminated with such eloquence thirty years ago has now been abandoned by nearly all Protestant divines. It is no longer preached except by an old-fashioned clergyman here and there. But Judge Black defended it with great earnestness and declared that Colonel Ingersoll disgraced his own intellect by describing it as absurd, unjust, and immoral. Then he said:—

> "The plan of salvation, or any plan for the rescue of sinners from the legal operation of Divine justice, could have been framed only in the councils of the Omniscient. Necessarily, its heights and depths are not easily fathomed by finite intelligence. But the greatest, ablest, wisest, and most virtuous men that ever lived have given it their profoundest consideration and found it to be not only authorised by revelation, but theoretically conformed to their best and highest conceptions of infinite goodness. Nevertheless, here is a rash and superficial man, without training or habits of reflection, who, upon a mere glance, declares that it 'must be abandoned,' because it *seems to him* 'absurd, unjust, an immoral.' I would not abridge his freedom of thought or speech, and the *argumentum ad verecundiam* would be lost upon him. Otherwise, I might suggest that, when he finds all authority, human and Divine, against him, he had better speak in a tone less arrogant."

We thus see that Judge Black had a characteristically Christian style of treating his opponent. Unable to meet his arguments, he turned round to heap abuse upon him, to call him "a rash and superficial man, without training or habits of reflection," who spoke arrogantly from an empty head. That method is still in operation. Many a defender of the faith has nothing else to fall back upon. To himself he whispers maliciously, "Since I cannot answer him, I will fling brickbats at him; I will pelt him with foul epithets; I will blacken his character for him; and for God's sake I will lie about him like any trooper." It is a very hoary-headed method, and it always goes down with the mob; but it does not help the cause on behalf of which it is employed. Not long ago two Sunday-school teachers, out of mere curiosity, attended a Freethought lecture. The hall was crammed with Christian believers who did everything within their power to prevent the lecturer from being heard. They nearly succeeded, and felt particularly proud of themselves; but the two teachers were so disgusted with their cowardly behavior that they immediately resigned their Sunday posts and avowed themselves Freethinkers. The curious thing is that fairly intelligent apologists do not realise that slander is at once the most cowardly and the most futile of weapons, and that its use is bound sooner or later to react upon the user. Christians have always taken a special delight in belittling and reviling Paganism, especially the Paganism of ancient Greece and Rome. Judge Black spoke of it in the following extravagant language:—

> "Reflect what kind of a world this was when the disciples of Christ undertook to reform it, and compare it with the condition in which their teachings have put it. In its mighty metropolis, the centre of its intellectual and political power, the best men were addicted to vices so debasing that I could not even allude to them without soiling the paper I write upon. All manner of unprincipled wickedness was practised in the private life of the whole population without concealment or shame, and the magistrates were thoroughly and universally corrupt. Benevolence in any shape was altogether unknown. The helpless and the weak got neither justice nor mercy. There was no relief for the poor, no succor for the sick, no refuge for the unfortunate. In all pagandom there was not a hospital, asylum, almshouse, or organised charity of any sort."

Since that vile calumny was written thirty-two years ago it has been demonstrated beyond the possibility of a doubt that the picture of ancient Rome therein painted is an entire caricature. Even a bigot like the late Dr. Reich and a great scholar like Professor Harnack have given it the lie direct. But what we wish to point out is that Christian apologists, in pursuing this method of exalting Christianity, have overreached the mark, and a strong reaction has already set in both in America and Great Britain, as well as on the Continent, in favor of Paganism. At several of our seats of learning champions of the cheerful and sane outlook upon life of the Greeks of the fifth century B.C. are hard at work sowing the seed of a new, saner, and more virile Paganism in the minds of their students and readers which, based upon modern scientific knowledge, is, in their confident hope, destined to supersede the Christian religion and initiate the establishment of wholesome and happier conditions of life all round. Literature and science are at last joining hands and working harmoniously towards the bringing about of so glorious an end.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XVI.

(*Continued from p. 541.*)

> "Why should a Chinaman abandon, at the bidding of anyone, a cult so essentially humane and deeply poetical as the worship of his ancestors? The Chinaman who did so would not be a better Chinaman. The chances are that he would be a vagabond, a déclassé item, instead of a respectable link in an endless chain of social continuity."—T. C. HAVILLAN, "The Chinese View of Missionaries," *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895.

> "I believe it to be strictly within the limits of truth to say that foreign missionary effort in China has been productive of far more harm than good. Instead of serving as a link between Chinese and foreigners, the missionaries have formed a growing obstacle."—SIR HENRY NORMAN, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, p. 304.

AND why should missionaries be sent to China? To teach the Chinese morality? That is like carrying coals to Newcastle; for, in the teachings of Confucius—who lived five hundred years before Christ—the Chinese possess one of the finest codes of morals in the world.

Even the much-belauded Golden Rule, which many Christians regard as containing the very pith and essence of Christianity, "Do not unto others that which thou wouldest not that they should do unto thee," was taught by Confucius, not only once, but "again and again."* Professor Giles, who has made China and the Chinese a lifelong study, and who is one of the highest authorities on the subject, declares:—

> "The cardinal virtues which are most admired by Christians are fully inculcated in the Confucian Canon, and the general practice of these is certainly up to the average standard exhibited by foreign nations."†

Indeed, says Freeman-Clarke:—

> "The sacred literature of the Chinese is perfectly free from everything impure or offensive. There is not a line but what may be read aloud in every family circle."‡

Which is a great deal more than can be said for the Bible, which contains passages that no clergyman would dare to read from the pulpit to a mixed congregation.

How the Chinese regard these parts of the Holy Book may be judged from the following statement of Sir Henry Norman, who says:—

> "Protestant missionary tracts are distributed bearing coarse illustrations of such Biblical incidents as the swallowing of Jonah by the whale and the killing of Sisera by Jael. Moreover, up to the present, the Protestant missionaries have circulated the whole Bible in Chinese. They have recently seen their error, and are

* G. G. Alexander, *Confucius, the Great Teacher*, p. 272.

† H. A. Giles, *Religions of the World*, "Confucianism," pp. 26-7. Cited by R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, p. 307.

‡ Freeman-Clarke, *Ten Great Religions*, p. 61.

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now considering the advisability of following in the steps of the more circumspect Roman Catholics, and withholding certain parts obviously unfit for Oriental comprehension."*

Lord Curzon also remarks that:—

"The missionary societies do not seem to have sufficiently realised that the Holy Scriptures, which require in places some explanation, if not some expurgation, for ourselves, may stand in still greater need of editing for a community who care nothing about the customs or prepossessions of the ancient Jews, but who are invited to accept the entire volume as a revelation from on high."†

Then the missionaries outrage the most sacred sentiments of the Chinese by declaring that the ancestors they revere and worship are paying the penalty for their ignorance of Christianity by endless torments with devils in hell. Dr. Morrison quotes several missionaries as teaching this horrible doctrine, among them Mr. Broomhall, Secretary of the China Inland Mission and editor of the missionary magazine, *China's Millions*, as saying: "The heathen are all guilty in God's eyes; as guilty, they perish." Of another missionary in China who taught "hell," Dr. Morrison says: "There are hundreds in China who teach as he does."‡ As Mr. Hayllar well says:—

"But when we come to the supernatural basis of the Gospel, no common meeting-ground seems possible. The literates especially reject Christian miracles with contemptuous indifference. What the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius is to the Protestant, or the cures of Lourdes to the Paris physician, such are the supernatural chronicles of Holy Writ to the literate. His mental attitude towards all such matters is in the highest degree sceptical. Why, if there were to be stupendous events, material to his wellbeing in another life, should they have happened in a remote corner of Asia, outside the ken of the Middle Kingdom? The idea is as offensive to his patriotic pride as to his trained intelligence. Moreover, if there is but one true road to salvation, what has become of his ancestors, and the sages whose memory he venerates? Is it pretended that, instead of being objects of worship, they are expiating unconscious sins in endless and undreamt-of tortures? To be instructed at the same time that the best he can look forward to in the future is to share an unseen paradise with foreigners, whom it is his dearest wish on earth never to see again, is equally terrible."§

Look, then, says Dr. Morrison, at the enormous difficulties the missionaries raise for themselves in China:—

"They tell the Chinese inquirer that his unconverted father, who never heard the Gospel, has, like Confucius, perished eternally. But the chief of all virtues in China is filial piety; the strongest emotion that can move the heart of a Chinaman is the supreme desire to follow in the footsteps of his father. Conversion with him means not only eternal separation from the father who gave him life, but the 'immediate liberation of his ancestors to a life of beggary, to inflict sickness and all manner of evil on the neighborhood.'"‖

Because there is no one to appease the ancestral spirits by the performance of ancestral rights and propitiatory offerings.

To tell the Chinese that their great teacher, Confucius, affectionately known to them as the "uncrowned king," is in hell, is as great an outrage as it would be for Chinese or Indian missionaries to come over here and tell Christians that Jesus Christ is in hell.

And why should the Chinese give up the teaching of Confucius for that of Christ? Mr. R. F. Johnston emphatically declares that:—

"If China thinks, or Europe persuades her into the belief, that her backward position among the great Powers of the world is due to Confucianism, she will be doing a great wrong to the memory of one of her greatest sons and a greater wrong to herself."¶

This was in reply to the missionary, Griffis, who declared that "Confucius cut the tap-root of all true progress," and, therefore, was responsible for China's arrested development. "It is to be hoped," says Mr. Johnston further,

"for the sake of China that many centuries will elapse before Confucianism as a moral force, as a guide of life, fades away from the hearts and minds of the people" (p. 302).

Sir Robert Hart, for so many years Inspector-General of Chinese Maritime Customs, who passed nearly all his life in China and knew its people as intimately as any European can, was of the same opinion. Mr. Douglas Story, after observing that, "No European knows so much of China and the hidden things of its mysterious inner life as the Inspector-General," tells us that he was "a profound believer in the value of the Confucian philosophy as an educator of Chinese minds," and adds:—

"As Sir Robert himself told me, he advised the retention of the ancient ethical training for the four literary degrees according to the custom in China for over two thousand years, and then the addition to this curriculum of a fifth and final degree in Western science. He argued that by such means the best brains of the land would be instructed in the high moral precepts which are the theme of Chinese classics, and would at the conclusion of the course be in a fit state to imbibe and to profit by the teachings of modern science. 'Train your youth in the classics,' he said; instruct them in the philosophy of Confucius, and then, when their moral education is complete, let them turn to the lessons of modern thought and knowledge. In such way you will possess a well-built fire laid beneath a chimney which will ensure complete combustion."*

The teachings of Confucius are thoroughly adapted to the Chinese character. As Mr. Diosy well says:—

"There is no doubt that the Sage [Confucius], himself a typical Chinese, knew his countrymen thoroughly, and formed for them a rule of life he knew to be suited to their peculiarities. Hence the extraordinary sway his teaching has exercised since his death, in 479 B.C., over the minds of the Chinese. Surely, the memory of no man, not even of Mohammed, is venerated by so many millions at the present time, and this veneration of Confucius had existed for a thousand years when Mohammed preached Islam."†

And Mr. Archibald Little has pointed out:—

"The entrance of Protestantism into China, with its inquiring and disputatious spirit, is proving fatal to the ingathering of the harvest anticipated by devout Catholics as the result of two centuries of toil in this ungrateful land. As in the West, the door once opened to doubt, *dogmatic* Christianity is doomed."

For, as we have seen, the Chinese look upon the multitude of differing sects as different religions. Mr. Little also tells us:—

"And it must not be supposed that, to quote one of the many false impressions derived from missionary reports, the Chinese are so steeped in materialism as to be callous in regard to moral teaching, and hence to be dependent on Western charity for their spiritual food. Hortatory works, urging men to reform their lives, are perpetually being circulated by benevolent individuals, in addition to which the people are stimulated by open-air exhortations by paid preachers. A common sight in Chungking in the evening, after the day's work is over and the shops are closed, is an elevated stand at a street-corner, consisting of a raised table draped in red cloth; upon it two flaring red candles, and behind it a man in full ceremonial dress, with the stiff official hat and silk ma-kwa, addressing the crowd. At first sight one would, but for his careful costume, take the man for a story teller, surrounded as he is by a group of silent listeners, until on a nearer approach you find he is expounding the doctrine of the native classics and exhorting men to repentance. No nation has so many wise saws and moral maxims always at its fingers' ends as the Chinese; scarcely a sentence but is interlarded with a proverb or a text from the ancient sages. That a people so generally well read as are the Chinese, and possessing in the teachings of Confucius a doctrine in no way inferior to Christianity, and which, unlike the latter, has survived unquestioned throughout all the wars and commotions of twenty-five centuries; to expect

* Sir Henry Norman, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, p. 306.
† Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 290.
‡ Dr. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 66.
§ T. C. Hayllar, "The Chinese View of Missionaries," *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895; pp. 772-3.
‖ Dr. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, p. 68.
¶ *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, p. 307.

* Douglas Story, *To-Morrow in the East*, pp. 188-9.
† Diosy, *The New Far East* (1904), p. 211.

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that a people so unemotional and so eminently practical in the application of their ethics to the wants of daily existence, should ever pin their faith to a work like the Hebrew books of the Bible, seems to a layman preposterous. That the Chinese fail to live up to their standard is only to say that they are human."*

Just as Christians fail to live up to the teaching of the New Testament by selling all and giving to the poor, and loving their enemies—especially if they happen to be Freethinkers.

W. MANN.

(*To be continued.*)

"The Boom that Thou Gavest Me."

THAT modest writer, Mr. Hall Caine, is fortunate in having publishers who are so unlike himself, for seldom has any book been heralded with such a blare of trumpets as his latest novel, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*. These industrious tradesmen announce the book as "a love story for all the world and for all time," and inform the reading public that of the *Eternal City* 702,212 English copies, of the *Christian* 643,228, of the *Manxman* 397,966, have been sold up-to-date. The new story is to be translated into sixteen languages, including Japanese and Yiddish.

The reasons for a popularity such as this are worth considering, for, if foreign sales come anywhere near the English purchases, it may be assumed that contemporary English fiction is represented in Europe by Mr. Caine as French literary art is by Anatole France, Belgian by Maurice Maeterlinck, Italian by Gabriele D'Annunzio, and German by Herman Sudermann.

Yet some people, not wholly illiterate, have been known to admit that they could only regard Mr. Caine's tremendous popularity with wonder and stupefaction. The genius of Hardy and Meredith, as of Shelley and Keats before them, dawned slowly on the general reader. But here is a writer of novels whose books run into new editions as fast as the printing presses and the bookbinders can supply them. Like Miss Marie Corelli and Mr. Charles Garvice, he has succeeded in winning the hearts of myriads of readers. What these stern moralists are to the worldly minded, Mr. Hall Caine is to the other worldly minded. In each, vulgar, but virtuous ordinary people and grotesque villains win the unlettered appreciation of their readers. Mr. Caine represents this taste, with the addition of an affectation of realism and the sham ethics of an invertebrate Christianity.

In his latest work, Mr. Caine breaks no fresh ground, but tells a commonplace love story in strident tones and with much elaboration of detail. Although occupying nearly 600 pages of close print, the plot can be told in a few words. A woman is married by force to a profligate brute; gets disgusted with her husband; loves an Arctic explorer; gives birth to an illegitimate child; and dies of consumption. The characters in the novel are older than the everlasting hills. There is not a single portrait of an actual personality; but only personifications of bravery, self-sacrifice, profligacy, greed, and so forth.

The story, it will be seen, is frankly popular, and incidentally presents a considerable opportunity for introducing theatrical effects, and the author's fondness for the Catholic Church. Indeed, Mr. Caine takes nothing for granted, and "wallows naked in the pathetic." Naturally, the explorer must be an Arctic one, and, when his mistress is suffering, by some theatrical telepathy he hears her voice calling him over thousands of miles of space. Mary O'Neill, the heroine, is what our American cousins call "a continental idiot." Forced into a loveless marriage with an almost unknown man, she has not sufficient sense to earn her own living after leaving her husband, and gets consumption through drying her baby's wet clothes on her own body. Although madly in love with an explorer, she does not read the daily papers to be informed of the expedition, and she starves herself in order that her child may be strong and healthy. Frankly, the book is altogether unreal and melodramatic, for, when the heroine is forced by poverty to solicit in Piccadilly, the only person she accosts is her long-lost explorer.

Mr. Caine tickles the ears of the groundlings with Biblical phrases. The title strikes the key-note, and Mary's narrative begins with the following words:—

> "'Out of the depths, O Lord, out of the depths,' begins the most beautiful of the services of our Church, and it is out of the depths of my life that I must bring the incidents of this story."

The ending has the same air of novelty:—

> "'Very soon the mist will rise, and the day will break, and the sun will come again, and—there will be no more night.'
>
> "These were the last words penned by Mary before her gentle and tortured spirit took flight from earth."

It is enough to break a poor critic's heart. However, Mr. Caine is giving pleasure to thousands of Yiddish, Japanese, and other readers, and no great harm is done, if, in reading his work, they cherish the pleasing delusion that they are reading really great English literature. But, since Mr. Caine plainly labors under the belief that he is a great writer, it is a pity that he cannot be enlightened. He has won a very large body of readers precisely because he is not a genius. Why should he not be content? Why should he hug the delusion that he is a brother to Hardy and Meredith, to Anatole France or Gabriele D'Annunzio? He is the universal provider of the circulating libraries, and is as little an artist as any other manufacturer.

MIMNERMUS.

* A. Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, pp. 257-8.

Acid Drops.

When the present writer was a little boy—under eight years of age in fact—he lived next door to a house that had been "haunted" until the local parson solemnly "laid" him (it was a *he*) at night with a lighted candle and full regimentals, in the name of the blessed Trinity. The little boy used to hang about that once haunted house a good deal, hoping to catch sight of Mr. Ghost if he should ever turn up again. Some people used to say that "the thing" could be heard and seen occasionally, but only after long intervals. He never appeared to the little boy, however; perhaps because the youngster was born to be a sceptic, and it is well known that ghosts only appear to believers.

We dare say a good many ghosts have been "laid" since then. But a case has just been reported in which the haunted house was a parsonage. It was Asfordsby Rectory, Leicestershire, occupied by the Rev. F. A. Gage Hall. The nocturnal visitant had disturbed the household for some thirty years. It had a partiality for pulling the bedclothes off sleepers in the middle of the night. It was tolerated for a whole generation, in point of time, and then the rector took a sudden decision to deal with the nuisance. So he dressed up in "full fig"—as they used to say in last century's novels, and solemnly ordered Mr. Ghost to depart in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It may be that the mention of three rival ghosts, and especially the last of them, upset the poor fellow's equanimity; anyhow, he took the hint and made himself scarce—and the rectory is now quiet and humdrum without him.

Such is the story that the newspapers give a lot of space to. And this is a Christian country, and it is nearly two thousand years after Christ, and Christianity is the cause of civilisation. No doubt the reader sees the joke.

Nothing could be more characteristic of the good Christians in London than their latest dead set at Jack Johnson. He is a pugilist, but there are plenty of white pugilists, and friendly reports of their performances are given by the English newspapers, including the dear *Daily News*. He is said to be "immoral"—which appears to mean, not only that he is fond of the ladies, but that the ladies are fond of him. But are there no "immoral" persons on the music-hall stage already? And is it necessary to make such a fuss about adding one to the number? He is also declared to be

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a fugitive from justice. Yes, from such justice as whites deal out to blacks in America. White men are allowed to consort with black women over there, but black men are not allowed to consort with white women. Johnson has done nothing that is illegal for white men to do, and nothing that is a crime under the laws of England. To talk about his "breaking the white slave laws of his country," as even the *Citizen* does, is malicious nonsense. The bed-rock truth is that Johnson's offence is his color; he is a black man, and he can beat any white man who likes to stand up against him.

Rev. Dr. Clifford calls Jack Johnson "a most disreputable individual." This is vague slanderous gabble. What specific crime has he committed? We have not heard of anything definite to his discredit. If there is, what is it? We should like to see Dr. Clifford brought to book for this slander. He evidently thinks he can say what he pleases about Jack Johnson with impunity. Perhaps he relies on the difficulty the black pugilist would find in getting justice against the white preacher.

Sir Hiram Maxim is to be congratulated on his letter to the *Daily News*. He has seen Jack Johnson in Paris, and obtained particulars of the pugilist's crime, which the Rev. F. B. Meyer and other gentlemen full of "Christian charity" are making so much of. Our readers will be surprised to learn that Jack Johnson's only "crime" is marrying his wife. She was employed as cashier at Johnson's café at Chicago—and this is what followed, in Sir Hiram's words:—

> "A strong friendship sprung up between Johnson and his cashier. The girl wrote to her mother in Ohio that Johnson wished to marry her, and she asked for her mother's consent. The mother disapproved very strongly; she went to Chicago naturally in a fearful rage, and those who wished to have a part of Johnson's money took advantage of the situation and brought criminal proceedings against him on what they were pleased to call the 'White Slave Trade,' i.e., they claimed that it was the White Slave Trade because the woman was a native of another State, and she had left her native State to meet Johnson in another State—the same as it would be in England if a woman in Essex should join her lover in the county of Kent. The proceedings were of the most abominable character, but nothing could turn the white woman against her black lover, and they were married."

Sir Hiram saw and conversed with Mrs. Johnson at Paris. She is the idol of her husband, and they are as happy as possible together. But she came out of Ohio and married him in another State, and American lawyers are trying to convict him as a "procurer" in consequence. Fancy a man procuring his own wife—for himself! What devilry will the Americans be up to next? Isn't it enough to soak negroes with kerosene and burn them alive on mere suspicion? Must they improve even on that?

Jack Johnson's first crime is that he is black. His second is that he whipped Jefferies, the white pugulist, who was put forward to rescue the championship from him, and failed so ignominiously. Other fighting films were shown freely, but the films of *that* fight were not allowed to be exhibited anywhere between New York and San Francisco.

Jack Johnson is a fighter. So are the clergy. He fights tangible adversaries. They fight the invisible Devil. He appears to be an honest man. They are—well, we are really not equal to the task of describing them.

Two poor Jesuites in the "Latest Wills" of August 22. This time they are hardly worth noting. But here they are. Rev. James Protheroe, Porthcawl, Glamorgan, left £4,344. Rev. William Frederick John Kaye, Archdeacon of Lincoln, left £4 082. Small humps, it must be allowed; yet still too large to go through the needle's eye. But here are two better developed humps from the same day's record. Rev. Percival Laurence, rector of Walesby, Lincolnshire, left £25,824. Rev. William Henry Custler, of Hendon, left £58,025. Ah! That's the sort.

One is struck, too, by the way in which these poor servants of Christ hurry along through this vale of tears. The age of the first was not stated, but the others lived to 84, 73, and 85 years respectively. How sad they must have felt at keeping out of heaven so long!

Turkey has not evacuated Adrianople, and is not likely to do so. Of course, the Powers could force her to give it up if they were united, and decided to do so; but these Christian nations distrust each other so thoroughly that they agree best when nothing is to be done. Meanwhile, it is rather amusing to read the moral lectures being delivered by some of the English papers, and the moral indignation expressed at Turkey not keeping rigidly to the terms of the Treaty of London. Not one of the Christian Allies have kept their agreement with each other; they have lied and robbed and murdered in turn. It is the non-Christian Power that must keep to the terms of an agreement forced upon it at the point of the sword—as though, under existing conditions, there is not as much justification for the Turks retaking Adrianople as for the Bulgarians to capture it in the first instance. But, apparently, the Christian papers of this country are convinced that a Mohammedan is the only one of the bunch that ought to act up to the letter and spirit of an agreement.

The following is cut from the *Daily Mail* of August 23, and is a telegram from its Paris correspondent:—

> "The steerage of a Transatlantic liner running from Trieste to New York was the scene of violent encounters between parties of Servians, Greeks, and Bulgarians returning to America after serving in the recent war.
>
> "The captain of the ship, an Englishman, had all the 1,200 third-class passengers searched for arms when two days out of port. Afterwards they were deprived of knives and forks, and for the rest of the voyage had to eat all their food with spoons alone."

How these good Christians love one another!

Dr. Page, the new American Ambassador, delivered what appears to have been an eloquent speech at the unveiling of the *Mayflower* monument at Southampton. Two sentences in his speech are noticeable. The men of the *Mayflower*, he said, "made the Deity a partner in their enterprise." That, we think, was not specially a characteristic of the Puritan settlers. It has been a characteristic of Englishmen in all their colonising efforts. God was always with them; they went to spread the knowledge of God; the Deity was always ostentatiously invited to a partnership. It was only when the dividends were declared that he was forgotten. The second remark was that the Pilgrim Fathers were not only God-led; they were God-led Englishmen. That, we suppose, is a sort of congratulating God Almighty on the nature of his followers. The colonists were lucky in having God as leader; God was lucky in having Englishmen as followers. Yankees had not then been invented, or he would doubtless have selected them. Failing them, he fell back upon Englishmen. Therefore, we admire the wisdom of God, also the judgment of Englishmen. Honors are about equal.

"It is no exaggeration to say that a mind which doubts the historicity of Jesus is to all historical and spiritual intents a thoroughly unsound mind." As this comes from that cock-o'-the walk, Sir Robertson Nicol, we suppose the matter ought to be regarded as settled. But we have our doubts. Is there anyone of education and discernment who really does believe the Jesus of the New Testament to be a historical character? We doubt it. For they each retain what they call a New Testament Jesus by throwing a large part of him overboard. One drops his miracles, another rejects his miraculous birth, another denies his bodily resurrection and ascension, another does not believe in his conflicts with Satan. And what is really all this but a rejection of the historical character of the New Testament Jesus? The New Testament Jesus is the one depicted in the New Testament, with all the stories and characteristics, from the miraculous birth to the ascension. To reject these and still claim to believe in his historical character is ridiculous. It is as though one claimed to believe in Napoleon the First, but denied that he was a soldier, that he was Emperor of France, that he fought Austerlitz, Jena, Waterloo, and died at St. Helena. One might believe in some person that one chose to call Napoleon, but it would not be the Napoleon of history. So with Jesus. To say that Jesus was a historical character, but that nearly all miraculous things related of him are false, is puerile. The historicity of Jesus honestly means the historicity of the New Testament character of the New Testament stories related of him. If these are not true, nothing worth bothering about remains. The question of whether there may not have been someone, about whom the only certain thing we know is that nearly all we are told about him is false, is not worth the trouble of discussing. Sir Robertson Nicol's statement is pure bluff.

Sir Robertson Nicol says that sceptical critics forget that there is historical evidence for the death and resurrection of Jesus. We should like to see it. We do not want evidence of his death. Evidence for his birth will be enough. If that is established, we are quite content to take his death for granted. And we should dearly love to see the evidence for his resurrection. *Evidence*, we mean; not what Christians usually understand as such. We do not want to be told that some people a long while ago believed in it, or that

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in more recent times other people are convinced because certain drunkards have been made sober, or any other of the fantastical rubbish that is served out so liberally in the pulpit. We mean the kind of evidence that would convince a jury of educated and impartial men. The difficulty of demonstrating certain assumed historic facts is, again, a mere piece of bluff. The accuracy of accounts of ordinary events may be difficult to demonstrate, because it may be only a long while after that they assume importance. But the birth and death of a God is in a category by itself; and it should have been accompanied by evidence that would have commanded the world's assent once and for all.

Rev. D. Ewart James, of Southend-on-Sea, has been lamenting the decay of dressing for Sundays, and sighs for the top-hatted, frock-coated, rolled-umbrella days of yore. The reverend gentleman will not stop the fashion. Church parade in the Garden of Eden was not a dressy affair, and even the apostles never wore trousers.

"Sand Services" runs a headline in the *Christian Globe*. It is a dry subject, but such services ought to be suitable to a religion built on the same material.

The Methodists of Vancouver intend having a cinema theatre of their own, and have started with capital amounting to £20,000. It will cost that sum for films only, if the pious picture-lovers start with a realistic film of Noah and the animals in the ark. There is one picture that would cost them more than that—Adam and Eve before the fall.

Dr. J. M. Gray is quoted in the *Christian Globe* as saying: "If we deny the endless miseries of hell then we must give up the idea of the endless joys of heaven." This may be logical; but it won't catch on. Not yet. You can't expect the poor Christians to suffer the loss of Heaven and Hell in one year.

Rev. J. Cones Vaughan, of Endcliffe Park Congregational Church, Sheffield, preached recently on "Is there a Hell?" and said that "the hell of everlasting, hopeless torment did not exist." Freethinkers have been saying the same thing for centuries, and there is no great novelty in the discovery. Moreover, the reverend gentleman gets credit for liberality of opinion, whilst the Freethought pioneers got imprisonment and ostracism.

Mr. Harold Begbie is to write the Life of the late General Booth. This is a most excellent choice. The title of the book should be the *Romance of the Salvation Army*. The *facts* are in Mr. Manson's book already. William Booth never troubled about them; neither, we feel sure, will Harold Begbie.

A correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* has made the wonderful discovery that "the Turks provoked the Crusades." This is astonishing news and surprising chronology. We never heard before, from any historian of the Crusades, that there was any *provocation* in the matter, except on the side of the Christians, who suddenly found that they could not tolerate the Holy Land and the sepulchre of their Savior being in the hands of the "infidels." For that, and that alone, they made war on the "infidels"—that is to say, the Saracens. And both the Holy Land and the sepulchre of Christ are in the hands of the "infidels" still.

Whether the sepulchre of Christ is authentic or not, it is at Jerusalem, and a big church is built around it. That church is divided into two. One half is used by the Greek Christians—the other half by the Latin Christians; and they love each other so that a guard of Turkish soldiers stands between them to keep them from flying at each others' throats.

The British and Foreign Bible Society report that the sale of Bibles in the Balkans has been greater during the past year than in any similar period. We presume the beneficial influence of the Holy Book has been shown in the two Balkan wars and the behavior of the Christian combatants.

Mr. R. J. Campbell asks whether the Gospel of Christ has "really effected any marked and permanent change in the feeling about death?" So far as the present is concerned, we answer, Decidedly no. People to-day face death much as people have always faced it. Some are afraid of death, some never trouble about it, some face it with calm resignation. And their profession of religious belief makes, apparently, no difference whatever, since one meets about the same proportion of each class in the religious as in the non-religious world. Education and temperament count for far more in the matter than does religious belief. It is, of course, a carefully fostered Christian teaching that Christianity enables people to bear the blow of death with calmness, and even with cheerfulness. But this is quite false, and almost everyone's experience proves it to be so. We defy anyone to detect, in the mere attitude of the average man or woman towards death, whether he or she is Christian or not. Of course, if one happens to be a Christian, a set phraseology will be used. But in the grief shown, and the state of mind manifested, the religious person is apt to show less genuine resignation, and certainly less strength of mind, than the average Freethinker.

Historically, the "Gospel of Christ" did make a difference in the feeling of mankind about death. It was noted by a clerical Professor—Professor Mahaffy—that an examination of the inscriptions on Pagan tombs showed an entire absence of morbidity. There was no morbid talk about death being a "release," or about the littleness of life, and no trace of fear. They were all in the spirit of bidding a last good-bye to a loved friend or relative. The change came with Christianity. That taught people to dread what might possibly await them after death, and also sought to reconcile them to the fact of death by dwelling upon the littleness and sinfulness of life. There is no question whatever that for many centuries Christianity made death more terrible, and so made people greater cowards in its presence, than had ever been the case before. So far as the Christian teaching affected men's minds about death, it affected them altogether for the worse. And so long as the Christian doctrine of heaven and hell maintained its force no improvement was possible. Improvement only came as this teaching lost its power. Then a saner and more rational attitude of mind towards death became possible. And in this instance, as in many others, the philosophy of the better Paganism showed itself far more commendable than that of the Christianity which succeeded it.

The twenty-five delegates from the Medical Congress who visited the Llandrindod Wells district got no welcome from the Urban District Council. The function was to have taken place on a Sunday, and the Nonconformist members kicked for all they were worth against such an abominable desecration of the Lord's Day. Science has no chance against religion in Wales.

A strike has taken place among workmen employed at Liverpool Cathedral. Efforts are being made to settle the quarrel. The newspapers do not state whether the clergy prayed for the workmen, or sprayed them with holy water.

We have received the following cutting from the *Daily Express* of August 12. It is a little behind date now, but it is too good to lose:—

> "The Bishop of Manchester, preaching on Blackpool sands on Saturday, told the story of an answered prayer—a true story, he said, that had been passed on to him by one of his own clergymen.
>
> "There was no bread in a cottager's house, and the father was out seeking work. The mother had not laid the table because there was no food to put on it.
>
> "At the suggestion of the little girl of the family, the mother laid the table, and then the two knelt down and prayed: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Some time later, when the father returned, he threw a shilling on the table and explained that he had met an old employer, to whom he mentioned his distress. The old employer gave him the shilling and employment.
>
> "The mother, father, and child compared notes, and found that the father had met the employer at the exact time at which the prayer was being offered in the home."

Surely the Bishop of Manchester was playing to the gallery in that ridiculous anecdote. He must have been bamboozling his audience. It is difficult to believe that he is himself the dupe of such an absurdity. Perhaps, if the story were investigated, it would turn out to be pure fiction; or what little truth there was in it might prove to be a mere coincidence. Why should God go out of his way to help those three people, and leave millions of others without the slightest assistance? And why did his benevolence rest content with a shilling, when he might as easily have made it half-a-crown? A partial God and a thrifty God was the God of Dr. Knox's story.

Rev. James Beeby, of Wimbledon, says that "Christianity will never be popular." If hundreds of thousands of priests, and millions of money, and the alleged aid of "Omnipotence cannot make it popular in two thousand years, it had better be given up as a bad job.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £166 17s. 5d. Received since:—J. M. Gimson, £3 3s.; J. Hopkins, 2s. 6d.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; Mr. McCarthy, 4s. 4d.; G. W. Wright, 5s.; E. Parker, 5s.; Two Barnsley Freethinkers, 10s.

E. RAGGETT.—Bible stories are fairly worked out in our *Bible Romances*. One cannot go back upon such work; it is done once and for all. We have not heard from Mr. Bryce lately.

H. ARNOTT.—The Old Testament is written in Hebrew. The oldest manuscripts date about A.D. 900. They are many centuries later than the New Testament documents. Nor is the Old Testament in any sense "the oldest Scripture in the world."

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

C. CLINTON.—The subject you write about is vastly important, but it is outside our special scope in the *Freethinker*.

G. W. WRIGHT.—Pleased to hear you consider this journal an "intellectual treat," which has "altered your outlook on life considerably." The extracts you so highly appreciated were from a selection by E. B., which had to be broken in the make-up of the paper. We think you may expect more of them.

PRESS CORRECTOR.—We meant no offence to your profession. Judging by books in general, they do their work extremely well. We understand also that the pride of bad authors, and the love of profit on the part of their publishers, must sometimes stand in your way.

BERTRAM H. WATTS.—We hope we have your name correctly, but your signature which looks so wonderfully clear, rather puzzles us. We had already noted Professor Bury's definitions of Atheism and Agnosticism. They will be corrected in our review. You are quite right in your criticism.

E. PARKER.—Your wishes don't add to the amount of the subscription, but they add to our appreciation of it.

TWO BARNSLEY FREETHINKERS.—Your letter is inspiriting. We shall be glad to receive such letters until the Freethought millionaire comes along—and after.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for useful cuttings.

BLACKBURN SECULARIST.—It was not sent to us; your copy is the only one we have seen. We are not giving any more cheap advertisements. Thanks, all the same.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote has engaged to lecture at the Secular Hall, Leicester, on Sunday evening, September 21. This will be a good occasion for trying his strength for platform work after his late severe illness. Leicester is the only place except London where only *one* lecture is required on Sunday. Two lectures might be something too much for a start. Mr. Foote feels himself fit; but you never know till you try, as the proverb says. The result of the Leicester visit will decide whether he will take *two* lectures at Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, and other places that are pressing for a visit.

It is Mr. Foote's intention to minimise his lecturing work for a time. He will not lecture every Sunday—at least not up to Christmas. He means generally to husband his strength, and the wear and tear of travelling is obviously the first thing to be dropped. There is plenty of literary work awaiting him, and the issue of fresh books and pamphlets through the Pioneer Press.

As soon as he has seen this number of the *Freethinker* through the press Mr. Foote will be going off on his long-deferred visit to Yarmouth. Anybody who can arrange fine weather for a week is earnestly invited to do so. But we are not hopeful. Last summer was an allegation, and this summer is not a realisation.

We have lately enjoyed a few days in the company of Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, of Chicago, whose name is well-known to our own readers. To give us longer time together Mr. Mangasarian came down to the seaside place where we avoid the London atmosphere and get plenty of pure air—without which we should not keep fit for our work very long. We spent some thirty-five years in London, and that is enough for one man's share. We were glad, therefore, that Mr. Mangasarian made our companionship easy during the few days referred to. We were also glad to find him looking well and fit for the hard work he will have to resume when he is back in Chicago. We met Mr. Mangasarian first at the memorable Rome Congress; we liked him then, and he reciprocated the feeling, which has since grown into a warm mutual friendship. We earnestly wish him a long life of happiness and usefulness. In his case the former will depend upon the latter. He is a born propagandist of the Humanist philosophy, and nature endowed him with all the requisite qualities for the task.

Mr. Bottomley's "Unconventional Thoughts" in last week's *John Bull* would have been none the worse for the acknowledgment that all his facts in the "Religion and Drink" portion were derived from Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*. We are not exactly complaining, for we know what modern journalism is, but Mr. Bottomley stands out of the rank of the profession. Moreover, we like to see our work getting all possible publicity, even though it brings us neither profit nor praise.

Mr. J. M. Gimson, of Leicester, writes: "This Honorarium Fund of yours is too nearly stagnant. I send a second small donation to enliven it a bit."

The July number of the *Examiner*, of Christchurch, New Zealand, edited by Mr. W. W. Collins, contains the following editorial paragraph:—

> "Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*, has, we regret to say, again been the victim to a severe illness. We are exceedingly glad to learn that he had so far recovered as to be able to preside over the National Secular Society's Conference, which was held in London on Sunday, May 11. We send our sincerest wishes for his speedy restoration to full health and strength. And we do this not only on personal grounds, but because never more than now was such strength as his of greater value to the great cause to which he has devoted the energies of his life."

We beg to assure Mr. Collins that his good wishes are sincerely appreciated.

Mr. Gimson is a student of English literature—as an amateur, not professionally—especially in regard to *belles lettres*, and more particularly the novelists. He writes us as follows on a matter that was sure to attract his interest:—

> "Apropos of Charlotte Bronte's letters—the paragraph from the Dewsbury paper given in 'Sugar Plums' does not help matters. Your note settles the Coleridge reference, but the substitution of Southey for Shelley does not help in either, for Southey died in 1843, before Charlotte Bronte had published anything, and his mind had given way some time before that. The statement she makes is most inexplicable."

We agree with Mr. Gimson. There is one theory, of course, not yet suggested—namely, forgery. We see nothing in the letters to render this inconceivable.

The Leeds case comes on the day after the *Freethinker* goes to press—on Wednesday, August 27. We have no information to give, therefore, but we hope to have good news for next week. Meanwhile we beg to remind our readers that the N. S. S. has defended, or offered to defend, in every "blasphemy" or "profanity" prosecution where the defendant has made any attempt to stand his ground.

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

The Ministry in Galilee Fraud.

We have examined the accounts in the Synoptics of the alleged ministry of Jesus in Galilee, and find them to be merely compilations made from hearsay stories, originated by nobody knows whom. A further examination of the subject from another point of view leads to the same inevitable conclusion—that there was *no* public ministry of "Jesus the Nazarene" in Galilee at all. This fact becomes obvious when we come to consider the rough-and-ready method of maintaining order in Palestine in the first century.

Both before and after the reputed time of Jesus, it was the uniform practice of all rulers, whether king, tetrarch, or procurator, to suppress all abnormal gatherings of the people by sending against them a body of troops, with orders to slay the leaders and chief followers, and disperse the rest. This was done as a precautionary measure against insurrections and the wanton destruction of life and property by the mob. The grossly ignorant and credulous people of those times were easily led into excesses by cunning agitators or self-styled prophets: hence, these were hunted down and slain whenever they showed themselves. The mere fact of the appearance in public of an individual who preached a new religion or counselled "innovations" was sufficient to bring down upon him and his followers the guardians of the public peace. In considering this subject, our modern ideas of liberty and the right of public meeting must be set aside. The people of the first century, more especially the Jews, could not be trusted to assemble in large numbers without committing all kinds of excesses, and acting like madmen. After the death of Herod the Great, when his sons were in Rome waiting to be appointed tetrarchs of Galilee, Samaria, and Judæa, all the hooligan population of those provinces plunged the whole country into anarchy and bloodshed, which was not suppressed until Varus, president of Syria, came with a legion of Roman soldiers, and crucified two thousand of them. Again, when, during the siege of Jerusalem, the hooligan element gained the upper hand, the city was turned into a pandemonium, and all the quiet and peaceable inhabitants were subjected to the most horrible outrages: and this went on daily until the city was taken.

The following examples of "innovators" are mentioned by Josephus.

1. A religious pretender who led a number of people to Mount Gerizim in Samaria. Pilate, being then procurator over that province, "sent horsemen and foot-men" against him, who slew the leader and put his followers to flight (*Antiq.* 18, 4, 1).

2. John the Baptist, who was put to death by Herod the tetrarch "lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion" (*Antiq.* 18, 5, 2).

3. "A certain magician named Theudas," who called himself a prophet, and led a multitude of people to the Jordan. The procurator Fadus, as soon as he heard of the gathering, "sent a troop of horsemen out against them," who slew many and dispersed the remainder. "They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem" (*Antiq.* 20, 5, 1).

4. The two sons of Judas of Galilee, James and Simon, were arrested by the procurator Tiberius Alexander, who caused them to be crucified. Their offence is not stated: probably they were seen in public with crowds around them, and their father having raised an agitation forty years before, the governor thought it safer to crucify them offhand.

5. An Egyptian, who proclaimed himself a prophet, and drew after him "a multitude of the common people" towards the mount of Olives. As soon as Felix, the procurator, was informed of the event, he sent from Jerusalem "a great number of horsemen and foot-men," who slew four hundred of the followers, but the Egyptian managed to escape (*Antiq.* 20, 8, 6).

6. The procurator Festus sent "horsemen and foot-men" against a "certain impostor" who had induced a number of people to follow him into the wilderness: the pretender and his dupes were slain (*Antiq.* 20, 8, 10).

In recording the putting down of these "innovations" Josephus implies that the authorities performed a duty they owed to the public. Moreover, it is quite probable that none of these pretenders had the smallest idea of raising an insurrection against the State; but the populace, when excited, might get out of hand and do much mischief: hence the prompt action taken to suppress the innovations.

Coming now to the case of "Jesus the Nazarene," that teacher (according to the Gospels) appeared in Galilee as a prophet and miracle-worker, and was followed wherever he went by great multitudes of people (Matt. iv. 25; etc., etc.); so much so indeed that he had to go up a mountain or into a boat to escape them. He is also said to have spent two whole years of his ministry (A.D. 28—30) in Galilee, wandering from city to city, and from village to village—always followed by a vast multitude. The question arises, then, Where was Herod the tetrarch? For it is quite certain that, had that ruler heard that a self-constituted prophet was going about Galilee preaching a new religion, both Jesus and his disciples would have been summarily dealt with before the new ministry was a week old. News of a prophet declaiming to the populace in every city or village which he entered would not be long in reaching the ears of Herod, and would be immediately followed by an order to his chief captain to send a strong force against the innovator, and to see that neither he nor his disciples were allowed to escape. This is what every ruler in Palestine did in those times, and what Herod himself had done in the case of John the Baptist. Why, then, did Herod the tetrarch permit this innovation to go on? The answer is, that he had no occasion to do anything; for Jesus never came into Galilee as a preacher. Had he done so, the tetrarch would have heard of it at once: for he resided at Tiberias, a city near the sea of Galilee which he had himself built some years before. The Nazarene could not have gone about the province followed by his multitudes, as represented in the Gospels, without having his ministry curtailed by the sword.

The Jerusalem Ministry Fraud.

According to the accounts in the first three Gospels, Jesus and his disciples came into Judæa a few days before the passover, and upon leaving Jericho "a great multitude followed him" (Matt. xx. 29). When the procession neared Jerusalem Jesus rode upon an ass, "and the multitude..... cried saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Having in this manner entered Jerusalem, it is not surprising that "all the city was stirred," more especially as the multitude shouted "This is Jesus the prophet" (Matt. xxi. 8—11). Next, "Jesus went into the temple, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves." And no one in the city appears to have had the power to check such high-handed proceedings. The "chief priests and scribes," it is true, "were moved with indignation;" but they were helpless and did nothing. In the evening Jesus retired to Bethany (xxi. 12—17). Next morning he returned to Jerusalem and went into the temple: there the chief priests and elders asked him, "By what authority doest thou these things?" This question he evaded by a quibble, and then told them some parables in which "they perceived that he spake of them" (xxi. 18—46). On that day, or the one following, Jesus publicly denounced the hypocrisy and evil doings of the scribes and Pharisees, the calumny

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taking up the whole of chapter xxiii. From this oration I make the following short extract:—

> "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! .....Fill ye up the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

We have no evidence that the scribes and Pharisees of the time of Jesus were "hypocrites," or that they did any of the things of which they are accused; nor do we know that one of them was such a systematic perverter of the truth as the writer of the first primitive Gospel, or the later forger of the Fourth Gospel, to say nothing of the fabricators of the admittedly lying apocryphal Gospels.

But it is unnecessary to follow the career of Jesus farther: the Gospel accounts of his doings in Jerusalem, and of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion, are all pure fiction. Had Jesus really appeared in Judæa in the days of the procurator Pilate, and had he entered Jerusalem at the head of a shouting multitude, both his ministry and his person would have been cut short by the Roman soldiers who were always on guard there. There would have been no arrest or trial: he and his disciples, and the most prominent of his shouting adherents, would have been put to the sword before they could have penetrated far within the city. The fabricator of the Jerusalem story appears not to have known that from A.D. 6, when Judæa was made a Roman province, until the beginning of the Jewish war (A.D. 66) a garrison of Roman soldiers was stationed at Jerusalem, their quarters being the spacious tower of Antonia, which was close to the temple. This fact is several times referred to by Josephus (*Wars* 2, 12, 1; 5, 5, 8; *Antiq.* 20, 5, 3; etc.). Thus, he says of some narrow passages near the temple—"through which the guard (for there always lay in this tower a Roman legion) went several ways, with their arms, on the Jewish festivals, in order to watch the people, that they might not there attempt to make any innovations." This Roman garrison is referred to in "the Acts" (xxi.—xxiii.) as rescuing Paul from the hands of the infuriated populace: the Gospel writers, apparently, knew nothing of it.

At the time when Jesus is represented as riding into Jerusalem, that city would be filling with Jews from all parts, who came to find lodgings for the passover week; and Pilate, or his chief captain, would be making preparations for dealing with anyone making "innovations." Jesus would thus be entering a trap from which there was no escape. To cut down the self-styled prophet and his disciples would be the first step in quelling the disturbance, no quarter being given to those caught red-handed: for Jesus was the leader of a hostile demonstration against the priests and elders and others in authority. This was a greater innovation than any of those recorded by Josephus; for none of those pretenders had the audacity to march into Jerusalem, to set the city authorities at naught, and to utter denunciations against them. No Roman governor who was responsible for the order of the province committed to his care would have permitted such an innovation, and if he chanced to be absent, the officer commanding the Roman legion within the city would know how to act. In either case there would be no trial, though there might be many executions. Josephus has not recorded Pilate's suppression of this astonishing innovation, though he has mentioned minor ones that occurred before and after. We may safely say, then, that the Gospel accounts of the "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem, and all that is said to have followed it, are unhistorical; otherwise we should have some account of the affair, and of the punishment dealt out to the innovators.

It has been said that the Jews had no power to put Jesus to death, and so brought him to Pilate to go through the farce of a trial: but, as a matter of history, we find that they often took the law into their own hands, more especially in a question relating to their religion. In the case of Stephen (Acts vii.) we are told that "they cast him out of the city, and stoned him." There was no handing him over to the procurator, and, though the incident is not historical, this is exactly what they would have done to Jesus had he really uttered the denunciations recorded in Matt. xxiii. The latter chapter, too, is a further proof of fabrication? Who heard the words uttered? Who wrote them down? From whom did the primitive writer get his report? The answer is in each case the same—"No one." The chapter was fabricated for the occasion.

ABRACADABRA.

A Plant and a Parasite.

THE spirit of rebellion rang fiercely through his words. They were hot with the contagious enthusiasm that sets even dull minds ablaze. Bitter contempt, like a poisonous antidote to a poisoned subject, coated the sharp points of his arrows, and indignant wrath strengthened them. His language was often coarse, but never weak. He was a fighter who knew that the glamor of life lay with the "respectable" people, not with the men to whom he spoke; and so his words were like their lives, hard, bitter, rough, and strong.

Every man in the crowd knew the speaker loved his fellow men, knew it for a certainty about which no doubt could cling. No amount of splendid oratory could have achieved that more successfully than the hard language he used. He drew the crowd with him up the heights; shaped for them their formless longings; let the light of his genius shine upon their needs, their desires, their faltering, death-clogged aspirations. He brought near and clear thoughts that had long hung dim on the obscure horizon of their purblind minds. He inoculated them with some of his own strength; and their eyes flashed, and their lips moved restlessly. And from their unusual feeling of power came the applause that rewarded him. Then the crowd melted into the darkness, becoming part of it.

I remained behind, wishing to speak to him for a few minutes. During his speech I often found myself wondering about the relationship between his ideas and the minds of his street-corner audience. I knew these men's lives and minds, as I thought, too intimately. The uncouth relaxations from uncouth labor, the ugly tongue they spoke, their low attitude to everything that seemed to possess any refinement, the continual use of base sex references, the merriment these caused, the sordidness of their minds, all relieved only occasionally by a flash of human purity, had encircled me like a heavy mist from my earliest association with men and their ways. Such knowledge, in itself, should be sufficient to make one a rebel at war with every superstition that ever darkened the minds and lives of men.

His ideas were diametrically opposed to their method of life, and yet he so dexterously worked upon the little best in their natures that, for the moment, they became cleaner, straighter men. He cursed thoughtlessness, and they knew he denounced them. Sharply he pricked their many foolishnesses, and they felt like beaten dogs. His fiery invectives frequently brought a self-accusing growl of approval. He whipped them till they squirmed, and poured upon them a tornado of denunciation against their "slave-worship," and they recognised they were slaves worshiping the men and things that made and kept them slaves.

It was here the thought-thread, linking his ideas to their minds and lives, snapped in my mind.

His slashing attack on industrialism as one of the causes of this slave-worship was all very well in its way; but to me it seemed, despite his powerful words, he had taken the lesser cause. Certainly he had emphasised the abrasion from our minds of antiquated theories; and had put a bomb under the man who allowed appreciation to descend to reverence; and, also, he had not spared the man who preached commandments to other people, and could not, or did not, obey them himself. But that seemed

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insufficient. It lacked the decisive note. It fringed the question. It was all very well to preach freedom; but freedom realises itself first in the mind; and a mind touched even with the slightest admiration of religion cannot possibly be free.

Challenging him on the point, I asked why he had obviously and deliberately refrained from introducing religion, and he replied: "What you say is true; religion *is* more of a mental influence; but its 'penetrative influence,' as you call it, is not worth bothering about. I, of course, agree that, as we have to go *vid* the mind, bad influences must be fought; and that religion is, therefore, one of the first obstacles we should encounter. At the same time, the religious influence is a triviality compared to the industrial influence. I have thrown both the cursed things into the balance. The latter is the more damnable. The worker understands it better. He sweats blood under it. He feels it tearing the life out of his miserable body. He hasn't a soul: born without it: dies without it. I am fighting the bigger devil. The worker can test the truth of what I say, simply by looking at his comrades. It's different with religion. The average worker doesn't give a damn for it: treats it as non-existent: it is, for him. That's why I leave it alone. The 'penetrative influence' of religion, as you call it, is played out. It is too slight, in comparison to the other thing. That has killed the religious obstacle, so far as the worker is concerned."

"And still," I remonstrated, "you have labor leaders, with a considerable working-class following, who can pray in public. And we cannot possibly forget the very many speakers you have who say God with an intonation of sanctimonious solemnity, knowing the majority of their working-class audience, if they do not turn their eyes heavenward, will, at least, have a spasm of reverence. The existence of these very far advanced people in your movement seems to prove that religion still exercises some away. It proves the religious attitude is still alive, and it seems to suggest that what I have called the 'penetrative influence' of religion is at work, even yet, notwithstanding your assertions to the contrary. The workers still show more respect for the cloth than for their masters."

"We differ," he retorted, "the average worker, more's the pity, shows more respect for his master than for his minister, if he has such a luxury."

"Questionable," I broke in, "and that's why I wish you wouldn't forget that minister-worship preceded master-worship, and has a bigger and longer history behind it. The average worker often shows his respect for his master by striking."

"And he has struck church attendance as well, not spasmodically, but permanently."

"Maybe; but he has still to strike from the instruction he received at church, an instruction that opens channels for the 'penetrative influence' of religion. This mental environment, because of its age, has a greater power than the industrial environment against which you turn your broadsides. It is, besides, a much more subtle thing; for it fixes itself to the mind when the mind is young, destroying, if only in part, the power of logical thinking that might develop in the young brain, and be strong enough, in after days, to tackle and subdue the social problems you spoke about. Religion prepares the young mind for the coming dulling influence of unjoyful labor by partially chloroforming it. And this malevolent characteristic is *not* confined in its operations to the children of the middle class alone. Even if it were, it would be sufficient to justify your continual antagonism."

"You're like the rest of Freethinkers," he said. "You imagine that the death of religion is the first article of progress to strive for. I tell you religion is a nonentity where the worker is concerned. To him it is a dream; he laughs at it in the morning. We counteract the influence of the dream, wherever it has any, by filling the worker's mind with realities."

"The influence of some dreams is not so easily dissipated. Let the dream but have historical and social life behind it, and the dream becomes a reality in its effects. The time is coming, and may not be so far distant, when you revolutionaries will discover we Freethinkers were not so far wrong in our estimation of your attitude. Creeds, too, struggle to survive. Religion sucks nourishment from young ideas that show the potentiality of growth. It is fastening itself now to the safe portions of your plant. It will gain some renewed strength from your plant's life; and its resuscitation of vitality will retard the maturity of that for which you now strive. The Freethinker says, 'Cut it off, ere it is too late.' The roots of religion are diseased. Disease springs from it; and you and your movement should be kept clean at all cost. Good night."

ROBERT MORELAND.

Two Warriors.

BEFORE the tomb where rest the ashes of the great, one is moved by feelings which escape analysis. Whether they are instinctive or intuitive, one cannot say; but they have their primary being in the heart. It was with these mixed feelings of reverence and hero-worship that I found myself on Wimbledon Common, the wild and free garden of Swinburne.

It is now lovely beyond description. As I write, the songs and echoes of birds resound through those leafy glades where once the Master trod. There is a Naples blue sky, making a magnificent canopy over the rustling leaves of the queenly birch-trees. The gorse has scattered its golden bloom, and now the seed-pods are browning in the sun. Soon they will burst, and fling their seed far and wide in the profligate way beloved of Nature. A red and gold butterfly flits by, and hovers round the eyebright which trails its tiny star-shaped flowers round the feet of the tall rushes. The bramble bloom tells of the approaching end of the summer, and the young birds will soon be able to relieve their parents of responsibility. All these signs observed by Freethinkers who are nature-lovers speak of endless change, but they give intense delight to those who do not vainly imagine man to belong to some supercarthly species.

I am now where the Master hath been. He has looked on these peaceful scenes of beauty, his foot has pressed the heather, and his eye has caught the glories of these colors and wrought them in imperishable verse. To a lover of Swinburne, his very presence is almost felt amidst these surroundings, and I cannot associate anyone's name but his with this lovely wind-swept common.

Swinburne was a prophet. His visions and ideals were of such strength and splendor that even admirers of Shelley found them too spacious to comprehend. Shelley was the light, but Swinburne was the fire, which burnt up the dead wood and festering jungle of each and every superstition. To sense this fiery spirit of revolt and destruction, the reading of "A Year's Burden" confirms the verdict that he invested his song with the robes of flame.

> "Are ye so strong, O kings, O strong men? Nay,
> Waste all ye will and gather all ye may,
> Yet one thing is here that ye shall not slay,
> Even thought, that fire nor iron can affright."

I often speculate as to whether he had Giordano Bruno on his mind when he wrote those virile lines.

There is a great stir in the air lately about Nietzsche; it is a pity that the efforts to give him a wider circle of readers cannot also be used to circulate in a cheap form his English poetic prototype. What humbugs the English are to be sure! They can subscribe thousands of pounds to save a miserable and dreary place called the Crystal Palace, they can even "Peter Pan" Kensington Gardens, but to an Englishman who was a monarch of ideas in the

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regions of thought, they cannot even raise a stone. London is statue-ridden. Good, bad, and indifferent, the figures of disreputable kings, of fire-eating and Bible-loving soldiers, stare upon us from all quarters. Pensions are showered upon those warriors who swept down with gunpowder poor devils armed with bow and arrows, and yet Swinburne finds no champion to support a scheme to commemorate his name. A bronze statue of Liberty awarding the wreath of victory to this slayer of superstition would be a fitting monument to adorn the stretch of country beloved of the poet. But then the English are so peculiar; they would rather, to their shame, wear cheap rag roses. Thus, in a Christian country, they would help to keep the hospitals in their ignoble position of depending on voluntary subscriptions. Jonathan Swift left the greater part of his fortune for the erection of asylums in England, as he said the people needed them; my respect for this sardonic Irishman increases every day.

Where is the man who might kiss the hem of immortality's robe by erecting a statue to one of nature's aristocrats? Where are those poets of Bohemian fraternity who profess to love their art? In honoring Swinburne they would be honoring one of the greatest of singers since Shakespeare; and this would be the highest tribute they could pay to their art and to Swinburne. It is too much to expect. We have a commercialised pulpit, a corrupt and bought press, and now we are treated to the degrading spectacle of poets bellowing their claims to the Laureateship. Shades of the muse in exile! Very soon the sign of Lombardy will be graven over the temple door of the Sacred Nine.

From Wimbledon Common to Parnassus is a far cry, and I had originally intended to write of the relationship of Nietzsche to Swinburne, but the open sky, and with only the Book of Nature to refer to, makes a straight line of thought impossible. At some future date, with the editor's permission and the readers' indulgence, I shall endeavor to show the kinship of spirit between Nietzsche and Swinburne.

Swinburne killed death in his "Hymn to Proserpine," and the Superman-idea of Nietzsche, with the great "Yea" to life, conclusively proves to Freethinkers that they were twin spirits fighting in the greatest cause of all. The "Yea" to life, and the "Nay" to the hideous Christian trappings of death, were two of the most powerful broadsides fired into the discredited hulk of Christianity.

WILLIAM REPTON.

God and Life.

[A few more excerpts forwarded in compliance with Mr. Foote's request at bottom of page 408 of the *Freethinker*.]

ALL the world over, I wonder, in lands that I never have trod,
Are the people eternally seeking for the signs and the steps of a God?
Westward across the ocean, and Northward across the snow,
Do they all stand gazing, as ever, and what do the wisest know?

—SIR ALFRED LYALL, *Meditation of a Hindu Prince.*

Life is pleasant, and friends may be nigh,
Fain would I speak one word and be spared;
Yet I could be silent and cheerfully die,
If I were only sure God cared;
If I had faith, and were only certain,
That light is behind that terrible curtain.

But what if He listeth nothing at all
Of words a poor wretch in his terror may say?
That mighty God who created all
To labor and live their appointed day,
Who stoops not either to bless or ban,
Weaving the woof of an endless plan.

—SIR ALFRED LYALL, *Theology in Extremis.*

So many Gods, so many creeds,
So many paths that wind and wind,
While just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

An Ode to the Devil.

ONE Sunday, as I pensive sat,
Revolving over this and that,
Beneath my pane, a brazen blare
Told me Salvationists were there.
I shut my window, but in vain;
The music of this Sabbath's bane
My spirit through the glass pursued.
I muttered something strong and rude.
Then, when the tamborinists' din
Had ceased awhile, there floated in
From one wild man, with hair unlevel,
A noisy discourse on the Devil.
"A bloke," he said, "on mischief bent."
These words an inspiration sent.
My heart went out to Satan then,
Who tempted me these lines to pen:

. . . . . .

Hail, friend of humankind, good Satan, hail!
Thy sterling virtues shall not be unsung
The while thy vices, magnified, are hung
Upon the very housetops. Satan, hail!

Father of lies? Nay, rather friend of truth,
Who, like Prometheus, to knowledge led
(If it be true what some say Moses said)
The early fathers of our tribe uncouth.

'Tis not my task to paint thee dazzling white.
Thy greatest enemies, or those who claim
To hold in greatest scorn thy hated name,
Shall here inspire the praises I indite.

The sweetest joys that this fair earth can give
Have fallen, one by one, beneath the ban
Of God's black-coated killjoys, until man,
Afraid to die, has hardly dared to live.

Who tempted us to taste the luscious fruit
The tree of knowledge bears? What gift divine
Could ever equal this great gift of thine?
Who could the worth of knowledge o'er compute?

Those who denied their earth-born God a sire
First taught that love of man and wife were vain.
The purest source of joy man e'er could gain
By unwed priests was trampled in the mire.

When two young hearts were warmed by love's sweet flame
'Twas said the Devil fanned the soft desire,
And all who would to holiness aspire
Must flee from love, and shun conjugal shame.

'Twas thou who tempted men to wash their skin
When holy saints the bath disdained to use;
All who a life of Godliness would choose
Must reckon cleanliness a pagan sin.

Did one man bravely dare to stand alone,
That man was called thy child. Dared one to think,
He stood already on perdition's brink,
All thine were those who called their souls their own.

When puritans grew strong, and in thy name
Forbade the dance, the play, and all delights
With which men loved to gladden days and nights,
Thy temptings, Satan, spoiled their dismal game.

Thanks to thy work, as many parsons wail,
Our weekly day of freedom oft is spent
In country rambles, and thy aid is lent
To those who use the Sunday tram and rail.

Do some desire with Wagner to commune,
Or taste the joys of Mozart's gentle strain
Upon their day of rest, the fact is plain
That Satan's artful plan commands the tune.

All pleasant things have thus been traced to thee.
Love, knowledge, recreation, all are thine.
Without thy temptings, lower than the swine
In point of intellect our race would be.

Let those who will desire with God to be,
Who fashioned hell,—on adulation fed,
I'd rather share thy damned, eternal bed.
Good Satan, kindly save a place for me.

HERBERT W. THURLOW.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6, W. Gallagher, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30 and 6.15, Miss K. B. Kough, Lectures.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, "Beelzebub," "The Conquest of Doubt"; 7.30, R. Miller, "Christian Progress."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. Rosetti, "Bible Blunders."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7 to 8, E. Glaister, "Secular Education."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Generosity is first, although it is not in the Decalogue.
—"MARK RUTHERFORD."

The Victory at Leeds.

THE battle at Leeds is over, and we have to report another victory for Freethought.

Our readers know what the battle was about. But we may as well summarise the situation.

Woodhouse Moor is a place of public resort under the jurisdiction of the Leeds City Council. Meetings of various kinds are held there, and the Council issues "permits" to take up collections and sell literature at such gatherings. This is no doubt a wise regulation in some respects, but there can be no excuse for applying it with partiality to *bonâ-fide* societies. But this is precisely what the City Council, under the guidance of the Parks Committee, was trying to do. It refused a "permit" to the local Branch of the National Secular Society. No other body had been refused. The Secularists were denied the privilege which all other bodies enjoyed. It was, in short, an attempt to penalise them on account of their opinions. And this is persecution. Call it by what apologetic names you please, it is simply persecution.

It was rather more than insinuated that the Leeds N. S. S. Branch had been refused the "permit" because of its "objectionable literature." If this meant *anti-Christian* literature it was beside the point, for under the present law—as laid down by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in 1883, and endorsed by Mr. Justice Phillimore and Mr. Justice Darling more recently—anti-Christian literature has the same right of circulation as Christian literature possesses. To be valid, therefore, the charge of selling "objectionable" literature would have to carry the sense of being *obscene*. It was easy to disprove *that* charge, and the phantom of "objectionable literature" vanished as soon as it was confronted.

The Leeds Branch could not be expected to accept tamely such a discrimination against its rights as a body of English citizens. It took steps to defend them. The only way open to them was to challenge the censorship of public meetings by bringing it to the notice of the general public; and this could only be done by defying it, in order that the matter might be argued and decided in a court of justice.

Mr. Ernest Pack, on behalf of the Leeds Branch, sought my advice as the President of the National Secular Society. I tendered it in a long and careful letter, dated July 17, and published in the *Freethinker* of August 3.

A public meeting was held at Woodhouse Moor on Sunday, July 20, and a collection and sale of literature took place without a "permit." It was a big and enthusiastic meeting, and a resolution against the partisan action of the City Council in relation to the "permits" was carried unanimously. Acting on my advice, only one person (Mr. E. Pack) took up the collection, and only one person (Mr. Jackson) sold the literature. These gentlemen were in due course served with summonses for breach of the bye-laws.

The summonses were heard on Wednesday, August 27, before the junior Stipendiary, Mr. Marshall, and not before the senior Stipendiary, Mr. Atkinson, as I had hoped. Mr. Marshall was fair and considerate enough from his point of view. He held, as I had foretold might be the case, that he had only to be satisfied that the bye-law had been broken, and to act accordingly. This attitude of his excluded an able speech that Mr. Pack had prepared, of which I have seen the brief. He was told plainly and firmly, but not unkindly, that it was no use trying to argue an impossible case. There was an adjournment for Mr. Pack to think it over. No penalty would be inflicted if he would give an undertaking not to repeat the offence. This he would not do. But he had till Friday to reconsider the matter, and to consult the N.S.S. headquarters—which for this purpose were then at Yarmouth.

Letters and telegrams passed to and fro between Leeds and Yarmouth. I was dead against an "undertaking"—except temporarily with a view to further litigation. Mr. Marshall had refused to state a case. He said that there was no point of law involved. Mr. Pack pressed that there was, and in my judgment he was right, but the magistrate had command of the court.

Happily, a new thing happened. Mr. Pack very wisely got into communication with officials representing the Parks Committee and the Town Clerk's Office. He satisfied them that they had a *bonâ fide* Branch of the N. S. S. at Leeds, and it was agreed that the "permits" should be issued. And there the battle ended—in an access of good feeling on both sides.

Curiously enough this way out of the trouble was the first suggestion in my letter of July 17. "If," I wrote, "there is any reasonable hope that a fresh application for the 'permit' would meet with a better fate, I think you should make it. Citizens should not flout the public authorities unnecessarily, and if there has been a mistake you should give them an opportunity of rectifying it." But the Branch committee decided against that suggestion.

I desire to congratulate Mr. Pack on the energy, and good sense, and readiness to take advice from an older soldier in these wars, which he has displayed in these proceedings. I laughed over his amusing account of how the word "mandamus" spread consternation everywhere.

Mr. Pack tells me that although he could not make any use of my letters in Court, they "had very much to do with the final turn of affairs—perhaps everything." "When you advise," he further says, "there is not much left to ask a lawyer, and I take this opportunity of thanking you for the care and attention you have given the Branch's case, for which we are all grateful."

I should be ashamed to quote such things in the ordinary way, but there are times when it is pardonable.

I take this opportunity of saying that no man, and no society, has ever had a battle to fight for Freethought, without commanding (or rejecting) my assistance. Fortunately the pages of the *Freethinker* contain the proof of this assertion. I appeal to them against the calumnies of the day and hour. They contain the testimony of more than thirty years.

G. W. FOOTE.

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God's Children.

AMONG the religious begging circulars delivered by hand or sent through the post, I recently received an appeal on behalf of an institution that professes to care for the welfare of homeless children. The circular makes an urgent appeal for funds, and impresses upon the reader the fact of there being many thousands of children abroad without homes, needing food, and utterly uncared for. I have no doubt that the statement is substantially true, although one must allow a little for exaggeration. In such cases exaggeration seems inevitable, especially when religion is on the carpet. It was a religious charitable organisation that touched provincial readers with an appeal on behalf of poor London children who had never seen a flower or a blade of grass. This in London, which probably contains more vegetation than any other capital in Europe, and where, even in the slums, the love of a back garden is notorious. Of course, with or without the greenery, the case is bad enough. No country is really deserving the title of civilised where children are unfed, unhoused, and uncared for; although, as a matter of fact, it is only in civilised countries that such cases occur. Uncivilised people would be almost unable to realise such a condition of things, and, if it existed, we can be sure the fact would be used as a fresh inducement to subscribe to missionary enterprise. And, curiously enough, it is in Christian countries that the neglect of children is most marked. It is seldom or never heard of among Jews. I have never heard it alleged against Mohammedans. Japan is said to be a perfect paradise for children. And among the Esquimeaux Nansen said that he never heard of or saw a case of child-neglect or ill-usage. In England many thousands of such cases are taken up annually by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; and the need for such a society is surely a clear condemnation of Christianity as a moralising factor in life.

I did not, however, sit down to write with the intention of dwelling upon these aspects of the matter. My attention was drawn by two expressions in the circular. One was that these homeless youngsters were "God's children"; the other was that those who were feeding and sheltering these youngsters were doing a work of God, and this would be helped by every subscription that was given. Everyone who gave a donation would feel that they were fellow-workers with God, and that, it may be presumed, would be ample reward for every religious mind. At any rate, it should be comforting to God that a number of people are able and willing to help him in the work of looking after his children.

Now, I do not deny that these homeless youngsters are God's children; I do not know whether they are or not. If they are not, it is a gross libel on the Deity. No man would like it to be said of him that his children were wandering about the streets without food, or shelter, or clothing. He would not like to have it made public if it were true; he would be naturally indignant if it were false. And even Deity must be expected to possess sensibilities, which ought to be respected. For the circular makes no pretence of proving paternity. It does not say that certain evidence has been given and verified to the end that these children belong to God. It simply collects a number of half-starved and generally neglected children, looks them over, and straightway declares they must be God's. Why? Do they wish the reader to infer that this is an old habit of the Deity? I believe that, in the case of a burglary, detectives are sometimes able to say who is the burglar by the style in which it is done. It doesn't seem good enough. It looks like taking a scandalous and perhaps unwarrantable liberty with one who is not here to defend himself in person. Mark Twain said that in all the attacks on the Devil one heard only one side of the case, and he would much like to hear what Satan had to say in self-defence. Well, we really hear little more from God. And one would like to hear what he has to say of these professed admirers of his, who, whenever there is an earthquake, or an epidemic, or anything unpleasant happens, straightway put it down to God's account. As an Atheist, I desire justice—even for God.

Suppose they are really God's children. If that is the case, why should any decent body desire to be a fellow-worker with him? Why is helping to feed and shelter these children called a work of God? Of course, in a sense, it is so. When John Smith absconds, and the Guardians have to feed and shelter his family, they may be said to be doing the runaway's work. But in that case we do not find a demand for the poor-rate accompanied by an announcement that we should pay cheerfully because we are doing John Smith's work. Not a bit of it. What we see is a small placard outside the police-station announcing that the Guardians desire to lay hands on the said John Smith and punish him for bolting and leaving his children chargeable to the parish. In this case we are actually asked to praise the author of the children's being for leaving them in the lurch, and told that we should feel honored by associating with him. And the children, when they are got into a charitable institution, will be taught to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven," and thank him for giving them their daily bread. And that when their Father has left them uncared for, and their daily bread is provided by promiscuous subscriptions.

Mind, I do not say they are God's children. I do not know. I am only trying to look at the matter impartially and to be fair all round. All the parents I know are mere men and women. When they look after their families, we say they are good parents; when they neglect them, we say they are bad ones. If my neighbor's children are hungry, it must be because either there is no food in the house to give them, or there is food, and the parents deliberately starve them. And I do not see how we can judge God's treatment of *his* children in any different manner. It is really not fair to punish a man for neglecting his offspring, and to praise God when he throws his children upon the world, dependent on public charity.

Of course, it will be said that God's care for his children is shown by the very circular that lies before me. He helps them by creating instruments to do his will. But the plea will not stand. John Smith might as reasonably contend that he should be praised for creating the necessity that brings a Board of Guardians into existence. There are cases where a woman has actually left a child on the doorstep of a well-to-do person in the hope that the child would get the comforts and attention she was unable to give. And with what result? It was quite useless the woman pleading that she could not feed the child, and that she hoped that in this way her child would be fed. She was charged with child desertion, and punished for it, just the same. A parent, says both the law and common sense, must stick to his or her child, and not desert it under any condition. Is there any more justification for God handing over his responsibilities to a charitable institution than there is for a man handing his over to a Board of Guardians or to some chance individual?

There is the seductive phrase that we are doing God's work, or helping God in his work of running the world aright. But what is God's work? And why should we do it for him, or even help *him* to do it? From all that one can judge, God's work is done in such a manner that it takes man no small part of his time to undo it, or to correct it. God sends diseases and man discovers the antidotes. At the recent Medical Congress the honors of the assemblage fell to Professor Erlich, with his famous antidote for syphilis. For about four hundred years this disease has been a scourge in Christendom, punishing both the vicious and the virtuous, the innocent and the guilty alike. And when the remedy arrives it comes from man, not from God. The same is true of all other diseases. For, note, the diseases are not created by man, but the remedies are. Man does not have to discover the diseases; they discover him.

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They are there in God's scheme of work, ready to hand, ready to operate. The remedies do not thus lie ready to hand. They have to be sought out by laborious, painful, sometimes dangerous methods. It took four hundred years to discover an antidote to syphilis. It took less than forty years for it to infect Europe from end to end, and would have operated more quickly had modes of travelling been easier and quicker.

God's work! The best of the world and of human nature is not God's work, but man's. God did not leave the world habitable to a civilised human being; it was man who made it so. God spreads a river over a countryside, and leaves a morass. Man deepens the channel, raises embankments, drains the land, and so creates utility, order, and the possibilities of development. God leaves man a savage, and human association civilises him. God leaves man ignorant, and human inquisitiveness and industry gives him knowledge. God leaves man the prey of brutal passions; men teach each other how to restrain them, or to transmute them into finer feelings. And all the time God is dogging the footsteps of man, providing a new disease for every change in life, punishing every false step with unfaltering cruelty, afflicting old and young, strong and weak, good and bad, with impartial malignancy. Man's only protection against Deity is knowledge; and of all the trees in the garden the tree of knowledge was the only one of which he was sternly forbidden to eat.

There is some truth in the statement that we are helping God. That is a game man, in his folly, is continually playing. When we see God's blunders we help him correct them, and then praise his wisdom for providing them. When the deplorable and ignoble character of his ancestry is exposed, we help him by creating a fictitious one. When his character and doings in past ages is made plain, we assist by creating a whole army of apologists to whitewash his reputation. Of course, it is the duty of children to help their parents; but that is mainly because, as the children reach maturity, the parent approaches old age and helplessness. Is that what Christians have in mind when they talk about helping God? I should not be surprised. For God does grow helpless as mankind reaches maturity. He is most powerful when they are in their childhood; most arrogant in his claims when they are most helpless. God and man cannot both grow at the same time. As one rises, the other falls; and a little less readiness to help God might result in the absence of anything to assist.

C. COHEN.

Christianity and Other Religions.

THERE are such things as foregone conclusions, or conclusions that precede all argument. To believers in Christ the truth of Christianity is a foregone conclusion, and so is the truth of Mohammedanism to Mohammedans, or of Buddhism to Buddhists, or of Hinduism to Hindus, or of Confucianism to disciples of Confucius. This is a rule to which there is absolutely no exception. The Rev. James Hope Moulton, D.D., is a Tutor in New Testament subjects at Didsbury Wesleyan College; and recently he undertook to deliver the Fernley Lecture, choosing for his subject, "Religions and Religion." It was, of course, a foregone conclusion that with him "Religion" meant Christianity. From the very moment of his appointment no one was in the least doubt on the point. The Lecture has just been published, and a review of it appears in the *British Weekly* for August 21 by another theological professor, Dr. Denney, of Glasgow. The title of the review is an amplification of that of the book, and reads, "Religions and the True Religion"; and here again it is a foregone conclusion that, in the leading article in the *British Weekly*, by "the true Religion" can only be understood the religion of Christ. All this, both in the volume and in the review, is a thing that cannot possibly be otherwise. Even the arguments adduced are so many foregone conclusions. You can tell exactly what they are without reading either book or review. They have positively no originality whatever, except that of re-statement by men of Professors Moulton's and Denney's well-known abilities. Let us look at them for a few moments.

This lecture was delivered in connection with the Centenary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society by "an enthusiast for the propagation of the Gospel." We are not in the least surprised, therefore, at the following statement which occurs in Dr. Denney's article:—

> "Professor Moulton is convinced that in his own faith he holds the key to the world's spiritual history, and in the strength of that conviction he welcomes everything in other religions which prepares the way for Christianity, or enables those who have been reared in them to understand the Gospel."

Now, suppose that a Mohammedan scholar had published a book on the same subject, and that another Mohammedan scholar was reviewing it in a Mohammedan newspaper, do you not think that the above extract, without the change of a single letter, could be legitimately applied to the author? We admit that, in all probability, the Mohammedan author would not convince the Christian; but we are fully as persuaded that the Christian author is not any more likely to convert the Mohammedan. A man's religion is a mere accident of birth and country. The devotees of every religion under the sun believe most firmly that theirs is the only true religion, and are astonished beyond measure when they learn that there are people who think differently. Dr. Moulton is spoken of as "an expert in the science of religion," the science of comparative religion; and being a Christian theologian nothing could have been more of a foregone conclusion than that he should sum up his book by saying that "our new science enables us to write a new chapter of the *Præparatio Evangelica*."

Dr. Denney is honest enough to recognise the fact that other students of "our new science" have arrived at an opposite conclusion. He says:—

> "There are scholars who use their knowledge of all religions to discredit faith in any. There are scholars, in particular, who use their knowledge of ancient religions to discredit Christianity. There is nothing in it, they tell us, which is not derived from earlier religions; the very figure of Jesus in the Gospel is merely the literary incarnation of ideas which originated no one can well tell how, but which certainly had no basis in history."

All such scholars Dr. Denney dubs "anarchists of criticism," and he seems to think that Dr. Moulton takes them too seriously and treats them with excessive "geniality and good humor." But they have an ever-increasing number of followers. W. B. Smith, Jensen, Drews, F. C. Conybeare, and J. M. Robertson are no longer faint voices in the wilderness. The books which they issue are being read and studied by a growing public, to which Professors Moulton and Denney no longer appeal. They do not all agree, but the faces of all are undoubtedly towards Rationalism. Dr. Denney is of opinion that "it is no exaggeration to say that a mind which doubts the historicity of Jesus is to all historical and spiritual intents an unsound mind." It is really of no consequence what the Glasgow Professor thinks of such a mind, because it would be equally relevant for us to conclude that "it is no exaggeration to say that a mind which believes in and worships a supernatural being called Christ is to all historical and intellectual intents an unsound mind." But let that pass. The non-Christian scholars just alluded to, avail themselves of their knowledge of the science of comparative religion to make two claims, each of which is said to discredit Christianity. The first deals with the idea of the dying God, or the God who dies and rises again for the redemption of mankind. This idea was common to several Oriental religions which had invaded the West and were

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competing with one another for supremacy there at the time of the rise of Christianity. Now, the claim made on the basis of that fact is thus stated by Dr. Denney:—

> "In some undefined way it is loosely supposed that this prevalent conception of a God who dies and rises again, and whose death and resurrection are ritually celebrated and regarded as of vital interest to the worshipers, has influenced both the New Testament story of Jesus, and the Christian interpretation of the great events in his career. Most of what is written in this line is absolutely uncritical, and can only be perpetrated because the writers have forgotten for the moment that Jesus is a historical person, and that there is historical evidence for what the New Testament says of his death and resurrection."

Has it not occurred to the learned divine that, in the latter half of that extract, he begs the whole question? The critics alluded to have not forgotten, even for a moment, that the Gospel Jesus is a historical character. What they contend is that there is no more historical evidence for the Gospel Jesus than for Attis, Adonis, or Osiris, or, in other words, that they are all alike supernatural beings for whose historicity there is not a single scrap of evidence. What Liberal Christians maintain is not that the Gospel Jesus is historical, but that out of the Gospel Jesus, which they admit to be largely legendary, it is possible to deduce or construct a really historical person, which we seriously doubt.

Now, both Denney and Schweitzer are clearly mistaken when they assert that "a God who comes to earth to die for men and rise again—and nothing but this is a redeeming God—is quite unknown to any of the ancient faiths." There are two eminent Professors who flatly contradict that statement. The one is the brilliant Greek Professor at Oxford, and the other the well-known Professor of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University. Professor Gilbert Murray declares positively that the idea of a dying and resurrected God or God-man was a popular article of faith prior to the advent of Christianity. He says:—

> "The figure of the Redeemer occurs in two pre-Christian documents, discovered by the keen analysis and profound learning of Dr. Reitzenstein: the Poimandres revelation printed in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and the sermon of the Nassenes in Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Hæresium*, which is combined with Attis Worship" (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 145).

Professor Benjamin W. Bacon, of Yale, bears the same testimony thus:—

> "In the Pauline Gospel the story of Jesus is a drama of the supernatural regions, wherein his earthly career as prophet, leader, teacher, sinks to the level of the merest episode. As pre-existent spirit, Jesus had been from the beginning 'in the form of God.' As the period of its consummation drew near he took upon him human form, descended through suffering and death to the lowest depths of the underworld, and by Divine power had reascended above all the heavens with their ranks of angelic hierarchies. Whether Paul himself so conceived it or not, the Gentile world had no other moulds of thought wherein to formulate such a Christology than the current myths of Redeemer-gods. .....The influential religions of the time were those of personal redemption by mystic union with a dying and resurrected 'Savior-god,' an Osiris, an Adonis, an Attis, a Mithra. Religions of this type were everywhere displacing the old national faiths" (*The Making of the New Testament*, pp. 49, 50).

Professors Murray and Bacon are quite as competent critics as Dr. Denney, and possess a more intimate acquaintance with the period in question; and they are both free from supernatural prejudices.

The second claim of the non-supernaturalistic critics is that the mysteries of the Pagan religions influenced the development of the Christian mysteries, such as the Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is not seriously denied by either Dr. Moulton or Dr. Denney; and neither of them succeeds in proving that there is any essential difference between Christianity and the religions with which it was, for some time, in competition in the Roman Empire. We hold that the following extract is as applicable to the Gospel Jesus as to the mythical beings of whom it speaks. Dr. Denney says:—

> "Attis, Adonis, and Osiris are in no sense historical; they are embodiments of the decay and reanimation of natural life year by year. The spirit of vegetation decays, and is quickened again with every revolution of the sun, and human beings are profoundly, and it may be piously, interested in this perpetual miracle in Nature."

Our conclusion, and by no means a foregone one, is that there is no true religion in the sense claimed by these two divines; that while some religions are, in some respects, better than others, they are all equally false on their supernatural or theological side. If the word must be used, the only true religion is the simple, natural one of doing good.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XVII.

(Continued from p. 550.)

> "It is practically impossible to convert a Chinaman to Christianity, and leave him still a faithful member of his family, and a loyal subject to the powers that be. Confucianism is so woven in with family observances and political doctrines that if the one is overthrown the rest follow. 'I come not to bring peace, but a sword,' has been but too truly exemplified in this country, and nothing but the weakness of the Chinese enables them to tolerate missionaries as they do."—ARCHIBALD LITTLE, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p. 309.

> "The chief difficulty consists in the conclusion to which the great official classes [in China] have arrived—that the missionaries are their most relentless and implacable enemies, calumniating them, and misrepresenting their actions at every turn, and using all their influence and the great means at their command to overthrow their system of government and abolish their rule for their own flagitious purposes. I use the word 'flagitious' because the very presence of missionaries in China, being a cause of the most complete perplexity to the minds of the educated classes, they can see no possible explanation of it, except in some sinister political purpose; the avowed objects striking them as being too puerile for a moment's serious consideration. That foreigners, to whom their country is indebted for unnumbered humiliations, who inflicted opium upon them, and stole the treasures of their Summer Palace, should produce men whose sole aim, under the guidance of a Divine command, is to benefit them, is an idea only to be entertained by children, or by poor, uninstructed people beguiled by bribes and unhallowed rites!"—T. C. HAYLLAR, "The Christian View of Missionaries," *Nineteenth Century*, Nov. 1895, pp. 769-70.

How it was that the Chinese endured for so long the accumulation of injury and insult which we have recorded may be explained by the essential tolerance and love of peace inherent in the Chinese nature—a characteristic which is commented upon in almost all works dealing with that race. Mr. Arthur Smith observes: "One of the best traits of the Chinese character is a talent for extreme forbearance with ills which cannot be cured."*

Sir Robert Hart has told us of his—

> "Many talks with Chinese acquaintances on the questions of the day—the doings of the treaty Powers and the difficulties of China—have shown how the situation is viewed by those whose attention it has attracted, and it has always on such occasions been a source of astonishment to observe how they retained their calmness and philosophy while inwardly boiling with indignation and trembling with apprehension. Whether it is their rice diet that is at the bottom of the general calmness of the national temperament, physiologists and psychologists can best determine."†

Time and again our Government had been warned of the consequences of acquiescence in the outrageous proceedings of the missionaries in China. The Tsungli-Yamen (the Chinese Foreign Office) had many times protested, without avail, as indeed had our own Consuls—notably Sir Rutherford Alcock—and others in authority in China, like Admiral Richards. Mr. Michie, an authoritative writer upon Chinese matters, had written a big book exposing and denouncing the methods of the missionaries. Many articles had also appeared in our leading

* A. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, p. 37.
† Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 148.

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magazines, like the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review*. So the Government could not plead ignorance of what was going on. But the missionary societies were powerful organisations, commanding immense revenues, and the Government were not going to unchain the tiger of Christian intolerance by meddling with their affairs. The only result of these humanitarian efforts on behalf of the Chinese was the issue, by the late Lord Salisbury, of a "Memorandum of Advice" to the leading missionary societies, containing the pious wish "that any endeavor to combat heathen prejudices and superstitions should be conducted with moderation and judgment, and that care should be taken to avoid giving legitimate cause for offence"—a piece of advice which had as much effect as water on a duck's back. Even so long ago as 1888, the late Mr. Archibald Little—who is recognised as one of the best writers on China, after pointing out that the great Taiping Rebellion was the result of missionary propaganda, observed :—

> "It is not generally known that a practical people like the Dutch, who hold the larger portion of the Malay race under their rule, forbid propagandism entirely, throughout the whole extent of their vast territories. We cannot, then, wonder at the Chinese desiring to do the like; and in common justice should allow the Government free action in a question of internal economy like this." *

If this policy had been observed from the beginning by our Government, many millions of lives and untold sufferings would have been saved.

As for the missionary societies, they were utterly callous in the matter of human life. If a missionary was killed, he was straightway hailed as a martyr, and the tale of his sufferings, properly embellished, made it good for the collection boxes. Then there was the indemnity, in blood and money, to be extorted, by the aid of gunboats, which would teach the heathen that they would be forced to have the emissaries of Christ whether they liked them or not.

The Chinese Government were powerless to avert the explosion which they could clearly see approaching. The English Government dare not attempt to deal with the missionary societies, and so events marched on the final catastrophe, which occurred in 1900, and is known as the "Boxer Rebellion," the keynote of which, says Mr. Michie, writing at that time, "may be gathered from the proceedings of the conspirators, from their placards and lampoons, and from their secret correspondence" "is general detestation of foreigners, special enmity to Christianity and its accessories, and aversion to the symbols of material progress." And, as he further remarks, "Nor is the present state of things a growth of yesterday. The ferment has been working for forty years—to go no further back—with many sporadic outbreaks to mark its progress."†

The Boxers—so dubbed by English journalists in the Treaty Ports—whose name would be better translated as "Righteous Harmonists," or "Righteous Fists," represented, not merely one of the many secret societies of China, says Mr. Dicey, "but they represent the feelings of the vast majority of the pig-tailed hundreds of millions in their war-cry, 'Expel the Foreigners!'"‡ And while Protestant missionaries blame Catholic missionaries, and Catholic missionaries blame Protestant missionaries, for a large share in provoking the outbreak, both parties blame the foreign traders in China as well. But Sir Robert Hart, who, from his position as Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, could speak with authority upon this point, says: "The foreign mercantile public cannot fairly be accused of having done aught to outrage Chinese feeling or evoke Chinese ill-will."§ He places the blame wholly on the missionaries who had done so. And although Sir Robert Hart went through all the horrors of the siege of the Legations, yet he declares that the rebellion "was patriotic in its origin and justifiable in much that it aimed at cannot be questioned, and cannot be too much insisted on."* He further remarks :—

> "The first doings of the Boxer patriots show that their plan of operations was, on the one hand, to destroy Christian converts and stamp out Christianity, and thus free China from foreign trespass, contamination, and humiliation. These are the objects which will be kept in view, worked up to, and in all probability accomplished—with other weapons in their hands—by the children or grandchildren of to-day's volunteers" (p. 53).

After the first successes of the Boxers, they received the support of the official class in China. The Dowager-Empress was wholly in sympathy with them. This is her account of the Boxer risings, as she described it to Princess Der Ling :—

> "Do you know how the Boxer rising began? Why, the Chinese Christians were to blame. The Boxers were treated badly by them; and wanted revenge..... These Chinese Christians are the worst people in China. They rob the poor country people of their land and property, and the missionaries, of course, always protect them, in order to get a share themselves. Whenever a Chinese Christian is taken to the Magistrate's Yamen, he is not supposed to kneel down on the ground and obey the law, as others do, and is always very rude to his own Government officials. Then these missionaries do the best they can to protect him, whether he is wrong or not, and believe everything he says, and make the magistrate set the prisoner free."†

No doubt that hundreds of Chinese Christians fell victims to the fury of the Boxers, and their deaths lie at the door of the missionary societies who induced them to leave their faith. Baron von Ketteler, the German Ambassador, was murdered, and the foreign Legations in Pekin were besieged. Then came the German Emperor's shout for "Vengeance, Vengeance!" and the Chinese were once more destined to experience the "resources of [Christian] civilisation."

That the foreign Legations in Peking were not destroyed, and the Europeans in refuge there were not killed, was entirely owing to the divided counsels of the Chinese themselves. There were two parties among the ruling officials at Peking; both were of one mind as to ridding the country of the hated foreigners; but the more enlightened party, aware of the power and extent of the foreign nations, knew that China could not hope to contend against them with any hope of success, and that to destroy the Legations would only end in the foreigners invading the country in irresistible force, overturning the Throne, and dividing the Chinese Empire among themselves.

As Sir Robert Hart remarks, the attacks on the Legations "were never pushed home, but always ceased just when we feared they would succeed." Had it been otherwise, he says, "we could not have held out for a week, perhaps not even a day." And they came to the conclusion—

> "that somebody, probably a wise man who knew what the destruction of the Legations would cost Empire and Dynasty, intervened between the issue of the order for our destruction and the execution of it, and so kept the soldiery playing with us as cats do with mice, the continued and seemingly heavy firing telling the Palace how fiercely we were attacked, and how stubbornly we defended ourselves, while its curiously half-hearted character not only gave us the chance to live through it, but also gave any relief forces time to come and extricate us, and thus avert the national calamity which the Palace in its pride and conceit ignored, but which someone in authority in his wisdom foresaw and in his discretion sought to push aside."‡

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

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* *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p. 309.
† A. Michie, *The Englishman in China*, vol. ii., p. 443.
‡ Dicey, *The New Far East*, p. 13.
§ Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 136.

* *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 7.
† Princess Der Ling, *Two Years in the Forbidden City* (1912), p. 179.
‡ Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, pp. 39-40.

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Acid Drops.

Lord Guthrie's summing-up at the trial of Albert Wade French, the secretary of the Glasgow Branch of the National Sailors' Union, on a charge of murdering James Martin, of the British Seafarers' Union—resulting in an acquittal—contained a protest against the religious bigotry displayed in some questions put to one of the witnesses by the prisoner's counsel. One question was "Are you a Jew?" and Lord Guthrie inquired "What had that to do with the case?" His lordship added that "An honorable Jew was as trustworthy as any nominal Christian." But this is putting the case very gingerly. Surely an honorable Jew is as trustworthy as an honorable Christian. Another question was "Are you an Atheist?" and Lord Guthrie's comment on this was still more open to criticism. "Counsel ought to have known," he said, "that there were no Atheists; there were Agnostics. A man might have doubts, but for a man positively to believe there was no God was absurd." But the Atheist does not deny the existence of God. The etymology of the term shows that it simply and properly means "without God"—which is exactly what "Agnostic" means as far as it has any sort of definiteness. We will not end this paragraph, however, without congratulating Lord Guthrie on his rebuke of religious bigotry being introduced into a court of justice.

Jack Johnson has invited the Rev. F. B. Meyer to half-an-hour's audience with him before representatives of the press. The Rev. F. B. Meyer says that he never received the letter. We daresay *that* letter would go astray. Anyway, Mr. Meyer knows of the letter now, and we wonder whether he will have the manliness to say to Johnson's face what he has said behind his back. Johnson is a man of more than average intelligence, from all we can gather, and we should be much interested in the result of the interview. Rev. F. B. Meyer will probably conclude that discretion is the better part of valor, and that to attack Johnson from the pulpit is preferable to meeting him face to face.

Rev. F. B. Meyer continues to outdo himself in the attack upon Jack Johnson. We never saw a more impudent, and at the same time hypocritical, letter than the one of his printed in the *Daily Chronicle* of August 29. He says that the question of Johnson's color has not entered his mind. What else was it then that inspired his denunciation of "this man" when Johnson was here before? "This man" was not allowed to fulfil his boxing engagement in London; it was too brutal and degrading a performance to be tolerated. Yet a precisely similar performance was permitted to take place at the National Sporting Club some three weeks afterwards,—the performers being two white men. Mr. Meyer never opened his lips, as far as we remember, against the "meeting" of the white boxers. He spent all his indignation upon the black-and-white encounter.

Perhaps the rev. gentleman will tell us in a few plain words what is the specific ground of his objection to Jack Johnson? The man is a pugilist,—so are others. He is branded as "immoral," without any definite allegation of immoral acts; moreover, the idea that *his* immorality should exclude him from the music-hall stage, in face of the well-known characters of some white performers on the same boards, is obviously nothing but a disguised objection to his *color*. Mr. Meyer sneers at Johnson's "serious imputations on American jurisprudence." He has travelled in America, and he must be incredibly ignorant if he does not know how blacks are treated by whites in that country. Has he never heard of negroes being excluded from white men's churches, and Sunday-schools, and Young Men's Christian Associations? Has he never heard of how they are compelled to travel? Has he never heard of accused negroes, some of whom have subsequently been proved innocent, being dragged out of gaol by mobs, and hung up to trees and riddled with bullets, or soaked in paraffin or kerosene and roasted alive? Has he never heard of beastly indignities practised upon negroes' bodies? There are good Christians, but when it comes to "infidels" they are not to be trusted. They do not understand that the "infidel" has any rights whatever. They display, in relation to him, neither common sense nor common decency. In the same way there are plenty of good white men in America, but when it comes to "blacks" *they* are not to be trusted. Most Englishmen realise this truth, and they will understand the real value of Mr. Meyer's taunt that Jack Johnson is a fugitive from justice. *Justice!* Good God! And this prater about "justice"—from whites to blacks—is a Christian clergyman!

Mr. Meyer's vindication of American justice is positively amusing. "The son of a wealthy white millionaire," he says, "has just been condemned to be hanged in Atalanta, a Southern city, on the evidence of a negro servant." Surely the reverend gentleman's logic is worthy of the imbecile ward of a lunatic asylum? The point at issue is not black men's treatment of whites, nor white men's treatment of each other, but white men's treatment of blacks. But, perhaps, after all, we ought not to be too severe upon Mr. Meyer. He displays the logic of his profession.

The reverend gentleman's last joke takes the biscuit. He calls upon Jack Johnson to go back to America, and submit to be tested by the oath and the examination of witnesses. "The world," he says, "will then be able to form its own conclusion." Yes, but where will poor Jack Johnson be? Doing heaps of time in an American prison. It is too big a price for one man to pay for another's satisfaction. Mr. Meyer takes himself too seriously. He seems to consider himself God Almighty's right-hand man. What we should like to see is an official note of the appointment.

Every movement that brings people of different nationalities into friendly conference makes a little in the direction of peace, but we must confess to inability to join in the very high expectations over the opening of the Palace of Peace at the Hague. Curiously enough, wars have been rather more numerous since the first Peace Congress at the Hague was held than before. Since that event there has been our own South African War, the Spanish-American War, the Russo-Japanese War, two campaigns in the Balkans—to say nothing of a number of small military enterprises. And to these we must add the tremendous increase in armaments all over Europe during the past ten years, with the statements of responsible Ministers that it is hopeless to expect any immediate cessation of this rivalry. The truth is that the delegates at the Hague seem much more concerned in settling the conditions of warfare than providing for its abolition; and in trying to settle the conditions under which wars are to be fought, each nation is trying to steal an advantage over the rest. The fact is that there are no two nations represented at the Hague who really trust each other. Two of the Great Powers of Europe, inspired with mutual confidence, could with comparative ease inaugurate an era of peace. But this condition does not exist.

Of course, the parsons have had to have a hand in the ceremonies at the Hague, although they have never done anything to promote peace, and their religion has been responsible for more wars than any other religion in the world. In this case Dean Hensley Henson preached a peace sermon in the Church of the Embassy at the Hague. Dean Henson professed to find a great improvement because, in deference to the Christian conscience, wars waged to-day for commercial benefit were compelled to cover their purpose with hypocritical pretence of nobler things. Well, we beg to point out that wars never were waged openly for profit, for the simple reason that no army could be held together on those terms. There was always the pretence of national honor, religious duty, and similar shibboleths. The modern world offers nothing new in this respect. And of all wars which satisfied private greed and gave scope to brutal ferocity, those waged in the name of religion have been the worst. The Balkan War—easily the most brutal and greedy of modern times—began in the name of religion, gained the sympathy of Christians by an appeal to religion, and the Christian Allies have even secured a certain measure of silence concerning their misdeeds because speech might have brought discredit on Christianity.

Naturally, Dean Henson could not conclude his sermon without a fling at Atheism. Lamenting the failure of modern civilisation in the direction of a genuine peace, he asks whether it is to sink before "the dismal shapes of the Atheist and the Anarchist." That is so like the parson. Call people names when you can, and if not that, then fix on to tendencies that are admittedly deplorable names that people have been carefully educated to dislike. We might leave the Anarchist to defend himself, since a defence of anarchy forms no part of our work, nor is Anarchism one of our convictions. But what on earth has either Atheism or Anarchism to do with the European inability to maintain a genuine peace? The nations of Europe are not given over to Atheism, and no one can accuse them of Anarchism. Their policy may be anarchistic, but that is a different matter. But Dean Henson knows quite well that the dominant voices in the Councils of the Great Powers are Christian, and he might soon learn, if he does not already know, that the modern peace movement owes far more to the spread of Freethought and to the efforts of Freethinkers

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than to Christianity. Still, it is an old clerical game to blame one's opponents for all that is unpleasant in the world, and Dean Henson is a very old hand in the religious business.

The Holy Synod of Russia has appointed September 11 as a day to be set apart for prayer for drunkards. The ceremony is to be annual, so that evidently it is not expected that the prayers will be answered with anything like promptitude and completeness. One would think that if Providence answers the prayer, it would do so by curing every Russian drunkard at once. That would be something like a cure, and would produce a striking impression on the rest of the world. We may also note that the Russian Church has not been, in the past, over-zealous in this matter of sobriety. Quite the reverse. For a long while both the Government and the Church deliberately encouraged drinking. One reason for this was that the Government derived a financial benefit from the sale of vodka; the other, that it kept the villagers free from plots and conspiracies. A vodka-soaked peasant was much more likely to remain a good son of the Church and a loyal subject than a sober one. Both the Church and the Government understood this, and acted accordingly.

Is one day of prayer for the cure of drunkards enough? It wouldn't be so in England, and we understand that Russia is the most drunken country in Europe. Besides, the Christian God is far from being a teetotaler himself—if we are to believe the Bible.

The Sea Dyaks of Borneo are very truthful people. They erect a "monument" to the man who tells a lie. That would never do in any Christian country. It would leave very little "land question" for Mr. Lloyd George to settle in England.

The late Dean Stanley had the audacity to call the Patriarch Abraham an Arab Sheikh. Professor Denney, of Glasgow, tell us that people were scandalised then, and that all sensible people are scandalised now by such an irreverence. In the Church it is a sin to tell the simple truth about the supposed founder of the Hebrew race. Dr. Denney will not allow us to speak of him as anything but "the Father of the faithful, the pattern of those who, through all the trials of life, hold fast to the word of the living God, and find the reward exceeding great." You must not mention that he was a liar, and for selfish purposes passed his wife off as his sister. You must not refer to his cruel treatment of Hagar, the Egyptian maid, and her son. It is only as an ideal servant of Jehovah that we are permitted to think and speak of him. Such is the condition of our being regarded as "sensible people."

In Professor Denney's opinion, it is equally irreverent to speak of Jesus as "the Carpenter of Nazareth." "The whole interest of the Church in Jesus is that he is the Son of God, that he receives sinners, that he is the Savior and the Lord of men." He may have been a carpenter, it is true, but it is indelicate and impious to allude to so earthly a fact in so heavenly an institution as the Church.

Whatever should we do without the Bible? After some weeks' discussion of the Parable of the Unjust Steward, the *Guardian* comes to the conclusion that "Possibly we have to wait for the true exposition, and the key to it may be lying in some buried papyrus." That is the beauty of having an inspired record. A non-inspired writer would have said what he had to say, and his readers would in all probability have understood him. But an inspired writer sets down his message, and, after nearly two thousand years' commenting and puzzling, it is decided that we must wait for the accidental recovery of some non-inspired writing to find out what the inspired writer meant. Perhaps the biggest joke of all is that the editor of the *Guardian* is quite oblivious to the humor of the situation.

A portentous announcement is made in the *Daily Telegraph*. Mr. G. Currie Martin, B.D., is publishing a volume of lectures on Inspiration. "The author's object," we are told, "is to show that inspiration is not primarily enshrined in books, but is the touch of the Divine spirit upon personality." This must mean, at bottom, that the touch of the Divine spirit is laid upon Mr. Martin. According to his definition, it is only the inspired that can discern inspiration; which is a beautiful conclusion—for the inspired, who have everybody else at their mercy.

"Wanted—More Humor in the Church" is a thick-type heading in the *Christian Globe*. Are they going to start a Punch and Judy, and lay the cross and the Man of Sorrows on the shelf?

Canon Newbolt must be a very simple-minded man if he really believes that "goodness can only be attained through the Gospel of grace." If that statement, recently made in St. Paul's Cathedral, were true, it would inevitably follow that all Christians are good, while all non-Christians are bad; but this conclusion, thoroughly logical though it be, is so monstrously false that not even Canon Newbolt has the temerity to adopt it. And yet the reverend gentleman can stand before a congregation in the heart of the City of London and unblushingly teach the most damnable heresy ever invented, namely, that goodness is obtainable only through grace, and grace alone through the Sacraments. Any fool who keeps his eyes open can see at a glance how utterly irrational, because absolutely untrue, such a creed is.

The Canon says that "man is trying to save society by human means and is utterly failing to achieve his purpose." Here, again, the facts are dead against him. During the last forty or fifty years pure Humanism has brought about several social reforms; but the grace of God has done practically nothing for society during the vast period of nearly two thousand years. The Canon tells us that "the Gospel of the blessed God is a very real and vital thing," and so it is—to the preacher; but to the world at large it has always been, and is, the most real and vital fraud imaginable. The priest has lived and fattened on it, but at the expense of starving the laity.

Canon Newbolt has been going for those people who at this season of the year "take a holiday from God." The people indicated are those who, when away at the seaside, neglect church-going, and so "give God a holiday." We have often observed the fact, and have taken it as an indication of how little conviction lies behind the practice of church-going. The fact is that, while church-goers represent only a small proportion of the entire population, a large proportion of these go as the result of mere social convention. It is a part of the social fashion, and it requires more self-assertion than the average British citizen possesses to break a practice that is labelled as respectable. But at the seaside the social bond is loosened, to the extent that one is unknown; and for a time one may indulge one's inclinations with impunity. Exactly the same thing occurs when people move into a new neighborhood or emigrate. Some of the Churches have created a machinery for keeping "removals" shadowed. No one has yet suggested the same thing for holiday-makers. Perhaps that is coming.

Dr. Ryle, Dean of Westminster Abbey, falls back upon the old, unverified and unverifiable theological hypothesis that "there has been something more, something nobler, in the history of mankind than the mere warfare of fighting organisations, the mere instinct of survival and mastery, the mere ingenuity of clever invention," and by this "something more" he means conscience, or the moral sense. He even refers to Darwin in confirmation of such a view; but the great Newton of biology never gave the slightest support to this theological dogma. The one object of his *Descent of Man* is to show that man does not possess a single faculty or sense which is not present, on a lower scale, in the animal. The moral sense is exercised by all gregarious beings, at whatever stage of development they may be.

Where the Dean goes hopelessly astray is in assuming that conscience represents a relation between man and God, whereas, in reality, it is purely a social faculty, a faculty that owes its very existence to social life. It is a theological fallacy to maintain that conscience "points man towards his Creator, the Personal Spirit Supreme of the Universe." Does Dr. Ryle imagine that the five hundred millions of Buddhists, all of whom are Atheists, have no conscience? Has he the hardihood to assert that the myriads of Confucians in China, who are taught to pay no heed to the Deity, are destitute of a moral sense, when we are assured by those who know them best that they are morally our equals, if not superiors? The very reverend Dean is evidently under the dominion of the usual inverate Christian prejudices.

Every institution that prevails in Christendom has its justification in the Christian religion. Militarism is as fully Christian as brotherly love, in fact much more so. Militarism is the most conspicuous and dominant fact in every Christian country, whilst Christian charity is a rarity under the sun. We are not surprised, therefore, at the Dean of Durham's statement that "the soldier takes his place in the scheme of a Christian State by the same title as the policeman, the judge, and the moralist." We agree; but we hold

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that if Christ reigned on earth, as Christians say he does, not one of the officials mentioned would have the ghost of a title to a place in the scheme of the Christian State. Militarism is the complete negation of the Christianity of the New Testament. That Christianity is a farce is amply demonstrated by the simple fact that the King is at once the Defender of the Faith in the United Kingdom and the head of our Army.

One benefit of competing religionists quarrelling is that a certain amount of truth-speaking is likely to crop up during the fight. We have called attention on several occasions to the large exodus from the Church that is taking place in Germany. Whether the Church happens to be Lutheran or Catholic, the exodus goes on; and last year, in Berlin alone, the number is said to have reached one hundred thousand. Dr. Clifford, with his customary "slimness," has pointed to this phenomenon as a triumph of what he calls the "free church principle." He wishes his readers to infer that these people are simply disgusted with a State Church, and are still good Christians on Free Church lines. We haven't the least doubt that Dr. Clifford knows the facts to be quite the contrary of this; and at any rate the *Catholic Times* blurts out the truth. It says that "a very large proportion of the losses of the Government Church is due to religious indifference and absolute unbelief." The *Christian World* has also been honest enough to say the same. It is left for Dr. Clifford—who has been so long playing fast and loose with terms in connection with the Education question that it seems to have become a habit—to ignore and misrepresent facts that even his fellow-Dissenters have been compelled to acknowledge and place in their true light.

Nothing is more amusing than a parson with a high and mighty air of patronising science. He will praise it and its work, but he is careful to say, or to imply, that, after all, the poor scientist is only groping imperfectly after truths that he is already acquainted with. Thus, the Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett graciously informs the world that evolution is not an explanation, but only a description. It does not explain the origin of the universe; it does not explain the "primal impulse" from which the whole movement proceeds. "It does not explain the particular forms and laws that are impressed upon the universe." And so on through a number of other things that Dr. Lidgett is good enough to inform us that evolution cannot tell us, but by inference he can. The poor, plodding, uninspired scientist must take a back seat when the Methodist preacher comes on the scene. It is all very amusing, and also very characteristic of the parsonic tribe.

Of course, evolution is a description. Properly understood, it is a formula descriptive of certain general modes of operation. That is all; but that is all that any scientific law is or pretends to be. Of course, it does not explain the "primal impulse"—one wonders what on earth Dr. Lidgett conceives this venerable bogey to be like—for the simple reason that it knows nothing of any such phenomenon. A primal impulse is primal nonsense. It does not explain the laws that are "impressed upon the universe," because the "laws" are inseparable from the universe, and are, in fact, nothing but a scientific description of the movements of the universe. And, of course, it does not bridge the "apparent" gulf between mind and matter. If it is only apparent, there is no gulf to bridge. At any rate, it will be time enough for anyone to try and bridge the gulf when it has been shown that a gulf is there. At present, all we can say with certainty is that there is a gap in our knowledge; and Dr. Lidgett and his kind are the last in the world likely to help in filling that gap. Finally, science does explain one rather important thing: it explains Dr. Lidgett. Our knowledge of the evolution of the medicine-man enables us to explain how a member of this species, with no special knowledge of the subject in question—offering, indeed, a plentiful absence of available information—can give himself airs of superiority over those who have made natural phenomena their life's study. This has been characteristic of the medicine-man throughout human history. It is the badge of their tribe. Dr. Lidgett is merely an interesting survival of a very primitive social state. Such survivals are useful enough in their way, but it does not do to take them too seriously.

How amazingly intimate and minute is the knowledge of God possessed by "J. B.," of the *Christian World*. He can tell us exactly how the Divine Being feels in any given circumstances. For example, when he "finds a good Jew, a Mohammedan of pure life, he feels a thrill of love and infinite pity for him." Thus the narrow prejudices of a Christian are ascribed to the Deity. To be sure he loves "a good Jew," or "a Mohammedan of pure life," but he "feels a thrill of infinite pity for him," because he has the misfortune not to be such an one as "J. B." is. Has it never dawned upon the brilliant essayist of the *Christian World* that by an orthodox Jew or Mohammedan even he may be looked upon as a legitimate object of the infinite pity of Jehovah or Allah?

The *Christian World* complains that a certain P. S. A. secretary received a circular from a Turf Society in Switzerland, inviting him to take shares in a St. Leger sweepstake. It says that the address of secretaries are published in the Brotherhood Year Book, and this makes them a target for such communications. The *Christian World* is indignant; we are a trifle suspicious. If P. S. A. secretaries receive circulars of this character, it looks as though the promoters of the sweepstakes expect to do business in this quarter. If they continue to receive them, it looks as though they have done business. Certainly, the Turf Society would not continue to work through the P. S. A. Year Book unless it brought grist to its mills.

The Pope is in a funk about nothing. He has issued a condemnation of Bergson's philosophy. Protestant clergymen generally regard Bergson as essentially a supporter of religion. But the Papa of the Catholics denounces his "false theories" and "poisonous errors," which are all the worse for being "sugar-coated" and thus rendered "subtle" and "seductive." The Papacy must be in a very shaky condition to be frightened with false fire in this way. The only effect of Sarto's denunciation of Bergson will be a good advertisement for Bergson, who already announces that he will reply to the Vatican in a series of winter lectures.

The following resolution of the Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland with regard to the late Cadder disaster is taken from the report in the *Glasgow Herald*:—

> "The Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland observe with sincere grief the very painful visitation of Divine Providence at Cadder coal pit which happened on Sabbath, August 3, and feel it to be their duty to God and their fellow-men to protest against the practice of the Carron Company, inasmuch as it now appears that they employ their men to work on the Lord's Day, and also against the action of the men themselves, who deliberately work on the Sabbath in defiance of the Lord's command to the contrary. The Presbytery would strongly urge upon employers and employees, whether in connection with this company or elsewhere, the great importance of abstaining from such transgression of God's law, as Sabbath desecration is a grievous sin which will not escape punishment in time and in eternity. The Presbytery would extend their deep sympathy to the bereaved families and dependants of the men, who have been so suddenly and unexpectedly overtaken with such a dire calamity."

According to this rigmarole there will be no accidents in mines if Sunday labor is abolished. If the Presbyterian gentlemen who drew it up really believe it they are several centuries behind the times. It had better be regarded as a professional manifesto.

"God tells me I must do so," said a ten-year-old schoolboy, named Robert Beedell, of Newton St. Cyres, Devonshire. Then he committed suicide by falling under a railway express at a level crossing. The jury found it a case of "suicide while of unsound mind." Hearing God speak is pretty good evidence of insanity nowadays. Formerly it was good evidence of inspiration. Look at the Bible, for instance.

"The Lord is such a long time taking me," said little Doris Cotton, of Forest-road, Shepshed, Leicestershire, to her father. She was fourteen years of age and had suffered for eighteen months with consumption, growing weaker and weaker. "Dad," she said, "lift me up to the window, so I can throw myself out." Soon afterwards—and it was Sunday morning—she managed to do this for herself, and her dead body was found on the causeway below. We suppose there is a Christian moral in this, if one could only dig it out. Perhaps it illustrates the consolations of religion.

From one morning's "Latest Wills." Rev. Marmaduke Alan Prickett, of the Junior Conservative Club, Albemarle-street, left £10,167. Rev. Charles Edward Bentley, College Green, Gloucestershire, left £10,194. Rev. Canon David Bruce Payne, of Deal, left £10,363. Rev. Percival George Willoughby, 81 Onslow-square, left £26,051. Very Rev. Sir James Cameron Lees, of St. Giles, Kingussie, Invernesshire, left £27,068. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Here are more of them. Rev. Henry Brembridge, of Winkleigh, Devon, left £34,015. Rev. George Feather, vicar of Glazebury, Lancashire, left £13,927.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

September 21, Leicester.

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

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £171 9s. 9d. Received since:—An Old Worker, £1; A. Galpin (U.S.A.), £1; W. H. Harrap, 5s.; Andrew Shiel, 10s.; Admirer (Reading), 10s.; Robert Stirton and friends (quarterly), £1 1s.

FREETHINKER.—The word "Atheist" did not "creep into" the Dictionary. It has been there for any length of time. If there is any "creeping in" at all, it is to be laid to the charge of the word "Agnostic," which was coined by the late Professor Huxley. We have referred to Lord Guthrie's protest in this week's "Acid Drops."

ADMIRER (Reading).—Sorry for the delay. See this week's list. Pleased to have your acknowledgment of "many moments of pleasure" derived from reading the *Freethinker*.

A. R. MACKENZIE (S. Africa).—We are for free speech everywhere, of course, but we cannot do much to defend it in any other country than our own. Neither can we deal with purely political questions anywhere. We think you will see, on second thoughts, that this is our proper and most useful policy.

B. EVANS.—Shall be sent as requested. Thanks.

T. HUNNOTT.—The book arrived all right. Please accept our thanks.

W. H. H.—We have none at present, but may have some before very long.

W. MARTIN.—We should hardly care to reprint it in the *Freethinker*. Eulogies of Bradlaugh by Mrs. Besant, written in the old days, have lost their grateful flavor now. Our best wishes go with you on the journey you are taking.

T. H. ELSTOB.—Thanks far your appreciative and encouraging letter. We will try to oblige with "More."

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. FERGUSON.—Letters posted at Glasgow on Tuesday cannot possibly be dealt with in "this week's *Freethinker*." Monday is the latest day for ordinary matter, and Tuesday morning for anything really urgent. We print early on Wednesday, and are on sale in the afternoon. A paragraph on the cutting will be found in this week's "Acid Drops." Glad to receive your thanks for "the very great pleasure" you derive from "being a constant reader" of this journal.

ANDREW SHIEL writes: "Mrs. Shiel and I have both read your paper from the first issue, and seem to enjoy it better all the time; in fact, we can still enter into a sort of struggle as to which of us shall have the first look through when Thursday comes round." This correspondent congratulates us on our "sustained and almost superhuman effort to keep the old flag of freedom flying."

T. FOWLER.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

M. MARTIN.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Having had three fine days and three dismal days, as far as the weather is concerned, with his old friend J. W. de Caux, J.P., at Great Yarmouth, Mr. Foote is seated in the editorial chair of the *Freethinker* again and seeing this issue through the press.

Mr. Foote does not intend to lecture every Sunday for some time. He has booked a few provincial engagements by way of trial, and in each case the Branch or Society has been informed that the engagement may be cancelled if it turns out that he has resumed platform work prematurely. He has been strongly invited to open the new session at Glasgow, but he thinks it imprudent to undertake such a long journey just at present. He hopes, however, to meet his Glasgow friends again at a not too distant date.

The Pioneer Press has several new books and pamphlets nearly ready for publication—including a cheap edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*, and some fresh issues of the "Pioneer Pamphlets" series. Other writings of Mr. Foote, and some of his more immediate colleagues, will be announced very shortly. The Pioneer Press intends to be very active on the publishing side this coming winter. Special efforts will also be made to push the circulation of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. F. J. Gould sails on the White Star liner *Adriatic* for New York on September 25. He will be spending several months in the United States, where he will visit many places under the auspices of the Moral Instruction League, but not in connection with the American Ethical Union, as in 1911. He will give moral teaching, in his well-known way, at the request of School Boards and other such bodies; the whole program being arranged by Professor F. C. Sharp, of Madison-square, who does it *con amore* and non-commercially. Mr. Gould's late visit to India, on a similar mission, was in every way successful. Besides public recognitions, Mr. Gould has received a token of thanks from the Gackwar of Baroda in the form of a silver vase. Before leaving England for the United States this month Mr. Gould has passed the pages of a new volume from his pen entitled *Pages for Young Socialists*, with Prefaces by Mr. H. M. Hyndman and Mr. J. Keir Hardie, and pictures by Mr. Walter Crane. We may add that Mr. Gould promises us what he calls "scraps of the usual sort" during his wanderings in America. Our readers will appreciate these "scraps" as they did before on the occasion of his visit to India.

The Positivists are the most insular people in the world and this characteristic is reflected in the *Positivist Review*. Nevertheless we like calling attention now and then to that publication; and we take this opportunity of repeating that we have every respect for its able editor, Mr. S. H. Swinny. The September number contains some interesting articles, and a beautiful funeral address by Mr. J. Carey Hall, the happy translator of Pierre Laffitte's *Positive Science of Morals*. Perhaps the article that attracts most attention is Professor Gilbert Murray's review of Mr. Marvin's *The Living Past*. Professor Murray calls upon Mr. Marvin to "justify the vast importance he attributes to Shakespeare." "Of all great men of genius," he adds, "I can hardly think of one who contributed so little to human progress." He even blames Shakespeare for not understanding the Puritans. Surely this is Professor Murray in a new vein. Perhaps he will explain what he means by "progress." Meanwhile we venture to think that it is Gilbert Murray, and not William Shakespeare, who fails to understand the Puritans. Shakespeare saw that they brought no new truth for the world, but a most unlovely temper. One can sympathise with the American humorist who said it was quite true that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but it might have been better for the world if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

An American "saint" writes us as follows:—

> "As an old reader of the *Freethinker* I regret to see the President's Honorarium Fund grows so slowly. To obviate that, as far as old age and decreasing income will permit, I take pleasure in handing you a slight contribution (£1). I hope many others may do likewise."

It is pleasant to find that we have good friends in all parts of the English-speaking world.

Canon Newbolt has been condemning society novels and the Salome dance. Considering what noses for indecency the clergy possess, it is remarkable than none of them ever notice the "nauseous unreserve" of the Bible. As for the dance of Salome, it is distinctly less sensational than David's *pas-de-seul*.

A story is going the rounds that one of Mr. Cook's lady patrons, recently returned from a lightning trip on the Continent, boasted that when she was in Italy she "saw so many people in the *garbage* of monks."

The Salvation Army has been holding an anti-drink crusade. One intoxication fighting another.

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

THE PREFACE TO LUKE'S GOSPEL.

THE form of dedication which Luke has prefixed to his Gospel (i. 1—4) has for three centuries been a source of misunderstanding to Bible readers, many of whom, misled by the wording of the English translation, have believed the writer to have lived in apostolic times. In the Revised Version several unimportant alterations are made in this paragraph; but the misleading portion is allowed to stand. Thus, Luke, in referring to the pre-existing narratives relating to Jesus, is made to say:—

> "even as they *delivered them unto us*, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word."

Luke was one of the "us"; but he was not an "eye-witness" or a "minister of the word." The passage should read:—

> "even as they, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, *delivered them unto us*" [*i.e.*, handed them down to Luke's day].

No one, from the latter statement, could mistake Luke for an eye-witness, or even the companion of an apostle: and it was for this reason that our priestly revisers would not put the words "delivered them unto us" in their proper grammatical position. The whole paragraph, as amended, reads:—

> "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, delivered them unto us, it seemed good to me also, having traced all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."

From this dedication we obtain a glimpse of Luke's time. We see, in the first place, that several other Christian scholars had already compiled or edited a series of Gospel narratives; and it is clearly implied that any educated Christian was at liberty to do so; "inspiration" for such a purpose had not then been thought of. The Gospels to which Luke referred as recently compiled were those "according to" Mark, Matthew, John, and Marcion.

Next, Luke says that the matters contained in the Gospels had been "fulfilled" among them; that is to say, were a fulfilment of so-called "prophecy." Chief among these would be the destruction of Jerusalem, the prediction of which event was composed after its occurrence, and piously placed in the mouth of Jesus; to which Luke himself contributed some additional circumstances which he knew had actually occurred (Luke xix. 43, 44; xxi. 23, 24). From this Preface, again, it would appear that Luke really believed that the primitive Gospel from which he and the others took their accounts, had been written by "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word." There was, we may suppose, a tradition to that effect; but this did not prevent him from making alterations wherever he thought he could improve the narratives, not even in the sayings ascribed to his Savior.

The next point is, that Luke states he had "traced all things accurately from the first": a statement which is simply untrue; for in the age in which that compiler lived, it would be impossible for him, or for anyone else, to collect evidence concerning the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ. But Luke records several events which are said to have occurred thirty years before the ministry of Jesus (Luke i., ii.). How did he "trace accurately" these matters? He relates, for instance, a speech (of eight verses) made by the angel Gabriel to the priest Zacharias in the temple, no other person being present (i. 13—20); also, another speech (ten verses) by the same angel to Mary the Virgin, no one else being present (i. 28-37). He records an address (four verses) by Elizabeth to her cousin Mary, in a private interview, and an ecstatic declamation (ten verses) uttered by Mary in reply (i. 42—55), no other person being present. He records, again, an outpouring of the spirit (twelve verses) by Zacharias (i. 68—72), and a short speech (three verses) by an angel to some shepherds (ii. 10—12). How did Luke "trace accurately" these circumstances? As a simple matter of fact, he could not; and he did not trace anything. The Virgin Birth story is a Christian fabrication which Luke added from apocryphal writings of his time, and all the foregoing events in connection with it are of the same fictitious character. Luke simply selected the narratives which he thought most credible from the Christian writings known in his time. By "tracing things accurately" he meant his searching through Josephus for names or events to fix the time when Jesus was born, and when he and the Baptist commenced to preach.

Luke, again, records a number of parables which were unknown to the writer of the primitive Gospel, and of which, apparently the compilers Matthew and Mark had never heard. These are: the Good Samaritan—the Servants watching—the Barren fig-tree—the Great Supper—the Lost piece of silver—the Prodigal Son—the Unjust Steward—the Rich man and Lazarus—the Importunate Widow—the Pharisee and Publican—the Ten pieces of money—and several others. Where did Luke get all these? Where, also, did he find the account of the raising of the Widow's son to life, of which the other editors appear never to have heard? The answer is, Nobody knows; but there can be no doubt whatever that they are all Christian fabrications. The evidence for this fact, though inferential, is sound and conclusive. We have, in the first place, no evidence that the sayings or discourses in the Gospels were ever uttered by Jesus; but, assuming that they were, they were not taken down at the time, and could not be remembered by hearing them spoken once. The alleged "divine inspiration" of the writers is a modern assumption which the Gospels themselves disprove. Where, then, did all these sayings come from? There can be but one answer: they were fabricated by some of the more cunning and unscrupulous scholars (probably teachers) among the early Christians. Those recorded only by Luke were fabricated at a later period than the others.

Again, if, as I have twice shown to be the case, the public ministry was a Nazarean fraud, then Jesus did not utter any of the sayings ascribed to him in the Gospels: we thus arrive at the same conclusion.

MOST EXCELLENT THEOPHILUS.

Who was the "most excellent Theophilus" for whom Luke wrote his Gospel? Respecting this great personage all Christian commentators and Biblical critics profess entire ignorance. There can be little doubt, however, that he was the Theophilus who became bishop of Antioch about A.D. 168. This Christian bishop and Luke's Theophilus were both persons of distinction, and both had been "instructed" in the Christian faith. There was also a tradition (referred to by Eusebius and Jerome) that Luke was a native of Antioch. From his *Letters to Autolycus* we learn that Theophilus of Antioch was a convert to Christianity late in life, and would therefore know less of the Christian writings than one brought up in that faith; and, being an educated man—he had read the works of Josephus, whom he names—he would naturally require a copy of the Gospel soon after his conversion. Apparently, the one in use at Antioch did not satisfy him; hence, Luke, an educated Christian of long standing in that church, compiled a revised Gospel for his especial use, and borrowed his *Josephus* for reference to historical matters. This Gospel was, no doubt, commenced shortly after the conversion of Theophilus, which would be many years before that personage was promoted to the office of bishop—say, some year after A.D. 150. This bishop of Antioch is the only Theophilus known who in any way answers the Theophilus of Luke's Preface. Luke's Gospel is first mentioned by Irenæus about A.D. 185.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A few brief comments are necessary respecting this second book of Luke. Like the Third Gospel, it

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was compiled for the use of the "most excellent Theophilus," and is from beginning to end pure fiction. Luke, it is true, was not the fabricator; that editor merely combined and put into shape some narratives from three apocryphal writings concocted before his time. We know from various sources that there were in circulation in the second century a number of fabulous stories relating to Peter and Paul, among which were the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Paul, the Travels of Peter, the Travels of Paul, and the Travels of Peter and Paul. Luke has simply selected, combined, and revised the narratives which he considered most credible in these writings, and has added names of procurators and other matters from *Josephus* to make the narratives appear more historical. Moreover, the long speeches which he has placed in the mouths of Stephen, Peter, and Paul have been shown to be his own composition.

The importance of the Book of the Acts is, in one sense, even greater than that of the Gospels; for not only are the miracles, ministry, and crucifixion of Jesus repeatedly referred to as historical facts, but the book is assumed by all shades of Christians to be a reliable account of the promulgation of the Christian religion by the so-called "Apostles" of Jesus, and even hostile critics sometimes accept it as such. Hence, it is used to fix all dates of the early history of the Church at Jerusalem, and also of the propagation of the gospel in other places by Paul. Now, if we carefully examine the Pauline Epistles, we shall find nothing in them —no name of emperor, king, tetrarch, procurator, etc.—to indicate when the writer lived. This period is obtained from the unhistorical "Acts," though the accounts of Paul's doings in that book are flatly contradicted in the Epistles.

That the narratives in "the Acts" are fictitious is beyond doubt: they simply require to be read to be recognised. In chapter i., for instance, is narrated the ascension of Jesus, with the apostles watching until he passes beyond the clouds: then two angels appear, and say that he will return in like manner. In chapter ii. we have an account of the descent of the Holy Ghost with "a rushing mighty wind," and tongues "like as of fire" alighting upon each of the apostles; after which these spirit-filled men are able to speak every known language. Next, on the day of Pentecost, all the foreigners in Jerusalem "hear them speak every man his own language," which is followed by a speech from Peter which converts 3,000 persons. And we are asked to believe that Peter would be allowed to address such a multitude, in Jerusalem, and at one of the three great festivals, and to set the city in an uproar, by preaching a new religion, without let or hindrance. Where was the procurator? and why did he permit such an innovation? And what were the armed Roman soldiers within the city, who were on the lookout for innovators, doing? The writer of the Pauline document from which Luke took chapter xxiv. knew that no such innovation would be permitted in Jerusalem; so he represents Paul as saying (xxiv. 12, 18):—

> "and neither in the temple did they find me *disputing with any man* or *stirring up a crowd*.....they found me purified in the temple, *with no crowd*, nor yet *with tumult*."

I have no space here to go into any more absurdities. It is true that the account of the propagation of the gospel by Paul appears more rational; but it is not historical. He is a miracle-worker in the Acts; but he has no such power in his Epistles. He works in harmony with the apostles in the Acts; but he denounces them and their interference in the Epistles. He is called "Saul" in the Petrine portion of the Acts (i.—xii.), and "Paul" in the Pauline portion (xiii.—xxviii.), the explanation being that Luke found the name "Saul" in the *Acts of Peter* and the name "Paul" in the *Acts of Paul* and *Travels of Paul*, and, believing they referred to the same person, changed Saul into Paul in the first Pauline chapter (xiii. 9).

We are told by orthodox critics that Luke was he companion of Paul during certain journeys in he Acts which are recorded in the first person, in which the writer employs the words "we" and "us"——meaning himself, Paul, and other co-workers—but this is an apologetic perversion, and assumes that Luke was one of the "ministers of the word" in apostolic times, which his Preface tells us he was not.

As regards the "we" narratives, Luke has simply incorporated in the Pauline portion of the Acts some narratives relating to Paul which he took from another source—the latter being written in the first person. It is the writer of this document that employed the words "we" and "us." These portions of Paul's journeys are the following: Acts xvi. 9 to 18; Acts xx. 5 to xxi. 19; Acts xxvii. 1 to xxviii. 16. If the first two of these sections be read carefully, it will be seen that the writer was not a follower of Paul, and that when he said "we" and "us" he referred to himself and his *own* travelling companions, not to Paul and his colleagues: whence it may be inferred who this "we" writer was believed (in Luke's time) to be. I leave these questions as a little problem for critical readers.

ABRACADABRA.

Creation Myths.

REFERRING in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* to the Genesis cosmogony, the eminent Leipzic Assyriologist, Professor Heinrich Zimmern, remarks that, "To seek for even a kernel of historical truth in such cosmogonies is inconsistent with a scientific point of view."

In the light of the fact that present-day science is unanimous in regarding the existing universe as the result of an orderly process of development, the myths and legends of savage and semi-civilised peoples are now relegated to their proper anthropological province. But although they are quite valueless to the geologist and the astronomer, these myths nevertheless retain their importance to the students of comparative psychology and comparative religion.

There is no longer any doubt that the Babylonian tablets preserve a far older account of the Creation than that recorded in the Book of Genesis. Still, although the Hebrew myth bears unmistakable evidence of its indebtedness to the earlier Babylonian epic, each story must be regarded as a comparatively modern rendering of the vastly older creation fancies of prehistoric man.

The story of the slaughter of a huge dragon at the commencement of the world's history is met with in many lands. Nearly all the authorities agree that the oldest known versions of this myth are those of Babylonia and ancient India. The Babylonian story informs us that at the Creation the mighty god Marmuk slew the terrible dragon Tiamat, and, having vanquished this creature, he created the heavens and the earth by "splitting the huge carcase of the monster into halves and setting one of them up to form the sky, while the other half apparently he used to fashion the earth." Upon this Babylonian myth is based the so-called Mosaic cosmogony. In the words of Professor J. G. Frazer—

> "The account of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis, which has been so much praised for its simple grandeur and sublimity, is merely a rationalised version of the old myth of the fight with the dragon, a myth which for crudity of thought deserves to rank with the quaint fancies of the lowest savages."*

The Indian variant is embodied in the ancient Vedic hymns. We gather from these that the brave and mighty Indra fought and defeated a colossal dragon named Vrtra, which had so dammed up the waters that they no longer flowed in their appointed courses. After Indra had slain the baleful dragon with his thunderbolt, the springs once more discharged their waters, which, filling up the dried river-beds, resumed their suspended flowings and somewhere reached the sea. But Indra's mighty

* *Golden Bough*, "The Dying God," pt. iii., p. 106; 1911.

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achievement only terminated the conflict for the time being. The warfare between Indra and his satanic adversary is periodically renewed. At certain seasons it may be said that the dragon that was slain now liveth again, and is at his old mischief. This myth refers not so much to the Creation as to a "regularly recurring phenomenon." As we shall see, this Indian myth, like its Babylonian counterpart, is colored by its native surroundings. In its present form it must be viewed as a fanciful description of the commencement of that season of storm and lightning which succeeds the prolonged heat of the tropical summer.

> "At such times all nature, exhausted by the drought, longs for coolness and moisture. Day after day, men and cattle may be tormented by the sight of clouds that gather and then pass away without disburdening themselves of their contents. At last the long-drawn struggle between the rival forces comes to a crisis. The sky darkens, thunder peals, lightning flashes, and the welcome rain descends in sheets drenching the parched soil and flooding the rivers. Such a battle of the elements might well present itself to the primitive mind in the guise of a conflict between a maleficent dragon of drought and a beneficent god of thunder and rain. The cloud-dragon has swallowed the waters, and keeps them shut up in the black coils of his sinuous body; the god cleaves the monster's body with his thunderbolt, and the imprisoned waters escape, in the form of dripping rain and rushing stream."

The myths of different peoples express in various ways the seasonal changes which the revolving years bring round. The legends of George and the Dragon, and of Apollo and the Python, certainly seem to symbolise summer's triumph over winter's darkness and decay. In the Babylonian myth of Marmuk, the solar divinity, and his conflict with Tiamat, the dark dragon, the yearly change which transforms the Euphrates valley from watery dreariness to the floral splendors of spring is symbolically portrayed. All through the winter the broad Babylonian plain is hidden by its liquid covering, and presents the appearance of a sea. With the coming of spring the sun recovers its lost power, the clouds break up, the waters slowly subside, and the solid earth, arrayed in its green mantle once again, returns to gladden the hearts of men. The sombre dragon Tiamat personifies the dark cloud-masses, the waste of waters, and the constantly falling rain; Marmuk, on the other hand, represents the vernal and summer sun which banishes the reptilian powers of darkness and deluge.

Lower stages of human culture provide innumerable examples of a kindred character. Among the north American Indians, for example, most weird and wonderful Creation stories, in which animal gods figure as the world's begetters, are constantly met with. But to return to the resemblances between the Babylonian and the Hebrew Creation Myths. By common consent these resemblances are so striking that no candid inquirer any longer disputes that both have arisen from a common source. The Babylonian cosmogony is many centuries older than the legends contained in the first chapter of Genesis. Both accounts postulate water and darkness as the sole existences at the beginning of things; in each cosmogony the creation of light marks the commencement of the world's career. In both accounts the appearance of the heavens is the outcome of the deity's division of the waters of the primeval chaos so that the upper waters form the heavens and the lower ones the oceans of the earth. "In the Babylonian epic," writes Canon Cheyne, "this division of the waters of the flood is in the closest relation to the battle with Tiamat; nor can we doubt that a parallel description once existed in the Hebrew myth of creation."

A comparison of the Babylonian with the Jewish arrangement of the several separate creative acts is both interesting and instructive. The following lists give the order of the acts of creation as presented by the cuneiform tablets and the inspired volume respectively.

Babylonian Tablets.	First Chap. Genesis.
1. Heaven	1. Heaven
2. Heavenly bodies	2. Earth
3. Earth	3. Plants
4. Plants	4. Heavenly bodies
5. Animals	5. Animals
6. Men	6. Men

As is evident at a glance, the uninspired version is eminently the more scientific of the two. Nor need this awaken astonishment. The Assyrians and Babylonians—not to mention the ancient Egyptians and other contemporary races—were far more highly cultured and civilised than the Israelites of old. The Chaldean astrologers and astronomers were keen observers of the sun, moon, and stars. As a consequence, a much better case could be made out for the divine origin of the Babylonian cosmogony than for that recorded in Genesis. In any case, the former myth more closely resembles the history of the evolution of the present phase of the visible universe which modern science has disclosed than the cosmogony so generally and so falsely attributed to Moses.

The semi-nomadic Israelites learnt much from the more advanced races with whom they came into contact; and from the Babylonians, we have many reasons for thinking, they learnt most of all. But the Hebrews not only borrowed their cosmogony; they also muddled it in the borrowing. The Babylonians apparently realised that the creation of the heavenly bodies was a necessary preliminary to the appearance of vegetable life on the earth's surface. But to the less philosophical Israelite the presence of plant life without the all-essential light and heat of the solar orb seems to have caused no surprise. This glaring absurdity alone—one, however, out of many—is sufficient to stamp the Genesis story as utterly valueless from a philosophical or scientific point of view. And with reference to the divine claims still sometimes urged on behalf of the Genesis myth, it may be remarked, once more in the words of that distinguished ornament of the Church of England, Canon Cheyne, that "all available evidence points to the direct or indirect borrowing on the part of the Hebrews."

Closely allied to Creation Myths are the very numerous legends concerning the deluge of waters. The two flood stories blended in the Book of Genesis—for separate legends have been more or less skilfully combined in the narrative—were also adopted by the Hebrews from their Babylonian masters. The Babylonian legend itself survives in two forms. One is preserved in the fragments of Berosus, an ancient Egyptian priest, who compiled a history of Babylon. The other may be studied in the cuneiform tablets preserved in the British Museum, and first translated by the late George Smith in 1872. Of these two accounts, the first mentioned is of small importance, but the second is of priceless value to the archæologist. The legend itself is of great antiquity, and is regarded by experts as at least as old as 3000 B.C. This circumstance alone puts all claims of Hebrew priority out of court.

The great Assyriologist, Professor Zimmern, is of opinion that the harmony between the narrative and the local conditions of Babylonia justifies the conclusion that that country is the birthplace of the story. "It is more difficult to determine," he writes,

> "whether any real historical event lies at the foundation of the narrative, or whether we have to deal with a mere myth. In itself, it would, of course, not be inconceivable that in days of yore an unusually extensive flood from the Persian Gulf, combined with continuous rain, burst upon the Babylonian lowlands, and destroyed countless human lives; that a dim tradition of this event was preserved; and that the Babylonian Deluge Story was a last deposit produced by this genuine occurrence. Judging, however, from what is known of the growth of myths, especially among the Babylonians, we think this is far from probable."

As in the myth of Marmuk and Tiamat, the native conditions of the country color the story. The Chaldean Deluge myth bears every appearance of a a nature legend. The flood story may be safely

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regarded as a poetical description of the rain which descends so copiously during the Babylonian winter. The hero saved in the ark or ship was in all probability the sun-god.

The views advanced in the foregoing paragraphs command the assent of our own great Assyriologist, Professor A. H. Sayce, who writes as follows:—

> "The sacred tree of Babylon, with its guardian 'cherubs'—a word, by the way, which seems of Accadian origin—as well as the flaming sword or thunderbolt of fifty points and seven heads, recall Biblical analogies, while the Noachian deluge differs but slightly from the Chaldean one. Indeed, the Jehovistic version of the flood story in Genesis agrees not only in details, but even in phraseology, with that which forms the eleventh lay of the great Babylonian epic. The hero of the latter is Tam-zi or Tammuz, the 'sun of life,' the son of Ubaratutu, 'the glow of sunset,' and denotes the revivifying luminary of the day, who sails upon his 'ark' behind the clouds of winter to reappear when the rainy season is past."

T. F. PALMER.

The Touch of Truth.

IN the pilgrimage of life, as Christians sentimentally call our unceasing warfare against the bedevilments of God, we often notice Truth, her face radiant with merriment. She is no perpetually solemn mistress; for there are times when the comicalities of opposing things awaken a glee within her as strong and as overwhelmingly jubilant as her knowledge of her own power.

A laughing Truth gives an electric thrill to the mind. A merry Truth is the salt of the intellect. And those whose brains have been fashioned into weapons for "the best of all causes" are rewarded by a happiness others do not enjoy. They see the disappearance of the mist men's wasted breath has caused to rise about the face of Truth; and they see her laughing with a contagious abandon that makes the heart young, and fresh, and fragrant. With every burst of merriment another idol is shattered, another god dies, another superstition goes slinking into the forgotten past, another tyranny cringes, currishly, away into the dusty museum of solemn shibboleths. There is a sharpness about the air they cannot abide. Freedom means a virile happiness; if it does not signify that it is nothing.

The book I was reading contained sermons. The title-page was amissing, and so author, date, and name were unknown. Nevertheless, the title might well have been *Hell-Fire Contributions;* the writer's name, Godfrey Helinuff; and the date a century ago, in the days when the world was not wicked.

The preacher was a Scottish Calvinist, with a particularly keen sense of God's selective power. At heart the man was really a lover of his fellows: he left no stone unturned in his endeavors to take all his congregation with him to Heaven, where he could, for evermore, dwell in peace with them, his brethren.

To accomplish this, he had developed a remarkably strong capability to denounce the shortcomings of his flock. Many of the sermons were individualistic trouncings. They made direct references to members of the congregation, whose lives, the pastor considered, were not such as to entitle them to accompany him on his homeward way.

One man had not kept rigidly to the commandment that refers to maid-servants; and his evil doings were submitted to a searching investigation. Nothing was hidden by the worthy administrator of God's holy rod of correction. The verbal flames of punishment flickered, and flashed, and burst forth in volcanic luridity. The man's sin was so expatiated upon; the results were so minutely portrayed; the detail so closely followed, step by step, that the congregation must have experienced a regular eruption of obscenity. The blue flames were not, assuredly, extinguished, so far as visibility goes, by those of amber and red.

Another member of the congregation had dared to quote, from Burns, a passage that related in some suspiciously irreverent manner to the previous Sabbath's castigation. According to the author, the fault, bad enough in that sense as it was, actually lay in the quoting from such an impious book on the Lord's Day. The trangression deserved nothing less than the complete cancellation of the sinner's claim in paradise; and by the time the minister had finished his non-stop flight the religious criminal's literary leanings were suffocated in the fumes of sulphur.

The son of a douce elder of the Kirk had so far forgotten his father's responsible position that he had allowed himself to be caught, and by the minister, too, in the act of sneaking, on a Sunday, into the garden where the gooseberries grew. Notification was given by the minister to his congregation that the boy had already expiated the offence at home; now it was the father's turn. Failure properly to carry out parental duties anent the observance of the Sabbath meant Hell for the child and Hell for the parent; and the righteous old warrior in the pulpit spared no pains to make it as hot as he could.

And so, sermon after sermon, individualistic faults were made the bases of discourses on the awful reality of Hell, its proximity to people, their liability to be received in its ever-open and welcoming mouths, and the frightful punishments that awaited them therein. No quarter was given; no mercy shown. Considerate sensitiveness to the feelings of others was a triviality compared with the love God's inspired castigator had for his congregation and his attempts to lead them home to heaven. Public ridicule was, by the grace of God, a good and necessary thing. Detailed information of private faults and failings was, by the grace of God, a gateway from sin. Ministerial opprobrium was, by the grace of God, the wrath of God.

And since then no Scotsman, bred in the hamlets of his country, has ever been known to be anything but pure, upright, noble, possessing a "deep-rooted soul," his face reflecting the glory of the God of the Calvinists, and his whole life one great irrefutable argument of the existence of that God!

The last sermon was very quiet and restful, in comparison to the others, as if God's apostle had become a little tired of his labors as public chastiser, and longed for peace; and his farewell remembrances of the horrors of Hell were weak and weary in every sentence. So must have thought the man who had possessed the book before me; for between the last two leaves was a pamphlet cutting which read:—

> "And it came to pass that the hills did not budge, nor did the mountains skip like kittens; for the glory of the Lord is such that it is woven in the mists, which the winds disperseth to all the airts; and even to the cleverest fools there cometh a time when their heart of hearts giveth the lie to the memories of their minds. Their tongues stammer in their perplexity; the bravest hide their heads, and the cowardly cry as a child newweaned. Be ye assured that the hottest flame of Hell will, in the days to come, melt; and men will laugh at the folly of their fathers, and their laughter will chase the gods from the skies and the priests from the earth."

It was the only touch of Truth in the book.

ROBERT MORELAND.

According to the *Daily Sketch*, most members of the Royal Family are on the 'phone. From the fuss the clergy make, one would imagine that the King of Kings was also connected up.

"Hurricane of Red-Hot Bricks" reads a scare headline in a recent issue of the London *Daily Chronicle*. To our surprise, it has no association with the place mentioned in so many pulpits, but refers to a paltry boiler explosion.

An order for a quarter of a million tons of coal has been placed with the Carlton Main Collieries. The order has no theological significance.

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Burke, "Is there a Hell?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Jas. Rowney, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

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THE
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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Nothing more debases a nation than religious despotism.
—NAPOLEON.

Vulgar Freethinkers.

IN one of the volumes of the *Golden Bough*, Professor Frazer devotes a number of pages in proving that to the primitive savage mind names are things—or, at all events, they are the equivalent of things. A name is so much a part of an individual that some never disclose it, lest an enemy, by becoming acquainted with it, should work the owner injury. Group names are often concealed for the same reason, and the mention of a deity's name is also fraught with danger. Professor Frazer quotes with approval the opinion of another anthropologist that in all probability "the whole Aryan family believed at one time, not only that his name was a part of the man, but that it was that part of him which is termed the soul, the breath of life, or whatever you may choose to define it as being."

In some directions a very large number of people are still in the mental condition betokened by this identification of names with things, or, at most, they do not look beyond the name to see what the thing is, and whether the name fits it. Call a thing bad, and thousands will straightway condemn it. Call it good, and they will accept it without further examination. Popular experience crystallises this in the saying, "Give a dog a bad name, and you may as well hang him." Sometimes it would be kinder to do the hanging first; and one suspects that the hanging is often only deferred to make the hangman feel that he has been engaged in a justifiable work. Formerly, in the political world, a great many people shunned the name of Radical because others chose to associate it with all kinds of disreputable teaching and conduct. When the Utilitarian philosophy was called "pig-philosophy," that quite settled it so far as many were concerned. And when Atheism received from the religious world an ornamentation of rascality, thousands shunned the name as though it were the plague. Such a word as "Agnosticism" became quite reputable by contrast. Not only reputable to religionists, but to many timid Freethinkers likewise. Thus the writer of a recent popular booklet on the existence of God explains that he prefers the term "Agnostic" to "Atheist" because, while descriptive of his own position, some people misconceive it; and in the same breath points out that "Agnostic" is not free from ambiguity. Presumably the writer knows what he means by both words, and means by both the same thing. But he prefers a word inherently ambiguous to one that is misconceived, stupidly or deliberately. Why? One cannot escape the suspicion that here is another instance of the fear of a name. Atheism is called names. Agnosticism has not been so generally complimented.

Turning over the pages of *Gleams of Memory*, by the late James Payn, I came across the expression that serves as title for this article. Having occasion to mention certain of his acquaintances who were evidently heterodox in their opinions, Mr. Payn hastens to add, "It is not to be supposed, however, that the friends of whom I speak were Freethinkers of the vulgar sort." I do not know whether the caution was written in Mr. Payn's behalf, or in order to protect the reputation of his friends. It may be that the writer did not wish his friends to be identified with anything so anathema to the respectable world as vulgar Freethinking, or it may be that he wishes to protect himself from the imputation of having vulgar associates. For next to being a Freethinker oneself, is having Freethought friends. Of course, if the Freethinking acquaintance happens to be a man of position or of wealth—the latter is as good as the former in this country—nothing will be said. But if he happens to be a man of no position and poor, not even to have had a first-class education, then the less said about one's unfortunate friendship the better. In any case, the expression is, as Ilam Carve would say, characteristically British. It is quite English to estimate the value of unpopular opinions in terms of wealth or social opinion, or even as lacking the hall-mark of an expensive education.

The root meaning of "vulgar" is something that is in common use, or pertains to the crowd or to the common people. But that does not quite fit Freethought. The mass of people are not Freethinkers; and although Freethought has very many more followers to-day than it has ever before had, it cannot strictly be said to be common. It is Christianity that is common; religion that is really vulgar. And, class for class, whether we take the Freethinker in the higher or in the lower social circles, the one whose parents have been in a position to give him a costly education, or the one whose education has stopped short at the elementary school, one may safely challenge comparison with others in the same social stratum. They are usually the pick of their class. Necessarily so, for the mere movement away from the ruck of accepted opinion implies a higher level of character. To compare the Freethinker of poor social position with Christians who have had all the advantages of a costly—if often wasted—education, is as fair as comparing the blood-and-fire Salvation Army preacher with Haeckel, Meredith, Metchnikoff, Spencer, or Tylor.

I suspect that what Mr. Payn had in mind was not vulgar Freethought, either in the original sense of "vulgar" or even in the sense of Freethought as expressed by poorly educated people, but plainly spoken Freethought. It is permissible, for example, to write Freethought in expensive books which only a few can purchase. It is vulgar to do so in penny pamphlets, and still more so in tracts that are to be distributed gratuitously. It is quite permissible to attack religion in language more or less obscure, accompanied by insincere expressions of respect for the thing attacked, regrets at not being longer able to support it, and untruthful confessions of the pain experienced at its rejection. But to say plainly, fearlessly, honestly, that the whole thing is a lie, that its rejection lifted a load from the mind, and that the world seems a happier and a better place without it; all this is unpardonably vulgar, unutterably offensive. You may express this in language of faultless character, there may not be a single expression to which exception can be taken—it still remains vulgar and unforgivable. It is not vulgar because it is coarse and brutal; it is vulgar because it is straightforward and uncompromising.

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I daresay that Mr. Payn must have come across a number of Christians who were coarse in speech, brutal in manner, and offensive in the way they expressed their opinions, and, from all points of view, genuinely vulgar. But he does not say "It is not to be supposed, however, that these were Christians of the vulgar sort." That in itself would be considered offensive. The Christian who pesters one in the street with inquiries about one's soul, who offers his impertinent sympathies on one's forlorn state, who pushes his coarse and ignorant literature through one's letter-box, is never described as vulgar. There is no judicial decision that attacks on Freethought must be expressed in such a manner that the chaste mind of a policeman is not affronted thereby. That only holds with regard to Freethought attacks on religion. It is not vulgar to morally steal the body of a dead Freethinker and carry out the farce of a Christian funeral. It is not even vulgar to tell lies about living Freethinkers. These are only examples of religious zeal. And although some Christians are superior to such actions, none condemn them.

Curiously, this particular fault is not characteristic of the very religious man. He does not usually discriminate vulgar Freethought from any other kind of Freethought. He impartially damns all varieties. It belongs more to the one whose religious beliefs are shaky, and who seeks to guard himself from suspicion by a free denunciation of other people. It is manifested with even a certain class of Freethinkers. A large part of the attractiveness of Agnosticism lies in its being "respectable" when contrasted with Atheism. The use of the word by Huxley and Spencer—both Freethinkers, but occupying commanding positions in the world of science and philosophy—provided a useful cover for timid souls. Genuine Agnosticism was just as "vulgar" as genuine Atheism. No one has ever been able to indicate any substantial difference between them. But it was a safer word. It diverted enmity and allayed suspicion. The Agnostic could always say, in effect, "It is true I do not believe in a God, but I do not call myself an Atheist. I am not as bad as he is. I have the redeeming merit of being ashamed to say what I am in unmistakable language. And if the religious world wants someone to kick, let it kick him." And he felt safe so long as the Atheist was there. Of course, if the Atheist was not there, if all the "vulgar" Atheists decided to become respectable Agnostics, Agnosticism would be no more a protective term than is Atheism under present conditions. It is a very shallow pretence, this of vulgarity, but it evidently serves.

After all, the world would have been in a parlous condition but for these "vulgar"—that is, straightforward—Freethinkers. All the Deistic attacks on Christianity were denounced as "vulgar" by religious critics. Paine, and Southwell, and Hetherington, and Carlile, and Holyoake, and Bradlaugh were all "vulgar" Freethinkers. They went to prison—all except the latter—because they dared to tell the truth in a plain, straightforward manner, such as any person of intelligence could appreciate. Their vulgarity lay in their clarity; it was their honesty that was the offence. In a society of hypocrites the honest man is a "sport," and every new variation has to face the hostility of the established species. But they did their work. They took the truth that was being whispered and shouted it from the housetops. They unlocked the truth from expensive volumes and distributed it in cheap papers and pamphlets. They forced the Churches to throw overboard doctrine after doctrine, and invited truth to be an occasional, if always shy, visitor to Christian pulpits. Above all, they made life easier — perhaps possible—for the "respectable" Freethinker. English freedom owes far more to the popular propaganda, carried on by men and women of poor position and limited resources, but unconquerable courage and incorruptible honesty, than it does to those who have often reaped profit and a cheap distinction in a field prepared for harvest by "vulgar," and, so far as the world is concerned, unknown Freethinkers.

Once upon a time, the Freethinker was simply wicked. That was a plain, straightforward charge, and Christians stuck to it as long as they could. But, then, Freethinkers became more numerous and better known. It did not pay to call them wicked. The charge was refuted by common experience. Then they became "vulgar." It was permissible to attack religion so long as it was done with deference, in a mincing manner, and with an apologetic air, as though you were half ashamed of the task. That is the stage we are now in. You may believe religion to be a lie, but don't say so. Suggest that it is a doubtful truth. You may believe it to be an evil, but don't say that. Say that the *Churches* have been responsible for much wrong-doing. You may be a Freethinker yourself, but don't give yourself away. Point out in what respect you differ from "vulgar" Freethinkers, and suspicion will be allayed. Above all, remember the great commandment, "Thou shalt love ease and social distinction with all thy soul; and though thy life may be half a lie, yet will thy days be long and thy name honored in the kingdom of public opinion."

C. COHEN.

In Praise of Unbelief.

IT is quite the fashion with some divines, at present, to extol Scepticism with all the eloquence at their command. The Rev. Professor H. R. Mackintosh, D.D., contributes an article on its merits to the *British Weekly* for September 4. The general prevalence of unbelief, even among professing Christians, is incontrovertible. The strongest faith is ever in conflict with doubt. On this point Dr. Mackintosh is most explicit:—

> "Those know little of personal religion who have not watched this profound conflict in themselves, or who deem it weak to confess it in the proper quarter. The thing is happening every day. Half the soul is for trusting God, the other half for suspecting him or defying him. One voice pleads that recent sorrow is the touch of a Father's hand, another cries that to speak of Fatherhood is folly. Each believing consciousness in its kind is a battlefield for these two. A Sceptic is hidden in the devoutest heart."

Everybody is fully aware of the truth of that passage, though the majority of clergymen would, perhaps, be inclined to deny it. When an intimate friend complained to Luther that there were times when he was unable to believe anything, to his astonishment, the Reformer gave warm thanks to God for the confession, saying that until then he had thought himself alone in that temptation. Bunyan has a great deal to say on the same subject, and one of his books is entitled *Holy War*. But no one has expressed himself with greater candor than Dr. Mackintosh does in the following extract:—

> "Life does not confirm the notion that by some sudden or magic change the followers of Jesus can fling off the temptation to unbelief for good and all. The soul cannot be wound up to make right feeling thenceforward automatically certain. Warfare with doubt is no inexplicable accident; it is part of faith's life."

The reverend Professor quotes someone who says: "There are sceptical thoughts which seem for the moment to uproot the firmest faith, and there are blasphemous thoughts which dart unbidden into the most reverent souls."

Now, what are we to make of such an uncompromising admission? What the divines claim is that doubt, if properly treated, becomes a means of grace. In itself it is "a deadly and insidious enemy," and Dr. Mackintosh speaks of the "lonely horrors" of it; but the object of its existence is to strengthen faith. It is here that we may grow in grace and knowledge by fighting and throwing it. On this account Professor Mackintosh urges us "to curb our minds and tongues when we might speak bitterly of unbelievers." Be appearances what they may, a believer is hidden in the most sceptical mind just as

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"a sceptic is hidden in the devoutest heart." Of course, if a man encourages his doubt by letting it have its way with him, perdition stares him in the face and shall be his lot for ever, but if he courageously faces and wrestles with it, he shall have reason to praise God for sending it. Is this the true philosophy of unbelief? According to the Christian creed everything comes to pass by the providence of God; and, surely, unbelief can be no exception. Though our "deadly and insidious enemy," our "humiliating and enfeebling companion," unbelief is yet a servant of the Lord, always doing his will. If we are wicked enough to allow it to exercise dominion over us, it will do the Divine will by destroying us; but if we rise up against and conquer it, by the help of Christ, it will serve God by indirectly increasing and purifying our faith. Dr. Mackintosh expresses the opinion that complete victory over doubt is not possible in this world. "Life will be over, and the eternal presence won," he says, "before we shall see the last of this humiliating and enfeebling companion." Now, we maintain that if God existed, doubt would be absolutely impossible. Unbelief is a positive proof that the Divine Being is not an object of knowledge. If he were an object of knowledge, he would be known to all mankind. They who affirm that they know him and have communion with him, mistake faith for knowledge, and are self-deceived. Knowledge and doubt cannot coexist. They who know that in the Indian Ocean there is an island called Madagascar are never hunted by disbelief in its existence; but if the statement were made that there is a city as big as London on the planet Saturn its truth would legitimately be open to doubt, because no one has ever seen such a city, and consequently its existence is incapable of any sort of proof. At best, such a city is merely an object of belief, not in any sense of knowledge. Its existence is a thing that can be neither proved nor yet disproved; it is purely and simply a creation of the imagination. Now, if, like Madagascar, God were an object of knowledge, no one would ever be tempted to disbelieve in him; but being, like the city in Saturn, simply an object of belief, it inevitably follows that millions of people totally disbelieve in him, whilst the firmest believers are constantly harassed with doubts and fears.

Supernatural belief is of necessity irrational, and doubt is the mind's natural protest against it. Take the belief in a Supreme Being, and consider its utter baselessness. "No man hath seen God at any time," or heard his voice. The idea of the Universe, with all its imperfections and cruelty, being the work of such a Being, is laughed to scorn by the reason. Disbelief in God is, therefore, commendable, being reasonable. To treat it as a sin is to be guilty of high treason against human nature. Dr. Mackintosh is mistaken when he says that "half the soul is for trusting God," the whole mind, when left to itself, being for having nothing at all to do with him. The children who receive no religious education whatever grow up into men and women who are never troubled by any thought of a Supreme Being. By nature every human being is a complete Atheist. The reverend gentleman is equally wrong in saying that the other half of the soul is for suspecting God or defying him, the truth being that the mind, uncorrupted by superstitious training, is utterly without the God-idea. If Dr. Mackintosh's statement were true it would be an insufferable insult to the God in whom he believes. Again, take the belief in the spiritual world, and examine it in the light of reason. What evidence of its existence has ever been adduced? Like God, it is solely an object of belief. No one has ever seen it, or a single one of its inhabitants. It is fully as imaginary an object as that city in Saturn. Some of us have seen Madagascar ourselves, and others believe in its existence on the evidence of those who have. That is to say, to some of us Madagascar is an object of knowledge, while to others it is an object of belief founded on the testimony of travellers who have been there. But nobody ever lived who could truthfully declare that he had visited the spiritual world, and could testify that it actually existed. And yet the divines speak of it as if it were an object of knowledge, or of belief founded on unimpeachable testimony. As a matter of fact, it is neither; and we claim that to believe in it is an offence against common sense.

The same remarks apply to the belief in Christ. His existence is equally insusceptible of verification. Dr. Mackintosh alludes to his "unchanging grace"; but what has it ever done for mankind? It is said to be a supernatural commodity, but we have not seen anything supernatural about the character and conduct of the people who glory in its possession. We do not for a moment doubt the sincerity of Martin Luther, but we are quite sure that he gave expression to a morally degrading heresy when he cried, "We are nothing; Christ is all." No other heresy has ever wrought so much harm in the world as that; and, unfortunately, it is dying a painfully slow death. Dr. Mackintosh says:—

> "One tried plan of safety is to cast ourselves down into the depths of Christ's sympathy, and take the shelter of his power. He, if we ask him, will reinforce the higher impulse, and disable fear, and strengthen us to believe with passion whatever about God and the great salvation is worth believing."

If there had been any reality in Christ's love and sympathy, ours would have been a perfectly good and happy world for the last nineteen hundred years. Instead of that, even Christendom, where Christ is asserted to have conquered, groans under an intolerable load of crime and misery, of oppression and injustice; and the Christian city of New York is admitted by a Christian missionary to have more murders committed in it in one week than are committed in one year in the Pagan city of Canton, in China. Where does the benefit of Christ's reign show itself? If Christendom stands morally no higher than Heathendom, are we not to conclude that God in Christ has been a dismal failure?

We therefore wish to sing the praises of unbelief in the Fables of the Above, because the belief in them has seriously hampered mankind in its upward march. It has prevented it from taking its problems into its own hands and solving them by the exercise of its own inherent powers. If Christ is all and does all, it would be presumption on our part to undertake any tasks whatever. Our duty is to pray and wait, self-reliance being the worst of sins. We rejoice to know that this demoralising heresy is at last passing, and that mankind is slowly learning to lean upon and help itself. Unbelief in God means belief in man, and doubt about the next world spells certainty concerning this. On this account we pronounce religious unbelief a highly praiseworthy virtue, which ought to prevail more and more.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XVIII.

(Concluded from p. 565.)

> "Out of this vast scene of war and terrible rapine it would be an agreeable recollection if one could think that some of the missionaries raised their voices in merciful protest against the outrages committed by the Allied soldiery. But no such voice was heard. They stood by silent spectators of this crucifixion of Christianity."—G. LYNCH, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 318.

> "Even some missionaries took such a leading part in 'spoiling the Egyptians' for the greater glory of God that a bystander was heard to say, 'For a century to come Chinese converts will consider looting and vengeance Christian virtues.'"—SIR ROBERT HART, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 90.

WE shall not follow the Allied Forces on their march to Pekin. Mr. George Lynch, one of the correspondents, has partly described the horrors of that devastating march. He says, when the Chinese—

> "heard the guns of the invaders, and saw at night their path torchlit by burning villages, [they] evidently thought that the time had come for their wives and sisters, as well as for themselves, to save themselves by suicide. There are things that I must not write, and

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that may not be printed in England, which would seem to show that this Western civilisation of ours is merely a veneer over savagery. The actual truth has never been written about any war, and this will be no exception."*

Mr. Foote's fine article, written at the time, and lately reproduced in these columns, "Christian Beasts in China," gives some idea of what happened. When they arrived in Pekin, the looting began. Pekin is a wealthy and populous city, full of great trading establishments, large warehouses, and thriving banks. Mr. Lynch declares that the Allied Forces constituted "the biggest-looting excursion since the days of Pizarro" (p. 179). And the missionaries, who caused all the bother, took a hand in the looting as well. Mr. Lynch says:—

> "First of all, there were the missionary looters. They had a number of converts more or less dependent upon them. This was given by them as a reason for what some people considered their stealing and holding sales of stolen goods. Their *modus operandi* was first to hoist flags over the houses of wealthy inhabitants, thereby protecting the buildings from the soldiers. Then on the doors they would affix a notice saying this was the property of such-and-such a mission. The reverend gentleman would then move into one of the houses, and start to hold a sale of the contents. When the goods were exhausted he would move on to another, and so on" (p. 182).

It is not only upon China that the missionaries have brought such awful disaster. Japan had a terrible experience of Christian fanaticism. A man of genius has described the result of the introduction, by the Jesuits, of Christianity into that country, as follows:—

> "This religion [Christianity], for which thousands vainly died, had brought to Japan nothing but evil: disorders, persecutions, revolts, political troubles, and war. Even those virtues of the people which had been evolved at unutterable cost for the protection and conservation of society,—their self-denial, their faith, their loyalty, their constancy and courage—were by this black creed distorted, diverted, and transformed into forces directed to the destruction of that society.....Viewed from another standpoint than that of religious bias, and simply judged by its results, the Jesuit effort to Christianise Japan must be regarded as a crime against humanity, a labor of devastation, a calamity comparable only,—by reason of the misery and destruction which it wrought,—to an earthquake, a tidal-wave, a volcanic eruption."†

The Polynesian Islands of the South Seas—regarded by most Christians as the peculiar crown and jewel of missionary enterprise—has the same tale to tell. Mr. Frank Burnett, who knows the islands well, tells us that the various Christian sects not only fought and quarrelled among themselves,—

> "but also urged the pugnacious and excitably inclined native to take sides in their unseemly squabbles to such an extent that the Government had to parcel the islands out among the three different warring religious communities in order to prevent the imminent danger of anarchy and lawlessness, with its bloody consequences."‡

And this is how things went on, under missionary rule, before the British protectorate was declared:—

> "At Tapuiouea, under combined chief and missionary rule, the Christians, who numbered at least two-thirds of the population, becoming very zealous in the interests of, and with the view of propagating, the faith, gave their Pagan brethren the alternative of either at once embracing the Christian religion or of being cleared root and branch from off the earth, thereby emulating the Jewish chosen people in their treatment of the Canaanites. The minority proved unreasonable enough to refuse compliance with such a righteous demand; consequently they were, without any delay, attacked by the Christian section, led on by the native missionaries, and, after some fighting, were defeated; whereupon they, with their wives and families, barricaded themselves in the large Maneappa or Council House on the island. An attempt to storm this place of refuge having failed, after mature consideration it was deliberately set on fire, with the result that, including those who were ruthlessly slaughtered while attempting to escape the flames, the lives of from 1,200 to 1,500 men, women, and children were sacrificed by Christian zealots for their 'holy cause.'"*

In New Zealand the same effects followed the introduction of Christianity and the distribution of the Bible broadcast among the natives. The Pai Marire, or Hau Hau, religion of the Maoris was, like that of the Tai-pings, founded wholly upon the Bible; and transformed the natives into incarnate fiends. Colonel Hamilton-Browne, who took a leading part in fighting these fanatics, says that by the year 1858 the Bible had been translated into the Maori language, and—

> "very many of the natives had learned to read, and the Sacred Writings were read with avidity. Now the Maoris were puzzled, like many others, by the various denominations, each claiming they were right and that the others were wrong, yet all asserting they drew their inferences from the same Book. Among the tribes existed bitter rivalry, hatred, and jealousy, so they gloried in belonging to different sects, and consequently added religious rancor to their tribal hatred. Missionaries, however, travelled through the country with impunity, not one receiving any harm until 1865. There was, however, a very great desire on the part of a vast number of the natives to find out which was the real and true faith, so that many of them joined one sect after another, as if to discover which fancy brand of religion suited his own constitution best; and being highly intellectual and keen reasoners, they came to the conclusion that each sect was only formed from the interpretation by the devotees of the Book itself, and that therefore they [the Maoris] had a perfect right to interpret the Sacred Writings in any way they saw fit. Just previous to the promulgation of the Pai Marire faith the Maoris had elected a king. Why, therefore, should they not have a new religion? Hence the growth of the Hau Hau's."†

The Maori wars, which began in 1860, had, up to 1864—says Colonel Hamilton-Browne, who served as Commandant in the Colonial Forces—"been carried on by the natives in a manner that had earned them the respect of our men. Their splendid courage, combined with their wild chivalry, made them an enemy worthy of the highest praise." But after 1864, says the same writer,—

> "the invention of the new religion, called Pai Marire turned the Maoris, both Christian and Pagan, from chivalrous, if savage, enemies into howling, blood-thirsty fanatics who murdered in cold blood, with every vile atrocity, man and woman and child not only of the white race but even also of the Maoris who refused to join their crazy faith."‡

And this lasted for seven years, until in 1871, when unable any longer to face the superior forces brought against them, the remaining Hau Hau's fled to the King Country and remained quiet.

And what is the result of missionary teaching on the African? Miss Mary Kingsley, in *Travels in West Africa* (1897), had the courage to tell the truth about African Missions. She said:—

> "The missionary-made man is the curse of the Coast, and you find him in European clothes and without, all the way down from Sierra Leone to Loanda. The Pagans despise him, the whites hate him; still he thinks enough of himself to keep him comfortable" (p. 490).

And she emphatically declares:—

> "I have no hesitation in saying that in the whole of West Africa, in one week, there is not one-quarter the amount of drunkenness you can see any Saturday night you choose in a couple of hours in the Vauxhall-road, and you will not find in a whole year's investigation on the Coast one-seventieth part of the evil, degradation, and premature decay you can see any afternoon you choose to take a walk in the more densely populated parts of any of our own towns" (pp. 493-4).

Professor Huxley, after a voyage round the world, in which he had an opportunity of seeing savage life in all conceivable conditions, declared that he found "nothing worse, nothing more degrading, nothing so hopeless, nothing nearly so intolerably dull and

* G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, pp. 142-3.
† Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, p. 358.
‡ Frank Burnett, *Through Tropic Seas*, p. 166.

* *Through Tropic Seas*, pp. 122-3.
† Colonel Hamilton-Browne, *With the Lost Legion*, pp. 14-15.
‡ Colonel G. Hamilton-Browne, *With the Lost Legion in New Zealand* (1911), pp. 18-34.

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miserable as the life I had left behind me in the East End of London." And he said he would "deliberately prefer the life of the savage to that of those people in Christian London."*

As Dr. Knighton remarked :—

> "We spend millions of pounds in the vain endeavor to Christianise remote savages of all kinds, human beings to whom the elements of Christianity are incomprehensible. We have millions of people in Europe in want of the necessaries of life, of education, and of all that makes life endurable."†

In many places savage tribes have been almost wiped out of existence through the missionaries insisting upon the natives wearing clothes quite unsuited for the tropics. Mr. Dunderdale, speaking of the Australian blacks, says :—

> "The blankets we kindly gave them by way of saving their souls were manufactured for the most part for the colonial market, and would no more resist rain than an old clothes-basket. The consequence was that when the weather was cold and wet, the black fellow and his blanket were also cold and wet, and he began to shiver; inflammation attacked his lungs, and rheumatism his limbs, and he soon went to that land where neither blankets nor rugs are required. Mr. Tyers was of opinion that more blacks were killed by the blankets than by rum and bullets."‡

The Rev. C. Haldon, a strong advocate of foreign missions, tells us that "The amount annually given in the United Kingdom to Foreign Missions by all denominations is about two millions sterling. This is a fact which the historian of to-morrow will be bound to expatiate upon."§ The historian of to-morrow will expatiate upon it right enough, but not in the manner that the Rev. C. Haldon anticipates. It will be with righteous indignation at the folly and wickedness of spending this enormous sum yearly —which takes no account of the equally enormous sums contributed by America, France, and Germany— upon heathen, where it does no good, but a great deal of harm; while a large part of our own people are sunk in the uttermost depths of misery and degradation, to a degree quite unknown to any savage tribe on the face of the earth.

W. MANN.

Goethe's Rhapsody on Nature.

(About the year 1780.)

NATURE! We are by her surrounded and encompassed—unable to step out of her, and unable to enter deeper into her. Unsolicited and unwarned, she receives us into the circuit of her dance, and hurries along with us, till we are exhausted and drop out of her arms.

She creates ever new forms; what now is was never before; what was comes not again—all is new, and yet always the old.

We live in her midst, and are strangers to her. She speaks with us incessantly, and betrays not her mystery to us. We affect her constantly, and yet have no power over her.

She seems to have contrived everything for individuality, but cares nothing for individuals. She builds ever, and destroys ever, and her workshop is inaccessible.

She lives in children alone; and the mother, where is she? She is the only artist: from the simplest subject to the greatest contrasts; without apparent effort to the greatest perfection, to the preciseest exactness—always covered with something gentle. Every one of her works has a being of its own, every one of her phenomena has the most isolated idea, and yet they all make one.

She acts a play on the stage; whether she sees it herself we know not, and yet she plays it for us who stand in the corner.

There is an eternal living, becoming and moving in her, and yet she proceeds not farther. She transforms herself forever, and there is no moment of standing still in her. Of remaining in a spot she does not think, and she attaches her curse upon standing still. She is firm, her step is measured, her exceptions rare, her laws unalterable.

She has thought, and is constantly meditating; not as a man, but as nature. She has an all-embracing mind of her own, and no one can penetrate it.

Men are all in her, and she is in all. With all she carries on a friendly game, and rejoices the more they win from her. She plays it with many so secretly that she plays it to the end ere they know it.

The most unnatural is also nature; *even the stupidest Philistinism hath something of her genius.* Who sees her not everywhere sees her nowhere aright.

She loves herself, and clings ever, with eyes and hearts without number, to herself. She has divided herself in pieces in order to enjoy herself. Ever she lets new enjoyers grow, insatiable to impart herself.

She delights in illusion. Whoever destroys this in himself and others, him she punishes as the strictest tyrant. Whoever trustfully follows her, him she presses like a child to her heart.

Her children are without number. To no one is she altogether niggardly, but she has favorites on whom she squanders much, and to whom she sacrifices much. To greatness she has pledged her protection.

She flings forth her creatures out of nothing, and tells them not whence they come, nor whither they are going. Let them only run; *she* knows the way.

She has few springs, but those are never worn out, always active, always manifold.

Her play is ever new, because she ever creates new spectators. Life is her finest invention, and death is her artifice to get more life.

She veils man in darkness, and spurs him continually to the light. She makes him dependent on the earth, dull and heavy, and keeps rousing him afresh.

She gives want, because she loves motion. The wonder is that she accomplishes all this motion with so little. Every want is a benefit; quickly satisfied, quickly growing again. If she gives one more, it is a new source of pleasure; but she soon comes into equilibrium.

She sets out every moment for the longest race, and is every moment at the goal.

She is vanity itself, but not for us, to whom she has made herself of the greatest weight.

She lets every child tinker upon her, every fool pass judgment upon her; thousands stumble over her and see nothing; and she has her joy in all, and she finds in all her account.

Man obeys her laws, even when he strives against them; he works *with* her even when he would work *against* her.

She makes of all she gives a blessing, for she first makes it indispensable. She lags, that we may long for her; she hastens, that we may not grow weary of her.

She has no speech nor language; but she creates tongues and hearts through which she feels and speaks.

Her crown is love. Only through it can one come near her. She creates gaps between all beings, and is always ready to engulf all. She has isolated all, to draw all together. By a few draughts from the cup of love she makes up for a life full of trouble. She is all. She rewards herself and punishes herself, delights and torments herself. She is rude and gentle, lovely and terrible, powerless and almighty.

All is always *now* in her. Past and future knows she not. The present is her eternity.

She is kindly. I praise her with all her works. She is wise and quiet. One can tear no explanation from her, extort from her no gift, which she gives not of her own free will. She is cunning, but for a good end, and it is best not to observe her cunning.

She is whole, and yet ever uncompleted. As she plies it, she can always ply it.

To everyone she appears in a form of her own. She hides herself in a thousand names and terms, and is always the same.

She has placed me here, she will lead me away. I trust myself to her. She may manage it with me. She will not hate her work. It is not I who spake of her. No; both the true as well as the false, she has spoken it all. All the guilt is hers, all the merit hers.—*Open Court.*

A mass, if not the majority, of people in every civilised country is still living in a state of intellectual savagery, in fact, the smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined by superstition. Only those whose studies have led them to investigate the subject are aware of the depth to which the ground beneath our feet is thus as it were honeycombed by unseen forces. We appear to be standing on a volcano which may at any moment break out in smoke and fire to spread ruin and devastation among the gardens and palaces of ancient culture wrought so laboriously by the hands of many generations.—*Prof. J. G. Frazer, "Scope of Social Anthropology."*

* Cited by Canon Farrar, *Contemporary Review*, September, 1889.

† Dr. William Knighton, *Struggles for Life*, p. 13.

‡ G. Dunderdale, *The Book of the Bush*; chapter, "Gippsland Under the Law."

§ *National Review*, April, 1911.

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Literary Gossip.

The September number of the *Humanitarian* contains two interesting articles. One is "The Language of Domestic Fowls" by Edward Carpenter and George Merrill; the other is "What is Humanitarianism?" presumably from the pen of Mr. Salt. I have the honor to agree with nearly the whole of it. But I do not, because I cannot, endorse Dr. A. R. Wallace's denial of the cruelty of nature in the operation of natural selection through the struggle for existence. It is true, of course, that a great deal of suffering, both in the lower animals and in ourselves, is a matter of imagination; but, in the ultimate result, it is that very faculty which is the vital basis of the humanitarian argument. Dr. Wallace's attitude is simply that of a super-naturalist, who has an object in "moralising" nature, instead of admitting that nature is simply non-moral. He has lately contended that our present civilised society is the worst that ever was; yet he still upholds the absurdity that wisdom and goodness are behind the world. Perhaps they are *behind* it; they are not *in* it.

* * *

It is easy to say that man's cruelties are deliberate, while nature's are not; but what, in that case, becomes of Dr. Wallace's argument—which is for *intention* in nature? That the lower animals kill each other in the quickest way means that they are hungry when they are doing it; they are after food, and not sport. When you come to man, you find that he delights in cruelty. It would take a big book to contain an account of the devilries he has practised upon his fellow man merely for a difference of opinion on quite imaginary subjects. But why call these "unnatural cruelties"? They are quite on all fours with the doings of nature. What man ever killed his most hated enemy with the cruelty that nature inflicts upon the victims of cancer? Man is not capable of such things. Nature beats him hollow in this as in other directions. She always gets the better of him in the end. Witness hospitals, cemeteries, and crematoriums. And there is a powerful passage in Mill's essay on "Nature" which nobody has ever answered—and nobody ever will answer; because it is less an argument than an unchallengable statement of facts.

* * *

Some time ago I censured a well-known journalist for using "antiquarian" as a substantive. I said that there was no such substantive in the English dictionary. The proper word was "antiquary." I have been told that I was wrong; at least the word "antiquarian" as a substantive has been pointed out to me in an English dictionary. I knew it could be pointed out,—not only in one, but in a dozen English dictionaries. The expression I used was not *an* English dictionary, but *the* English dictionary—which is equivalent to the English *language*. I still stand by what I said. Dictionaries do not make words, they register them; and they register slipshod as well as accuracy. It is demonstrable that "antiquary" was always used properly for hundreds of years. Sir Walter Scott would have been soundly rated if he had called one of his novels *The Antiquarian*. Even now in the popular dictionaries "Antiquary" takes precedence. "Antiquarian" has a secondary place as being used both as an adjective, which it properly is, and as a substantive, which it properly is not.

* * *

The illegitimate use of the word came in, as so many other illegitimacies did, in the modern era of cheap newspapers, universal reading, and irresponsible journalism. For my own part, I do not pretend to omniscience or infallibility; but I do respect our noble English tongue; and I may add that my knowledge of it is not derived from dictionaries, but from a personal study of its literature, and above all of its masterpieces, written by great men of genius who had something to say, and not by journalists of the day and hour who were earning the only thing they could earn—their daily bread.

* * *

Slipshod writing is only too common nowadays. He who writes for daily or weekly papers of immense circulation writes for the unlearned and the uncritical. He may start well, but he is apt to become slovenly, because he has not the impulse of genius, and the public he addresses is so unexacting. Presently he is satisfied to fill his space in a passable way; and if his readers continue to look upon him as an oracle it is because a one-eyed man—however poor that solitary optic may be—is easily first amongst the blind.

* * *

I am sorry to say that Mr. A. E. Fletcher, a Christian Socialist, who constantly praises the Sermon on the Mount without ever being detected in reducing an iota of it to practice, seems to have permanently joined this species of journalists. He takes a sixth of a page or so of *Reynolds'* and chatters in a know-all, careless way about books and writers. Last week he took Swinburne for his subject, under the title of the "Rhetorician of Democracy." One gathers from the article with this invidious heading that it would have been far better for Swinburne if he had consulted Mr. Fletcher, instead of following his own imperfect judgment. Mr. Fletcher could have given him a great many useful hints; including, for instance, what time his death would have been most serviceable to his reputation; although that is a matter on which poets are no more ready than other persons to take advice.

* * *

Brief as Mr. Fletcher's article is it contains something about himself (of course!) as well as about Swinburne, and several references designed to show the extent of the writer's erudition, besides some blunders which he would have to avoid if he were writing in a journal that had a well-informed respect for literature. We are apprised of that obscure fact (or tradition) that Milton thought *Paradise Regained* was better than *Paradise Lost*. Also that Landor thought his *Gebir* (written when he was a little over twenty!) was going to be his masterpiece; though he afterwards "said himself somewhere [how elegant and precise!] that he believed there was only one man who ever read it besides himself, and that was Robert Southey." Such chatter is, to say the least of it, careless. Severe judges might call it by a much harsher name. It was De Quincey who believed that *he* was the only reader of *Gebir* until he met with a fellow reader in Southey. How many readers the poem had is not to be determined at this time of day, but we know that its admirers included not only Southey and De Quincey, but also Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Sir Walter Scott.

* * *

Mr. Fletcher is more truly his old self in his remarks on *Songs Before Sunrise*. But why does he speak of its "strong rhetoric"? Did it not contain magnificent poetry? Was not its thunder melodious? Did not the poet hail freedom, justice, and humanity in language fit for the gods? Mr. Fletcher admits that Swinburne was, in his younger days, "all a wonder and delight." Being printed as a quotation these words are taken, we presume, from Browning's glorious invocation of his dead wife at the end of the first part of the great *Ring and the Book*:—and spoiled in the taking.

* * *

Swinburne was a great critic as well as a great poet. Mr. Fletcher finds that "as a critic of other poets, he was extravagant both in his praise and his blame." I deny it. I admit that he was enthusiastic. Good red blood poised from his heart; not the milk of the sentimentalist nor the ginger-beer of the pedantic commentator. One of Swinburne's most delightful characteristics was the royal way in which he heaped praise upon other great (or good) writers—even amongst his contemporaries. There was not an atom of envy or jealousy in his composition. "Never to praise with enthusiasm," said Vauvenargues, "is the sign of a mediocre nature." Swinburne praised with enthusiasm. He praised noble work nobly. It is nonsense to say, as Mr. Fletcher does, that he was "not over generous to Tennyson." To say this is not to have read or not to have remembered. And when one is told that he was "very unfair to Praed," one can only reply, "Who the devil was Praed?" Praed!

* * *

I venture to say that Swinburne's criticism shows the highest qualities of judgment. He was nearly always right—if I may be allowed to say so. He had a wonderfully sound instinct for the best work in all departments of literature. And the addition of eloquence, which ordinary critics do not command, made his prose delightful to those who, if they had no genius themselves, were responsive to its appeal.

* * *

Mr. Fletcher is a Christian. I am an Atheist. Contrary to the common notion, it is the Christian, and not the Atheist, who has lost his reverence. It is very odd. But not so odd when you go below the surface of things. A Christian believes that God died for him. How is real reverence compatible with such insane vanity as that?

G. W. FOOTE.

Thus while the avowed creed of the enlightened minority is constantly changing under the influence of reflection and inquiry, the real, though unavowed, creed of the mass of mankind appears to be almost stationary, and the reason why it alters so little is that, in the majority of men, whether they are savages or outwardly civilised beings, intellectual progress is so slow as to be hardly perceptible.—*Prof. J. G. Frazer, "Scope of Social Anthropology."*

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Acid Drops.

Religion — and especially modern religion — seems the quintessence of selfishness. One would imagine that a man who had any claim to that title would hardly think of himself in the midst of the horrors of the railway disaster at Aisgill Summit. But there was one survivor who naively told a pressman of his feelings in the following manner: "The sight was one," he said, "which I shall carry with me to my last day on earth. I cannot even speak about it, because I realise that it was only by Providence that I myself am not numbered amongst the dead." Perhaps we should charitably hope that this gentleman did not fully realise what he was saying. If he did he must have believed that Providence planned that horrible "accident," with all its shocking details of human suffering, just to satisfy the survivors of their importance in the divine economy. Even little babies were burnt to death in order to make this gentleman see what deep interest the Almighty took in his preservation. Such is the moral influence of religion! No wonder it has been called the curse and degradation of mankind.

The case of a lady traveller was not as bad as that of the gentleman who reckoned himself in the good books of Providence, but it showed that religion does not minister to disinterestedness. "One woman," the same report says, "holding her baby close to her, was sobbing out a prayer of thanks that her life had been saved, with that of her little child." There was at least the mother's love to claim forgiveness in this case.

An hysterical penman in the *Christian Age* wishes God to help the "lower-class" Secularists. Not even God could help the lower-class Christians—judging by the samples at Christian Evidence meetings.

"Sitting like a stuffed cow gazing with vacuous mind at what passes before your eyes" is, according to a Sunderland vicar, one of the effects of picture shows. Especially, we presume, on Sunday evenings.

Kansas State, a number of the inhabitants of which recently requested the Governor to arrange for a day of prayer to secure rain, has now prepared a scheme for the erection of huge reservoirs to prevent drought in future. This seems a sad waste of public money and an insult to Providence. If prayer can bring rain, it is folly to waste time and money on building reservoirs in order to conserve the water. The wisest thing would be to segregate all the believers in prayer on a tract of land and build the reservoirs among those who think more of engineers than of Jehovah.

Mr. Carnegie told a representative of a Dutch Press Agency that he likes newspaper men whatever the paper they represent. All papers are alike to him, he said. We believe Mr. Carnegie to be quite sincere in saying this. Any other advertiser would say the same thing. It is not the opinions of the papers they care about, but their circulation.

To be quite serious and quite frank, Mr. Carnegie is just an example of the demoralising power of wealth. We have been unable to see anything in Mr. Carnegie but a mind of a very commonplace order, with a perfect mania for advertising Mr. Carnegie. All he has to say on any subject never rises above the commonest of commonplaces. Had he not been a multi-millionaire, he would never have been heard of. Being a man of millions, he is able to secure that his name shall be stuck about the country on buildings that have to be maintained by the ratepayers. He figures at the Hague solely in virtue of his money. He issues an appeal to the German Emperor for peace solely because he has money, and which, coming from a poor man of ten times Carnegie's ability, would have been treated as an act of impertinence. The press fawns on him and chronicles his doings and his carefully calculated gifts. When wealth is worshiped in this way, it becomes one of the gravest of social dangers and a centre of demoralisation.

The Rev. W. L. S. Coghlan, vicar of Holy Trinity, Stepney, says "God doesn't care for clothes; He isn't a second-hand clothes dealer." It is a delicate subject, but when on earth "the Lord" was not exactly a Beau Brummel. He did a little tailoring in Eden; but that was a very long time ago.

The clergy have little sense of humor, and anyone with a keen appreciation of fun might do worse than glance at any of the parish magazines. Writing in the current number of *The Brightside*, published in connection with Cliff Town Congregational Church, Southend-on-Sea, the Rev. D. Ewart James states, "All being well, our organ will first *speak* to us on Monday, September 8." Certainly, the age of miracles has not passed.

Father Gasquet, head of the English Benedictines, is paying a lecturing visit to the United States. A press agency reports him as saying that the condition of religion in England, outside the Catholic Church, is most deplorable. Oxford and Cambridge are becoming more and more Atheistical, the Anglican Bishops are frankly Freethinkers. Within a generation, says Father Gasquet, England will be divided between Roman Catholics and Freethinkers, as Protestantism is becoming more and more a negligible force. Father Gasquet's conclusion is that those who are not drifting away from all religion are drifting towards Catholicism. We quite agree with the concluding sentence, and we should be pleased to feel that the prophecy concerning what is to happen during the next generation is sound. We are afraid, however, that Father Gasquet is merely beating the big drum in an attempt to convince people that the Roman Church is the only refuge against Freethought. We believe it is the *best* refuge, but Father Gasquet overlooks the fact that while the Protestant world is being tapped by his own Church on one side and by Freethought on the other, the Roman Church itself is ultimately powerless to arrest the disintegration of religion. That is part of a general world-movement. The Roman Church may form a kind of religious Alsatia for deities seeking protection; but even Alsatias do not last for ever.

The Solicitor-General, Sir J. Simon, has been getting into hot water with his Nonconformist backers. Very thoughtlessly, he promised to speak at a Nationalist demonstration at Newry on Sunday, September 28. This has, says the *Daily Telegraph*, roused a storm of indignant protest in English Nonconformist circles, and it is expected that the Solicitor-General will discover that he cannot attend. Dr. Horton says that Sir John Simon's action will damage the Government far more than anything else could do. That guardian of the public morals, Rev. F. B. Meyer, has also entered his familiar greasy protest against one of his Majesty's Ministers attending a demonstration on Sunday. The Lord Primate of Ireland says that Sir John has already taken steps to climb down. We should not be surprised. Sir John Simon is a politician, and as such is not likely to offend supporters if he can possibly avoid it. The Irish voters are not in his constituency, and it will be safer to offend them than English Nonconformists. But it is a pretty state of affairs when men placed in responsible positions are so quickly brought to heel at the command of a number of Sabbatarian bigots. A due sense of personal dignity should lead Sir John Simon to treat such reproofs with contempt.

Sir John Simon, having returned from a holiday, corrects the announcement that he had engaged to address a Nationalist meeting on Sunday, September 28. His letter to the Primate of the Protestant Church in Ireland is a smart performance. He turns the tables on that ecclesiastic by asking what the Protestant Churches in Ulster are going to do on Sunday, September 28? Are the clergy not to preach against Home Rule on that date? Are they not urged to "allow their churches and services to be used as the place and occasion of demonstrations in support of Sir Edward Carson's political policy?" And if these are not political meetings what are they? Thus the Primate is caught in his own trap. We are glad to see that the Solicitor-General does not perceive anything wrong in a political speech on Sunday—at a proper place.

In India the revenue from the sale of intoxicating drinks has increased from two to four millions sterling during the last ten years. In India there is no religious instruction in the State schools, and so the *Methodist Times* improves the occasion by asserting that "It is education apart from religion that must be held mainly responsible for this decadence," and invites subscriptions to the missionary fund. We beg to point out that England grew more and more drunken while education was wholly in the hands of religious organisations, and when there was no education apart from religion. It has become less drunken since education has been partly freed from religion. We are not silly enough to assert that the drunkenness resulted from the religious teaching, or that a growing sobriety was wholly due to the State taking education out of the hands of the Churches. But if we did so the argument would be quite as good as that advanced by the *Methodist Times*.

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A local preacher writes to the *Methodist Times* that he has not much hope of the world being converted before Christ's second coming. Neither have we. He also believes that the second coming will convert the world at once. So do we. We agree completely with this local preacher. *When* Christ comes again we quite believe that it will work a wonderful conversion in all who are then alive. And if the *Freethinker* is then alive, we shall not be surprised to find the whole of its staff converted—editor and all. *When* he comes. Yes, *when!*

We have often had the impression that Dissenters believe civilisation commenced with the "Free" Churches. Many little things keep occurring to confirm this. For instance, the managing director of the Free Church Lecture Agency says that if it had not been for the Free Churches, lecturing would scarcely have come into existence at all. After that, we should not be surprised to learn that the Free Churches invented gravitation and manufactured the British Constitution.

Two little French girls have been seeing visions of Joan of Arc. She appears to them every day in the same spot, and cinematograph operators have been on the spot to "film" the appearance. Of course, the camera fails to show the vision; but this does not interfere with a number of people believing it to be genuine. The proof is that when the girls were shown a picture of the spot, they still saw the saint there—which is just what one would expect. Joan addresses one little girl in Latin and the other in French. It is said that feeling runs very high among the villagers, and the number of visions seen by other people increases daily. An epidemic of mystic hysteria seems to be setting in. Such occurrences remind one how very thin, after all, is our veneer of civilisation.

M. Henri Bergson has been hailed by the hard-pressed defenders of the faith as a modern St. George attacking the dragon of Freethought. At the time we doubted if they would find the distinguished philosopher so orthodox as they thought. The Pope has now condemned M. Bergson's views as "false theories" and "poisonous error."

The prospectus of a seaside school for boys announces that "the headmaster believes that a child should be taught to follow the religion of his mother." If the lady were a Seventh Day Adventist, or a Muggletonian, the schoolmaster's face would be worth seeing.

A book has been published with the suggestive title, *Religion and Fairyland*. So far as the Bible is concerned, from the talking snake in Eden to the aeronautical expedition of the Messiah, the book is mainly a collection of fairy tales.

The Rev. Frank Ballard, the notorious infidel slayer, has been described by a *Christian Commonwealth* interviewer as "a man with no skin to his soul." This is a fortunate circumstance should the reverend gentleman ever visit the Nether Regions.

A Roman Catholic Bishop—Bishop Amigo—visited Wandsworth Prison the other day to attend to the spiritual needs of his co-religionists. He found 200 there to welcome him, and delivered an address in the prison chapel. He pointed out what a "great blessing and privilege" it was to have a special chaplain and a beautiful chapel at their service, and urged them to make the most of it. We have no doubt they will, and many of them will pay the place a return visit. We are also told that the Bishop was delighted at the hearty way in which the prayers were said and the hymns were sung. Quite so; we should not be at all surprised to learn that some of these inmates in Wandsworth Prison are amongst the most devout in the diocese. Evidently their offences, whatever they were, do not interfere with the fervency of their religion; and just as evidently the fervency of religion does not prevent their being in Wandsworth Prison, with a special chaplain and a beautiful chapel, not open to the general public. The joke is that this account is taken from the *Catholic Times*, so that it is not the creation of a sarcastic reporter. But we wonder what would be said if the President of the N. S. S. visited Wandsworth Prison and found 200 of his fellow unbelievers ready to listen to an address? The religious people seem somehow to get all the privileges.

"What a lot of Jews there are in high places" writes a society journalist. Was he referring to the fact that half Christendom worships a Jew and the other half a Jewess?

A new play is to be produced with the title of *The Ever-Open Door*. It has no relation to a recent controversy, but to London, which is getting almost as congested as the place where the "Lord" consigns his failures.

Southlands Brotherhood, York, has published a list of its Sunday afternoon speakers for September. Rev. A. Stanley Parker's is not bad—"Midnight Adventures in New York streets"—the streets, apparently, being in "the underworld." Councillor J. T. Clarke's subject, however, is better than that: "What God and I can do." We understand that God can do everything. Councillor Clarke, therefore, does all the rest. We are glad to know that the Almighty has such good backing.

Rev. W. H. Heap, of Hull, says that there could be "no absolute proof" of a future life "until we woke up on the other side." We have been saying that for forty years and more, and thousands of sensible people believe it. Mr. Heap joins us on this point. Many other clericals will do the same when they are honest enough—or frightened enough.

Blue Books are mines of information to the skilled reader. Two striking examples of drunkards reformed by change of environment and treatment appear in the report of the Inspector for Scotland under the Inebriates' Act. One was a drunken woman, well known to the police, who has for three years filled a responsible position and led an exemplary life. The other case is that of a married woman with a long list of convictions. She has also been reformed, and has lived respectably with her husband for over two years. As these women were reformed by purely secularistic agencies, their photographs will not be published in the religious press, and evangelists will not get delirious in reciting their stories.

Christian Scientists are now being brought into court, just like the Peculiar People. They may treat themselves as they please, but they must bring in a doctor to attend to their sick children. We did not know that this was the law of England, but the judges are evidently going to decide that it is. But if medical science is to take the place of prayer—and we are quite agreeable that it should—the New Testament should be thrown out of English courts of justice where it is still used as a swearing-block. To swear a man on that book, and punish him for obeying it, is a thing that could only occur in a Christian country. Christians are the worst hypocrites on earth. When a real Christian turns up all the others fall upon him. They would soon have Jesus Christ himself under lock and key, if his "second coming" were not so unconscionably delayed.

Rev. Arthur Wellesley Batson, sixty years of age, left Severn House, Watchet, Somerset, and went up to London. His rural innocence, combined with a little something to drink, which "disagreed" with him, got him into trouble. Eventually he had to pay the doctor's fee of 7s. 6d. at Bow-street, and the cabman's charge of 6s. The fine was only 1s. We hope the reverend gentleman has gone home. And we hope he will keep there. If he follows Paul's advice to Timothy there he can provide for any possible "disagreement."

Rev. Jos. Miller, of Great Bolas, aged 74, is marrying Miss Roberts, who is 54 years younger. He is marrying her for the good of the parish. That is the first consideration. The second is that he may "have a co-worker in holy things." The reverend leaves it at that. So will we.

More poor Jesuites! All from one morning's paper. Rev. Neill McBride, Glensha, Forfarshire, left £13,124. Rev. William Borrer Tracey, Director of the Church Missionaries' Home, Limpsfield, Surrey, left £4,601. Rev. Charles Edward Thorne Roberts, rector of St. Vedas, Foster-lane, E.C., left £4,881. Rev. G. O. F. Griffith, Beckenham, Kent, left £1,459. The last is almost a minnow.

Essex has got a Bishop. His headquarters will be at Chelmsford. But he will doubtless be often seen at Southend-on-Sea. Business is sure to call him there a good deal—especially in the summer time.

Potiphar's wife plays the game all right with Joseph in Sir H. B. Tree's Biblical drama. But her invitation to *il casto Giuseppe* has to be extended and subtilized for modern taste and manners. The lady spends only three words on the invitation in the Bible story. They prefer "Cat and Mouse" methods nowadays.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

September 21, Leicester.
October 5, Birmingham Town Hall; 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £175 15s. 9d. Received since: — Alex. Lewthwaite, 10s.; Greevz Fisher, 9s. 6d.

The Sides of Walworth: Mrs. Louis F. Side and Family, £1 2s. 6d; R. H. Side, £2; E. D. Side, £2; Mrs. E. D. Side, £1; Miss Beatrice Side, 10s.; Bartrum Side, 10s.

W. GOODBURN.—There is not much in it. The Hull men of God seem a very dull lot. Thanks, all the same.

THOMAS FOWLER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

M. ROGERS.—The suggestion would be all right if one could see the prospect of getting one's money back on the publication.

W. H. B.—See paragraph. Thanks.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

H. BAILEY.—It is of no special value. Might fetch 2s.

H. ROSETTI.—We hope it will prove effectual.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for batches of useful cuttings.

E. SCHMITZ.—Mr. Cohen is half sarcastic, of course, in calling this a Christian country. But, as a matter of fact, Christianity is legally established here.

A. M.—The verses have already been published, and they are not specially suitable for our columns. Are they?

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The Leicester Secular Society has selected "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*" as the subject of Mr. Foote's lecture next Sunday evening (Sept. 21). There could hardly be a finer subject, and as Mr. Foote never lectures better than when he lectures on Shakespeare, there should be a crowded audience to welcome him after his late illness and absence from the platform.

What might be a difficulty on the occasion of Mr. Foote's visit to Birmingham on October 5 has been met by a new arrangement. Two lectures in the Town Hall, with only an interval of a couple of hours or so between them, are a great effort under any circumstances. It has been decided to drop the afternoon lecture this time and concentrate on the evening meeting.

It is rather odd that this dropping of the afternoon lecture should take place in connection with Mr. Foote—by whom it was introduced. There used to be but one (annual) meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall, which was held in the evening. Mr. Foote took it for several years running and worked the audience up to gratifying proportions. After some time he threw in an afternoon lecture. It cost the Branch nothing, and the collection helped to defray the day's expenses. Having "caught on" it was continued when other lecturers were introduced.

A new course of lectures will be delivered at the Stratford Town Hall under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., on the second, third, and fourth Sundays in October. The lecturers will be Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, and Foote. Subjects and other details will appear next week.

North London Freethinkers are requested to note that Demonstrations will be held at Parliament Hill to-day (Sept. 14) at 3.15, and at Finsbury Park this evening at 6. The speakers will be Messrs. Hope, Ratcliffe, Davidson, Miss Kough, etc.

Mr. Thomas Hardy opens the September number of the *English Review* with a short poem entitled "The Place on the Map." It is the story of a poor schoolmaster whose love for a woman should have been a joy to both, but proved a tragedy "Under superstition's hideous control." Mr. Henry Newbolt writes appreciatively of the immortal genius of Chaucer. In contrast with this is an outspoken article by "Civis" on "The Doctors and Venereal Disease"—a painful topic, but one affecting the very life-blood of England. Mrs. Walter Gallichan's article on "The Sexes Again" is able and powerful in its way, but it certainly invites criticism; and one of the best forms of it would be a day's narrative of the life of the society in which her suggestions—for they are not exactly proposals—were carried out. There are other interesting articles in this number of the *English Review*. The editor contributes a noticeable one on "Socialism and Social Sense."

We are glad to be able to cut the following paragraph from the *Evening Dispatch* (Birmingham):—

> "Evidently the world does move. The Chicago *Dial* reminds us that John Fiske, whose daughter has just been married, was once reprimanded and threatened with expulsion from Harvard because of his addiction to Darwinism. Less than ten years later he was called back to Harvard in order to expound the very views that he had previously been punished for holding. This change on the part of the Harvard authorities was not, of course, due to any liberalising process in theological thinking. It was due to the bayonet pricks of public opinion, which is the only propulsive power that theology has ever known—or will ever know."

Twenty years ago such a paragraph could hardly have appeared in any other journal than the *Freethinker*. Yes, the world *does* move. And everybody has got to move with it.

Someone loves (or hates) the *Freethinker* so much that he has been stealing it from the West Ham Public Library at the Green, Stratford, E. A capable pair of eyes are watching for him when he calls for his next weekly copy.

An Isle of Man reader, who is nearly eighty-two years of age, says that his "life would be very dull without the *Freethinker*." This is a better testimonial than most journals could print. Honestly, we mean; for some journals will print anything.

The veteran Mr. R. H. Side, who is now eighty-nine years of age, called at our office early in the week and left the Side family's annual contribution to the President's Honorarium Fund. Our old friend is afraid he won't be able to come to any more annual dinners. He says that he sat in a draught last time, and was also unable to hear; and that he requires something better at his time of life. Of course he does. And we will see that he gets it.

Mr. Foote will review the new shilling shocker—*Is There a Hell?*—in next week's *Freethinker*. He will follow it with a review of Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought*—on which he has a good deal to say that will not be said elsewhere.

Even with the best intentions a man's words may be altered by those who quote them "from memory." What must it have been in early Christian days when there was no printing and most people were illiterate? Our own readers have already begun to quote a phrase of George Meredith's wrongly. In a letter to us he spoke of our fighting "for the best of causes." Will our readers note that this is the authentic text—and keep to it.

Let us praise the pioneers of progress—the thinkers, the discoverers, the propagandists—whose only weapon was the living word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." We subscribe to that text. The living word passes from man to man, from city to city, from nation to nation, from generation to generation; and as it passes it cries, "Behold I make all things new." Without armies, battlefields, or bloodshed the Word which is God achieves its conquests. The youthful Tennyson well sang that Wisdom wrought in the same way:—

> "No sword
> Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
> But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
> She shook the world."

—*G. W. Foote.*

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The Gospel History a Fabrication.

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

THE Gospel in use among the Nazarenes—viz., that "according to the Hebrews"—was, as we have seen, called by many "the original Gospel of Matthew," and was said by some to be the canonical Matthew "mutilated" because it did not contain the Virgin Birth story. It would appear, then, that if the first two chapters of Matthew be expunged, that Gospel would be little more than a revised Greek copy of the Gospel of the Nazarenes. Now, if we compare the Gospel of Matthew with the other two Synoptics, we find that Matthew differs chiefly in containing certain lengthy discourses which are not given by the others. Chief among these is the Sermon on the Mount, which fills three long chapters (v., vi., vii.), though Luke gives a number of extracts from it (vi. 20—49). The next long discourse given by Matthew only is chapter xxv., which, after introducing the subject by two parables—the ten Virgins and the Talents—gives a graphic description of the Last Judgment, in which only those were allowed to enter heaven who had showed kindness to the "brethren" by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless, and visiting the sick. This Last Judgment scene is of the same character as one found in the ancient Egyptian "Book of the Dead," and was, no doubt, taken from that book by the Nazarenes, and made their own plan of salvation. Hence, the religion of the primitive Jewish Christians was simply humanitarianism, the belief in Jesus as a god forming no part of their creed. To this twenty-fifth chapter should be added several parables bearing upon the same subject which are recorded by Matthew only. These include the Tares and the Draw-net (Matt. xiii.), the Merciless Servant (Matt. xviii.), the Laborers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx.), the Marriage of the King's Son, and the Wedding Garment (Matt. xxii.).

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

This notable "Sermon" is represented in Matthew's Gospel as delivered upon an unnamed mountain; Luke's short version of it is said to have been spoken upon a plain: it is also represented as delivered at two different periods in the ministry of Jesus. After reading Matthew's long and complete version, we need little critical knowledge to see that this so-called "Sermon" is in character and structure a purely literary composition, which was never uttered extempore on either of the occasions represented. Moreover, it is in itself a complete code of rules and prescriptions relating to conduct, which are identical with the known doctrines and practices of the Essenes. The Nazarenes and Essenes were Jews who conformed to all the Mosaic ritual except animal sacrifice, for which they substituted gifts to the altar at Jerusalem. Matthew's Sermon is but a copy of the doctrines and principles of the society, drawn up by elders of the sect, and was probably read out daily to new members until they knew all the paragraphs by heart. The Essenes did not go about trying to make converts, as described in the Book of the Acts. Their principles were known and respected by all Jews, and those who had thoughts of adopting their mode of life went to their houses, and were allowed to stay with them for a short period. Josephus did so before deciding to become a Pharisee. The following passages in the "Sermon" show that it was drawn up for Jews who still conformed to the "law of Moses":—

> Matt. v. 17.—"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
>
> Matt. v. 23, 24.—"If therefore thou bring thy gifts to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

The following passage commends the continence practised by the stricter order of the Essenes:—

> Matt. xix. 12.—"and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

The Christian teacher, Origen, understood the last passage literally, and being "able to receive it," he did so: but it is possible that the passage only means what is stated in Rev. xiv. 4.

THE TEMPTATION AND TRANSFIGURATION.

One of the most obvious of the Gospel fabrications is the story of Jesus being tempted by a real live Devil (Mark i. 12—13; Matt. iv. 1—11; Luke iv. 1—13). This temptation is threefold: (1) Jesus having fasted forty days is asked by the Devil to turn stones into bread; (2) Jesus is placed by the Devil on the pinnacle of the temple, and asked to cast himself down unharmed; (3) the Devil promises to give Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" if he will worship before him. After resisting these temptations "the Devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

In the Zend-Avesta, the holy prophet Zoroaster is first assaulted and afterwards tempted by the Persian devil Ahriman. One of these temptations is that Ahriman promises to make him "ruler of all the nations" if he will renounce the god he serves—which he refuses to do.

In the Buddhist scriptures, Gotama, when about to leave home, wife, and child to devote himself to the enlightenment of mankind, is tempted by Mara, the Evil One, to wait for seven days until "the wheel of empire" should make him "sovereign over the four continents"—but he refused to stay. Many years later Gotama Buddha fasted for several weeks, during which he was assailed by Craving, Discontent, and Lust, the daughters of Mara, whom he resisted: then, on the forty-ninth day "angels came and ministered unto him." These legends date from several centuries B.C., and were, no doubt, known to the Nazarenes, to whom they suggested the story of the temptation of Jesus.

A second obvious fabrication is the alleged transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. xvii., Mark ix., Luke ix.). Upon this occasion the Nazarene, with Peter, James, and John, ascended a high mountain.

> "And Jesus was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.....and behold a voice out of the cloud saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him."

In this story, Peter recognised the two resurrected men, and names them. The Buddha was also transfigured before his death. Another obviously fabricated story is that of the baptism of Jesus, with the dove and the voice from heaven. It is almost needless to say that all the alleged events in the Gospels are narrated as historical occurrences: hence, all Christians who endeavor to get rid of the most obvious fabrications by treating them as allegories are simply perverters of their own scriptures.

It is unnecessary to cite further examples: the whole of the Gospel "history" is of the same fictitious character. There is not a scrap of evidence that any human being ever heard or saw any of the sayings or doings ascribed to "Jesus the Nazarene." They are one and all early Christian fabrications, and as such I will now leave them and bring this series to a close.

PALEY'S EVIDENCES.

Some weeks ago I noticed in the *Freethinker* that a writer in the *Athenæum* says of Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*:—

> "Now that Euclid has gone, it is the only compulsory subject which gives the slightest idea of the meaning of an argument; and, if Paley's premises are granted, his conclusions are hard to refute."

It is really amusing to see Paley's *Evidences* placed next to Euclid for reasoning, and more so to be told that "*if* Paley's premises are granted"—etc. What an "if"! I thought everyone knew that it is in the premises all the fallacies lie. Thus, Paley's main

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"argument" for the truth of the Gospel miracles runs as follows:—

> "If twelve men, whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their own eyes, and in which it was impossible that they should be deceived;.....If I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burned, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account;—still, if Hume's rule be my guide, I am not to believe them. Now I undertake to say, that there exists not a sceptic in the world who would not believe them."

Here we see assumption piled upon assumption, every one of which can be challenged. I select this example because the same style of reasoning is still employed by all kinds of Christian advocates. I have noticed several cases during the last year or so.

Now, it is scarcely necessary to say that we have *not* the testimony of "twelve men" who witnessed the alleged Gospel miracles: we have not even the testimony of *one* man. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not witnesses of anything they record, and though two of the apostles are said to have been named Matthew and John, the latter were not the writers of the Gospels so called. Not one of the writers of the canonical Gospels was an apostle, and all four lived in post-apostolic times.

Paley's "twelve men" are the so-called "twelve apostles" of Jesus, respecting whom nothing certain is known except the names: and such being the case, it is simply ridiculous to assert that they were noted for "probity and good sense," in the modern acceptation of the terms. Assuming that they were no worse than other Jews of their time, they were very ignorant and credulous men, whose heads were filled with all the superstitious ideas of the times in which they lived: they could not, in fact, be otherwise when their teacher himself believed in demoniacal possession. Paley further says that the "probity and good sense," with which he gratuitously credits them as possessing, "had long been known"—which is obviously untrue.

In drawing up his premise, Paley evidently had his eye on the accounts narrated in the Book of the Acts, in which twelve apostles are represented as going about preaching a new religion and creating disorder, regardless of threats, stripes, or imprisonment. It never entered his mind that no Roman procurator would have allowed such doings to go on for a single day; but apart from that, he ought to have had the sense to know that in the account in the Acts we have not the testimony of the "twelve men" to anything done by Jesus: for they are merely some of the *dramatis personæ* in that work of fiction, and, as everybody knows, an author can make the characters in his story say or do anything he pleases. At the very most, the testimony derived from the Acts could only be that of one person, the writer; but in this case we have not even that testimony, for Luke was not a witness of what he records in that book. Moreover, the long speeches placed in the mouths of Peter, Stephen, and Paul are fabrications made by Luke himself. The critical scholar Renan and the author of *Supernatural Religion* have each independently compared those orations in the Greek, and, after studying the various forms of expression, have arrived at the same conclusion—that they were all composed by Luke himself. A writer in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* makes the same admission.

Paley further says that the Gospel miracles were "wrought before the eyes" of his "twelve men," and that "it was impossible that they should be deceived"—his only authority for which statement being the Gospel narratives themselves. But, supposing those narratives to be pure fiction—as they undoubtedly are—how then were miracles "wrought before the eyes" of the apostles? And not having witnessed any of these "mighty works," what nonsense it is to say "it was impossible that they should be deceived"? We are thus dealing with silly assumptions.

Lastly, what evidence have we that these "twelve men" allowed themselves to be "racked, burned, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account"? We have none whatever. Many absurd stories of martyrdom are told by later Christian writers; but these, when sifted, prove to be nothing but fables. We *do* know, however, that in later times thousands of Christians have suffered torture and death rather than deny certain facts or doctrines which to them were simply *matters of belief*: whence it follows that the only apparently real argument used by Paley—that of steadfastness to religious convictions under persecution—is no proof of the truth of the matters believed.

ABRACADABRA.

Holiday Notes and Reflections.

FOR several years past I have recorded my impressions, in these columns, of the manner and method adopted by the various types of religious folk at the seaside of propagating their special superstitions for the edification of visitors, and I have derived a good deal of pleasure—which I hope has been shared by my readers—in stating my views in these columns. This year I visited Clacton, a growing seaside resort on the East Coast, after an interval of eight years, and I found it had undergone considerable development; indeed, everywhere I found signs of prosperity. Fine wide streets, with large, handsome buildings on the main thoroughfare, and then street after street of well-constructed houses, with beautiful gardens in front, and in one part of the town what promises to be a handsome Garden City. There are plenty of churches and chapels in Clacton, representing many varieties of sects of the Christian faith; there is also a large Salvation Army Barracks, and several mission-halls belonging to Primitive Methodists and other Christians of an equally primitive kind.

Clacton is not, like many other seaside places, a fishing district, and although the natives are a slow-going kind of people, they are not without a certain amount of intelligence that makes them less susceptible to religious impressions than the ordinary uncultivated fisherman. Most of the lodging-house keepers, however, appear to be very pious persons, if one may judge from the number of pictures that adorn their rooms—pictures representing the Virgin Mary and young Jesus when he was a baby and various framed texts from the Gospels that hang upon the walls. Over my head, as I lay in bed, was the portrait of young Jesus when he was about fifteen or sixteen years of age; and a more effeminate looking youth it would be difficult for anyone to imagine. At Clacton the religious folk have no open-air meetings on the front; the only meetings they have—with the exception of the Salvation Army—are either held in their churches and chapels, or outside of them, after the usual indoor services are over. The only meeting I saw during my visit was that of a small section of the Salvation Army that paid a visit to the street in which I was lodging and sang a song to the tune of an old nigger melody that I remember to have heard when I was a boy. A venerable-looking old gentleman, not unlike the late General Booth, but without his pronounced Jewish nose, was the leader of this little band; but, as he delivered no sermon, but contented himself with offering up a short prayer, I am unable to speak concerning his ability to uphold the traditions of the Army as an inspired prophet of the Lord. But, as I have said, there are plenty of churches and chapels in the town, and to these visitors are cordially invited to attend. On the West Cliff a very beautiful church—St. James's—is in the course of erection, and visitors are very earnestly invited to contribute to the cost, which is to run into several thousands of pounds; and the worst of it is that while it is difficult to get enlightened people to contribute towards the provision of a Freethought Temple or Institute in London, where scientific and rational ideas may find expression, there always seem to be plenty of

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people willing to spend their money on the erection of buildings in which old and effete ideas on theology may be propagated.

At Clacton I came across a melancholy figure, who is regarded as a sort of silent follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. He is a tall, thin, delicate-looking man, with a gloomy cast of countenance; with aquiline nose, thin lips, dark brown beard and moustache. He sits about near the bandstand, apparently taking no heed either of the music or the passers-by. He wears a long, shabby frock-coat, worn almost thread-bare, and patched in many places; his shoes are much the worse for wear, and covered with Blakey's. Nearly everyone looks at him as they pass by. He rarely speaks or smiles; but he gives a sad glance at those who appear to pity him.

I heard one of the members of the crowd refer to this strange man as "J. C.," and then, pointing to his forehead, said that the poor fellow was a little touched in the upper story, which clearly goes to show that the ordinary man in the street regards Jesus as being somewhat insane, with only occasional intervals of good sense. This melancholy man of Clacton, I afterwards learned, had been disappointed in love, and had registered a vow that he would never, till the day of his death, wear any other clothes than those in which he was to have been married, and so far he has kept his word. It seems, then, that the effect on the mind of a person who is over-earnest in love matters is not unlike that of persons who are over-earnest in matters of religion—that way lies madness. M. Jules Soury, in his work on *Jesus and Israel*, maintained that all religious enthusiasts were insane, that most of them suffered from chronic congestion of the brain, and many of us have witnessed some sad examples of this malady. This strange character, to which I have just referred, like Jesus, was very effeminate in appearance. How is it, I may ask, that Christians worship as a God a being who was so destitute of manly characteristics? Christians say that Jesus was so good, so kind, so tender, so loving, and all that kind of thing, but they never say "Jesus was so bold, so courageous, so manly, so heroic"; and, consequently, strong, manly men can never have much admiration for him. In point of fact, the qualities of nature which we most admire in women we generally despise in men.

When I found that there were no religious meetings being held on the front, I considered the question as to whether there were any clergy or ministers announced to preach at any of the churches or chapels within reasonable distance worth hearing, from a Freethought point of view, and I decided, whether rightly or wrongly, that there were not. Moreover, it is such a long time since I went to a church or chapel to hear a discourse, that I felt that, apart from the feeling of being in a very uncongenial atmosphere or environment, only a very powerful and logical speaker could draw me away from the front, where I had an opportunity of listening to a very efficient military band while I gazed upon the calm, blue sea as the waves rolled ceaselessly on to the shore.

And, after all, it was only a small minority of the people who had gone to church—the majority were on the front listening to the band, bathing, or going brake drives. But I saw many good, kind Christians when they came out of church. They came on to the front before dinner, and the ladies seemed to take as much delight in displaying their fine clothes and their expensive jewellery as the most worldly minded ladies in the crowd.

Some of the churches, no doubt, have good congregations during the summer season, but when the visitors have returned to their homes, I suspect that there are plenty of empty pews to be found in all the churches and chapels, not only of Clacton, but at most of the seaside places in this country.

While away on my holidays, I did a fair share of reading; I read a couple of Geo. B. Shaw's plays and several serious essays on the question of Peace. I also waded through the "Hell-fire" correspondence in the *Daily News*. Some of the letters, in my judgment, were extremely good from a Freethought point of view, especially that by Wm. Archer, who calls himself a "Protestant," though he is as much a Freethinker as I am, one by a Unitarian minister, and another by Mrs. Ormiston Chant.

Wm. Archer, like Thomas Paine, showed that there are gradations in the culpability of sin; that a man who would tell a good spanking lie would hesitate a long while before he would think of cutting a man's throat.

On the other hand, the Unitarian parson demonstrated that hundreds of thousands of people had been condemned to hell by priests and parsons on a wrong interpretation of that word. But the letter to which I desire to call particular attention was one by the Rev. Dennis Lloyd James, Chaplain of Gordon-road Workhouse, Peckham. He wrote that there was a hell open to sinners and unbelievers, and he insisted on Christians upholding this belief. "As long as sin remains a fact," he says, "in God's moral universe there must be a hell both in this world and the next. Hell in this world is sin ripe, in the next rotten ripe, hence irremedial; hence the doctrine of eternal punishment."

It is bad enough for a priest or a parson to frighten little children with the story of a Devil or hell-fire, but children may live long enough to outgrow these wicked ideas; but to torture the minds of old people in the workhouse or in the infirmary with the wicked lie that any God of goodness will consign a poor creature to either a figurative or a literal hell for ever and for ever is nothing short of infamous; and I am only sorry that I am not a member of the Camberwell Guardians, so that I might give this reverend gentleman a piece of my mind.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Noses.

SOME people will think this a strange heading for an article. A few, perhaps, will turn up their noses at it, and ask, "What will the man write about next?" Probably the most severe will say the subject is below the dignity of philosophy. But, with all due respect, we think they are mistaken. There was once a cant about the dignity of history; everything was beneath its attention except the doings of princes, popes, generals, and statesmen. But the *coup de grace* was given to that superstition by Lord Macaulay. Nothing is really trivial to the eye of a philosopher. The laws of the universe are as much involved in a grain of sand as in a planet. The mystery of life is as great in an insect as in a Shakespeare. A common song has often been more powerful than a law passed by both houses of parliament, sanctioned by the crown, administered by judges, and enforced by policemen, gaolers, and soldiers. Has it not even been said that the history of the world would have been changed by a difference of an eighth of an inch in the length of Cleopatra's nose? Let us have done then with "dignity," and let us look at facts. And who can say that noses are not facts? Is not the nose called "the prominent feature"? Why, there was a gentleman, immortalised in an old epigram, whose long nose was an advance agent—a herald to announce he was coming. *His* nose was a fact, anyhow. Look at Cæsar's nose, look at Wellington's, look at Napoleon's. Such noses are not only facts, but *tremendous* facts. They ploughed deep furrows in the world's history. They are unforgettable noses.

Laurence Sterne, our great English humorist, wrote a long dissertation upon noses, which is well worth reading; although, like the Bible, it is not exactly fit for children. A later writer devoted a whole book to noses—and a very witty and instructive book too. We are therefore not the first in the field. Nevertheless, our remarks will have their speciality. We shall not follow Sterne or his suc-

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cessor, except in point of time, but strike out a line of our own.

The nose, dear reader, has played a very great part in religious history. The priests have always led the people by that organ. It was the easiest to catch hold of, but that was not the reason. The fact is, the nose was the gate of piety. The soul went in and out of the nostrils. When the Hebrew prophet had a dead boy to resuscitate, he stretched himself upon the lad seven times; at last the lad's soul came back, and the reanimated corpse sneezed. And why did it *sneeze?* Parsons cannot answer the question. But we can. The lad's soul re-entered his body through the nose; in doing so it set up a titillation, and relief was found in the usual way.

Dr. Tylor, in his splendid work on *Primitive Culture*, has some instructive pages on this subject. Sneezing customs are general, though not universal. When the Englishman who sneezes cries "God bless me!" he is following an old custom of which he has lost the original meaning. The object was to keep evil or foreign spirits from entering. Zulu diviners cultivate sneezing, which they regard as an indication of the presence of the spirits they are invoking. Calabar negroes, when a child sneezes, will say "Far from you!" with a gesture as if throwing off some evil. On a Samoan's sneezing, the bystanders exclaimed "Life to you!" The Jewish sneezing formula is "Good life!" The Moslems say "Praise to Allah!" Prometheus, in the Greek mythology, prays for his artificial man, when it gives the first sign of life by sneezing. Jehovah breathes into Adam's nostrils to make him a living soul. Jacob prays that man's soul may no longer depart from his body when he sneezes. The sect of Messalians used to spit and blow their noses to expel the demons they might have drawn in while breathing. Mediæval exorcists drove the devils out through the patients' nostrils. Josephus, the Jewish historian, relates that he saw a Jew, named Eleazar, curing demoniacs in the time of Vespasian, by drawing out the demons through their nostrils with a magic ring.

This is enough to explain the religious mystery of noses. The reader is now aware why the priests have kept their eyes on those organs. The men of God suspect and hate our eyes. They tell us we must not walk by *sight*. We must walk by *faith*. That is, we must follow our noses; or, in other words, walk by *smell*. The parson goes in front, and we must tramp after him. As Hamlet says, "you shall nose him as you go," by his flavor of brimstone, until at last you come to the great treacle-pot called Heaven.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Affiliated" Criminals.

THERE are no declared Agnostics, Freethinkers, or Atheists listed in the monthly report just published from the State Penitentiary of Nebraska — which is, perhaps, not be wondered at, since Nebraska is the home of that eminent and influential Christian, William Jennings Bryan. Of the 250 odd inmates 76 are Catholics, 65 Methodists, 57 Baptists, 31 Christians (Campbellites), 15 Presbyterians, 13 Lutherans, 9 Episcopalians, 6 United Brethren, 4 Congregationalists, 2 Christian Scientists, 2 Mormons, 1 Hebrew, and 75 Non-sectarians. Thus four-fifths of the persons imprisoned for crimes in Nebraska are affiliated with church, syangogue, or tabernacle, and but one-fifth are unattached. Of the population of Nebraska, the Roman Catholics form somewhat less than 10 per cent., but they supply more than 20 per cent. of the criminals. According to the Government census, the non-church members of Nebraska make up nearly 70 per cent. of the population. And yet these 75 "unaffiliated" are only a little more than 20 per cent. of the prison population, while the "affiliated" supply the 80 per cent. Let us here refer to the statement of Mr. Bryan, which, to eke out his meagre salary of $12,000 a year, he is now repeating at the Chautauquas for $500 a lick, that if we were to divide the sheep and the goats, here the people who are with the church and there the people who are not, on the one side would be found all who are virtuous and law-abiding, and on the other side the criminal and worthless class generally. And right in his own State the prison statistics rise up to overwhelm him. If Mr. Bryan's religion were as generally accepted by the law-abiding as by the law-breaking population, Nebraska would be 80 per cent. instead of only about 30 per cent. "affiliated." There is no excuse for misrepresentation regarding the close relation, in all countries, between religion and crime. The facts have been made the subject of close investigation by unprejudiced minds. That religion makes people good who would not be so without it, or that unbelief loosens rather than strengthens the moral character, is a pious fiction and nothing more.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Friend or Fool.

To discover the will of a Deity whose sway
In the universe naught can resist,
It would seem at first sight that a sensible way
Is to notice the things that exist.

By his hand into space all the planets were hurled;
He for ages unchallenged has reigned.
It would seem as if God who created the world
Had created the things it contained.

But no; we must learn we are wide of the mark.
What is logical need not be right;
The disciples of Reason are all in the dark,
The disciples of Faith in the light.

If from slavery, cruelty, carnage, and crime
The intentions of God should be gleaned,
The Almighty Creator would seem for all time
But a paramount Infinite Fiend.

So we learn the Almighty is not what he seems,
But is better and kinder by far.
He intended great things that are still only dreams—
Is distressed by the facts as they are.

The Lord is the potter, and man is the clay;
But, in spite of his infinite skill,
He sadly refuses to have his own way,
And mould the poor stuff to his will.

The Lord is a shepherd who places his sheep
On the edge of a dangerous rock;
And, while to destruction they stumble or leap,
Sits bewailing the fate of his flock.

But, on seeing the fruit of the theory they state,
His defenders may open their eyes;
For, in robbing our hearts of a Deity to hate,
They have given us one to despise.

In working his dolls on their minature stage,
If a showman would imitate God,
He'd weep for poor Judy and tremble with rage
When his Punch was applying the rod.

But, despite all the freaks that his puppets have
The showman contrives to keep cool; [played,
While God by *his* puppets is grieved and dismayed,
And sits in despair like a fool.

Great God! though the timid who cringe at thy feet
May in terror thy wisdom avow,
The man who's conducting the show in the street
Is a hundredfold wiser than thou.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.

KNOW THYSELF.

Man has been studying all sorts of things during the ages, and most of them unreal. At last he has taken to studying himself, and therein lies his salvation. "Man, know thyself," said the wise ancient. After the lapse of nearly three thousand years, man is beginning to think there is something in the advice. Some hundreds of years ago, the great Montaigne expressed astonishment at the fact that while man could not make a flea he would be making gods by the dozen. Happily, he is growing tired of that branch of industry. Instead of looking towards the fancied heavens, and exclaiming to their imaginary sovereign, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" the modern man is taking himself a great deal more seriously. He is rising from his knees and trying to stand erect. He is full of a newly awakened curiosity. He has heard so much about the gods! "What am I? What are my fellow men? What were the men who went before us? What will the men be who come after us?"—such are the questions he is now asking. And this means an entirely new departure. The theocentric theory is giving way to the homocentric theory. Theology, the science of God, is giving way to Anthropology, the science of Man. We are at the beginning of the end—in spite of all the Church Congresses in Christendom.—*G. W. Foote.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, "Beelzebub," "Wonders of Science and Miracles."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, a Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. Hope, Ratcliffe, Davidson, Miss Kough, etc.—Finsbury Park: 6, a Demonstration. Speakers: Messrs. Hope, Ratcliffe, Davidson, Miss Kough, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Christian Sects; or, We are Not Divided."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 7.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

PRESTON BRANCH N. S. S. (B. S. P. Rooms, 7 Market-street): 7, J. Clark, "How I Became a Secularist."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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

Is There a Hell?

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

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

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

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

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

WHERE AND WHAT IS HELL?

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

But there is hardly any subject on which we can obtain so little information. The clergy are becoming more and more reticent about it. What little they ever knew is being secreted in the depths of their inner consciousness. When they are pressed for particulars they look injured. Sometimes they piteously exclaim "Don't." At other times they wax wroth, and exclaim to the questioners about the situation of hell, "Wait till you get there."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

G. W. FOOTE.

The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge.

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

Particularly when the Christian world is in so critical a position. Once upon a time the Christian Churches were selective. They took care that only those who were in genuine agreement should enter their doors. It was the duty of the newcomer to prove that he agreed with the doctrines taught. Nowadays, the Churches are collective; their policy is to gather as many as they can without a too rigorous entrance examination. The entrant need not prove that he is a Christian; so long as he is not positively disreputable, the Churches will do that for him. They must collect all they can and be thankful for what they get. A man may mean by "God" nothing but a nebulous, undefinable, unusable sort of an abstraction; and by "Christ" no more than respect for a Jerusalem Labor Leader; but if he will only use these words, it is enough. He will be claimed as a Christian by some church that seeks to atone for empty seats by claiming a large congregation that never attends. If he happens to be a man of the scientific standing of Sir Oliver Lodge, the threads of connection may be still more attenuated; hard-pressed theologians will treat them as though they were ropes of steel. For about scientists the Christian world is far from easy. Counting only those who openly call themselves Freethinkers, it claims all the rest as on the side of religion. There is a strong feeling—when there is no actual knowledge—that it is not so, but it comforts restive minds. It is felt more strongly that between scientific and religious teaching there is direct conflict; but, again, it professes a cheering conviction to the contrary. Consequently, when it was announced that Sir Oliver Lodge would speak—in part of his address—on the relation between science and religion, there was great jubilation, and it was assumed that the reference would amount to a reconciliation. And to theologians assumption is the equivalent of proof. The reconciliation would be attempted, therefore it would be done, therefore the latest deliverance of science was in support of religion, therefore to be non-religious was to be unscientific.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(*To be concluded.*) C. COHEN.

An Old System Under a New Name.

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

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

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

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

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

We are often assured that the boycott of people whose opinions differ from those of the majority is now at an end. Proudly do many tell us that this is the age of freedom, in which every person is at liberty to hold and express what opinions he or she pleases. Theoretically, this may be true enough, but practically it is as false as it can be. Unpopular opinions are still penalised, not by the death of their promulgator, and the confiscation of his goods, but in various little ways which in their sum total are exceedingly irritating and injurious. The whole community is biased against the Freethinker. He is not only looked down upon and despised, but he is also subjected to a systematic treatment that both annoys and harms him. If he keeps a shop, it is shunned; if he runs a newspaper, it is ignored; if he has a profession, his chambers are seldom visited and possible clients are warned against him; if he takes part in a public propaganda, he is reviled and slandered; if he has literary gifts, they are woefully depreciated. In these and a million other ways he is made to suffer, and those who make him think they glorify God thereby. It is surprising to what an absurd extent certain forms of literature maltreat Freethought. There is a new *Encyclopædia*, called the *Everyman*, in the process of publication just now, which is to consist of twelve volumes, of the same size as the Everyman Library books. It is therefore our latest work of reference; but, unfortunately, those who refer to it find it seriously disappointing. They search for an article on Freethought, but discover that the word does not occur in it as a heading. Thirteen lines are devoted to "Freethinkers," but all the information we derive is that it is "a term used of all who reject belief in divine revelation, applied specially to the deistical writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." Reading these few lines no one would dream that there are such wretches as Freethinkers in existence to-day; and the only authorities mentioned are Lechler, who published his work on *Deism* in 1841, and A. S. Farrar, whose book appeared in 1862—both absurdly out of date. The article on "Atheism" does not occupy one column, and there is not a single word in it concerning the Atheism of the present time in Great Britain and America. The writer does not cite one authority. "Agnosticism" gets three-quarters of a column, and is dismissed as having had in this country "many able exponents in the 'seventies and 'eighties of last century." You are to infer that it is quite dead now. The only authorities alluded to are "*An Agnostic Apology* by Leslie Stephen, and Professor James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*," neither of which conveys the slightest information about present-day Agnosticism, which is a greater factor in the life of the people than at any former period. In its treatment of such subjects the *Everyman Encyclopædia* ranks no higher than the periodical literature of the Churches.

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

J. T. LLOYD.

The Remedial and Fatal Effects of Faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> "The people is a beast of muddy brain."

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

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

But, despite the indignant protests of these enlightened priests, the faithful remained faithful still. The Holy Coat was again exhibited at Treves in 1891, and added to the profits and prestige of the church, and miraculous cures were alleged by more or less truthful witnesses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

T. F. PALMER.

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

Acid Drops.

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

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

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

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

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

A meeting of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews was held the other day to consider the question of finance. The Society has a deficit of £6,900.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The *New Witness*, run apparently by the Chestertons, has an article "On Place-Names in Poetry," in which we read that "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus" is "a phrase which stands unrivalled in the poetry of the world." The writer should read Milton.

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

> "The real value of the *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, especially its historical value, is of quite another kind. Mr. Shaw calls it a torpedo, and he is right. How well that torpedo was aimed I have only too good reason to know, for I was on the ship that it struck. The ship was irreparably damaged. It sank; and while a few strong men (like Mr. Foote and the Under-Secretary to the Board of Trade) are still clinging to the wreckage of its stout timbers, the majority of its crew are struggling in the water in a manner at once grotesque and pitiable. For myself, I had the good fortune to be picked up by the boat of an obscure fisherman—that was called Peter.
>
> "Mr. Shaw may have thought he was firing his shot at Orthodoxy. I do not know; anyhow, he did not hit Orthodoxy. What he did hit, what he certainly brought down was that high Idealistic Rationalism, the creed of Mill, of George Eliot, of Huxley, which was at that time the creed of almost all intelligent people."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

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

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

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £183 17s. 9d. Received since:—E. Raggett, 10s.; W. Lupton, 10s.; J. D. Hyman, 2s. 6d.

L. E. ADAMS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

REV. U. DHAMMALOKA.—Your letter to hand, with enclosure, which is placed to your credit. Change of address noted. Glad you have recovered from your long illness, and shall be pleased to hear from you again when you have any news to communicate.

THOMAS FOWLER.—Always glad to receive cuttings, but please let them be as up-to-date as possible.

R. S. P.—We are obliged.

A. M.—We don't want to be too hard on Praed. We read him in the long ago, when we had youth and more leisure than we have now, and read "everything." He wrote society verses and political satires—good enough in their way, but belonging to the passing hour. You ask our opinion of Victor Hugo. Matthew Arnold described him as half man of genius and half charlatan. We think that was Arnold's arithmetic, but we are only quoting from memory. We should alter the proportions, but Arnold noted a real flaw in that splendid genius. *Les Misérables* is one of the great books of the world. We cannot deal with Hugo's poems in a brief reply to your question.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings

E. RAGGETT.—The object of *Bible Romances* is to teach as well as to amuse. It contains more information about the Bible—or rather about its contents—than any other single book ever published; and it anticipated every important point of the "Higher Criticism." Our object has always been serious. We never had a taste for mere clowning, and clowning for a living, except in a circus, is a very poor position for any man with the least self-respect. Grinding out "humor" daily is a frightful occupation for a rational being. It is calculated to drive a superior practitioner to suicide and an inferior one to the brandy bottle. For real wit read Shakespeare. For laborious and sometimes painful impromtus read Oscar Wilde.

H. DAWSON.—We had already noticed the *John Bull* paragraph. Thanks all the same. The letter is not editorial. It will do good in that district.

A. TAYLOR, who sends us a report of a discourse on Hell "by a local Fire Insurance agent," says: "The *Freethinker* is just 'ripping,' and I am already looking forward to next week's particularly."

R. AXELBY (1) Your friend's statement about Shelley is a rare joke. We have heard lots of funny falsehoods about that great poet, but we never heard before that he was "a victim to drink." Shelley was the most abstemious of men, often dining on bread and water. He very rarely touched wine; probably not half a dozen times in his life. Some of his friends were of opinion that he injured his health by over-abstinence; not doing justice to his body and overtaxing his brain. Practically he was a teetotaler and vegetarian. (2) The Globe Shakespeare is in one volume, but the type is small; so is that of the one-volume Oxford Shakespeare. The type of the Leopold Shakespeare is larger: so is the price.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

C. W. THOMAS.—Glad to receive such an appreciative and encouraging letter from New Zealand. By all means send us the paper you mention.

IRISH FREETHINKER.—It is the usual news from Lourdes; just a few instances of benefit from excitement and expectation.

J. WEST.—The reverend gentleman's views on vaccination and smoking are no affair of ours. The *Freethinker* only deals with parsons *as* parsons.

H. READ.—"Lectures on Noses"—a book at one time well known, but now only obtainable second-hand, and that rarely.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—We may give Mr. Shaw's new play a turn.

MCCANN.—Cuttings are too late on Tuesday.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks!

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

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

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

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

Some of our readers will recollect that this is essentially what

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Salvator Rosa: Artist and Rebel.

(1615—1673.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sir Joshua Reynolds says:—

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

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

After his sojourn in the wilds, Rosa returns to civilisation, full of aspirations such as all young geniuses are wont to have, but alas! there was a grave awakening for a soul enamored of nature, liberty, and the ancients. He had yet to learn of the old Bohemian road, *misère*, which a modern (that grand Bohemian, Murger) speaks of, upon which everyone must tread who enters the arts, without other subsistence than art itself. Soon Rosa was to tread that road. If he had but bowed to the art conventions of the day, as taught in the workroom, the routine *giro*, and the schools, he would have learned that Madonnas, dead Christs, holy families, martyred saints were the only marketable art commodities. Instead of this, young Rosa was painting his wonderful landscapes or scenes from classical history. And so no patrons came to poor Rosa, who could only get rid of his work through the *revenditori* for a small pittance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Ingenuus, liber, Pictor, successor et equus,
Spretor opum, mortisque, hic meus est genius."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Salvator Rosa became the most famous painter of his day, and that notwithstanding all his political and religious heresies. The courts of Europe begged the honor of his brush and palette. To all, whether high or low, who were willing to accept his art, as he conceived it, he would say Yes. But to dictation he would not submit, neither to patrons, the schools, nor the market. And so it happened that this great genius, whose fame rang through Europe, and who numbered princes and prelates among his personal friends, was not "officially" recognised in his own country. To Church and State, as such, his name was anathema. He was a heretic and a rebel. Year after year went by and he saw all the official and public work being placed in the hands of second-rate artists, whilst he was ignored. But finally the conspiracy against him breaks down awhile, and in 1689, four years before his death, the "official" recognition comes, and this is how Rosa writes his friends concerning it:—

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

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

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Twin Spirits.

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

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

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

In reading *The Antichrist*, with its wealth of bitterness and denunciation directed against Christianity, one is instinctively reminded of the "Hymn to Proserpine." The fierce derision of one and the sublimity of the other forms a mental picture of destroyer and builder. The anger of Nietzsche knew no bounds when dealing with the effects of priestly destruction:—

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

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

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

WILLIAM REPTON.

WHY INFANTS OUGHT TO BE DAMNED.

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

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, L. B. Gallagher, a Lecture.

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

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

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

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

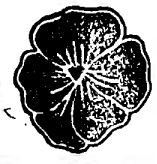
WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 7.30, J. Hecht, "What is Death?"

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Why do these religions oppose and exterminate one another? Why has this been the case ever and everywhere. Because men are ever men; because priests have ever and everywhere introduced fraud and falsehood.

—NAPOLEON.

Is There a Hell?—II.

HELL has long been cooling off. It is said that nearly all the scientific men went there and they improved the place beyond recognition. The oldest inhabitant was puzzled to know where he was. A few of that venerable species were so discontented with the change, so disturbed in their habits of life, so wild at being robbed of their last consolation, that they made themselves a perfect nuisance. For the sake of the peace and quiet of the place, Satan had to put them them outside, with some fuel and matches to start a hell of their own. The place, indeed, is so much altered that it has had to change its name. It is no longer called Hell; it is now called Hades, as may be seen by the Revised Version of the Bible. The new name is quite attractive. It would admirably suit the advertising placard of a seaside resort. Many a young fellow would like a girl with that name. It suggests another Maid of Athens. But it lacks force as a "swear word." It is hardly strong enough to move a cat from a garden wall.

The contributors to *Is There a Hell?* accept the renovated establishment. Their clerical predecessors preached the old Hell of brimstone and fire, and eternal darkness in spite of the flames, and everlasting torture of the hopelessly damned; and they burnt people alive in this world for doubting the orthodox view of the next. The fire and the flames are now given up. Yet the old Hell was proved from the Bible, and the new Hell is proved from the same book. And the same book has been used, and will continue to be used, to justify whatever changes of doctrine the Christian Churches deem necessary.

How does a change *become* necessary? The explanation may be given with reference to the biological law of natural selection operating through the struggle for existence. A changing environment means that a species must adjust itself to new conditions of existence or perish. An unchanging environment means that a species may continue to exist indefinitely without further adjustment. The change never originates in the organisms; it always originates in the environment. When it does originate in the environment the law for the organisms is "Change or die."

This is how the Christian Churches change. They never change of themselves. The motion of development never comes from within. It comes from outside. A change takes place in the environment; that is to say, in the intellectual, moral, and æsthetic condition of mankind. Science shows, for instance, that the universe was not made in six days—if it was made at all. When that fact was established beyond dispute, it was found that the word "day" meant period. Further advances of science compelled the clergy to find, as the most sagacious of them soon did, that the whole Creation Story was a legendary narrative—embodying, of course, the sublimest truths. That is how the matter stands to-day. Further changes in the environment will compel further changes in the Churches' doctrine. We say *compel*, for that is always the process. Organisms will not change unless the environment does. Churches will not change unless the world does. And the world *does* move. Galileo muttered the truth when the Inquisition made him openly deny it; and Pascal said later on that if the world did move all the Cardinals at Rome could not prevent its moving, or themselves from going round with it.

Let there be no mistake on this point. It is idle for the Christian Churches to pretend that they have not really changed. They point to the Bible, and say "It still stands." They point to the words, and say "They are still there." But words have no intrinsic value. They are arbitrary symbols, differing in different languages. The English word "God" and the French word "*Dieu*" mean the same thing, though they have only a single letter in common. The words are nothing in themselves; it is their meaning that matters. If the meaning has changed the words have changed. And if the Bible does not mean what it did, it is not the same Bible, in spite of the unchanging words.

The Catholic Church is represented in this little book by Father Benson. He also gives up the old "literal"—that is, *honest*—Hell; and even argues that it is incompatible with our modern notions of the goodness of God. This is intended for the higher class of readers. The lower class of readers are supplied with something less refined and elevated. The Catholic Church still gives its imprimatur to Father Pinamonti's and Father Furness's little books on Hell. These little books are placed in the hands of the children of the lower classes. They give the most awful descriptions of the tortures of Hell. Older copies give pictures of these tortures. Such books are shocking, abominable, disgusting. They are calculated to terrify children. That is what they are meant for. Yet higher-class adult readers are assured that the flames and the serpents are all fancy. Even the Catholic Church has to consider the environment.

There is no end to the sleek audacity of the worst profession in the world. Some years ago the Free Churches, as they facetiously call themselves, drew up a new Catechism. The old stupidity was retained, but the old terrors were omitted. There was no mention of—no allusion to—the Devil. A friend of ours wrote to Dr. Agar Beet for an explanation. Dr. Beet was a member of the Catechism Committee. He had also been in trouble with the Wesleyan Methodist Conference over the question of everlasting punishment. This reverend gentleman replied to our friend's inquiry in the most simple manner. He said that he had no definite explanation to offer. The Devil appeared to have been "overlooked." Fancy overlooking the Devil! It was like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. The truth is, of course, that the Devil was not *overlooked*. The Devil was *dropped*.

Spurgeon, the famous Baptist preacher, did not overlook the Devil. Nor did he overlook Hell. He also took care that his congregation did not overlook them either. There was no painted fire in his Hell. It was all real. He insisted on this with the

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emphasis of personal knowledge. One would think that, like Dante, he had been in Hell and out again. His sermons contain many graphic descriptions of the great "pit." Here is one of them:—

> "When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament."

Spurgeon could speak of Hell like a commercial traveller who carried samples. But the time for that is gone—and gone for ever.

Dr. Isaac Watts, of famous memory, in Dissenting circles—and really a good writer if he had only kept to subjects on which it was possible to *know* something—was just as bad as Wesley and Whitefield. He did not "overlook" Hell in his *World to Come*. But the best idea of his notions of the abode of "damned sinners" (this is not our expression, but John Wesley's) is afforded by the following hymn, which used to be number 42, in the second book of Dr. Watts's old collection:

> "With holy fear and humble song,
> The dreadful God my soul adore;
> Reverence and awe become the throng,
> That speaks the greatness of his power.
>
> Far in the deep where darkness dwells,
> The land of horror and despair,
> Justice hath built a dismal hell,
> And laid her stores of vengeance there.
>
> Eternal chains and heavy plagues,
> Tormenting racks and fiery coals—
> Darts to inflict immortal pains,
> Dipt in the blood of damned souls.
>
> There Satan, the first sinner, lies,
> And roars and bites his iron bands;
> In vain the rebel strives to rise,
> Crushed with the weight of both thy hands.
>
> These guilty souls of Adam's race
> Shriek out and howl beneath thy rod;
> Once they could scorn a Savior's grace;
> But they incensed a dreadful God.
>
> Tremble, my soul, and kiss the Son.
> Sinners, obey your Savior's call,
> Else your damnation hastens on,
> And hell gapes wide to wait your fall."

There is a fluency and a vigor in this hymn which explains its being a great favorite in the days when the Devil was a haunting terror and Hell a dread reality. It could not be sung now in any church or chapel in England.

We will now consider the contents of *Is There a Hell?* a little more in detail. First we will take the anonymous editor's Introduction. This is how he opens:—

> "Whether or not we confess it to our fellow creatures, we all cling desperately to the belief that there is another life beyond the confines of this one. Atheists tell us glibly enough that we die like dogs; that our souls perish with our bodies; that when the earth has swallowed us up, we become part and parcel of the clay from which we were originally made, and there is an end of the whole matter. But in our heart of hearts we do not believe the Atheists, and we do not even believe that the Atheists believe themselves."

"Die like dogs." What a vulgar expression! What have dogs done to be singled out for this insult? Dogs have been known to save drowning people who could get no help from their felow human beings. Dogs are the most stedfast of friends. They are also the most unbribable. If every man has his price, it is not true of every dog. A millionaire could not get a dog away from a beggar. And what about the "die"? When our time comes we shall all have to die like dogs. There is nothing peculiar in a dog's death. All animals have to die alike. "Lower animals" involves "higher animals." Man is as much an animal as a dog. Shakespeare calls him "the paragon of animals." And what Shakespeare saw Darwin has confirmed.

(*To be concluded.*) G. W. FOOTE.

Spiritual Blindness.

IT is an incontestable fact that whatever objects one person can see are visible to all others who care to look at them. As long as you retain your sight you are capable of beholding every substance within your range. You need not pray to any supernatural being, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold the beautiful things that surround me." Your eyes are your own, to open or close as you may desire. It is true that some people have a longer and stronger sight than others, which may have been inherited or acquired by training; but the fact remains that the total lack of vision is either the outcome of disease or accident, both of which are preventible. Blindness, which is a most terrible affliction, is always caused by a purely physical defect. The blind are fully aware of this; but the idea of denying the reality of vision never enters their heads. They know perfectly well that in temperate regions nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand do actually see. When a child is born its parents do not require to send up to heaven the prayer, "O Lord, be gracious unto us and grant that the eyes of our darling may be opened." The child opens its eyes automatically, and vision ensues. Now, the curious thing is that, while tacitly admitting the truth of all this, the divines aver that man has spiritual eyes also which never spontaneously open, but must, in every case, be opened by a supernatural being, who, however, scarcely ever opens them at all, or opens them most inadequately. The Rev. Dr. Selbie, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, says:—

> "We are told that, with all its wonders, the human eye is but a very imperfect optical instrument at the best. If that is true, it is still more true that we are all more or less spiritually blind. Some of us have hardly had our eyes opened at all to the things of God. Some of us confess that clouds and darkness are round about us, and that we cannot see."

We are quoting from a sermon by the Principal which appears in the *British Congregationalist* for September 18. It was preached at Paddington Chapel, London, and its message is that we are all, including the preacher, more or less spiritually blind. It never occurred to him, that his discourse, from beginning to end, is a bill of indictment against God, presented to the Paddington Chapel congregation as grand jury, who, by listening to it with approbation, declared it to be a true bill. For countless ages the petition has been going up to the Throne of Grace, "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law"; and yet, in this second decade of the twentieth century of our Lord, Dr. Selbie is obliged to acknowledge that "we are all more or less spiritually blind, which proves that God is a most unwilling, if not bungling, eye-opener.

Is not that a most humiliating confession to make, and exceptionally dishonoring to the Divine Being? The brightest and ripest saint on earth to-day has his spiritual eyes only less than half opened, so that, at the very best, he sees the things of God merely in a mirror, darkly. Even Dr. Clifford, who is nearly eighty years of age, and has been a preacher of the Gospel from early manhood, is reported to have characterised his own faith thus:—

> "I cannot say I never have any doubt. I have doubts. I have knocked at the door again and again, and it has not been opened. Faith is a struggle, and faith in the perpetuity of a life that seems so brittle has to be fought for."

Tennyson, too, speaks in the same strain. All he can claim is:—

> "A little hint to solace woe,
> A hint, a whisper, breathing low,"

and even of this he "may not speak. In "The Vision of Sin," he says:—

> "At last I heard a voice upon the slope
> Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'
> To which an answer pealed from that high land,
> But in a tongue no man could understand."

Sometimes highly emotional preachers indulge in absurdly extravagant language, speaking of God as if

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they know him much better than they do their most intimate friend, and of the heavenly Jerusalem in terms of far greater intimacy than they would dare to employ in a description of the town in which they reside; but the generality of believers, however, are more accurately represented by Tennyson, Dr. Clifford, and Principal Selbie. They have doubts. They have knocked at the door innumerable times, and it has never once been opened. They are not sure; they only hope it is all true. Yes, says Dr. Selbie, we are all more or less spiritually blind, and have great need to pray the prayer, "Open thou mine eyes," but many there are of whom we must say that they are totally blind. These are his very words:—

> "You wonder, sometimes, perhaps, that some men you know make so little of religion. You think of famous people who have been against religion, and have written against Christianity, and you think they are very clever, and you wonder why all the world does not think just as they do. But did it never occur to you that these people are blind? They are atrophied on one side of their nature, so to speak. There are certain things which they cannot see, just as color-blind people are unable to see certain things which you can see perfectly well. These men who leave God out of account, who say there is nothing in Jesus Christ beyond what is in any great human genius—these men cannot see. They are blind. Eyes they have, but they see not. Ears they have, but they hear not."

We frankly admit the blindness, but positively deny that it is caused by the atrophy of an existing organ of vision. What we maintain is that so-called spiritual blindness represents a normal condition of the human mind. We are spiritually blind because we have no eyes, and we have no spiritual eyes because there are no spiritual things to see. Once a man has seen the sun, shall he ever be troubled with any doubt as to its existence? To have seen is to know, and knowledge casteth out scepticism. To see an object, however dimly, is to know that it is there; and to know that it is there is to be incapable of doubt. The fact that Dr. Clifford has doubts proves that he has never really seen the things whereof he speaks. Had he seen them, doubt would have been an infinite absurdity, an impossibility. We hold that no one has ever seen them because they cannot be seen, and that they cannot be seen because they are not. What then? Are we to infer that all Christians are cunning hypocrites? By no means; multitudes of them being profoundly truthful and sincere. What we are necessitated to infer concerning them is that they are living in the Paradise of Fools, a region in which vanity and conceit hold sway. Dr. Selbie, humble, sincere, and conscientious though he be, takes for granted and emphatically affirms that unbelievers are the victims of spiritual atrophy, or that by neglect and wicked living they have drugged faculties which in him and his friends are doing their appointed work. How often has that been said of Charles Darwin, whereas Darwin himself assures us that he lost his Christian beliefs because he realised how utterly groundless they were. He became an Agnostic not because he starved his higher nature, but because he gave it its appropriate vent in the study of Nature round about him. The things of God ceased to exist for him because God himself had vanished. Because he expressed regret at having lost his love of poetry and music in consequence of his long absorption in biological research, Christians jumped to the idiotic conclusion that he lost his religion because he had so culpably neglected its exercises, which every honest reader of his *Life* knows to be absolutely false. In the same way, Dr. Selbie says of the opponents of religion generally that "they are atrophied on one side of their nature." We repudiate the insulting expression with scorn, and unhesitatingly declare that "the things of God," "the things of the spirit," and "spiritual vision" are theological assumptions, or inventions, of the objective reality of which there is absolutely not a single shred of evidence. They are simply dream-objects created by a restless and misguided imagination in times of ignorance and credulity. And yet Dr. Selbie has the audacity to stand up in a pulpit before a believing assembly and, in effect, institute the following comparison between them and the unbelieving crowds outside: "We see; they are blind. We exercise the whole of our nature, all our faculties being at work; they are atrophied on the higher and nobler side of their being. We are right; they are wrong." This is what is called preaching the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, and they who do it boast that humility is the first and last Christian virtue, being, in fact, the essence of the Christian life.

Now, we boldly deny the moral right of Christians to sit in judgment upon the rest of mankind. It by no mean follows, as they assume, that we are wrong because we differ from them. They form a minority of the human race. They have never been more than about one-third of the world's population. And yet they arrogate to themselves all the prerogatives of undoubted superiority. The world, they assert, will never be set right until it becomes Christianised, though nothing can be more conspicuous than the fact that Christendom, especially the most Christian portion of it, is as far from being set right to-day as it ever was. The truth is that, on the average, Christians are not better than other people, and in many cases not even as good. They have never succeeded in demonstrating that they possess and exercise faculties of which we are destitute, and until they do that their proud claims must fall to the ground. We are convinced that they are self-deceivers on a gigantic scale, consumed by their pride, warped in character by their devotion to "the things of God," hindered in their progress on earth by their glorification of heaven, and robbed of the true joys of time by their concentration upon the hypothetical bliss of eternity. We see only this world and this life, and we believe we are wise in restricting our attention and activities to their all-important interests.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge.—II.

(Concluded from p. 595.)

IN the opening of his speech, Sir Oliver Lodge made a parenthetic reference to the conflict between religion and science that is worthy of a word of comment. In leading to the conclusion that scepticism might be carried to too great lengths, and long accepted scientific generalisations rejected in the first flush of new discoveries, he said:—

> "Let me hasten to explain that I do not mean the well-worn and almost antique theme of theological scepticism—that controversy is practically in abeyance just now. At any rate, the major conflict is suspended; the forts behind which the enemy has retreated do not invite attack; the territory now occupied by him is little more than his legitimate province."

Sir Oliver was, of course, speaking on behalf of the mass of scientists; and this sentence quite bears out what I said in the preceding article. The vast majority of scientific men have no interest in religion, save as a phase of anthropological study. Religious beliefs are not now the subjects of keen attack by them, because theologians have had their lesson, and no longer dare to estimate the value of scientific teaching in terms of religious belief. Their forts do not invite attack because they are really not worth attacking. And their "legitimate province" is the province that lies outside of all knowledge, actual or attainable. Sir Oliver could hardly have better expressed the scientific contempt for current theological doctrines.

Another point worth noting is that Sir Oliver specifically denied being a "vitalist" in the sense of believing in an "undefined vital force." And he added that "to attribute the rise of sap to vital force would be absurd. It would be giving up the problem and stating nothing at all." This is precisely what I have said over and over again. "Vital force" is no more intelligible or useful than "God."

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It is, as Comte would have pointed out, the metaphysical form of the theological explanation, both of which have the quality of leaving the problem exactly where it was.

Having said this, it is difficult to find adequate justification for the claim immediately set up in the expressions: life "introduces something incalculable and purposeful into the laws of physics"; that "we see only its effects, we do not see life itself"; and "life appears necessary" to the conversion of the inorganic into the organic. As these statements are made in order to back up the theory that vital phenomena are dependent upon the existence of a power that cannot by analysis be reduced to a combination of other forces, but always remains true to itself, one fails to see in what way this differs from the "vital force" just discarded? So long as we claim the existence of a *separate* force, it matters little whether we call it life or vital force. It is really the old thing under a new name. The expression "we do not see life" is hopelessly unscientific. All we can mean by life is the phenomena which, when occurring, we call vital, as we call other phenomena chemical, and others physical. Might we not as reasonably say we do not see heat itself, nor chemical affinity itself, but only their effects? The reply would be that "heat," apart from any particular form of heat, is a pure abstraction. And so one may also say that life, apart from vital phenomena, is equally an abstraction. It is always wise to be on our guard against mistaking abstractions for concrete realities.

In order to avoid repetition, I leave for a moment certain aspects of the expressions cited. "Materialism," says Sir Oliver, "is appropriate to the material world; not as a philosophy, but as a working creed, as a proximate, an immediate formula for guiding research. Everything beyond that belongs to another region, and must be reached by other methods. To explain the psychical in terms of physics and chemistry is simply impossible." And, again, "the extreme school of biologists.....ought to say if they were consistent, there is nothing but physics and chemistry at work anywhere." Why so? The laws of physics are the generalised expression of the behavior of one group of phenomena; the laws of chemistry are the generalised expression of another group of movements. The chemist does not deny the laws of physics; he says they explain phenomena within certain limits. Beyond those limits we have to consider other modes of operation which he calls chemical. And the physicist quite agrees with him. And neither claim, so far as I am aware, that the laws of physics or of chemistry, or both in combination, explain biological phenomena. If they did, there would be no need of biology as a separate department. All that "the extreme school" really assert is that physical and chemical laws continue to operate in biological processes—which Sir Oliver Lodge fully admits—but that at a certain stage the interaction of chemical and physical forces produce new groupings and new complexities which are called by a new name—biological—because they represent a new set of phenomena. And this the biologist admits. The chemist no more denies the existence of the psychical than the biologist denies the existence of chemistry. He does deny the existence of the psychical as a separate and independent force which is merely brought to bear upon other forces; but that is an entirely different question. Nor need the chemist deny the existence of the psychical merely because he analyses a psychic state and furnishes reasons for believing that if our analysis were exact enough, and our synthesis equally complete, no separate "psyche" need be invoked. He is merely exhibiting the conditions which, when existent, he agrees with others in calling psychical, and which cannot be properly described under any other name.

To put the whole matter briefly, each group of phenomena—physical, chemical, biological, or mental—requires the framing of new "laws" to express their modes of operation. This is not because they involve the appearance on the scene of an absolutely new force, but because the emergence of the conditions that give rise to the new group cannot be adequately expressed in the terms that apply with descriptive fullness to preceding groups. Thus, if we assume two bodies travelling in space in a line that will bring them together, we have a problem in dynamics. Allow them to collide with sufficient force, and the two may be converted into an incandescent mass. Our problem then becomes one of thermo-dynamics, and a new "law" must be framed. Follow the subsequent development of the mass, and still more "laws" must be framed to describe the chemical changes that take place. But there is no introduction of an independent force; there is only the framing of new "laws" to describe the emergence of new and more complex conditions.

I do not, therefore, follow Sir Oliver Lodge when he says the "extreme school" holds that "the laws of chemistry and physics are supreme,—and they are sufficient to account for everything"! No Materialist who understands his case says anything of the kind. You can no more adequately express mental phenomena in terms of physics or chemistry than you can express chemical phenomena in terms of psychology. Each set of laws are valid within their own legitimate sphere. Mental life is as real to the Materialist as to the Spiritualist. It is almost laughable the way in which Spiritualists of all schools avoid meeting what is really the essence of Materialism, and insist upon putting into his mind conceptions that none but a scientific lunatic could entertain.

I agree with Sir Oliver that life introduces something purposeful into nature. That it introduces something incalculable is highly disputable, since incalculable is only the equivalent of our inability to calculate under present conditions of knowledge. But purposeful, yes. It is part of the phenomena of life that it should exhibit purpose. This is really saying little more than that life introduces into nature living things. No one disputes so obvious a proposition. But that is really not what Sir Oliver Lodge implies. The implication of his position is that life is introduced in order to establish the governing fact of purpose. If he does not mean this, it is impossible to see what he does mean, and he is simply thrashing the air. For no one will deny the fact of purpose as a mere phenomenon of life. There was purpose in Sir Oliver delivering his address, just as there is purpose in my writing these articles. It is not really purpose as a fact in life that is in question. It is purpose as lying behind the introduction of life that Sir Oliver is trying to establish. If he can establish that, well and good. If he cannot, he has no case. And whether he can or cannot, the one solid fact is that he has not done so.

What Sir Oliver does, finally, is—first, to assert that thirty years' experience of psychical research has convinced him that "discarnate intelligence, under certain conditions, may interact with us on the material side, thus indirectly coming within our scientific ken." To this one may reply that other investigators have not been so convinced, and even though all the alleged facts of psychical research were admitted as genuine, there still remains the probability that a more complete knowledge of the forces at work may render the hypothesis of surviving disembodied intelligencies quite superfluous. It is, at least, suggestive that assumed disembodied intelligences with whom communications have been set up are always those of the recently dead. And it is, therefore, permissible to assume that the minds of the living are the real sources of the revelations and communications. And one is naturally suspicious of an explanation that is essentially in terms of savage psychology modified to suit facts of recent discovery—if we admit all the stated facts to be absolutely genuine.

Secondly, Sir Oliver makes a quite unscientific appeal to our sense of the fitness of things. Surely, he says, referring to the ordinary scientific explanation, "Surely there must be a deeper meaning

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involved in natural objects.....Why do things struggle to exist? Surely the effort must have some significance, the development some aim." But why? Why must there be some aim in natural processes? If science is to be trusted at all, life on the earth had a beginning, and it will have an end. What aim, outside of the process itself, can there be if lifelessness is to follow animate existence just as certainly as it preceded it? The only "must be" there is in the case is that supplied by human reason itself, which reads into nature aims and purposes that we only know as existing in conjunction with animal intelligence. But animal intelligence is only a fractional part of natural phenomena as a whole; it is, apparently, an evanescent part; and what warranty is there for saying that qualities characteristic of a small part of nature "must be" characteristic of nature as a whole? There is none at all, so far as I can see; and the "must be" and "must have" is not part of a scientific induction; it is an appeal to pure sentiment and traditional teaching. Anyway, it is not the task of science to say what must be, but to find out what is. Any "must be" that does exist in science can only appear as the rigorously logical deduction from admitted data. Above all, these appeals to popular feelings about the fitness of things are in the highest degree unscientific and misleading. For the popular mind has been developed in an anthropomorphic school. It has been in the habit of looking for reflections of its own moods in nature, and as a result it has usually managed to find them. It is precisely this frame of mind that for two hundred and fifty years science has been striving to correct. That its task is not yet complete there is evidence on every side. The address with which I have been dealing is only one more piece of evidence to the same end. Sir Oliver Lodge is not, as he seems to think, a soldier in an army advancing to the conquest of new territory. He is rather one of the rearguard of a retreating force that has fought its principal battles and experienced hopeless defeat.

C. COHEN.

A Clearing-Up.

SOCIAL or mental freedom from any tyranny never comes like a lightning flash; clouds never disappear suddenly. The blow may be startling in the rapidity of its action; the result becomes a process of growth.

Some time ago I lay on a hillside looking at heavenly things. The sky was black with an ominous accumulation of dense clouds. The atmosphere was heavy with the foreboding of a storm; and everything, in heaven and on earth, seemed possessed of the anticipation of doom; except myself; for I was busy with analogies. Just when I reached the stage of slavery corresponding to the blackness of the sky, and when it seemed time that something should happen, coincidence would have it that a sudden gust of wind should come from the west.

It was the blow. Then the forces of emancipation began. The wind came in hurried gusts, and the trees near by chattered excitedly. The grass and bracken swayed irresponsibly, and a rabbit poked out its head to see what was going on. Gradually the wind became a strong, steady breeze. The tree-voices ceased their chattering to sing the song of Nature. Movement took the place of stagnant solidity in the heavens; and the bright, clear place on the western horizon slowly extended its eastern boundary. In about an hour the last of the heavy clouds was climbing the mountain range on the east, to disappear somewhere out of sight beside its ungainly brethren. And the air was full of freshness, and bright with gladdening sunrays.

The process took some time to come to its consummation. Had the first gust of wind not been followed by many more, had these not grown into a steady breeze, the sky would not have been cleared of its weight nor the air of its heaviness, and the doom *might* have been accomplished.

As it was with my picture of nature, so it is with the affairs of men. To cavil and complain that our labor's ideal is not realised within a lifetime seems to suggest an ignorance of the powers of mental conservatism. The man who sets out to free the mind from its dark clouds of prejudice and superstition must have a goodly amount of patience. A minute in the natural clearing of the sky might represent a decade in the clearing of the sky of man's mind. Pioneers cannot gauge the results of their work. That must remain to others. To complain is to retard. To continue fighting, regardless of apparent drawbacks, despite the tendencies of the mind for relief, for rest, is to prove the real pioneering spirit, to deserve all the praise one can bestow upon the possessor of it.

Religion has been the darkest cloud that ever cast its oppressiveness upon the life of humanity. The scope of religion has been illimitable, and its potentialities incomputable. It has sounded all the depths of human nature, and has ascended all the heights of genius, of love, of human grandeur. Not an attribute of Nature has it failed to steep in its gloom. It has gone with men to the fringes of the forest of thought, and, with them, for its own purposes, has penetrated to the hidden lakes of truth. From man's weakness and from man's strength it has drawn the food of its days. And even man's great desire for freedom has not been allowed to go unaccompanied. Religion has tracked it like a sleuthhound, keen on its scent, recognising that the grandest of man's desires was its deadliest of enemies. With an almost admirable tenacity has Religion stuck to the way of the print of the footsteps of Freedom; and when it saw an opportunity of attack, or an opportunity to steal ahead and proclaim the victory, it has neither hesitated to attack nor to steal. And so has it wormed its way into the heart of things, achieving a reflected power and a glory that it claims as its own birthright.

If these things be true, if the clouds be so heavy, if the atmosphere be so oppressive, the breeze must be strong and prolonged that would clear the air and the skies of man's mind. The mind of the average individual moves in a small space, and the national mind moves in a space not much, if any, larger. Within the limits of that space the influence of religion has been of tremendous import in the past, and is yet. Ideas of such venerable age are not subdued as easily as the inclination to break stones. They are not shattered at a blow. They are not blown away with the first gust of the winds of adverse criticism. Accustomed to the heaviness and heat of restriction, they chill and die slowly in the crisp fresh air. So slowly do they relinquish life that the gradual diminution of their vitality but proves their past power and strength.

Against habits of thought that have become characteristic of the national being, that are so well developed that the least return of mediæval oppressiveness can give them resuscitation of life, those who would fight must possess a patience, a courage, a conviction, rarely, if ever before, found necessary. The hardest task ever undertaken by the mind of man has been to conquer and reject the religious habits of the mind of man. Mental warfare demands qualities, sterner qualities, than those requisitioned in the brutal slaughter of men; and we cannot say that Freethought has failed in the duties conviction imposes upon it.

The patience required from Freethought, the never-sleeping courage, the continual activity, the constant, steady breeze of truth, demanded from it, have not been found wanting. The conviction that the skies will yet be cleared of their dark, heavy clouds and the air relieved of its unhealthy oppressiveness by the strong ceaseless flow of criticism is Freethought's inspiration. It has taken up the task. It recognises the responsibilities. It will lay down neither until the impurities of superstition are swept from the

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air and skies of man's mind. The blow has been struck; the gusts of wind have become a steady breeze; the process of emancipation goes on, its operations increasing in activity as the breeze quickens in velocity; and the little space on the western horizon gradually becomes bigger and brighter, telling us that Freethought's labors realise their reward surely, if slowly.

ROBERT MORELAND.

The Dear Bishops.

"The Archbishop of —— and —— have returned from town to —— Palace, where they will entertain a house party during the session."—MORNING NEWSPAPER.

THIS interesting announcement is common enough. We do not refer to it on account of its novelty. Indeed, if it were less common it might excite more attention. If the average Christian were not used to such things he would "sit up," as the man in the street says, at the idea of a right reverend father in God figuring in "society" news like a sporting nobleman, a notorious actress, or a parasite-haunted millionaire. What an effort of imagination it involves to picture Jesus Christ giving a swell party, or Peter and Paul looking in at a fashionable at-home! Fancy the announcement that Jesus Christ had just left his town residence for his country seat, where he was going to entertain a number of distinguished guests! Fancy a newspaper paragraph to the effect that (say) John had just returned from a holiday at Ostend or Monte Carlo! The incongruity is quite staggering. But the case is altered since the infancy of *the* Salvation Army, of which General Booth's affair is only a small contingent. The religion of poverty became a road to riches. The religion of humility became a path to honors and dignities. The religion of the next world became the way to the best places in this world. It was a wonderful transformation change. Nothing like it was ever seen in a pantomime. And when the startling change was once effected it went on as a going concern. From the days of Constantine, the Christian emperor—though it is doubtful if he ever *was* a Christian—the representatives of Jesus Christ, the poor Carpenter of Nazareth, have affected wealth and display. Even now the Pope reckons himself above any Emperor, Czar, or Kaiser on earth. Cardinals count themselves as little less than Kings; in fact, they *are* Princes—of the Church. The Bishops of the Church of England sit in the House of Lords; that is, when they take the trouble to be present. They seldom attend unless the interests of their own order are at stake. Even the Nonconformist ministers play up to their position for all it is worth. Did not the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes go to Court dressed in silk stockings and silver shoe-buckles? And did not General Booth travel like a patrician? We have seen him sailing up the platform to his private carriage, followed by a crowd of uniformed satellites, one carrying this and another that, and all crowding after him as though they were going to rush in after him through the gates of heaven.

But to return to the bishops. We call them the dear bishops. And are they not so? We pay the poorest of them some £4,000 a year, and the richest £15,000. Mr. Asquith receives £5,000 a year as Prime Minister of the British Empire. Dr. Davidson receives £15,000 a year as Archbishop of Canterbury. He is commercially worth perhaps a twentieth part of that figure. It would probably puzzle him to earn a thousand a year in the open labor market. As the chief apostle of Jesus Christ in England he ought to receive far less. A hundred a year should be the outside salary of a Christian preacher. In the case of a bishop fifty pounds a year should suffice. No doubt he would find it hard to live on that income if he did not trust a good deal in the Lord. But he *ought* to trust a good deal in the Lord. What is he a bishop for otherwise? He should show an example to the flock. They are expected to have faith, and he should have it more abundantly; in fact, if he had faith enough, he would be able to live without any salary at all. Meat and drink and clothes would come supernaturally. "For the Lord knoweth that ye have need of such things."

John Stuart Mill said that a bishop might not be a hypocrite, but he certainly looked like one. Living up to a sunflower, or a piece of old blue china, is nothing to living up to a bishop's costume. No man has ever done it. An honest bishop is an impossibility. He may be all right as a man, but as a bishop he is an impostor. Good to his wife he may be, kind to his children, amiable to his friends, and considerate to his acquaintances; but in his public capacity he is always a fraud. "Blessed be ye poor," he says with his tongue. With his hand he rakes in the shekels. He talks of the Son of Man who had not where to lay his head, and can hardly tell offhand the number of bedrooms in his own palace. He professes to lead others in following one who was despised and rejected of men, and he insists on having a good place near the front in every earthly procession. He preaches "Labor not for the meat that perisheth," and lives on the fat of the land. Generally he reaches a good old age, sticks to the world with all his strength, keeps out of heaven as long as possible, and only goes "home" when he can no longer live abroad. The longevity of bishops is proverbial.

How curious that all this contrast, and all this hypocrisy, should be displayed in the cause of religion! It is like keeping drinkshops in the interest of temperance, and brothels in the interest of morality! But when you look into it more closely the curiousness disappears. Religion has been used, all over the world, to deceive and exploit the people. Those who speak in the name of God are eager after the "goods" of men. Those who preach felicity above make themselves as comfortable as they can below. Those who promise mansions in the sky get hold of good residences on the solid earth. It is really a wonder that the multitude do not see this. The fact is gross as a mountain, open, palpable. But the people (we suppose) are caught so young by the clerical tricksters, and are so thoroughly imposed upon in their childhood, that they seldom recover their common sense in adult life, but go down to their graves in the firm belief that the fellows who have told them lies and robbed them are the appointed teachers of a God of truth and justice.

G. W. FOOTE.

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

Is anything to be learned from Hosea and his wife? Is there anything of use in Joel, in Amos, in Obadiah? Can we get any good from Jonah and his gourd? Is it possible that God is the real author of Micah and Nahum, of Habakkuk and Zephaniah, of Haggai and Malachi and Zechariah, with his red horses, his four horns, his four carpenters, his flying roll, his mountains of brass, and the stone with four eyes? Is there anything in these "inspired" books that has been of benefit of man?

Have they taught us how to cultivate the earth, to build houses, to weave cloth, to prepare food? Have they taught us to paint pictures, to chisel statues, to build bridges, or ships, or anything of beauty or of use? Did we get our ideas of government, of religious freedom, of the liberty of thought, from the Old Testament? Did we get from any of these books a hint of any science? Is there in the "sacred volume" a word, a line, that has added to the wealth, the intelligence, and the happiness of mankind? Is there one of the books of the Old Testament as entertaining as *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Travels of Gulliver*, or *Peter Wilkins and his Flying Wife*? Did the author of Genesis know as much about nature as Humboldt, or Darwin, or Haeckel? Is what is called the Mosaic Code as wise or as merciful as the code of any civilised nation? Were the writers of Kings and Chronicles as great historians, as great writers, as Gibbon and Draper? Is Jeremiah or Habakkuk equal to Dickens or Thackeray? Can the authors of Job and the Psalms be compared with Shakespeare? Why should we attribute the best to man and the worst to God?—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

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Acid Drops.

"Ought Christians to Die Rich?" is the title of an article in the *Methodist Times*. Well, we never heard of one who struggled to die poor, and all of them seem willing to run the risk of dying otherwise. The writer of the article thinks it "is the Lord who gives His servants power to get wealth," so it is, apparently, all right. And as things go, the Lord must thoughtfully withhold the power from others, since we cannot all be rich. We might *all* be comfortable, but it is simply impossible for us all to be rich.

The Established Church, said Karl Marx, "will more readily pardon an attack on thirty-eight of its thirty-nine Articles than on one-thirty-ninth of its income." It is a case of "The Law and the Profits."

Professor B. Moore, at the British Association meetings, did not delay in giving a reply to Sir Oliver Lodge. In an address before the joint sections of Zoology, Physiology, and Botany, he laughed at the transcendental speculations that some people are so fond of, and claimed that by actual experimentation evidence had already been obtained of the steps of organic evolution. As the result of eighteen months' experiments, it is now clear, he said, that by the continued action of the law of molecular complexity, life must originate, that forms of life were now originating, that the origin of life was no fortuitous accident, and that the same processes were guiding life onwards to a higher evolution in a progressive creation. This is a clear endorsement of Professor Schafer's declaration of a year ago.

A discussion followed the address, in which Sir Oliver Lodge took part. He, of course, admitted the facts, so far as the experiments were concerned; indeed, whether it had been done or not, he quite admitted that the manufacture of living material might be accomplished. But when they got "potential living matter," that was not what he regarded as life. He regarded life "as something not of that order, but of a higher and different order." It would only be the construction of a chemical or physical vehicle that life would make use of. Well, one can only say, quite plainly, that against that attitude all argument is impossible, and no proof would be adequate. We are not surprised that the *Daily Telegraph* special correspondent remarked that Sir Oliver "scarcely used the language of science" in his argument. It was the speech of a pulpiteer, one who cares nothing whatever for scientific method or results, and is anxious only to see a preconceived idea or belief established.

Consider what the attitude of Sir Oliver Lodge is. He says to the chemist and the biologist:—

> "I admit that if you have not yet made, you may one day make, living matter from a combination of non-living matter. But when you have done this, you have not manufactured life. That is something quite different, and all you have done is to create a medium in which life may show itself."

Now that, we repeat, is not the language that one has a right to expect from a scientific man. Life is not something apart from its manifestations, life is the name given to certain properties or clusters of properties associated with a special kind of organisation. Life, by itself, is a sheer abstraction. It has no more existence than heat or light apart from undulatory phenomena. Life, as a name of certain groups of phenomena, is a plain, understandable term. But life, apart from these phenomena, is a conception as idle as it is absurd. Nay, it is not even a conception, it is a mere word, for no one, not even Sir Oliver Lodge, can have the ghost of an idea as to what can possibly be meant by it.

Two letters appeared the other morning in the *Daily Sketch*. One welcomed the announcement of Sir Oliver Lodge's "new continent" which the writer declared to be "far more real than the material earth," though he did not state how he found that out. He also welcomed the news of the "miracles" at Lourdes. The other correspondent suggested that the Church should gather together a lot of people with one leg or one eye, and send them to Lourdes. If only one of them returned with two legs or two eyes, it would "confound the agnostic for ever." We fancy this writer must have been reading the *Freethinker*. Anyhow, he was lucky to get his letter inserted.

In the recent "City Valuations" at Glasgow it was sought to get a house at 21 Burnbank-gardens reduced from £70 to £60. But the Assessor said there were no fewer than five clergymen claiming lodger votes in that house, and each had sworn that the room he occupied was valued at £10 a year at least. That made £50 for the bedrooms alone! The Committee, however, benevolently fixed the value of this clerical warren at £65.

Rev. Alfred Francis Hall, aged 26, a curate at St. Peter's Church, Upton Manor, was put into the dock at the West Ham Police Court to answer a serious charge of indecent assault on a lad that he had prepared for confirmation. The following letter was subsequently written to the lad's father, and was produced and read in court:—

> "Dear Mr. ——,—From the depth of my heart may I say how truly sorry I am for all that has occurred. The feelings of my mother and father are a sufficient guide to me as to what you and Mrs. —— must be feeling, and I know this only too well. I have by my own act blighted all my life, and I shall always have one thought searing my soul, and so my punishment is indeed terrible. Forgive me if you can, and know that I am dead to Forest Gate as far as the present and future are concerned. You had better show this to Mrs. ——, and think as kindly as you can of one who has been sorely tempted, and in his weakness has fallen.—Yours in penitence, A. F. HALL."

The prisoner was sentenced to six months' hard labor. Three other cases against the "reverend" gentleman were not proceeded with.

"You have your own Christian names, and Christ knows them," writes Bishop Montgomery in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*. What a busy person he is supposed to be! It must be exhausting work, too, after counting the hairs of all our heads, and watching the sparrows fall.

The Salvation Army Home does not appear to be such a heaven upon earth as some people suppose. Recently, a poor woman, charged with stealing at Rochford Session, was asked if she would go to the Army home, and she said she preferred going to prison. She was sentenced to a month's hard labor. Comment is superfluous.

Principal Forsyth, Principal Selbie, Rev. Dr. Horton, Rev. Silvester Horne, and other men of God, have signed an appeal to every Congregational church in Great Britain to make up a big collection for the London Missionary Society, which is short of funds and has an increasing deficit in its balance-sheet. The appeal suggests the setting apart of a special Sunday for "considering the need of the non-Christian world and the obligation of members of the churches in the matter of giving." We venture to say that the need of the non-Christian world does not include anything that these reverend gentlemen, and their colleagues, are able to give. Most people, except those who live by it, or have friends living by it, recognise that the missionary game is pretty nearly played out. What answer is made to Sir Hiram Maxim's damaging book? They know better than to make one.

A small boy of eight, on his return from school the other day, exclaimed, in a state of great excitement, "O mother, my teacher is a liar." Startled by so bold and emphatic an assertion, his mother reproved him for speaking in so disrespectful a manner of his teacher. Unabashed, the little chap retorted, "But, mother, she did tell us a lie to-day." "What did she say?" came the maternal inquiry. "She told us that Jesus walked on the sea, and I am sure no one ever did or ever can walk on the sea." Then the mother added, "I suppose she got it out of some book or other." "I don't care a rap where she got it from," replied this youthful Freethinker; "all I know is that it is impossible to walk on the sea without getting drowned." This child of eight has got brains, which many adults either lack, or do not use.

The editor of the *Church Times* remarks that "Darwinism in its strict sense has gone by the board." Of course, the editor of the *Church Times* need not trouble to find out either what Darwinism is, or what living scientists think about it. But, on the other hand, he is not specially called on to exhibit his ignorance on the subject. We can assure him that Darwinism, in its strict sense, is not called into question by any scientific man worth talking about. How far Darwinism is operative in the fixation of variations is another question altogether. But, as a matter of fact, the biological world of to-day is probably more Darwinian than Darwin himself. The editor of the *Church Times* had better consult Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, who is still with us. Or, if he is "suspect," let him ask Sir Oliver Lodge. Sir Oliver is not a biologist, but he is well able to give the needful correction.

A Lambeth woman was committed for trial the other day (Sept. 18) for ill-treating her children. She is said to

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have forced her little boy to his knees, and compelled him to sing hymns and say prayers. Then she dragged him to his feet and beat him. She is evidently a firm believer in religious education, and would doubtless resist the exclusion of the Bible from the schools.

Pious food reformers have a hymn-book of their own with which to serenade the "Lord." We can sympathise with any vegetarian who might be asked to join in the singing of "There is a fountain filled with blood."

If he is not careful, Mr. Hall Caine will be getting into trouble with some of his Christian friends. He is writing a series of articles in the *Daily Telegraph* on "Woman," and, after describing the manner in which the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca is narrated in the Bible, adds:—

> "It is a shocking story—shocking in its picture of the degradation of womanhood.....Not a hint of any higher impulse; any concurrence of the soul; any spiritual compulsion; any physical attraction; anything we call love; any exercise of nature's selective instinct. It is mere sale and barter, in which the woman, the thing bought and sold, is made to acquiesce in her own auction."

The rows we have got into for saying exactly the same thing of the position of woman in the Bible! Mr. Hall Caine says it as though it were almost an original discovery. He might have learned as much any time he pleased from the writings and speeches of Freethinkers. All the same, he will not please his religious backers by pointing out that amongst God's chosen people women were regarded as articles of merchandise. And he might have gone further still. He might have pointed to the Ten Commandments, in which the wife is lumped in with the husband's horse and ass and other articles of property. And she doesn't even head the list.

Nevertheless, Mr. Hall Caine needs be more careful, and more catholic, in his studies. He says, "Such, apparently, was man's earliest conception of woman's place and use in the world." We hope that Mr. Caine is not under the chapel-like impression that the Bible is, in an anthropological sense, an early record of human history. No serious student to-day would ever dream of going to the Bible for man's earliest conception of anything. Marriage by purchase is not by any means the earliest mode of contracting unions. It is obviously a peaceful refinement of marriage by capture. And there were earlier stages still. Mr. Caine makes the mistake of taking the Christian world too seriously. It might also do his Christian friends some good if he pointed out to them that contemporary conceptions of woman among many of the nations "who knew not God" were really much higher than those of the Bible.

It is related in a recent number of the *Catholic Herald* how a confirmed Freethinker became a Catholic. As usual, the name of the convert is conveniently withheld; but whoever he was, if at all historical, his intellectual calibre was such that Freethinkers generally will not mourn his loss. He had evidently been discussing the claims of Christianity to credence and trust with a Catholic who, declining to enter into controversy with him, said: "Look here, my friend; either Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, or he did not. If the resurrection is true, a convent scandal would not make it untrue." This argument, thus stated, floored the Freethinker, and he immediately rose and blossomed into a Catholic. We have never met such a Freethinker in our lives; and even if we had, we would have been glad of the opportunity to make a present of him to any Church. As a matter of fact, a person endowed with such a slender intellect cannot be a genuine Freethinker.

More religion and brotherhood! The secretary of the St. Asaph branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society invited the bishop of the diocese to attend a meeting of that body. But the secretary is a Calvinistic Methodist, and a great many of the society's members also belong to that cheerful sect, with Baptists and other odds and ends of the Dissenting world. So the bishop wrote back declining the invitation on the ground that Churchmen have been subjected to a "campaign of slander and falsehood" in order to get the Welsh Church Bill through Parliament, and that to co-operate with the people responsible for this would be "nothing less than hypocrisy." The bishop does not say with David, "All men are liars," but he does say that Nonconformists are. And the latter will doubtless reply with "You're another." So the pious rail, and the ungodly laugh. Both have used slander and falsehood against Freethinkers, and its use has served as a means of cementing friendship. And religious people, having found this weapon serviceable for so long, can hardly be expected to drop it directly they fall out amongst themselves.

"How we may secure literary quarantine is agitating many minds," says *Current Literature*. These pure-minded censors might start by prohibiting the Bible from being placed in the hands of children, for if it were published for the first time to-day it would very probably land its producer in gaol.

Rev. R. R. Roberts, in vacating the presidency of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, asked the Conference to consider a number of things, and this was one of them. "Think," he said, "of the dragons that devoured our youth and made them first rogues and then atheists." We wonder who the dragons are. We also wonder how the young people who are devoured by these monsters have such a lively development afterwards. Mr. Roberts's view that roguery leads to Atheism is an instance of what Herbert Spencer would have called professional bias. It could easily be corrected by application to the nearest prison. Ninety-nine per cent., at least, of the inmates would be found to belong to some Christian Church or other. It would probably be difficult to find one Atheist in the whole establishment.

Rev. P. Watchnest, of Huddersfield, says, as prison chaplain, that every man he had visited in prison had passed through a Sunday-school. That is one of the outward and visible signs of a religious education, we presume.

Professor T. M. Kettle has some quaint ideas concerning Freethought. Writing in *Public Opinion*, he says, "The world sets me the conundrum: Christianity or the other thing? I am, as they say, at heart a Christian. But I read a twelve and sixpenny book blowing it sky-high." Even a professor might learn that the deadliest Freethought explosive can be had for twopence.

Rev. Dr. Clifford wants Passive Resistance to go on. "We want no tests for teachers but capacity and character; the Catechisms and creeds of the Churches should be kept out." Dr. Clifford discreetly omits to add that the Bible should be kept in. He is an opponent of Secular Education. He objects to the Church Catechism in a school that a Nonconformist contributes to support. He has no objection to "simple Bible teaching" in a school that an Atheist helps to pay for.

Prayers were offered, nearly a couple of months ago, for rain in the Newcastle district. When it came it was a devastating flood. The water was from ten to twelve feet deep in some parts of the town, and the Vicar of Jesmond (Rev. J. T. Inskip) is lauded in one of the local papers for helping "distressed" people "across the flooded channel and placing them in safety on the pavement." We should have thought this deserved no particular praise, considering that the reverend gentleman (whose God sent the deluge) was one of the main agents in bringing about the mischief.

"Providence" often fails to recognise its own buildings. That is why lightning conductors are attached to churches. But that precaution does not always ensure safety. In the recent heavy storm the parish church of Bothenhampton, near Bridport, was struck by lightning. A large portion of the bell turret, and the stone cross, were cut away, and fell smashing through the roof.

There doesn't seem very much to choose between any of the Balkan Allies when it comes to a question of dealing with non-Christians. Miss Durham is a lady journalist who wrote very warmly in praise of the Montenegrins at the beginning of the war. She has now written with equal warmth against them, and in consequence of evidence seen or collected by herself. She says that in Albania the Montenegrins closed the mosques, arrested the Mohammedans, and in batches of twenty to fifty gave them the choice of baptism or death. At Cherem all the males were killed, and the houses, with the women and children inside, burned. Other evidences of cruelty are given by Miss Durham, and she says she has been most careful in getting at the facts. The *Catholic Times* says that "how people professing any form of Christianity could perpetrate such outrages is almost inconceivable." We appreciate the editor's indignation, but we think he will find if he turns to the records of his own religion, that there is in all this nothing new in the history of Christianity. It is just Christian belief that has always given brutality a keener edge and cruelty a sharper zest.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

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

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged £185 0s. 3d. Received since:—Per J. Ainge (Leicester)—S. Leeson, £1 1s.; W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; — Bartlett, 2s.; A. Wade, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 3s.; J. Ainge, 3s. G. B. Taylor, £1; W. R. Munton, £2; E. Pinder and Friends (Leicester), £1 1s.; T. Raff (W. Australia), £2 2s.

G. B. TAYLOR.—Glad to hear from you on the rolling deep. When will your voyages bring you to London again? Your good wishes are cordially reciprocated.

DISGUSTED.—Many non-believers do go to church to please their womenfolk or to court respectability. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true."

A. W. HUTTY.—Is it not possible to accept the good in Nietzsche without troubling so much about what you regard as evil? It is only on the side of religion and ethics that he can be dealt with in the *Freethinker*. We may add that satirists should never be taken quite literally.

W. R. MUNTON.—Thanks for subscription; also for good wishes. We hope to do plenty of work for Freethought yet.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

E. SCHMITZ.—We quite agree that "Abracadabra's" recent series of articles on "The Fabrication of the Gospel History" would be very useful if reprinted in a permanent form; but we cannot afford to risk our slender resources until Freethinkers show more alacrity in pushing the circulation of such publications.

C. M —"Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" occurs in Genesis i. 28.

B. EVANS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

W. GREGORY.—The date of the "Bradlaugh Sunday"—if we may call it so—has to be fixed by the N. S. S. Executive, not by the President personally. We are glad to hear that Mr. Davidson gave the Kingsland Branch so good a lecture on Bradlaugh last Sunday. Pleased to learn that the Branch's outdoor work is successful generally.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Your letter and ours must have crossed in the post.

J. W. O'LEARY.—Cecil Chesterton may have been on "the ship" that he says Mr. Shaw torpedoed, but we were not aware of the fact, and should not believe it if he did not state it himself. As it was so long ago (Bradlaugh died in January, 1891), Cecil Chesterton must have been very young then; and it could hardly have been a matter of great importance what opinions had the honor of his adherence. We are often puzzled by zealous Christians, emerging into some notoriety, who claim to have been Freethinkers in "the long ago."

S. G. MASON.—Thanks for the reference. But the periodical you mention is not sent to us, and we cannot buy everything.

E. F. REMINGTON.—We cannot tell you where Huxley said "he knew of no other religion save the Christian one that will keep a woman pure and virtuous." Nor can anyone else tell you.

W. REPTON.—Next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Birmingham "saints" expect a big audience next Sunday evening (Oct. 5) in the great Town Hall. Mr. Foote's subject will be "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology"—with reference to his recent much-talked-of address to the British Association. Most of our readers will recollect that Sir Oliver Lodge is the Principal of Birmingham University.

Mr. Foote resumed his platform work at Leicester on Sunday evening. "Foote's weather" used to be a byword amongst the "saints" at Leicester; it meant fog, rain, snow or some other sample of English weather at its worst. Fortunately it was very fine on Sunday, and Mr. Foote managed to get through his task all right. The Secular Hall was filled with a most appreciative audience, gathered not only from the town but also from the surrounding districts, some "saints" walking a good many miles to hear the N. S. S. President. The lecture on "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*" was followed with deep attention, and was evidently much relished. Mr. Sydney Gimson, who presided, stated how glad they all were to see Mr. Foote recovered from his late severe illness and back in the lecturing field again; and how much the "splendid" lecture they had listened to would make them look forward to his next visit.

Mr. Gimson's announcement of various Committee meetings in this, that, and the other room after the lecture, fell gratefully on Mr. Foote's ears. It showed that active work was going on, and that the Leicester Secular Society was facing the future with hopeful energy. Mr. Foote is sorry to say that he forgot to note the name of the young lady member who sang a solo (in the absence of the quartette) with such acceptance after the lecture.

Mr. Foote is none the worse for his Leicester visit; it rather did him good. The pleasurable excitement was a beneficial change from the very quiet life he has been leading lately. He still adheres to his declared intention of not lecturing every Sunday, especially as he wants time this coming winter for a larger output of literary work; but he can now step on the platform again without a shadow of apprehension.

Mdlle. Carmelita Ferrer, the dancer, who is appearing in London, is a niece of Francisco Ferrer, the "intellectual," and at the time of his sentence she made several appeals to King Alfonso for a reprieve.

A discussion on "Beyond the Grave" has been published in recent issues of the *Walsall Observer*, and the Freethought position has been ably stated by several correspondents.

A course of Freethought lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., will take place at the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evenings, October 12, 19, and 26. Mr. Cohen starts the series, Mr. Lloyd continues it, and Mr. Foote winds it up. There will be ample local advertisements. But the "saints" are asked to give the enterprise all the publicity they can. It is a thing we can never have too much of.

The Birmingham Branch opens its winter session to-day (Sept. 28) at the King's Hall, Corporation-street. Mr. E. Clifford Williams lectures at 7 p.m. on "Lessons from the Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

A MODEL KING.

In St. Ferdinand, King of Castile (d. 1252), the virtues of a king shone out brightly—magnanimity, clemency, love of justice, and, above all, zeal for the Catholic faith and a burning desire to protect and propagate its religious worship. He showed this especially by the vigor with which he pursued heretics. He never allowed them to exist in any part whatever of his dominions. When they were discovered, he himself with his own hands carried the faggots to burn them.—*Breviarium Romanum, Feast of St. Ferdinand, June 5.*

Grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, etc.—*Col. for All Saints.*

CARLYLE AND THE CHURCH.

His (Carlyle's) destination was "the ministry," and for this, knowing how much his father and mother wished it, he tried to prepare himself. He was already conscious, however, "that he had not the least enthusiasm for that business; that even grave prohibitory doubts were gradually rising ahead." It has been supposed that he disliked the formalism of the Scotch Church; but formalism, he says, was not the pinching point, had there been the preliminary of belief forthcoming. "No church or speaking entity whatever can do without formulas; but it must *believe* them first if it would be honest."—*J. A. Froude, "The Early Life of T. Carlyle."*

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Huxley's Fight for Truth.

THE average member of the broader-minded section of the public, in our comparatively calm and tolerant generation, can form no conception of the bitter battle which secured us the modicum of freedom we now enjoy. That circumstance alone more than justifies those who insist on recalling the invaluable services rendered to science and Freethought by such heroes as Bruno, Galileo, Copernicus, Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, Huxley, and Tyndall. And in fighting for the liberty of the platform and the press, the names of Richard Carlile, Charles Bradlaugh, and George William Foote will ever endure as outstanding examples of men whose courage was never shaken in the struggle for liberty and truth. It is occasionally insinuated, or alleged, that the present recognised standing of Rationalism as a legitimate instrument of thought and expression is due exclusively to the titanic labors of the great Freethinking scientists, historians, and philosophers alone. Although the writer can never think without emotion of the benefits which these men have conferred on the human race, he nevertheless realises that their paths were made easier—in any case in nineteenth-century England—by the iconoclastic labors of the aggressive Secular movement.

This movement very materially assisted in weakening the barriers of religious bigotry, and in accustoming the community to the more or less unpalatable fact that honest and able men were prepared to challenge, and debate on an open platform, the received religion of their country.

Moreover, these bold men paid the penalty which all uncompromising reformers right down the ages have had to pay for courage and sincerity. The scientists and men of letters were thus enabled to write and teach with an ampler freedom than would have been granted them in an age in which those who spoke more plainly than themselves were wanting. The men who were prepared to face political and social ostracism, and, if need be, go to prison for their opinions; the men who were willing to brave the insolence of office, and the law's injustices and delays, in vindicating personal and public rights, played a part in the stern fight for English liberty which some future Buckle or Gibbon will adequately recognise and record.

Despite such mitigating influences, the opposition encountered by the gentle Darwin, when he submitted his discovery to the world, was by no means devoid of bitterness. The year 1859 saw the publication of the *Origin of Species*, a work which, directly and indirectly, has probably done more to revolutionise modern thought than any other. As is well known, evolution is older than Darwin, but that great naturalist enunciated the law of selection, which placed evolution on a firm theoretical basis. But before that doctrine triumphed, there were many fierce conflicts. And in winning over the scientific world to evolution, Darwin's doughty lieutenant, Huxley, played a similar part in England to that performed by Haeckel in Germany:—

> "The idea that all the varied structures in the world, the divergent forms of rocks and minerals and crystals, the innumerable herbs that cover the face of the earth like a mantle, and all the animal host of creatures great and small that dwell on the land or dart through the air or people the waters,—that all these had arisen by natural laws from a primitive, unformed material was known to the Greeks, was developed by the Romans, and even received the approval of early Christian Fathers, who wrote long before the idea had been invented that the naïve legends of the old Testament were an authoritative and literal account of the origin of the world. After a long interval, in which scientific thought was stifled by theological dogmatism, the theory of evolution, particularly in its application to animals, began to reappear, long before Darwin published the *Origin of Species*." *

Buffon, the famous eighteenth-century naturalist; Erasmus Darwin, the poet and botanist, and ancestor of the immortal Charles; the unfortunate, misunderstood, and still immensely underrated Lamarck, were, among others, evolutionists before Darwin. When we remember the disadvantages under which Lamarck labored, his contributions to evolutionary philosophy appear very remarkable. He regarded the doctrine of descent as the real basis of the science of life. He traced the highest living things to the simplest beginnings, and he urged that man's progenitors were ape-like animals. But this great pioneer was before his time, and his message passed unheeded. Nor did Herbert Spencer—another pre-Darwinian evolutionist—make much impression on his earlier contemporaries. Both in conversation and from reading, Huxley was rendered familiar with Spencer's views. But, although he had already abandoned his orthodox beliefs, he remained quite unconvinced. That Spencer's position was clearly and cogently put, is abundantly proved by the following passage, which formed part of one of his articles in the *Leader* of March, 1852:—

> "Those who cavalierly reject the theory of evolution, as not adequately supported by facts, seem quite to forget that their own theory is not supported by facts at all. Like the majority of men who are born to a given belief, they demand the most rigorous proof of any adverse belief, but assume that their own needs none.....We may safely estimate the number of species that have existed, and are existing on the earth, at no less than ten millions. Well, which is the most rational theory about these ten millions of species? Is it most likely that there have been ten millions of special creations; or is it most likely that by continual modifications, due to change of circumstances, ten millions of varieties have been produced, as varieties are being produced still?.....Even could the supporters of the development hypothesis merely show that the origination of species by the process of modification is conceivable, they would be in a better position than their opponents. But they can do much more than this. They can show that the process of modification has effected, and is effecting, decided changes in all organisms subject to modifying influences.....They can show that in successive generations these changes continue, until ultimately the new conditions become the natural ones. They can show that in cultivated plants, domesticated animals, and in the several races of men, such alterations have taken place. They can show that the degrees of difference so produced, are often, as in dogs, greater than those on which distinctions of species have been founded. They can show, too, that the changes daily taking place in ourselves—the facility which attends long practice, and the loss of aptitude which begins when practice ceases,—the strengthening of the passions habitually gratified, and the weakening of those habitually curbed,—the development of every faculty, bodily, moral, intellectual, according to the use made of it—are all explicable on this principle."

These powerful arguments apparently made no appeal to Huxley. He was almost destitute of that faculty of scientific imaginativeness which was so pronounced in his friend, the brilliant Tyndall. As a consequence, he was condemned to wait until Darwin's great work appeared before he could see the light. In the law of natural selection—Darwin's most important contribution to evolutionary philosophy—Huxley at once recognised an agency which obviously would account for those transformations in the animal and vegetable kingdoms to which the fossils preserved in the rocks so unmistakably point. The imposing array of evidence of variation which Darwin presented in the *Origin* also carried great weight. No unprejudiced naturalist could any longer dispute that a never-ceasing struggle for existence went on in the world of life. And it was equally undeniable that the successful competitors in this struggle were precisely those plants and animals which displayed variations which favored them in the contest. Still, although never wavering in his evolutionary beliefs after 1859, Huxley was at no time an adherent of the doctrine of the all-sufficiency of natural selection. Like Darwin himself, particularly towards the close of his life, Huxley regarded natural selection as an extremely important, but by no means exclusive factor in organic change. But the fact remains that the conversion of Huxley

* Professor Chalmers Mitchell, *Huxley*, pp. 89, 90.

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and other eminent contemporary scientists was more largely due to the theory of selection expounded in the *Origin of Species* than to all the wealth of evidence in favor of evolution, which that extraordinary work contains.

The principle of selection supplied the key which solved the riddle of organic transmutation. MacGillivray, Dr. Wells, and Patrick Matthew, among others, to some extent anticipated Darwin and Wallace in recognising the power of the selective principle. But there the matter ended, so far as they were concerned. Chalmers Mitchell has noted the further interesting fact that in classic Greece, the philosopher Aristotle had asked :—

> "Why are not the things which seem the result of design, merely spontaneous variations, which, being useful, have been preserved, while others are continually eliminated as unsuitable?"

Darwin forwarded a copy of the *Origin* to Huxley some weeks before the work was in the hands of the public. He appears to have entertained some anxiety as to Huxley's conversion to his views. But, to Darwin's intense delight, Huxley, on the eve of the book's publication, wrote to inform its author that its careful perusal had made him an evolutionist, and that he had become convinced that natural selection constituted a true cause for the production of species. As Huxley himself put it :—

> "My reflection, when I first made myself master of the central idea of the *Origin* was 'how exceedingly stupid not to have thought of that.' I suppose Columbus's companions said much the same when he made the egg to stand on end. The facts of variability, of the struggle for existence, of adaptation to conditions, were notorious enough; but none of us had suspected that the road to the heart of the species problem lay through them, until Darwin and Wallace dispelled the darkness, and the beacon-fire of the *Origin* guided the benighted."

To the mind of Huxley, as also to the minds of a few other progressive thinkers, previously enigmatical phenomena were now perfectly clear. Facts utterly at variance with the theological dogma of special creation, but obviously explicable in the light of evolution, now appeared in multitudinous variety. The arid bones of classification became pregnant with the spirit of life. All the boundless enthusiasm of Huxley's nature was set on fire by Darwin's revelation, and he was fully alive to the sternness of the impending conflict. The leading anatomist of his day, Richard Owen, an evolutionist at heart, soon made his peace with the obscurantists. Within the world of science itself, those who were against evolution in any form, constituted a formidable body. The waverers had to be convinced before the battle could be won.

The clericals were made furious by this damnable doctrine, and evidently meant mischief. Huxley entertained the shrewd suspicion that all those who were constitutionally impatient with "new-fangled notions" would curse rather than bless. All this he seized an early opportunity of intimating to Darwin, as the following characteristic letter proves :—

> "I trust you will not allow yourself to be in any way disgusted or annoyed by the considerable abuse and misrepresentation which, unless I am greatly mistaken, is in store for you. Depend upon it, you have earned the lasting gratitude of all thoughtful men; and as to the curs which will bark and yelp, you must recollect that some of your friends, at any rate, are endowed with an amount of combativeness which (though you have often and justly rebuked it) may stand you in good stead.
>
> "I am sharpening my claws and beak in readiness."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosom's rule;
But they who pierce the secrets of "The Truth"
Sow not such empty chaff their hearts to fool.

—*Omar Khayyam; E. H. Whinfield, Trans.*

Back to the Devil.

STUDENTS of early religions and the superstitions of savages tell us that the primitive form of religion consists in a propitiation of malignant spirits, and it is quite an accepted generalisation of sociology that as knowledge and culture increase, religions exhibit less of the elements of fear and acquire a stronger element of morality. Devils were believed in before gods.

This might almost have been anticipated from first principles. In the presence of the unknown man's dominant feeling is suspicion—apprehensiveness. Fear is born of ignorance, and as ignorance is the normal and prevailing condition of primitive man, fear forms the normal and prevailing characteristic of his beliefs. The unknown is feared and suspected by the savage simply because it *is unknown*, as the child dreads and suspects the darkness because it knows not what that darkness may contain. To form some notion of the state induced in the primitive mind by natural phenomena of menacing aspect, we need only imagine what form our own feelings and ideas might probably take in the presence of, say, a terrific thunderstorm or earthquake, if we were without any conception of natural causation, in complete ignorance not only of the properties but of the very existence of the atmosphere and of electricity, and knew nothing of the physical condition of the earth's crust and of the subterranean forces.

Fear of the unknown is, then, the fundamental element of primitive religion, and hence it follows that, as knowledge increases and the domain of the unknown diminishes, this element of fear also diminishes, and the religious feeling of which it is the mainspring and cause grows weaker. The moralising of religion which the increase of knowledge and the growth of intelligence bring about is thus necessarily accompanied by a diminution of absolute belief—of that blind, intense faith with which the older religions were held. No enlightened votary of a modern religion holds his faith with that intensity and absolute conviction which a savage shows in his beliefs; for the savage's beliefs, based as they are on a fear of mysteriously powerful and malignant beings, are to him matters of supreme importance—things of life or death immediately affecting his welfare. Religion, in short, is based on fear of evil, morality on love of good; and while the one depends on ignorance, the other depends on knowledge. We cannot love the unseen and unknown, but we may well fear it. The child's suspicious fear of the darkness is the basis of religion. The child's sure and confiding love for its mother is the basis of morality.

Thus we reach the conclusion that belief in and fear of the powers of evil form the root elements of religion, and that the weakening of such belief and fear would accordingly be accompanied by a decadence of religion. Our modern clergy who sometimes bewail the growing indifference to religion and the diminishing attendance at their churches would probably resent with some emphasis the suggestion that the decadence of religion is intimately connected with the decadence of the Devil, but this shows gross ingratitude for all that the Prince of Darkness has done for religion in the past. What would they not give for the prevalence now of that intense and invincible faith which peopled the earth with demons and foul fiends constantly on the watch for the souls of men; which lived under a perpetual dread of satanic influences; which attributed epilepsy and insanity to demoniacal possession; and which believed in the devil-scaring potency of charms, amulets, and relics? What would they not give for the revival of the child-like faith we find in such stories as that of Satan making love to a lady in the semblance of a saintly bishop, or of a nun swallowing a devil in a lettuce by imprudently eating that vegetable without previously making the sign of the cross? How many glorious truths of science would

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they not barter for some of that holy zeal which made the anchorites of the early Church scourge and torture themselves in the deserts in their struggles against diabolic promptings, or which induced Martin Luther, with a more human and robust pugnacity, to fling his inkstand at the Devil?

The decadence of the belief in his Satanic Majesty has indeed been going on apace, and the process seems now wellnigh complete. He has ceased to exist in serious literature, and one of his latest appearances in fiction seems to have been in a novel published some years ago, wherein he is made to figure as a cultured modern gentleman attending social functions in evening dress. This is surely the lowest depth of degradation we can imagine for the Prince of Darkness, and the substitution of "swallow-tails" for the orthodox caudal appendage must have been enough to make all the unfallen angels weep. If there be any "mute, inglorious Miltons" still among us they must either remain inglorious or choose other themes for epic verse than the speechifyings of devils in hell, the serpentine wiles of Satan in the matter of Eve's choice of fruit, or Raphael's long-winded accounts of military campaigns in heaven. It must indeed be a sad reflection for the clergy that almost the only work now extant and widely read in which the Devil is treated with the fullest respect and seriousness is the "Word of God." Here he survives in all his original glory, from his earliest escapades in Genesis to his final consignment to the lake of fire in Revelation; for that quaint collection of fables and fallacies called the Bible still illustrates a few useful truths, and one of them is that a Devil must be inevitably associated with a God, and that no religion can get on without one.

A theological system which tries to uphold the existence of a principle of good without equally emphasising the existence of a principle of evil is an unbalanced and lop-sided affair which can neither carry conviction to the intellect nor persuasion to the conscience. On the one hand, the profoundest problem of existence to the theologian—the problem of evil—is left unsolved; and, on the other hand, the moral motive is left incomplete, for—from the theological point of view—the theory of punishment is no less justifiable as affording a moral motive than the theory of reward, and the one should be as strongly invoked as the other to afford a complete and logical scheme for the moral government of the universe. The love of God is to the fear of the Devil as the sun's light is to its heat, and the first is as closely dependent on the second in the one case as in the other. This is why modern Christianity is such a feeble, cold affair—a pale, phosphorescent gleam, only shining with any brightness in very dark corners. To brighten up the lights of heaven it will be necessary to fan afresh the fires of hell.

This brings us to a consideration of the remedy. A restatement of religion is obviously required. The Devil must be restored to his pride of place, and that with even greater powers than before. We want a new John Knox to preach the gospel of the Prince of Darkness; a new Jonathan Edwards to proclaim the evangel of hell-fire. Nothing so revolutionary is, of course, to be expected from the quiet sheepfolds of the Anglican or Roman Churches, so the new prophet must be looked for among the ranks of Dissent. At first sight, it would seem that the Salvationists, with their thoroughgoing doctrines of Blood and Fire, might be the section of Christendom best fitted for this great task, but any religious movement in modern times must be of an intellectual character, and it must be confessed that, whatever may be their merits, the Salvationists scarcely exhibit the qualities which would be required of pioneers in an intellectual movement. At the other extreme of British Nonconformity the New Theologians certainly put forward some pretensions to scientific thinking, and favor a moderate use of the reasoning faculties—chiefly in the direction of trying to prove that black is the same thing as white by calling them both grey. But the path along which they seem to be moving leads in a diametrically opposite direction to the one here indicated. They seem to be devoting themselves to explaining away those very elements of religion the necessity of which I have been trying to point out, and instead of insisting on the supreme importance of the Devil to the religious theory of the universe, they seem to be engaged in a mistaken attempt to get rid of him altogether.

But there will have to be no greyness about the regenerated Devil. He will have to be far blacker than the most terrified imaginations of past ages have painted him, for he will have to be as powerful for evil as the Deity is powerful for good. Zoroastrianism furnishes the only parallel for the theological system here proposed, and the Devil will have to be raised from the subordinate position of a fallen angel to the dignity of an Ahriman—a primal principle of evil, coeval with the Deity and equal to him in power. Zoroastrianism is, indeed, the most logical religion that has obtained credence among men, but even here a slight inconsistency is apparent, for the system of Zoroaster seems to admit a final conquest of good over evil as the foreordained and certain end of the moral order. This inconsistency will have to be carefully avoided in the new system, and the result will be an immense strengthening of the moral motive.

The principles of good and evil being exactly balanced, neither is supreme in power. But the moral element in man co-operates with the principle of good, the immoral element with the principle of evil. Thus, as equal quantities on the opposite sides of an equation cancel each other and leave the solution of the problem to be determined by the values of the other terms, so man's moral nature becomes the determining factor in the moral process, and *man himself is the arbiter of the moral fate of the universe.* If man advances ethically; if the good in him increases and the evil diminishes as his evolution proceeds (and this appears, on the whole, to be the case), the final triumph of good will be assured, and each individual human being, by his good or evil conduct, either aids or opposes this result. Moreover, it might be arranged that at the final settlement of affairs the defeated power will have to relinquish to the conquering power all the human souls in its possession, somewhat as prisoners of war are handed back at the close of a campaign. Hence it would follow that, as the probabilities are so much in favor of the final triumph of the good principle, the prospect of eternal punishment will become very remote, and there will be a very strong probability that all human souls will eventually be "saved." And, as every human being's conduct contributes to the final result, it would also follow that the virtues of the good man would prove efficacious, not only for the saving of his own soul, but for the final rescue of the souls of all men, good and bad alike. Surely, no religion has ever offered a grander moral motive to mankind.

And how would the existing religions fare under such a system? They would all fall into their due places as tentative, imperfect, but more or less praiseworthy efforts made by man in the course of his advance to aid the principle of good in the great moral contest. The new religious system would unify and reconcile all the various religions, as a complete and true philosophy (if we could find one) would unify all the sciences, and reconcile any apparent discrepancies they may now exhibit. All religions would then be regarded as equally deserving of support, religious animosities would cease, and universal tolerance would prevail—for the first time in human history. For every religion would then be fighting a common enemy for the achievement of a common good, and when men are confronted by a powerful, fierce, and implacable foe, they do not wait to dispute over the rival advantages of the weapons they are using.

We recapitulate the points in which such a religious system would prove superior to existing systems.

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The problem of the origin of evil would be solved. The evil principle would be without origin, and coeval with the good principle.

The problem of the persistence of evil would be solved. We should no longer have to reconcile the occurrence of famines and pestilences, of earthquakes, floods, and conflagrations, and all the misery they cause, with the existence of an all-powerful and beneficent Deity.

The terrible doctrine of eternal punishment would fade away.

A sublime and moral motive would be furnished.

Universal toleration and charity among the various existing religions would be brought about.

Here, then, we have a logical and consistent theology, built on rational methods. Its only drawback is that the stones of its foundations are purely imaginary, but that is a defect inseparable from every theological system that ever has been or ever will be invented.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Ingersoll on "Blasphemy."

I DENY the right of any man, of any number of men, of any Church, of any State, to put a padlock on the lips, to make the tongue a convict. I passionately deny the right of the Herod of authority to kill the children of the brain.

A man has a right to work with his hands, to plough the earth, to sow the seed, and that man has a right to reap the harvest. If we have not that right, then all are slaves except those who take these rights from their fellow-men. If you have the right to work with your hands and to gather the harvest for yourself and your children, have you not a right to cultivate your brain? Have you not the right to read, to observe, to investigate—and when you have so read and so investigated, have you not the right to reap that field? And what is it to reap that field? It is simply to express what you have ascertained—simply to give your thoughts to your fellow-men.

If there is one subject in this world worthy of being discussed, worthy of being understood, it is the question of intellectual liberty. Without that, we are simply painted clay; without that, we are poor, miserable serfs and slaves. If you have not the right to express your opinions, if the defendant has not this right, then no man ever walked beneath the blue of heaven that had the right to express his thought. If others claim the right, where did they get it? How did they happen to have it, and how did you happen to be deprived of it? Where did a church or nation get that right?

Are we not all children of the same Mother? Are we not all compelled to think, whether we wish to or not? Can you help thinking as you do? When you look out upon the woods, the fields—when you look at the solemn splendor of the night—these things produce certain thoughts in your mind, and they produce them necessarily. No man can think as he desires. No man controls the action of his brain any more than he controls the action of his heart. The blood pursues its old accustomed ways in spite of you. The eyes see, if you open them, in spite of you. The ears hear, if they are unstopped, without asking your permission. And the brain thinks in spite of you. Should you express that thought? Certainly you should, if others express theirs. You have exactly the same right. He who takes it from you is a robber.

For thousands of years, people have been trying to force other people to think their way. Did they succeed? No. Will they succeed? No. Why? Because brute force is not an argument. You can stand with the lash over a man, or you can stand by the prison door, or beneath the gallows, or by the stake, and say to this man: "Recant or the lash descends, the prison door is locked upon you, the rope is put about your neck, or the torch is given to the fagot." And so the man recants. Is he convinced? Not at all. Have you produced a new argument? Not the slightest. And yet the ignorant bigots of this world have been trying for thousands of years to rule the minds of men by brute force. They have endeavored to improve the mind by torturing the flesh—to spread religion with the sword and torch. They have tried to convince their brothers by putting their feet in iron boots, by putting fathers, mothers, patriots, philosophers, and philanthropists in dungeons. And what has been the result? Are we any nearer thinking alike to-day than we were then?

No orthodox Church ever had power that it did not endeavor to make people think its way by force and flame. And yet every Church that ever was established commenced in the minority, and while it was in the minority, advocated free speech—every one. John Calvin, the founder of the Presbyterian Church, while he lived in France, wrote a book on religious toleration in order to show that all men had an equal right to think; and yet that man afterward, clothed in a little authority, forgot all his sentiments about religious liberty, and had poor Servetus burned at the stake for differing with him on a question that neither of them knew anything about. In the minority, Calvin advocated toleration; in the majority, he practised murder.

I want you to understand what has been done in the world to force men to think alike. It seems to me that if there is some infinite being who wants us to think alike, he would have made us alike. Why did he not do so? Why did he make your brain so that you could not by any possibility be a Methodist? Why did he make yours so that you could not be a Catholic? And why did he make the brain of another so that he is an unbeliever—why the brain of another so that he became a Mohammedan—if he wanted us all to believe alike?

After all, may be Nature is good enough and grand enough and broad enough to give us the diversity born of liberty. May be, after all, it would not be best for us all to be just the same. What a stupid world if everybody said yes to everything that everybody else might say.

The most important thing in this world is liberty. More important than food or clothes, more important than gold or houses or lands, more important than art or science, more important than all religions, is the liberty of man.

If civilisation tends to do away with liberty, then I agree with Mr. Buckle that civilisation is a curse. Gladly would I give up the splendors of the nineteenth century—gladly would I forget every invention that has leaped from the brain of man—gladly would I see all books ashes, all works of art destroyed, all statues broken, and all the triumphs of the world lost—gladly, joyously would I go back to the abodes and dens of savagery, if that were necessary to preserve the inestimable gem of human liberty. So would every man who has a heart and brain.

How has the Church in every age, when in authority, defended itself? Always by a statute against blasphemy, against argument, against free speech. And there never was such a statute that did not stain the book that it was in, and that did not certify to the savagery of the men who passed it. Never. By making a statute and by defining blasphemy, the Church sought to prevent discussion—sought to prevent argument—sought to prevent a man giving his honest opinion. Certainly a tenet, a dogma, a doctrine, is safe when hedged about by a statute that prevents your speaking against it. In the silence of slavery it exists. It lives because lips are locked. It lives because men are slaves.

To be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false—that is the mark and character of intelligence.—*R. W. Emerson.*

The moral amelioration of man is the principal mission of woman.—*Auguste Comte.*

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CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Miss Kough, "Charles Bradlaugh, Iconoclast."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Mr. Davidson, "Life and Work of Charles Bradlaugh." Finsbury Park: 5.45, Mr. Davidson, "Life and Work of Charles Bradlaugh."

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

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 7.30, T. J. Thurlow, "Charles Bradlaugh: A Remembrance."

COUNTRY.

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BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Lessons from the Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

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The foremost in the race are those who have thrown off the load of superstition which still burdens the backs and clogs the footsteps of laggards.—PROF. J. G. FRAZER.

The Glorification of Sir Oliver Lodge.

IT is not difficult for a scientist to earn the gratitude of the religious world nowadays. Investigators may risk their lives over and over again in dabbling with the culture of poisonous germs; they may give, as the result of long and patient study and experiment, a discovery such as that of radium to the world, or so fruitful a hypothesis as Natural Selection. These things leave the religious world unmoved; but let a scientific man come forward and pronounce himself in favor of some sort of a religion—that blessed word covers now almost anything—and preachers of all kinds write in his praise. He at once becomes one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest of living scientists. His utterances are stamped with the insignia of infallibility. His personal impressions are "the deliverances of modern science," the warfare between religion and science is at an end—or, at least, the fighting is only maintained by dwindling guerilla bands of discredited irreconcilables.

In connection with Sir Oliver Lodge's address before the British Association the course of events has been exactly what one might have predicted. Had its tone been non-religious it would have passed without comment. Had it been anti-religious it would have been pointed out that other scientific authorities disagreed with it. As it was pro-religious no mention has been made of the amusement it has caused amongst scientific men, and nothing, of course, of the fact that a very large body of scientists —the majority, probably—totally disagree with him. The *Church Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily News*, form a trinity that sees a change in the attitude of science towards religion. Well, *science* is exactly where it was, and certainly there is no change in Sir Oliver Lodge. He has never been anything but religious. He has been for years trying to harmonise science with religion; and when a man gets that bee in his bonnet it is not easily dislodged. Everyone knew what Sir Oliver was, and those who laughed at his fantastic collection of reconciliations, quite appreciated the value of his genuinely scientific labors in other directions. On the other hand, those who accepted his reconciliations seriously, probably knew little and cared less about his scientific work. At any rate, Sir Oliver was always religious; his case is not that of a man brought to religion by scientific study, but that of one who has retained something of religion, despite his scientific attainments.

A perfect chorus of praise has gone up from everybody, except scientific men themselves. Dr. Clifford and Mr. Campbell have publicly expressed their "gratitude" for the address. The Bishop of Birmingham has returned his thanks. Even the Catholic *Universe* remarks that "The presidential address of Sir Oliver Lodge to the British Association marks an epoch in the history of experimental science." Well, beyond the fact that Sir Oliver said that he had conducted a number of experiments which supported the belief in a future life, without disclosing either their nature or the method adopted, the address had about as much connection with experimental science as with the market price of cabbages. I am, of course, only referring to the religious portion of the address, which is the only part with which the *Universe*, and the gentleman mentioned above, are concerned. One would imagine that Sir Oliver had brought forward some entirely new discovery, produced some unknown facts, demonstrated some unsuspected truth. But he did nothing of the kind. All he said at the British Association he has said scores of times before, and there was nothing that scores of others might not have said for him.

Numbers of sermons have been preached on Sir Oliver's address, all striking the same key. There are two before me at present, one by the Bishop of Birmingham, the other by the Rev. Dr. Warschauer. The Bishop's address is chiefly remarkable for saying nothing in four columns, although, as it was a sermon before the members of the Association, his method was, perhaps, the wisest that could be adopted. He hoped that religion and science would henceforth live in harmony, and that both, confessing a "reverent Agnosticism," would work together for the common good. A pretty sentiment; only one wonders what would be the religious contribution to the common stock. The Bishop admitted that during the last hundred years our more correct knowledge of man, of living beings, and of the universe in general had come from science. It had shamed religious people out of their "self-importance." Quite so; it was the growth of science that gave people more correct views, not religion. What, then, is the religious contribution? The Churches did set out to teach us about man and the world, about disease, about life, about death—and afterwards. And what happened? Why, every message delivered in the name of religion that admitted of proof or disproof has been shown to be wrong. It taught astronomy, and blundered; it taught geology, and blundered; it taught biology, and blundered; it was proved to be ignorant of every subject it claimed knowledge on—save one. The only subject on which the falsity of its teaching has not been demonstrated is that of a future life. And that because neither proof nor disproof is possible.

What is, then, the use of religion in the world? It has nothing to tell us that cannot be better told elsewhere. It has no knowledge of anything superior to the knowledge available elsewhere. If it is at its worst it can only obscure and obstruct; and at its best it can only re-echo what non-religious teachers have discovered. "You need us," says the Bishop of Birmingham, addressing the scientists. The impudence of it! Imagine a Laplace, a Lyell, a Darwin, a Pasteur, or a Metchnikoff needing the clergy to help them in their work. There *is* a fable which tells of the way in which a mouse helped a lion. I do not recall one of an elephant needing a donkey.

Dr. Warschauer's address is of a different order. For his own sake it would have been better had he adopted the Bishop of Birmingham's plan, and confined himself to amiable generalities. As it is, his remarks are definitely and uniformly stupid. He has the orthodox misunderstanding of Materialism, and

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assumes that it claims to explain everything in terms of chemistry. As I pointed out last week, Materialism no more undertakes to explain everything in terms of chemistry than in terms of physics. It does not even tie itself down to any given conception of "matter." At most it is a plea in favor of unbroken continuity and invariable causation. Of course, in this Dr. Warschauer was following the lead of Sir Oliver Lodge; but Sir Oliver could have saved him from his favorite argument of the impossibility of getting anything out of a combination unless it has previously been placed there. He says that religious people need not be alarmed about Materialism, for "what but Divine Wisdom could have endowed.....chemical substances" with the capacity for producing life? "How could anything come out of them that was not first put into them?"

Now, Sir Oliver really would instruct Dr. Warschauer better than this. He is evidently under the impression that the qualities of a compound are secreted somewhere among its factors as a performer hides a card up his sleeve. Sir Oliver Lodge would be the first to tell him that what he says *cannot* be is of constant occurrence. Sir Oliver has, in his anxiety to reconcile religion and science, often played fast and loose with scientific conceptions, but his practical training as a scientist has always saved him from stupid blunders of this kind. What he would say is, not that a compound does not manifest qualities not previously there, but that at a certain stage of development a new power, life, adds its directive influence to what is taking place. There is nothing whatever to prove that this is so; but it is not open to the charge of ignorance. To put it quite plainly, Dr. Warschauer's statement is open to that charge. And it needs but little acquaintance with scientific methods and principles to prove it.

Two things Dr. Warschauer is specially thankful to Sir Oliver for. One is that he has helped to kill "the popular superstition" that while "men of religion are usually divided," men of science are "always at one." He says he remembers this "very superstition being brought out with great gusto by Mr. Foote of the *Freethinker*, in his debate with myself," and, of course, also remembers how very clearly he pricked the bubble. It is a pity to disturb such complacency, but Mr. Foote was never silly enough to assert that men of science were all in agreement. The contrary is so obvious that none but a fool would make such a statement. What Mr. Foote did point out was that scientific men had behind them a body of accepted facts upon which they all took their stand, from which they could reason upon new facts that presented themselves, and to which they could refer for verification or correction. And this body of accepted truth is steadily growing. In contrast to this there are no generally accepted facts in religion; there is no body of admitted truth to which all may appeal. The very data of religion is in question. The more scientific men discuss their differences, the greater becomes the measure of their disagreement. Sir Oliver killed no popular superstition—unless it is a superstition popular in Dr. Warschauer's own church.

Dr. Warschauer is also thankful to Sir Oliver because he taught "science its proper place," "pointing out its limitations." In other words, says the preacher, "there are large domains where the writs of science do not run." Again, the zeal of the preacher causes him to overreach himself. Sir Oliver Lodge did not put "science" in its proper place; he did not point out that there are regions where its writ will not run. On the contrary, he was appealing for the application of science to the very region where Dr. Warschauer says it will not apply. What Sir Oliver protested against was the methods of *physical science* being used as decisive. He said that you could not test beauty and happiness by the tests used in physical science. In this the Materialist may agree without the least injury to his position. And it is probably due to the fact that Sir Oliver is a physicist that he has come to identify, in thought, science with his own branch of study.

Dr. Warschauer is a true theologian. He loves science, but he says, "Thank God, there is somewhere where it doesn't apply! Thank God, there is a region where you cannot apply methods of exact observation, where our knowledge defies classification and co-ordination. Thank God, there is a region concerning which we can only guess, and about which verifiable knowledge is impossible. For so long as we believe in that land there is a haven of refuge for the preacher of religion."

C. COHEN.

Echo of a Friendly Encounter.

IT was our good fortune, recently, to meet a young gentleman who, not long ago, came into fairly close touch with Freethought and Freethinkers. For twelve months the association continued, during which time he divested himself of every rag of supernatural belief he had ever possessed, becoming, in fact, a veritable Freethinker. But eventually he imagined that there was gradually taking place an appreciable softening of the moral fibre in many of his new friends. Sexual purity appeared to be on the decline amongst them, nor was honesty any longer universally held to be the best policy. Divorce proceedings and prosecutions for theft and other crimes were not unheard of in their ranks. The conclusion to which our friend found himself irresistibly driven was that Freethought robbed people of something ineffably valuable, for which it offered no adequate substitute. "If you take religion away from people," he said, "you ought to have something equally as valuable, or more valuable, to put in its place." This is a very old argument which has been, and is, a standing difficulty in the way of many minds. It is taken for granted by multitudes that when one thing is removed its place must be filled up by something else. This is a plausible fallacy, but before we discuss it there are two or three preliminary points to consider. In the first place, it by no means follows that, when a Freethinker falls into irregular habits, his Freethought principles are the cause of it. If those habits are really hurtful to the community, if they are in their very nature anti-social, they must be uncompromisingly condemned; but, surely, it cannot honestly be claimed that the responsibility for them lies at the door of Secularism, because Secularism denounces them in the name of reason. When a Freethinker happens to go wrong, which is very rarely, how apt his Christian judges are to exclaim, "What else could you expect from an Atheist?" or, "No wonder; he rejects Christ." As a matter of fact, however, departures from rectitude are not limited to Freethinkers. We are informed that there are some eighty thousand prostitutes in the city of London, and the question naturally arises: By whom are they supported? No one would dream of asserting that they are exclusively dependent for their living on the comparatively small number of Atheists in our midst. There is ample evidence that they are supported by priests, by clergymen, by Sunday-school teachers, by men who believe that the Bible is God's Word. Are Christians never prosecuted for all sorts of felonies? Do they never make an appearance in the Divorce Court, or are they altogether above committing suicide? By whom are our prisons crowded? Is it not a fact that Freethinkers are rarities within them? Now, are Christians prepared, for once, to be perfectly logical and fair? Will they be consistent enough to say openly that the crimes of Christians are the appropriate harvest of their Christian principles? If not, we call upon them, in the name of truth and fairplay to refrain from vilifying Freethought in that horribly unjust and wicked fashion.

Again; there is, no doubt, a sense in which our friend's allegations are more or less true. It is a fundamental contention of Christian teachers that it is impossible to observe what they call the moral law without supernatural help, which is supposed to

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manifest itself in the form of grace, mercy, or redeeming love. This help must be diligently or passionately invoked on bended knees, and the suppliants must regard themselves as helpless until it comes. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," is Paul's emphatic utterance. Seeing a man on the way to the gallows, a minister of the Gospel cries, "There go I were it not for the grace of God." "What would there be to prevent me from robbing or murdering you," asks a believer, "if there were no God?" Not much, we admit. Ever since the Edenic catastrophy, human nature is, in and of itself, utterly incapable of any good thought or action. God alone, by his grace, can make and keep us virtuous. Now, if a man persistently trained from earliest childhood to cherish that belief loses it, the first result is a sense of helplessness and despair which engenders moral recklessness and unconcern. In such a case the loss of supernatural belief not unnaturally proves damaging to the character. If a person abstains from doing wrong from dread of supernatural punishment in a world to come, what more reasonable than that the casting out of that fear should be accompanied and followed by a temporary demoralisation of the whole nature? To people brought up in so hideous a creed there can be nothing more dangerous than the sudden dropping of it. Having always been solemnly urged to distrust themselves, and put their entire trust in heaven's mercy, the disappearance of the supernatural object of faith and source of all human strength and virtue, disturbs their mental equilibrium and throws them into a state of moral disorder. Trust in self comes slowly and with difficulty to such folk, and while acquiring it they may slip into several moral quagmires and suffer harm.

Our friend persists in asking, "What are you going to put in the place of these supernatural hopes and fears?" One might as reasonably ask, What are you going to put in the place of disease? The answer is, Nothing. Disease is an intruder in the system, and all that the physician has got to do is to evict it as quickly as possible, and once it is gone the system automatically returns to its normal condition. So, likewise, supernatural belief is a disease of human nature. Nearly everybody takes it because everybody else is eager to impart it. It is a virus, a parasite or microbe which infects the whole system, and in many instances it has so entrenched itself in the system that it cannot be eradicated; that is, it has reached an incurable state. Our point, however, is that it is a foreigner, an intruder, who has no right to be present; an enemy, towards which our first duty is to dislodge and turn it out, bag and baggage, and that once it is outside we need put nothing in its place, but allow the system time and opportunity to recover its normality. Health is a condition; order after disorder; peace after the tumult of war; man in full command of himself and all his faculties. This is what Freethought is doing its utmost to bring to pass; and in proportion as it succeeds man's moral or social life will gain enormously in every respect. It is well known that the healthiest and happiest people in any community are those represented by the third or fourth generation of Freethinkers. They have had sufficient time to readjust their relationships both to themselves and the outside world.

On two important points our friend is radically mistaken. The first is the assumed adequacy of the Christian moral code. Nietzsche rendered magnificent service by pointing with such fine clearness that it represents a morality fit only for slaves. Will any unprejudiced person maintain that the Christian law of marriage is defensible? Does anybody imagine that the problems of sex are already solved? Has the last word been spoken on the subject of Capital and Labor? Morality ought to be progressive, but there is no room for progress in the Christian system. What may appear immoral to our friend may only be a higher form of morality, for which he is not yet sufficiently advanced. The other point concerns the status of the reason in human thought and life. Our friend fears that it is not a reliable guide through the world. We agree with him. For convenience's sake we break the mind up into so many faculties; but the division is purely imaginary. Man is a unit, the whole of which is involved in every action. When we speak of the reason we are thinking of the whole man as working in a certain direction; but no action can be uninfluenced by a single faculty. The reason is specially engaged in the task of unravelling the various tangles into which social life has become enmeshed; but in all its operations the emotions are represented. In reality all that we contend for is that man is capable of managing his own affairs without assistance from any superhuman region. That he cannot do this solely by the exercise of the powers inhering within him is incapable of verification; but there is the most ample evidence that he has failed to do so with all the supernatural aid which the Church assured him was at his disposal. Faith has had an *innings* of many thousand years, and society still groans under heavy burdens of oppression and injustice. Let reason have an *innings*, and let it prove by the success or failure of the play what it can or cannot do. We confidently predict that once man is permitted to tackle his problems in his own way and strength he will in time solve them all satisfactorily and set the world right.

We are convinced that opposition to Freethought comes only from those who misunderstand and misrepresent it. The theologians do not wish to possess an accurate interpretation of it, and we cannot hope to lead them out of darkness into light, because they seem to love the former rather than the latter; but we are gradually getting a hearing from young men and maidens over whom their influence is decidedly on the wane. These are in process of discovering the truth for themselves, and the truth is making them free.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Talk With Mother.

"I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams."
—TENNYSON.

THEOLOGIANS have placed the Garden of Eden in Mesopotamia, travellers in Africa, ethnologists in Atlantis, mythologists in Lemuria, philosophers in Utopia, and imaginative journalists at the North and South Poles; the whole series constituting a real embarrassment of choice. Even so, it did not present difficulties to the *Freethinker* reporter. A few weeks before I had been despatched by the stern editor, who had instructed me definitely to obtain an interview with Eve, the mother of the human race.

The dangers of the journey, however manifold, paled beside the pleasures in store for the journalist. Fancy the sensation which the most satiated of reporters must experience on beholding a tree certified to be that of "Good and Evil." Fancy, too, the traveller's tales waiting to be written, unfolding possibilities almost too good to be true. The rewritten story of the Fall would have the force and flavor of the newest scandal. All conscientious editors would seize upon such an item for reproduction in their pages, and the glory of the *Freethinker's* journalistic "scoop" would resound throughout the world.

Perched upon a peak of the Pamirs, provided with flowers that never wither, with delights that never end, with songs that never cease, Eden surged above the barren plains, a mirage of terrestrial bliss. The perspiring reporter ascended the heights upon which it was set. It was a hard climb to the top, but Eve was to be found there; and the editor's definite instructions could not be ignored.

Eve was "at home," and at the reporter's approach she rose and greeted him.

"You are enterprising," she said, "and so I welcome you. One gets so tired of stay-at-home folk."

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The reporter bowed, and gravely said, "Freethinkers are always enterprising, madam; I came on a special errand."

"What is it?"

"An interview," I managed to stammer, being overcome at the spectacle of beauty unadorned. Eve appeared pleased. She brought out some apples. "Do you know," she said, "I have never been interviewed for the papers. I thank your editor for the compliment. Why did you wish to see me?"

"I really wanted to know whether you were ever married to Adam; because people are so straight-laced nowadays."

"Please to bear this in mind, sir," she replied with emphasis, "we were modest back in the old days."

"No offence, dear madam," I assured her. "Perhaps you can offer a kind word upon the present style of dress, inasmuch as we are slowly coming round to your fashions."

"Your women lack dignity and strength. Do you think we should have survived at all if we had been rigged out like that? Besides, think what we escaped. We had no washing to do on Mondays, nor did we have to sew buttons on our husbands' shirts, patch their pantaloons, get their overcoats out of pawn, or even argue about long hairs on their shirt fronts. We had much to be thankful for."

I gasped in astonishment.

"Yes," she continued, "I surprise you; but I am no ordinary woman. I was never a 'flapper,' and, indeed, started life at full age—and——"

When I recovered consciousness the clock was striking seven, and I found I was at home in my own room.

Mimnermus.

Napoleon's Religion.

> "In spite of terrors of Napoleon, he is entitled to the gratitude of mankind. He pulled down the Pope, and the monks in Spain and Italy, and the Inquisition in those countries. He carried the light of liberal principles to dark and enslaved regions. It will be impossible for all the kings and priests in the world to make men as ignorant and submissive as they were before he marched over the Alps..... Napoleon—and that was his greatest fault—gave, in some sort, a sanction to falsehood, and hypocrisy, and imposture, by going to mass. His example was of evil tendency. The act was, besides, a compromise with *fraud*."—William Cobbett, *Register*, vol. xxviii., p. 6.

The time should be approaching when both Frenchmen and Englishmen will take an impartial view of the great personality who, a century ago, so rapidly rose to power in Europe. The harsh judgments of historians like Scott and Lanfrey may perhaps be somewhat modified by the conviction that Napoleon, like lesser men, often acted from necessity rather than from will. Lust of power grows by what it feeds on. The fabric of Napoleon's dominion ever needed new conquests to make the earlier ones secure. If ever a man could dominate circumstances and, by seizing the opportune moment, subordinate them to his purposes, it was Napoleon. Yet Napoleon believed in destiny, and would have said with Bismarck, "There is so much *I must* in my life that I rarely reach *I will*." He said himself, "My son cannot replace me; I could not replace myself. I am the creature of circumstances."

Napoleon came at the break-up of the old feudalism, and completed the work. France was fighting for very life against the allied monarchs of Europe, and he won his way to the top by dint of his inherent fighting qualities. Physically, he was different from other men. His head was abnormally large, his blood circulated abnormally slow. In this respect such a man was never known. His pulse beat only forty to the minute. This indicated great reserves of energy and callousness. He could easily stand work, troubles, and sleeplessness that would have killed other men. His habit was to get to bed at eleven and be up at three, and he had the "two o'clock in the morning courage." In war he could do everything for himself. *Il n'est rien à la geurre, que je ne puisse faire par moi-même.*" He said with the same frankness, "*J'aime le pouvoir comme un musicien aime son violon*" (I love power as a musician his violin). He went straight to his point unembarrassed by scruples.

Rarely has the "Will for Power" been more absolutely incarnate or more reckless of honor, truth, sympathy, affection, or human life. He said to Metternich he thought nothing of the lives of a million men. As a matter of fact, between 1804 and 1815, there were killed more than 1,700,000 Frenchmen, not to mention allies and enemies. The eternal Ego may be said to have been at bottom of his religion. On his beautiful bronze face was stamped, as Heine remarked, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Woe to those who stood in his way!

Yet he believed in fate, which he identified with God. He was a Deist of the school of Voltaire, thinking with him, "*Si Dieu n'existait pas il faudrait l'inventer*" (If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him)—exactly what has been done. He had a genuine belief in an overruling Power, but he was consistent throughout. He regarded religion as an instrument of policy, and utilised it to render others subservient to himself. Atheism he was suspicious of. Those who deny celestial rule are apt to question terrestrial rulers boldly. To Laplace he noticed that his great work, *La Mécanique Céleste* never once mentioned the name of God. "*Sire*," replied the astronomer, *je n'ai pas eu besoin de recourir à cette hypothesè.*" Laplace had no need to recur to that hypothesis, but Napoleon had. He had a strong sense of the mystery of existence, and he knew that God was among the magical words, as he called *liberté* and *égalité;* excellent to conjure with. His God or fate was an unknown one. He said, "The problems of Providence are insoluble." "All predictions are imposture, the result of fraud, folly, or fanaticism." Yet he would have repudiated Positivism had it been started in his time. "A religion," he remarked, "which relates to this life, without teaching man whence he comes and whither he goes, is not supportable [*soutenable*]."

Napoleon did not believe in any special revelation. He said, "I once had faith. But when I came to know something, as soon as I began to reason, which occurred early in life, at the age of thirteen, I found my faith attacked, and that it staggered." He became, as he said, "no capuchin," but a man of the world, ready to utilise it for his own aggrandisement. Of the Christian religion, he said, "As far as I am concerned, I do not see in it the mystery of the Incarnation, but the mystery of social order, the association of religion with paradise, an idea of equality which keeps the rich from being massacred by the poor." Again he says, "Society could not exist without an inequality of fortunes, or an inequality of fortunes without religion." "A man dying of starvation alongside of one who is surfeited, would not yield to this difference, unless he had some authority which assured him that God so orders it, that there must be both poor and rich in the world, but that, in the future, and throughout eternity, the portion of each will be changed." Christianity was not true, but it was useful. He said frankly to his friends, "It is said that I am a Papist. I am nothing. In Egypt I was a Mussulman; here I shall be a Catholic, for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions; but the idea of a God! [then pointing upward] Who made all that?" (Thibaudeau, p. 152).

His sentiments were the same when at St. Helena. Mrs. Abell, in her *Recollections of the Emperor Napoleon* (p. 69), relates how she catechised him on the subject in Anglo-French. "*Pourquoi avez-vous tourné Turque?*" He did not at first understand me, and I was obliged to explain that "*tourné Turque*" meant changing his religion. He laughed and said, "What is that to you? Fighting is a soldier's religion; I never changed that. The other is the affair of women and priests; *quant à moi*, I always adopt the religion of the country I am in." He was much annoyed when accused of Atheism, though he confessed himself a

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fatalist, saying, "I believe that whatever a man's destiny calls upon him to do, that he must fulfil." His belief in destiny was doubtless genuine, though it, too, had its utility in impressing others with the idea that he was the man destined to rule, and that the stars in their courses fought for Napoleon.

Napoleon's phenomenal intellectual capacity is admitted on all hands. His words often have the sharpness of a sword. "Half measures are always dangerous." "Hazard nothing, gain nothing." "Speeches pass, actions remain." Scorn dominates sometimes, as when he says, "No government so tyrannical as one calling itself paternal." "The kitchen is a fine accessory to government." "Men are rare." "People in general are but big children." "There are rattles for all ages." "We must laugh at men to avoid crying." "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step." "Fortune is an arrant courtesan." "Wash your dirty linen at home." "We can march quicker when we march alone."

His utterances on religion are of this serious cynical turn: "In all countries," he said, "religion is useful to the Government; it should be used to control the people." Again he said: "Nothing more debases a nation than religious despotism." "The decadence of Italy dates from the moment when the priests would govern the finances, the police, and the army."

The intimate alliance of the Christian religion with political tyranny he noted in saying, "The French people, in order to obtain a constitution founded on reason, had to conquer eighteen centuries of prejudice" (*Moniteur*, vol. xxix., p. 90). In Egypt he told his soldiers to co-operate as cordially with believers in the Koran as with Jews and Christians, and to show the same respect to their muftis and inmans as to archbishops and rabbis. He himself observed the feast of Ramazan, realising the verse of Voltaire on Zaire, that he is "a Christian in Italy, a Freethinker in Paris, and a Mussulman on the banks of the Nile."

When First Consul, Lafayette urged him to give equal liberty to all sects, placing them, as in the United States, outside the Government, he observed, "Lafayette is right in theory, but he always believes himself in America. The Catholic religion prevails here. Moreover, I have need of the Pope, and he will do whatever I wish." He disliked sects, and idealogues were his *bête noir*. "An established religion," he remarked, "is a kind of vaccination, which, in satisfying our love of the marvellous, guarantees us against quacks and sorcerers; the priests are worth more than the Cagliostros, Kants, and the rest of the German dreamers."

Speaking of his soldiers wearing the turban when in Egypt, he said, "Collectively, an army may well pretend to be of any description of worship, but it should in this obey the orders of a general-in-chief, who is as much the organ of his country as the flag is its symbol. Yet it would be odious for the soldiers individually each to deny the beliefs and faiths of their fathers, to improve their own position." He found his own policy confirmed, not by their words, but by the deeds of priests in all ages.

At St. Helena he said, "Theologians of all religions are the same; they spare neither ink nor words to enforce, according to their passions, their authority, or their caprice, a certain elasticity to the law of Moses, to that of Jesus Christ, or of Mohammed."

Napoleon sought to, and did, utilise religion in the matter of his coronation, his divorce, and the conscriptions. He considered it as a buttress of his own power, and at the time of the Concordat observed, "Mark the insolence of the priests who, in sharing authority with what they call the temporal power, reserve to themselves all action on the mind—the noblest part of man, and take it on themselves to reduce my part to physical action. They retain the soul and fling me the corpse." He wished to be head of the Church as well as of the State. "You will see," he said, while negotiating the Concordat, "how I will turn the priests to account, and, first of all, the Pope." Parodying Voltaire, he said, "Had no Pope existed, it would have been necessary to create him"—viz., to give a spiritual sanction to his own authority. He let the clergy know they were servants of the State. When the curé of St. Roch refused to bury an opera dancer, he published in the *Moniteur*: "The Archbishop of Paris orders the curé of St. Roch in a retreat of three months, in order that he may bear in mind the injunction of Jesus Christ to pray for one's enemies." The Church was made the handmaiden of the State.

All Catholic children were taught to pray for and serve Napoleon. "For God has raised him up for us in times of peril, that he might restore public worship and the holy religion of our forefathers, and be its protector." M. Taine says:—

> "Every boy and girl in each parish recite this to the vicar or curé after vespers in their tiny voices as a commandment of God, and of the Church, as a supplementary article of the creed. Meanwhile the officiating priest gravely comments on this article, already clear enough, at every morning and evening service; by order he preaches in behalf of the conscription, and declares that it is a sin to try to escape from it, to be refractory; by order, again, he reads the army bulletins, giving accounts of the latest victories; always by order he reads the pastoral of his bishop—a document authorised, inspired, and corrected by the police.....'You must praise the Emperor more in your pastoral letters,' said Réal, Prefect of Police, to a young bishop. 'Tell me in what measure.' 'I do not know,' was the reply. Since the measure cannot be prescribed, it must be ample enough."

Napoleon said, "Popes have committed too many absurdities to be believed infallible." Yet it was his own attempt to subjugate the Pope which led onwards to the claim for infallibility. He has left on record his plans to be head of the Christian Church. "If I had returned from Moscow victorious," he said, "I should have exalted the Pope beyond measure, surrounding him with pomp and deference.....I would have made him an idol. He should have dwelt beside me. Paris would have become the capital of the Christian world, and I would have governed the religious as well as the political world. I would have had my religious as well as my legislative sessions; my council would have represented Christianity; the Pope should have been only their president. I would have opened and closed these assemblies, approved and published their decrees, as was done by Constantine and Charlemagne." Here we see the quality by which Napoleon outshone the great generals of all ages—his imaginative daring. It may seem strange that a man of such soaring mind and dauntless ambition should never have questioned the great god-ghost bogie. But, in truth, with all his clear, direct view of the things before him, he was in matters of speculative philosophy but an uncultured Corsican. "Who made all that?" satisfied him as a complete answer to Atheism, just as it satisfies, for a time, the merest child. So he remained a Deist.

La Casas reports him as saying:—

> "Everything proclaims the existence of a God—that cannot be questioned; but all religions are evidently the work of man. Why are there so many? Why has not ours always existed? Why does it consider itself exclusively the right one? What becomes, in that case, of all the virtuous men who have gone before us? Why do these religions oppose and exterminate one another? Why has this been the case ever and everywhere? Because men are ever men; because priests have ever and everywhere introduced fraud and falsehood."

He said that his incredulity did not proceed from perverseness or from licentiousness of mind, but from the strength of his reason. Yet, added he, "no man can answer for what will happen, particularly in his last moments. At present I certainly believe that I shall die without a confessor." His doubt on the subject was warranted by self-knowledge. But it was rather his desire to die with all the *éclat* which the Church ceremonies could give than the return of faith which, after his trying illness, led him to receive on his deathbed the sacrament from Père Vignali.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

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Naked Woman Penitent.

CURATE AND POLICEMAN SHOCKED.

MELBOURNE, July 22.

THE sight of a naked woman kneeling before the altar of All Saints' Anglican Church at St. Kilda intensely shocked the curate on Sunday afternoon. The clergyman's attention was attracted by sounds of supplication from the direction of the chancel, and on investigating he was astonished to see an absolutely unclad woman kneeling before the altar. That was too much for the reverend gentleman, who promptly left the church and sent for the nearest policeman. Soon a young constable appeared, and drew near to the unknown penitent, who was certainly representing to the life the well-known story of Elizabeth of Hungary.

His urgent suggestion that she should clothe herself being unheeded, he was in a dilemma what to do and so left the church and prevailed on someone to summon some of the lady teachers from All Saints' Sunday-school to intercede with the penitent and get her to dress.

The first two young ladies who volunteered were scared by the "wild look" which they said the woman had in her eye; and they took to flight. But some of the older lady teachers were induced to go in. They at length got the woman apparelled. She proved to be between 35 and 40 years of age.

Her statement to the constable was that she had been making earnest intercession in great humility to be made a better woman. She added that she had been living at Nott-street, Melbourne, and at Fitzroy-street, Fitzroy, but she was uncommunicative on other points.

On being taken to the St. Kilda lock-up, Dr. Louis Henry, J.P., interrogated her, with but little more success. She, however, told him that she was in communion with God when she was found naked in the church, and had gone there because she was surrounded by a lot of devils. The doctor formed the opinion that she was a hard-working woman who was suffering from an acute form of religious mania. He certified accordingly, and the woman was taken to the receiving home at Royal Park.—*Taranki "Budget"* (New Zealand).

ON SEEING GHOSTS.

Whenever a real ghost appears,—by which I mean some man or woman dressed up to frighten another,—if the supernatural character of the apparition has been for a moment believed, the effects on the spectator have always been most terrible,—convulsion, idiocy, madness, or even death on the spot.....But in our common ghost stories, you will always find that the seer, after a most appalling apparition, as you are to believe, is quite well the next day. Perhaps, he may have a headache; but that is the outside of the effect produced. Alston, a man of genius, and the best painter yet produced by America, when he was in England, told me an anecdote which confirms what I have been saying. It was, I think, in the University of Cambridge, near Boston, that a certain youth took it into his wise head to endeavor to convert a Tom-Painish companion of his by appearing as a ghost before him. He accordingly dressed himself up in the usual way, having previously extracted the ball from the pistol which always lay near the head of his friend's bed. Upon first awaking, and seeing the apparition, the youth who was to be frightened, A, very coolly looked his companion the ghost in the face, and said, "I know you. This is a good joke; but you see I am not frightened. Now you may vanish!" The ghost stood still. "Come," said A, "that is enough. I shall get angry. Away!" Still the ghost moved not. "By —," ejaculated A, "if you do not in three minutes go away, I'll shoot you." He waited the time, deliberately levelled the pistol, fired, and, with a scream at the immobility of the figure, became convulsed, and afterwards died. The very instant he believed it *to be* a ghost, his human nature fell before it.—*Coleridge, "Table Talk."*

MORE FLASHES FROM NIETZSCHE.

One should not go into churches if one wishes to breathe *pure* air.

The Christian faith from the beginning is sacrifice: the sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of spirit; it is at the same time subjection, self-derision, and self-mutilation.

The tendency of a person to allow himself to be degraded, robbed, deceived, and exploited might be the diffidence of a God amongst men.

We are most dishonorable towards our God: he is not *permitted* to sin.

Not their love of humanity, but the impotence of their love, prevents the Christians of to-day—burning us.

It is a curious thing that God learned Greek when he wished to turn author—and that he did not learn it better.

Christianity gave Eros poison to drink; he did not die of it, certainly, but degenerated to vice.

Disguise it as we may, the government of mankind is always and everywhere essentially aristocratic. No juggling with political machinery can evade this law of nature. However it may seem to lead, the dull-witted majority in the end follows a keener-witted minority. That is its salvation and the secret of progress. The higher human intelligence sways the lower, just as the intelligence of man gives him the mastery over the brutes. I do not mean that the ultimate direction of society rests with its nominal governors, with its kings, its statesmen, its legislators. The true rulers of men are the thinkers who advance knowledge; for just as it is through his superior knowledge, not through his superior strength, that man bears rule over the rest of the animal creation, so among men themselves it is knowledge which in the long run directs and controls the forces of society. Thus the discoverers of new truths are the real though uncrowned and unsceptred kings of mankind; monarchs, statesmen, and law-givers are but their ministers, who sooner or later do their bidding by carrying out the ideas of these master-minds.—*Prof. J. G. Frazer, "Scope of Social Anthropology."*

RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES.

If your nurse has told you that Ceres presides over corn, or that Vishnu or Sakyamuni became men several times, or that Odin awaits you in his hall towards Jutland, or that Mohammed or some other travelled to heaven; if, moreover, your preceptor deepens in your brain what the nurse has engraved, you will hold it all your life. Should your judgment rise against these prejudices, your neighbors, above all your female neighbors, will cry out at the impiety and frighten you. Your dervish, fearing the diminution of his revenue, may accuse you before the Cadi, and this Cadi impale you if he can, since he desires to rule over fools, believing fools obey better than others; and this will endure till your neighbors, and the dervish, and the Cadi begin to understand that folly is good for nothing, and that persecution is abominable.—*Voltaire "Dictionnaire Philosophique."*

I would rather go to the forest, far away, and build me a little cabin—build it myself—and daub it with clay, and live there with my wife and children; and have a winding path leading down to the spring where the water bubbles out, day and night, whispering a poem to the white pebbles from the heart of the earth; a little hut with some hollyhocks at the corner, with their bannered bosoms open to the sun, and a thrush in the air like a winged joy. I would rather live there and have some lattice-work across the window, so that the sunlight would fall checkered on the babe in the cradle. I would rather live there, with my soul erect and free, than in a palace of gold, and wear a crown of imperial power, and feel that I was superstition's cringing slave, and dare not speak my honest thought.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

THINK AND LET THINK.

Do you know that every man has a religious belief peculiar to himself? Smith is always a Smithee. He takes in exactly Smith's worth of knowledge—Smith's worth of truth, of beauty, and divinity. And Brown has, from time immemorial, been trying to burn him, to excommunicate him, because he didn't take in Brown's worth of knowledge, truth, beauty, divinity. He cannot do it, any more than a pint-pot can hold a quart—or a quart be filled by a pint. Iron is essentially the same everywhere and always, but the sulphate of iron is never the same as the carbonate of iron. Truth is invariable, but the Smithate of truth must always differ from the Brownate of truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Mr. Dooley, the American humorist, has been describing women as angels. "But," he adds caustically, "I used to agree with Hogan whin he said pollyticks was too rough for women, but after readin' what they've done in England I'm afraid they may be too rough for pollyticks."

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Acid Drops.

The *Catholic Times* and the *Christian World* have been carrying on a controversy over the education question. A great deal of it has been an illustration of the pot commenting on the kettle's complexion, but in its last rejoinder the *Catholic Times* gets home a clean hit. The editor of the *Christian World* objects to religious dogmas being taught at the public expense. Very good, replies the Catholic editor, but what is the teaching "that the Bible is the Word of God, inspired, revealed, authentic, and that it has an authority for belief and conduct which is possessed by no other volume on earth," but a dogma? And he asks:—

> "Why should the State pay teachers to teach that dogma, or to assume it when teaching the contents of the book, and not pay Catholic or Church teachers for teaching other dogmas? Why should Nonconformists, at the expense of the public purse, have their dogmas taught if we may not have ours? So long as Free Churchmen insist on Bible teaching or Cowper-Templeism, they are insisting on a privilege for themselves."

There is really no adequate reply possible to these questions, and so long as Nonconformists stand for Bible teaching in their schools, Catholics and Churchmen have them, logically, at their mercy. The reply that the Bible is in the schools as literature, or as a manual of ethics, is sheer cant. It is there in a privileged position, except where teachers are better inclined, it is made the basis of *religious* instruction, and its teaching involves some of the greatest of dogmas. Some Nonconformists are straightforward enough to recognise this, and to stand forward as advocates of Secular Education. But the vast majority, led by men like Dr. Clifford, support the teaching by the State of dogmas in which they believe, and shriek themselves hoarse against the State teaching dogmas in which other people believe. Their attitude is only one of the many illustrations of the way in which Christianity blinds men to a sense of justice and fair play all round.

September 19 was the anniversary of the death of St. Januarius, and the miracle of the liquefaction of his blood duly occurred in the Cathedral at Naples. This "saint" is said to have been beheaded in 309, and his head was given to the Church by the Duke of Anjou some seven hundred years later. On the anniversary of his death, a priest approaches the head, holding in his hand a small bottle containing some of the congealed blood of the martyr. When the bottle is brought within sight of the head, the blood melts and runs down the side of the bottle. It is, of course, a mere chemical trick, and has been duplicated time after time. Any head will do, but asses' heads are necessary to a proper performance of the religious rite.

Once upon a time the blood refused to liquefy. This was when the French were at Naples, and Murat had been made king by Napoleon. The priests wanted to get rid of Murat, and the non-liquefaction of the blood was a means of stirring up ill-will among the people. Murat was, however, equal to the occasion. He planted some cannon opposite the Cathedral and threatened to blow the church to pieces unless the miracle occurred within a given time. The bishop held out as long as he dared, protesting that it could not be done. But Murat meant what he said, and the bishop knew it. The miracle, consequently, took place in good time. That was over a century ago, and the same piece of jugglery is still being performed by knaves for the benefit of fools. And yet some people talk of Christianity as a civilising force!

Very reluctantly the *Guardian* at length admits the impossibility of turning the Turk out of Europe—for the present. But it hopes for the best, barely hides its satisfaction that the peace just concluded will not last long—or, at least, only until Bulgaria is strong enough to have another try. We should have thought that by this time the most prejudiced would have come to the conclusion that the Turk was certainly not worse than any of the Christian nations whose cupidity and barbarity prevented them dividing fairly the spoils they had won. Evidently, however, the *Guardian* is unconvinced. It says: "The great work of turning the Turk out of Europe still remains to be accomplished." But why should the Turk be turned out of Europe? The only reasons that we can see is that he is not a Christian, and some people have convinced themselves, almost as an article of faith, that Europe must be entirely in the hands of Christians. Well, the most of it is, and look at the result! Could it have been much worse had there been no Christians at all in Europe? Would it, in that case, have been in as deplorable a condition as it is? We have our doubts concerning the second query—but we have none at all about the first. Christianity as a civilising force is one of the greatest failures the world has ever known.

The Churches are beside themselves with joy over Sir Oliver Lodge's unscientific pronouncements from the Chair of the British Association. Even the staid and ecclesiastically orthodox *Church Times* is in rapture, and, in its issue for September 19, devotes an eloquent leading article to a discussion of "The Wane of Materialism." The writer falls into the usual error of asserting that the day of Materialism is past. "Darwinism," he solemnly assures us, "has gone by the board." Its advocates "have seen not merely subsidiary details, but the very foundations of their creed overthrown by later discoveries." "The Materialistic dogmas" of the mid-Victorian era "are utterly discredited to-day." Many other assertions of that wild, irresponsible character are made in the article; and one is tempted to infer that the writer himself must have known how entirely false they are. Leading biologists of the day have again and again given them the direct lie in the press. Everyone remembers that last year's meeting of the British Association gave a stronger and more enthusiastic support to the mechanistic interpretation of the Universe than any of its former sessions. By whom is it "utterly discredited"? By the clergy and about half-a-dozen scientists who happen to be also Spiritualists. As Sir Ray Lankester has repeatedly declared in letters to the *Times* and the *Telegraph*, Darwinism is the foundation upon which present-day biologists build. Will the *Church Times* be good enough to inform us by which discoveries Mechanism has been overthrown?

Sir Oliver Lodge was asked recently whether the inquiry into the constitution of matter and the origin of life had made it easier to believe in God? The question was not a very intelligent one, and we cannot say that Sir Oliver gave a very intelligible answer. He said that the belief had not been made easier, but it had been "made fuller and truer and more real." Now, we should dearly like to know how investigations of the kind named can make our knowledge of God fuller or more real. People know to-day as much about God as ever they did, and Sir Oliver Lodge knows just as much as anybody else. Whatever be the constitution of matter, its relation to the existence of God remains the same. And most certainly nothing has occurred in the world of science to make our knowledge of God more truthful—that is, more exact—than it was. "God" still remains what it always has been—a word that explains nothing, serves no useful purpose, and is positively harmful, inasmuch as it persuades many they have an explanation when all they have got hold of is a phrase.

Sir Oliver Lodge's British Association Address has "encouraged" Dr. Clifford to anticipate a time when the world will witness the marriage of physical science to theology. In that case, *we* anticipate a speedy decree of nullity.

Eight children were burned to death in a tenement fire at Quebec, and the rest of the family were rescued in a shocking condition. "Providence" was too busy watching the sparrows, or counting the hairs on people's heads, to trouble about burning children.

The newspapers are making a fuss over the death of a Canning Town woman in her 103rd year. At that age Methuselah was still at school, and Noah was as green as a Boy Scout.

A lunatic sent to the Church Army's Senior Missioners a card of pansies for "thoughts." He knew what was wanted.

The future of China is on "the knees of God" says the editor of the *Christian Globe*. When Deity gets up there should be some breakages. Japan appears to be anticipating the event.

That brilliant artist, Mr. Will Dyson, who draws the cartoons for the *Daily Herald*, has a caustic wit with a profane flavor. A recent drawing of his, dealing with the library censorship, was entitled, "And a little child shall lead them," and depicted a procession of leading novelists preceded by a pert "flapper."

"God" is very cheap nowadays. "King Carson" himself assures his followers that he cannot fail because he trusts in God. We understand that the Nationalists are equally confident of the divine assistance. What on earth,

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or in Ulster, will poor "God" do? One thing is certain. He is sure to be on the winning side.

We see by the report in a Leeds newspaper that Mr. E. Pack has had to bring an assaulter into the Police-court. Mr. Pack was annoyed at the persistent sale at his meetings of an anonymous, discreditable paper called ——. But why should we give it a gratuitous advertisement? He felt obliged to denounce it, as it was sold by persons who should have known better, and to explain that it was not in any way associated with the Secular movement. One of the sellers jumped up on the plinth-platform and spat in Mr. Pack's face. This led to the Police-court appearance, and the assaulter's undertaking not to sell it again within a hundred yards of Mr. Pack's meetings. We understand that the Stipendiary Magistrate remarked that the publication in question was justly called "obscene," and that he passed it over to the Chief Constable in open court.

It is odd to see in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* a letter protesting against Atheist lectures in Victoria-square, Leeds, and dated from the Clarion Café. The writer, who signs himself Arthur Lister, and sneers at "these Secularists," does not appear to be acquainted with the *Clarion* editor's opinions.

We have received news of the arrest of Mr. W. T. Stewart for "blasphemy" at Wolverhampton. No further news of the case has reached us up to the time of our going to press. What *are* the Christian bigots doing? Are they trying to give a special advertisement to Mr. Foote's lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall? Or is it simply another specimen of their ill-conditioned zeal for the kingdom of God?

Last week's *Referee* gave prominence to the following letter:

"BLASPHEMY IN THE PARKS.

"To the Editor of the *Referee*.

"Sir,—The *Referee* is a powerful paper. Will it assist in putting down a notorious evil by giving the following matter publicity? I refer to the disgusting blasphemy indulged in by the Freethinkers in Hyde Park.

"I have lately listened for a while to the speakers, and their language is both horrible and disgusting. I hold no brief for any form of religion, believing that all are entitled to their opinions. But to all earnest and decent-minded persons the remarks indulged in by these filthy fiends are beyond all reason. The worst of it is, these men are applauded by the crowds of young men and women who surround them.

"The following are samples of the remarks which I have heard within the last few days: 'Your filthy Church,' 'Your dirty God,' 'Your God was born in a pub.,' and even more horrible and blasphemous suggestions which I dare not even indicate.

"Now, educated and refined women are forbidden a hearing in a just cause, and yet these men are allowed to poison the air and people's minds with their obscene remarks. It is a great disgrace and a crying evil. I am sure you will recognise the importance of putting this down, and if the *Referee's* influence can be used it will, I am sure, earn the gratitude of all right-thinking men and women. I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

"Sydney E. Rist.

"Clapton, September 25, 1913."

"Right-thinking men and women," of course, are men and women who think like Sydney Rist—whoever he may be, for he is quite unknown to fame. We hope there are not as many of them as he imagines. The adjectives this correspondent is allowed to throw about are disgraceful to himself and discreditable to the *Referee*. Note how he leads up to the word "obscene." At first the Freethinkers' language is only "blasphemy," but it ends with being "obscenity" for the sake of "putting it down." Which is the Christian policy all over. "Give a dog a bad name and hang him." It is an old game, and is played by nobody as well as by the Christians.

The three samples of wicked language adduced by the *Referee* correspondent are not obscene, whatever else they are. "Your filthy Church" is founded upon the newspaper reports of the clergymen who are so often found guilty of fetid offences. "Your dirty God" is justified by many Bible passages, including Ezekiel's dinner, which was made and cooked by the direct orders of Jehovah. "Your God was born in a pub." is not exactly elegant. But if "an inn" be substituted for "a pub." it is literally true. What does this impudent bigot want? Let him get the Churches and the Bible cleaned up a bit. Freethinkers won't be so able to speak such hard words about them then.

"Whiskers and religion have ever been associated," says the pious *Daily Chronicle*. "Imagine a priest of any of the Greek churches without his flowing beard." Yes! And fancy the "Son of Man" with a clean shave and a close crop!

"M. C. L.," of the *Catholic Herald*, admits that in his private capacity the Pope is as fallible as ordinary mortals, that he is not sinless, or incapable of committing sin, as Christ is declared to have been, but firmly holds that when he "is speaking as head of the Church, exercising his office of pastor of all Christians, and of his supreme authority defining a doctrine to be held by the whole Church, he is infallible; that is, incapable of teaching error or false doctrine. Yes, "surely the distinction is clear"; but how does "M. C. L." account for the fact that different Popes have promulgated contrary dogmas? Is he not aware that there have been numerous papal schisms, for which the fourteenth century was notorious above all the others? Has he forgotten that for ages there was a bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism, now the one and now the other being *ex cathedra* pronounced orthodox? Or can he tell us which, if either, of the two rival Popes was infallible? Facts are stubborn things—dare he face them?

We had no idea that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was so religious. We know he was a politician, and perhaps that may explain things. And the religion he favors is of the good old Presbyterian type. So, at least, we gather from his utterances at the ordination of a new minister at Lossiemouth Presbyterian Church. At the luncheon that followed the ordination, Mr. Macdonald protested strongly against the attempts that were made to brighten religious services. What was wanted, he said, "was the staid, solemn, impressiveness of the old-time minister." We confess we are astonished. Perhaps the new minister was very solemn, and Mr. Macdonald was trying to make him feel at home. Perhaps he was just poking fun at the whole thing. Perhaps there are some old-fashioned Presbyterian voters to be caught. We can't say. On the face of it, it looks as though Mr. Macdonald would sympathise with the minister who thanked God there had never been a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon in his church.

At a sale at Croydon of effects from Addington House, formerly a residence of many Archbishops of Canterbury, a massive solid brass bedstead was sold for thirty-one shillings. There is no room for tears, for the Founder of the Christian superstition was sold for about the same price.

Sir Thomas Lipton says that "few college-bred men are successful in business." That may be true of the provision trade; but they are sufficiently astute in the soul-saving department.

Rev. E. F. Borst Smith, author of *Caught in the Chinese Revolution*, says that when people meet with indications in China of missionary work, it is usually of medical rather than non-medical work. This we can well believe. Chinamen in need of medical attendance are not stupid enough to refuse aid from a doctor because he happens to be a Christian. The same is true of India and elsewhere. The truth is that these "medical missions" are so many bribes to the natives abroad, and so many blinds to the natives at home. The first are induced to attend the mission for the sake of non-Christian ministrations; the latter are led to believe that those who come are animated by a desire to hear the Gospel. If the missionaries abroad were to drop the purely secular baits held out, the results of missionary work would be such that none but the most incurable fanatics would support it.

Through a false report of his death, a stationmaster at Widnes has had the experience of reading his own obituary, and the newspapers are making the most of it. There is nothing novel in this, for many Biblical persons had two funerals. Imagine the return of Lazarus after the club-money had been spent.

Mr. Lloyd George has been praised by the Liberal press for using the word "lie," which they attribute to his Celtic directness. Mr. Foote used the word in the Price Hughes pamphlet years ago, and it was then thought offensive by the same Liberals. Mark Twain has a very neat definition: "A lie is an abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble."

A north country newsagent called one of our readers who buys the *Freethinker* of him weekly "a One-World man." "You should see," he added, "the curious people who come in for the *Two Worlds*."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, October 5, Town Hall, Birmingham; at 7, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology."

October 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £193 2s. 3d. Received since:—T. J. Thurlow, 5s.

D. DAWSON.—Glad you find the *Freethinker* an intellectual treat and do your best to promote its circulation. Thanks for the references. The frequency of illegitimate births in pious Wales is a byword. The same may be said of godly Scotland.

W. W. (Glasgow).—Determinism is well expounded and defended in Mr. Cohen's little book. There is no need for us to write at any length on the subject while that volume is in the field. It deals with Mr. Blatchford's great mistake with regard to Determinism without mentioning him. If that is not enough we will fulfil the old promise that you refer to. We were anxious to avoid what might look like personal antagonism, and the result was procrastination from a possibly mistaken motive. Your three questions cannot be answered in a few words. "Utilitarianism" needs a new definition before we could endorse or deny it. Evolution has thrown a fresh light on the whole question of morality.

J. MITCHINSON.—Sorry we are unable to use it. It would do more good in ordinary papers than in our columns.

G. SMITH (Montreal).—Thanks for the cuttings, also for your good wishes.

H. ROBERTS.—You are right; it *is* comic to see the Churches hanging on to Sir Oliver Lodge, who, so far as we know, doesn't belong to any of them.

JAMES CLARKE.—Glad you have derived so much advantage from reading the *Freethinker*. See "Acid Drops." We cannot open a space for general questions.

W. CLUCAS.—You will see a paragraph on Mr. Foote's lectures at Manchester in this week's "Sugar Plums."

WELSH RATIONALIST.—Your "question" is an essay, and cannot be dealt with in this column.

B. GREENWOOD.—Pleased to hear you think so highly of this journal. Sir Hiram Maxim's book is, as you say, too costly for the bulk of the readers whom it would interest; but such works are expensive to produce and do not circulate like the newest novels.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad the Birmigham Branch began the new session so well last Sunday with a good audience to hear Mr. Clifford Williams's excellent lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh."

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

Birmingham has been placarded with big bills advertising Mr. Foote's lecture this evening (October 5) at the Birmingham Town Hall. His subject is one of special interest, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology"—that gentleman being the Principal of Birmingham University. The lecture begins at 7 o'clock, all seats are free, and there will be opportunity for questions when the lecture is over. Discussion is forbidden by the conditions under which the use of the Town Hall is granted.

The use of the Birmingham Town Hall is granted free of rent to the local Branch of the N. S. S., but there are the necessary expenses of lighting, cleaning, etc., to be borne, and the cost of advertising the meeting is considerable. The "saints" may therefore be asked to come prepared to contribute liberally to the collection.

Lancashire "saints" are reminded that Mr. Foote visits Manchester very shortly. He is to lecture in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, on Sunday, October 19. There will be two meetings, afternoon and evening, as usual. Mr. Foote's subjects will be announced in due course.

Mr. Cohen starts the new Glasgow Season on Sunday, October 19. The meetings will be held at the North Saloon, City Hall—which is a Corporation building. Unfortunately there are restrictions to which the Glasgow 'saints" are unaccustomed. No charge can be made for admission, for one thing; and this is rather a crippling condition unless the "saints" who can afford to do so put their hands more deeply into their pockets than there has been any necessity for in the past.

A mistaken idea seems to prevail in Freethought circles at Glasgow,—namely, that Mr. Foote refuses to visit the city for lecturing purposes again. All he did, when asked to open the new season's program of the Glasgow Branch, was to say that he did not deem it prudent to start platform work after his late severe illness with two lectures on one Sunday, sandwiched between two long railway journeys on Saturday and Monday. He has to leave home at 9.30 a.m. at the latest in order to get to Glasgow at 10.30 p.m. To *begin* lecturing again with such an effort would have been very unwise. Mr. Foote looks forward to meeting his Glasgow friends again at no very distant date.

The North London Branch of the N. S. S., having brought their successful outdoor season to a close on Sunday, and strengthened their position by the accession of several new members, have arranged a course of indoor lectures during October at the Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, Kentish Town, N.W. The Hall adjoins the "Bull and Gate," and is almost opposite to the Kentish Town Midland and Tube Railway Station. Mr. Cohen opens with a lecture on "What is Secularism?" Admission is free, and North London "saints" are particularly requested to help in advertising these meetings.

A discussion on religion in recent issues of the *Middlesex County Times* has been enlivened by a contributor who signs himself "Ah Loo Sing," who has a remarkable knowledge of the weaknesses of Christianity.

Mr. S. H. Swinny, editor of the *Positivist Review*, who has visited Portugal and investigated the alleged ill-treatment of Royalist prisoners by the Republican Government, will deliver a special lecture on "Portugal and its Prisons" at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, this evening (Oct. 5). Admission free, and questions and discussion allowed after the lecture, which begins at 7.

"God Save the *New Age*." Thus concludes an editoria announcement in the last week's issue of our earnest and interesting contemporary. We hope, however, it has not come to that yet. The *New Age* is one of the papers that would be missed. We don't see eye to eye with it in several things, but the paper has brains,—which is precisely the thing most wanted (in both senses of the word) in English journalism. "More brains, O Lord, more brains" was George Meredith's prayer for the English nation generally; though it doesn't seem to have been answered to any appreciable extent up to the present. Yes, the *New Age* has brains. It also has courage. And these are not the road to fortune in philistine England.

Our gallant contemporary is raising its price from threepence to sixpence. We are afraid that this is not the way to cover the loss of over £1,000 a year which it lately stated it was sustaining.

We beg our readers' help in the following matter. There seems to be a dead set made against the *Freethinker* at present in certain trade quarters. The tale is going round that we do not accept "returns" at our publishing office, and this deters newsagents from ordering copies that may, as they think—unless they only *pretend* to think—be left upon their hands unsold. We beg to assure our readers that this is not true and never has been true. This journal has always been sent out "on sale or return." The complaint we are noticing has no foundation whatever. We hope our readers, when they happen to hear it, will inform their newsagents accordingly; and place their orders for other literature where they can get supplied with the *Freethinker*.

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's article on "Is There a Hell?" stands over till next week. Mr. Foote has just been so tremendously occupied with behind-the-scenes work that he has had very little time for anything else. His pen is represented in this number of the *Freethinker* but not in a special article.

We are reminded of a passage in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's "Life" of her father. "To be a real President of the National Secular Society," she says, "involved the performance of a vast amount of labor, the greater part of which was unrecognised and unseen." And the Secular Society, Ltd., which has come into existence since, by no means lessens the labor.

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Huxley's Fight for Truth.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 619.*)

HUXLEY'S forecast was fully realised. The public, clerical and lay, was shocked and scandalised at the audacious supposition that man, proud man, created in the image of God, was, after all, dressed in nothing save a little brief authority. It soon became obvious that the paragon of animals was, through logical necessity, to be included with other evolved things.

> "Carlyle himself, to whom many of the freest and noblest spirits in Europe were beginning to look as to an inspired prophet, could see in it nothing but a 'monkey damnification of mankind.' The dogmatic world saw in it nothing but a deliberate and mischievous assault upon religion. The Church of England in particular was beginning to recover from a long period of almost incredible supineness, and there was arising a large body of clergy full of faith and zeal and good works, but quite unacquainted with science, who frankly regarded Darwin as Antichrist, and Huxley and Tyndall as emissaries of the Devil. Against evolutionists there was left unused no weapon that ignorant prejudice could find, whether that prejudice was inspired by lofty zeal for what it conceived to be the highest interests of humanity, or by a crafty policy which saw in the new doctrine a blow to the coming renewed supremacy of the Church."*

Not only was the evolutionary teaching assailed with unrestrained ridicule, misrepresentation and hatred; the evolutionary teachers had also to defend themselves from the most shameful insinuations concerning their personal character. The sweet-natured Darwin was commonly compared with an ape, an animal he was popularly alleged to closely resemble. But this calm and patient student of nature's wonders philosophically ignored all that the sacerdotalists, and those whom they inspired, chose to say or think about him. He went serenely on in prosecuting those inquiries into natural history which won him the proud title of the Newton of biology. But with Huxley it was different. He was not content to champion the cause of evolution only, he was determined to smite the Philistines hip and thigh. An early opportunity was afforded him for displaying his prowess. Among the comparatively few favorable notices of the *Origin* was the now famous review which appeared in the *Times*.

> "The *Origin* [writes Huxley] was sent to Mr. Lucas, one of the staff of the *Times* writers at that day, in what I suppose was the ordinary course of business. Mr. Lucas, though an excellent journalist.....was as ignorant of any knowledge of science as a babe, and bewailed himself to an acquaintance on having to deal with such a book, whereupon he was recommended to ask me to get him out of his difficulty, and he applied to me accordingly."

Thus, by a happy accident, Huxley was enabled to place a brilliant essay on Darwin's masterpiece before the educated section of the English reading world. Although Darwin was not in the secret he suspected the identity of the writer of the review. He immediately wrote to Huxley with reference to it, and in the course of his letter he says:—

> "Certainly I should have said that there was only one man in England who could have written this essay, and that you were the man; but I suppose that I am wrong, and that there is some hidden genius of great calibre; for how could *you* influence Jupiter Olympus and make him give you three and a-half columns to pure science? The old fogies will think the world will come to an end. Well, whoever the man is, he has done great service to the cause."

In 1860, Huxley publicly proclaimed his evolutionary opinions in a brilliant lecture before a highly cultivated audience on "Species, Races, and their Origin."

In April, 1860, he contributed a long and weighty essay on Darwin's work to the pages of the *Westminster Review*. The same period witnessed the publication of two bitterly hostile articles, one of which appeared in the *Edinburgh* and the other in the *Quarterly Review*. The *Edinburgh* essay came from the pen of Sir Richard Owen, who had hitherto been regarded as a worthy representative of the best traditions of science. He occupied an influential position in society, was unquestionably, at that time, our foremost anatomist, and his views were well known to his intimates as far from orthodox on the problem of species. But, with painful shortsightedness, and mean littlemindedness, he was prepared to sacrifice his reputation with posterity for the sake of ephemeral orthodox smiles. There is also some reason to believe that he was by no means unwilling to gratify his jealousy and dislike of those younger and more progressive scientists who seemed likely to thrust him from his proud position of supremacy. He now changed from his previously favorable attitude towards evolution to one of bitter antagonism. To his time-serving he added deceit, for he remained professedly friendly with the rising evolutionists at the very time that he was preparing his venomous attack in the *Edinburgh Review*. The style of the anonymous writer, coupled with his wide scientific knowledge, at once made plain his identity, although Owen long endeavored to conceal his connection with it. The nature of the article was such that even the passive Darwin was moved to say, "It is painful to be hated in the intense degree with which Owen hates me."

The *Quarterly* article was written by Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. It proved a splendid combination of ignorance and arrogance. After dwelling upon the circumstance that anything that a man of Darwin's calibre chose to say on a scientific subject was, to say the least of it, entitled to respect, Huxley, when reviewing the matter in 1887, went on to recall the deplorable fact that for years subsequent to the publication of the *Origin*, misstatement, buffoonery, and denunciation characterised the vast majority of press references to the theory of evolution. And, with reference to the Bishop of Oxford's *Quarterly* article, Huxley says:—

> "Since Lord Brougham assailed Dr. Young, the world has seen no such specimen of the insolence of a shallow pretender to a Master in Science as this remarkable production, in which one of the most exact of observers, most cautious of reasoners, and most candid of expositors, of this or any other age, is held up to scorn as a 'flighty' person who endeavors to 'prop up his utterly rotten fabric of guess and speculation,' and 'whose mode of dealing with nature' is reprobated as 'utterly dishonorable to natural science.' And all this high and mighty talk, which would have been indecent in one of Mr. Darwin's equals, proceeds from a writer whose want of intelligence, or of conscience, or of both, is so great that, by way of objection to Mr. Darwin's views, he can ask, 'Is it credible that all favorable varieties of turnips are tending to become men?' who is so ignorant of palæontology that he can talk of the 'flowers and fruits' of the plants of the Carboniferous epoch; of comparative anatomy, that he can gravely affirm the poison apparatus of venomous snakes to be 'entirely separate from the ordinary laws of animal life, and peculiar to themselves.'"

So much for the good bishop's effusion. But at the meeting of the British Association held at Oxford in the autumn of the same year, Huxley was destined to meet both Owen and Wilberforce face to face. In the home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs the new evolutionary teaching was assured of a warm reception. The special creationists were quite certain that they would now completely crush their antagonists. In the various sectional meetings, Huxley stood almost single-handed against a host of parsons and professors. But the two chief encounters were between Huxley and Owen on the one hand, and Huxley and Wilberforce on the other. Owen had the audacity to assert that differences of kind, and not merely differences of degree, distinguished the brains of apes from those of men, and this solemn pronouncement was joyously received by the majority of his listeners as a staggering blow to the theory of descent. Without the slightest hesitation, Huxley there and then gave Owen the lie direct, and "pledged his reputation to justify his contradiction with all due detail on a future occasion."

* Professor Chalmers Mitchell, *Huxley*, pp. 111, 112.

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This undertaking, as every student knows, Huxley afterwards carried out. He demonstrated in detail the untruthfulness of Owen's allegations, and no contemporary anatomist would now for one moment support the position which Owen took up. In the words of the late Professor Weldon: "It is difficult to understand how an anatomist of Owen's experience could have made such statements; and his subsequent explanations are equally unintelligible."* In order to enjoy a temporary triumph, this eminent if unreliable man seems to have been prepared to sacrifice the respect of that posterity which was certain, sooner or later, to be placed in possession of the real facts of the case. Moreover, Owen must have had the mortification of knowing that, after Huxley's repudiation of his assertions, his authority as an anatomist had been severely shaken in the opinion of those best qualified to weigh the evidence each disputant had advanced.

This combat electrified the atmosphere, and two days later the Bishop of Oxford delivered an eloquent and impassioned address, in which he denounced evolution in general and Huxley in particular. Apparently carried away by the applause of his audience, to whose religious prejudices and emotions the Bishop made a powerful appeal, he concluded by asking Huxley whether he was descended from an ape on his grandfather's or grandmother's side of the family. This polished episcopal peroration provoked the following withering reply. Said Huxley:—

> "I asserted, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a *man*, a man of restless and versatile intellect, who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them with an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions, and skilled appeals to religious prejudices."

Only too well did Huxley now realise that if the evolutionists were to unmask falsehood, and bring truth to light, with unequivocal success, they could afford to give the enemy no quarter. He therefore decided upon dedicating his life to the cause, and his writings, addresses, and discoveries proved invaluable in securing the ultimate triumph of the doctrine of descent. And so complete was this conquest that, when, thirty years after the celebrated gathering at Oxford in 1860, the British Association again met in the university city, the then President, Lord Salisbury, Conservative Premier, professed churchman, and bishop appointer, was compelled to admit, when referring to evolution, that Darwin,—

> "has, as a matter of fact, disposed of the doctrine of the immutability of species.....Few now are found to doubt that animals, separated by differences far exceeding those that distinguish what we know as species, have yet descended from common ancestors."

But in the intervening years little transpired that reflected any credit on the sacerdotalists. At an earlier date, when Lyell was battling for the recognition of geological truth, that great man was subjected to the meanest annoyances. And that eminent physician, Sir William Lawrence, was driven to suppress his excellent *Lectures on Man* through the fury of the orthodox party. So fierce was the animosity aroused by this work that, acting on the theory that it constituted an attempt to undermine revealed truth, Lord Eldon refused an injunction to protect the rights of the author in his own property.

This theological bitterness was rearoused in the 'sixties. But the enemies of enlightenment had to meet a man of tougher fibre in Huxley. Backed by a few upper class intellectuals, scientists, and men of letters, and supported by that body of public opinion which the secular and other advanced movements had brought into being, Huxley had to fear no infringement of his personal liberty. The opposition to evolution now took the form which theological fanaticism always takes when its teeth have been filed. Abuse, detraction, and vilification, Huxley philosophically took for granted.

When we reflect, that even to this hour, many thousands of broad-minded people regard their ancestral association with ape-like creatures as somewhat disconcerting to their dignity, we are bound to ungrudgingly admire the courage with which Huxley proclaimed man's kinship with lower animal forms. At this very period a Scotch university refused a professorship to a distinguished scholar merely because he had expressed views that were favorable to evolution. When so much bigotry stalked abroad, Huxley was evidently swimming against a powerful stream. At any suggestion of relationship between men and apes the respectable and religious were up in arms. And Huxley's "presumptious blasphemies" were not whispered to an elect few. They took the form of a series of lectures to working men, in 1860, on the "Relation of Man to the Lower Animals"; and, two years later, these addresses were expanded into his celebrated work, *Man's Place in Nature*. The uproar was deafening at the time; but when, in the early 'seventies, Darwin published his *Descent of Man*, that even more advanced work was received with comparative calmness. It was now obvious that Huxley had fought and won.

In advanced circles, Huxley has been reproached for certain concessions to broken orthodoxy; but it is only the merest justice to remember that his services to Freethought and humanity were very great indeed. All his writings—even his scientific text-books — may still be read and re-read with pleasure and profit. He was a man of varied culture who, had he never become a famous scientist, would almost unquestionably have risen to a high place in the republic of letters. His hatred of humbug, his battles with the bishops, his overthrow of Gladstone, his sincere desire to render the general public familiar with those natural truths which many men in his position would selfishly restrict to a privileged class, all redound to his honor. In the judgment of the writer he was an outstanding modern humanist, and it may be fitly said of Huxley, the brave Freethought warrior, that,—

> "The elements
> So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
> And say to all the world, *this was a man!*"

T. F. PALMER.

* Weldon, "Huxley," *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

Man's Euthanasia.

A DREAM OF THE FINAL VICTORY.

THAT weird and awful condition of things, which astronomers and physicists had predicted as the inevitable fate of the solar system, had at length arrived. The days of life on the earth were drawing to an end. The human drama was closing amid slow-moving scenes of cosmic gloom.

The sun had smouldered down to a dull red glow of cheerless and sullen aspect. The tidal drag on the earth's rotation had done its work, and our planet now moved along its orbit in sluggish inertness, turning one face always towards the sun. There was neither dawn of morning light nor fall of evening shadows. Day and night had ceased. Time itself seemed to have come to an end. The sun had for ever disappeared from one hemisphere, and even where seen, it never rose nor set, but in response to the earth's annual motion seemed to swing slowly northward and southward, like a pendulum whose oscillations are about to cease. Now and again, at long intervals, a pale ghost of a moon stole across the twilight sky; while behind the wearily swinging sun, the stars—not the constellations of old, but stars in strange new groupings — pursued their bright processions through the circling year.

And the surface of the earth told the same story of lapsing energies—of approaching doom. The tideless seas were still as death. No tempests swept

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their waters, no billows broke upon their coasts, but, except where the ice sheets spread, the ocean lay stagnant as a marsh, and about its creeks and bays there luxuriated degenerate forms of fungoid and algal life. Save for plants and animals of man's cultivation, most of the higher flora and fauna had perished. Much invertebrate life, both terrestrial and aquatic, survived. Fish of lower types and aquatic reptiles still occupied the waters; but, except for a few arctic and sub-arctic forms, all mammalian and bird life, under natural conditions, had succumbed. In short, except for the persistence of man himself, and the forms of life under his protection, the classes of living things on the earth were approximately the same as they had been towards the close of the Mesozoic period. Evolution was retracing its steps.

The dark side of the earth, bound in fetters of relentless ice, was, of course, deserted by all forms of life. The central meridian of the sunward hemisphere passed through that region which used to be called Arabia, and by some curious freak of fate the scenes of man's earliest civilisations seemed likely to be also the scenes of his final doom. Those regions named in past ages Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Hindostan, were the only regions peopled by the dying race. Here, man lived in close fellowship and communion, as though in response to that universal instinct whereby gregarious creatures crowd together for companionship and mutual aid when a common danger threatens.

But even thus, the population was not dense. Apart from the adverse conditions brought about by the cosmic and climatic changes, human fertility had declined, as that of all old and worn-out stocks must eventually decline. All over the yet extensive area in which human civilisation was still possible, scarce fifty million human beings were dwelling. But these were the heirs of all the ages—these were the elect of human kind—and amid all the gloom of nature there shone the clear and steady ray of man's indomitable spirit.

A group of these men of the latter days walked slowly across the sands of a gloomy desert absorbed in converse of high and solemn import, while a distant illumination of the sky seemed to indicate the position of some great city resplendent with light. As a pause fell over the discourse, they gazed at the dull red glow of the motionless sun, and then one spoke thus in a tone of quiet irony:—

"So this, then, is our end. This is the goal of man's career—the final purpose of all his efforts—the reward of all his labor. A century or two of deepening gloom may yet be his portion, and then the end. The end of all his intellectual splendor, of all his moral greatness, of all his physical energy. The achievements of science, the glories of art, the triumphs of mechanical power—all knowledge, all skill, all human endeavor shall sink to nothingness; and this dark orb will continue revolving for yet unnumbered ages through the black voids of space, the grave of man's vain and foolish hopes, the ghastly sepulchre of his bones."

Another pause ensued, during which the group, turning their eyes from the speaker, again quietly regarded the red orb of the sun hanging low down in the southern sky. Presently, a grave, firm voice took up the discourse:—

"This idea of a purpose in nature which still survives with a few of us is closely connected with the old god-idea which used to puzzle and vex the ancients, and which has long since been exploded. The teleological idea should, therefore, be no longer tenable by us—it should not even linger as the last shred of human superstition. Nor would it do so if all of us realised—what is surely indisputable—that the idea of a purpose, a design, a pre-appointed end, is merely a subjective notion having no reality apart from man himself. The ultimate substance of existence, functioning through its inherent energy—which process we call causality—involves an absolute and eternal necessity which leaves no room for design—indeed, it is the very negation of the idea of design. If nature *must* take a certain course, what becomes of its "purpose"? And if there be no purpose or end outside of consciousness, it surely follows that consciousness must be an end to itself. The purpose of life is that very life itself in its varying degrees. A noble life achieves a noble purpose. A base life achieves but a base purpose. Man's physical end, therefore, which we all realise to be not far distant, has no connection whatever with an ethical purpose, for this will have been achieved to the full in man's own ethical progress and the high goal to which he has attained. The ethical end—happiness pursued along the path of virtue—is ours already. We have fought and conquered, we have striven and achieved, we have labored and loved. This, the only ethical purpose conceivable, we have attained, and be the physical end what it may, we can await it with calmness and fortitude. We read that one of the earliest philosophies which suggested themselves to the intellect of man was that called Stoicism. This sublime doctrine will also illuminate his end."

"And though the physical end of any particular ethical process has no moral significance," pursued another speaker, "that is to say, though any stage which moral advance may have attained when the physical end overtakes it affords an equally logical justification for such advance—yet the recent researches of our scientists in the field of astro-physics lead us to believe that, in the vast majority of cases, organic and super-organic evolution run a complete course in each stellar system. Organic evolution, from the first inception of life to the highest form of intelligence possible in any case, forms but a passing incident in the vastly longer process of physical evolution, from the first inception of ponderable matter to its final return to the ether. Thus the ethical process, wherever it happens to be going on, must be regarded as but a passing incident of the cosmic process; and if physical evolution in any part of the universe may be likened to a wave on the ocean of existence, organic evolution may be likened to a momentary ripple on the surface of that wave. So the cosmic process would generally afford sufficient opportunity for the complete development of the ethical process. There would, no doubt, be exceptions, but owing to the inconceivable vastness of the spaces through which any particular process of material condensation must take place, every sidereal system would probably be isolated in a region of practically infinite extent, and thus the chance of any sudden catastrophic termination to the evolutionary progress of the system would be infinitesimally small."

During the pause of contemplation which followed, a brilliant meteor flashed out in the northern sky, lighting up the desert for a few seconds with a clear white radiance, and revealing a weird scene of far-spread desolation. Then another spoke.

"Nor does the gloom of our physical surroundings much affect us who are so familiar with its cause and progress; and even were we less used to these conditions, the time has long passed when natural phenomena could influence man's feelings and ideas. Indeed, it might be argued without extravagance that the physical conditions under which we live may, during their gradual development, have been of some intellectual advantage to the race. Our ancient records tell us of a time when the sun shone with a brilliance which the eye could not bear, and seemed to move across the sky with undying energy; when the moon shed a clear and silvery light; when the skies were blue; when green fields and woods decked the earth; and when fresh breezes flecked the ocean's surface with the foam of dancing waves. Perhaps it is not surprising that, under such conditions and during ages of intellectual darkness, the superstition about a beneficent ruler should have arisen and been maintained—indeed, we are told of cases where the sun and moon were actually worshiped—and such superstitions could not have failed seriously to retard man's intellectual and moral progress. The aspects of nature under which we live afford no

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opportunity for such delusions, and may have played an important part in their destruction."

"This much is certain," said another voice with quiet decision, "we shall die as free beings—as masters of ourselves — not as the creatures and puppets of an irresponsible and capricious deity. Our destiny will be neither that of criminals nor of slaves — neither to suffer eternal and unmerited torments, nor to pour forth ceaseless adulations before a despot's throne. We shall pass, as all nature's manifestations pass, back to the eternal existence whence we arose; that existence which is neither kind nor cruel, neither just nor unjust, neither creator nor created; which contains within itself all the potentialities of being, and which is at once the origin and end of all things."

Thus the wonderful discourse went on, scaling the heights and sounding the depths of human speculation with the majestic calmness and detachment of brave men doomed to death. With such a spirit animating him, man's final victory was assured.

A. E. MADDOCK.

Correspondence.

ATHEISM AND ART.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I, as one of your least occasional contributors, congratulate Mr. H. George Farmer on his excellent article, "Salvator Rosa: Artist and Rebel." It is my humble opinion that there is an inclination of the trustees (who are often people of real influence in the religious world) to give the public just as much of genuine art as they think, and as little of any with the sublime Pagan touch as possible. For proof of this I would ask anyone to take a walk through our National Art Gallery. It is true that we have specimens of the richness of Rubens, and also examples of the beauties of Murillo and Titian; but the general conception of the whole exhibition makes one murmur of the artists, when leaving, "How truly Christian they all must have been!" Allowing for Turner and Hogarth and a few more, a tour of inspection makes one feel pleased to be alive in the twentieth century, even in spite of the Blasphemy Laws. To have lived in the time of those half-demented people, who painted the ghastly pictures of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, must have been an ordeal; yet we find writers in our daily press, especially at Christmas, going into journalistic adoration over crudities which could only have been painted in Bedlam. Is it not another example of nothing being too mean for the use of a religion which, when all other methods failed, could be safely used to terrify people into a state of religious devotion? The persecution and ostracism of Salvator Rosa can easily be understood; the majority of historians would have us believe that Atheists in Art were unknown. The principle is nicely applied, when we come to think of it; unless a painter believed in the Trinity, say, he was incapable of anything truly artistic. Once again thanking Mr. H. George Farmer and the *Freethinker* for an intellectual treat gathered from ground which I think, as a Freethinker, is rather neglected.

WILLIAM REPTON.

P.S.—As a matter of interest, I might say that in the National Portrait Gallery there is a portrait of Thomas Paine, but short-sighted people should make a rule of asking to see it.—W. R.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPT. 25.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davidson, Leat, Moss, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, Wood, and the Misses Kough and Stanley.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for Leeds and Preston Branches and the Parent Society.

Mr. Thurlow reported on behalf of the Sub-Committee elected to consider and report upon certain literature circulated at Freethought meetings.

The Secretary reported upon the outdoor work at various stations, and further arrangements were made in regard to Edmonton.

Various minor details were discussed, and the meeting then closed.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

IS CHRISTIANITY PLAYED OUT?

"Hence, doubting spirit, cease thy troubled quest;
Believe, have faith, and God will do the rest."
So speaks the wise apologist for that
Which seems to be at present falling flat.
"Our Christ," the parson cries, "our Christ played out?
Away! 'tis hideous sin to raise a doubt.
If you suggest that such a thing is true,
In everlasting fires you're sure to stew.
We know the Church does not, and cannot, cope
With human ills; the parsons, clergy, Pope,
On earthly misery have naught to say,
But tune their harps to heaven's immortal lay.
'The earth's the Lord's,' the Bible tells us so;
He's thus responsible for earthly woe.
'Tis naught to us what ails the human scum,
If good subscriptions to our coffers come.
Our occupation 'tis to advertise,
And wealth amass as pilots to the skies.
With squabbles oft we draw the public eye,
And thus to 'draw' the public pocket try.
From suffering men our path is very wide;
We pass their troubles 'on the other side.'
The only matter that we care about
Is 'What's the richest crowd?'—with them we'll shout.
Distress in everything around we see;
Oh, Lord, may no distress abide in me!
Such is our pleasant, though p'rhaps selfish, song;
With happy hearts through life we jog along.
We preach the gospel, and to faith exhort;
And, though 'tis true salvation can't be bought,
Still all our worshipers we oft assure
The more they give, the Lord will bless the more."
Religion pays too well to be played out;
Whilst fools exist, so will the pious tout. G. R.

HOPES AND HAPPINESS.

To destroy a groundless hope is not to destroy a man's happiness. The instantaneous effort may be painful; but it is the price which we have to pay for a cure of deep-seated complaints. The infidel's reply is substantially this: "I may destroy your hopes; but I do not destroy your power of hoping. I bid you no longer fix your mind on a chimera, but on tangible and realisable prospects. I warn you that efforts to soar above the atmosphere can only lead to disappointment, and that time spent in squaring the circle is simply time spent. Apply your strength and your intellect on matters which lie at hand, and on problems which admit of solution. The happiest man is not the man who has the grandest dreams, but the man whose aspirations are best fitted to guide his talents; the most efficient worker is not the one who mistakes his own fancies for an external support, but he who has most accurately gauged the conditions under which he is laboring."—*Leslie Stephen*, "*Essays on Freethinking and Plain Speaking*," p. 356.

THE BIBLE AND TRUTH.

We have proof in the Bible that, apart from the lying which constituted false witness and was to the injury of a neighbor, there was among the Hebrews but little reprobation of lying. Indeed, it would be remarkable were it otherwise, considering that Jahveh set the example; as when, to ruin Ahab, he commissioned "a lying spirit" (1 Kings xxii. 22) to deceive his prophets; or as when, according to Ezekiel xiv. 9, he threatened to use deception as a means of vengeance. "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel." Evidently from a race-character, which evolved such a conception of a deity's principles, there naturally came no great regard for veracity.—*Herbert Spencer*, "*Principles of Ethics*," sec. 158, vol. i., p. 402.

POPE'S EPITAPH ON GAY.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit a man; simplicity, a child:
With native humor tempering virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight at once and lash the age:
Above temptation in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, e'en among the great:
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblamed through life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honors! Not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say,
Striking their pensive bosoms—"Here lies Gay!"

Are all your Mosques, Episcopal Churches, Pagodas, Chapels of Ease, Tabernacles, and Pantheons, anything else but the Ethnic forecourt of the Invisible Temple and its Holy of Holies.—*Richter*.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, N.W., adjoining "The Bull and Gate"): 7.30, C. Cohen, "What is Secularism?"

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, "Beelzebub," "Creation or Evolution?"

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "How I Fell Among Thieves."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, Demonstration in aid of the National League of the Blind.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): 7, G. W. Foote, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. Rodolphe Broda (of Paris), "The World Crisis of Religion."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 41 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Sir, the State in choosing men to serve it, takes no notice of their opinions; if they be willing to serve it, that satisfies.—OLIVER CROMWELL.

A Vain Delusion.

EVERYBODY is acquainted with the fact that for the last ten years it has been the boast of the pulpit that the attitude of science to religion has become one of positive commendation. It is undeniable that a change has taken place in the relation between the two, but it is equally incontrovertible that the change has not been on the side of science. As we have repeatedly affirmed in these columns, science is farther away from religion to-day than it was in the 'sixties and 'seventies of last century. We might almost go to the length of saying that the attitude to religion of present-day scientists is one of utter unconcern. Into their various observations and experiments religion does not enter at all. Is it possible, for example, that any honest clergyman can rise from a careful perusal of *The Mechanistic Conception of Life* by Jacques Loeb, one of the most distinguished biologists of the day, and declare that science lends a helping hand to religion? Or is there a theologian of any note who, after reading *A Treatise on Zoology*, or *The Kingdom of Man* by Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, has the temerity to assert that scientific discoveries tend to confirm the dogmas of theology? The truth is that science is so far from supporting religion that it completely ignores it. Its observations and experiments are conducted on the assumption that natural law is everywhere supreme, and that there is "no room in the Universe for the working of a Divine power." This is the assumption that underlies the work of practically every biologist of to-day. The editor of the *Church Times* is radically mistaken when he tells us that "Darwinism, in its strict sense, has gone by the board," and we confidently challenge him to name five accredited biologists who hold such a view, the incontestable fact being that Darwinism is the foundation upon which all biologists build. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the science of the present is more materialistic than was the science of the mid-Victorian era.

Let us take Huxley, to whom the divines are so fond of alluding as an outstanding exponent of a materialistic interpretation of the Universe which is no longer scientifically tenable. We are proud to be numbered among the warmest admirers of Professor Huxley, but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that he was but a lukewarm supporter of Freethought. When appealed to for help in the well-known case of the Editor of this journal his reply was as follows:—

> "I have not read the writings for which Mr. Foote has been prosecuted. But, unless their nature has been grossly misrepresented, I cannot say that I feel disposed to intervene on his behalf."

That utterance was wholly unworthy of Professor Huxley, and shows conclusively that he was not at heart a thoroughgoing Freethinker like George Meredith. As a matter of fact, he was a vigorous opponent of Materialism. He did not believe, as Darwin himself did, that Darwin's theories, rightly understood, "abolished teleology and eviscerated the argument from design." It is a curious fact that, whilst he did more than anybody else to persuade the public that Darwinism was "an intelligible hypothesis good enough as a working basis," he was never himself a whole-hearted believer in it. As the late Sir W. T. Thiselton Dyer says of him, in his biographical sketch in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:—

> "With the transparent candor which was characteristic of him, he never to the end of his life concealed the fact that he thought it wanting in rigorous proof."

Indeed, so far was he from being a Materialist that he solemnly pronounced Atheism to be "on purely philosophical grounds untenable." While accepting the theory of the spontaneous generation of life, he did not dogmatise on the subject. He wrote:—

> "To say, in the admitted absence of evidence, that I have any belief as to the mode in which the existing forms of life have originated, would be using words in a wrong sense. But expectation is permissible where belief is not; and if it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy, I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from non-living matter. I should expect to see it appear under forms of great simplicity, endowed, like existing fungi, with the power of determining the formation of new protoplasm from such matters as ammonium carbonates, oxalates and tartrates, alkaline and earthy phosphates, and water, without the aid of light. That is the expectation to which analogical reasoning leads me, but I beg you once more to recollect that I have no right to call my opinion anything but an act of philosophical faith."

If we compare that extract with Professor Schafer's Address from the chair of the British Association last year, it will be evident that the present age is much more materialistic than that of Huxley, and in the discussion that followed the Address the advocates of the mechanistic interpretation of the Universe were all-victorious.

With the above facts in mind, we respectfully invite the editor of the *Church Times* to specify "the crudely materialistic dogmas formerly presented as the final result of science which are utterly discredited to-day." We shall be surprised if he succeeds in naming even one on the testimony of half-a-dozen first-class scientists. Of course, a man who is ignorant or unscrupulous enough to say that "Darwinism, in its strict sense, has gone by the board," is capable of making any extravagant statement; but we shall insist on his adducing ample evidence of the truth of his assertion as to the abandonment of a single scientific dogma held by the majority of scientists thirty or forty years ago. His reliance on Sir Oliver Lodge is ridiculous in the extreme, because outside his own department Sir Oliver is the most unreliable witness living. In his recent Address he said that "in physiology the conflict ranges round vitalism"; but at Dundee last year, Dr. Benjamin Moore, Professor of Bio-Chemistry in the University of Liverpool, exclaimed, "Vitalism is dead." Ten years ago Sir Edwin Ray Lankester made precisely the same announcement. Writing to the *Times* for May 17, 1903, he said:—

> "I do not myself know of anyone of admitted leadership among modern biologists who is showing signs of 'coming to a belief in the existence of a vital principle.'

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> .....Modern biologists (I am glad to say) do not accept the hypothesis of 'telepathy' advocated by Sir Oliver Lodge, nor that of the intrusions of disembodied spirits pressed upon them by others of the same school."

Science, we are told, has completely failed to interpret the Universe on mechanistic lines. At present it is in a state of hopeless bankruptcy. Intellectualism has come to the end of its tether, and confesses itself defeated. Forty years ago the scientists fancied that they had found a key that would unlock all doors, and that the inevitable result would be the banishment of all mystery. The riddle of the Universe was about to be read for all time. Such, we are assured, was the fond dream of the mid-Victorian men of science. The only one among them whom the Materialists can claim was Tyndall, who, in reality, was the humblest and most unassuming of men. So far was he from pretending that science could answer all questions and solve all mysteries that we find him continually confessing and deploring his ignorance. At the close of his interesting address on "Scientific Materialism" he gives the following good advice: "Let us bow our heads and acknowledge our ignorance, priest and philosopher, one and all." What the scientists set out to do was to study Nature by means of observation and experiment, to discover what the facts of existence really were, to put them in order in the evolution of the Cosmos, and to understand our own relation to the whole of being. Is it true that now at last they confess themselves disappointed and defeated? On the contrary, they know that they have succeeded beyond their most sanguine expectations, and that their prospects are indescribably bright and encouraging. They have already made marvellous discoveries, all of which confirm them in the belief that the day is coming when the vast and orderly mechanism of Nature shall be an open book, clearly read and deeply enjoyed by all mankind. Even now, the working of that mechanism is sufficiently understood to enable us "to a large extent to perceive, foresee, and manipulate it so as to bring about certain results and avoid others."

Science is not bankrupt, has not failed, but is still pursuing with greater confidence than ever the objects it had in view forty years ago; nor is it one whit more friendly towards religion than it was then. Years ago the omniscient *Daily Mail* told the English-speaking world that science was completely discredited, and it has repeated the false assertion now; but the *Daily Mail* is wrong. Science has never attempted to demonstrate the existence of the soul, or the reality of the life to come. God, the soul, and immortality are outside its range altogether, to attempt the demonstration of which would be the height of folly. The dogmatic religion, to which the *Daily Mail* recommends its readers to look for safe guidance, is being gradually undermined by the very science for which it has so violent a contempt. The situation is comical in the extreme, and so impossible. The falling Church at once claims science as an ally and condemns it as an exploded fallacy. Our comfort lies in the fact that side by side with that of a sinking religion we have a rapidly rising science. Knowledge has arrived, and faith is under notice to quit.

J. T. LLOYD.

Brotherhood and Bunkum.

ONE does not need to be a centenarian to recall numerous movements that were, in the minds of their conductors, going to revolutionise religion, restore Christianity to its primitive purity, and conduct the world by a short cut to the millennium. At one time, it is the Christian Endeavor movement; at another, the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon epidemic, or some special interpretation of Christianity that despairing Churches clutch at like a drowning man at a straw. All these movements come and go, and they all pass through much the same phases. There is a rapid recruiting from various churches and chapels, there are conferences and congresses, reports of the splendid progress made, and then—a gradual decay and practical disappearance. If they survive, they continue as part of the ordinary church or chapel machinery, and Christian preachers are left faced with the problem of dealing with a world that is steadily drifting away from all religious belief.

For some time past the boom has been connected with the Brotherhood movement. Its new president, the Rev. Silvester Horne, declares that it is not only going to revolutionise life, it is also going to reestablish Christianity—the latter is, indeed, the prelude to the former. For Mr. Horne is not one of those who believe "you can reform society by the simple process of leaving God out." Which is quite natural—in a parson. A society that had no place for God would not be reformed. It would be lacking—parsons. Moreover, the Brotherhood movement is democratic in principle; it has grasped the true principles of Christianity; it is "a return to what is primitive and fundamental"; it is "out to give to Christianity a more human interpretation and a more human application"; and Mr. Horne has "no fear that the working people of this country are going to surrender their Christian inheritance."

Now, all this is really intensely funny, although Mr. Horne is not a humorist—not intentionally, that is. But the finest strokes of humor are produced unconsciously, and Mr. Horne makes a bull's-eye. Consider all that it implies. Over nineteen centuries ago Jesus Christ of the New Testament came into the world with a definite mission before him. He founded a pure religion, one that brought health, hope, and deliverance to a dying world. The power of Christianity was such that it completely conquered the old Pagan civilisation, and it has been the source of inspiration for all that was good in life ever since. Centuries roll by, and then two remarkable discoveries are made. The first, is that Christianity is losing ground. It could conquer a civilisation already existing, but it cannot hold its own in a civilisation which, so they say, was founded by itself. The second discovery is that, except for a semi-mythical period known as primitive Christian times, the world has been on quite a wrong tack. All the great Christian writers—one might even include the New Testament itself—all the Churches, past and present, have made a colossal blunder. They have all assumed that the main purpose of Christianity was to secure man's salvation in the next world. But they were all wrong. Its great and central gospel was salvation in this world, to be secured by the principle of Brotherhood. Christianity must have a human—that is, a secular, application. Jesus Christ came and lived and died, not as generations of Christians have believed, for the salvation of man's soul, but to secure better wages, better houses, and a better social structure.

Now, if Mr. Horne's position and statements do not imply this, they are either meaningless or a sheer piece of bluff. When the Freethinker points to the reign of Christianity as one of the most colossal disasters that ever overtook a civilised people, men like Mr. Horne object, and proceed to indicate the immense benefits flowing from the Christian Churches. But on his own showing, all these Churches were built on error, taught error, and pointed human energies in the wrong direction. And no indictment that was ever framed by the most uncompromising Freethinker could be more sweeping than this. He says that for at least fifteen hundred years the Christian Churches have been leading men astray. They either did not know what genuine Christianity was, or they deliberately taught a false creed. In either case their influence has been bad. Whichever way you have it, Mr. Horne is endorsing the Freethought attack. It is Christianity that has been the great enemy to civilisation, and it must be swept on one side before genuine progress can be made.

Mr. Horne says that what the Brotherhood movement wants is "clean, healthy human homes, and

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honest industry, and high civic responsibility." To announce this as a wonderful discovery in the Christian Church, and to indicate that there is great difficulty in convincing Christians of the desirability of these things, is, again, an emphatic condemnation of historic Christianity. In any case, Mr. Horne is late. Thomas Paine preached this gospel over a century ago. Freethinkers have been preaching it ever since; and Mr. Horne is only preaching it now because Freethought is making it impossible for the Churches to preach any other gospel with success. For Mr. Horne, like other parsons, stuck to the old gospel so long as it would stick to him. How much of this "social gospel" should we have heard if churches and chapels had continued to be filled with people who were willing to listen to the gospel of "other-worldism"? But churches must be filled somehow, preachers must secure audiences, and the discovery of a social gospel is no more than the last resource of a clergy who despair of retaining a hold on the people by any other means. The game is not a new one, in principle. Over and over again the Catholic Church has had a timely revelation that helped it to surmount a difficult situation. Mr. Horne is not a Catholic, and it would be hardly safe to claim a revelation. But he can fall back upon a rediscovery of primitive and fundamental Christianity. Where humbug is so common, a little more or less makes no great difference.

In what way does the Brotherhood movement indicate a revival of Christianity? It does not comprise the bulk of the working classes. It does not comprise those who were non-Christians before the movement began. They are not converted. The Brotherhood crowd is gathered just as other religious crowds are gathered—by vigorous recruiting among other churches and chapels, with a sprinkling of those who, led by sentiment more than reason, are attracted by the discussion of secular and social topics. Of course, the mass of people are more ready to listen to lectures on these subjects than to sermons on theology. But that does not prove the strength of religion; it only exhibits its weakness. The Brotherhood movement is there simply because it keeps religion in the background, or confines it to some innocuous and vague formula about the Fatherhood of God. Let religion take the first place, and a large part of the attendance would drop off. As it is, the *Christian Commonwealth*, which has had little but praise for the movement, says that the representatives at the Birmingham Conference "had to face the fact that the Brotherhood movement is showing signs of arrested development," and that individual societies are "preoccupied with the problem of declining membership." Naturally; there is only a certain number from which these bogus social movements can draw. So soon as the limit is reached, the reaction begins. Then a new movement has to be initiated, only to share the same fate. Luckily for the Churches, the crop of fools is constant. But outside the Churches and the mass of people available for religious exploitation, the number of people definitely severed from both Church and Chapel steadily increases.

I do not believe that any clear-sighted social reformer expects any great good to result from these religious movements. He may keep on speaking terms with them, he may use them as so many pawns in the game he is playing, but that is about all. He knows that the real aim of these preachers is not social improvement, but an increase in the strength of religious organisations. Their object is a successful Church, not a reorganised society. To that end all things are legitimate—brass bands, theatrical displays, sensational revivalism, or a semi-hysterical interest in social problems. Every European reformer knows—and the bulk of the leading ones say—that Christianity, as such, has no real interest in social progress. In every country in the world the churches and chapels act as the guards of vested interest. Even in England and America, where the growth of public opinion has forced some of the clergy to adopt different tactics, we are apt to forget that these represent only a miserable minority. The majority of Christians are still following the old ruts and playing the old game.

There is no doubt whatever that conservative interests view these religious developments with anything but dread. Of course, they would rather not have them. They would prefer that the old preaching of humility, and suffering, and patience, and submission should continue. But if it cannot continue, if something must be done to please people and to satisfy the desire for social reform, it is far better that what is done should be under the auspices of religion. If it does nothing better, it will guarantee the minimum of change. How else is one to account for the way in which large employers of labor, great landowners, etc., patronise these religious developments? They know that exactly what Mr. Horne accuses, by implication, other churches of doing, he is doing himself. He is heading forces that might be dangerous into a comparatively innocuous channel—a place where social aspiration evaporates in religious sentiment.

The position is really simple. The demand for social justice is either well-based or it is not. If it is sound, theology cannot endow it with extra strength. Justice to man for the sake of man, is a plain principle, and one that appeals to all. Justice to man for the sake of God, is an appeal that has never yet secured decency and fair play, and never will. Those who are trying to-day to weld together the demand for social justice and theology, are not primarily interested in reform. Their dominant interest lies elsewhere, and they will sell the social cause whenever the two interests conflict. All history proves the truth of this; and although present day tactics may delude some—may even delude preachers themselves—others will not fail to see behind the mask of the social reformer the face of the religious evangelist. And behind him they will catch a glimpse of those sinister vested interests that form the life-blood of the Churches, and for which they will continue to fight so long as they stand to gain by the advocacy.

C. COHEN.

Cancer and Roses.

OUTSIDE there was a blue-black sky, glittering with starlight; inside there was an imagined heavenly canopy glowing with God's love. Outside roses and honeysuckle slept on the walls of the house, but not so soundly as to forget to breathe their perfumes into the air; inside the atmosphere was heavy with the taint of sickness, a death sickness that was made, to me, all the more tragical by the dreams of the sufferers.

They thought God was with them in the little room. His love, they imagined, was easing the pains of the one and soothing the grief of the other. They saw the Paradise they had been taught to long for; and now that it was time for one of the sisters to go, all the beauty of God's love, and all the strength and comfort of his everlasting arms, had been required to soften the blow.

The one who would remain was praying by the bedside of her sister. She was picturing the delights of heaven; and in her intensity it seemed to both that their spirits had already forsaken the clay, and were soaring together through the ineffable bliss.

Outside, in the old garden, the white roses seemed to gleam, with a strange fascinating beauty, in the darkness. It was as if their white petals reflected the star-rays, illuming the air with a soft mysterious light, weirdly beautiful. You could nearly *feel* the gleam. It seemed to seek you; it seemed to go stealing through your body like the warm glow of some old and dim memory suddenly revitalised. A curtain of quietness closed about your mind, shutting out everything but the loveliness before your eyes. There was something uncanny about it; for the gleam seemed to be purifying you in its own beauty. You felt conscious of the process.

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I suppose this feeling is more or less similar to the religious awe we read of and never see in operation. There is a considerable difference, of course, even granting the effects are somewhat alike. The roses were facts; the gods the sisters were worshiping were ideas. So were the glow of God's love and his loving-kindness; but the gleam that seemed to come from the roses was caused by the keen contrast between the white petals and the darkness, giving the sharp atmosphere the appearance of luminosity. You forgot those things when the spell enwrapped your mind; and if you had continued to overlook them when the beauty evanished, and had you sought some cause outside nature, you would very probably have blocked the truth by the obstacle named God.

While the night air had been purifying my body and mind, the sisters were bathing their minds in the fancy-lit mists of the supernatural. Thanking God for the many joys he had given them, and would give them, they forgot for a brief moment the cancer that had robbed one of them of her beauty, and was now robbing her of her life. Praising the great giver of all things for his wonderful loving-kindness, they forgot, for a little moment, the physical pain one had suffered, and the mental anguish the other had endured. Anticipating the happiness of each other's company in the heaven of their dreams, they had forgotten all about that other sister, whose nature, made by the God they worshiped, had led her "astray," and whom they had banished because of her iniquity.

A few minutes under the influence of a mental anæsthetic is poor balancing for years of misery; the selfish happiness of it bitter when it freezes human sympathy.

The religious emotionalism of the sisters would not last long, I knew; for there is little room in the mind for religion when acute pain racks the body. Human needs and human attention come before religion in point of experience. Religious bigotry may harden the heart against the weakness of those nearest to us; but when it comes right down to personal requirements, the same religious bigotry evacuates its position: human needs force it out. What suffering Christians refuse to others is gratefully taken by themselves; their religion gets the slip in the interests of their bodies.

When everything has been said for the strength of religion, the depths of its roots, and the heights of its topmost leaves, and all that, and however true these things may be, it is still wonderful how easily and how quickly religion does the disappearing trick, particularly when its presence is most important to the individual. The supposed good attributes of religion might have remained beside the sisters during their suffering just as easily as the bad attributes remained when they sent the other girl about her lonely business. Religion *is* a funny thing! The good of it seems to slide away in a moment or two, while the bad lasts for ever, approximately. It is full of irrationalities; and naturally enough, being but an agglomeration of them, when you come to analyse it.

My thoughts were becoming slightly tinged with sarcasm, when a shriek of pain cut the silence like a lightning flash. Hastily I went indoors, reaching the bedside in time to see the last twitchings of the lips of a lamb of God, killed by a loathesome disease.

We Atheists are supposed to be spiritually blind; but what kind of a blindness is it that transforms a terrible yell of agony into a jubilant shout of praise? My companion told me, some time later, that her sister had gone home on the wings of a prayer, that her entrance into Paradise had been heralded by her shout of joy.

I went out from the death-room, with that idea in my mind. Into the darkness I went; and the stars were still gloriously brilliant in the sky, and the air was still sharp and fragrant, and the weird gleam still shone from the white roses in the old garden. Sitting down on a chair, I let the loveliness of my surroundings quieten the mingled sorrow and wrath that I felt. And then I put the old questions to my pipe again, the questions that make me seem callous in the estimation of my Christian friends, the simple questions that make God ludicrous when not completely impossible, the questions that undermine the foundations of religion, the questions that blow it up.

And inside there was a sister, who had refused to be comforted, whose idea had given rise to my invisible wrath, and whose beliefs, despite their roots and heights, were so badly made that they were valueless; for she was weeping her eyes out upon the covered bosom of her dead sister.

Robert Moreland.

Is There a Hell?—III.

We left off, at the end of our last article, with some remarks on the anonymous editor's statement about Atheists teaching that "we die like dogs." We put in a good word for the dog as being more faithful than the majority of human beings. We will only add, on this point, in the first place that this pious gentleman should read Byron's epitaph on his dog "Boatswain," and, in the second place, that reading the Bible is pretty sure to induce a false notion of man's canine friend. "Holy Writ," especially in the Old Testament, uses the word "dog" to indicate a practiser of unnatural vice. Which, by the way, is a piece of very vulgar insolence; for it is impossible to estimate man's indebtedness to the dog in the course of his evolution, and man's virtues, far more surely than his vices, are to be found amongst the lower animals.

After all men do die like dogs. Shakespeare calls man "the paragon of animals" and all animals die alike, just as they are all born alike—at least as regards the various mammalian species. "Yea, they have all one breath," as the wisest book in the Bible says. And there is nothing but man's vanity to support the idea that his "soul" is less perishable than theirs. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return" is said of man in the Bible itself; and the "breath of life" infused into man in Genesis is precisely the same "breath of life" that was infused into the rest of the animal creation.

"In our heart of hearts," this writer says, "we do not believe the Atheists, and we do not even believe that the Atheists believe themselves." This is a fair sample of Christian manners in controversy. In ordinary disputes such an attitude commonly provokes a "you're another" reply. But it is hardly worth while descending to that level of discussion. Atheists may very well leave the Christians in full possession of that kind of argumentation.

We pass on to another part of the Introduction to *Is There a Hell?* There is truth, and more of something else, in the following passage:—

> "Of recent years there has been more talk in the pulpit of heaven than of hell, and not a few people have endeavored to persuade themselves that there is no hell. This is a very natural reaction from the terrifying notions of a material hell which were inflicted for many generations upon our forefathers ..... The Dantesque picture of this hell as a penal place of flames, and smoke, and physical torture, appalled the people of yesterday and sent children to bed in agonies of terror. But that was an absurd picture. One can burn one's hand in a furnace, but one cannot burn one's soul there. Only a spiritual fire can be felt by a spirit."

It is perfectly true that civilised people have revolted against the descriptions of hell that terrified little children, and were meant to terrify them. But it is no less true that those descriptions were based upon the plain language of the Bible. Such expressions as "everlasting fire," "the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire," and "the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever," are not to be explained away as merely symbolical without bringing the Bible into contempt. To call the orthodox picture of hell "Dantesque" is simply an evasion. Dante's conceptions of hell were first of all derived

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from the Christian Scriptures. Huxley practised a similar evasion, but for a very different object,—namely, to disarm prejudice and obtain a peaceful hearing. In his American lectures on Evolution he criticised the "Miltonic" theory of creation severely; but all the time he meant the "Mosaic" theory—that is, the Biblical theory. When the discussion opened between Huxley and Gladstone the "Miltonic" had soon to be dropped for the "Mosaic." For the old parliamentary hand wanted his adversary to suffer as much odium as possible; and in this particular instance he was not entirely without justification.

It may be observed, also, that the "absurd picture" was not so absurd in view of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which this writer completely overlooks, although it is still taught by the Catholic and Anglican Churches, and is included in the Syllabus of Religious Instruction in elementary schools, of which Dr. Clifford, one of the leading Free Church divines, is so amazingly proud. We have already quoted Spurgeon's eloquence on this very point. When the risen body had joined the immortal soul they were to be tortured together for ever; and the fire in which the body was to be burnt without being consumed was "exactly like that which we have on earth." That was a wicked hell, but it was an honest hell. And if Spurgeon believed in it, as he probably or possibly did, he was right in warning people against it.

The various writers of this volume do not give up hell altogether. There is a certain terrible vigor in the word, which is utterly lost in the "Hades" of the Revised Version. Hell is cooled down, but not abandoned. It is still serviceable. Listen to the anonymous editor again:—

> "Hell may not be a place; it may be a state. Heaven may not be a place; it may be a state. But if heaven is the reward of the righteous, there must be a negative of non-reward, if not an antithesis of direct punishment, and the negative or antithesis of heaven *must* be hell."

There *must* be a hell! Of course there must. The clergy will not discard it while it is of the least worth to them. When it is nothing but a sheer loss, they will get rid of it altogether, without the slightest compunction.

For the present hell is indispensable. All the contributors to this volume—Catholic priest, Anglican clergyman, Nonconformist minister, and Jewish rabbi—are agreed upon this one point. Listen to the editor again:—

> "In the succeeding pages of this book a number of well-known religious authorities give their own views upon the subject—views which in many particulars are dissimilar from one another. But it will be found that every one of these authorities gives an unqualified 'Yes' to the vital question—'Is There a Hell?'"

These "authorities," as the editor calls them, are no authorities at all. They dismiss as false what their predecessors taught as truth. What *they* now teach as truth will be dismissed as false by *their* successors. "Authorities" indeed! Their agreement is confined to the one point,—that there *is* a hell. *Where* it is, *what* it is, and who will have to go to it, and whether they will have to live in it for ever—these are points on which these "authorities" are in open disagreement.

Some of them argue, and justly enough, in our opinion, that heaven and hell are parts of the same view of the "beyond." If you give up the latter, you have no logical ground for retaining the former. They stand or fall together. Listen to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton on this point:—

> "If we are to be logical we must, when we give up hell, give up heaven also. It is the feeblest form of sentimentality to profess a belief in heaven—and especially to accept heaven for ourselves—when we have no fear of hell and have given up believing in it. And to do the modern mind justice it does, as a rule, frankly surrender both. The disbelief of to-day in hell is equally a disbelief in heaven. The vast bulk of the indifferent have no expectations of any future life, and if they genially declare that God is too kind to send them to hell, they practically believe that he is not kind enough, or, at any rate, has not the power, to send them to heaven. They have dismissed the whole idea of a future life for themselves and for their friends, and they live practically in the present and for things that can be gained and enjoyed here in this life."

This is quite true. Heaven and hell are *falling* together. No one that we know of was ever anxious to go to heaven. It was only the alternative to hell. There was no other place of refuge. A man who rushes out of a house on fire is in no hurry to decide where he will eat his next meal and take his next night's sleep. Ask him where he is going and he replies, "Out of *this*." Christian Churches traded chiefly on the fear of hell. The hope of heaven was but an afterthought. We cannot see that it is any more attractive now. What has happened is that hell has become less terrifying. Dr. Horton himself does not paint it in very lurid colors:—

> "We are obliged to revise the geography, if we may so call it, of the spiritual world. We do not say that heaven is above and hell is beneath, for such expressions have lost their meaning for us with the fuller knowledge of the solar system. What do we say? We say, in the light of Christian revelation, that heaven is a state of permanent reconciliation with God, and that hell is a state of permanent enmity to God. To be reconciled with God is to be in heaven, even here, and to be at enmity with God is similarly to be in hell."

Rev. Silas Hocking goes farther than this. "Heaven and hell," he says, "may be in the same place; and heaven will be hell to the man who loves evil things." Mr. Hocking appears to be a universalist. He denounces the old idea of hell most severely:—

> "To talk of a hell so horrible that no man with a heart in him would throw a dog into it, and yet to preach that the Almighty Father cast the bulk of the human family into it to burn for ever and ever, is to insult the very name of the Being whom we are taught to love."

After this it is easy to understand that Mr. Hocking believes that in course of time "all men will grow to see the good" and that "all lost souls will be reclaimed."

Rev. Dr. Charles Brown writes on "the Absurdity of a Material Hell." Still, the sinner must look out:—

> "I preach that there will be a terrible awakening for people who have trifled with duty and conscience, and who have rejected the light. I preach that there must be something unutterably awful under the figures which our Lord used of the outer darkness, the undying worm, the unquenchable fire. I preach, and I sincerely believe, that there is some experience that is more terrible than we conceive in store for the wilful and unrepentant sinner."

This gentleman is very insistent with his "I preach." But how does it matter *what* he preaches? The only important thing is what he *knows*, and he knows *nothing*—just like his colleagues.

One idea possesses all these clerical gentlemen. They follow Jesus in dividing people into sheep and goats—good and bad; and there is heaven for one lot and hell for the other. But what a childish philosophy is this! Few of us are angels; few of us are devils. Most of us are neither black nor white, but various shades of grey. The best of us have our defects; the worst of us have our redeeming qualities. Bad men and good men are a very unphilosophical division of the human race. Things are not so simple as that. If they were the world would have few problems to trouble it. With all the "good" men on one side and all the "bad" men on the other we should soon come to a settlement of human affairs. Pascal said that man never has the choice between good and evil—he has only the choice between various mixtures of both. Just in the same way are goodness and badness mixed in mankind. Consequently the doctrine of heaven for one set of people, and hell for another set of people, is puerile, and can only be dismissed with the contempt it deserves by intelligent people.

G. W. Foote.

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Acid Drops.

The Church Congress has provided the usual cartload of words to a very few grains of sense. All sorts of problems have been discussed, without anyone being much the wiser or better. And, as usual, the speakers were most definite where knowledge was impossible, and least certain where courage and industry could have supplied them with positive information. The relation of the sexes, for instance, all the speakers agreed, ought to be governed by the Christian ideal. But, as no one proceeded to say just what the Christian ideal was, peace was maintained. Otherwise, the Congress might have witnessed some lively scenes. Canon Grane, speaking on War, said it was a wonder that the saving grace of humor had not shown us "the *reductio ad absurdum* to which civilisation, minus Christianity, had brought the leading Christian States." If Canon Grane had not been a clergyman, one might have expected him to realise that the fault is not that civilisation has been deficient in Christianity, but that it has had too much. Sir Ernest Sutour, who really ought to have known better, touched the limit by declaring it incontestable that "Christianity had done much to mitigate the horrors of war and to promote good feeling among nations." Examples: England and Germany; Germany and France; Bulgaria, Servia, and Greece.

Some spirited comments on Sir Oliver Lodge's presidential address are contributed by Sir Ray Lankester to the *Daily Telegraph*. He says, as we said in the *Freethinker*, that Sir Oliver's profession of "belief" is a very interesting piece of autobiography, but "singularly out of place at a meeting for the advancement of science." Sir Ray (these titles seem sadly out of place, somehow, in connection with scientific work) points out that the business of science is not to discuss "possibilities," but to verify facts, however wildly improbable they may appear at first sight. Had scientific men adopted the plan of Sir Oliver Lodge and discussed mere speculative possibilities, they would still have been quarrelling over ghosts and goblins and vampires and witches. Instead, they insisted that "the vampire and the dragon should be placed 'on the table,' that angels should be brought before them and their power of dancing on a needle's point exhibited, before they would discuss these things at all." And the result of the adoption of this attitude was the rapid disappearance of the superstitions for which so many worthy men have stood sponsors.

Sir Oliver Lodge, says Sir Ray Lankester,—

> "Seeks to prepare the way for the reception of his hypothetical as plausible and needful conceptions by conjuring up select specimens of scientific investigators who are so blinded by their occupation in special branches of science that they are unable to do what he is able to do—namely, to take a large view of existence. He seems to think that there are biologists and others ignorant enough to maintain that all existence and 'the nature of things' can be explained by physics and chemistry. He supposes such persons to deny the existence of ghosts on the ground that they cannot be accounted for by physics and chemistry. There may be such persons, and we leave Sir Oliver to deal with them when found. There are others (of whom I am one) who—in common with Huxley—admit that science does not explain existence nor the ultimate nature of things at all. Sir Oliver makes an urgent appeal in favor of the plausibility of ghosts. He omits to state or consider the real objection which all reasonable men entertain to a belief in the existence of ghosts—namely, that the President of the British Association has not, any more than have other such believers, brought forward a particle of experimental evidence in favor of it. The best evidence forthcoming is not sufficient to induce a normal man to bet five pounds on the successful demonstration of a ghost's existence against five thousand offered on the other side."

This is a well-deserved rebuke, and it was necessary that someone should administer it. When ill-informed people are told in scores of sermons and religious journals that science has altered its attitude towards religion, etc., etc., it is well that someone in authority should point out how much alone in the world of science Sir Oliver Lodge stands. It may be that the acceptance by people of Sir Oliver's speculations as the verdicts of modern science may lead others beside Sir Ray Lankester to speak out. In that case it will be Freethinkers who will have to thank Sir Oliver for his presidential address.

While the Church Congress was discussing the elevating influence of Christianity on the fair sex, Albanian women were fighting the Servians with rifles and hatchets. There is often a contrast between theory and practice.

The Balkan Christians have three gods. The Turks have only one. There is about the same ratio in their cruelties.

It gives one the creeps to see a paper like the *Westminster Gazette* playing to the gallery just as badly as journals of far less intellectual calibre. On the opening day of the Church Congress our contemporary had a front-page article on "The Church and the World." It was very well written, and in some respects very able. This passage, for instance, was as sound as it was pungent:—

> "The Church of England is very militant about Disestablishment and Church schools, but it seems to a great many observers to be strangely pacific and quiescent about a great many other things of at least equal importance; and by some unfortunate chance, whenever it has to give a vote, it gives one which history almost invariably judges to have been on the wrong side."

But at that point our contemporary seems to have felt that discretion was by far the better part of valor. Severe criticism of the Anglican Church in particular would have to be balanced by compliments to Christianity as a whole; so it began to call attention to some comforting "facts which concern all the Churches." "We see many signs," it went on, "that the modern world is becoming in a general way more religious. There is a marked reaction from the materialism of forty years ago. Our scientific men are beginning to tell us that all things are possible, and the President of the British Association delivers a religious address from his chair." We should like to think this was sarcasm, but we are unable to do so. The writer deliberately abases himself, and grows maudlin in putting his neck into the Philistines' yoke for the sake of his salary. Otherwise we might ask him what he means by "the materialism of forty years ago"—who are the scientific men who teach the nonsense that "all things are possible"—and why President Lodge's address is any more important than President Schafer's from the chair of the British Association? Above all, we should invite him to indicate some of those "signs" of the world's growing more religious. We wonder if he refers to the rivalry in armaments between Christian nations or the meek and mild virtues of the Christian Balkan States?

There were several reports of the Wolverhampton "blasphemy" case in the local papers. We have reproduced (on another page) the longest from the *Express and Star*. Any other choice might have been misrepresented. But we add the following extract from the *Birmingham Daily Mail* of October 1, giving some of the alleged "blasphemies":—

> "There never was a man called Jesus at all."
> "What did he teach?"
> "I could train a parrot in three weeks to say Jesus was a great teacher."
> "Nobody outside a lunatic asylum would believe that Jesus lived."
> "We have splendid history books and a dozen eminent men who have never heard of Jesus."
> "Josephus is the only reliable historian, and there is no mention of Jesus in his books."
> "If a man believes Jesus lives he is in error, and if he says he does live he tells a deliberate untruth."
> "Jesus was not a teetotaler."
> "I could name you a hundred Christs all born of Virgins."

Such are the expressions that expose a man to a criminal prosecution in this "land of freedom." Here and there a sentence may be marked by what some people would regard as bad taste. But bad taste is not a crime. If it were, the bulk of the population of England would be in prison—if those outside were numerous enough to keep them there.

We quite understand that what is *sub judice* is not open to public discussion. Mr. Stewart's case is *sub judice*, but his statements are not. The statement that "There never was a man called Jesus at all" is *sub judice* in the court of historical controversy, but not in any police-court or at any court of assize. Without being responsible for Mr. Stewart's literary composition, we take the fullest responsibility for the substance of his statement. We are prepared to repeat it as often as may be necessary. To put it forward as "blasphemy" is a disgrace to the police, and to listen to it is not very creditable to the Stipendiary. Why, there is a member of the present Government, Mr. J. M. Robertson, who has written a big book to prove what the Wolverhampton "blasphemer" alleges in the first and last of his "criminal" utterances. One man is prosecuted for making a statement, and another man who proves it enjoys a place in the Government and £1,200 a year. Shaw himself couldn't do justice to this tragi-comical discrepancy. One would have to leave it to Swift.

We prefer to say nothing at present about the complications in Mr. Stewart's case. We may have something to say about the matter when the case is over.

Knowing the Blasphemy Laws as well as we do, we are often astonished at the nonsense that is written and spoken

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about them. Complaint is made, for instance, that "blasphemers" are arrested instead of being summoned; in fact, the recent arrest at Wolverhampton is treated as something entirely new. It is really nothing of the sort. George Jacob Holyoake was arrested in 1842 and several of his colleagues were arrested afterwards. Harry Boulter was arrested in 1908. The young Sheffielder, S. E. Bullock, was arrested in 1911. We have not kept a detailed record of the Nottingham case, but we fancy there was an arrest in that also. There was no arrest, of course, in the prosecution of the *Freethinker* in 1882. Mr. Foote's was a press offence, and the prosecution had to proceed under the Newspaper Libel Act.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," says the Lord's Prayer. But somehow or other it doesn't get done. A speaker at the Church Congress—the Rev. H. Dunnico, of Liverpool—pleaded that working men should have "a chance to become the creatures that God intended them to be." Poor God! His wishes are always being frustrated. Clerical land-nationalisers are always declaring that God meant the land for the people,—only the landlords have been too many for him. When Jesus Christ said that the meek should inherit the earth he must have meant in coffins.

One Lord God Almighty (that sounds well!) is to be besieged by praying ladies, and all the friends they can induce to join them, during the week from November 1 to November 8. A call to prayer for that period is issued by the Catholic Women's Suffrage Society, the Church League for Women's Suffrage, the Free Church League for Women's Suffrage, the Friends' League for Women's Suffrage, the Jewish League for Women's Suffrage, and the Scottish Churches' League for Women's Suffrage. The "call" states that "the enfranchisement of women is in accordance with the wil of God." Here we have the will of the poor Deity frustrated again. It is pitiable.

Where do the ladies find what is, or is not, in accordance with the will of God? They certainly cannot find anything like woman suffrage in the Bible. If they followed Paul's directions they would keep silence in public and talk all they wanted to at home. But the time has gone by for that—and gone by for ever.

The "militants" don't join in this week of prayer. They prefer arson. Yet Mrs. Pankhurst is a pious lady, and takes the name of God in vain as well as the other suffragists.

"He has taken a prominent part in social and religious work." This is what a newspaper report says of James Vose, who was charged before the Bolton magistrates with obtaining money by false pretences from the Britannic Insurance Company. Accused was remanded, bail being refused.

Rev. Cecil Frederick Blyth, rector of Rickinghall, Suffolk, left £4,303. Rev. Duncombe Herbert Sawyer, of Bournemouth, left £15,822. Their present address must be warmer than ours this October.

A workman named Thomas Tosheeky was lately buried by a heavy fall in a coal mine at Wilkes Barre, the result of a slight explosion which destroyed the props of his working. His fellow workmen spent a whole week in digging him out. He was fed by means of liquid food through a pipe driven through the solid rock to his living tomb. Conversation was also carried on through the same channel. To keep his spirits up a gramophone was placed at the outer end of the pipe. But there was no "Nearer my god to thee" in the entertainment. The program consisted of the latest ragtime pieces and music-hall sketches.

More "chatter about Christ" from Bernard Shaw, who says that "Christianity has not gained an inch since the Crucifixion." We admit the fiction, but there was no Cross, and no Christ, and no Christianity but what was made up during several centuries from religious material derived from all points of the compass. It is a pity that Shaw doesn't take a more scientific view of the Gospels. Jesus Christ is as imaginary as Don Quixote, and to discuss the teaching of either of them at this time of day is a great absurdity.

A bright, clever girl was occupying a Woman Suffrage stand. She had occasion to mention the *Daily Mail*, and some of the crowd called out "the Daily Liar." "Oh, well," she said, "I know it has another name." There was a good laugh, and she deserved it.

We are reminded of that incident by the *Daily Mail's* recent attack on Mr. J. M. Robertson, M.P. It accused him of extravagant vituperation, which it attributed to "the thoroughness of his early training as a street-corner orator under the banner of the late Mr. Bradlaugh." We don't remember Mr. Robertson's speaking at any outdoor meetings, and Bradlaugh was one of the most careful speakers who ever lived.

Miss Marie Lloyd, the famous music-hall artiste, was ordered by the New York Immigration authorities to be deported as an "undesirable." Solomon himself would never have passed those terrible officials.

Mrs. Philip Snowden, speaking at Manchester, said that, unless the Christian Church was fair to women, they would forsake the Church. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" If the ladies leave the Church the poor clergy will have to sing in the streets.

A woman was sentenced to six months' hard labor for stealing umbrellas and handbags from St. Faith's Chapel, Westminster Abbey. It was stated that she constantly attended churches. In that capacity, doubtless, she counted as many devout believers in the religious census tables, published to the greater glory of God.

There is a National Gas Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush. We hope the clergy are adequately represented.

Atheists, Agnostics, Freethinkers, and all such people are devoid of the sense of beauty. Christians all know that. Yet it was left to Mr. H. S. Salt to protest against the proposed vulgarisation of the Sty Hill Pass in the heart of the Cumberland mountains.

The Church of England clergy have a good conceit of themselves. Canon Cunningham, of Farnham, trotted out what he might have called a home-made recipe for good legislation in the House of Commons. After the House had discussed any Bill before it, one of the late W. T. Stead's "tips from heaven" would be solicited:—

> "When all the several views had been voiced," said the Canon, "surely a great silence would be kept for a space, while severally and collectively the House would consult the Unseen Presence and seek His counsel. When this had been revealed the Speaker would voice what he had come to feel had been given to the assembly. It might be on other lines than anything previously suggested, and the leaders would rise one after another to say 'Amen.'"

Evidently the reverend gentleman doesn't expect John Morley in the House of Lords, or John Burns and John M. Robertson in the House of Commons, to raise any objection to this pious performance. Nor does he suspect the possibility of the Speaker objecting to play the part of a mediumistic telephone.

"Every slum is a blasphemy," said the Rev. P. E. Rattenbury, speaking at the Baptist Union meeting at Manchester. Yet the Blasphemy Laws are still confined to Freethinkers.

Another exploded Messiah! A Breslau plumber, named Hermann Steinicke, got a number of dupes to accept him as the "returned Christ." He promised them a happy life with three or four hours' work a day when his "kingdom of peace" came in again. In return for this promise he obtained money from them that enabled him to live in luxury. Finally, however, they turned upon him, and had him arrested as a swindler. He is now doing time.

We congratulate the *Methodist Times* on its ability to see the trees through the wood. It pronounces the religious difficulty to be *the* difficulty in connection with Home Rule. We hardly thought anybody believed to the contrary. Every statesman who has attempted to deal with the Irish question on any comprehensive scale has found himself faced with the problem of reconciling Catholic and Protestant. Both talk, professionally, about love; both illustrate in practice the power of religion in general and of Christianity in particular, to generate hatred. For nothing but religion could make men hate each other as bitterly as do Catholics and Protestants. A difference in mere political opinion would admit of easy compromise. In religion, hatred becomes a virtue, and reasonable concession a vice. For it is not love of their own religion so much as hatred of the religion of someone else that is the real motive power in Ireland. And the situation only proves what a fundamentally anti-social, non-moral, and disruptive power religion is.

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It is abominable that parents who hate the idea of beating their children should be compelled to send them to school where they may be beaten by strangers. A woman applied to the Acton magistrates the other day for a summons against a schoolmaster who had caned her son. She stated that there was a mark five inches long and two inches wide on the boy's back, and that a doctor who had seen him considered it was brutal treatment. The summons was not granted. Yet, as the woman said, she would have got into trouble if she had struck the boy so herself.

Is it not a shameful confession on the part of English school-teachers that they cannot maintain discipline without a stick? Those who really mean this have mistaken their vocation. Why should they be unable to dispense with what has long been given up in the schools of other countries? A teacher who struck a child in a Japanese school would lose his (or her) engagement on the spot. But there is no Bible reading in the Japanese schools. That may make all the difference.

Eugenio Prosetti, a Roman bootmaker, has served a sentence of fifty-four years' imprisonment for murder in Italy. It is difficult to see how such a sentence is preferable to capital punishment. We admit that the "mercy" of it is worthy of a Christian country—and the Christian deity.

Christianity is the only religion that supports a man under trials and affords him consolation in adversity. Yet nobody is surprised when a Christian commits suicide. There was a heading "Curate's Suicide" in the *Star* the other evening. It ought to have convulsed London, but we needn't say it didn't. The curate in question was the Rev. Henry Thirkill Johnston, aged twenty-nine, a former missionary in Calcutta. He had suffered for some time from a severe nervous breakdown. He laid his head on the metals before a Great Northern express, and "Providence" let him lie there.

What taste the monarchical superstition seems to inspire! Ex-King Manuel's interrupted honeymoon has been in the newspapers day after day. It was enough to make a feline night-disturber sick.

A Coventry reader says: "I wrote you some time ago about an issue of the *Freethinker* I had not received. It has just turned up, and I am herewith returning it to you, as it shows how easily the Post Office miscarries things." The word "Coventry" on the wrapper is not in our shop manager's best handwriting, but it is legible enough to any person looking at it attentively. But where it has been—or rather where it has *not* been—is a puzzle. Amongst the postmarks we notice Bombay. From there it seems to have been returned with a written suggestion to "Try Cowley, Cheltenham, R.U., Angleterre." Finally the actual address of Coventry was "tried" and the poor packet reached its destination at last. We must at least give the Post Office credit for ingenuity.

We suggest to Mr. Farmer, whose learned and pregnant articles on musical composers and other artistic matters are familiar to our readers, that he should follow up the history of the National Anthem. The music is not bad—in its way, but the words are "a caution." Yet people take off their hats to "politics" and "tricks" and "fix" as if they were listening to the sublimest flights of Shakespeare. The "victorious," "glorious," and "over us" form another poetical beauty of "God Save the King." How the "over us" got in is a curious speculation. Mr. Farmer may solve it. As a help to him we may point out that the very words "long to reign over us" in relation to the monarch occur in old Bishop Latimer's first sermon before King Edward the Sixth. From the context we should judge that the phrase was even then a familiar one.

"Woman in the coming season will try to recapture the lost art of blushing," says the *Daily Mirror*. We suggest that a selected course of Old Testament reading might produce the desired result.

"A War Over One Man" is a description of an industrial dispute in the press. Yet history records worse ironies. The Crusades, in which myriads of men lost their lives, was a war over the tomb of a man who never lived and never died.

A "ghosts'" dinner took place in Fleet-street recently at the "Cheshire Cheese," and the bogeys consumed a considerable quantity of meat pudding and liquid nourishment. This was a more harmless recreation than the ghostly amusement recorded in the early part of the Gospels.

Lord Salisbury told the Church Congress that "neither baths nor parlors were the saving of souls." Agricultural souls, of course. He might have added that a lot of poor Christian people object to baths, like the water-fearing tramp who asked if he couldn't be cleaned on the vacuum system.

Another poor Jesusite! Rev. Dr. George Green Gillan, of Carmunnock, Lanarkshire, left £12,600. A large sum to make out of thrifty Scottish Christians. But he managed it.

Someone has sent us a little publication called the *Religion of a Business Man* by Herbert Parker, B.A., Liverpool. This gentleman chuckles over the fact that the *Freethinker* pays a tribute to "the great Nazarene" every week by dating after him. "Every time," he adds, "Charles Bradlaugh dated a letter he was rendering silent homage to the might of Christ!" This antiquated folly was once very common. It only lingers now in the most hopelessly stupid circles. It might as well be said that Mr. Parker renders a silent tribute to Roman emperors every time he writes the name of certain months of the year; worse still, that he renders a silent homage to Pagan divinities every time he writes the names of the days of the week.

The following appeared in the Bristol *Herald-Courier*, Tennessee:—

"Knoxville, Tenn., September 2.

"Two preachers, Matthew and Luke Duncan, brothers, of Frost Bottom, Tenn., fought over an argument about the Bible last Saturday, and after they had fought, both took to the woods. Matthew was captured yesterday and taken to Oliver Springs. He fought savagely when taken, knocking several men down before being overpowered. During the night at Oliver Springs he was lashed to a post for safekeeping. To-day he was committed to the State hospital for the insane at Lyon's View. His brother, Luke, has not been found.

"They fought following an argument as to who has the supreme power, the Lord or the Devil. Matthew maintained that God has power over the Devil, and Luke took the other view."

This sort of thing is astonishingly common in America. Christian preachers over there beat the British variety hollow as lunatics and criminals.

"If the story is true that the Socialists and anti-clericals of Rome attempted to mob a delegation of Catholic societies from abroad visiting the Pope, then it is evident that the Socialists and anti-clericals of that city have as faint or erroneous a conception of equal rights and impartial liberty as was displayed in New York by the Irish Catholics who mobbed a troupe of actors presenting a play that was not to their taste. If anti-clericalism is but Catholicism reversed, and means only hatred of the persons of the Catholic faith, it is not so vast an improvement as it might be over Catholic bigotry."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A Socialist at Toulon bit off an adversary's nose after a political argument. Who was it said that Socialism was a religion?

£102,000 has been raised for the Church Missionary Society as a result of the recent Swanwick Conference. This will raise the price of "rice" Christians.

Christian Evidence lecturers, and other defenders of the Design Argument, will note with pleasure that a fowl, dressed for table at Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire, was found to possess two hearts, both of which had worked independently. "He doeth all things well." Sometimes over well.

What Secularists these Christians are! At Carshalton Surrey, they have been raising funds for a church institute by selling lead pencils, which were bought at wholesale rates and retailed at a penny each. When the full amount is raised the result in all probability will be attributed to prayer and not pencils.

The Bishop of London, when before the Divorce Commission, pretended to represent the "Christian view" of marriage. The President tried in vain to get him to tell where it was to be found. No such thing exists, unless it be in the Catholic Church. The discussions at the recent Church Congress show that all sorts of views on the subject are held even by the clergy of the Church of England.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

October 19, Manchester; 26, Stratford Town Hall.
December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £193 7s. 3d. Received since:—Annonymous (Liverpool), 15s.; W. H. B., 2s. 6d.; G. Le Quesne and Friends (New Zealand), £1 1s.; Welsh Doctor, £2.

W. RICHARDS.—Why do you call him "the doctor"? He is no more a doctor than you are. Thanks for the papers, though we had already received them from other hands.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. H. B.—Thanks for pleasant letter.

J. DRISCOLL.—Not without merit, but hardly up to our level of publication.

E. HANNAN.—Thanks for your trouble. But we hardly know what to make of Leeds. Perhaps we had better give it a rest for a bit.

A. H.—See paragraph.

J. HECHT asks if anyone can find work for a worthy Freethinker who wants it badly. He has been an active member of the Edmonton Branch. He is skilled in the management of horses, an experienced driver, and a good canvasser.

BIRMINGHAM "SAINT."—"Blasphemy" cases *must* go to the Assizes. They have to be tried by a judge of the supreme court. A special statute to that effect was passed some seventy years ago.

W. MCLELLAN.—Your letter was sent on to us at Birmingham, too late for any useful reply, even if we could have given advice in the absence of full details.

WELSH DOCTOR.—The memorandum we made in a hurry after the lecture on Sunday night has got mislaid somehow. We therefore acknowledge your subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund in one of the ways first suggested.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

L. E. ADAMS.—Your letter repeats what we have often said, and the case, being purely private, cannot be used as evidence.

A. POTTS.—From various sources.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

W. DAVIDSON.—Always pleased to hear from you, but kindly let it be before Tuesday.

W. H. HARRIS.—We don't think Bernard Shaw's reply to the reverend gentleman is just what you appear to think it. But we cannot deal with the matter just now.

W. G. KING.—We are seldom able to deal with things that reach us on Tuesday, unless they are really urgent. We had already written on the Wolverhampton prosecution.

W. GARDNER.—We saw the correspondence on Hyde Park "blasphemy" in the *Referee*. We don't think, however, that the Home Office or the Police want more "blasphemy" prosecutions in London. Perhaps an attempt may be made to deal with "improper" language. But even that could only be justified by treating Freethinkers and Christians alike. Any check in the interest of the peace must be applied impartially all round.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote was not able to travel to Birmingham on Saturday evening, as he has usually done in the past. He had therefore to travel on the Sunday, leaving home at 9 in the morning and arriving at Birmingham at 2 in the afternoon, after nearly missing the connection at Paddington. He entered Birmingham in a deluge of rain; the deluge continued all the afternoon and all the evening, and apprehension was felt as to the success of the Town Hall meeting. But there was a splendid audience in spite of the weather and Mr. Foote had a great reception, which Mr. Fathers, the chairman, noted with much pleasure. The criticism of "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology" was followed with close attention throughout, and enthusiastically applauded at the finish. Many questions were asked and answered, and there was the time-honored complaint of "no discussion" which is a condition attaching to the grant of the Town Hall for the meeting. Mr. Foote's visit should give a fillip to the N. S. S. Branch's regular Sunday propaganda in the King's Hall.

Mr. Foote is only delivering two lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall this side of Christmas—on Sunday evenings, December 7 and 14. During the month of November he will devote himself exclusively to literary work and fresh publications through the Pioneer Press.

District "saints" are reminded that Mr. Foote visits Manchester next Sunday (Oct. 19) and delivers two lectures (afternoon and evening) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road.

Glasgow "saints" are once more reminded that Mr. Cohen lectures in their city next Sunday (Oct. 19).

The Stratford Town Hall course of Sunday Freethought lectures begins this evening (Oct. 12). Mr. Cohen occupies the platform and we hope the local "saints" will do their best to advertise the meeting amongst their friends and acquaintances. Mr. Lloyd takes the second lecture of this course and Mr. Foote the last.

Despite the unpleasant weather on Sunday last, the bright and cheerful-looking little Foresters' Hall, Highgate-road, was comfortably filled. Mr. Cohen was in excellent form, and his lecture was greatly appreciated. Mr. J. T. Lloyd occupies the platform next Sunday, and the North London "saints" should give him a hearty welcome.

The tenth annual Bradlaugh Dinner is to be held rather late—on October 23—at the Holborn Restaurant. Tickets are 5s. each—but only 3s. to members of the Bradlaugh Fellowship; and can be obtained of W. J. Ramsey, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, or of H. Reeve, 107 Green-street, Bethnal Green. There is a piquancy in the announcement that Mr. Bernard Shaw is to occupy the chair.

The October number of the *English Review* contains an excellent article by Florence G. Fidler on "The Position of Women under the Hammurabi Code." The editor contributes his monthly supply of vigorous editorial notes—chiefly, this time, about Home Rule. Some of the other contents are interesting, but they do not call for special mention in our columns.

George Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, has had a month's holiday. He appears to have spent it in his native district in New Hampshire, amidst old friends and other persons of "rural simplicity"—to borrow Lord Rosebery's happy description of the mental characteristics of the "slim" Dutchmen of South Africa. They have stirred up George's own native humor, and caused him to contribute one of his happiest efforts to the old paper. We confess to having had several good laughs over it. We are also glad to infer that the month's holiday has afforded our distant friend and colleague some real bodily and mental refreshment.

George Macdonald's early reference to a certain minister of the gospel (he got across the fraternity pretty soon) is dry—but not with the dryness of Shakespeare's remainder biscuit after a long voyage:—

> "A few days before the Old Home Day I had fallen in with a Universalist minister who does odd jobs of preaching in a number of near-by parishes. With him I discussed religion and Rationalism, and found him cognisant of biblical criticism at least as late as Colenso on the Pentateuch. He was liberal and reasonable enough to admit that if the Christian religion had not been invented and presented to the world until the twentieth century nobody would think it worth patenting. Its success, he said, required the age of ignorance and credulity in which it originated. That was going far, for a minister, and so when he took the floor during the services at Surry I looked for something educative. But there was nothing. His preaching proved as dusty and musty as the rest."

The "Colenso" touch is George all over.

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Here is another passage about ministers:—

"If going to meeting in New England is to continue, it looks to me as if the people and the preachers would need to come together for a heart-to-heart talk. A preacher can be liberal enough in his expressions when he is talking to somebody who knows that orthodoxy is a blown-out tyre in these automobile days; but the suspicion does not seem to have entered his mind that the people are as well acquainted with the fact as himself. On the other hand, the people talk like Rationalists, but seem to suppose that the ministers are unconscious of their state of mind. So they are pious enough when the preacher is about, and the minister is orthodox in their hearing. Both sides are wearing masks in the other's presence. The minister has every Sunday the opportunity of a student or teacher to tell his hearers something they don't know and so to be to them a source of information about progress made in religious thought and even in science. But he is either too lazy or afraid, and his people haven't the sense or courage to demand something besides the old husks he feeds them. The churches are poorly supported, and the contributors are paying reluctantly for something they don't want, and wanting what they don't get."

Capital! And what a lot of good nature there is in it!

We think we like George Macdonald best of all, however, in his personal touches. For instance, he meets an old farmer friend that he hadn't seen for a generation. "I went to school with him," he writes, "in the 'seventies. I shook his hand, and, to make conversation, asked, 'Has anything happened since I saw you thirty-five years ago?' He thought a minute, and then —— 'Well,' he said, 'I don't know as there has.'" That is so natural that one can imagine the interview. It is equalled, if not bettered, by a later sparkle. George was rather proud in former days of his wrestling and his spelling. But he painfully remembers that he was not always successful. "A consumptive from Boston name Will Cleland, then rusticating for health, took a fall out of me at wrestling, and I was spelled down in my fourteenth year by Ben Crosby, a boy later adjudged an idiot and put in an asylum."

The month's holiday has done George Macdonald good. It hasn't made him a humorist; nature did that; but it has pricked him up to do more justice to the fact than he seems to fancy he is entitled to do—at least as a regular thing—in the *Truthseeker*. But, for our part, to use an Hibernicism, we wish he could have a month's holiday every week.

We have received the following letter from the antipodes:

"Dear Sir,—A few friends and devoted admirers of yourself and of the noble work of emancipation from the shackles of superstition to which the best years of your life have been ungrudgingly given, hearing with keen regret of your recent indisposition, desire to send you a small spontaneous token of their goodwill.

"On behalf of these friends, therefore, I have much pleasure in enclosing the sum of one guinea, which has been subscribed among them, and we trust that this small mark of our esteem may be of some slight service to you in furthering the glorious cause of Freethought.

"My fellow-subscribers unite with me in wishing you a speedy restoration to health, and ardently hope that you may long be spared to wield the bloodless sword of Reason against the ranks of Ignorance and Superstition.—I am, very truly yours, GEORGE LE QUESNE."

Our readers will be interested in the following item taken from the *Glasgow News* (Sept. 30):—

"The remains of Colonel Leith Hay, a gentleman who resided for a number of years in Lochaber, and who died last week, were yesterday interred in Glen Nevis burying-ground, Fort-William. The Colonel left explicit, albeit somewhat peculiar, instructions as to his burial, and amongst other things it was stipulated that his coffin, which was to be made from fir grown at Achnacarry, was to be quite plain and to contain no name-plate. Another stipulation was that no clergyman was to attend the obsequies, and that on the approach to the grave a piper should play 'The Cock o' the North.' These instructions were faithfully carried out at the interment yesterday, and the incongruity of a funeral cortege proceeding to a cemetery to the accompaniment of a rollicking marching tune was pronounced in the extreme. Unmarked by any solemn rites or ceremonial the body was silently committed to the tomb."

A piper instead of a clergyman at a funeral! And the good Christians have to put up with it.

Nature proposes to herself no aim in her operations, and all final causes are nothing but pure fictions imagined by men.—*Spinoza.*

Charles Bradlaugh—an Appreciation.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH was not a commonplace man; he was a great man; or, as the saying is, a man-and-a-half. One of those rare and fine spirits who appear on the great stage of the world at long intervals to enhance the power and dignity of man—who crowd their lives with noble services in the cause of truth and justice. He would have been conspicuous in any age and in any society.

For the love of humanity he endured persecution, calumny, and bitter struggles. The people, the politicians, the press, the pulpit, all combined their great forces to denounce, to libel, to crush this mighty giant and to attack his character with virulence. They called him a vulgar and dangerous agitator, a Godless man, a breaker of holy images, a Republican, a man who impeached the royal House of Brunswick, and boldly denounced the unjust system of paying regular pensions to individuals whose ancestors were of doubtful character, and whose pedigrees would have done no honor to horses in a stud book. He defied the gods in heaven, the Devil and his friends in hell and on earth, and other sundry nobilities of this world.

His following was immense. Mr. Foote tells us in his interesting *Reminiscences*, that at the last Bradlaugh demonstration, on February 15, 1888, in Trafalgar Square, seventy or eighty thousand people were present. The conflict was a desperate one. It was between truth and falsehood; and the overthrow of tyrants and the deluders of mankind if Bradlaugh triumphed over the forces of obscurantism. He put up to auction all the theatrical properties of priestcraft. What a sacrilege!

But truth is great and will prevail. Next to the glory of discovering a new idea is the elimination of a false one. Everything was against him; but no power on earth can, at any time, drive to despair a genius of such vigorous determination. He began the war of his life with every disadvantage. He was not born in the purple, and was without family connections, without friends, without means or any social influence. He stood alone—firm in his policy and lofty principles. He laughed at difficulties that would have overwhelmed a lesser man. He trampled over prejudices like a bull in a china shop. Legends, traditions, ancient privileges, old and new superstitions were all treated by him with sovereign contempt. As he was a born actor, *in the best sense*, he was very effective. He had nothing but genius, wonderful energy, and purity of aim to inspire and guide him in his holy crusade. Creeds, geographical limitations, imperial bombast, and hoary institutions did not intimidate him. He did not isolate himself and stand for country or party. He was a citizen of the world, and, in the words of Horace, he was a man, and felt interested in all that concerned man—irrespective of color, class, creed, or country. He was too great, too enlightened, too noble a man to belong to one family, one party, or one country. He belonged to the republic of the world; he preached the gospel of humanity. Religion, to him, was not a bag of tricks made of impossible dogmas, doctrines, ritual, ceremonies, and other fooleries; it meant pure life and noble deeds; the service of man and not the worship of an imaginary God. He loved real men and women.

Compared with others, he had very few illusions. Indeed, it is neither possible nor desirable to be without them. To him this was a grim world and not a playground for gambling with the destinies of humanity. Tennyson's words, "Nature red in tooth and claw," banished from his mind the prating of ages about the love of God, his providence, and his wise dispensations. He was incurably convinced that true and lasting salvation must be the work of man. He therefore labored with a heart and a head and a will to clear the social, religious, and political atmosphere of all shams, frauds, and delusions. This was not an easy task, but Bradlaugh believed in himself—the hallmark of all great men. He was a

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man born to conquer and to command. Thousands became devoted to his personality and ideals. His ever-increasing followers were fired by his zeal and enthusiasm. He led a propaganda whose aim was war, and not petty spectacular skirmishes. The people idolised him. He possessed all the qualities of a great leader: strategy, knowledge, geniality, and reserve force. He was a promoter of truth and gave to the world his best, caring nothing for rewards and applause. He gave no quarter and expected none. He was a magnificent fighter and played the game fairly and like a man. He was not a hireling, but a hero. He worked like a Trojan and stamped his personality on his generation, and left a name and fame which will shine brighter with the march of time.

In honoring his memory we do not canonise or worship him like a divinity, but remember him as a great man—a man who left humanity in his debt. He was essentially a self-taught man. In the words of Carlyle, his university was a library of books. Nature was his tutor, goodness his theme, a passion for truth his whole philosophy, and the emancipation and happiness of the human race his ultimate end and object in life. What a man! What a noble ideal! Of such is the kingdom of heroes and heroines.

He was a clear-headed man and soon gave up soldiering, as he did not believe in that form of rascality called patriotism—the killing of innocent people to add to the (false) glory of his country.

When he became a clerk in a solicitor's office he mastered all the bewildering technicalities of the law which proved so useful to him in his future conflicts with the forces of law and order. By reading and reflection the light of knowledge dawned upon his clear intellect and acute judgment.

His lectures and addresses impressed all those who heard him. He was not a meteor, but a fixed star. Thousands attached themselves to his blazing propaganda and became fascinated by his style of oratory, at once clear, eloquent, and fatally logical.

He founded the *National Reformer*, with contributors like Mrs. Besant, Mr. Foote, and many other rising men. The articles proved a shock and gave a rude awakening to all the Churches. The clergy attacked him, lied about him, hunted him everywhere, but all to no purpose. The more they persecuted him the harder he worked. He replied to them, debated with them, and routed his enemies in hollow fashion. He lashed them unmercifully—and they felt it. The whole country rang with his name. His triumph was complete, and the rise of the Higher Criticism and the unwilling surrender of one dogma after another are a tribute to his work and success.

The Churches have been losing ground ever since. Bradlaugh undermined the Rock of Ages and ridiculed the high pretensions of the clergy. He was the pioneer of various secular, rationalist movements which have become such a power in our time. All the best informed minds at present concentrate their attention on the affairs of this world. This is largely due to Charles Bradlaugh, Mr. Foote, and many other able men and women.

His legal and parliamentary struggles, and his ultimate triumph, are now matters of history. Those incidents in his life reflect no credit on his persecutors—religious or political. When he entered the House of Commons—that great museum of cultured curiosities and pathetic monstrosities—the members soon discovered his genius, ability, patience, insight, grasp of all political problems, honesty, disinterestedness, clear vision, impartiality, reach of knowledge, and noble aims.

He was a strong Individualist and believed in self-help and independence. He was not a believer in Socialism and officialism. In his judgment, education, arbitration, conciliation, co-operation, and legislation were the best and sanest methods for securing social reform. His firm attitude excited the hatred of the more fanatical Socialists. His great achievement was the Act dealing with Oaths and Affirmation.

As the President of the N. S. S. he did a great work, but failing health compelled him to resign on February 16, 1890. With great judgment he nominated Mr. G. W. Foote (the Christians always emphasise the initials, G. W., whenever they refer to Mr. Foote) as his successor. This gave no surprise to those who knew the high qualifications of our present President. Mr. Foote was then, as he is now, a man of great ability, literary tastes, and a sound and subtle critic of human character. He has a personality and many faculties and charms that appeal to the imagination of his readers and auditors. His other great colleague, Mrs. Besant, also suffered much persecution. She was then a great power; but now, alas!—let us be charitable and judge her as she was at her best.

Bradlaugh pleaded eloquently on behalf of the people of India. When he went there he received a great ovation. Mr. Foote tells us that, although Bradlaugh was a poor man, he declined handsome gifts of money made by the people of Hindoostan.

The physical and mental pressure became too great and he broke down completely. He died on January 30, 1891. His funeral was an imposing scene, and the grief of the whole civilised world and the appreciation of his services are his lasting epitaph.

His creed is best described in his own words in the pamphlet by his talented daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, entitled *Did Charles Bradlaugh Die an Atheist?* In the same pamphlet, on p. 7, will be found his dignified reply to the false rumors that were circulated about his change of opinion.

He died as he lived, a confirmed Atheist. We have the written testimony of Dr. Bell and his daughter concerning this much-canvassed topic—a perennial theme with many lying Christians.

What is the moral of his life?

It is very easy to criticise men, but most difficult to estimate them. Let us be fair and just and not flatter his memory, but paint him as he appeared to those who knew him well and loved him. It is our duty to do full justice to the great services he rendered to humanity. He was impulsive, electric, and himself said he was hardly a poet. Full of passion and emotion, he possessed a logical and practical mind. He was a hard hitter, a most severe critic, but transparently fair. He was a philosopher and a statesman, and had a genius for public affairs, according to the judgment of Mr. Foote. He was not only a born orator, but a born ruler of men. His commanding personality, his insight, his generous sympathies, his iron grasp of all the essential problems of life, his love of progress and order, his knowledge of the world and human nature, marked him out by temperament, education, and circumstances, as a leader of a revolutionary intellectual movement.

He was indespensable after the Oxford Movement and its reactionary tendencies. What a contrast he was to Cardinal Newman! They were both sincere, elemental, and lovers of truth. They both had a distaste for hypocritical compromises of large principles. Between Catholicism and Atheism there is no compromise. Newman's honesty and logic drove him to Rome—singing pathetically, "Lead, kindly light." Bradlaugh's clearer vision made him an Atheist.

The impartial historian, while admiring them both, must record with sorrow Newman's crusade against the progress of human reason, and shed tears at the fall, crash, and death of such a fine intellect. He will say of Bradlaugh that he loved the light and opened vistas to humanity in all directions. In the one case a beautiful sunset passed into the dark night of obscurantism, in the other, the dawn passed into the great light of day.

History offers many such contrasts: Dante and Shakespeare, Napoleon and Washington, Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine, Bernard Shaw and the Pope of Rome, Harry Lauder and the Bishop of London—are cases in point. The tragedy of the human intellect is too sad to contemplate.

Bradlaugh, though an orator, was not a great literary writer like Mr. Foote and Mr. Robertson. The styles

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of talking and writing are different. The dash, the go, the fire, the overwhelming flow and fluency of words and ideas lend charm, dignity, and power to oratory, but are totally inappropriate to the calm, patient, and stately marshalling of arguments on the printed page. Cicero, Edmund Burke, and Macaulay united both excellencies, but such a combination is very rare.

Bradlaugh had a capacity for broad outlook, brushed aside all minor details, and boldly took large views. He had the divine afflatus and was too matter of fact and hurried for literary artifices. He had more natural abilities than book-learning; he was not a pedant, but a philosopher—not a petti-fogging politician, but an enlightened statesman. He was educated and well-informed, but not a man of classic culture or scientific acquirements. He would have risen to the top in any profession and achieved success in any activity.

In his large view men and women were not puppets or pawns in a game of chess; not commodities for sale; but human beings, who needed light, sympathy, encouragement, and full opportunities to lead comfortable and happy lives.

In the law courts he showed his grasp and learning and mastery of legal technicalities. The judges were much impressed by his personality and his vast acquaintance with legal precedents and all the machinery and trickery of jurisprudence. It would be a delicate task to strike a balance between the profits accrued from the Mosaic law or the institutes of Justinian. The law and the profits go together. Mr. Foote, who heard some of the most eminent lawyers in the last generation, tells us that no practised lawyer approached Bradlaugh in grasp, subtlety, and skill in handling complicated cases and elucidating legal points.

Bradlaugh worked for the triumph of liberty and justice. The only fees he received were sleepless nights, bad health, and persecution. True heroism consists, not in doing things for glory and gold, but for the good of others. It shuns rewards and the applause of a fickle multitude who one day praise a man to the skies and the next day stone him. Such is the ingratitude of the world! Real happiness consists in increasing the happiness of others; and kindness to dumb animals is not less meritorius than kindness to our brothers and sisters.

Love of God is vague and vain, but the love of humanity should be our greatest aim. This is the love that passeth understanding. A grateful nation may sometimes raise monuments and sepulchral arches to glorify the life of a great man, but the most enduring monument is the worth of his own life.

Among the men and women who have influenced the thoughts and destinies of their contemporaries and left a deep mark on their own and future generations, Bradlaugh occupies a large place. He gave cheerfully and freely his life, health, pleasures, comforts, and wonderful gifts to the cause of true religion and human welfare—a man who has enriched his country, not by leaving millions of money, which no honest man can accumulate without wholesale exploitation, but by spreading the light of great ideas which mould human character and modify social institutions, bringing the human race nearer to the goal of complete emancipation from the slavery of the body and the mind. He left behind him a shining example of service and high aims. He was always in harness and had no time to be tired. The way to honor him is to walk in his footsteps—to remember that the best way to honor the dead is to discharge our duty towards the living. Life is too short for whining or frittering away in selfish occupations.

He is the true benefactor who boldly sweeps away from the human imagination a lie, a fraud, or a delusion, and plants the seeds of truth, harmony, and social order. To secure general happiness, the resources of nature, human learning, and art should be open to all.

Work is neither a blessing nor a curse, but a necessity, and ought to be made pleasant and shared by all.

The world was not leased by God or the Devil to a few choice individuals whose waste, idleness, and extravagance cause most of the miseries of mankind.

Bradlaugh's great aim was to readjust the claims of all on the lines of sanity, economic justice, and freedom. This is, in reality, the whole task of true statesmanship; the rest is all rhetoric and vanity.

Where there is poverty, ignorance, crime, disease, prostitution, political shuffling, and the spirit of war, there can be no order—no civilisation.

Given a free and enlightened people, who can measure the potentialities and possibilities of their lives?

Bradlaugh saw clearly and steadily the whole tragedy of a civilisation based on tyranny, stupidity, and supernatural beliefs. He had faith in man.

What a world this would have been if such great minds did not light up the dark places in men's minds.

He was one of those choice spirits—a true man. The world has produced greater men, but none more honest or more indispensable. No niche in any pantheon contains a nobler figure than Charles Bradlaugh.

E. BURKE.

Alleged Blasphemy.

"DR. KNICKOLI" BEFORE THE STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATE.
COMMITTED TO THE ASSIZES.

A LECTURER named Thomas William Stewart, *alias* "Dr. Knickoli," appeared at Wolverhampton Police Court this (Wednesday) afternoon, and was charged with committing blasphemy by attacking the truth of Christianity "by ribaldry, profanity, and indecency" on September 26 and 27.

He brought with him several books and sheets of MSS., and after explaining to the Stipendiary (Mr. N. C. A. Neville) that he wanted to make notes of the proceedings, he was accommodated with a seat behind the solicitors' bench.

Defendant's wife sat in the gallery—also taking notes.

Among the local gentlemen present were the Rev. J. A. Shaw, Alderman Price Lewis, Councillor W. Hodgson, etc.

Mr. K. Tweedale Meaby (Deputy-Town Clerk) prosecuted, and said three charges were being preferred. So far as they had been able to find out, the defendant was a prominent resident of Sheffield. He was a travelling lecturer and a seller of pamphlets, obscene literature, and very improper goods. From the evidence it seemed very clear that the man was endowed with an adequate supply of words for what he wanted to express.

Besides the charge of blasphemy already mentioned, Mr. Meaby said there was another charge of sending on September 29 a postal packet, a certain obscene article; and another, of offering for sale on September 26 a certain indecent object. The prosecution, Mr. Meaby said, did not suggest for a moment that there was any offence on the part of the defendant if he, with due gravity and propriety, contended that religion was untrue or if he attacked even the fundamentals of religion, but what the prosecution did allege was that he wilfully perverted, insulted, and misled others by licentious abuse applied to sacred subjects. He (Mr. Meaby) should submit that what the defendant said came within the definition of blasphemy in the English law.

The first charge was then taken.

Mr. Bernard W. Molton, sub-editor on the *Express and Star*, spoke to recording in shorthand the speeches of the defendant on the 26th and 27th ult., at Snowhill and on the Market Place respectively.

A transcript of the notes was read out by Mr. Meaby, and the defendant was promised a copy of the notes. They had reference to Scriptural passages and theological opinions. In one passage the defendant was alleged to have said that he would not mind doing three months at Stafford. "Nothing would please me better," he said, "than to be prosecuted. It would be a fine advertisement for me. I would not mind three months in every place in England."

Mr. Molton was cross-examined by the defendant, who occasionally became excited.

Detective-inspector Nixon corroborated.

Defendant (cross-examining): What do you mean by profanely scoffing at the Christian religion?—Witness: You were speaking with contempt of Jesus Christ.

Well, who is Jesus Christ?—I am not going to enter into an argument.

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Can you make a thing that is not, ridiculous?—Now you are talking like a showman.

Detective-sergeant Jeffreys said he attended the meetings in question, and corroborated the evidence of the previous witnesses in every detail.

Detective-sergeant Murphy also said he corroborated the previous witnesses in every detail.

Defendant (cross-examining): Have you consulted me privately?

Witness: No, I have not.

Have I not your written request for private advice on a delicate subject?—Yes, you have; I asked for it for a purpose.

Then you aided and abetted me in doing wrong?—Oh, no. We wanted to see what the advice consisted of.

The Stipendiary: I don't think this has anything to do with the case.

Defendant went on to cross-examine witness regarding the correctness of the shorthand writer's transcript, and asked the witness if he could swear that the words read in the extracts were used?—Yes, when they are repeated.

Of course you could, damn it. I could expect that.

To the Stipendiary: I apologise to your worship—a figure of speech.

The Stipendiary remarked that a man would be a marvel if he remembered every word of a speech.

Defendant: But you have heard three witnesses swear that they can corroborate the exact words. Then a man who can corroborate it must be a marvel or a liar.

This was the case for the prosecution.

On being committed to the Stafford Assizes, the defendant said he would not say now what he had to say, as it would take some hours to do so.

The Stipendiary told him that bail would be allowed, himself in £50, and a surety of the same amount.

The defendant thought he had a man in Court who would go bail for him, but on asking for him he was found to be missing.

A travelling friend of the defendant ran out of Court to look for him, and as he was away some time, another man volunteered to go bail.

However, on entering the box, the volunteer was asked to take the oath, but he declined, saying, "I do not believe in anything of this."

Thereupon the Stipendiary observed that he would not take the bail offered unless the bondsman would swear.

The defendant appealed to the volunteer to take the oath "as a personal favor," but just then the Court doors opened, the missing man entered, and was bound over.

The second charge of sending through the post a certain obscene article was then preferred, the defendant pleading "not guilty."

Mr. Meaby remarked that the defendant was not only a lecturer upon religion, but a dealer in obscene literature.

The defendant asked for an adjournment so that he could prepare his defence. He was only informed of these other charges at eleven o'clock this (Wednesday) morning, he said.

The Stipendiary agreed to an adjournment of seven days, bail being allowed in his own recognisances of £25.

—*Express and Star* (Oct. 1).

COLERIDGE ON GHOSTS.

Define a vulgar ghost with reference to all that is called ghost-like. It is visibility without tangibility; which is also the definition of a shadow. Therefore, a vulgar ghost and a shadow would be the same; because two different things cannot properly have the same definition. A *visible substance* without susceptibility of impact, I maintain to be an absurdity. Unless there be an external substance, the bodily eye *cannot* see it; therefore, in all such cases, that which is supposed to be seen is, in fact, *not* seen, but is an image of the brain. External objects naturally produce sensation; but here, in truth, sensation produces, as it were, the external object. In certain states of the nerves, however, I do believe that the eye, though not consciously so directed, may, by a slight convulsion, see a portion of the body, as if opposite to it. The part actually seen will by common association seem the whole; and the whole body will then constitute an external object, which explains many stories of persons seeing themselves lying dead. Bishop Berkeley once experienced this. He had the presence of mind to ring the bell, and feel his pulse; keeping his eye still fixed on his own figure right opposite to him. He was in a high fever, and the brain image died away as the door opened. I observed something very like it once at Grasmere; and was so conscious of the cause, that I told a person what I was experiencing, whilst the image still remained. Of course, if the vulgar ghost be really a shadow, there must be some substance of which it is a shadow. These visible and intangible shadows, without substance to cause them, are absurd.—*Coleridge, "Table Talk."*

What is meant by Conscience? If it means the perception of right and wrong, it is an intellectual faculty, which varies in individuals and societies, some having greater discrimination than others. If it means the recognition of distinct, settled categories of right and wrong, it depends on social and religious training. In a high state of civilisation these categories approximate to the laws of social welfare and disease; in a low state of civilisation they are fantastic and fearfully distorted by superstition. There is hardly a single vice that has not been practised as a virtue under a religious sanction. Finally, if conscience means the feeling of obligation, the sense of "I ought," it is a product of social evolution. It is necessarily generated among gregarious beings, and in the course of time Natural Selection weeds out the individuals in whom it is lacking or deficient. Social types of feeling survive, and the anti-social perish. And this is the whole "mystery" of conscience.—*G. W. Foote, "Ingersolliem Defended Against Archdeacon Farrar."*

MIDDLE-CLASS RELIGION.

The religion of this vast English middle-class ruling the land is Comfort. It is their central thought; their idea of necessity; their sole aim. Whatsoever ministers to Comfort—seems to belong to it—pretends to support it, they yield their passive worship to. Whatsoever alarms it they join to crush. There you get at their point of unity. They will pay for the security of Comfort, calling it national worship, or national defence, if too much money is not subtracted from the means of individual comfort: if too much foresight is not demanded for the comfort of their brains.—*Dr. Shrapnel, in George Meredith's "Beauchamp's Career."*

MORALS AND MIND.

Imagination or mind employed in prophetically imaging forth its objects, is that faculty of human nature on which every gradation of its progress, nay, every, the minutest, change, depends. Pain or pleasure, if subtly analysed, will be found to consist entirely in prospect. The only distinction between the selfish man and the virtuous man is, that the imagination of the former is confined within a narrow limit, whilst that of the latter embraces a comprehensive circumstance. In this sense, wisdom and virtue may be said to be inseparable, and criteria of each other. Selfishness is the offspring of ignorance and mistake; it is the portion of unreflecting infancy, and savage solitude, or of those whom toil or evil occupations have blunted or rendered torpid; disinterested benevolence is the product of a cultivated imagination, and has an intimate connection with all the arts which add ornament, or dignity, or power, or stability to the social state of man. Virtue is thus entirely a refinement of civilised life.—*Shelley.*

The true philosophy is to retire within oneself, and listen to the voice of reason, amid the stillness of the passions.—*Rousseau.*

AN ACCOMPLISHED MINISTER.

Church service was over on Christmas morning and three prominent members walked home together, discussing the sermon.

"I tell you," said the first, enthusiastically, "Doctor Blank can certainly dive deeper into the truth than any preacher I ever heard."

"Y-es," said the second man, "and he can stay under longer."

"Yes," said the third, "and come up drier."

'Tis a good thing preachers don't go to Congress. Whin they're ca'm they'd wipe out all th' laws, an' whin they're excited they'd wipe out all th' popylation. They're niver two jumps fr'm th' thumbscrow.—*Mr. Dooley.*

SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION.

Husband (sarcastically): "Well, my dear, did you derive much consolation from your attendance at church this morning?"

Wife (enthusiastically): "Rather! Mrs. Gibbs had on that old blue hat of hers, and I sat right in front of her the whole morning."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Banham's, 56 Richmond-road, Barnsbury): 7.30, General Meeting—Business, Election of Auditors and Plan of Next Season's Lectures. After business, a Social.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, N.W., adjoining "The Bull and Gate"): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Lying Gospel."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Rule of the Dead."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, W. Davidson, "Christianity and Civilisation."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "The Message of Freethought."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, a Lecture.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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MR. BRADLAUGH WAS AN ATHEIST, BUT HIS STANDARD OF DUTY WAS A VERY HIGH ONE, AND HE LIVED UP TO IT. HIS LIFE WAS AN EXAMPLE TO MANY CHRISTIANS, FOR HE ABOUNDED IN EVERY CHRISTIAN VIRTUE.

—*Henry Labouchere.*

"Labby" and Bradlaugh.

The Life of Henry Labouchere. By Algar Labouchere Thorold. London: Constable & Co. 18s. nett.

MR. THOROLD has written a very entertaining, and by no means uninstructive, book about one of the most curious and fascinating personalities in the public life of England during the second half of the nineteenth century. I came across Henry Labouchere a good deal myself in the 'eighties. With Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Samuel Storey, he was connected with the People's League for the Abolition of the House of Lords, of whose Committee I was a member. I met him several times in connection with the work of the then youthful Metropolitan Radical Federation. And of course I saw something of him in connection with Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle. On the whole, therefore, I am in a position to say, without impermissible temerity, that this Biography presents a lifelike portrait of the man who was universally called "Labby."

It is not my purpose in this article, however, to deal any farther with the book in general. I have to confine myself mainly to the chapter headed "Labouchere and Bradlaugh."

This chapter is of profound interest to Freethinkers. Mr. Thorold does justice to Bradlaugh as well as to Labouchere. These two men, so dissimilar in their personalities, yet so similar in opinions and objects, were thrown together in the struggle for the constitutional right of an English constituency to be represented by the man of its own choice in the House of Commons. This, and this only, was the issue in that great contest. Bradlaugh never denied the right of the House of Commons to expel him if it chose. What he denied was its right to refuse him admittance. A member must be in before he can be turned out. That is plain logic; it was also the law of England, as Bradlaugh succeeded in demonstrating. Fortunately the borough of Northampton elected Labouchere as his parliamentary colleague. They fitted each other to a nicety. Bradlaugh fought like a Trojan outside; Labouchere fought with at least the wiles of Ulysses inside. The final victory was won between them; although, of course, Bradlaugh was the Titan of the mighty struggle.

It was extraordinarily lucky that Labouchere was not only a Radical like Bradlaugh, but a Freethinker to boot. He laughed at being called "the Christian member for Northampton." It was one of the best, if unintentional, jokes of the age. Mr. Thorold takes care to make it plain that "the Christian member for Northampton" had no intellectual differences with the Atheist member. He raises that point early in the Preface:—

> "In his personal outlook on things he was as completely non-religious as a man could be. He was not anti-religious. He fully recognised the utility of religious belief in others, perhaps even in society at large, and he based this recognition not so much on the hardness of men's hearts as on the thickness of their heads. But personally he, Henry Labouchere, took no interest whatever in the matter. In philosophy he was a strict agnostic, owning Hume, for whom he had the greatest admiration, and the Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, as his masters. And he was remarkably well read in the works of those philosophers."

Labouchere was as cynical and witty as Bradlaugh was passionately earnest. "I do not mind Mr. Gladstone always having an ace up his sleeve," he once said, "but I do object to his always saying that Providence put it there." Spoken in Labouchere's soft, bland voice, the witticism must have been irresistible. He was not a propagandist, but his convictions were held tenaciously. On this point one may quote the following sentences from Mr. Thorold:—

> "It has often been pointed out that the difference between religious and irreligious people does not lie so much in opinion as in temperament. Labouchere had an essentially irreligious nature, he was a born *impeí*, as the French say: Mr. Bradlaugh had the soul of a Covenanter. As far as speculative religious opinions were concerned, they practically coincided."

It is not quite clear to me, at any rate, how the difference between religion and irreligion can rest upon a mere basis of temperament. This is to exclude it from all relation to the intellect. Yet the remark about Labouchere seems sound enough. The reader who does not know French must, unfortunately, be told that there is no English equivalent for *impie*.

One may pause at this point to quote a striking passage from Mr. Thorold stating his view of the inner meaning of Bradlaugh's battle with the House of Commons, and the significance of his ultimate victory.

> "This means that the modern state is non-theistic, and that our civilisation, of which the state is the political expression, is based on those positive social needs of man, to which theological problems, however interesting in themselves, are irrelevant. Thus, in Bradlaugh's victory, to the winning of which Mr. Labouchere so powerfully contributed, one of the most important principles of 1789 was definitely ratified by the representatives of the people, the Lords, spiritual and temporal, and the sovereign of this country. A truly momentous event, the importance of which it would be hard to overestimate. For it means that God has ceased to exist in England as a political entity."

I should personally endorse this judgment—in spite of the sporadic application of the unrepealed laws against "blasphemy" and "profanity." No front-rank Freethinker has been attacked for a great many years, and any such attack would probably be unsuccessful, especially if initiated in London. Provincial prosecutions do not excite national interest, unless the persons aimed at are of national reputation—which, from the very nature of the case, is unlikely.

Mr. Thorold calls Bradlaugh "that upright and greatly persecuted man." He pillories some of the bigoted Christians who referred to "Iconoclast" as "the bellowing blasphemer" and in other charitable ways. But the best tributes to Bradlaugh in this chapter come from the pen of Labouchere himself. The following was written soon after Bradlaugh's death.

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"Mr. Bradlaugh was my colleague for ten years. During all these years our relations, political and personal, were always of the most cordial character. He was in private life a thoroughly true and amiable man, while in public life he was ever ready to sacrifice popularity to his convictions of what was right. He was, as is known, an atheist, but his standard of duty was a very high one, and he lived up to it. His life was an example to Christians, for he abounded in every Christian virtue. This the House of Commons came at last to recognise. I do not think there is a single member more popular or more respected on both sides than he was on both sides. Often and often Conservatives have, in a friendly way, said to me: 'What a much better man your colleague is than you are!' And I heartily agreed with them."

Here is another passage worth reproducing:—

"Regarding money, he was more than disinterested. So that he had enough to pay for his food, his clothes, and for his modest lodging in St. John's Wood, he never seemed to trouble himself as to ways and means."

Nor must one overlook the following:—

"He had a great affection for his books, and the only time I ever saw him disquieted about money matters was when he feared that he might have to give them up, owing to some bankruptcy proceedings that were threatened, in consequence of one of his numerous actions on the oaths question."

Bradlaugh's death as an Atheist has never been questioned except by hopelessly foolish or blackguardly Christians. Mr. Labouchere's last hours were in keeping with the rest of his life. Mr. Thorold says:—

"The earliest remark of Mr. Labouchere's that I have recorded in this book was a jest, and so was the last I heard him utter. On the afternoon of the day before he died, as I was sitting at his bedside, the spirit lamp that kept the fumes of eucalyptus in constant movement about his room, through some awkwardness of mine, was overturned. Mr. Labouchere, who was dozing, opened his eyes at the sound of the little commotion caused by the accident, and perceived the flare-up. 'Flames?' he murmured interrogatively. 'Not yet, I think.' He laughed quizzically, and went off to sleep again."

He was near his long sleep, and he had earned it.

G. W. FOOTE.

Materialism: Its Meaning and Value.

THANKS to Sir Oliver Lodge, "Materialism" is a little more in evidence just now than is usual. Despite the stock assertion that Materialism, as a mode of scientific or philosophic thinking, is dead, the British Association Address has been welcomed as a much-needed declaration against the Materialistic theories of scientific thinkers. Their welcome has, therefore, been also a confession. It made plain the existence of great uneasiness concerning this alleged corpse. They all agreed that Materialism was dead, but the agreement was wholly between themselves. They inspired each other with courage by a mutual assurance that no enemy was present. But when a scientific man did say a word in favor of ghosts — disguised as "discarnate human intelligences"—and the supernatural—respectably clothed as a "directive mind"—the relief experienced was great indeed. Strange that there should have been so much thankfulness for a promise of help against an enemy who does not exist!

The truth is that this expressed belief in the death of scientific Materialism is no more than an elaborate pretence. Materialism is not dead; it was never more alive than at present, and was never more generally recognised as the very groundwork of scientific research. I am not, of course, thinking of the bogies that some people create and call Materialism. Nor do I mean that all the theories propounded by Materialists from time to time have been either justified by results or are still worthy of credence. I mean by Materialism the principle which—for want of a better phrase—has now come to be known as "mechanistic"; and it may safely be said that this rules to-day without serious challenge. To put the whole matter pointedly, even defiantly, to be scientific is to be Materialistic. To be a Materialist is the first requisite of the scientific worker.

Exactly what Materialism means I hope to be able to show later. At present my chief aim is to emphasise its place in the world of thought and its potency as an instrument in interpreting natural phenomena.

There is no line of cleavage in the intellectual world at all comparable to that which separates naturalism from supernaturalism. Between the two there is no logical middle term. There have been endless "harmonies" of the two, from the days of the Greeks down to Sir Oliver Lodge; but these have very seldom outlived those who proposed them, and in the end the two views have been left unreconciled and irreconcilable. This line of cleavage is not only the deepest in the intellectual world; it is also the oldest. It meets us at the very beginning of orderly reasoning about man and the world. The naturalistic interpretation gives us the very birth of what we call science, and it gave the first definite challenge to an all-controlling supernaturalism. At the end of several thousands of years these two views are still confronted. The fight for the ruling interpretation of nature still lies between the naturalist and the supernaturalist. It is true that no one now gives complete adherence to supernaturalism. The mechanistic interpretation is admitted to be sound, even though limitations are predicated. And it is equally true that the naturalism of many falls short of completeness. Under the guise of philosophy—some seem to think that philosophy is above the operations of scientific method—a pseudo supernaturalism still obtains; but the two views still represent the logical extremes of thought, and it is between these two that the battle must ultimately be fought. All other conflicts are affairs of outposts only. And the one permanent feature in this long contest has been the controversy over what has been known as Materialism.

"Materialism," says Lange, in the first sentence of his classic, *History of Materialism*, "is as old as philosophy, but not older." It was an apt rebuke to those who were more concerned with superficialities than with fundamentals. One might go even further than Lange and say that if we take philosophy as either the equivalent of organised knowledge, or the search for a verifiable principle of unity, then Materialism marks the very beginnings of sound philosophy. Human mental life begins in a world of delusion. The earth is flat, not round. The stars, so far off, are within almost grasping distance. The imaginary is as real as the actual. The simple appears complex, and the complex simple. Words play the part of things, and things are without constancy and order. If the world had been deliberately created by a deity whose whole aim it was to deceive man, the situation could not have been better devised. For long ages, so far as men think about the causes of things, their thoughts are radically false. The great task before man has always been to release himself from the snare of mere appearance and from the cloud of fantastic beliefs that usurp the place of theories based upon verifiable facts.

Under these conditions, the first step towards improvement, whether in ancient or modern times, is by way of pointing to a principle or to facts that appeal to all minds, to which all may refer, and which are above the coercion of mere fantastic theory. And unsatisfactory as were some of the early forms of Materialistic teaching, nothing else could have broken through the thick cloud of fable that blocked the way to useful knowledge.

It is to the credit of ancient Greece that—so far as we have any reliable records—the first attempt at a really scientific interpretation of nature began in that country. And it must be placed to the credit of Materialism that it commenced in an assertion of a principle to which Materialism has always remained true. When Thales affirmed water to be the cause of all things; or Aixemenes, air; or Heraclitus,

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motion; or Empedocles, the four elements; there was affirmed the principle that natural phenomena owed their existence to the operation of forces inherent in nature itself. The need of external control was questioned, a principle of natural examination indicated, and an inevitable conflict initiated. The great battle between naturalism and supernaturalism, between science and theology, had commenced. Henceforth there were only two logical camps in the mental world. The one tracing everything to the operation of natural causes; the other, not indeed denying their operation, but asserting their ineffectiveness without a guiding or creative divine mind. From Thales down to Sir Oliver Lodge these two forms have, to use a biological phrase, "bred true." They were represented at the British Association of a few weeks ago, as they were in the streets of Greece—albeit the relative strength of the two parties had undergone a profound alteration.

An advance of profound importance was made by another Greek thinker—Democritus. With truth he might have said, "Give me atoms and I will give you a world." Only fragments remain of his writings, but his philosophy, which reappears in Epicurus, and over and over again in the history of science, was saved from extinction by its clarity. His main teachings were that nothing comes from nothing, and nothing can be destroyed. Here was an affirmation of the principles upon which all science rests—the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy.* Everything, he said, has a cause and happens by necessity. Things are constantly being formed and constantly changing, and the variety of things in the world is due to the variety of the atoms and their innumerable modes of combination. But, beside the atoms and empty space, there is nothing but opinion. Democritus left no room for Deity, nothing for him to do; no room for that popular bugbear, design in nature. He saw that the causes of things have to be found in things themselves; and his teachings, faulty as they were, may be regarded as the most valuable contribution made by a single individual to the entire structure of scientific thought.

Metaphysicians and priests might contest these principles, but, once enumerated, there was small possibility of their being altogether ignored. Henceforth, they remain a power to be reckoned with. Epicurus gave them greater literary expression, and applied them to ethics. Lucretius, in one of the most remarkable pieces of writing that antiquity has given us, worked out a complete system from which the supernatural is definitely excluded. His main object was to show that nature did all things by itself, although tradition and ignorance attributed them to the gods. Had human thought continued the line of investigation marked out by the best of the ancient Greeks, the scientific discoveries and wonders of the past century might easily have been the world's possession centuries ago. How much the world lost by the overthrow of Pagan civilisation, no one can tell. It is only gradually that we have learned to partially appreciate how much the ancients knew, and the measure of our knowledge in this direction supplies us with some indication of the world's loss by the Christian conquest.

This, however, we can say with absolute certainty. Just as it was ancient Materialism that cut a way through the mass of fable and theology that prevented mankind setting out in an intelligent search for truth, so, at the Renaissance, and again in the seventeenth century, and yet again in our own days, all real advance has been dependent upon a tacit or avowed recognition of those basic principles of which Materialism has never ceased to assert the validity.

C. Cohen.

(To be continued)

* Perhaps it is necessary to point out that the disintegration of the atom does not involve, as some people seem to imagine, the annihilation of "matter." It can only prove that the atom is no longer to be held as the primal form of matter. Materialism is quite unaffected by the fact.

Dogmatism and Subterfuge.

In its "Men and Matters" department the *British Congregationalist* for October 9 charges Mr. Bernard Shaw with taking "so great a delight in doing evil." The particular evil alluded to is that of attacking the Christian religion in the new play, *Androcles and the Lion*, now being acted at the St. James's Theatre. That journal is of opinion that it is the duty of ministers of the Gospel to recognise this evil and denounce it with unsparing severity. One clergyman, at least, seems to have discharged that obligation with remarkable thoroughness. The Rev. Arthur Hill, of Tollington Park, London, according to a report in the religious newspaper just mentioned, recently characterised *Androcles and the Lion* as "a brilliant flank attack on the Christian religion." He said:—

> "How any intelligent man can imagine that this drama is enacted to expound the beauty of the Christian religion, or to defend or uphold it in any form, passes my comprehension. You have there one of the most alert intellects of our age obviously in open warfare with everything that the Christian religion has stood for during twenty centuries."

Mr. Hill waxed exceedingly vehement as he piled words upon words in condemnation of this wicked drama, in which Christian martyrs are treated as "snivelling, sponging, greedy hypocrites," the God of the New Testament is deleted, and the crucified Christ banished. Having worked himself up into a very high pitch of indignation, the reverend gentleman exclaimed:—

> "I am with every man who is on our side. I am against every man who is against our faith. I am with every Church, great or small, that believes in Jesus Christ and his Gospel. I am at war to the knife with every man who dares to make that faith the theme of foolish and flippant jests."

As we read that extract two things suggest themselves to us. The first is that Mr. Hill, in the heat of that exuberant diatribe, completely forgot his vocation as preacher of the Gospel of redeeming love. It is his business to be for all men in the hope of winning them to Christ. Mr. Bernard Shaw is one of the people for whose salvation the Son of God died, and, surely, to be against him, as Mr. Hill declares himself to be, is equivalent to being against the loving Savior of mankind. The second thing is that if the reverend gentleman is resolved to be against every man who rejects and assails the Christian creed he has his work fully cut out for him. He will have to be against millions upon millions of his fellow-beings.

The opponents of Christianity are spoken of as evil-doers, but it happens that they are thus described by utterly incompetent judges. By what authority do Mr. Hill and his followers sit in judgment upon Mr. Shaw and those who agree with him? The former have nothing but the fact of their belief to support them, while the latter challenge that belief in the name of common sense. The strangest fact of all, in this connection, is that the Christian's *faith* and *knowledge* contradict each other on every point. He *believes* that the Gospel is the power of an omnipotent and all-loving God unto salvation, but *knows* that it is nothing of the kind. He *believes* that the risen and ascended Christ occupies the throne of the Universe and reigns, though he *knows* that he does neither; and he glorifies this imaginary king by putting his knowledge under a bushel and diligently nursing his faith. Now, if Christianity were true, faith and knowledge would be, not only in absolute agreement, but literally identical. The fact that they are so deeply at variance utterly disqualifies a Christian for speaking with authority on any Christian topic, and deprives him of the right to treat anti-Christians as doers of evil.

So far as the report of his sermon is concerned, Mr. Hill comes before us an unblushing dogmatist, who takes it for granted that to be against his faith is to be on the broad road that leadeth to destruc-

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tion. This is so self-evident that it would be a culpable waste of time even to attempt to prove it. So Mr. Hill indulges in an uncompromising and unqualified dogmatism. He realises how difficult it is to fight "the men who stab us in the back, make us the byword and scorn of the world, and then tell us that they are doing us good," and so he prefers open foes to those who make brilliant flank attacks, though he deals with both in his own haughty, cavalier fashion. It is possible, however, that he abstains from argument because it is so rare a commodity on his side. Faith is always fancy's child, never reason's, and whenever an attempt is made to argue on its behalf it proves quite futile. We have a telling example of this in the Correspondence of the Rev. Professor David Smith, D.D., in the *British Weekly* for October 9. A Belfast student, who avows himself practically an Agnostic, asks the Professor a few pertinent questions, such as, On the assumption that a God of love exists, how do you explain the cruelties practised in connection with the Jewish Tabernacle ritual? Do you believe that such a God ordered the total destruction of whole communities, innocent and guilty alike? On the same assumption, how do you account for the appalling cruelty of Nature which one witnesses every day? "Could a God of love have created creatures who must subsist by preying upon others weaker than themselves?" Those questions are genuine posers, and no one knows it better than Dr. Smith. He does not even try to answer them; he merely shuffles, trifles with words, but never comes to the point. He taunts the student with his serious lack of up-to-dateness, his old-fashioned standpoint, the standpoint of "a blind and stupid orthodoxy" which held sway fifty years ago. "The plain fact is," he says, "that your theory of the Universe is at least fifty years old: you contemplate those difficulties from the pre-Darwinian point of view." Then he adds:—

> "A detailed discussion of your difficulties is impossible here; but this much may be said—that it would be like the breaking of the morning if you got hold of the principle of evolution, and applied it to your perplexities. History is an evolution—the gradual unfolding of the Divine purpose, the slow and painful growth of humanity toward an ever fuller maturity."

The plain fact is that Dr. Smith completely evades the difficulties raised by the Belfast student. The principle of evolution offers no solution of them, but leaves them just exactly where they were before it was discovered. The facts of cruelty, suffering, and sorrow in the Universe are not affected in the least by your acceptance or rejection of the Darwinian hypothesis. If a God of love exists, the evolutionary process has been under his guidance at every step from the very start. Who can contemplate the awful suffering attending the struggle for existence without being filled with shuddering horror? Is it not incredible that it can have been under the direction of an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving Heavenly Father?

There is nothing easier than to speak contemptuously of "the blind and stupid orthodoxy" of fifty years ago; but it does not seem to us that Dr. Smith's orthodoxy is one whit less "blind and stupid." Take the following specimen:—

> "The Bible is the record of revelation, and revelation is an historical process—God's gradual self-discovery in the national life of Israel. Consider what this means. At the outset Israel stood on the common level of Heathenism, and God revealed himself to her little by little as she was able to receive it."

Where was God prior to his "self-discovery in the national life of Israel"? Why did he choose to find himself in the national life of Israel, rather than in that of the Egyptians or the Greeks? Or on the supposition that he did reveal himself as a stupendous respecter of persons in his selection of Israel as the medium of his gradual self-discovery, why was not Israel ever so much better in every respect than all other nations, and why did he allow her to be scattered abroad and eventually lost for ever? Was such conduct, such glaring favoritism, worthy of a Deity of infinite justice and love? Even Judah fared no better in the end than Israel. She crucified his only begotten Son, and as a punishment was driven out of her own land and permitted to become a despised, rejected, and cruelly persecuted race for upwards of fifteen hundred years. These are stubborn facts, and no theory of evolution, on any Theistic basis, affords the slightest explanation of them. Dr. Smith only complicates the whole subject by his introduction of a self-discovering Divinity as a superintending agent into the evolutionary process in which, according to his own admission, "existing types have been evolved by the forces of environment and the struggle for existence." This strange admission is made in answer to the question, "Did God create beasts of prey?" but by making it the Professor virtually gives the case for Theism completely away. If God had no share in the evolution of beasts of prey, why should it be necessary to assign him any share in the production of man? He makes practically the same concession in connection with the extermination of whole communities in Old Testament warfare. He says:—

> "All this, like the polygamy and concubinage of the patriarchs, belongs to a rudimentary stage in the development of civilisation, in the process of moral and religious evolution."

Of course; but all this is wholly inexplicable on the assumption that the process of evolution has always been under the charge of an infinitely powerful, wise, and good God.

Professor Smith wonders that the student's love of animals has not made him a better theologian. We rather think that his love of animals may have discredited his theology and made him an Agnostic. What is beyond controversy is that Dr. Smith's endeavors to amalgamate Theism and Darwinism are ridiculous in the extreme. The truth is that we must choose either Theism or Darwinism, for we cannot have both and retain our sanity.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Secret of Victor Hugo.

Complete Works of Victor Hugo in French. (Collection Nelson. 1s. each. 1913.)

Among the cheap reprints of the works of famous authors, it is doubtful if there has been one that has given more general satisfaction than this fine edition of the works of Victor Hugo, which has been issued by the enterprising house of Messrs. Nelson. Swinburne, who often wrote extravagantly, but never at random, has proclaimed with all his unrivalled eloquence that Hugo was the greatest of his contemporaries. Apart from Swinburne's admiration of Hugo, his knowledge of the great Frenchman's writings was unequalled, and his appreciation was always pleasant and inspiring.

Swinburne was never half-hearted, and he always came charging down the wind like a knight in armor. *Les Chatiments* he described as "a book written in lightning"; *Les Contemplations* as written in "sunlight and starlight." He boldly proclaimed *La Legende de Siecles* to be "the greatest book published in the nineteenth century," *Les Miserables* to be "the greatest epic and dramatic work ever created or conceived"; *Les Travailleurs de la Mer* to be "a work unsurpassed even among the works of its author for splendor of imagination and of style"; and *Quatre vingt-treize* to be "a work as rich in thought, in tenderness, in wisdom, and in humor, and in pathos, as ever was cast into the mould of poetry or fiction." Finally, he calls Hugo "one of the very greatest among poets and among men."

It would be difficult to undervalue the insight and sympathy which marks this generous appreciation of the great English poet to the great Frenchman whom he ever regarded as his master. Hugo's work was very different from the jewelled toys turned out of the literary workshops at the time. As often

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grandiose as grand, he was at least a master artist, and, compared with others, his work was as the ocean to a millpond. Each succeeding volume from his pen abundantly proved his genius. The French language had been ransacked for centuries, yet here was a man who was able to introduce new rhymes by the dozen, and not merely grotesque rhymes, but for the loftiest purposes of poetry. Nothing shows his command of language and his prodigious vocabulary more than this. He was, indeed, a Napoleon of verse, and the prefaces to his verses remind one not a little of the Emperor's addresses to his army. They read like the addresses to poetic victories. Even when words are put into God's mouth, for Hugo used deity as Shakespeare did witches, we cannot help seeing the deific alias of Hugo.

It is characteristic, too, that all shades of religious opinion should be ably represented in his pages. Theism, Pantheism, Atheism, every mood, from a glowing optimism to a cynical despair is there. He would have sympathised with Septimus Severus, who kept a bust of Christ in his private room, "along with Jupiter, Orpheus, and other creatures of the same kind."

Hugo is plainly not at home upon "sacred ground." He was too much of a Voltairean to write like Dante, Calderon, or Milton. He cared no more for that reservoir of falsehood, the Bible, than he did for Herodotus, Ossian, or Sismondi. To write successfully upon Christian themes, a man must feel as a Christian. Hugo's piety was but a reflex of the sentimental interludes in his life, inserted between the Freethought of his mother and the scepticism of his later years.

Hugo's chief prose works, *Les Miserables* and *Les Travailleurs de la Mer*, possess that hold upon the reader which is the distinguishing mark of every book that deserves to be called a literary masterpiece; but I sometimes think that Hugo's life is more dramatic and is more attractive than anything that he wrote. His long and chequered career was filled with experiences of the most diverse kind. He mixed with princes, he knew the men and women of the streets, he was well known in the political arena, the wide worlds of literature and the theatre were open to him. He knew the extremes of triumph and exile; at one time the popular idol, and at another eating the bitter bread of banishment.

The story of his exile gives dignity to a stormy life. For nineteen dark years his voice did not falter nor his heart fail. From Jersey and Guernsey he dispatched that marvellous series of songs and satires which passed secretly from hand to hand in France, and were read with tears and cries of rage during that reign of terror which ended in the downfall of the Second Empire. These poems were veritable bombshells in the political arena, for Hugo wrote poetry as an eagle flies, and his devastating genius rocked the French political world out of its complacency.

Did ever despot suffer such impeachment as the pinchbeck Napoleon the little? Was ever monarch attacked in such grand and sonorous lines with such sinewy rhetoric, sounding declamation, pictorial richness? The barbed words of the author were carried over hill and dale, over even the ocean, and found their responsive chords in humble people living in small towns and remote villages, and became to them things which marked out one day from another by the ecstasy of intense emotion.

The love of liberty and of democracy has been a common possession of the great poets, but few have surpassed Victor Hugo in the ardor of his devotion and in the rapture of his praise. An avowed Freethinker and an unashamed Republican, Hugo always stood in the very forefront of the battle. In his lyrics we find a most magnificent expression of the claims of the indomitable human spirit which stands erect in the presence of adverse fortune and bids defiance to all malign fate. There is no finer ethical inspiration than breathes through the unforgettable lines of his inspired utterance. Let Valjean, the convict, Gilliat, the fisherman, Gavroche, the street urchin, speak of his humanity; and the superb crown of song laid on the altar of Liberty proclaim his love of Freedom. It was a most animating message that the great French Freethinkers of the eighteenth century bequeathed as a legacy to the nineteenth century. Equally inspiring was the message of this great poet of the nineteenth century brought to the twentieth as a gift, and it is of splendid augury for the future that liberty in our day should have received such a glorious coronal of song as had never before been laid at her feet:—

> "Our glorious century gone
> Beheld no head that shone
> More clear across the storm, above the foam,
> More steadfast in the fight
> Of warring night and light
> True to the truth whose star leads heroes home."

MIMNERMUS.

Mr. Chesterton's Challenge.

CONCERNING an "Acid Drop" dealing with the Infallibility of the Pope, which appeared in this journal for October 5, and is to be found on p. 632, Mr. Cecil Chesterton writes as follows:—

> "SIR,—Must I own that I had completely 'forgotten that for ages there was a bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism, now the one and now the other being *ex-cathedra* pronounced orthodox'? Would the author of your 'Acid Drops' mind refreshing my unfortunate memory by mentioning, say, one or two of the many occasions upon which Arianism was officially approved by the Holy See? Also, by the way, why 'Augustinianism'? I do not impugn the orthodoxy of St. Augustin's faith, but I cannot recall that he had anything whatever to do with the Arian controversy. Are you perhaps thinking of St. Athanasius?"

We thank Mr. Chesterton for giving us the opportunity to enlarge upon and prove the statements made in the "Acid Drop" in question. Of course, the term "Augustinianism" was used in a loose, general sense, to cover the doctrines usually known as orthodox in the Catholic Church. Every Church historian knows that there is no essential difference between the tenets advocated by Athanasius and those championed later by Augustine. Again, the paragraph under discussion did not contain the words "Holy See," as employed by Mr. Chesterton. Technically speaking, the "Holy See," never approved of Arianism, for the simple reason that it did not exist during the Arian controversy. What the "Acid Drop" contended was, that Arianism had been *ex cathedra*—from the chair, or with authority—pronounced orthodox on repeated occasions. From the beginning, Holy Church, as the Body of Christ, or the Temple of the Holy Ghost, has been held to be infallible; and we are quite willing to admit that this view is legitimately based upon definite New Testament declarations. Nothing is more undeniable, however, than that this infallible Church has always been the scene of the most acrimonious controversies. The followers of the Lamb have invariably been notorious for their unlamblike characteristics. Their quarrelsomeness was a byword. They quarrelled for generations about the Trinity, while their disputes over the person of Christ lasted some three hundred years. The ineffable relations of the Godhead were a subject, the discussion of which roused the passions of all classes to positive fury. As Eusebius tells us, "Bishop rose against bishop, district against district, only to be compared to the Symplegades dashed against each other on a stormy day." Speaking of Constantinople, Gregory of Nyssa informs us that "Every corner, every alley of the city, was full of these discussions—the streets, the market-places, the drapers, the money-changers, the victuallers. Ask a man 'how many oboli,' he answers by dogmatising on generated and ungenerated being. Inquire the price of bread, and you are told, 'The Son is subordinate to the Father.' Ask if the bath is ready and you are told, 'The Son arose out of nothing.'"

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It was to put an end to these disputes that the first General Council was convened by Constantine the Great. This famous Council met at Nicæa in 325. It was one of the stormiest assemblies ever held. The two men around whom the tempest raged were Athanasius and Arius, who hated each other as only two Christians could. Illustrative of the extent to which the Holy Fathers were under the control of unholy passions, there is an old legend to the effect that the Right Reverend Bishop of Myra made an exhibition of his Christian gentleness by dealing a blow, with all his force, at Arius's jaw. In the end, by a snatch vote, Athanasius won, while Arius was sentenced to a life of exile. Ten years later, another Council was convened at Tyre, before which Athanasius appeared as defendant instead of Arius. In ten short years the tables had been completely turned, Athanasius being now deposed and banished, while Arius was to be received in triumph at Constantinople. After the banishment of Athanasius, a synod, held at Jerusalem, examined the new confession of faith submitted by Arius, and pronounced it orthodox. Still another Council, convened at Antioch, reaffirmed the deposition of Athanasius, and promulgated anew the Arian creed. It is also a well-known fact in ecclesiastical history that the great Italian Council of Ariminum lapsed into Arianism, some say by an oversight. The truth is that, as Dean Milman puts it, "The two great patriarchates of the East, Constantinople and Alexandria, brought to issue, or strove to bring to issue, their rival claims to ascendency, and council after council promulgated, reversed, and re-enacted their conflicting decrees."

We hope we have now sufficiently refreshed Mr. Chesterton's "unfortunate memory" to enable him to see that the claim to infallibility for either Pope, Council, or Synod is unspeakably absurd, so absurd that only blind faith, such as the Church always demands, can tolerate it. All through her history, from the days of the Apostles to our own, the Christian Church has been mainly occupied in promulgating, reversing, and re-enacting her contradictory and irreconcilable decrees; and even to day it is only by the exercise of arbitrary authority, as the Modernists well know, that anything like peaceful unanimity can be maintained.

J. T. L.

ANCIENT HINDU SCEPTICISM.

Did God exist, omniscient, kind,
And never speak his will in vain,
'Twould cost him but a word, and then
His suppliants all they wish would find.
If God to men allotted woe
Although that woe the fruit must be
Of men's own actions, then were he
Without a cause his creatures' foe,
More cruel thus than men who ne'er
To others causeless malice bear.

—*Muir's "Religious and Moral Sentiments from Sanscrit Writers."*

FREE WILL.

Men deceive themselves in this, that they think themselves free. Now, in what consists such opinion? Solely in this, that they are conscious of their actions, and ignore the causes that determine them. The idea that men have of their liberty comes, then, from this, that they know not the cause of their actions, for to say that these depend on the will is to use words to which no meaning is attached.—*Spinoza.*

OLD AND NEW FAITH.

Faith in a divine power, devout obedience to its supposed will, hope of ecstatic unspeakable reward, these were the springs of the old movement. Undivided love of our fellows, steadfast faith in human nature, steadfast search after justice, firm aspiration towards improvement, and generous contentment in the hope that others may reap whatever reward may be, these are the springs of the new.—*John Morley.*

Acid Drops.

Holy Russia is Jew-baiting again. One almost shudders at the awful picture of superstition and fanaticism. This "Ritual Murder" trial is as bad as the old prosecutions for witchcraft. If you want one overwhelming indictment of Christianity, point to the Jews. And if you want a new proof of the greatness of Shakespeare's heart and the grandeur of his genius, turn to that matchless passage in the *Merchant of Venice* where Shylock voices the protest of his race against ages of Christian inhumanity. What intellect, what passion, pouring in a torrent from the Master's soul! And it was written more than three hundred years ago, when all Europe was sunk in the barbarism that Russia lies in now.

The Bishop of London objects to the Churches taking money from people who employ girls at starvation wages, and drive them to prostitution to eke out a living. We have nothing whatever to say against the Bishop's objection, except that it is rather late in the day to raise it, and if it were acted on the Churches would soon be short of funds. It is notorious that, among sweaters of labor, religious people figure very prominently; and, indeed, if *all* religious employers paid a fair wage, the problem of underpaid labor could be very easily dealt with. Moreover, why draw the line at sweating? What of the revenues of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, derived from slum areas and the like? Will the Bishop refuse that portion of his salary which comes from these sources? We doubt it. We remember the Bishop explaining that his £10,000 per year was barely enough to make ends meet, and we scarcely think he will do anything that would mean a reduction of income. Similar objections to the Bishop's have been raised before, but they are mostly intended for the shop window. They know the advice will not be acted upon; and, if it were, those who give it would be the first to explain that their words had been wrongly construed.

Lord Hugh Cecil has a pretty habit of saying some very caustic things. Discussing the Ethics of Property at the Church Congress, he told his audience that the Church's manner of dealing with reform was like the man who ran after a 'bus and only caught it at the end of the journey. The illustration hits off the situation exactly. The Church is the last even to *talk* about reform; to conceive it bringing it about is the dream of a fanatic or a fool.

"What is right in heaven," said Mr. Snowden at the Church Congress, "must be made the rule on earth." We hope not. We have heard of some very curious things in heaven, and we feel sure there would be trouble if earth did likewise. And, after all, Mr. Snowden might better justify his claim to be a Labor leader if he left heaven alone. People have decided what ought to be right in heaven by first of all finding out what *is* right on earth. If Mr. Snowden does not know, he has yet to learn the alphabet of genuine reform.

Southern Italy has been visited by another terrible earthquake. There was a wild rush of worshipers from the principal church at Santa Maria di Capua Vetere, where vespers were being held; many people were knocked down and trodden upon, and two women killed. Such is the elevating influence of religion in the presence of danger! At Naples images were dragged out of churches and placed in the public squares, to protect the women who remained there all the night.

"When Secretary of State Bryan set out upon his lucrative lecture tour with the 'Prince of Peace' packed in his grip, he made the explanation through his paper, the *Commoner* (August, 1913), that he could not meet his expenses out of his salary of $1 000 a month, and must 'augment' his income by resort to the platform. On September 9 Secretary Bryan signed for publication in another paper the statement that he speaks on educational subjects only, and 'it is for this object that I give my lectures, not for a lucrative end.' That statement is printed in the New York *Times*. The explanations are contradictory, and have nothing in common except that both are false. The falsehood of the first consists in saying that he needed the money for expenses, and of the second in saying (1) that his subjects are educational, and (2) not given for a lucrative end. The lectures are not educational, for no one learns anything from them that is true. Bryan is in the religious class with Pastor Russell and Billy Sunday. People are not educated by ignoramuses."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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Rev. A. B. Maughan, of Beighton rectory, near Sheffield, finding he was in the wrong train, pulled the communication cord and stopped the train for his own convenience. The penalty for this sort of thing is £5, but the Blyth magistrates treated it as a purely technical offence, and dismissed the case on payment of costs. There are some advantages in being a clergyman.

While conducting divine service at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Haywards Heath, the Rev. G. Pearson "suddenly became demented." Suddenly? Surely the poor man had been graduating for that condition. No one in his complete senses, at this time of day, could be pursuing the clerical occupation.

Why do things of this kind happen in churches, which, being consecrated, are full of the Holy Ghost? The parson is full of the Holy Ghost too—by virtue of his ordination. Strange!

Man's imagination cannot keep pace with the subtlety and variety of nature. The incidents of every novel and every play have occurred, or will occur, in the ordinary course of things. Many years ago we wrote a little story of a Mad Parson, who lost his head in a pulpit, and was besieged by his congregation, who tried to put an end to his scandalous sermon. It may be found in our *Comic Sermons*.

"The care of Children" was the subject of a paper read by Dr. Mary Murdoch at the National Union of Women Workers Conference at Hull. In the course of the discussion there was a striking speech by Miss F. R. Gray, headmistress of a girls' school, who was very severe on religious novels. We venture to reproduce her words from the *Daily News* report:—

> "The crying need of our young people of to-day, Miss Gray declared, was discipline. Lawlessness rather than freedom, self-gratification rather than self-control, desire for present pleasure rather than for future happiness—these were all signs of the times.
>
> "There was a lack of moral fastidiousness in much of the literature of to-day.
>
> "'The books of which I am thinking,' she went on, 'are written with an ostensibly moral, and even religious, motive, and they are false to the core. They teem from the press in England and in America in their hundreds of thousands, and they are frequently commended by persons of undoubted piety.
>
> "'The life that is depicted in these books is utterly unreal,' declared Miss Gray. 'There is no fidelity to nature or to art; the only interest is the love interest, and this love is a mere animal passion that should be called not love but lust. While on the one hand it triumphs over the ordinary principles of morality, such as truth, justice, and honor, on the other it associates itself with religion in a way which may fill one person with nausea, while from another it conceals the poison.
>
> "'I often wonder how many young women have found the downward path more easy and more alluring because of these "religious" novels. They are to be found in the libraries of girls' clubs and Sunday-schools as well as in our free libraries.'"

This is a very grave impeachment of a certain class of pious literature.

The *Guardian* says it has the "utmost respect" for Suffragan Bishops. They work very hard, and "they have little time to think." That is really a gem, and we decline to run the risk of dimming its brilliancy by any comment.

There was one meeting of the Church Congress at which Nonconformists and Churchmen fraternised. This was when they had for discussion the relations of Christianity to civilisation. And, of course, they all agreed that civilisation was nothing without Christianity. This was the one point they could talk about without quarrelling, and it was demonstrably false. Civilisations have been wrecked by Christianity, but none have been made by it. The civilisation it inherited it destroyed—or, on the most favorable view of affairs, failed to preserve. And it has always been living upon the fruits of imbuing agencies that in nine cases out of ten it did its utmost to crush out of existence. The Churches never could agree on preaching a common truth, but they can agree to preach a common falsehood.

It almost seems as though the rule of Christian writers is to find out what are the facts and then state the reverse. Thus, in *The Christian Tradition and its Verification*, Mr. T. R. Grover says: "Nowhere in classical literature—perhaps nowhere in non-Christian literature—is there a teacher of men who is recorded to have taken the same interest in children that Jesus did." Now, what was the interest Jesus took in children? His interest in them was to use them as an illustration of the simplicity and credulity that would attain the kingdom of heaven. That is about the limit of his interest in them. As a matter of fact, one striking feature in the New Testament as a whole is its scant recognition of family life. And this feature remains true of early Christianity. Children are practically ignored, and their influence on adult life completely overlooked. Writers like Dean Milman and Principal Donaldson have pointed out the striking absence of the recognition of home life in early Christian writings, and the consequence of this in increasing the barbarity of succeeding ages. The era of the deliberate manufacture of records in support of Christian claims is past, but that of the equally deliberate falsification of historic fact is still with us. And the mass of misrepresentation is so great that adequate correction is almost hopeless.

Although we do not suppose that anything very drastic will result from the report of the Royal Commission on Divorce, the Church of England is getting a little uneasy about it. A proposal has been made to invite the co-operation of Nonconformists, in order to guard and protect the Christian ideal of marriage. The Church of England Men's Society is to propose a resolution at its forthcoming Congress declaring the Majority Report to be contrary to the law of the Church, and affirming its adherence "to the principle of the indissolubility of marriage." These people are evidently living away back in the Middle Ages. Sensible people will realise that the indissolubility of marriage—under all conditions—simply does not, and cannot, exist. Even where it exists in theory, it disappears in practice. Above all, it is not a question of the law of the Church, but the needs of contemporary society. A dissolution of marriage is always regrettable, but all sane folks will admit that there are other eventualities more regrettable still, and it is in order to avoid these that some revision of our divorce laws is called for.

Rev. A. M. Mitchell, vicar of Burtonwood, near Earlstown, Lancashire, says "There is none other landowner but God." In England, too! But the reverend gentleman admits that God is not in possession. And the landlords smile. They dread Lloyd George more than Parson Mitchell's "God."

The land question "is above party," Mr. Mitchell says; "it is a task for all citizens, all Christians." This is a fair sample of the loose way in which these men of God gabble. Mr. Mitchell seems to think that "citizens" and "Christians" are convertible terms. If he does not mean that, what *does* he mean? One of two things,—either citizens are not Christians, or that Christians are not citizens. We leave the reverend gentleman to get out of his own muddle.

Marrying a man to reform him is an ancient folly. According to a newspaper report a man called James Flynn has just been sentenced at London Sessions to twenty-one months' hard labor. He was one of the five convicts who made a startling escape from Gloucester Gaol in October, 1906. After his release on ticket-of-leave he courted and married a Salvation Army girl, but in a few weeks he wanted her to support him by the worst of occupations, and she was compelled to leave him. A religious wife does not appear to have done him any sort of good.

In the case of the Berkeley Hotel burglary, Mr. Justice Darling reduced a sentence of seven years' penal servitude to three years. Justice Darling explained that was not because the prisoner in question was a good man, or any better than his associates; it was solely because he had "assisted the community" by betraying his fellow-burglars. This is quite a common practice; but we do not find it quite clear how the community is assisted, or future burglaries made more difficult, by the reduction of this sentence. It is some comfort, of course, to the owners of property to get it back. It is cheering to the police to bag the whole of the gang. It is satisfactory to the judge, we presume, to sentence them. And when we have enumerated these advantages the list seems to be about exhausted. At any rate, we do not see where the community has been assisted to any vital extent.

What is the interest of the community in this matter? Its chief interest is surely not the restoration of a little property—important though that may be to the owner. It certainly is not to gratify the professional pride of either policeman or judge. It seems to us that the chief interest in the situation is the criminal; and this is the one aspect of the situation that is left out of account. The important thing is that the criminal is there, and the vital question is what to do with him. These men were all equally guilty. They were all, we will say, equally oblivious to the sacred

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rights of property; yet one man has his sentence reduced by more than one-half—for what? It is really a reward for proving himself to be a little worse than the others. The one decent quality he possessed was that of sticking to his "pals." True, it was loyalty in a bad cause; but loyalty is loyalty, no matter how expressed. Then along comes "Justice" in wig and gown, and says: "You are all equally bad characters, at present. But if one of you will prove yourself worse than the others—if, in addition to being a thief, one of you will turn traitor—that one shall be rewarded." And straightway "Justice" destroys the last shred of decency by a threat of torture. We say deliberately, by a threat of torture. For it is torture to say that if a man turns traitor to his "pals" he shall receive three years, but if he remains loyal he shall have seven.

And so "justice," as understood in a Christian country, plucks the last decent feeling from a man instead of using it as a lever for improvement. It will not be pretended that this particular criminal is the better man for betraying his associates. He will come out of prison, in all probability, rather worse than he went in. And justice declares itself content. For our part, we would like to see it made positively illegal for judges to bargain with criminals in this manner. Let the police catch, and let judges condemn. The more efficient they are the better. And, if we can summon up enough common sense, when the police have caught and the judge has condemned, let us deal with the criminal as a problem to be solved once and for all. But, in the name of common decency, let us put an end to a bargaining between judges and criminals which does nothing to diminish crime, and only serves to prove how barbaric we still are in our dealing with social questions.

An article in one of the religious quarterlies is on "The Supply of Missionaries." That's all right; the critical question is—the demand for them. At present the supply always exceeds the demand.

More "Providence." This time at Nome, Alaska. More than half the city has been devastated by an earthquake; 500 houses are destroyed, and nearly 4,000 people are homeless. What the hurricane began the fire finished. "He doeth all things well."

Bishop Cameron, of Capetown, told the Church Congress that it was practically impossible to have Europeans and natives worshiping in the same church. He said that "in many places to attempt to enforce such common worship would mean the alienation of the whole European community." So much for the Christian Brotherhood of Man in actual practice. What the European community will do when it gets to heaven is a bit of a puzzle. Perhaps there, too, there will be compounds for the colored folk. Or, perhaps, they will be colored afresh. It is curious, by the way, that in all the visions of heaven that have been seen, all the inhabitants were white. We do not recall a single description of black angels hovering round the throne. Bishop Cameron strongly recommended "providing Europeans and natives with separate opportunities of worship." He also advised against the blacks being allowed to vote on terms of equality with the whites in Church Synods. This, he explained, might lead to the European vote being quite swamped. Bishop Cameron evidently believes in the franchise so long as he can make sure which way the vote will go. Why not adopt Mr. Dooley's advice—let them all vote equally, and a white bishop do the counting?

The Bishop of Barking has been presented with six hundred guineas in order that he may take a little holiday. Some holiday makers with that some of money would be away for years.

When God Laughs is the curious title of a shilling novel. In that other work of fiction, the Bible, God laughs in the Old Testament and weeps in the New. Readers buy or borrow the book, and take their choice.

The opening of the first Sunday-school Exhibition at Sittingbourne reminds us that such schools were originally established to teach ordinary education on the only day in the week available, prior to the introduction of the Factory Acts restricting the use of child labor. Sunday-schools nowadays have nothing to do with real education. Instead of the rule of three, they teach the truth of the "three-in-one"; instead of sense, nonsense. In short, they are incubators for hatching little Christians.

Mr. Eden Phillpott's new play, *The Shadow*, is unconventional in so far that it has a murderer for a hero, who knocks a miserly squire on the head one dark night. The hero justifies his action by saying, "Bean't the Bible full o' such things?" A shrewd hit which should make the "gods" sit up.

Albert Davis died in Bedford Gaol after a hunger strike of nearly five months. He rarely touched food but more often took a little milk. His death was due to exhaustion. This came out at the inquest. He was only twenty-one years of age; he had no brothers or sisters, and his father and mother died from small-pox when he was nine years old. What a desolate fate—even for a criminal! He appears to have thought he would get himself released—like the Suffragettes. He forgot that he was only a man. Besides, he belonged to a very poor family. Moreover, as forcible feeding was not used, his case was not reported to the Home Secretary.

A nice point was raised at the Marlborough-street Police Court when several Suffragettes were brought before the "beak" for fighting the police at the arrest of Miss Annie Kenney on the previous afternoon. One of the culprits was a clergyman; evidently a very "high" Churchman, for he claimed to be a "priest of the Catholic Church," while admitting that he was "a priest of the Church of England." He objected to be sworn on the book which had just been kissed by a wicked policeman. He even claimed to affirm. But the magistrate would not let him do that. He was told that he would have to be sworn on the Scriptures sanctioned by the Church to which he belonged. There was perhaps a lot of practical good in this decision. But could it be maintained at law? On the whole, we venture to doubt it. One would like to hear the point argued.

After bombarding Cabinet Ministers, the women—or the pious among them—are to take a turn at bombarding God. A number of "Leagues" have combined to issue a circular calling for a week of prayer. They say the claim for the enfranchisement of women "can be rightfully and conscientiously pleaded before God." Well, but he ought to know all about it as it is. We can understand arguing it out with Asquith, but why argue it out with God? Anyway, we expect it will be a one-sided discussion.

The *Referee* has been printing a number of letters complaining of "Blasphemy in the Parks." The letter-writers are enthusiastic but contradictory, for one complains of the pollution of the minds of young women, and another says "one never sees a decent woman" at these meetings. Another correspondent writes from Paris. Perhaps he walks over to Hyde Park every Sunday.

The now godly *Referee* prints further letters on "Blasphemy in Hyde Park." It is the dull season, parliament is not sitting, the sea-serpent has ceased to attract, and our pious contemporary is short of copy. There is nearly always a business explanation of these things.

The Rev. W. L. Watkinson told a gathering at a Wesleyan Methodist luncheon recently that "I was wasting my time reading a bit of fiction the other day." Was it the Bible?

Canon Samuel Augustus Barnett left estate of the gross value of £10,580. Not bad for a faithful friend of the working man.

The newspapers have been using heavy type to draw attention to a Kentish apple weighing a pound and a quarter. They would have to use poster type to do justice to the apple in the Garden of Eden.

Otto, by the grace of God, King of Bavaria, has reigned over his kingdom for twenty-seven years, although he is quite mad and is confined in Furstenried Castle. His devoted subjects must be worthy of the same institution.

"Everlasting Fires" is the wording on an advertisement in the daily press. It has no theological significance; and only relates to a special brand of coal.

A real conversion will take place shortly. The unfinished "Temple of Jezreel," on Chatham Hill, is to be converted into a picture palace. It was built about thirty years ago, at a cost of £45,000, by James Jezreel, founder of the "New and Latter House of Israel." When five stories had been reached, Jezreel himself died. Poor Jezreel was born too late to work that oracle.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, October 19, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester; at 3, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology"; at 6.30, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*."

October 26, Stratford Town Hall.
December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £197 5s. 9d. Received since:—P. M. W., £1 1s.; W. Bailey, £20; Five Edinburgh Saints, 10s. 6d.; G. Smith, 10s.

A. EYLES.—Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary, is sending you a form for the withdrawal of your children from religious instruction. Our shop manager is executing your order.

P. M. W., subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, through our publishing office, writes: "I should like to say how glad I am that the President is so much better. How greatly I admire his ability and his devotion to the cause, and how sincerely I wish him health and strength to carry on his work."

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. GOODBOURN.—The reverend gentleman's advertisement is not worth repeating here. He seems to expect to fill his church with readers of a racing paper. But the poor men of God must do something to fill up.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

H. ROBERTS.—May be suitable next week.

G. SMITH.—Thanks for your "further small mite" to the President's Fund. We note your view that it should progress more rapidly, and would do so if converts only gave their old "pew rents and collection money."

J. ROBERTSON.—Acknowledged as desired. Thanks also for good wishes. Mr. Foote is keeping well. If the insomnia would only go right away he might almost hope to flutter the laurels of Methuselah.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's friends in Manchester and the district will probably be glad to hear him again. They will have an opportunity to-day (Oct. 19). He lectures, afternoon and evening, at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints; and his subjects are, or should be, attractive.

Although it is Mr. Foote's intention not to lecture two Sundays following, for some time at least, he is breaking this rule next Sunday (Oct. 26), when he lectures at the Stratford Town Hall, right after his visit to Manchester. This is unavoidable if he is to take one of the Stratford dates.

A medical friend, who travelled a considerable distance to hear us lecture at Birmingham, does us the honor to remind us that he is indebted to us for his "mental emancipation in the old days" when he "was a student in London." He also writes:—

> "I thoroughly enjoyed hearing you again at Birmingham, after so many years, and made an effort to go there. I was glad to see your health permitted you to stand the strain of speaking in such a large hall. Your voice sounded very clearly and could be heard in the back parts of the hall."

Some of our friends will like to read that.

Mr. Cohen lectures at Glasgow to-day. See the "Lecture Notices" for particulars. We hope the local "saints" will give his visit the utmost possible publicity. That is all it wants.

Arley Lane, who does the "Pulpit and Pew" for the *Birmingham Weekly Mercury*, devoted his two columns in last week's issue to Mr. Foote's lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday evening, October 5. We reproduce the first portion of his descriptive report:—

> "Once, when sheltering from rain under a tree in the vicinity of the Benbulben mountains in the West of Ireland, a laborer who had run from his work to avoid a drenching, said—
>
> "'It never rains here. It doesn't stop to rain. It tumbles down in solid sheets of water. When the wind blows on it, ye might think it was rainin' bullocks. By the seven lame pipers of Ballydehob, but it's the rale rain we get in the Benbulbens.'
>
> "Let me advise all my friends to drive the forty miles from Bundoran to Sligo, with the Benbulbens on their left, the Atlantic on their right.
>
> "But let the day be fine.
>
> "My last run over that ground was done in a rainstorm that nearly washed me off the car, so that I reached the Imperial Hotel at Sligo more like a drowned rat than an English tourist.
>
> "All of which came to my mind as I plashed through the streets of Birmingham on Sunday eve, now and then peeping in at church and chapel doors that I might observe how many had come to worship the Creator on a very wet evening.
>
> "For though it was not raining bullocks, the downpour was so continuous and persevering that one wondered what it might have accomplished if its talents had been exercised in another and a more virtuous direction.
>
> "Not many in the churches; fewer still in the chapels; public worship, it would seem, is largely dependent on the weather.
>
> "'You can't expect folks to turn out on such a night,' was the actual observation of a preacher of distinction. What? Not for God? Not for heaven? Not for the everlasting ecstasy?
>
> "Is weather to stop us from pursuit of the heavenly Jerusalem? Are we to risk the gates of pearl because of an evening's rain?
>
> "But if the churches and chapels were drawn blank, the Town Hall was full.
>
> "Full to the last benches in the great gallery; full to the front bench on the floor.
>
> "No music; no singing; no attraction beyond the speech of Mr. G. W. Foote, who was announced to deal with the Theology of Sir Oliver Lodge.
>
> "Not that the crowd cared two straws for Sir Oliver or his Theology.
>
> "Close inquiry proved that most were subjects of good-humored derision.
>
> "'Sir Oliver,' said one, 'is an unbeliever who talks to mugs in the chapels.'
>
> "Said another: 'I'm here to hear Foote, no matter what he talks about.'
>
> "These were apparently respectable, shrewd, and intelligent men of the upper working-class.
>
> "The congregation was, in fact, mostly composed of men, just as the church and chapel congregations are mostly composed of women."

It will be noticed that Arley Lane corroborates what we said about the terrible rain and the splendid audience. The rest of his report is a bright and humorous summary report of the lecture. Occasionally the reporter offers a little criticism of his own, but it is always good-tempered and impartial. We thank him for breaking the ridiculous silence on the part of the Birmingham press, which affects to be ignorant of Mr. Foote's existence, although his name on a bill brings a great crowd of people—without any help from *them*.

There was an improved audience last Sunday at the Foresters' Hall, Highgate-road, and Mr. J. T. Lloyd's excellent address was followed with the keenest interest. The platform this evening (Oct. 19) will be occupied by Mr. Max Hope, who will deal with "The Assumptions of Sir Oliver Lodge."

Mr. Cohen had a good meeting at the opening of the Stratford Town Hall course of lectures on Sunday. His lecture was warmly applauded, and was followed by interesting questions and discussion. Mr. Lloyd occupies the same platform to-night (Oct. 19), his subject being "Heroes of our Faith."

A man who is prosecuted for "blasphemy" has a perfect right to conduct his own defence in his own way; though whether that is always the best way to frustrate the Blasphemy Laws, and help to break them down, is open to discussion. When our advice is asked for in any particular case we are ready to give it. We have usually found, however, that it has not been followed. Perhaps the best thing we can do is to offer a few words on the subject generally.

According to the common law of "blasphemy," ever since Lord Coleridge's judgment in 1883, it has been perfectly legal to attack the fundamentals of Christianity, provided that the disputant respects "the decencies of controversy." That is the whole point at issue now. It is useless to argue that anyone has the right to say *what* he likes, *when* he

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likes, *where* he likes, *how* he likes, and to *whom* he likes. He cannot possibly have such a right as that in a place of public resort, where other persons have the same right to be that he has himself. What has to be argued is that he has not transgressed the "decencies of controversy"—meaning thereby the *ordinary* decencies of controversy. A Freethinker may claim the same freedom of speech that prevails, for instance, in political discussion. He should be able to speak of Jesus Christ as freely as the most extreme Tories—and the *Daily Mail*—speak of Mr. Lloyd George. He should be able to speak of Christianity as freely as Sir Edward Carson or Captain Craig speaks of Home Rule. He should be able to speak of Christians as freely as they speak of "Infidels." He should be able to speak of the "gods" of to-day as freely as religious people speak of the "gods" of the past, or the "gods" of distant parts of the world. Equal freedom with other controversialists is what the law allows him, and what he should maintain against his prosecutors.

The worst thing a man prosecuted for "blasphemy" can do is to indulge in an attack on Christianity or a defence of Atheism. The jury are not there to decide such matters, and persistence in such a line of defence will only annoy them and incline them to "get their own back" when their turn comes to speak. Showing-off is another bad policy. It will not be easy to make the judge take you at a fanciful valuation, and juries naturally resent being treated as bigger fools than they are. Above all, don't display too much of what the man in the street calls "lip." He who is pleading for fairplay should respect it himself. He who is pleading for toleration should at least be conciliatory. George Jacob Holyoake made a nine hours' speech at his trial in 1842, and he used to say humorously, but not without some degree of truth, that he deserved his sentence for talking at such inordinate length.

We are assuming, of course, that the defendant in a "blasphemy" prosecution wants to make the best use of his opportunity to attack the Blasphemy Laws and hasten their repeal; in other words that he is fighting for an acquittal at the best or a disagreement of the jury at the worst. That is the only thing that really counts. Making conviction difficult is the only effective way of stopping prosecutions. But if a defendant is animated by other motives, they are of no importance to anyone but himself, and would not excite our interest or demand our attention.

Camberwell Borough Council has employed the Bishop of Southwark to consecrate a new addition to Forest Hill Cemetery. Councillor A. B. Moss offered to do the job at half the Bishop's price. His offer was not accepted. Had it been so the Council would have lost nothing on one side and gained something on the other. Cash in hand is a solid thing, and Mr. Moss's hocus-pocus would have done the land quite as much good as the Bishop's.

There are few lady speakers on the Freethought platform, and we should make the most of those we have. Birmingham "saints" are reminded—and we ask them to let their friends and acquaintances know it—that Miss Kough lectures this evening (Oct. 19), at the King's Hall, Corporation-street.

Mr. W. Bailey, of Manchester, who has already subscribed liberally to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes us as follows:—

> "Dear Mr. Foote,—As some compensation for the loss you have sustained in the curtailment of your lecturing tour, I send you a further contribution of £20 towards your Honorarium Fund, hoping that friends of the 'best of causes' may see their way to similar action. I trust your pen may for many years yet continue to expound those principles to which you have devoted a long and strenuous life.—Believe me sincerely yours, W. BAILEY."

We appreciate Mr. Bailey's good wishes, as well as his generous subscription, and we hope they will be realised. But we also hope that our voice, as well as our pen, will do a good deal more service to Freethought before the end.

This is not exactly a "Sugar Plum" but we don't know where else to put it—for we don't mean it to be an "Acid Drop." Mr. Justice North, who sentenced us to twelve months' imprisonment for "blasphemy" in 1883, died on Monday (Oct. 13) in his eighty-fourth year. We were the last prisoner he ever tried. He was removed to the Chancery Court after our trial—which he took twice at the same Sessions in order to secure a conviction. He had been for many years in retirement and most people thought he had joined the great majority. His one passport to immortality is his historical connection with the *Freethinker* case.

Musicians and Freethought.

> "The quickening and growth of the spirit of Rationalism have produced consequences not entirely beneficial: for although the purgative function of the inquiring mind and the apotheosis of that entirely Protestant quality called *common sense* have done much to guard us from temptations to error, yet we have lost a great deal in the domain of the mystic and the picturesque.....The truth remains.....that so far as art is concerned.....the triumph of reason and the reign of positive negation are attended by results which can only be called deplorable."—Extract from the *Musical Standard*.

I NEVER really knew what the "balm of Gilead" was, but I apprehend the phrase alright, and I should say that the above piece of writing must be as this very "balm" to all those highly respectable people who sit in choirs and organ-lofts, for whom the said periodical specially caters, apparently. But I have a notion that all this fuss about Rationalism and negation has something of the air of the "twice-told tale" about it. Once upon a time, we were told that the world was less moral, less just, less sober, and all on account of Rationalism. Now we are informed that we are less "mystic" and "picturesque," and it is all on account of this same Rationalism. Personally, I have not the slightest idea what the terms "mystic" and "picturesque" convey in music; but Rationalism is to be "deplored," and so it is blamed for the world's loss of some idea or emotion which no one has ever seen, felt, or heard.

When one speaks of the "mystic" in a certain class of literature, I understand fairly well; but in music, or even in art generally, what does it denote? Can music evoke any such precise idea, state, or emotion to the senses that can be defined as "mystic"? Even a word like "picturesque" (except in a general connotation, *i.e.*, fit to become, or fulfilling the subject of a picture) evades definition. All this talk about the mystic and picturesque in music is sheer verbiage, and ought to be relegated, with those other "palpably nugatory" abstractions which so annoyed Ruskin, to the land of "What is it?"

As for Rationalism, Professor Bury's recent book, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, will, for the modest sum of one shilling, educate the writer to a better circumspection of his subject. To the Greeks of old, Rationalism was necessary not only for their philosophic speculation, says the Professor, but "as a condition of their literary and artistic excellence." The whole history of art and literature down to the present time is subject to this identical interpretation, as may be understood from Lecky and Bagehot. That England has been backward in the arts is due, says Buckle and Herbert Spencer, to the very absence of this Rationalism. But I feel sure that the writer in the *Musical Standard* is relying more upon an interpretation of his thesis through individuals rather than by general influences, and, as he specifies music, I will endeavor to show, by recalling some of the greatest names in the art, how utterly ridiculous is this chatter about the "deplorable" results of "Rationalism."

Bach (1686-1750) is one of the greatest names in music. He is generally looked upon as part and parcel of the Church, at least by people who only see with their eyes. They note a host of his works bearing the title and purport of religion, and they think that is sufficient. Yet it is difficult to conceive him in any way but as a Rationalist. Bach was a *Capellmeister*, and, therefore, religion was his business. German opera was practically non-existent, and the concert platform was unknown, and so Bach was subject to the Church's religious forms because there were no other vehicles for his art. Theology or creed was evidently of secondary importance to a man who could write the *B. Minor Mass* for the Catholics and the *St. Matthew Passion* for the Protestants. No one but a free man in creed and theology would use material (as Bach did) from secular works in religious compositions. Look at the opening chorus of the *Christmas Oratorio*, which

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is taken from the *Birthday Ode* for the Queen of Poland, while the Virgin's song, concerning the advent of Christ, originally appeared in the secular cantata, *Hercules auf dem Scheidewege*, where it is sung by Vice when endeavoring to seduce Virtue.

Handel (1685-1759) is another greatly misunderstood artist. Here in England he is considered one of the pillars of the Church. The *Messiah* has almost become part of middle-class religion. But Handel was, as Edward Fitzgerald says in one of his chatty letters, "a good old Pagan at heart, till he had to yield to the fashionable piety of England." One writer in *Grove's Dictionary* actually demonstrates that wherever Pagans appear side by side with Jews and Christians in the oratorios, the former have "musically" the best of it. For example, in *Saul*, the "Along the monster Atheist strode" is quite picturesque beside the respectable piece which follows—"The youth inspired by thee, O Lord." In *Theodora* the "Venus laughing from the skies," compared to the Christian choruses, is like a fresh breeze blowing into a stuffy room. Handel, like Bach, used his secular material for his oratorios. Little does John Smith, grocer, know, when he talks about the "heavenly music" of the *Messiah*, that he may be listening to the *Italian Duets!* Handel was a Pagan.

The great literary and social ferment (essentially rationalistic) which brought about the French Revolution naturally bore some musicians with it. Among the greatest of these was Gluck (1714-87), whom Burney called "the Michael Angelo of Music." He gave the world those wonderful operas, *Orpheus*, *Alceste*, and *Iphegenia*, all of which are cast in the mould of classic antiquity. We know nothing of Gluck's religion, but we know something of his art, and that must guide us. It was in the Pagan art of ancient Greece that Gluck sought his ideal, and in the æsthetics of the Freethinking encyclopædists of his day that he looked for the guidance of this ideal. Gluck was decidedly a Rationalist, but still he wrote that immortal *aria* "Che faro senza Eurydice."

Gossec (1734-1829) was one of the official musicians of the Revolution, and besides being ordained by the Republic as the first composer in France, and writing operas, he composed several revolutionary pieces, such as the *Hymn à la Raison*, *L'Offrande à la Liberté*, etc. He was known as a Freethinker, not only in religion, but in art. Like later reformers—Berlioz and Wagner—he wrote for huge orchestras and bands.

Grétry (1741-1813) was another musical reformer and partisan of the Revolution. He advocated a sloping auditorium and a hidden orchestra long before the days of Bayreuth. His writings are full of "reforms." He was the friend of Voltaire and a decided Freethinker. Indeed, his name appears in Maréchal's *Dictionnaire des Athées*. Among his "rebel" music is the *Fête de la Raison* and *La Rosière Républicaine*. Both Gossec and Grétry are names which count in musical progress.

For the real musical reverberation of the French Revolution we must look to Beethoven (1770-1827), the "great pathfinder," as Wagner calls him. That he was a confirmed Freethinker is allowed by all his biographers.* He was in open revolt against all the creeds, and would even make fun of the Bible. Among his works are two masses and an oratorio, which, on account of their religious titles, will specially claim our attention here. The *Mass in C*, says Nohl, "is not a religious composition," and Macfarren suggests that it "might scarcely have proceeded from an entirely orthodox thinker." In the *Missa Solennelle*, which Beethoven considered his "most finished work," the formula of the Church is completely ignored. "Its astounding grandeur," says Schlüter, "leaves no room for religious feeling." Dannreuther says it is a "a veritable hymn to humanity.....before the glory of which all that pertains to any particular Church, to any particular priesthood, vanishes as shadows in a noonday sun." Look at its *Agnus Dei*. Where is the peace in the *Dona nobis pacem?* It is revolt! Even in his solitary oratorio, the *Mount of Olives*, biographers find the "unchristian hand" of the composer. The way Christ is made to sing a lengthy *scena ed aria*, a florid duet, and quite a "sparkling trio" (as Rockstro says), has shocked England so much that a special *libretto* has been substituted. Beethoven is one of the greatest names, if not *the* greatest, in music, and he is this in spite of his "deplorable Rationalism."

The creator of the German *lied* was Schubert (1797-1828). He wrote hundreds of compositions, from symphonies down to simple *strophe* songs; and, notwithstanding all the so-called benefits which this Christian civilisation has conferred upon the world, he died a pauper at the age of 31. Schumann says that Schubert could have set a placard to music. His settings of Goethe, Schiller, and Heine are real tone-pictures. Grove says we know nothing of his religion. Yet we have that delightful poem of his preserved by Schumann, which tells us all we need know:—

> "Leave them racing, hurrying on
> To some distant goal,
> Building creeds and proofs upon
> Half-seen flashes in the soul.
> Not a word of it is true,
> Yet what loss is theirs or mine?
> In the maze of human systems
> I can trace the thought divine."

From this it would seem that all religions were the same to Schubert, and thus he could write a *Mass* for the Catholics, an *Oratorio* for the Protestants, and a *Psalm* for the Jews! He was certainly a Rationalist, and he wrote the "mystical" *Der Wanderer* and the "picturesque" *Erlkönig*.

One of the freest minds in art which took service under Heine's flag, in the "war of liberation," was Robert Schumann (1810-56). One has only to read his prose works and his letters to know how utterly free he was from that "inherited usage" which was Heine's *bête noir*. J. M. Wheeler gives him a place in his *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. He wrote a *Mass* and a *Requiem*, which, although they bear the Catholic formula, are full of characteristics opposed to Catholic ritual. His so-called "profane oratorio"—*Paradise and the Peri*—is considered by most writers as his chief work, and the very title of the composition gave offence in certain "respectable" quarters. Schumann was the first musician to sally forth sword (or shall we say pen) in hand to rout the Philistine.

Berlioz (1803-69), "the mighty Hector," believed neither in a God nor Bach, says his friend Hiller. In his charming autobiography, which W. E. Henley ranked as a classic of its kind, Berlioz tells us how he scandalised the pious Mendelssohn by laughing at the Bible. I suppose it is not too much to say that he is the greatest musician France has produced. His *Damnation of Faust*, like the *Faust* of Schumann, is a true understanding, and worthy setting, of Goethe's masterpiece, and infinitely superior to Gounod's cheap and tawdry stuff. Berlioz' works are like huge canvases of tone. Heine said his music reminded him of "primeval monsters and fabulous empires." Among his so-called religious works are an oratorio, *The Infancy of Christ*, a *Requiem*, and a *Te Deum*. Of the two latter, one eminent critic has said, they "stand like colossal statues at the gates of a barbarian temple. They are absolutely unchristian in feeling." Surely this writer didn't expect a Berlioz to write *à la* Sankey-Moody hymnal. Berlioz was an Atheist like his father, and I suppose he is one of those people responsible for the loss of the "mystic" and "picturesque" in music. Bah! it is enough to make a stir in that ground of *Père la Chaise*.

Félicien David (1810-76), the composer of the symphonic ode, *Le Désert*, was a Freethinker, much taken up with St. Simonianism. Offenbach (1819-80), the most brilliant exponent of the lighter *opéra comique*, was also a Freethinker. English critics complained that he even introduced his scepticism into his *libretti*. Many will remember the recent revival (up-to-date) of his *Orphee aux Enfers* in

* In an article, entitled "Beethoven and the Revolution," in the *Freethinker* (August 4, 1907), I dealt at length with Beethoven's religious views.

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London. Henry Litolff (1818-91), a famous pianist in his day, but now only known to fame as the composer of the overture, *Robespierre*, and the delightful *Spinnlied*, was a thorough rebel and Freethinker. When a youth he threw himself into the Vienna rebellion of 1848, and even at middle age he couldn't keep out of the Paris Commune of 1871. Another fine pianist, alive to-day, who took part in the Paris Commune, and is a Freethinker, is Raoul Pugno.

We will now turn to the land of the *bel canto*—Italy. The first free musician, at any rate in modern times, is Rossini (1792-1868), known best of all for his opera, *William Tell*, the overture to which is such a favorite in all concert *répertoires*. Rossini was a reformer. It was he who broke the back of the singers' tyranny and domination. When the "star" of the day said, "I shall sing such and such a *cadenza* there, Signor Rossini," the signor replied, "You will sing just what I have written; no more and no less." Chouquet tells us that Rossini was a sceptic. He also wrote music that may be called "religious," with a stretch of fancy—for instance, *Moses in Egypt* and a *Stabat Mater*—but it must be patent to the meanest musical person that every note in these is stage music. A hymn of thanksgiving in *Moses* is worked out to the accompaniment of a polonaise!

The great Verdi (1813-1901), whose *Trovatore*, *Traviata*, and *Aïda*, belong to our operatic *répertoires*, was also a Freethinker. In his earlier days he was always in trouble with either Church or State on account of his *libretti*. I remember reading that during his latter days, when in retirement, how he insisted upon priests keeping to their soul-saving business, and not interfere with secular affairs.

Boito (1842), the composer of *Mephistophele*, is still living. He was one of the rebel poets of Italy, with Carducci, in the 'sixties and 'seventies. He is a candid Freethinker, and in his *Mephistophele* made a daring satire on the Roman Church. In the scene where Mephistopheles is crowned, all the demons and witches kneel down in adoration to a parody of the music of the Catholic *Tantum Ergo*. Needless to say, the stage was rushed on the first performance, and a riot ensued.

Now we come to one who startled all the dovecotes of respectability in art and life—Wagner (1813-88). He was an inherent rebel. In 1849 he was among the democrats advocating reform in Dresden, and finally took part in the rebellion. On its suppression, Wagner fled to Switzerland, but his assessors, Bakounine, the apostle of Anarchism, and Roeckel, the musician, went to prison. Wagner was always a strict Freethinker and an Atheist. At first, a friend and follower of Feuerbach; then of Schopenhauer. In later years, although still maintaining his *animus* against the God-idea, he became enamored with the ascetic side of Christianity, in an ultra-development of Schopenhauer's surrender of the will. His operas, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* are well known to the masses, but it is in his stupendous music-drama—*The Ring of the Nibelung*—that he reveals his great genius. Not content with revolutionising his art, he preached the reason for his revolt in some of the most remarkable books of the century, viz.: *Art and the Revolution*, *Music of the Future*, etc. An excellent summary of his philosophies, in art, religion, and politics, is contained in Bernard Shaw's *The Perfect Wagnerite*. I suggest it will not be presumptuous to claim Wagner for Rationalism, and for having contributed a quota to the progress of music, even if we have lost something of the "mystic" and "picturesque"!

Hans Von Bülow (1830-94), a great pianist, a great conductor, and a composer of note, was a militant Freethinker, if not an Atheist. His writings bear abundant evidence of this. As a young man he was swept into the revolutionary philosophies of '48, and they always seem to have stayed with him. To him the God-idea was all-harmful, and he blamed it for all the "banalities in the world," including Philistinism. He was a man every inch of him, this same Von Bülow.

Anton Rubinstein (1830-94) has been designated the "founder of the musical education and civilisation in Russia." He was, besides that, one of the world's greatest pianists, and his works are among the classics of the musical art. His well-known *Melody in F* belongs to "the people," whilst his *Ocean Symphony* will be cherished by the elect for all time. Rubinstein was a confirmed Agnostic, and priests were a continual fund of amusement to him. The orthodox oratorio, where artists sing highly dramatic incidents dressed in conventional "evening dress," and as immovable as a rock, raised his ire. Rubinstein said that if the people wanted Bible history in *libretti*, they ought to have it with full scenery and effects, and to this end he devised his "sacred operas"—*Moses*, *Christus*, etc., but they were unsuccessful.

Brahms (1833-97), who was bracketed with Bach and Beethoven as the "Three B.'s of Music," also belongs to the Rationalists. His *Four Serious Songs* are poems upon the uncertainty of human life, and almost a glorification of Death. *Grove's Dictionary* admits that the composer did not hold to the immortality of the soul. The writer says "the dogmatism of the Churches did not appeal to him." The great *German Requiem*, although it has the mark of a church piece by title, is nothing of the sort. Again, we have a critic (Streatfeild), as with Berlioz, who calls the work "unchristian"—*i.e.*, I suppose because the composer does not allow the æsthetic principle to play "second fiddle" to the devotional. Brahms' *Song of Destiny*, and *Song of the Fates*, tell us more of his heresy.

The intellectual opening of Russia, which seems to have been sequential to the liberal decades following the emancipation of the serfs, gave to musical art the genius of Moussorgsky (1835-81). Here was a staunch democrat and Freethinker who dared (and it meant *dare* in those days in Russia) to say, "Hold out the hand of fellowship to the masses, and learn from them the true purpose of life." He practised what he preached, but what a sad tale it is in his life. His songs are truly "human documents." Those weird *Songs* and *Dances of Death* reveal his very soul. One writer has called him the "musical Nihilist," and not without reason. The *Peep Show* is a delicious satire. Moussorgsky hated "authority," and the official, the priest, and the academic person all come in for severe handling under his lash of satire.

Two masters of the Neo-romantic school—Greig and Tschaikowsky—belong definitely to Freethought. Everyone knows their music, if really not the best of it. Greig (1843-1907) was the friend of the great literary Freethinkers—Ibsen, Björnson, and Brandes. He set to music the *chef d'œuvre* of the first, *Peer Gynt*. Björnson's *Sigurd Jorsalfar* also had his setting. He ignored Christianity, and Brandes tells us he was a Freethinker.

Tschaikowsky (1840-93), the great tone poet of pessimism, was an Agnostic. His letters, especially those to Von Meck, tell us of all his "doubts." Providence, immortality, and the rest, all are discussed by him. Critics actually tell us that he reveals his "doubts" in his music. Markham Lee, in his *brochure* on the composer, says he can imagine Tschaikowsky saying, in his *Pathetic Symphony*, "There is no God!"

Unquestionably, one of the first names in music to-day is that of Richard Strauss. His conception of the musical art is something immense. He uses tone as a Titan. But I must pass on to his philosophy. It is clearly Nietzschean, as revealed in his tone-poems, *Also sprach Zarathustra* and *Ein Heldenleben*. The composer has, in the former, attempted to represent man in his effort to solve the riddle of the universe. In *Heldenleben* Strauss portrays man's life-conflict, his triumph, and final peace. This, like *Tod und Verklärung*, called forth a perfect storm of hostile criticism on account of its realism. Strauss also belongs to Freethought.

Among the foremost French composers of modern times are Massenet, Bruneau, and Charpentier, all

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Rationalists. Massenet (1842-1912) was a confessed Voltairean. His oratorio, *Marie Magdaleine*, and the opera, *Hérodiade*, caused considerable stir by reason of the freedom of their texts. Bruneau was the friend of Zola, and a good fighter for liberty all round. His "naturalism" in *L'Attaque au Moulin* and *La Rêve* was subjected to much criticism. Gustave Charpentier is still living. He is a staunch Freethinker and revolutionary Socialist. His opera, *Louise*, and a tone-poem, *La Vie du Poet*, reveal revolutionary ideas.

These are the names of giants in the musical art, and I claim them for Rationalism. If music has lost anything by this "Rationalism," it is only the bonds and fetters which bound it to social and religious convention. The progress of all art is dependent upon progress in civilisation, and the latter seems to be determined in relation to conflict with "the powers that be." Thus Rationalism or Freethought, in its conflict with religion, is an absolute condition of civilisation, and so of Art.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Shelley and Keats on Richard Carlile.

SHELLEY'S first piece of important prose was the "Letter to Lord Ellenborough," before whom Daniel Isaac Eaton was tried for "blasphemy" in March, 1812, his offence being the publication of the third part of Paine's *Age of Reason*. This virtuous man and honorable publisher was found guilty and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, also to stand in the pillory. Shelley was not yet twenty, and he waited to see if some older and more influential champion of freedom would "raise his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity." But no one spoke, and the young poet stepped into the breach. The manuscript of his letter was entrusted to Mr. Syle, a well-known printer and publisher of Barnstaple. Shelley ordered a thousand copies to be printed, but the tradesman was more easily frightened than the author. Mr. Syle suppressed and destroyed all the remaining sheets after some two hundred copies had been delivered. It was difficult to circulate even a few of these copies, but the pamphlet survives amongst Shelley's prose works, and is a monument to his honor. It is not, as a composition, to be compared to such a superb achievement as the later *Defence of Poetry*, which was so highly—yet not *too* highly—praised by James Thomson. But the Letter to Lord Ellenborough was one that only Shelley could have written; it is creditable alike to his head and heart; its style was wonderfully mature for a youth only half way through his twentieth year; and it has the distinction, we repeat, of being his first prose writing of real importance.

Six years and a half later, in October, 1819, Richard Carlile had to answer six indictments for "blasphemy." He read the whole of the *Age of Reason* in his defence, in order to have it published as part of the report of his trial. He was found guilty (of course!) and sentenced to a fine of £1,500 and three years' imprisonment in Dorchester Gaol. The news of this judicial crime reached Shelley at Florence, where he was "in hourly expectation of Mary's confinement." He was also "full of all kinds of literary plans." Yet he could not forbear giving his attention to the new "blasphemy" case. Writing to the Gisbornes on November 6, 1819, he said: "I have just finished a letter of five sheets on Carlile's affair." What became of it we do not know. Is there any Shelleyan alive—Mr. Wise, Mr. Dobell, or another—who can give us any information on the point? Dr. Dowden, Shelley's official biographer, says that the letter was "addressed to Leigh Hunt." He gives a brief account of it, running only to seven lines; and winds up, characteristically, with bigoted nonsense about "the indecencies of Paine's commentary on the story of the birth of Jesus Christ"—as if it were not Shelley's opinion, but Dr. Dowden's, that really mattered.

The Carlile case attracted the attention of another great poet—John Keats. Writing to his brother George, before Carlile's trial came on, Keats first observed that England was recovering from the reaction which followed the French Revolution, and then he proceeded:—

> "There are little signs whereby we may know how matters are going on. This makes the business of Carlisle [Keats's spelling] the bookseller of great amount in my mind. He has been selling deistical pamphlets, republished Tom Paine, and many other works held in superstitious horror. He has even been selling, for some time, immense numbers of a work called The Deist, which comes out in weekly numbers. For this conduct he, I think, has had about a dozen indictments issued against him, for which he has found bail to the amount of many thousand pounds. After all, they are afraid to prosecute. They are afraid of his defence; it would be published in all the papers all over the empire. They shudder at this. The trials would light a flame they could not extinguish. Do you not think this of great import?"

Richard Carlile was happier than he knew. His own indomitable manhood was equal to anything. No one ever looked on the face of danger with greater equanimity. He was incapable of fear. He was as stubborn as the oak of his native Devonshire, as enduring as the Dartmoor granite. And he had friends amongst the people, and friends of eminence like the great Jeremy Bentham. But he was unaware that his fight was watched by two mighty poets, both Republicans and Freethinkers, both friends of human liberty and progress, both young and fated to die young, and both destined to become fixed stars in the firmament of English literature. Richard Carlile has been sneered at by dilettante reformers, who had none of his passionate devotion to principle, nor a single spark of his fiery courage. They could never have wielded his sword even if they had seized it in a moment of unwonted enthusiasm. He fought like a Titan, and there was no room for "delicacy" in such a struggle. He had all the qualities that were requisite. And the two most exquisite poets of his time—for Coleridge was alive then, but not creative—looked out from their towers of song and saw where his whirling sword gleamed in the desperate fight, and recognised, with the intuition of genius, that he was a true hero battling for the most precious possession of humanity; for that intellectual liberty, without which life is a slavery and happiness a disgrace.

G. W. FOOTE

Everybody will remember the destruction of Messina by earthquake in December, 1908. A *Daily Chronicle* representative has been writing on that City of the Dead—for the old city is left in its ruins and a new city is springing up beside it. The only church that the earthquake left standing was San Niccolo. It stood, but its interior is a scene of desolation. Another edifice—a Pagan one—was luckier:—

> "Littered about the quays and floating in docks I noticed scores of Royal Custom House registers of the earthquake days. Wavelets ripple over the sunken wharves, the quayside and adjacent streets remain rent asunder in mighty gaps; the Parade all upheaven, smashed, and encumbered with rubbish as when the tidal wave, 150 feet in height, retired after its vent of herculean castigation. One object rivets attention. The giant form of Neptune, trident in hand, surveys the scene serenely from the summit of his superb fountain. The sea has respected its god. Pious folk pointed me to the survival of this and like pagan memories, in contrast with the annihilation of their own sacred shrines, as proof positive that the quake was the handiwork of demons."

What a brain-addling thing superstition is!

Obituary.

With the deepest regret I record the death of our comrade and friend, John Clark, of Leyland, near Preston, who died on October 8 (while unconscious), after a short but severe attack of pneumonia. He was a member of the Preston Secular Society; and when conscious he refused the attentions of the clergy. All his spare time was taken up with the propaganda of the causes he loved. He lived and died a Secularist, but was buried a Christian. The funeral took place Saturday, the 11th.—A. P.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

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KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington): Monday, Oct. 20, at 8.30, Meeting—*re* Evening Lectures.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, N.W., adjoining "The Bull and Gate"): 7.30, M. Hope, "The Assumptions of Sir Oliver Lodge."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Heroes of Our Faith."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 8, "Beelzebub," "Meteorology, Biblical and Scientific."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, a Lecture.

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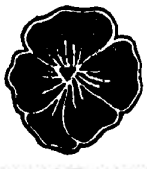
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, Miss K. B. Kough, "*Androcles and the Lion.*"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "The Rule of the Dead"; 6.30, "The Physiology of Faith."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Theology"; 6.30, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice.*"

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. M. Hogg, "The Temperance Problem and Social Reform."

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THE
Freethinker
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 43 SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

It is the practice of the mob first to stone and then to erect useless memorials to their greatest benefactors. All who set themselves to replace ancient error and superstition by truth and reason must lay their account with brickbats in their life and a marble monument after death.—PROF. J. G. FRAZER.

Bible Blunders.

PEOPLE who have given the subject fair attention have long known that the Bible does more than *contain* inaccuracies; it positively *abounds* in them. There are hundreds of substantial contradictions, and thousands of formal discrepancies. This fact must have been known, at least to a considerable extent, by the old orthodox divines, who went through the Bible with exemplary diligence, and sprinkled their sermons profusely with well-stocked pepper-dridges of more or less apposite texts. But they never admitted it. They kept on saying that Holy Writ was without a single mistake, and that the man who found one had an infidel squint or was misled by the Devil. Their theory was well expressed by the late Mr. Spurgeon, who once affirmed that every sentence of the Bible was written with an Almighty pen, and every word fell from Almighty lips. Spurgeon said that more that fifty years ago. There is not one leading minister who will say it now.

Bible blunders are indeed an inexhaustible theme. Mr. Gladstone, one of the prosiest and dullest of harmonisers, never touched more than the fringe of the subject. He confined himself to the stock illustrations which had been dealt with by hundreds of writers before him—a fact, by the way, which exemplifies the Grand Old Man's terrible lack of originality. He devoted whole pages to showing, in his peculiarly vague and diffuse manner, that the word "day" in the fantastic Creation Story really meant a chapter, that it had nothing to do with chronology, but was a device of composition. He devoted many more pages to showing that if the narrative were read slowly and carefully, attaching a Gladstonian meaning instead of a dictionary meaning to every word, and adding all sorts of amplifications and qualifications between the lines, that old Creation Story was a magnificent manual of astronomy, geology, and biology, and that all the writings of Darwin (supposing them to be true—which Gladstone would never admit or deny) were but commentaries on the science of Moses. But clergymen like Canon Driver and Dean Farrar laughed at him as politely as possible. They knew it was all nonsense, and that the man who "reconciled" the Bible and Modern Science did not understand either.

The ground taken by the new school of Bible defenders is this. They frankly admit that it contains a multitude of mistakes in science and history, and from the point of view of common sense. They no longer declare that it is the Word of God; they say it *contains* the Word of God. The revelation is not formal, but suggestive. Somewhere or other within it, if we seek aright, we shall find all that is necessary to our salvation, and that is all it was ever intended for. Its writers *were* inspired as religious teachers; they were *not* inspired as scientists or historians; nay, they were not even preserved from falling into any of the errors, superstitions, and prejudices of their own age and nation.

This theory sweeps away all the common difficulties of the case. It gets rid of the science of Genesis, the inaccuracies of the historical books, the absurdities of Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale, and all the self-contradictions between "In the beginning" and "Amen." It will serve the Church for some time. But it cannot last for ever. It is essentially a transition theory. It marks the progress of clerical surrender up to date. Simply this and nothing more. "Inspiration" cannot be given up all at once. It becomes slowly diluted by reason, until at length there remains but a trace of the original spirit, which finds its expression in the paradox, "That is inspired which inspires me."

The word "inspired" like the word "genius" is fast obeying the common law of language. New words are invented in science and commerce, but old words are generally retained with an altered meaning in politics and religion. "Genius" once meant an attendant spirit; now it means an exaltation of natural faculties. "Inspired" once meant being the medium of divine messages to man; now it means being wound up to a high pitch of performance, as in the poet, the artist, the actor, the orator. We also speak of the performer's "soul" without the slightest reference to anything apart from his visible organisation. Thus do supernatural terms get emptied of their meaning.

The Bible is indeed a blunder altogether. Supposing there be a God, who is the Creator of all us, and who communicates with us spiritually, it is childish to suppose that he said all he had to say two or three thousand years ago, speaking in two languages that are only understood by comparatively a handful of his children, and taking no care whatever to preserve the written word from the accidents of time and change. No one can ever be assured that God has spoken unless God speaks to him individually. Revelation must always be personal. What is revelation at first-hand is only hearsay at second-hand. He who has God's authority for anything only brings me his own authority when he conveys it to me.

Supposing God spoke to Moses, how do I know that this is what he said to him? The very lapse of time raises insuperable difficulties. It will not do to tell me that similar difficulties occur in regard to the works of all ancient writers. *Similar* is not the *same*. There is a fundamental difference at the starting point. It does not materially affect my life or my principles to believe or disbelieve that Cæsar wrote the "Commentaries," or Cicero delivered those Orations. As the man in the street would say, nothing hangs to it. But an alleged revelation involves the greatest and most decisive consequences, in private and public life, and in all modes of thinking and feeling. So much hangs to it that the revelation should be unquestionable, which it cannot be in the case of a book like the Bible.

Freethought must keep on attacking the Bible. It is the Alpha and Omega of Christian theology and priestcraft. Theoretically the Christian has a God in heaven; practically his God is the Bible, and this is none the less true because he reads it in all sorts of different ways, for that is precisely how every God is understood by his devotees.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Materialism: Its Meaning and Value.—II.

(Continued from p. 659.)

LIKE other forms of scientific thought, the Materialism of antiquity underwent an eclipse consequent on the revival of supernaturalism, of which Christianity stood as the conquering expression. Until the Renaissance, Materialism as a mode of thought was either extinct or survived only in secret. The products of Greek thinking could not be altogether destroyed, but they were so overlaid with supernaturalism, and the investigation of natural phenomena so completely under the control of the Church, that for the better part of a thousand years the world remained practically stagnant. Many of the positive results of ancient thought were actually lost altogether. This was the case with the Pythagorean system of astronomy—revived at a later date by Copernicus. And when not lost, the true principle of investigation was ignored. The utter barrenness of the spiritualistic or supernaturalistic method was never more clearly shown than in the one period of civilised history during which it exercised complete control.

At the Renaissance, Materialism did for human thought what it has done over and over again in the history of science. Just as in the dawn of Greek philosophy so it again brought men's minds back to an unchallengable reality—to facts that could be grasped by all, and tested by all. And with each revival, like the waves on an incoming tide, it registered a more assured advance. This time its rise was strengthened by the sound scientific work that had been done in the schools of Mohammedan Spain. Great advances had been made there in many directions; but, above all, the science of chemistry had been created. This served, more than anything else, to make thinkers familiar with the conception of force as something inherent in matter rather than external to it. In its more developed form we have, in place of force, energy. Most advanced scientific workers to-day show a strong inclination to drop "force" altogether as introducing a quite needless anthropomorphic element.

The causes that led up to the deeply-rooted modern mechanistic, or Materialistic, conception of nature may be briefly indicated. In astronomy, the Copernican theory effected a complete revolution in human ideas concerning the earth's place in the universe, and this in turn modified men's attitude towards the ruling form of supernaturalism. It was a sure instinct that led the Church to oppose the Copernican system, as, once admitted, the cosmology on which Christian teaching rested logically collapsed. Following this, Galileo and Newton, in formulating the laws of terrestrial and celestial gravitation, made the important advance of reducing all mass motion to a "force" belonging to matter itself. In a way, this had been done by some of the Greek thinkers; but the Newtonian generalisation gave the idea an experimental and verifiable basis. In turn, Newton was attacked for Atheism and Materialism; and, so far as his theory eliminated the direct action of Deity, the charge was justifiable. With the Nebular Hypothesis of Laplace, the work of establishing the mechanistic principle in astronomy was practically completed. No future criticism of either theory could disturb that. Indeed, *all* criticism was compelled to express itself in terms of the Materialistic principle.

Just as Laplace used the dissipation of heat and the laws of moving bodies to explain the formation of the solar system, so geology became a science by abolishing cataclysmal and creative epochs, and tracing all geologic changes to the operation of known forms of energy. How recent most of our best scientific knowledge is, and how rapid advance may be once a fruitful idea is mooted, may be seen from the fact that Hutton, the real founder of scientific geology, formulated his theory as late as 1788. Other investigators—Werner, Hall, Humboldt, Sedgwick, Murchison—made important contributions to a knowledge of geological phenomena; and, finally, Sir Charles Lyell, in 1830, in his epoch-making *Principles of Geology*, established the principle of the uniform, continuous, and permanent action of known forces as accounting for the whole of geological phenomena.

Chemistry exerted also a profound influence in firmly establishing the mechanistic idea. The study of chemistry, for various reasons, has a larger connected history than most of the other sciences—with the possible exception of astronomy. When Dalton, in 1808, propounded the atomic theory, he brought back, by actual proof, the teachings of Democritus and other Greek thinkers. That has remained one of the basic conceptions of modern science, and is substantially unaffected by any possible theory as to the disintegration of the chemical atom. It still remains the most powerful instrument in the hands of the chemist. And when we add to the facts already named the establishment of the principle of the conservation of energy, and of the doctrine of evolution in the organic sphere, we have a world, practically complete in its general features, and in which the supernatural has no place whatever. For everyone of these teachings rests upon the conception of forces as internal instead of external. The whole phenomena of nature, from atom to planet, and from the tiniest speck of living matter up to man, exist as the result of "forces" inseparable from the material of nature. Henceforth, whatever the clash of scientific forces, the problem before all is that of deducing the known universe from the play of known or knowable forces. The supernatural has received its death-blow.

So far, I have not given any exact definition of Materialism. For, like other terms with historical associations, its meaning is best realised by understanding what these associations were. And from what has been said, it will be plain that the essential issue between Materialism and Spiritualism lies in the possibility or impossibility of explaining all phenomena as due to the composition of natural forces. This was the conception that characterised Materialism in the days of Democritus, and it is still characteristic of Materialism in our own day. If phenomena can be so explained, then the truth of Materialism is admitted, even though we may disguise our Materialism under other names. If we give up this method of explanation as hopeless, there is an opening for the spiritualistic theory, although an opening only. There would still be needed positive proof of its correctness. And, judged by its history, there need be no hesitation in saying that, whether Materialism be right or wrong, the spiritualistic theory is absolutely worthless as either an explanation of admitted facts or as an instrument of investigation.

On the other hand, not only has the mechanistic principle proven itself to be of enormous value as a mode of inquiry, but it possesses the valuable feature that its errors always admit of rectification. It should however, be pointed out, that the errors charged against Materialism are more properly chargeable to the science of the time. There is no need for wonder, to take an example, that when "matter" was thought of by all as made up of small, solid bodies, indivisible and indestructible, materialistic thinkers made use of that conception. But no change in our conception of the nature of matter can really affect Materialism. The answer to the question "What is matter?" must always be determined by contemporary science. If matter is thought of at one time as made up of solid particles, and at another as so many ethereal ganglia, the Materialist may rest content with either view. In any case, the word is no more than a symbol, useful to summarise our experiences, and so render them intelligible. The Materialist may, in brief, endorse Mr. Carvath Read's dictum, that "matter" "is a methodological category; it is for science to decide how it may best be defined as a means of understanding phenomena."*

* *Metaphysics of Nature*, p. 287.

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The truth is, that a great deal of the discussion about matter is a heritage from the long reign of metaphysics. People assumed — and many still assume—that apart from what we know of the world as represented in consciousness, the whole of which may be traced to sensations and memories of sensations, simplex or complex; beside this it is assumed that we have some apprehension of another world dignified by the name of reality. Under various titles, noumenon, thing-in-itself, unknowable, etc., this has always been a veritable bugbear in the history of scientific philosophy. It is sheer futility. Of a world outside of consciousness we know nothing, and never can know anything—not even whether there is anything to know about. The phenomena described by the term "matter," and the phenomena described by the term "mind," are, for us, never more than two aspects of the same fact or set of facts. Modern psychology, if it has done nothing else, has at least made this clear.

But there are Metaphysical Materialists, as there are Metaphysical Spiritualists. And each perpetrates exactly the same blunder. To take away all sensible qualities: heat, color, smell, hardness, etc., and then to assume that there remains something which we call matter, and declare that to be the origin of everything, is as far removed from sound science and as truly metaphysical—in the vicious sense of the word—as it is to abstract all mental qualities and worship a mythical substratum—"mind." Mind as the sum of mental qualities is understandable. Matter as the sum of sensible qualities is also understandable. But neither mind nor matter, as things in themselves, is anything more than a figment—both useless and misleading. A genuine Materialism is committed to no such metaphysical nightmare. Its sole concern is the establishment of the simple principle that natural phenomena result from the inevitable composition of natural forces. Once grasp that principle in all its simplicity, and apply it with only a moderate degree of logical acumen to all the confusion that has gathered round the subject of Materialism, and a large part of the criticism levelled against it, disappears.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Honest Doubter.

THE Rev. Dr. Wilbur Chapman is a professional revivalist who hails from America. Revivalism, as a profession, is not yet a hundred years old; but from the day of Moody and Sankey to this of Torrey and Chapman its popularity has been great. The chief object in view is the restoration of backsliders whom the local clergy are unable to reach. As a rule, backsliders are simply indifferent, lukewarm believers, and to win them back into the Christian fold is not a very difficult task. Convinced unbelievers do not attend revival meetings except out of curiosity, nor are they at all likely to be affected by the ordinary evangelistic appeals. Unbelief is a subject which the revivalist does not seem to understand. Dr. Chapman betrays his ignorance the moment he begins to talk about it. He tells his hearers that some are doubters because they are too stubborn to believe. He admits, however, that "some are born with a tendency to doubt," while convinced that, in the majority of instances, "doubt has sin as its tap-root." "For the one who is an honest doubter," he professes "all respect," and would like to help him if he could. He defines him thus:—

> "The honest doubter is the man who tells me that he cannot receive my hope and faith, that he does not know that he wants to receive either, but at the same time he tells me that if my hope cheers me, if my faith strengthens me, if it makes trouble easier to bear, and the tomb to be robbed of some of its gloom, he will say no word to me that will take away from me the thing that means so much to me. Such a man is an honest doubter."

We prefer to call such a man a cowardly doubter, who lacks the courage of his convictions. In Dr. Chapman's discourse a doubter is one who rejects religion, an Infidel, even an Atheist; but it is impossible to reject religion honestly without regarding it as false. To grow away from it while believing it to be true would be the absurdest thing in the world. But if one verily believes that religion is false is it not his duty to say so and try his best to make converts? Dr. Chapman believes that Christianity is a good which everybody needs, and he goes from one end of the world to the other coaxing people to accept it. Has not the man who is convinced that Christianity is untrue and has wrought incalculable harm in the world, an equal right to make proselytes, if he can? Was not Bradlaugh as legitimate a propagandist as Moody? He is not worth his salt who makes no endeavor to spread the faith that is in him.

Dr. Chapman has an endless store of anecdotes to illustrate whatever assertion he happens to make. The statement that "the doubt of many has a sin as its tap-root" is verified by a neat little story about a University student. He was one of the Upper-class-men, and the gentleman who was about to preach overheard a careless, slighting remark about religion in which he indulged on his way to the chapel. The minister turned and laid his hand upon his shoulder, saying, "May I speak with you for a moment?" When they were alone he said, "Are you a Sceptic?" "Yes, sir, I am," came the ready answer. The preacher said, "What sin are you covering? Tell me honestly what sin are you covering? For I know you are covering sin." Thereupon, the story proceeds, the young fellow's "face became as white as death," and with tears streaming down his cheeks he made a full confession of his guilt. Another pat story is of two men meeting somewhere in Africa. "Are you a Christian?" the one asked the other. "No, I am not a Christian," was the answer. "Why not?" "Because the Bible has so many contradictions in it." This answer casts a strong suspicion upon the truth of the story. They talked the matter out by the fireside, with the result, of course, that the Freethinker flung his unbelief to the winds, and became a zealous disciple of Jesus Christ. We are told of another, "the greatest Infidel Dr. Chapman has ever known," who, on hearing Moody say, "God is your Father; he has given Jesus Christ to be your Savior; will you take him?" bowed his head and exclaimed "O, God, if this is what thy love means, I will accept thy Son." Such are the stories that are so serviceable at revival meetings; and the people are so delighted to believe them. "A leader in Scepticism," "the greatest Infidel I have ever known," such is the description of the doubters who are supposed so easily to become precious jewels in Immanuel's crown.

Dr. Chapman's sermon contains one priceless gem, of the real value of which the preacher had no idea. Here it is:—

> "You may argue yourself into a position of Scepticism, which is greatly to be deplored; you rarely argue yourself out of it."

A truer observation was never made. Acceptance of Christianity is never an intellectual act. No person ever argued himself into a state of Christian belief. Every argument for belief is intellectually assailable. Our revivalist admits it, and says:—

> "You may encourage doubt by argument. It is not well to argue about these things that are so great and so sacred. Go at a man with an argument, and you will knock at the door of his head, and he will come back with an argument, it will be 'Greek meeting Greek,' and you will make very little progress."

Now, why is it easier for a man to argue himself into Agnosticism than out of it? Is it not because Agnosticism is fundamentally reasonable, while belief is against reason? It is a notorious fact that the most perfervid believers are in constant danger of lapsing into unbelief. The tendency of all faith is to die out; it can be kept alive only by artificial means. This is beyond all controversy. A Christian may argue himself into a position of Scepticism, but he may not argue himself out of it. It is very

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questionable whether a convinced, thoroughgoing Freethinker has ever become a Christian in any way whatever; but we do know of scores of Christians, after joyfully experiencing what is called the new birth, who have become Freethinkers by force of argument, and are permanently beyond the reach of all revivalists. Their Scepticism is a treasure laid up in their hearts, "where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." They are quite prepared to talk the matter out with anyone who comes along; they would not be afraid to try a lance with Dr. Chapman himself, so assured are they of the perfect soundness of their ground. This revivalist is wise enough never to enter into argument with them. Dogmatising is so much easier and safer. He prefers to say to them, when they are not present: "You are dominated by the spirit of prejudice. You have not been fair to God's Word, to Jesus Christ and the Church." This is sheer balderdash, with not a word of truth in it. The fact is that the reverend gentleman is sitting in judgment upon people he does not understand. If the greatest Infidel he has ever known was converted by means of a few commonplace words uttered by the evangelist Moody, we deliberately declare that he is utterly incompetent to talk about Infidels.

The honest doubter is of necessity a maker of doubters. He does not stick his finger in his waistcoat and sneer, as Dr. Chapman thinks he does, but he does allow the light that is in him to shine before men. He not only tells you that he cannot receive your hope and faith; he goes further, and informs you what prevents him from receiving them, and that, in his judgment, you, too, would be much better off without them. This is by no means a sneering attitude, but the natural attitude of a man who believes that he is in possession of the only saving truth, which he is eager to share with all his brethren. Probably he was once a Christian himself, as zealous and joyful as any revivalist; but when the eyes of his understanding were opened, his faith and hope took wing and flew away. Now, has he not a perfect right to say that he has grown away from religion? When I meet such a man, says Dr. Chapman,—

> "I feel like saying to him, Did Gladstone grow away from it? and our own great McKinley, did he grow away from it? When the doctor said that McKinley was going to die, our great martyred President said, Gentlemen, if this is the end, then let us sing a hymn together."

We are not surprised now that the reverend gentleman is averse to arguing about these things. He has not mastered the art. Everybody knows that Gladstone died a Christian; but what on earth has that to do with the case? Charles Darwin, a greater man than Gladstone, did grow away from the Christian religion; and tens of thousands have done the same since. It is a difficult task nowadays to come across a scientist who is a whole-hearted believer. The fact that Gladstone died a Christian cannot surely serve as an argument for the truth of Christianity. You might as well argue that because, five hundred years ago, the majority of people believed in witches, it follows that witchcraft must have been true. We know that witchcraft was not true; and many of us are quite as sure that Christianity is as false. Had it been true, there would have been no need of Dr. Chapman and his ilk. Revivalism is itself a most powerful argument against its truth. So is the Church, with all its intricate machinery.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Glorious Company.

> "Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
> For you a stately gallery maintain
> Of gay and tragic pictures." —WORDSWORTH.

WE have an affection for all dictionaries. Even a gazetteer is a mine of suggestion; but a biographical dictionary or an encyclopædia is certain to make large inroads on our time. Take, for example, Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. In it there are thousands of entries, taken from all ages and all countries. That means many thousands of names of interest, many thousands of men and women who have played their part on life's stage, and who played it in a sufficiently remarkable manner to give their names a distinct interest to their descendants. We know of few more delightful occupations than the reading of such a book, and it is a thousand pities that Freethought publishers are not sufficiently wealthy to include the portraits of all the persons mentioned.

Such a book is informative, and turns the handles of many doors. We turn a page and encounter the name of Richard Carlile. It is but a name on the page, but what an indomitable spirit does it not conjure up. There flits into our memory the terrible martyrdom of this bravest of the brave soldiers of Liberty. Think of it! Carlile, the lion-hearted, suffered nine-and-a-half years' imprisonment for championing the liberty of the press. His brave wife and other members of his family, and shop assistants, divided among them fifty years' confinement. Further we see the splendid name of Edward Gibbon, the greatest of English historians, who "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer." He walks for ever as to the clash of arms, under an imperial banner. Without exploration we have found the magnetic and powerful name of Voltaire. What a man! His epigrams stung like wasps, and rankled for years afterwards. At sixty-four, when other men are thinking of slippered ease, he was writing *Candide*, the wittiest book in the world. Writing *Œdipus* at seventeen, *Irene* at eighty-three, he crowded between these two masterpieces the accomplishments of a giant. And Edward Fitzgerald, who turned the quatrains of the old freethinking Persian, Omar Khayyam, into a masterpiece of English poetry. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," as his friend Tennyson described it. The name of Thomas Paine is homely, but what a personality does it not recall! A character of outstanding ability, a maker of nations, far from being the uncouth and unlettered man of popular imaginings.

There is a very significant entry in the name of the Empress Catherine, of Russia. How many critics of Freethought know that the evangel of Reason appeals equally to the monarch on the throne as to the man in the street. Catherine was a Freethinker in word and in deed. When Diderot was compelled by poverty to sell his library, she bought it for him, and installed him in it as librarian. Another royal "intellectual" was Frederick the Great. What must it have been to have been present at those festal evenings at Frederick's palace when the nimble wit of Voltaire challenged the best brains of Europe? It must have been a rich memory and an abiding delight, like those ever-memorable nights at the "Mermaid," when rare Ben Jonson exchanged quips and cranks with the smiling Shakespeare. Napoleon, the little Corsican who shook the world, is here, too, in the volume. A more shadowy figure is that of Kit Marlowe, the Elizabethan dramatist, whose untimely death prevented his trial for blasphemy. Sir Richard Burton, the untiring traveller, who penetrated to the "Holy of Holies" at Mecca at the peril of his life, is another of the glorious company of Freethinkers.

The "intellectuals" of France are represented by a splendid procession from Abelard to Anatole France. Who can see the name of Ingersoll without a quickening of the pulses? He comes riding down the wind like a knight in shining armor to attack the embattled hosts of superstition. And the lonely student, Charles Darwin, who turned "Adam" and "Eve" out of the "Garden of Eden," not with a flaming sword, but with a steel pen. Here are Heine, the gifted singer of Germany, dying upon his mattress-grave with a jest upon his lips, and Shelley, the sweet-souled English poet, who was deprived of his children for his Freethought, and men and women imprisoned for selling his works

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A sense of fellowship with the fled centuries invades us as we see the name of Giordano Bruno, one of the most fearless martyrs for truth. And Time seems poised for a moment upon his spread wings as we encounter the puissant personality of Lucretius, one of the sublimest poets who ever sang under the eagles of the Cæsars.

Names like these are signposts to meet the reader and direct him towards the wonderful universality of Freethought. And, mind you, there are thousands of such signposts. "Wonderful" is the only adjective which will serve for this maze of wonders; this patient account of the men and women who have cared for intellectual freedom, written by a wise and careful student who himself emptied many an ink-pot in the service of a great cause.

Here under one roof, we may say, is the temple of Liberty and the house of Wisdom, compared with which the abbeys and cathedrals, churches and mosques, of the superstitious are but charnel-houses full of dead bones. For each of these men and women were, in their way, the apostles of freedom. They were knight-errants of the evangel of Liberty. From the far-off time when Lucretius rolled his richest thunders against the infamies of religion in his day, until twenty centuries later Swinburne rallied the soldiers of Freethought with the golden trumpet of his genius, Liberty never failed of its votaries. The bare records of the doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity. The feats of Freethinkers have needed little of the embellishments which high-sounding language could give them. From Hypatia, murdered by a Christian rabble, to Ferrer, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," they strike our imaginations and hold our wonder in thrall. They are potent because of their very sincerity. Who could fail to recognise the splendid courage which held so steadfastly to the last moment, or fail to appreciate the iron nerve which bent only before the impossible?

We come to this in the end, that freethinking "saints" are the best. It is significant that in Christian Scotland the popularity of "St. Andrew's Day" is far less than that of "Burns's Night." Is it not true that in the sheer fight of personalities for the possession of England's Day, Shakespeare has beaten St. George, as our American friends would say, "to a frazzle"? There is always a risk when the man whose work lies in the town, as most of our work lies in the town, would rather sit a serviceable armchair than a charger in the ranks of Freedom. But one who has read in Joseph Wheeler's book of those whose monuments are more enduring than marble, might yet listen to the calling bugles of the Army of Liberty.

This is but a little cloud of biographical dust, and, if an apology is needed for such trifling, we point to the fact that the interest of such a volume is inexhaustible. It reaches from the greatest names in history to hundreds of men and women whose achievements were less important, but who, because they dedicated their powers to the service of intellectual liberty, interest us intimately.

> "Come let us drink in silence ere we part
> To every fervent yet resolved heart
> That brought its tameless passion and its tears,
> Renunciation and laborious years,
> To lay the deep foundations of our race,
> To rear its stately fabric overhead,
> And light its pinnacles with golden grace."

MIMNERMUS.

The Old and the New.

OUR fathers did the best they could. They believed in the supernatural, and they thought that sacrifice and prayer, fasting and weeping, would induce the supernatural to give them sunshine, rain, and harvest—long life in this world, and eternal joy in another. To them, God was an absolute monarch, quick to take offence, sudden in anger, terrible in punishment, jealous, hateful to his enemies, generous to his favorites. They believed also in the existence of an evil God—almost the equal of the other God in strength, and a little superior in cunning. Between these two Gods was the soul of man, like a mouse between two paws.

Both of these Gods inspired fear. Our fathers did not quite love God, nor quite hate the Devil; but they were afraid of both. They really wished to enjoy themselves with God in the next world, and with the Devil in this. They believed that the course of nature was affected by their conduct; that floods and storms, diseases, earthquakes, and tempests were sent as punishments, and that all good phenomena were rewards.

Everything was under the control and direction of supernatural powers. The air, the darkness, were filled with angels and devils; witches and wizards planned and plotted against the pious—against the true believers. Eclipses were produced by the sins of the people, and the unusual was regarded as the miraculous. In the good old times Christendom was an insane-asylum, and insane priests and prelates were the keepers. There was no science. The people did not investigate—did not think. They trembled and believed. Ignorance and superstition ruled the Christian world.

At last a few began to observe, to make records, and to think.

It was found that eclipses came at certain intervals, and that their coming could be foretold. This demonstrated that the actions of men had nothing to do with eclipses. A few began to suspect that earthquakes and storms had natural causes, and happened without the slightest reference to mankind.

Some began to doubt the existence of evil spirits, or the interference of good ones in the affairs of the world. Finding out something about astronomy, the great number, the certain and continuous motions of the planets, and the fact that many of them were vastly larger than the earth—ascertaining something about the earth—the slow development of forms—the growth and distribution of plants, the formation of islands and continents, the parts played by fire, water, and air through countless centuries—the kinship of all life—fixing the earth's place in the constellation of the sun—by experiment and research discovering a few secrets of chemistry—by the invention of printing and the preservation and dissemination of facts, theories, and thoughts, they were enabled to break a few chains of superstition—to free themselves a little from the dominion of the supernatural, and to set their faces towards the light. Slowly the number of investigators and thinkers increased — slowly the real facts were gathered—the sciences began to appear—the old beliefs grew a little absurd — the supernatural retreated, and ceased to interfere in the ordinary affairs of men.

Schools were founded, children were taught, books were printed, and the thinkers increased. Day by day confidence lessened in the supernatural, and day by day men were more and more impressed with the idea that man must be his own protector, his own providence. From the mists and darkness of savagery and superstition emerged the dawn of the natural. A sense of freedom took possession of the mind, and the soul began to dream of its power. On every side were invention and discovery, and bolder thought. The Church began to regard the friends of science as its foes. Theologians resorted to chain and fagot—to mutilation and torture.

The thinkers were denounced as heretics and Atheists—as the minions of Satan and the defamers of Christ. All the prejudice, ignorance, and malice of superstition were aroused, and all united for the destruction of investigation and thought. For centuries this conflict was waged. Every outrage was perpetrated, every crime committed by the believers in the supernatural. But, in spite of all, the disciples of the natural increased, and the power of the Church waned. Now the intelligence of the world is on the

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side of the natural. Still the conflict goes on—the supernatural constantly losing, and the natural constantly gaining. In a few years the victory of science over superstition will be complete and universal.

So there have been for many centuries two philosophies of life: one in favor of the destruction of the passions—the lessening of wants—and absolute reliance on some higher power; the other, in favor of the reasonable gratification of the passions—the increase of wants, and their supply by industry, ingenuity, and invention, and the reliance of man on his own efforts. Diogenes, Epictetus, Socrates, to some extent Buddha, and Christ, all taught the first philosophy. All despised riches and luxury—all were the enemies of art and music—the despisers of good clothes and good food and good homes. They were the philosophers of poverty and rags—of huts and hovels—of ignorance and faith. They preached the glories of another world, and the miseries of this. They derided the prosperous, the industrious, those who enjoyed life, and reserved heaven for beggars.

This philosophy is losing authority, and now most people are anxious to be happy here in this life. Most people want food, and roof, and raiment—books, and pictures, and luxury, and leisure. They believe in developing the brain—in making servants and slaves of the forces of nature.

Now the intelligent of the world have cast aside the teachings, the philosophy of the ascetics. They no longer believe in the virtue of fasting and self-torture. They believe that happiness is the only good, and that the time to be happy is now, here, in this world. They no longer believe in the rewards and punishments of the supernatural. They believe in consequences, and that the consequences of bad actions are evil, and the consequences of good actions are good.

They believe that man, by investigation, by reason, should find out the conditions of happiness, and then live and act in accordance with such conditions. They do not believe that earthquakes, or tempests, or volcanoes, or eclipses are caused by the conduct of men. They no longer believe in the supernatural. They do not regard themselves as the serfs, servants, slaves, or favorites of a celestial king. They feel that many evils can be avoided by intelligence, and for that reason they believe in the development of the brain. The school-house is their church, and the university their cathedral. The teacher, the interpreter of nature, is their preacher, and all the truths that have been demonstrated constitute their creed.

They believe in the gospel of Intelligence, and they wish to save the world from ignorance, superstition, and misery.

The New Religion satisfies the heart and brain.

The Old Religion is cruel, childish, and absurd. The Old Religion was in perfect harmony with a flat world, with a little heaven above it, and a large hell beneath. The Old Religion had a powerful savage, an immense barbarian for a god, and another savage for a devil. Man at his best was a poor slave, whose happiness and misery dwelt in the smiles and frowns of these supernatural monsters.

The New Religion has destroyed these phantoms. The universe is no longer governed by a tyrant, and man at last is free.

The Supernatural has almost gone, but the Natural remains—the Gods have faded, but Man is here.

—Ingersoll.

For the benefit of the treasury of Trinity Episcopal Church in Wheaton, Illinois, five young women allowed themselves to be sold at auction, September 20, at a vaudeville show given in the church's clubhouse. What disposition was made of the women by their purchasers is not told by the Chicago *Examiner*, which reports the sale. The proceeding is presumed to be innocent, but is reminiscent of the ages when women regarded it as the fulfilling of a vow that involved all that such a sale would suggest.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Acid Drops.

How the clergy know, and follow, their own interests! They damn the people to all eternity when it is safe to do so for the slightest sign of independence. "Believe and be saved; disbelieve and be damned"—that is their message when the people are silly and weak enough to accept it. But when their power begins to wane they take to pleading instead of cursing, and coaxing instead of coercing. They court the "dear people" and make themselves out to be their kindest, tenderest, and most valuable friends. This game is worked best at a time of bereavement. It is not surprising, therefore, to read that as soon as the silence of grief was broken by speech at Senghenydd, where the deadly mine explosion took place, the men of God looked in with their cheap professional attentions. "Clergy and ministers of all denominations," a reporter said, "move about among the people, and Salvation Army lasses soothe the sorrowing ones with gentle words of comfort." What a ghastly mockery! "Soothing" the women with their men down in the burning pit! The very word is shameful; and only a maudlin religion like Christianity, with its wretched "consolations," could be guilty of such miserable meanness.

One of the rescuers down in the blazing mine was overwhelmed by a fall of roof and killed. It was a brave man's work and a brave man's death. Up above in the sunlight, at the same time, the Bishop of Llandaff was performing prodigies of "consolation." His first visit was to the home of Mrs. Baker, who had lost both her husband and a son, with a family of ten dependent upon her. In the midst of this affliction her new baby was born. Some good, kind woman might have carried sympathy into that stricken home. But what could the Bishop of Llandaff do there? What could *any* man do there? To speak in the name of God was a mockery. What had that poor woman done that "Providence" should send her so heavy a blow? What could the Bishop talk to her except humbug? By the way, she has since died.

Five men of Mrs. Ross's household were down in the Lancaster pit, and it was feared that all of them had perished. She also was visited by the heroic Bishop of Llandaff, who told her, as he told other humble mourners, to "look to Him to whom the widow and the fatherless are an especial care." Nothing but the religious training of these poor women can account for their listening patiently to such hypocritical nonsense. The kind attentions of "Him" would have been useful *before* the explosion; what use were they after it? The Bishop of Llandaff knows as well as we do that God's care for the widow and the fatherless is only a pious "gag." Science is more merciful than Providence. Had all who were concerned given Science fair play there would have been no explosion at Senghenydd, and the women would not have required any "consolation" for the loss of fathers, husbands, and sons.

Rev. R. J. Campbell has been orating at the City Temple on the recent tragedies on the sea, in the earth below, and in the air above. Many people, he says, find such tragedies standing in the way of "wholehearted assumption of the Christian faith." The explanation used to be that God does as he likes and is, after all, wiser than we are. But the new explanation is that "God cannot help himself in the matter.....It had to be, and omnipotence could not alter it." Which is equivalent to Carlyle's complaint that "God does nothing"—as we have always said.

Mrs. Theaker, a resident at Thorpe Bay, Essex, appears to be exceedingly intimate with God. Speaking at a recent meeting at her house, she said she had sausage-roll and dry toast for dinner on Christmas Day. Afterwards, while pondering over this tribulation, the Lord spoke to her about it, and said to her, "It is because you have never prayed for one"; and she whispered in reply, "No, I did not, for I trusted to the good doctor, who has supplied me with a Christmas dinner for eight years, and I heard afterwards that he was lying ill and unconscious at the time." This Culinary Christianity suggests the association of piety and pies, and prayers with pudding. Most Christians prefer the cash, and let the cookery go.

The Christians of Southend-on-Sea, led by their pastors and masters, are anxious to prevent any amusement on Sunday. They want everything closed except churches, public-houses, and the mouths of the asses which, like Balaam's quadruped's, are opened by the Lord.

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A nineteen-years'-old choir-boy figured in a divorce case last week as a co-respondent. This is what comes of following the clergy's example.

The writer of the "Readers and Writers" column in the *New Age* notes a fact that has often been dwelt upon in the *Freethinker*, but falls into a curious error in indicating the cause of its existence. It is, he says, a proof "of the obsession sex has made of itself in the West that many such words as 'expurgated,' originally of a wide connotation, have come to be confined popularly to sex matters. Virtue, continence, licentious, sensual, passionate, lust—the list might be indefinitely extended. These words, I fancy, owe their degradation to novelists and women." Now, novelists and women may be charged with responsibility for a deal, but in this instance they could safely plead "Not guilty." Novelists—of the kind indicated—do not create a public opinion; they follow it, and strengthen it by pandering to it. Besides, this narrowing of ethical language until it has come to mean little more than sex relations is very much older than the novel-writing class, and its source lies much deeper than is indicated by the *New Age* writer.

To put the essence of the case in a sentence, the narrowing of words such as those cited to mere sex is only one of the many illustrations of the profoundly ill effects of Christianity on moral judgment. The older Pagan world rightly conceived the good man, the virtuous man, as one who was "straight" in all aspects of life. It did not specially emphasise sexual straightness; it held that as only one of the relations in life in which rectitude was desirable. The result was that the good man, in the Pagan sense of the word, was one who in all directions discharged his duty faithfully and well. On the other hand, Christianity was from the outset obsessed by the fact of sex. Sexual rightness was the crowning virtue, sexual wrongness the crowning vice. It did not, of course, deny that conduct in other directions was either virtuous or vicious; but it so dwelt upon sex that in course of time it edged other things out of consciousness when the words "vice" and "virtue" were mentioned. And the further result of this was that a man might be forgiven almost any form of rascality provided he kept—at least ostensibly—the seventh commandment. No one was made better by this; it is fairly easy to show that many were made worse. And if any illustration is needed of the truth of what has been said, the swarms of parsons always anxious to discuss sexual purity—or impurity—and their lukewarmness in denouncing other vices, will serve. As in so many other cases, the way of salvation lies in forsaking the Christian path and returning to the healthier humanistic one.

From a report in the *Weekly Scotsman* (Oct. 18) we learn that, at the recent royal marriage "the form of service had been printed in a shortened form," and that "Canon Sheppard, who read the opening injunctions, made it shorter still by omitting those passages which, in the Prayer Book, specify with needless explicitness the purpose for which matrimony was ordained." If the Church marriage service has already to be shortened and expurgated for royal brides and bridegrooms, it will soon have to be cleared of its beastliness for humbler couples—all of which is founded on Paul's sexual perversion. The plea that the brutal language of the Marriage Ceremony is at any rate true has not a shadow of justification in the light of human evolution. Marriage is not based upon love or lust; it is based upon the fact of offspring, and upon that alone.

Of the three parsons who assisted at the Royal Wedding, the *Daily Chronicle* says that one had to undertake his duties "for love," and serve without fee. That one was the Archbishop of Canterbury. What on earth does he get his £15,000 yearly for?

The Chairman of the Congregational Union says that a man may not be irreligious because he does not go to church, but he is not very religious unless he goes. That is exactly what we have always said. It is all humbug asserting that there are more religious people outside the Churches than in them. This discovery is only made in order to soften the fact that so small a proportion of the population attend church. In the main, when a man is really religious, he will attach himself to some church or chapel. And when he severs that connection, even though he may invent a number of excuses for the severance, the bottom reason is that he is losing his faith in religion.

Mr. Morgan Gibbon also asked, "Have strong, brainy, strenuous men no need of religion? And has the Church no need of them?" Strong, brainy, strenuous men answer the question by generally staying away. We quite admit that the Churches have need of this type—never more so—but they can't get them. Look at the mental calibre of the leaders of the Churches. Would they be leaders in anything but religion? Could anyone imagine the Bishop of London, or Campbell Morgan, or R. J. Campbell leading in anything but theology? Oh, yes; the Churches need brainy men, but as they can't get them they must make the most of what they *can* get. And the quality is steadily sinking.

The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, president of the Congregationalist Conference, has been sighing for the "old Sunday." Presumably, the dear old Sunday when Nonconformists were flogged if they did not attend the Government churches.

Mrs. Herbert Stead spoke of the duty of the Churches towards "the woman in the back street" at the Congregationalist Conference at Southend. The Churches have usually given blankets and promised coals—some in this world, more in the next.

A writer on education says that children should choose their own occupations. Impossible! Too many would wish to be parsons, and work only one day a week.

What a busy week Providence has had! The *Volturno*, with its mass of emigrants on a burning ship in a raging sea; between 400 and 500 killed in a single mine accident in Wales; a railway collision in Lancashire; and an exploding Zeppelin airship, with its tale of dead, in Germany. In the air, on the earth, under the earth, or on the sea, who can escape the power of the Lord? What a comfort it must be to the devout mind to reflect that these things come, not from the unconscious operation of "blind" laws of nature, but from a directive intelligence that baffles all attempts at human comprehension.

Rev. Edward Henry Greenhow, of the Vicarage, Chidcock, Bridport, left £11,623. We wonder if he has met the blessed-be-ye-poor preacher yet. Or did he go straight to the pit?

Punishment! What a silly and inhuman idea! It simply makes a bad matter worse. Yet the Christians are mightily in love with it, for it lies at the basis of their faith. They cannot even conceive the world going on without it. Here is Mrs. Phipps, for instance, chairman of the special schools sub-committee of the London Education Committee, defending the punishment of children by giving them bread and water instead of a square meal at dinner time. "Since the abolition of corporal punishment," she said, "they must have some form of punishment that would affect the children." Nonsense! Stop driving and try leading.

The *Daily Telegraph* notice of the death of the late Mr. Justice North lays on praise with one hand and brushes it off with the other. "He was least successful," our contemporary says, "as a criminal judge, and one of his sentences, that of twelve months' imprisonment on Mr. G. W. Foote for blasphemy, evoked some strong protests on the ground of its severity." Yes, and on other grounds too. He played the role of partisan on the bench, and allowed his friend, Sir Hardinge Giffard (now Lord Halsbury), the leading counsel for the prosecution, to walk out of the court in confidence that the case would be in excellent hands during his absence—as Mr. Foote told his lordship to his face.

A feeble jest that "Buddhism required a mild climate" raised a gentle giggle at a Wesleyan missionary centenary celebration meeting in London the other day. We agree that any climate would appear mild compared with the Christian hell.

A story has been published, entitled *A Preacher of the Lord*. If all of that profession buy a copy of the book, the author should become wealthy; and, should the "Lord" acknowledge the compliment, he should be also famous.

A Brentford school teacher has just been fined for punishing scholars by compelling them to go down on their knees. Not long ago the children used to be laid across the teacher's own.

The *Maxims of Noah* is the title of a new book. It sounds watery. We suppose the *Maxims of Jonah* will follow.

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Writing on children's books in the *Daily Mirror*, a correspondent says: "Homer and Virgil may pass from the memory of the busy person, but not Cinderella." Just so! That is why the dear clergy wish the fairy tales of the Bible taught in schools.

"A woman was the only one who had the pluck to withstand the crucifixion of Jesus, and that was Pilate's wife," said Mrs. Councillor Lees, speaking at the Congregational Autumn Assembly at Southend-on-Sea. Another woman, Eve, caused all the bother that led to the crucifixion.

"Marriage is a life-long miracle," quoted the *Daily Mirror*, *apropos* of the Royal wedding. The miracles often get exposed in the law courts.

Holy Russia still keeps up her reputation. She refuses to let Dr. George Brandes pass her frontiers in order to deliver the lectures he had undertaken at St. Petersburg on Goethe and Strindberg. Brandes' father was a Jew, and Brandes inherits the blood, though he is neither a Jew nor anything else in the matter of religion. Moreover, he is unfriendly to Russia; that is to the Russian autocracy, which is, after all, more a bureaucracy. For these lofty reasons he is refused a passport.

Dr. George Brandes may use Shylock's exclamation to explain this Holy Russian outrage,—"I am a Jew." But what of that? Jesus Christ was a Jew. His mother was a Jewess. His father,—well that is delicate ground; but the man whom his mother called his father was a Jew. And all the twelve apostles were Jews. None of them would be admitted into Holy Russia to-day.

That good man, the Head Constable of Wolverhampton, who started the latest "blasphemy" prosecution, resembles the Psalmist in one thing. He is fearfully and wonderfully made. If he has a keen ear for "blasphemy" he has a keener nose for "indecency." A travelling Rag Time company had a poster depicting a boy scout surrounded by the flags of the nations. Nobody had so much as imagined that an objection could be raised to it by anyone outside a prison or a lunatic asylum. The Head Constable of Wolverhampton, however, is like Voltaire's Habbakuk "capable de tout." He objected to the posters as "indecent," and the company had to get them covered up all over the town.

If ever the Head Constable of Wolverhampton had to be executed there would be no need to electrocute him. Put him in a London music-hall chair, with a Russian or French up-to-date female dancer on the stage, and the deed would be done. The shock wouldn't kill everybody, but it would be fatal to this gentleman.

The *Athenæum* performed a great feat last week. It devoted six columns to a review of Mr. Thorold's *Life of Henry Labouchere* without mentioning Bradlaugh—although it mentions Northampton and "Labby's" twenty-five years' representation of the borough in parliament. This reticence is positively sublime. Christians ought to subscribe to present the editor with a testimonial.

The £70,000 deficit of the London Missionary Society occupied the attention of the Congregational Union Assembly at Southend-on-Sea last week. Mr. Basden, of Hampstead, offered the quaint suggestion that the fall was due to people keeping motor-cars. It looks as if the motors had outstripped the chariots of the Lord.

It will be interesting and instructive to watch the action of Church of England clergymen when the Government's land proposals are fairly before the country. The Church is, of course, directly interested in any drastic rearrangement of our land system, and any proposal that goes to the root of the matter is almost certain to affect its revenues. Moreover, the Church of England is *the* Church of the large land-owning class, and parsons will, therefore, be on the horns of a dilemma. If they back up any proposals for remedying the evils of the land system—that is, assuming they are really made—they will suffer the loss of their best friends. If they do not back them up, the hollowness of their professed interest in social betterment will be plain to all. In this matter the Church of England is more vitally interested than the Nonconformist Churches. They are just as much the Churches of the commercial classes, although the line of division is not so clear as it was some half-century since. But, already, if one may judge from such organs of Church feeling as the *Guardian* and the *Church Times*, the line of policy is decided on. That appears to be, sympathy for the agriculturalist, and real help for the landowner.

Fancy "pinching" clothes at the Chichester Diocesan Conference! The meeting was at St. Leonards, and Canon Bond and the Archdeacon of Lewes had new overcoats—which they never took home with them again. The thief who took the Canon's coat left an old one in exchange for it. The Archdeacon fared worse, the thief who took his coat carried off with it the notes of the reverend gentleman's speech, and completely upset him.

"Some of us," says the Bishop of Liverpool, "have undergone the experience of unlearning sacred lessons we were once taught." Some of us! We should all of us have had to unlearn our early religious lessons, more or less. In some cases we have unlearned the lot, in other cases only a part is unlearned, but in almost every case advancing years means throwing overboard much that, thanks to the indolence of parents and the rapacity of teachers, has been forced on the child's mind. For it is one of the evils of the situation that religious parents will teach, or allow their children to be taught, a cruder form of theology than they themselves believe in. In every other subject we give the children of our best; in theology, they are usually supplied with the worst. Adults will admit their grave doubts concerning many religious doctrines, but they will place them before children as unquestionable truths. It is one of the evils of religious education that this should be so. And the one way out is to leave religion alone until the child is old enough to understand it. The opposition to religious education in State schools rests on the sound basis of injustice to the adults. But the opposition to the religious teaching of children *anywhere* rests upon the more important basis of injustice to the child. Let us act fairly by the children, if we cannot act fairly by adults. Give the child a chance.

The restraining influence of religion is a parrot-cry of the clergy. It was not very apparent in the case of an Italian priest at Spello, near Perugia, who stole a valuable altar painting worth £4,000. Had he been less devout he might have taken the altar as well.

A provincial parson prosecuted a boy recently for stealing a solitary apple from his orchard. Perhaps the clergyman was thinking of that other pippin which "brought death into the world and all our woe."

When he first saw women in the pulpit, said the Rev. Morgan Gibbon at Southend, he felt what a good thing it was that Paul was "thoroughly dead." Paul should be ripe by this time.

Old Moore has published his Almanac for 1914, and the dulcet voices of the stars warn us that religious scandals are to be feared next year. No definite date is given, but, presumably, they will spice the Sunday papers as usual throughout the twelve months.

We don't think we ever read anything sillier than Bishop Welldon's letter in last week's *Clarion*. If he wants to champion Christianity in regard to the treatment of woman during its long history, why doesn't he reply to dignitaries of his own Church, such as Principal Donaldson, for a beginning? And is he really so ignorant as to believe what he says about Chivalry. He actually represents Chivalry as a Christian movement. He may have found it so in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, but let him turn to a history of Chivalry and learn the truth. Bishop Welldon might also stop the circulation of maudlin stories about himself. The latest tells how he pacified and overcame a lot of discontented working men by saying the Lord's Prayer. If he is really so good at that sort of thing, why don't they send him to Dublin? Why does he wait to be sent? Why not go "on his own"?

Gravity is always mistaken by the multitude for wisdom. A round-faced merry fellow shall make a bright, sensible speech, and he will be voted frivolous; but a long-faced saturnine fellow shall utter a string of dull platitudes, and he will be voted a Solon. The clergy, who know this, have developed a perfect art of dullness.

The Birmingham police have been trying to stop the sale of Freethought literature at meetings in the Bull Ring. The magistrates, however, declined to assist a partisan prosecution, and the case was dismissed.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, October 26, Town Hall, Stratford; at 7.30, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*."

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £219 7s. 5d. Received since:—A Manchester Medico, 10s.; Rellim, 2s.; T. T., 2s. 6d.; G. W. S. (Grahamstown), 4s. 4d.

F. J. Voisey.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. D. writes: "It is good to have one's memory of dear Wheeler refreshed by occasional reprints of his delightful copy. I hope that everyone enjoys them as much as I do. The last example helped me to get a new subscriber to the *Freethinker*." We are pleased to hear this. If we could afford it we would publish a good collection of Wheeler's articles in volume form; but as we cannot do that, we take pleasure in reproducing some of them in our present-day pages for the benefit of a new generation of readers.

E. B.—Many thanks.

W. P. Ball.—Much obliged.

Sinn.—Sorry we can't oblige.

T. Robertson.—We were afraid that Mr. Cohen would not be in the best of health for his Glasgow visit. Influenza has a way of lingering on the wrong side of the front door after you have said good-bye. We are glad to hear that the lectures were so successful in spite of the new restrictions.

R. H. Rosetti.—Glad to hear Mr. Lloyd's lecture was "followed with intense interest by a good audience at the Stratford Town Hall." Also that many questions were asked and answered.

P. Partridge.—Pleased to hear of Miss Kough's large audience and fine lecture at Birmingham.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had capital meetings at Manchester on Sunday. The afternoon meeting, in particular—especially in such brilliant weather, tempting people into the open air—eclipsed all expectations. Mr. Foote was enthusiastically received, and his lectures were warmly applauded. Many questions were asked after both lectures. Mr. C. Pegg was chairman.

"Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*" will be an out of the common subject at Stratford Town Hall this evening (Oct. 26). Mr. Foote has no doubt, however, that he will find Shakespeare appreciated there as elsewhere. It may be added that, up to the present, audiences seem to find this lecture singularly interesting.

Fancy the *Freethinker* being mentioned in *Punch*! This is indeed a blow to the old conspiracy of silence. The following appeared in *Punch* for October 15:—

> "'The last edition was obviously a great improvement. It contains 352 pages, besides 58 pages of Introduction; say 600 pages in round numbers.—*Freethinker*.'
>
> "Of course, if they ask us to, we will say it, but we don't believe it."

The explanation of the strain upon our contemporary's faith is easy. The 352 is a printer's blunder for 532. We hope our arithmetic passes muster now. As for printers and their blunders, even *Punch* must have had some experience in that direction. But all comic we trust, as in the present instance. Occasionally a tragic instance is enough to wring a heart of stone. We once wrote of an old stalwart of Freethought that in the heaviest fighting he never blenched. The printer turned it into *bleached*. We just caught it in time. Otherwise our only remedy would have been suicide.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures at the Leicester Secular Hall this evening (Oct. 26). The local "saints" should do all they can to advertise his visit and secure him a big audience.

Mr. Bertram Dobell's catalogues are always interesting. He is not only a seller of books, but a reader of books, and a writer of books. His new catalogue, numbered 222, contains many annotated items, one of which is as follows:—

> "Grote (George), Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind, by Philip Beauchamp, 8vo, sewed, 3s. 6d., 1866.
>
> "A work of (for its time) very advanced tendencies, first printed (I believe) by Richard Carlile, and never acknowledged by its Author."

Mr. Dobell is right in believing that this little work was first published by Richard Carlile. We have a copy of the original edition, dated 1822 and bearing Carlile's imprint. It is bound up with other things in vol. iii. of the *Deist*, and is finely printed in large handsome type, with a liberal margin, running to 140 pages. The edition that Mr. Dobell advertises is probably the one published by Edward Truelove.

John Stuart Mill mentioned the *Analysis* in his *Autobiography* (p. 69) as one that contributed materially to his "mental development." He says it was "written on the foundation of some of Bentham's manuscripts and published under the pseudonym of Philip Beauchamp." Mill refers to it again in his essay on "The Utility of Religion" as "a short treatise, understood to have been partly compiled from manuscripts of Mr. Bentham." Mill knew all about it, but he did not care to go farther. The real truth is that the book was written by George Grote, the historian of Greece, from manuscript notes of Bentham. Grote, like Mill, was one of Bentham's disciples. Mill was next door to an Atheist; Grote and Bentham were pure Atheists—Bentham aggressively so. Our old friend and colleague, J. M. Wheeler, told us that he had come across a lot of Bentham's manuscripts in the British Museum, some of which were evidently regarded as too strong for publication. Bentham's character was worthy of his intellect. He supplied Robert Owen with money to prevent the break-up of the New Lanark social experiment. He also supplied Carlile with money to carry on and extend his publishing business in answer to the "blasphemy" prosecutions. Some of the money went in publishing this very able and important work in Mr. Dobell's catalogue.

It is true, as Mr. Dobell says, that the *Analysis* was "never acknowledged by its author." The question even arises, Who *was* its author? Bentham was not, and Grote was not; yet they both were. The fact was well-known behind the scenes, and it was fully stated in Truelove's edition, if not earlier.

One wonders, by the way, if Macaulay would have penned his glowing tribute to Bentham as a jurisprudist if he had known that the old man was a confirmed Atheist.

The *Glasgow Herald* has made and published a discovery. "When men," it says, "hate each other intensely 'for the love of God' there is no crime too horrible for them to impute, and no cruelty so extreme that they will shrink from perpetrating it." *That's* all right. But it would have been called a vulgar lie in the *Freethinker*.

Some time ago we announced that we were trying to make up a second set of the *Freethinker* as a precaution against fire or other accidents. We have the volumes of this second set as far back as 1893, and we are anxious to obtain the remainder back to the start in 1881. We also stated that we wished to obtain a copy of our old *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought* written—well, say before the Flood. Unfortunately we have received no response to our appeal. We venture to renew it. Of course we are ready to pay a reasonable price for the volumes (or numbers) that we desire—although we should cheerfully accept them as a gift if any holder could afford to present them. It would be best to reply to us direct. But anyone calling at 2 Newcastle-street on this business could see our shop manager, Mr. H. Saill, instead.

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We are devoting a good deal of time and attention to our review of Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* —a subject which is, of course, of transcendent interest to our own readers. We hope to print a large instalment of our review in next week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. H. George Farmer, who has written another article for the *Freethinker*, this time on Courbet, says he will take our hint about the National Anthem. "Strange to say," he adds, "I have a lot of notes on the point, which I made some years ago." But he cannot get access to them just at present. On another point Mr. Farmer writes: "I sincerely hope you will not overdo yourself with *two* lectures at Manchester. The movement cannot afford to lose your guidance even for a day." The same hope was expressed at Manchester. It was expressed by the chairman and earnestly echoed by the audience. Perhaps there is more efficacy in Freethought than in Christian prayers. Anyhow, while we were very tired on Monday morning, we felt none the worse in any other way, and the voice was rather improved than worsened by the Sunday's effort.

Another successful meeting was held at Foresters' Hall, Highgate-road, on Sunday last. An appreciative audience enjoyed Mr. Hope's lecture, and several questions were asked. The final lecture of this course will be delivered to-day (Oct. 26) by Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, who is a favorite of North London "saints."

The Bethnal Green Branch holds a "Tea, Social, and Dance" at the King's Assembly Rooms, Cottage-grove, Mile-end-road (near Grove-road), on Sunday, November 2. Tea on table at 5.45. Mr. C. Quinton as M.C. Tickets 1s. each, obtainable of Mr. J. Neate, 375 Bethnal-green-road.

There is one person, at any rate, who remembers our criticism of the late Wilson Barrett, the actor, and his trumpery play, the *Sign of Cross*. We cut the following from John Francis Hope's article on the "Drama" in last week's *New Age*:—

> "I believe that Miss Lillah McCarthy followed Miss Maud Jeffries in the part of Mercia in the *Sign of the Cross*. That was a long time ago, but 'the whirligig of time brings in his revenges'; for she is now Lavinia in *Androcles and the Lion*, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Mr. Shaw has written only a parody of Wilson Barrett's 'masterpiece.' It is a little amusing to remember how ministers of religion gave handsome testimonials to that play; and to notice how ministers of religion are divided in opinion about Mr. Shaw's parody of it. So officially and officiously Christian was the welcome given to the *Sign of the Cross* that, in 1896, Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society, published 'a candid criticism' of it. If many more clergymen clasp Mr. Shaw to their bosom as the Rev. R. J. Campbell has done, I suppose that we shall have from Mr. Foote a candid criticism of *Androcles and the Lion*. Certainly, it would serve Mr. Shaw right, for a parody that does not define the thing parodied has failed in its function of criticism."

We rarely go to the theatre now, for we live out of London, and are more affected than we used to be by bad air. But we think of going to see Shaw's new play, even at that price, since it cannot yet be read in print; and if we do our readers (*and* Mr. Shaw) may be told what we think of it.

We made Maeterlinck's little book on *Death* the subject of a Queen's Hall lecture soon after its publication. Since then he has expanded the treatise, and now publishes it under the title of *Our Eternity*. We hope to give it attention shortly. Meanwhile we may note a brief review in last Sunday's *Observer*. The writer quotes three lines from Shelley as expressing all that the Belgian poet and essayist urges against the fear of death:—

> "And Death shall be the last embrace of her
> Who takes the life she gave: even as a mother
> Folding her child says, 'Leave me not again.'"

"Who can appreciate these lines," the reviewer says, "will not need to read Maeterlinck's essay." What is this? Is Shelley coming into vogue? "Then is doomsday near." Doomsday, at least, to many lies and many evils.

Tuesday's *Daily News* contained a column review of *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle*, by H. N. Brailsford. The writer, S. K. Ratcliffe, spoke in the highest terms of Thomas Paine, and declared that Mr. Brailsford was hardly to be forgiven for calling that great man "Tom," who was the "splendid knight-errant of democracy."

Vanishing Relics of Man's Early Condition.

IN his *Magic and Religion*, and elsewhere, the late Andrew Lang endeavored to throw doubt on the well-established proposition that lowly savage peoples possess no conception of a Supreme God. Lang also took exception to the view propounded by Dr. Frazer that magic had preceded religion in order of development. But, acute as some of his criticisms undoubtedly were, they have received no support from subsequent inquiry into the customs and beliefs of savages, while some of his contentions have been completely crushed by more recent research.

There is every warranty for the conclusion that the lowliest surviving savage races are to be met with in the remotest recesses of Central Australia. An acquaintance with the facts relating to these primitive peoples is of priceless value to the anthropologist. In the archaic states of society and modes of thought of the Australian natives, we seem to discern the remotest past, and the most primitive stage of human existence still remaining on our planet.

The world of science is immensely indebted to Mr. A. W. Howitt and his colleague, Mr. Lorimer Fison, for their untiring industry in gathering and explaining the facts of aboriginal Australian life. Their pioneer work prepared the way for other students in the same instructive continent, but their greatest service to science was to stimulate Professor Baldwin Spencer and Mr. F. J. Gillen into conducting those observations which have rendered their names famous throughout the anthropological domain. The work of these two eminent men on *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* has given us an elaborate and carefully authenticated account of primitive savages practically unaffected and uncorrupted by European interference.

Although Australia is the largest of islands and the smallest of continents, it is one of the most isolated land surfaces of the earth. This island-continent was dry land at a time when vasts tracts of what are now Europe and Asia were covered by the sea. Cut off from larger land masses many millions of years ago, its flora and fauna are of a much more primitive pattern than those of the remaining continents. That fierce struggle for existence which was the order of things in other parts of the world was in Australia at a minimum for ages. As a consequence, plant and animal organisms which had perished in the conflict with higher forms elsewhere continued in Australia to survive. And for similar reasons the Australian savages have remained, right down to our time, in a more aboriginal condition than any other uncivilised people in the world.

Although some of the native tribes are less backward than others, all may be said to be remarkably primitive:—

> "While their neighbors, the Malays, Papuans, and Polynesians all cultivate the soil, and build substantial huts and houses, the Australian natives do neither. Pottery, common to Malays and Papuans, the bows and arrows of the latter, and the elaborate canoes of all three races, are unknown to the Australians.....No record, no folk tales, as in the case of the Maoris of New Zealand, of their migration, are preserved by the Australians. True, there are legends and tales of tribal migrations and early tribal history, but nothing, as A. W. Howitt points out, which can be trusted to as referring even indirectly to their first arrival. It is almost incredible there should be none, if the date of their arrival is to be reckoned as only dating back some centuries." *

All the available evidence points to the settlement of these races in Australia at a period very remote. Their rude system of counting betrays no sign of outside influence. Some tribes could not reckon beyond three; very few had any numeral beyond four, and with those that had reached the idea of "five," a word meaning "many" was in use. The

* Channing Arnold, *Australia*.

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various native languages differ to a surprising extent, being sometimes quite unintelligible between tribes separated by a very few miles of country. Nevertheless, the occurrence of common roots proves them to have arisen from a common source, which again points to the vast antiquity of the original settlement of the native races.

The wide gulf which separates the tribes of Central Australia from the civilised peoples of our globe is glaringly illustrated by two remarkable facts. Although these children of nature suffer severely from cold at night "under the frosty stars of the clear Australian heaven," the idea of warming their bodies with the skins and furs of the animals they slaughter for food seems never to have entered their heads. Absolutely naked, they crouch round their miserable fires during the hours of darkness, sometimes tumbling into them and scorching their bodies. The second even more astonishing fact resides in the circumstance that these savages are utterly ignorant of the connection between the intercourse of the sexes and the birth of children. Not only is this so, but they resolutely reject the true explanation of procreation when it is offered to them by their white visitors. Their own notions concerning the reproductive processes are indeed astonishing. It is their firm belief that in the days of long ago their ancestors wandered through the country in bands. These ancestral bands were formed of the members of the group that had descended from the particular plant, animal, or even inanimate object which was their totem. Writes Dr. Frazer:—

> "A totem is a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation.....The connection between a man and his totem is mutually beneficent; the totem protects the man, and the man shows his respect for the totem in various ways, by not killing it if it be an animal, and not cutting or gathering it if it be a plant. As distinguished from a fetish, a totem is never an isolated individual, but always a class of objects, generally a species of animals or of plants, more rarely a class of inanimate objects, very rarely a class of artificial objects." *

The Central Australians likewise suppose that at death the spirits of their ancestors formerly entered the earth, and at the spots which they selected for this purpose, spirit houses were formed. A stone or a tree is usually regarded as the object denoting the site selected by the spirits as their residence. Such spirit abodes are scattered all over the country and the ancestral ghosts that haunt them are perpetually on the look out for a convenient opportunity "to be born again into the world." When a woman passes one of these spirit dwellings the waiting and watching ghost seizes his chance and darts into her body. In course of time her baby is born and the infant is regarded as a reincarnation of the spirit that successfully waylaid the passing female.

> "It matters not whether the woman be young or old, a matron or a maid, all are alike liable to be thus impregnated by the spirits, although it has been shrewdly observed by the natives that the spirits on the whole exhibit a preference for such women as are young and fat."

Among these unsophisticated savages every confinement is regarded as the outcome of spirit agency. And that this most extraordinary delusion was in all probability the universal belief of the human race at the period when the ancestors of extant and extinct civilised peoples were in the same lowly stage of evolution is made abundantly manifest by the survivals of similar notions which are embalmed in the folk tales of the Indo-Germanic stocks. Sidney Hartland's *Primitive Paternity* and *Legend of Perseus* both abound in examples which very strongly countenance this conclusion. Very possibly with an eye on a certain Virgin Birth recorded in some of our own sacred books, Dr. Frazer pointedly says:—

> "Students of folk lore have long been familiar with notions of this sort occurring in the stories of the birth of miraculous personages, but this is the first case on record of a tribe who believe in immaculate conception as the sole cause of the birth of every human being who comes into the world. A people so ignorant of the most elementary of natural processes may well rank at the very bottom of the savage scale." *

On the more general problem of the genesis of religions, Spencer and Gillen's researches have thrown considerable light. These careful and painstaking observers have shown that, while magic is of universal occurrence among the natives, religion—employing that term as denoting prayer and sacrifice to, and praise of, superior spirits—is nearly unknown. Every aboriginal Australian is quite certain of the power of his own magical influences over nature. But a slight amount of differentiation has already set in. A few savages are regarded as greater experts in the magic arts than the average natives, and these favored mortals correspond to the wizards and medicine-men of other savage races. The belief in the efficacy of magical rites and ceremonies permeates the entire community. Scepticism seems to be quite unknown, and those who indulge in deceit themselves accord the fullest credence to the claims of other practitioners of the magic art.

Still, although magic is the predominating feature of the native superstitions, the germs of religion are not absent. And Dr. Frazer is probably correct in his surmise that these germs would in due course have developed into a full-blown religion had it not been for the arresting influences of European intervention. And turning to the tribes of South-eastern Australia, we find among them that a rudimentary form of ghost-worship exists. Fires were kindled near the resting-places of the dead, so that their ghosts might be made more comfortable. Among the Dieri, dead men of quality were remembered by the living, who placed food on the graves, while in the winter months fires were lighted so that the spirit could bask in their warmth. Moreover, some of the Western Australians maintain a fire on the grave for nearly a month, and, as the natives are confident that the departed will return, they deposit their finger-nails in a hole near their temporary resting-places, so that they may recognise their dead kinsmen when they revisit the world. In North-east Queensland the beginnings of a belief in the immortality of the soul have been discovered. Some of the tribes not only place food and water inside the grave, but they also bury with the corpse his ornaments, weapons, and other personal possessions. Dislike of the prowling habits from which all spirits suffer is shown in the custom of breaking the legs of the deceased and in maltreating other parts of his body. A conception of the future state as one closely resembling that which the departed led on earth seems clear from one of the customs of the Turribul tribe. Their dead were placed in trees.

> "If the deceased was a man, they left a spear and a club near him that his spirit might kill game for its sustenance in the future state; but if the deceased was a woman, they laid a yam-stick near her body in order that she might dig for roots."

With another tribe, a man suffering great agony will appeal to the dead for help in his distress. The defunct one is expected to reappear in a dream and teach the sufferer a song which has the power to dispel the malign influences which encompass him. Beliefs and practices such as these are incipient stages of ancestor-worship.

Other Australian tribes call on their totems before going to sleep, much as modern Europeans request the guardianship of their saints or divinities in similar circumstances. One of the Warramunga animal totems is a quite imaginary water-snake, from which these natives claim descent, and this totem is apparently on the high road towards apotheosis. Although in South-east Australia a belief is alleged to be prevalent that a sort of anthropomorphic creature dwells in the sky and keeps an eye on the doings of the people below, he appears to be merely a dead savage whose former exploits have been magnified by the native traditions. On the other

* *Totemism and Exogamy*, vol. i., pp. 3, 4.

* *Totemism and Exogamy*, vol. i., p. 94.

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hand, it is quite conceivable that this semi-divine being may owe much of his supposed importance to European influences. Among the Central Australian tribes whose beliefs have been preserved from all possible suspicion of foreign admixture, no belief in any high god can be said to exist. The testimony of our weightiest authorities is to the following effect:—

> "The Central Australian natives, and this is true of the tribes extending from Lake Eyre in the south to the far north, and eastwards across to the Gulf of Carpentaria, have no idea whatever of the existence of any supreme being who is pleased if they follow a certain line of what we call moral conduct, and displeased if they do not do so. They have not the faintest idea of a personal individual other than an actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct, so far as anything like what we call morality is concerned."*

With regard to the alleged "discovery" of a high ethical faith among savages, Professor Baldwin Spencer, in a letter to Dr. Frazer, expresses his very firm conviction that there is an utter absence of "any such thing in Australia." As a plain matter of fact, the obstacles which the reactionaries have placed in the paths of the consistent evolutionists have all turned out to be the merest mare's nests. The more carefully and systematically the still surviving uncivilised races are studied, the clearer becomes the truth that wherever the human race has made progress its advancing career was commenced at lowly savage levels. Supernaturalism may have developed out of magic, or magic and the fear and supplication of the ghosts of the dead may have taken their rise together. In any case, each form of superstition has played its part in leading on to the evolution of all the religions that exist, or ever have existed, in the world.

T. F. PALMER

God-in-Christ.

IT is blasphemous of me to link God-in-Christ with hyphens. There is more than a suspicion of disrespect in it; besides, I plead guilty: it is impossible to link the words in any other way. Even professors of long experience in the gentle art of web-weaving cannot accomplish the task of making God-in-Christ a reality. Their lives are full of the sustained endeavor. Every week, for six hours at the most, they heroically strive to achieve the performance. They are assisted by whole libraries of inspired wisdom. They are on friendly terms with God, who is their father, and with Christ, who is their brother; and, despite the much-emphasised statements that they dwell in the love of God, and drink their knowledge from the fount of life, they have, hitherto, failed to do what they claim to be able to do. Try as they will, they cannot reap the reward of their nerve-shattering exertions. God refuses to be linked to Christ except by verbal hyphens. Christ "is not having any."

A few Sundays ago I was lured to church by the title of the evening sermon. The subject was, "The Error of the Unbeliever." As an unbeliever, it was quite pleasant to know I had only one fault; and so I took the opportunity to discover wherein lay that error of my crooked ways, and at the same time to spend an evening in the company of Christ.

The whole sermon might have been condensed into one sentence: the error of the unbeliever is his unbelief. The pastor did not even attempt to prove it; and my conviction, that the modern apostles of Christ, following up their prototypes of the New Testament fairy tales, never prove anything, became more securely fixed in my mind.

Once the minister had disburthened himself of the wonderful discovery resulting from his three hours' preparation, I became interested in the congregation. I searched for the presence of Christ. He was nowhere to be found. There were no signs of him in the pulpit, nor were there any appearances of him in the pews. Christ, certainly, was conspicuous by his absence.

This was strange; but I remembered it was the spirit that should be looked for in such a place. If the spirit were present it would, assuredly, manifest itself in some way, and particularly to an Atheist. These people were assembled to worship Christ, and, consequently, if he were not addicted to telling "fibs," I was dead sure to see things.

How would the spirit show itself? I surreptitiously studied the eyes of the people nearest me. The light of the world would surely be evident there, I thought; but, no; the eyes were all dull and heavy, sleepy even. There was not one of the bright flashes of enthusiasm that stir the heart with contagious rapture; not one ray of the quick, inspiring interest, shooting from the eyes, and revealing the hot, glowing vitality that throbs with love; not one glimmer of the intelligence that is ablaze with passion for the thing loved. No; all these eyes were lifeless, empty.

And yet, the minister was holding forth the glories of God; how they shone, and how they, generally, were super-superlative in every sense. He ran the whole gamut of the wonders of his father; and not an eye twinkled with pleasure. He deflated on the powers of God till the atmosphere seemed to become divine, so to put it; and not an eye reflected the divine splendors. Something was wrong. The spirit was not walking up to its reputation. Naturally, I experienced a shade of disappointment.

Not being altogether hopeless, I turned my attention to the faces and forms of the congregation. Perhaps the spirit would quietly, if not ostentatiously, evidence itself in them. The same boredom was equally characteristic. There was no smile of joy, nor strength of determination, nor anything that suggests the resolution of conviction. Faces and forms were all sleepy, sodden, expressionless, and the spirit was not in them, obviously. These people were all tired. They might as well have been in a park chewing grass.

And yet, the pastor had, by this time, neared his peroration. He was working his voice into intense awfulness. The glory of God in Christ was the Christian's salvation. The father of Christ asked them through his son to arise and gather the fruits of his great vineyard; but the audience sat still, never moving a muscle. The pastor sent his voice up to the thirteen stars that decorated the roof. "The love of God in Christ, which the unbeliever has not," he elocuted, "is within you. God reposes his trust upon you [there was no doubt about the *reposing* of the trust]. You are his beloved children, to whose care he has bequeathed, through his holy son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the coming of his glorious kingdom. There is no hope for the world save through God in Christ. Amen. May the blessing of the Lord fall upon the words of his servant."

Then it was that the spirit began to move. There was a subdued shuffling of feet, a quiet shutting of Bibles, a low motion of people straightening themselves up. After twenty minutes' somnolency, the spirit of life reawakened to meander through a joyless hymn; and the short service came to an end.

There was something humorously pathetic about the affair; but it has its grim side. A goodly number of the congregation were known to me. Influential men were scattered about, employers of labor, city magnates, controllers of the press, trade-union officials. The remainder of the audience was gathered from the ranks of the middle-class workers. They represent the controlling portion of the nation. Against that social and political power Freethought, the destroyer of hypocrisy, the vanguard of progress, has to fight. The grimness of the struggle is, must be, inevitable; the opposing power is so strong, and we have but our minds.

But, softly, where is the spirit to-day, where is the enthusiasm, where the hot love, tempered with strong reason? In the minds of rebellious un-

* Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 491.

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believers in orthodoxy. We could sit for hours listening to the editor and his lieutenants, and go home with our minds, our nerves, tingling with delight, our beliefs rising into a grandeur, and our convictions growing greater with a courage that these sleepy Christians never enjoy from their twenty minutes with God-in-Christ. Victory never comes to them who wait; it comes to them who work; and the value of that work can be reckoned by "the spirit" crystallised in it.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

I.—THOMAS SCOTT.

FEW have done more valiant work for Freethought, in a quiet way, than the subject of my present sketch. Born April 28, 1808, Thomas Scott lived the life of a cultured gentleman and scholar. He had acted as page to Charles X. of France, and he travelled widely in all parts of the world. Having thoroughly investigated Christianity, he, in the latter part of his life, set himself to the work of enlightening others as to his conclusions. To this task he devoted his time, money, and talents. From his house at Mount Pleasant, Ramsgate, he began by issuing small tracts designed to aid the cause of free inquiry and free expression of thought. These were printed at his own expense and given away, mostly sent by post to the clergy and the cultured classes. Soon a number of writers gathered round him whose works he published and distributed, mainly at his own cost. Altogether, the pamphlets which he published made no fewer than sixteen good-sized volumes. Among the writers who contributed to the series may be mentioned Francis Newman, W. R. Greg, Dr. Willis, J. Cranbrook, M. D. Conway, E. Maitland, M. Macfie, C. Bray, E. V. Neale, J. Robertson, F. E. Abbot, Sir R. D. Hanson, W. Jevons, M. Kalisch, T. Lestrange, J. Muir, J. A. Symonds, P. A. Taylor, Rev. R. Suffield, Judge Strange, Dr. G. Wild, Dr. Zerffi, and Bishop Hinds. Thomas Scott was well called a prince of propagandists. He had always fresh irons in the fire, and the entire series of pamphlets were of the scholarly, cultured order, calculated to win the attention of those for whom they were designed.

As a specimen of his own incisive style, take the first of *213 Questions*, to which answers are respectfully asked from the orthodox (1865):—

> "(1) As we are required to love our enemies, may we not safely infer that God loves *his* enemies? (2) If God loves his enemies, will he punish them more than will be for their good? (3) Would endless punishment be for the good of any being?"

As an instance of illustration, take the following from his reply to Dr. M'Neile, the Dean of Ripon, on the Resurrection:—

> "If anyone comes and tells us that a man, like the cow in the nursery rhyme, jumped over the moon, or that he walked through a six-feet-thick wall, or that he could show himself and vanish at will, we should say at once that his statements might possibly be true, so far as his report of what he thought he had seen was concerned; but that, if it was true, then the creature who did these things was not made of flesh and blood, but had an organisation so entirely different from man that no points of likeness could be traced between the one and the other."

The principal work issued with Thomas Scott's name was the *English Life of Jesus*. The title shows it was designed to do for English readers a similar work to that which Strauss and Renan had done for Germans and French. Unlike more popular and pretentious Lives of Jesus, it did not attempt to build an edifice without the needful materials, but rather examined those materials, and showed that they could not consistently be fitted together. It shows, in short, that in the Gospels we have to do with legends and fictions, rather than with facts. The work was written in conjunction with Sir W. G. Cox, or rather, I believe, was founded on manuscripts by that gentleman, who, being a dignitary of the Church of England, could not afford to put his name to such a work, and preferred that the whole credit or odium should fall on Mr. Scott, ever ready to do anything for the cause of Freethought. In 1871 Mr. Scott issued a challenge to the Christian Evidence Society, but that body acted with their accustomed discretion, and Mr. Scott followed up his challenge with a scathing exposure of *The Tactics and Defeat of the Christian Evidence Society*.

In a farewell address to his readers, after fifteen years of work, which he published in 1877, Mr. Scott said:—

> "The spectacle of millions of my fellow-countrymen bound hand and book by metaphysical and priestly exclusiveness made so painful an impression upon my mind that I felt irresistibly impelled to expose dogmatic assumptions and promote free theological inquiry as the undoubted right of all thoughtful minds."

He entered on his task single-handed, but he soon made friends who rejoiced to help him in his labors. He says:—

> "Expressions of sympathy with my design and offers of co-operation in the work reached me from what seemed to be the most unlikely quarters, and, for a considerable period afterwards, able and highly educated clergymen forwarded me manuscripts for publication, containing attacks on the false bulwarks of ecclesiasticism, and expositions of absolute moral verities. Cultivated and earnest laymen, capable of dealing with the points at issue, also came forward voluntarily and contributed useful papers to the series."

Essays on every branch of theology were issued "illustrating the unhistorical character of many Bible records, the gradual development of beliefs and ceremonies from Solar and Phallic worship to Christianity, the priestly origin of creeds, and the true inductive methods of investigation." In laying down his work he was able to say: "The persuasion gains ground everywhere that the only true orthodoxy is loyalty to reason; and the only infidelity which merits censure is disloyalty to reason." The seed, he says, may for a while appear unproductive. Mrs. Grundy is still strong. "But over all such untoward agencies the cause of freedom of thought and freedom of expression will certainly triumph; and every anathema of priests and denunciation by bigots will but tend to accelerate its progress."

Thomas Scott died at Norwood on December 30, 1878. In a memoir contributed to the *Liberal* of March, 1879, Mr. G. G. Flaws says:—

> "His was a grand presence; tall, yet robust, with strikingly handsome head and face; in bearing, dress, and manners every inch a perfect English gentleman. Though fond of deluding himself into the belief that he was destitute of humor, he often chuckled with kindly malicious glee at some of his own *repartees*, and unconsciously manifested great powers of drollery; albeit, his wit, if used in writing—which it seldom was—would have barbed itself with sarcasm. He hugely relished the lighter sallies in others, particularly when, through pen and pencil, they waged war against the unrealities of theology and the creeds. No man more detested cant, in every form; no man more gloried in sincerity, both in himself and others. He was as purely transparent a soul as ever honored mankind."

No notice of Mr. Scott would be complete without mention of his wife, who assisted him in all his work with whole-souled devotion. She was a lady of great culture and refinement, in every way fitted to be the helpmeet and companion of one of nature's gentlemen.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

GOOD CHRISTIANS!

Then there were gruesome stories of the massacres. A lady who had fled from Monastir recounted tales of cruelty, the work of Balkan Christians, which made mere crucifixion seem a deed of kindness. Our nearest neighbor had a cousin in the madhouse, the reason of his madness being this:—

He and some other Turkish students of good family had volunteered for service in the war and, being all acquainted, kept together. One night they were on outpost duty in a lonely hut, quite unaware that the force to which they were attached was in retreat, when they found themselves surrounded by Bulgarian komitajis. The character of the assailants was so well known that all were panic-stricken, and one, who was small, managed to get into an empty barrel which was in the hut. The boy in hiding heard what followed, when the students had been overpowered. "You'll look better without that nose, bey effendi. Those lips are much too long, they hide your teeth. And now that pair of ears—those eyes—that tongue!" Such words, with the horrid crying of the victims, still more, perhaps, his own terror which prevented him from coming out and sharing the fate of those he loved, drove the youth in hiding mad; not at the moment, for he managed to lie quiet and escape, but afterwards, when he had reached a place of safety.

Mere human rags, deprived of all that makes life sentient, found their way to Turkey with the refugees. Among a crowd of wretches who were taken care of on a farm belonging to my friend, Ali Haidar Midhat, every girl and youngish woman had been violated; and children of thirteen were big with child. In our village one saw many refugees. It was nothing uncommon at the railway station to send a tray round among persons waiting for the train on behalf of some unhappy individual. One day, when I was called on to contribute, the object was a splendid specimen of manhood who had had his tongue cut out. I think, too, there was something wrong about his ears, but cannot be quite certain for he wore a heavy turban.—*Marmaduke Pickthall in the "New Age."*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Foresters' Hall, 5 Highgate-road, N.W., adjoining "The Bull and Gate"): 7.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, "God—Freewill—Immortality."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 8, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.15, A. J. Minton, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Fred Morgan, a Dramatic Humorous Recital.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "What Do We Know?"

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When a man has the talent to attack with effect falsehood, prejudice, and imposture, it is his duty, if there are any social duties, to do it.—PROF. J. B. BURY.

Religion and Morality.

THE Bible is sown with atrocious or unreasonable prescriptions. For Jehovah, the inexpiable crimes are idolatry and blasphemy. The Jews were always to stone whoever incited them to idolatry, whether son, daughter, brother, or wife. They were to exterminate the inhabitants and the animals, and destroy the belongings, of idolatrous cities where Hebrews had been attracted and converted.

The blasphemer was to be stoned, and so was the sorcerer. Death was decreed against those who resorted to wizards. This is justice after the fashion of the negroes of Central Africa. Jehovah was also like certain idols on the banks of the Niger in his pronounced taste for the odor of burning fat. To eat of that holy fat was to the Jew a capital crime. The same punishment was awarded to those who should eat of the blood.

Against the enemy Jehovah commanded a savage cruelty. All the males of cities carried by assault were to be put to the edge of the sword. In other cities, which Jehovah gave as a heritage to his people, the whole population was to be massacred.

Elsewhere it is said that every girl who marries without being a virgin should be stoned. The wife is also an impure being. To touch her, or any object which has been in contact with her during her menstrual period, is to become impure until the evening. She is further impure during seven days, if she gives birth to a son; and during fourteen days after the birth of a daughter.

The most singular prescriptions are solemnly formulated. It is forbidden to shave or cut the hair round. Quadrupeds may be eaten if they ruminate and are cloven-footed, but no one must eat the hare nor the cony, *which of course ruminate*, but do not divide the hoof. It is also necessary to abstain carefully from certain fantastic animals, having at the same time four feet and wings, etc., etc.

If the commandments of Jehovah are sometimes singular, the methods of appeasing him, and of effacing sins, are not more rational. The almighty Lord is, above all, hungry for victims. Formerly, as we have seen, he devoured the first-born children; later he is contented with animals. He pardons, for a calf, a sin committed in ignorance; a broken oath for a lamb or a goat; a fraud or a falsehood for a ram without spot. For an emissary he-goat the sins of all Israel are remitted.

The Koran, which was born of the Bible, is not more sensible. It orders abstinence from the blood and flesh of the pig, and of animals suffocated, stunned, killed by a fall, or slain by a wild beast. For Allah, as for Jehovah, the greatest virtue is belief. No infidel must be loved, be it a father, a son, a brother, or an ally. The believer is rewarded in this life by rich booty from the infidels, and in paradise by dwelling in delicious gardens, peopled with black-eyed houris, etc. Reprobates, on the other hand, will drink boiling water like molten lead, and liquid feculence.

Essentially all anthropomorphic religions resemble each other, whether monotheistic, like Judaism and Islamism, or polytheistic, like the religions of Greece and Rome. From the theological point of view the great moral question is how to please the supernatural being or beings who are feared and adored, and above all how not to displease them.

Yet the gods of Greece and Rome cared less for the current morality than those of Persia, India, and Judæa. They were not the authors of the moral law; they were its guardians. Certain crimes were chiefly regarded as direct offences against the deities, and it was in that light they were expiated. Mommsen affirms that, at least in the primitive ages of antiquity, capital sentences were regarded as the effect of the malediction of offended gods. Stealing fruit by night, for example, was to commit a theft on Ceres, etc.

The great reward after death consisted in conserving an interest in the life of posterity, in being able to protect and assist them. It was this terrestrial life, above all, about which the practical good sense of the ancients was solicitous. In the belief of the Hesiod the shades of the men of the Golden Age had become good genii, wandering over the earth, and dispensing riches and repressing injustice; while the spirits of the wicked were tormented, and tormented men, in the form of spectres and lemures. These beliefs were generally prevalent, but there were no obligatory dogmas, nor was there any official preaching.

There was no theocratic code; nothing analogous to the amazing and often ferocious despotism of the great Asiatic religions; above all, no asceticism, and no doctrine of renunciation, except that which was preached by the Stoics, and which Christianity assimilated with such alacrity.

In sum, the morality of Greece and Rome, with its qualities and its defects, was laic and, above all, civil. Christianity came, and completely changed the direction of ethics. From that time this earthly life was considered as a pilgrimage, an exile; the heavenly Jerusalem was the destination. To arrive thither it was necessary to obey the orders that were reputed divine, whatever might be the result in this world. The great duty was to love and obey God; the great rock of danger was sin; and this, according to St. Augustine, could only be avoided, if it pleased the divinity, by the assistance of grace.

For the old philosophers death was a hard necessity, the effect of a law; for the Catholics it became a consequence of sin and an object of terror; for, after it, the soul had a thousand chances of being engulfed in the billows of infernal fire. Reprobates would burn there eternally, and, according to St. Gregory, the spectacle of their tortures would rejoice the elect.

This terror of infernal torment was, as we know, the great means by which Christianity inculcated its morality. None is more efficacious with believers, but it is certainly not the noblest.

It has been observed with reason that the antique virtues were masculine; they were courage, magnanimity, and, above all, patriotism. The whole influence of Christianity tended, on the contrary, to effeminate the character in addressing itself no longer

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to reason, but to emotion, in glorifying humility, meekness, love of God, continence, and faith. Faith above all; blind faith became the first of duties; *Credo quia absurdum.*

The ancient ideal was chiefly civil and patriotic; the Christian ideal was ascetic. For the sectary of Jesus the earthly country was little, and the Christian conscripts sometimes refused military service, even at the cost of martyrdom.

Abstinence, renunciation, and maceration were *par excellence* the means of attaining to sanctity. One should if possible be a monk; at the very least, conform his life to the monastic ideal, lead a mechanical existence, and not think.....The body was profoundly despised and neglected, and dirtiness became agreeable to God. St. Anthony never washed his feet; St. Ammon never saw himself naked; Sylvia, a beautiful virgin of sixteen, never washed more than her fingers; Paula and Melania, whose consciences were directed by St. Jerome, believed that "baths were defiling."

The ascetic detachment of the Hindoos was imitated, and far surpassed. St. Melenia, having lost her husband and her two sons, knelt down and thanked the Lord that she could henceforth serve him more fully. It was good to forget one's mother, and abandon one's children in order to consecrate one's self to the ascetic life. Evagrius burnt the letters of his parents from whom he had been long absent. St. Gregory relates that a young monk, being unable to express his filial affection, went secretly by night to visit his parents, and God punished him with sudden death.

But the death of virtue was chastity. All that related to the union of the sexes was regarded as horrible. Woman was the great enemy; she should blush for her sex, for her beauty, and for her apparel. Marriage was only tolerated. "It is better to marry than to burn," said St. Paul. St. Jerome, for his part, saw but one good thing in marriage; it produced virgins.....By the unanimous testimony of Fathers and Councils all sexual intercourse outside marriage was criminal. From the moment Christianity triumphed under Constantine, the Mosaic penalties against sexual offences were adopted and aggravated; adultery became a capital crime, and sodomists were drowned, decapitated, or ingeniously tortured.

The Christian desire for the extinction of the human species should have maintained suicide in honor, as it had been in antiquity. But in the eyes of the Christians it was murder. It killed the soul. Yet one form of suicide was ardently sought by the fanatics—namely, martyrdom.....Nevertheless, with respect to suicide, Christianity wrought a kind of revolution, both moral and, indeed, beneficent. It was the same with respect to abortion and infanticide, to which antiquity attached no great importance. Christianity, on the contrary, condemned and repressed them, not through humanity, but because the death of the unbaptised fœtus or child entailed the terrible consequence of eternal damnation.

Christianity did some good also in relation to slavery. Not that its doctrine condemned slavery in itself. On the contrary, St. Paul advised Christian slaves to be most docile; he even declared that the slave was the only property the Christians might keep, and taxed with vanity and stupidity those who thought otherwise. Indeed, in Europe the ecclesiastics were the last possessors of slaves. In the Christian doctrine equality was not for this world, and the servile virtues were glorified; yet the clergy carried on an active propaganda in favor of slaves. .....Charity was also enjoyed as producing, above all, if displayed to monks, abundant spiritual benefits. .....Christianity also opposed the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. In 329, after the Council of Nice, an edict of Constantine condemned the games of the circus, and the last combat of gladiators took place at Rome in 404.

—From Letourneau's *L'Evolution de la Morale*, translated by

(*To be concluded.*) G. W. FOOTE.

Materialism: Its Meaning and Value.—III.

(*Continued from p. 675.*)

IN order that a question may be properly dealt with, it must first of all be correctly stated. This is a rule that holds good of all questions, and is especially applicable to a discussion on the subject of Materialism. If, for instance, instead of plunging at once into a discussion as to whether matter was ultimate or not, or whether matter and force were the sole forms of existence, the disputants first of all decided what could properly be meant by these terms, the controversy would certainly be more illuminating than it usually is, and a great deal of it would never exist. As it is, it has suited the Spiritualist to tie the Materialist down to a definition of matter that no Materialist was logically bound to accept, and on the other hand, many a Materialist has been only too ready to accept that definition, and so play into his enemy's hands. The result has often been, not merely a quarrel over mere words, but about words that could not have any real value.

I have already given an illustration of this in protesting against the attempt to tie the Materialist down to a given conception of "matter," instead of its being recognised that the word is never more than a term useful as describing a particular group of phenomena. Another instance of the same kind is found in the assumption that because "matter" is found adequate to describe certain groups of experiences, the Materialist is bound to prove that such a "reality" exists outside of all relations to a human brain. If this cannot be done, the Spiritualist holds that Materialism breaks down. We cannot, he says, prove that matter exists; how, then, can Materialism be scientifically sound?

Sometimes this kind of attack takes another form. Religious writers, and even teachers of science—who are not always scientific teachers—after discussing such things as gravitation and electricity, will conclude by saying, as though it were beyond dispute, "Of course, we do not know what gravitation and electricity are in themselves." And quite a deal of the now fashionable Agnosticism rests upon our assumed inability to know what "things are in themselves." Now, instead of spending one's time following people who talk and write in this fashion, wherever they choose to lead, a far more profitable method is to define the terms of the initial proposition. Is the problem correctly stated, or otherwise? What do we mean by a knowledge of things in themselves? Does science really ask us to first of all believe in, say, gravitation and electricity, and then to further believe in the existence of something else of which gravitation and electricity are, so to speak, merely shadows?

Now, I have no hesitation in saying that science makes no such demand upon us. When we are asked to believe in gravitation or electricity, science tells us what these things are, and we are enabled to know them in the most complete manner. What, for example, is gravitation? It is not something the effects of which are seen in the mutual attractions of matter. In a loose and convenient way we speak of a stone falling to the ground as the effect of gravitation, or in consequence of gravitation, but, strictly speaking, the stone falling *is* gravitation, and when we have determined the rate at which it falls, there is nothing else to know about it. Gravitation is a name given to the observed fact that masses of matter everywhere bear a certain quantitative relation to each other. When we have stated this in precise terms we have said all there is to say about gravitation. When we understand this we know all there is to know about gravitation. We do know gravitation in itself, because the law of gravitation, in itself, is nothing more than the mutual attraction of matter reduced to an exact descriptive formula. The proof of this is, that if we take away the "attractions" of matter all gravitation disappears. There is nothing left to know.

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What is true of gravitation, is true of electricity, of life, of mind, of all laws and generalisations framed to describe natural phenomena. They are all group names. Phenomena are classified as physical, chemical, biological, or psychological, because they exhibit certain common characteristics. The laws of chemistry are generalisations descriptive of the behavior of one group. The laws of biology are descriptive of the behavior of another group; and so on, throughout. And "life" is not something apart from the motions of living beings, any more than heat is something distinct from things that are hot. The "thing in itself"—that is, the thing covered by the term used—is the thing we know, since that is all that is properly indicated by the name. Indeed, if the electricity, gravitation, life, mind, etc., that we know are not, "in themselves," like these things, all one can say is that in that case they are not these things at all, but different things altogether. The larger part of metaphysical controversy originates in the discussion of problems that are self-created, and are perpetuated because so few will take the trouble to think the whole out afresh for themselves.

All that the Materialist is really concerned with is that his conception of matter, or life, or mind, shall be broad enough to cover the facts. Some, however, are not slow to assert that this is exactly where Materialism breaks down. According to a recent writer on the subject:—

> "Materialism.....is the most uncritical of philosophies, but it is in one respect often like a true theory of existence as a whole, that is, it tends to be of an analytic character, though stopping short of a full analysis. As opposed to metaphysics, which has at least attempted to take account of all types of existence .....Materialism takes as its basis one of these three types of existence.....and practically it omits the other two." *

That is, Materialism is uncritical because it sticks exclusively to solid atoms, and ignores ether—which is presumably non-solid—and mind. If this were true Materialism would be not only uncritical, it would be sheer insanity. Writers who deal with the subject in this fashion might at least pause and ask themselves whether Materialists could be really such fools as to ignore so plain a fact as mind, and the inquiry might suggest to them the necessity of further examination as to what the Materialist actually meant. Materialism no more ignores psychological facts than it ignores material facts. It has a place and a meaning for both.

The same kind of delusion lay at the foundation of much that Sir Oliver Lodge had to say at the British Association. He said that if Materialism were to be accepted, physics and chemistry should explain everything. And he added that while they might explain a sunset, could they explain our sense of joy or perception of beauty at beholding it? To this a writer—replying in the interests of Materialism—asks, "Why not?" For my own part, I should meet both Sir Oliver Lodge and his critic with the single query, Why? Both appear to be floundering in the same sea of confusion. Why should physics and chemisty explain everything? Why should the Materialist be called on to explain an emotion in terms of chemistry? Let anyone seriously try to describe or explain an emotion in terms of chemistry or physics, and he will soon realise what a hopeless task he has set himself. It simply cannot be done. So far Sir Oliver Lodge is correct in saying that Materialism, *as he conceives it*, cannot deal with these things. And in asking "Why not?" his critic also misconceives the real nature of the problem before him.

To explain is to make intelligible. And in science all explanation consists in the establishment of equivalents. When it is shown that A B C are the factors of D, we have shown that D is the equivalent of A B C—plus, of course, all that results from the combination of the factors. When we say that we have explained water by showing it to be the product of H_2O, we have only demonstrated that whether we say water, or use the chemical formula, the two statements are identical. If we are working out a problem in dynamics, we meet with precisely the same principle. We must prove that the resultant accounts for all the forces proved to be operating at the time. So, then, it is open to the Materialist to claim, and he does claim, that this principle will also apply to the phenomenon of life and intelligence. That is, life and intelligence will ultimately be found to be due to the composition of natural forces, and that the principle ruling elsewhere in nature rules here also. So far, all is easy sailing, and in a general way—sometimes in more than general outlines—this has already been done. Neural changes as the equivalents of psychic states is an established fact, and experimental psychology has brought many detailed proofs of a quantitative equivalent of a qualitative state.

Now, the confusion into which Mr. Arnold, Sir Oliver Lodge, and scores of others fall, is this: they assume that because the Materialist asserts the possibility of establishing between psychic states and nervous conditions, and between nervous conditions and chemical combinations, some form of equivalence, the identities of the different phenomena are destroyed. If chemical combinations give rise to living matter, and living matter gives rise to mind, then, they say, everything is reduced to chemistry, and chemistry explains everything. The assumption is quite false. The identity of each phenomenon remains, no matter how produced, and each phenomenon can only be properly explained—that is, made completely intelligible—in terms of its own class. Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, Physics are group names used to distinguish certain clusters of phenomena having certain fundamental features in common. If chemistry could explain everything, there would be no need for any other science, and science would ultimately become a study of chemical actions and reactions. But no one imagines for a moment that this could ever be the case. It is admitted that at one time the earth was destitute of life, and it is also admitted that life was once without any trace of what we know as mind. And, however introduced or originated, once here as distinct groups of phenomena, life and mind must be described in terms of their own group, without any prejudice as to their mode of origin. Psychological facts must be described in terms of psychology, biological facts must be described in terms of biology, chemical facts in terms of chemistry, and physical facts in terms of physics. You can give the physical and chemical explanation of a sunset. You can also give the psychological explanation of the feelings we experience on beholding it. But you cannot give the psychological explanation in terms of chemistry and physics, because the fact belongs to a group of another order. A psychological fact is ultimate, as such; so are chemical and biological facts, as such. If by analysis you reduce the psychological fact to its biological and chemical equivalents, its character, as a psychological fact, is destroyed. To seek in analysis for what is the product of synthesis is surely the most stupid of pursuits.

I have dwelt at considerable length upon this point, but I trust that my readers will consider this quite justifiable. Materialism is so seldom rightly understood by its enemies, and often so sadly misunderstood by its friends, that its surely worth while making the position clear, even at the risk of being counted wearisome. And here, as in many other instances, the supernaturalist enjoys a certain advantage from his position. He can appeal to established prejudice in familiar language, and assent requires but little mental effort. But disproof of his position requires a consideration of scientific and philosophic principles such as only the minority are inclined to give.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

* *Scientific Fact and Metaphysical Reality*, by R. B. Arnold, p. 27.

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Authority.

THE Rev. R. J. Campbell was one of the preachers at the recent Southend meeting of the Congregational Union, and the subject he discussed was "Christ as Authority." We are told that "the sermon, finely conceived and delivered with arresting power, was all too short for its absorbed hearers." It is a well-known fact that the Gospel Jesus is represented as speaking, not in his own name, but in that of his Father. In the wonderful prayer recorded in John xvii., he says to the Father, "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee." In the same Gospel we also read: "I spake not from myself; but the Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Ignoring these and other similar sayings, Mr. Campbell declares that—

> "What astonished these Galileans most was that Jesus made no appeal to any authority but his own, cited no great names, rested his case upon no venerable tradition, no written word. His own word was enough—fresh, bold, assured, imperative. 'He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.'"

In answer to the question, "What intrinsically was this authority which men discerned in Jesus?" he says that it was not the authority of a commanding personality, or of an unusual positiveness and earnestness of speech, and, further, that it was not even what he said. Then he adds: "It was not so much what Jesus said as what he was, that constituted his revelation to mankind." Surely this is only another way of saying that the authority of Jesus inhered in his commanding personality. Mr. Campbell admits that none of his utterances can be regarded as original, and asserts that his authority "was something in himself that everybody felt when coming in contact with him." This is not true. Thousands came in contact with Jesus without finding anything in him that put him in a position of authority. Those of his own people who believed in him never numbered more than a couple of hundreds, possibly not nearly so many. In his own day he was "despised and rejected of men," which, speaking generally, is as true of him to-day.

Let us examine this point a little more carefully. Mr. Campbell alludes to "the sublime figure of the Lord himself, the unique phenomenon of the relationship in which he stood, and knew he stood, to the transcendental world of timeless values"; but to call a God-man "a sublime figure" is a culpable misuse of terms. A God-man is simply a chimerical, mythical being, and anything but sublime. "The transcendental world of timeless values" is equally unreal, existing only in the minds of those who believe in it. If Jesus was merely a man, Mr. Campbell's description of him is perfectly grotesque. To assert that the authority which Jesus exercises over the human conscience is infinitely greater than that ever exercised by anybody else is to ignore undeniable facts. Upwards of five hundred millions bow to the authority of the Buddha, and, taking them upon the average, they are morally equal, if not superior, to the followers of Jesus. Now, if Jesus really were all that this preacher asserts concerning him, it would be absurd to speak of "a strong craving evidenced on every hand for a truly authoritative Divine word to our age and to the individual soul." If the Gospel is true, that word exists, Jesus himself being the Word of God to the whole world. Yet Mr. Campbell is of opinion that "a new age demands a new word, and recognises its own insufficiency to utter it." If this is so, it follows that the prophecy of the Gospel Jesus concerning the future of his Church is not fulfilled. He said that if he went away he would send the Holy Ghost, and that when the Comforter came he would convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, and guide his people into all the truth. That must have been a false prediction if Mr. Campbell's message is true. If a new age demands a new word, is in fact vainly craving for it, where is the Holy Ghost? He has failed to fill and guide the Church according to promise, and the world is still unconvicted. In addition to this lamentable failure of the Church, we are confronted by the bankruptcy of science and the breakdown of the reason, and here we are, with upturned faces, ardently craving for "a truly authoritative Divine word." This is eminently amusing.

After all, the new word, the truly authoritative Divine word, turns out to be an objective fact, which is the historical Jesus. Listen to this:—

> "The authoritative fact is Christ—Christ himself, not theories about Christ, not speculations concerning him, but Christ—Christ as he broke upon an astonished world nearly two milleuniums ago, and is breaking upon it afresh to-day—Christ in the Church, in the Bible, in the reason, but detected there, as in all that has been thought and said about him in past and present, because at a definite point in time he appeared, and lived, and wrought, and suffered, as a man among men."

There was a time when Mr. Campbell distinguished between Jesus and Christ, but now he seems to treat them as identical. "Christ is a break with the natural order, an invasion from the supernatural," he tells us to-day. "His advent in the world," he continues, "is not an event that can be fitted into our ordinary human categories; it is a supersession of them." Fancy a sane man averring that such a conception of Christ is not a theory or speculation. It is absolutely nothing else. Such a being never existed except in the fancy of theologians. If asked, "Did Mr. Campbell's Christ ever live?" we would return the emphatic answer, No, never. He is fully as mythical as Osiris, Adonis, Attis, or Mithra, after whom he was originally modelled. There is no higher law in existence whose mission it is to set lower ones aside. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is described as freeing a man from the law of sin and death, is an invention of the theological mind, and to believe in it is an act of high treason against Nature. No being from a higher realm has ever allied himself by a stupendous miracle with our race. The fact that Mr. Campbell is what he is, is a conclusive evidence that the Christ he preaches never was at all.

Mr. Campbell has made a valuable discovery, and we shall allow him to tell us what it is in his own words:—

> "More than any other single influence whatsoever, or all other influences put together, he [Christ] has convicted the world of sin. The sense of sin is largely Christ-created, and he is the only remedy for the need he has thus awakened."

We have been saying the same thing about sin ourselves for years. Sin is a theological creation, just like Christ; and the remedy for sin is just as imaginary as sin itself. Nobody has a sense of sin who is not a believer in God. The priest-created sense of sin has driven many human beings into hopeless insanity. We once knew a man who, under a deep conviction of sin, was beside himself with baseless fear for the space of nine months.

Mr. Campbell has made another discovery of immense import. He says:—

> "If Christ could be accounted for in terms of human evolution, or in terms of the sequence of time and sense in any way, we should have no Gospel to preach. It is just because he cannot be thus accounted for that he is the light of the world. All our Christian institutions, creeds, and doctrines, are but the broken rays of that eternal light."

Nothing could be truer. The Gospel is as fantastic as the Christ who is its centre, and as impotent. It is called the Gospel of God, though he will not or cannot administer it himself. It is also named after Christ, but he is no more able to preach it than his Father. It is perfectly true, however, that without a supernatural Christ there could be no Gospel. Now, as Christ is said to be an invasion from the supernatural, so his Gospel is supposed to cause the supersession of natural law for all believers. The law of sin and death is God's, and so is the law of

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the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but the latter is said to be a higher law which bends down and rescues a penitent and believing sinner from the cruel clutches of a natural law from which otherwise there could be no escape. Thus the Gospel is fundamentally immoral, and its influence upon those who verily believe it is bound to be demoralising.

Having abandoned the belief in an infallible Church and an infallible book, Protestants are without any genuine authority to fall back upon. That is why they have split up into six or seven hundred conflicting sects. It is the most difficult thing in the world to realise the presence of an invisible Christ; and if he still wears our humanity he cannot be everywhere present at one and the same time. Catholics are much better off in that they have a visible and Divinely appointed representative of him on earth, who is officially authoritative in all ecclesiastical and theological deliberations. Consequently, the Catholic Church has preserved its unity throughout its history. Blessed are they who are neither Catholics nor Protestants, but who have found in reason the only authority to which it is always safe to defer.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Catholic Bigot in China.

SIR HIRAM MAXIM'S drastic exposure of missionary methods in China, in his book entitled *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, has been well received by all advanced journals in this country. Even the conservative *Times*, which has never dissembled any love for advanced views on religion, gave a short, but fair and accurate description of its contents, without comment, in its columns, of books received, which was as much as could be expected from such a quarter. And, as the *Times Literary Supplement* is undoubtedly the best literary review published in this country, and gives the cue to many lesser literary lights, this was a matter for congratulation. If there had been anything immoral or indecent in the book, we may be sure that its reviewers and critics would not have been backward in pointing it out. No such charge has been made in any of the notices we have seen of Sir Hiram's book in this country; and, as a matter of fact, nothing of the kind can be found within the covers of the book. This should be borne in mind in order to appreciate what follows.

A copy of the book was, in due course, sent to the editor of the *Shanghai Times*, a follower of Jesus named John O'Shea, who, from his name, would seem to be a Roman Catholic Irishman.

It should be stated that Sir Hiram Maxim had sent a letter to the *Republican Advocate* (which is also published at Shanghai), in which he points out the absurdity of sending missionaries to China to teach morality, seeing that the Chinese have the high moral philosophy of Confucius and Buddha; and citing the testimony of Legge, Edkins, Le Compte, and Eugene Simon to the teaching and practice of Chinese morality. This letter appeared on May 24 last. On May 26, O'Shea, the editor of the *Shangai Times*, published in that paper an editorial, entitled, "A Monstrous Maxim," of which we give the commencement:—

> "A maxim more wicked and misleading we have never seen in print than that to which our esteemed contemporary, the *Republican Advocate*, had the bad judgment to devote no fewer than five of the pages of its issue of the 24th inst. The same Maxim (we regret to say we are obliged to personify the word—his Christian name and title being Sir Hiram S., Knight, inventor, man of science, and of world-wide renown in fields of usefulness and enterprise in which his astonishing achievements would have unquestionably conferred lasting fame upon him had he only had the wisdom to restrain his manifest hatred for all religions and their teachings within the bounds of ordinary decency) lately endeavored to gain the attention of the reading public in the Far East through the medium of the columns of the *Shanghai Times*. Some days ago he sent us a book which he has had published, for the purpose of having us review it, but its character is so utterly execrable that we had quite made up our minds to take no notice of it whatever, and should unquestionably have acted upon this determination had it not been that in the *Republican Advocate* on Saturday evening we discovered the long letter over his name to which we are now referring, and which epitomises the monstrous piece of literature with which he has favored ourselves."

The blind passion of the writer prevents him seeing the obvious falseness of his charge of "hatred for all religions," for Sir Hiram's letter praises the high morality taught by the religions of Confucius and Buddha—a strange way of showing hatred, truly!

Note, also, the good old Christian method of dealing with the enemies of the faith. When the work cannot be suppressed—and, as we shall see, the writer suggests its suppression in China—then the next best thing to do is to take no notice of it, ignore it, boycott it, so that no one will know of its existence (this is still the policy of the press in our own country toward militant Freethought). If, unfortunately, it should reach the public through others being so ill-advised as to notice it, then there is nothing left but to pour mud and filth upon it; to charge it with immorality, indecency, obscenity, and blasphemy; in a word, to *frighten* people from reading it. History attests that this has been the method of Christianity from the earliest ages down to the present day, and the editor of the *Shanghai Times* provides a shining example of the malignity of Christian charity, which thinketh no evil; and the venom of Christian benevolence, which loveth its enemies.

With pen spluttering with holy rage, this defamer declares that Sir Hiram's book is a "compilation which would fairly put the Hunan Tracts, of infamous memory, and the pictorial abominations of the late Chou Han to the blush." To those who have not heard of these tracts, we may state that they were native productions, published to counteract the missionary propaganda, some of which were parodies of Christian dogmas, rites, and ceremonies; we have only seen one, and this represented Christians worshiping a crucified pig. Others were undoubtedly indecent and obscene, and to say that Sir Hiram's book puts them "to the blush" is really a criminal libel for which the writer would have to pay by a long term of imprisonment if tried before an unprejudiced jury, but Sir Hiram knows better than to trust the vindication of his honor to the justice of twelve Christian jurymen.

As a matter of fact, most of the illustrations in Sir Hiram's book are reproductions from Dante's illustrations of the Bible, and not the faintest shadow of indecency can, even by the most morbid Nonconformist conscience, be attached to any illustration in the book.

The editor of the *Shanghai Times* would have made a glorious officer of the Holy Inquisition. This is how he gleefully describes the end of Chou Han, the opponent of Christian teaching in China. He says:—

> "The Diplomatic Body in Peking were moved to take action with regard to the matter, in a way which secured the speedy relegation of the ingenious author and artist to a place where it was not in his power to do any further mischief. He languished for a long time in obscure imprisonment in Changsha, and died there, if we remember aright, only a few years ago."

No doubt he would like to condemn the distinguished author, whose character he so vilely assails, to a similar fate.

He goes on to observe that he does not know what action is likely to be taken with regard to the book, but it "should certainly never be allowed to circulate, or be translated, in China."

We reproduce here a few of the flowers of speech this good Christian, in the plenitude of his Christian charity, bestows upon the author and his book. It disseminates "poisonous slanders," "false and fœtid attacks" upon religion, "false and infamous slan-

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ders"; describes the world-famous author as "a renegade and a rascal," and concludes:—

> "The book is a monstrous, false, and thoroughly blackguard publication, and the author is unfit to wear the Cross of the Legion of Honor—of which, we perceive, he is a member, or any other foreign order (most of which are religious in their origin) or distinction whatever."

Such is the snarling fury into which this meek and humble follower of Jesus works himself over *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*. If half, or a quarter of the charges he makes against the book be true, why did not some of the numerous reviews of the work in this country mention it? The *Times*, which is so particular in such matters, never hinted that the work was indecent or blackguardly. And we challenge anyone to point out anything of the kind in the work.

Sir Hiram Maxim's career is honorably known to all the world, but who is this self-constituted champion of public morality and religion? Will his career stand investigation? What was his life and occupation before he became connected with the *Shanghai Times*? We have heard strange tales, which, if true, would show this pious editor in the character of "Satan rebuking sin."

It is the fate of every advocate of Freethought to be stung by these obscure reptiles of the Christian press—when they think they can operate with safety to themselves—and those who advocate advanced views are prepared beforehand to take the risk.

This scurrilous outbreak will not harm the distinguished author of this book. Already the leading missionary societies are lamenting a falling-off in their donations, and this book will help to still further curtail the financial supplies. We can rest assured that Sir Hiram Maxim's name will be honored generations after his Christian traducer is dead and forgotten.

W. MANN.

Up for Judgment.

St. Peter stood guard at the golden gate,
With solemn mien and an air sedate,
When up to the top of the golden stair
A man and a woman, ascending there,
Applied for admission. They came and stood
Before St. Peter, so great and good,
In hope the City of Peace to win,
And asked St. Peter to let them in.
The woman was tall, and lank, and thin,
With a scraggy beardlet upon her chin.
The man was short, and thick, and stout;
His stomach was built so it rounded out.
His face was pleasant, and all the while
He wore a kind and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke,
And the man kept still while the woman spoke.
"Oh, thou who guardest the gate," said she,
"We come hither, beseeching thee
To let us enter the Heavenly Land,
And play our harps with the Angel Band.
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt;
There's nothing from Heaven to bar *me* out.
I've been to the meeting three times a week,
And almost always I'd rise to speak.
I've told the sinners about the day
When they'd repent of their evil way;
I've told my neighbors—I've told them all—
'Bout Adam and Eve, and the Primal Fall.
I've shown 'em what they'd have to do
If they pass in with the chosen few.
I've marked their path of duty clear—
Laid out the plan of their whole career.
I've talked and talked to 'em loud and long,
For my lungs are good, and my voice is strong;
So, good St. Peter, you'll clearly see
The gate of Heaven is open for *me*.
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn't walked in exactly the narrow way;
He smokes and he swears, and grave faults he's got,
And I don't know whether he'll pass or not.
He would never pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn;
So I had to leave him in sorrow there,
While I, with the chosen, united in prayer.
He ate what the pantry chose to afford,
While I, in my purity, sang to the Lord.
And if cucumbers were all he got,
It's a chance whether he merited *them* or not.
But oh, St. Peter, I love him so;
To the pleasures of Heaven *please* let him go!
I've done enough—a saint *I've* been.
Won't *that* atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim Gospel, I know 'tis so,
That the unrepentent must fry below.
But isn't there *some* way you can see
That he may enter who's dear to me?
It's a *narrow* Gospel by which I pray,
But the chosen expect to find *some* way
Of coaxing, or fooling, or bribing you
So that *their* relations can amble through.
And say, St. Peter, it seems to me
This gate isn't kept as it ought to be.
You ought to stand right by the opening there,
And never sit down in that easy chair.
And say, St. Peter, my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trimmed:
They're cut too wide, and outward toss;
The'yd look better narrow, cut straight across.
Well, we must be going, our crown to win;
So open, St. Peter, and we'll pass in."
St. Peter sat quiet, and stroked his staff,
But, in spite of his office, he had to laugh;
Then said, with a fiery gleam in his eye:
"Who's tending this gateway—you or I?"
And then he arose in his stature tall,
And pressed a button upon the wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell,
"Escort this female around to Hell!"
The man stood still as a piece of stone—
Stood sadly, gloomily, there alone.
A long-life settled idea he had
That his wife was good and he was bad.
He thought if the woman went down below,
That he would certainly have to go;
That if she went to the regions dim,
There wasn't a ghost of a show for *him*.
Slowly he turned, by habit bent,
To follow wherever the woman went.
St. Peter, standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.
He called the gentleman back, and said:
"Friend, how long have you been wed?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh);
And then he thoughtfully added, "Why?"
St. Peter was silent, with head bent down;
He raised his hand and scratched his crown;
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself he spake:
"*Thirty years* with that woman there?
No wonder the man hasn't any hair!
Swearing is wicked, smoke's not good;
He smoked and swore: I should think he would!
Thirty years! with that tongue so sharp!
Oh, Angel Gabriel, give him a harp!
A jewelled harp with a golden string.
Good sir, pass in where the angels sing.
Gabriel, give him a seat alone—
One with a cushion—up near the throne.
Call up some angels to play their best;
Let him enjoy the music—*and rest!*
See that on finest Ambrosia he feeds;
He's had about all the hell he needs:
It isn't just hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and the future too."
They gave him a harp with golden strings,
A glittering robe and a pair of wings;
And he said, as he entered the realms of day,
"Well, this beats cucumbers, any way."
And so the old Scripture text stands fast:
The last shall be first, and the first shall be last.

A. Scallywag.

Mr. Foote's being called on to speak at the Bradlaugh Dinner was a pure accident. He was undecided whether he would be able to attend or not. He was only certain at the last minute. He arrived, in fact, just a little late for the function, the chairman being already seated. That is why his name was not on the program. "Simply this, and nothing more"—as the owner of Poe's "raven" says.

Shaw described himself as a "mystic." He might have said a "comic mystic."

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Acid Drops.

Apropos of our note last week of the influence of Christianity in contracting the meaning of ethical terms, a striking instance of the truth of what was then said was furnished by "Citizen Sunday." It was decided that all the churches and chapels should devote their sermons to a consideration of "the moral question." All religious people were to range themselves on the side of righteousness. They were to see that "bad houses" (not bad homes), suggestive prints, and objectionable pictures were destroyed, and that the "wild oats" theory with regard to young men was abandoned. This, according to the wisdom of these people, is the scope of "the moral question." It is sex, sex, and nothing but sex. What of the rack-renting landlord, the sweating employer, the slanderous speaker, the false friend, the hypocrite, and the thousand and one other forms of knavery? Evidently these do not come within the scope of "the moral question." There is nothing connected therewith over which parsons may lick their lips. And yet, we venture to think, that a genuine crusade against many of these evils, or all of them, might do more to bring about cleaner sexual relations than all the sermons preached last Sunday. It is true that you cannot be healthy without being clean; but there is also truth in the statement that you cannot be clean without being healthy. It is not very wise to clean a pig and then put him back in a filthy sty.

What is the principle that ought to underlie infliction of judicial punishment? According to Judge Avory, the principle is, mainly, to deter other people. The man punished is not of very great consequence. In sentencing driver Candle, for the Aisgill disaster, Judge Avory said, "I have to bear in mind that I sit here for the purpose, not so much of punishing a particular offender, as deterring others from offending in a like manner." Driver Candle might have replied, "If that is the case, why not select someone else and punish him?" If judges only sit to illustrate to the public at large what will happen if they commit certain actions, the end would be achieved by selecting a certain number of people, say, by ballot, and giving them certain terms of imprisonment corresponding to the offences against the committal of which all are warned. If that is the idea under which our judges and legislators labor, we are not surprised at the ineffectiveness of our criminal law. We venture to suggest that Judge Avory ought to sit where he does sit not primarly to provide warnings to possible offenders, but to deal with the offender actually before him, and to deal with him in terms of a rational understanding of human character and its environment. As a matter of fact, punishment, however severe, does not deter others, and never has deterred others. This was conclusively proved by the abolition of hanging in public. Certainty of detection *is* essential, but more important than that even, is to deal with each offender in a way that will correct whatever in his nature is capable of correction. Judge Avory may be capable enough, so far as a knowledge of the law and of legal procedure is concerned. He obviously has still much to learn concerning the philosophy of wrong doing and its proper treatment. As a matter of fact, the most important person in any case is the wrong doer. Everyone else is a mere incidental.

Six thousand pounds is to be spent for a house for the new Bishop of Sheffield. His "Master" frequently slept out of doors for want of better accommodation. "Blessed be ye poor! Woe unto you rich." But the Bishop chances it.

"Secularism is waning," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "and the anti-religious element in the Socialist propaganda is disappearing." Socialists can look after themselves; but we know that far more Freethought literature is circulated to-day than ever before in the history of the movement. We know more about it than the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*.

The editor of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Report has some curious ideas regarding Freethought, which he mixes up with Socialism. He says that in Germany "it is the universal experience of our colporteurs that Social Democrats are their most violent opponents, surpassing all others in hatred of the Bible and contempt for its teaching." Although the Society boasts of issuing the Scriptures in 450 languages, apart from the Socialists, only two Freethinkers appear to have come in contact with the Society's agents. One was in Timbuctoo, and the other in North Africa. The supporters of the Society must be as innocent as bull-pups if they swallow this soothing syrup for intellectual infants.

"French in a Week" is the alluring headline in an advertisement in a religious contemporary. It won't do, however, for all Christians know that the Holy Ghost can teach foreign languages in half a minute.

A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* says: "The daisy copies not only the yellow orb of the sun, but greatly daring, the darting rays of light. The sunlight is the very life of the vegetable world, which in glad return, devotes its energy to unfolding an image of its God." If this sort of thing is acceptable to his readers, the editor had better call his paper "The Sun Worshiper."

The editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* suggests in a leader that the Churches should keep "young and simple and supple." They do not require the advice. Their suppleness would make an insurance agent turn green with envy.

Taking things on the whole, there seems to be about as much nonsense talked in the City Temple as in any place of worship in London. And, in a way, the nonsense there seems more offensive. For it is vented with an air of superiority, and as though its production had only been secured either by the possession of abnormal capacity or at the cost of many brain-racking nights. Here is a sample. Mr. Campbell told his congregation the other evening that those who see in "nature's catastrophes an unanswerable challenge to the gospel of Christ," should take note that it is to that very gospel "that they owe their capacity for perceiving that fact at all," and this is "in itself a presumption in favor of the view that behind all this clash and conflict of the inner and the outer in our total experience there remains a reconciling factor yet to be disclosed."

For downright nonsense this would be hard to beat. It never required very much capacity to recognise the challenge of evil in the world to Theistic beliefs, and it has been one of the commonplaces of controversy from the days of the Greeks onward. It is one of the stupidities—or knaveries—of Christian preachers to assume that human nature after Christianity was something different from what it was before Christianity appeared. People were just as capable of seeing, and feeling, "nature's catastrophes" before Christianity as afterwards. They were just as capable of seeing the possibility of recognising how impossible it was to harmonise them with the belief in a wise and good Providence, and that remains as impossible to-day. Mr. Campbell is as helpless before the problem as is any other preacher. His conclusion that there "remains a reconciling factor yet to be disclosed" is sheer fatuity. There was more sense in the old cry to trust in God. How does Mr. Campbell know there is a factor to be disclosed? And if it is not disclosed, how does he know what it is like? When stuff of this kind passes for *thinking*, and the men who voice it are hailed as great spiritual forces, what further proof is needed of the mental, and even moral, bankruptcy of Christianity?

The *Christian Commonwealth*, in a way, caps Mr. Campbell's absurdities by one of its own on the same topic. It says, referring to the brave attempts at rescue made at sea and in the pit, "While men and women are capable of these heroic sacrifices and reveal themselves the possessors of the unconquerable spirit in the face of such appalling terrors, we cannot believe that a malignant chance rules the affairs of mankind." "Malignant chance" is malignant nonsense. No one but a parson or a religious journalist would be capable of using the phrase. If there is a God, *he* may be either malignant or benevolent. But if there is nothing but natural forces, kindness or cruelty simply has no place in natural operations. Again, one feels impelled to ask whether knavery or stupidity is responsible for such language? And note it is the men and women who risk their lives to save, while God does nothing, save control the conditions that brush a few hundred out of existence in a few minutes. It is hopeless appealing either to Mr. Campbell or to the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*, but some others will certainly see that malignancy rests with the God who animates nature, not with the natural forces that Theists believe express his will. Natural catastrophes in themselves are bad enough, but to have in addition the belief in a God who is responsible for their occurrence, is enough to drive mad those who seriously think out their position. Luckily for themselves most religious writers nowadays have a congenital protection against such a calamity.

Smith and the Church is the title of a book by Dr. H. H. Beattys, which asks the question whether Smith should

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attend a place of worship. If all the members of that numerous and respectable family should accept the invitation, the churches will have to put out the notices, "Standing Room Only."

"Science Conquers Rheumatism" runs a puff in a pious paper. That compliment to science was paid for at the usual rates.

A writer in the *Southend Telegraph* says "we must move our eyes from the Sea of Galilee and look for Jesus by the sea at Southend." When the tide is out there will be a chance for the police—and the longshore men. We look forward to the inquest.

The British and Foreign Bible Society's report states that their 1,200 native colporteurs sold 3,750,000 copies of the Scriptures during 1912, which is an average of 3,125 for each native. As many sales are by barter, which includes food, fish, fruit, eggs, pine chips, nuts, swords, and such articles, the Society's agents must be excellent tallymen.

The priests have kept remarkably quiet over the labor troubles in Dublin. But at last they have made a move. It was proposed to transport a number of children from their homes in Christian Dublin to friends in England who would maintain them until the labor war was over. Arrangements were made and a number of children ready for departure. Then the priests took alarm. The children would be freed from the direct influence of the Roman Catholic Church; and, while that Church does not mind their being reared in a state of semi-starvation, it does object to their spiritual welfare being threatened. So they have practically forbidden the parents to allow the children to leave, and the best part of them have withdrawn their consent. Mr. Larkin now finds himself in opposition to the Church, and, for the benefit of those who lay so much stress on the predominance of economics, we venture to predict that he will find this a much more powerful enemy than even the combined forces of capital. Perhaps it will drive him to the recognition of the fact that so long as superstition sits enthroned, stable social reform will remain more or less of an aspiration. Other reformers have been driven to that conclusion, against their inclinations. The consequences of this new development should at least prove instructive.

It was not to be expected that the Catholic priests would quietly allow Dublin children to be drafted over to English homes during the strike. Securing (and keeping) the young is all in all to the Catholic Church. Dr. Walsh knows what he is about, whether Mr. Larkin does or not. Of course we are not dealing with the ethics, but with the tactics, in the matter.

James Larkin now understands what it is to upset the Dublin priests. They quickly settled his hash. He has obtained seven months' leisure to reflect upon the value of religion as a social influence. We hope the lesson will not be lost upon the Trade Unionists of Great Britain. They dropped Secular Education out of their Annual Congress discussions just to please the Catholics. They ought to take it up again after this—lest a worse thing befall them.

There ought to be common sense enough in Dublin to get this strike settled with benefit to both sides. One is entirely against the employers if their real object is Trade-Union smashing. But they can surely give way on that point, as other employers have done, without loss of dignity; for there can be no dignity in seeking to oppress and degrade one's fellow men. Less passion and more cool intelligence should find a reasonable solution soon. Meanwhile the poor women and children are suffering from sheer want of food and clothing—and the wind is beginning to blow keener across the Irish Sea. We gladly give publicity to the appeal of A. Evans, Member of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress—220 Blackfriars-road, London, S.E. Warm clothing, boots, etc., are specially requested, and will be sent over by the weekly food-ship. Necessary repairs will be done at this address.

Rev. Benjamin Thomas Winterborn, of Beau Site, Crowborough, left £30,068. What a big fortune that would have seemed to the "Savior" and the twelve apostles! But things have altered since then.

More poor Christites! Rev. Stephen Greathead, Chiselhurst, Kent, left £19,720. Rev. Anthony Laurie, Cheltenham, left £2,161. Rev. Henry Thomas Fletcher, of Bicken, Lincolnshire, left £54,464. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Judge Malouin, at Quebec, has decided that no one Jew or number of Jews could bring an action because their religion had been libelled. The Christian religion, however, is protected in that way in England, under the law of Blasphemous Libel. Circumstances *do* alter cases.

The Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. Inge) has been trying to comfort his fellow-clergymen. He says that "there is no ground for anxiety," and that "the Church is a spiritual society" under the constant care of God. A *spiritual* society! What about the endowments? Of which, by the way, Dean Inge enjoys a liberal share.

Bishop March, Roman Catholic, Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, was shot by a madman while conducting divine service. One shot went wide, but another struck him on the head, only wounding him slightly. We suppose the Bishop's escape was "providential." But wouldn't "Providence" have been better occupied in keeping the madman out of the church altogether? All that is gained is a demonstration of the shot-resisting power of the Bishop's cranium.

Mr. Lloyd George is accused of "blasphemy" for quoting the sixty-fifth Psalm in the peroration of his Bedford speech. His accuser is a Church of England man. Of course! Everybody knows whom the Bible belongs to.

Sir Rufus Isaacs is the first Jew to hold the position of Lord Chief Justice of England. The Liberal press says he will adorn it. The Tory press shouts "Marconis!" Our view is that Sir Rufus Isaacs, like the late Lord Chief Coleridge, will find it awkward if he has to try a "blasphemy" case.

James Berry, ex-hangman, is dead. He jerked many a pious murderer to Jesus. We suppose he has followed them there himself. The meeting, however, must be rather embarrassing, one would think. The question of *ropes* will have to be *tabu* if the peace of heaven is not to be broken.

Rev. Dr. Felix, Rector of Llanhilleth, has been pointing the lesson of the Senghenydd explosion. The 422 miners who were "hurled out of the world" are only a part of a much larger number of "human souls" who emigrated the same day. "There are about 5,140 men, women, and children dying every hour," this reverend gentleman says, "and judging from their lives a very large majority of them are going to hell." The bereaved women know where their men have gone. No doubt they are grateful for the information. We should imagine that Dr. Felix is the most popular man in the district.

It is odd to see Dr. Stanton Coit's daughter married in a Christian church—that of St. Ethelburga, in Bishopsgate. Being a suffragette, however, she secured certain concessions in the marriage service. Dr. Cobb, indeed, was very obliging; though it is doubtful if he had any legal right to depart from the Prayer Book formulas. She did not promise to "obey" her husband. Nor did the knot-tier pray that she might be "faithful and obedient to her husband," but only that she might be "loyal to her husband." We see very little profit in these alterations. It is as absurd for a woman to promise to be "loyal" to her husband as to promise to "obey" him. How can "loyalty" figure in a contract? And does it not, in these circumstances, include some idea of obedience?

We can see, of course, that Dr. Cobb is displaying a business tact in his part of this accommodating arrangement. He recognises the fact that more and more people get married at registry offices every year. He thinks that they are driven away from the Church by the old-fashioned wedding ceremony. He fancies that if this ceremony be "rewritten" (his own word) brides and bridegrooms will all patronise the church again. We believe, however, that he is mistaken on this point. He may not like to admit it, but it is a fact nevertheless, that the great majority of brides and bridegrooms who patronise civil marriage don't want religious marriage at any price. Christians seem to think that playing the ostrich is both useful and dignified. It is neither. It is of no use, and it is marked by an utter want of dignity.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1918.—Previously acknowledged, £220 6s. 5d. Received since:—W. B. Snell (S. A.), £1 1s.; W. H. B., 2s.; A. Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; P. G. Peabody, £20.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

GLASGOW CUTTINGS SENDER.—Should be glad if you would send earlier. Tuesday is too late for use.

J. BOND.—Last week's motto was taken from one of Prof. Frazer's lectures. The Shelley quotation was the reviewer's.

W. H. B.—Thanks for "sincere good wishes."

E. B.—Many thanks for welcome cuttings.

A. GOODWIN.—Glad to have your pleasant letter.

A GOOD deal of correspondence stands over unavoidably till next week.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had a capital audience at the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening—a really wonderful audience considering the detestable weather, which was the theme of endless lamentation in Monday's newspaper. Mr. Foote had two awkward journeys to the Hall and back again, but he was well repaid by the way in which his lecture was received by the numerous and enthusiastic meeting. It was on "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*." No lecture of the kind could ever have been followed with intenser interest, and there was quite an ovation when the lecturer resumed his seat. Mr. Rosetti made an excellent chairman.

Mr. Foote's next public appearance will be at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evenings, December 7 and 14. The subjects of his lectures will be announced next week.

Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe delivered the last of the series of four Sunday evening lectures given at Foresters' Hall, North London. In spite of the rain, there was a very fair audience, and several questions were asked after the lecture.

Mr. Lloyd lectures this evening (Nov. 2) at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, Birmingham. Local "saints" will please note. With decent weather there should be a crowded audience.

Our review of Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* is postponed for another week while we get rid of an unpleasant though not a dangerous cold. We are rather glad in one way of the further postponement, as we are seeking to obtain a book to which we desire to make accurate reference on a rather important point.

The Bradlaugh Dinner this year was a good deal of a Bernard Shaw dinner. Mr. Shaw did his best to explain Bradlaugh in terms of Shavism. The great "Iconoclast" was really a Shavian without knowing it. He was really not an Atheist, but a remarkably religious man—if not a "mystic," which Shaw claims to be himself. But what is a "religious" man, if Bradlaugh is to be included in the fraternity? Shaw is very shy of answering that question; and we, for our part, cannot discover that he means anything more than a man of principle, who devotes his energies to the promotion of his convictions. Shaw is just like the Christians in wanting to include heroes like Bradlaugh within the category of the Shavian religion. It is a common trick of religionists, but it didn't work at the Bradlaugh Dinner. Shaw's speech was brilliant, witty, and entertaining, but it was sadly lacking in intellectual texture. Moreover, his chief object was obviously to set his own program, rather than Bradlaugh's, before the meeting. At some points he was not even decently careful. When he explained that he (Shaw) was still an Atheist, in the sense that he was when he saw Bradlaugh smashing the idols, he forgot that many persons listening had heard Bradlaugh, while others had read him, and knew that Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism* was critically hostile to every form of Theism—even to the most refined and metaphysical. Bradlaugh was not an Atheist for any of the secondary reasons suggested by Mr. Shaw. His Atheism was grounded on philosophy. He would have been an Atheist if orthodox Christianity, with all its idolatries, had never existed,—and if he had never been persecuted himself by its professors. Bradlaugh's Atheism, in short, was not personal, but philosophical. And if Mr. Shaw doesn't know this he is not qualified to talk about Bradlaugh's Atheism at all. If he does know it he was taking liberties with that Bradlaugh dinner-party at the Holborn Restaurant.

Mr. Cohen's letter, which appears on another page, deals with Mr. Shaw's curious argument about "the line of least resistance." We had our own opinion of it as we listened to it. We let it pass here, however, and turn our attention to Shaw's still more curious argument that Bradlaugh, being a miracle of men, estopped all objections to miracles in general. This is Shaw all over. One wonders at times whether he indulges in these confusions consciously, or whether he is a victim of his own humor. "A miracle of men" is a metaphor; it is permissible in poetry, but not in logic. Bradlaugh was not a "miracle" in the primary and strict meaning of the word. Calling him (and other great men) so only shows that in the puzzle of heredity the great law of variation in nature has been overlooked. Macaulay's memory and the mental arithmetic of a "Datas" are not "miracles." They are extraordinary developments of common human faculties. And all great men are explicable in the same way. Every faculty that Bradlaugh possessed in large measure was possessed in smaller measure by his less gifted fellow men—or they could not have appreciated and applauded him. In the same way, Shakespeare's admirers possess all the qualities that are displayed in his writings,—at least all that they admire; but these are in them comparatively weak and passive, while in him they are powerful and creative. And there is no miracle in a question of degree. A miracle is a difference in kind.

Mr. Philip G. Peabody, of Boston, who made up the ful sum (£800) of the President's Honorarium Fund last Christmas, has just sent us his cheque for £20 as his present year's subscription. He takes the opportunity of writing us a very encouraging (one might say flattering) letter,—from which we make the following extracts as likely to interest our readers:—

> "As I grow older (I am in my 57th year) I am more and more impressed with the conviction that the Freethought movement is at the bottom of all reform: religion is the sum and substance of all that is bad, wicked, selfish, and cruel: every meanness, every stupidity is aided and encouraged by it. That Christianity dies so slowly, and still has the power it has, is, to me, a never ending source of amazement—an almost miraculous tribute to the stupidity and heartlessness of the human race. It is sometimes hard for me to believe that such a race *deserves* salvation; and were the human race the whole question, I confess my attitude might be different. But whole races of sentient animals have their destiny to work out: they, at least, are entitled to live free from the cruelty that religion causes.....I am inclined to think that, at the present moment, there is no life in the world of as much value to the cause of Justice as yours."

With regard to the *Freethinker* itself Mr. Peabody writes:—

> "You are weekly producing, in my opinion, a volume of literary matter that constitutes a most wonderful monument to your devotion and ability. Omitting the cream of the whole paper—your own writings—you would even then be editing a paper of the highest literary and intellectual merit. For merely surrounding yourself with your staff of writers, you would be entitled to the highest praise. Long may you, they, and the *Freethinker* live and prosper!"

The last sentences touch us on a sensitive spot. Our old friend, the late Joseph Symes, once said to us, in a letter from Melbourne, where he fought so brave a battle: "I envy you your contributors." He had very good reason for it. But we smiled a little as we reflected that we might remind him that they did not fall from the sky. One has to find the right sort of contributors, and, having found them, to keep them—especially in the financial conditions of the case. That we have found and kept the contributors our readers have known is creditable to us—and no less creditable to them. It may be the top of our achievement.

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Mr. Chesterton's Challenge.

[We have received the following fresh letter from Mr. Chesterton, and we print it together with Mr. Lloyd's reply —at which point the controversy must end in our pages.—EDITOR.]

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I refresh your "unfortunate memory" as to the actual terms of your original "Acid Drop" upon which I venture to comment. You were criticising a writer in the *Catholic Herald* who appears to have explained accurately enough the orthodox Catholic view as to the character and limitations of the Pope's infallibility. After saying that "in his *private* capacity the *Pope* is as fallible as ordinary mortals," he remarked that when *he* "is speaking as Head of the Church, etc.," *he* is infallible. Upon this your comment ran "but how does 'M. C. L.' account for the fact that *different Popes* have promulgated contrary dogmas?" In illustration of this you then referred to the "numerous Papal schisms" of the fourteenth century,—a period, by the way, during which, so far as I remember, no dogmas of any kind were promulgated. Then you went straight to the sentence which I ventured to query: "Has he forgotten that for ages there was a bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism, now the one and now the other being *ex cathedra* pronounced orthodox?" Finally, lest there should be any doubt whatever about your meaning, you say: "Or can he tell us which, if either, of the two rival Popes was infallible?"

Now I put it to any fair-minded man whether your argument had any meaning whatever if it was not directed to proving that the *Pope* was not infallible. I am willing to waive the point that the phrase *ex cathedra* is an abbreviation of "*ex cathedra Petris*," and therefore applies exclusively to the Pope. But if the Pope was not concerned in the matter, how does your description of the "bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism" bear upon the statement made by "M. C. L."?

The instances you bring forward in support of your revised case are, from the point of view of a Catholic, wholly irrelevant—or, rather, they tell in favor of the Papal claim. It is, of course, perfectly true that *the State* sometimes supported orthodoxy and sometimes Arianism. But nobody ever contended that the Roman Emperors were infallible, *ex cathedra* or otherwise. It is also true, no doubt, that when the orthodox had been banished or silenced by the civil power, the Arians held Councils which prescribed orthodoxy. But these Councils have no more authority for Catholics than the Wesleyan Conference or any other assembly of heretics. What you have succeeded in proving is that a Council is authoritative only when ratified by the Holy See. Which is our case.

Of course, I quite agree with you that "there is no essential difference" between "the tenets advocated by Athanasius and those championed later by Augustin." In fact there is no difference at all; for both held the Catholic Faith, the dogmas of which, when once promulgated, never have been, and never can be, reversed or altered in any way. That, again, is our case. But I thought the expression "Augustinianism" odd, as I should think it odd if someone said that Germany, in the sixteenth century, was divided between Popery and Wesleyanism, though Wesley undoubtedly held Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. And I pointed out the oddity because, taken together with the rest of your remarks, it seemed to suggest that your contributor did not know what he was talking about. I trust I shall not be thought discourteous if I add that I remain of that opinion.

As to what you say about the violence of Catholics and others during the early centuries of Christianity, it leaves me quite untouched. It merely shows that the "Faith once delivered to the Saints" was not that of Mr. Cadbury or of the quaint seventeenth century Protestant sect which first professed to discover the insanities of Pacificism in the Bible. Which once more is our case.—Yours faithfully,

CECIL CHESTERTON.

IN reply to the above letter I wish to say, in the first place, that I did not challenge the *accuracy* of "M. C. L.'s" definition of Papal infallibility in the *Catholic Herald*. What I called in question was the *fact* of that infallibility. I am surprised that Mr. Chesterton, in taking up the cudgels for "M. C. L.," does not even attempt to "account for the fact that different Popes have promulgated contrary dogmas," though this was the real issue raised in the "Acid Drop" under consideration. He neither denies the fact, nor explains it. Again, he neither denies nor explains "the numerous papal schisms," mentioned by me. He merely states that "no dogmas of any kind were promulgated" in the fourteenth century. My reference to that century was in connection with papal schisms, not the promulgation of dogmas. I beg to remind my critic of the stormy scenes amid which Urban VI. was elected to the Holy See in the year 1378; how, a few months later, the same Cardinals, with one exception, elected a rival Pope, in the person of Robert of Geneva, who took the name of Clement VII., and how for many years these two vicars of Christ, or "two worthless priests," as Macaulay calls them, vilified each other in the filthiest language, each being Antichrist to the other. By this schism Western Christendom was divided for thirty-eight years, and not a little bloodshed caused. I asked "M. C. L." which of these rival Popes is to be regarded as infallible? but his champion has not favored me with an answer. As there have been at least thirty similar schisms the ignoring of such a question is highly significant.

Mr. Chesterton is quite right in stating that my argument had no "meaning whatever if it was not directed to proving that the Pope was not infallible." I have never seen the slightest reason for believing in his infallibility, and certainly my critic has adduced no proof of it. Most assuredly he cannot be ignorant of the fact that many zealous Catholics have expressed the strongest opposition to such a claim, among whom was the distinguished scholar, Döllinger. It is a total mistake to say that I have "succeeded in proving that a Council is authoritative only when ratified by the Holy See." I have done nothing of the kind. Besides, "authoritative" is by no means synonymous with "infallible."

Mr. Chesterton applies infallibility exclusively to the Pope. According to him, every successor of St. Peter has been above doctrinal error. But what about Liberius, who won his popularity by becoming a semi-Arian? What about Felix II., who was a complete Arian? Liberius went to the length of subscribing the third Sirmian formula, giving up the "homoousion," an act which has ever since caused considerable embarrassment to the maintainers of the indefectibility of the Roman See. Surely, when promulgated by two occupiers of St. Peter's Chair, Arianism and semi-Arianism must have been successively pronounced orthodox by the highest authority on earth. Mr. Chesterton conveniently overlooks that important chapter in the history of the Church.

The closing sentences in the above letter are fine samples of Chestertonian irrelevancies, and need no further comment. The curious thing about the whole letter is that it admits all my facts, but denies their relevancy. I maintain, however, that nothing could be more relevant to my argument than the fact that a Pope subscribed a semi-Arian creed, or that the Church, in several councils and synods assembled, declared Arianism to be the orthodox Faith.

J. T. L.

Free-Will and Necessity.

"Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

—MILTON.

WHATEVER Freethinker ventures to express views such as this paper sets forth is sure to meet with sneers and ridicule from the orthodox, who will also, most assuredly, try to turn his principles against himself. What then? Truth is truth; and its weakest friend ought never to feel ashamed of it. Besides, Christians of every denomination are shut up, by the logic of their position, to believe that absolute necessity prevails throughout the physical and moral world. The Calvanist avows this belief

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in his creed, though he endeavors to escape its logical conclusions when contending with the Arminian. There can be no doubt that Calvinists are necessitarians; for if all things are foreseen and foreordained, then nothing could, nothing ever can, happen otherwise than it does. If it is foreseen, it must happen; if it does not happen, it was not foreseen. But the Arminian, or freewiller, though on one point more logical than the Calvinist, is equally at sea upon another point not less vital. For an Almighty God must have all power; his creatures are mere marionettes, engines made and worked by the Creator, merely exhibiting his power in the *semblance* of personal and spontaneous actions. God's power is the *only* power, if he is all-mighty; and therefore all that is done is done by himself. This view—and it cannot be controverted without repudiating Christianity—tells with equal force against Calvinist and Arminian, as does also the foreknowledge of God. Given a being of infinite knowledge—he knows everything, every act, every motion from eternity to eternity, as the pulpits phrase it—and that which he foresees must, in its own time and place, occur. Prophecy lands those who believe in it on the same necessitarian shore; for the God who predicts knows all the circumstances beforehand, and his own power, physical and moral, is the only force concerned in the event.

I mention these points just to ward off unjust blows and to silence dishonest or unfair criticism; to show that whoever has the right to complain of my views, the Christians have no such right, either on physical or moral grounds.

As this paper follows up principles advanced in two former articles, viz., "Personal Identity" and "Ethics and Personal Identity," the reader is asked not to complain too severely if he finds here a repetition of some ideas previously expressed. The nature of the case renders such repetition unavoidable, though I hope it has been kept fairly within bounds.

Most people, whatever their creed, practically assume that the human Will is free. Even fatalists, Calvinists, and necessitarians generally praise and blame, reward and punish, human actions, just *as if* people could do as they pleased, and were absolutely free in their desires and deeds. There may be less inconsistency and absurdity in that than at first sight seems possible. Truth does not show itself all at once, and popular conceptions are generally incorrect, especially those relating to moral questions. It is not my intention to defend any absurdity which I recognise; nor can I reasonably hope for perfect success where great and wise men have so seriously and repeatedly missed their way. Still, I am of opinion that necessity constitutes no bar to morality, and that people may be as rationally rewarded or punished under its reign as under that of free-will. Indeed, I am not sure that necessity may not be consistent with freedom, though many would scout the supposition as insane. Be it so. Necessity certainly does not destroy or prevent the Will: does it destroy or prevent its freedom? A careful and honest investigation may enable us to return, at least, a dispassionate answer, if not an adequate one.

What is necessity? The word is French (*nécessité*), derived from the Latin (*necessitas*), unavoidableness, inevitableness, fate, destiny. Dr. Ogilvie thus defines the English word:—"That which cannot be put off .....that which must be, and cannot be otherwise; or the cause of that which cannot be otherwise; irresistible power; compulsive force, physical or moral." We need a fuller explanation of the term; and the correctness or incorrectness of our explanation must depend upon the views we hold respecting nature or the universe. If we regard all material things and forces as creatures of an infinite God, then necessity resolves itself into nothing but the divine will, or into God himself. With this as our starting point, the universe is necessary, that is, could not have been otherwise, but must be precisely thus, only because God willed and made it such. If we consider the universe as consisting of indefinite quantities of matter and force (whatever these names mean), which are inseparable, and have always existed, and have always acted and reacted as at present, then we must conclude that the phenomena of nature could not have been otherwise than they are, solely because their eternal elements are just what they are. To be sure, when the subject is fully examined, the Theistic and Pantheistic position equally lose themselves in the same conclusion; for an eternal God must be a necessary being equally with an eternal atom, and could not have been in any particular different from what he is. And thus we find that philosophy, whether it travels by the theological or the scientific route, arrives ultimately at the same goal, the goal of absolute necessity, a necessity co-extensive with the universe itself, that never for one moment, in any spot, relaxes its reign.

Matter and force are eternal. What their real nature may be I know not. They are first principles; and first principles admit of no possible explanation. Though we cannot explain their nature, though both matter and force may possibly be one thing, it seems impossible to doubt that chemistry and physics have demonstrated that neither matter nor force can be created or destroyed; and the conclusion seems inevitable that that which cannot be created cannot be destroyed, cannot be increased or diminished in quantity, must be eternal, and, as to its elements or primal nature, unalterable. If this be not true, then we seem still to have no real science or philosophy. Groups of facts united by empiric bonds or extemporised principles do not constitute a science. The groups of facts are no doubt united by some *natural* principle; when we are sure we have found that, we have a science. If matter and force be not eternal and unalterable in their qualities, then philosophy has no foundation, and science is, at best, but a record of observation and experience.

But if matter and force are eternal, so must their qualities be. For a thing cannot exist, would not be the thing it is, unless its qualities were present; and there seems no occasion yet for the inquiry as to whether matter or force may ever have changed in their qualities. If matter and force and all their qualities be eternal and unchangeable, their every phenomenon must be necessary, and could not have been otherwise. The phenomenon is, in fact, no more than a particular exhibition of those two: it has no separate, no independent existence; it comes and goes, but its elements remain essentially the same, no matter what appearances they may from time to time assume.

As far as the physical world is concerned, the doctrine of necessity seems so clearly established that even religious people no longer resist it. The time is practically gone by when God "held the winds in his fist and the waters in the hollow of his hand"; when "clouds arose and tempests blew by order from his throne." The departments of physical nature were formerly under the absolute control of supernatural powers and agents; now no part is thus controlled. The lightning is no longer left in the hands of any deity, for the very clergy run up lightning-rods to protect God's own temples from the stroke of his own thunderbolt. We need no better proof that theology is dying, that science and art are supplanting it, that necessity is now conceded to those departments of nature which in former days were specially subservient to the whims or exigencies of deity. For even the popular mind finds order, that is, necessity, in precisely those fields where divine caprice held its most unlimited sway. Men have now lost the power to pray for or against astronomical events. Who, with an almanac before him, could entreat his Heavenly Father not to send an eclipse or a conjunction of planets? Who could pray against the return of a periodic comet, or even invoke the aid of deity against the influence of an unexpected one? Can the mathematician pray about his figures and numbers; the chemist about his weights and measures, his mixtures, elements, and compounds; the musician about his notes; the builder about his materials? The truth has been mastered that no power can make $2 \times 2 = 5$, nor

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cause a triangle and a circle to coincide; that no power can produce water out of anything else than oxygen or hydrogen; that no brick or stone can be converted into wood; that the notes of the diatonic scale cannot change their essential qualities. Even the weather and disease have almost escaped from the grasp of the priesthood, and their total emancipation cannot be long delayed.

The emancipation of the physical world from the clutches of superstition may be regarded as an earnest that the moral world must soon follow it into liberty; for the moral, at best, is but another phase of the physical. We ourselves are necessary phenomena, and could not, with the antecedents we had, have been otherwise. We are effects of causes, which in turn were effects of certain prior causes, and so on till we are led by the chain of phenomena back to the solid substratum of matter and force. Had the materials of our bodies been different, we should have differed physically and morally; had our ancestry been otherwise, so should we; had our age or nation, our creed or government, been different, so must we have differed; had we been born in Mercury or in Saturn, how unlike life had been from the present reality! I presume no one questions this. Everything in our physics reappears in our moral character. Take an extreme case: suppose human beings had not constituted a race, and had never been propagated as they are. How strange life would have been without love, courtship, or marriage! Can anyone estimate the difference in which lack of those would have resulted? I trow not. Love, courtship, and marriage constitute the greatest events in the life of our race; round these cluster government, police, and religion; and round those the moral character of the individual is formed and developed. And here we see the necessities of human nature, themselves the natural product of prior necessities, resulting in equally necessary moral actions. The study of food, clothes, shelter, health, and disease will lead to similar results, viz., that the physical lead by necessary and inevitable processes to moral states and actions. One might enlarge indefinitely upon this subject, and illustrations might be culled from life by scores to evidence the truth that moral actions are as much *necessitated* as the fall of an unsupported stone, or the revolution of the seasons. It is not requisite, however, to proceed further in this direction, except only to remark, what everybody knows and admits, that the moral character depends much, and necessarily depends much, upon the education we receive in early life. Both a man's personal merits and demerits shrink into insignificance when seen in the light of truth—even if they do not vanish altogether.

Had we been able freely to choose our own nation, ancestry, constitution, sex, and all else that goes to make our life what it is, there might have been some excuse for the fiction of free-will, as it is generally understood. But unless the choice is made at the very beginning of the series, there is no place for it afterwards. A man may be able to refuse, under given conditions, to jump over a high cliff, but when he takes the fatal leap, unless he is in some way caught and supported by a force not his own, he must go to the bottom, no matter what tremendous issues may be involved. And so he must if he be thrown over by others. In the moral region this holds: one event, one incident, leads to another. Every effect is the product of a cause or causes; every effect in turn becomes the cause of something else. Cause and effect, in physics and in ethics equally, know no beginning, no end—they constitute an endless chain, the links of which are infinite in number, and all in their due order. We are the product of an infinite series of phenomena, every one of which has planted its elements in us, has left its mark upon us, in physics and morals. Whoever reflects upon it will readily perceive that our physical constitution, and every part of it, must have their effects in our thoughts, hopes, fears, desires, and wishes, motives and actions.

JOSEPH SYMES.

(To be concluded)

In Honor of Bradlaugh.

THE atmosphere was electric at the tenth annual dinner of the Bradlaugh Fellowship, held at the Holborn Restaurant on October 23. Not only was there an excellent attendance, but the announcement that Mr. Bernard Shaw would occupy the chair had attracted people from all parts.

At the outset, Mr. Shaw put everyone in a good humor by saying "grace," and he quoted some effective lines of Shakespeare with the happiest effect. Indeed, Mr. Shaw was in rare form, and his witty speech, in proposing the toast of the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, was much to the taste of the large and appreciative gathering, who frequently applauded the display of intellectual fireworks which Mr. Shaw had prepared for their benefit. A ripple of laughter followed the opening description of Bradlaugh "as a great religious force," which Mr. Shaw explained by saying that Bradlaugh found the world in such a state that it was necessary to emphasise the negative rather than the positive side of his creed. He called himself an Atheist, and Mr. Shaw said that he (Shaw) proclaimed himself an Atheist at this time, and he was an Atheist still.

Bradlaugh was expelled by that highly religious assembly, the House of Commons, which went out of its way to repudiate a greater honor than it deserved. Bradlaugh used the highly religious name of "Iconoclast," the eternal task of all the ages. In the days of Mohammed the idols were of wood and stone, but now they had about fifty for one they had then, but unfortunately, they were of flesh and blood. They had idols which they put into seven uniforms daily, and called them kings; idols which they dressed up in wigs and robes and called "justice," idols in blue uniforms and helmets, which they spoke of as "law and order;" and idols with collars buttoned at the back, instead of at the front, which stood for religion. Idols were very cheap nowadays.

Bradlaugh was not impressed by the idols, nor was he afraid of them. He was an irrational Rationalist, for he never followed the line of least resistance, which ought to have consisted of taking off his hat to the idols and of filling his pockets. That was what a large number of pastoral people did, who reviled Bradlaugh for his lack of religion; but Bradlaugh hit the idols as hard as he could. The speech closed with a graceful compliment to "my friend Mr. Foote, who is carrying on Bradlaugh's work," and a warning to Freethinkers to disbelieve the priesthood of science as much as they did the priesthood of religion.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, in responding to the toast, recalled the days when Shaw and her father were "friendly enemies," and spoke of the glowing tribute to her father presented in unaccustomed views. She also pointed out that Mr. Lloyd George's land law reform scheme was one long since advocated by her father, and she also gave a lengthy account of her visit to the recent Freethought Congress at Lisbon.

To Mr. Arthur B. Moss was entrusted the toast of "The Fellowship," and he emphasised the Freethought side of Bradlaugh's career.

A lively speech followed from Mr. George Standring, who responded to the toast of "The Fellowship," which he said originated with some obscure and contemptible people. During its ten years of existence it had numbered two Members of Parliament, one clergyman, and the President of the N. S. S. among its chairmen. It had progressed from the abysmal depths of G. S. (George Standring) to the altitude of G. B. S. (George Bernard Shaw). It also numbered among its regular attendants, he humorously added, certain grey-bearded and bald-headed men and women who had known Bradlaugh.

Mr. E. H. Haywood proposed the toast of "Freethought at Home and Abroad," and spoke of the veneration felt for Bradlaugh by the younger generation of Freethinkers.

At the conclusion of this speech there were loud calls for "Foote," and the Chairman asked Mr. G. W. Foote to gratify the wishes of the company.

Mr. Foote, who was received with loud applause, said the last meeting he attended at which Mr. Shaw was present led to his going home for two months, and if this occurred again he should avoid Mr. Shaw in future. The average Englishman suffered from sleeping sickness. There was something in being a standing challenge in a country in which the inhabitants tend to lie down as near as possible to a pigs' trough. John Bull wanted his head knocked, and Bradlaugh did that.

Bradlaugh was not a politician, he was a statesman. His Titanic strength was expended outside Parliament, and when he took his seat after his unexampled conflict he was a broken man. The work he did was seminal work. He was a herald, not a member of the rear guard. Lloyd George to-day is but following Bradlaugh. The credit of founding the first Republican Society in England since the Chartist times belongs to Bradlaugh, and he (Mr. Foote) was always

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proud of being the secretary to that body. The virtues of the clergy were sometimes more dangerous than their vices. We have the Rev. Mr. Campbell stealing Freethought thunder, and Mr. Shaw completing the education of the congregation and preacher. If Mr. Shaw should ever succeed Mr. Campbell, he would either burst himself or burst the Church. Bradlaugh refused to use the word "religion," and was not a member of any Church. He was born too big for that.

Mr. Heaford concluded the speeches by replying to the toast of "Freethought at Home and Abroad," and a unanimous vote of thanks to the Chairman concluded the meeting, which broke up after the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

Between the speeches songs were rendered by Miss Nell Gwynne.

C. E. S.

Correspondence.

"G. B. S." ON BRADLAUGH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is a pity that one cannot be always accurate and striking; but, if a sacrifice must be made, by all means let it be in favor of accuracy. Particularly when not doing this involves the encouragement of modes of thinking that are fundamentally vicious. At the Bradlaugh Dinner, the other evening, Mr. Bernard Shaw is reported as saying that—

> "Though Charles Bradlaugh preached the gospel of Rationalism, he acted throughout his life in the most irrational manner. Instead of choosing the line of least resistance.....he chose the line of greatest resistance. When he met one of these idols, instead of taking off his hat and filling his pockets—which was the sensible rationalistic thing to do—he hit the idol as hard as he could, and very often he knocked it down."

The contradiction is quite fanciful, and does not exist in fact. Popular it may be to sacrifice all other considerations to financial gain, but why rational? It is really because people are not rationalistic that this course is followed in so many instances. Mr. Shaw surely has sufficient command of language to find terms that will correctly describe this kind of behavior, and when Bradlaugh is the subject, his speech need suffer no decrease in brilliancy as a consequence.

Nor did Bradlaugh, in his most heroic endeavors, ever cease to follow the line of least resistance. Great as Bradlaugh was, he was incapable of achieving the impossible, and too wise even to attempt it. The line of least *social* resistance was then, as it is still, to bow to popular idols instead of smashing them. But he who sets himself up as the teacher of a scientific sociology should recognise that the peculiarity of the human animal is that *psychological* impulsion is the determining factor in human conduct. Bradlaugh would, indeed, have encountered far less social resistance had he been an idol-worshiper instead of an idol-breaker. But had he followed that line he would have accomplished the remarkable feat of working along the lines of greatest psychological resistance, and that would have quite equalled the miracle of the Gadarene swine. Bradlaugh's real greatness lay in the simple fact that his line of greatest psychological impulse was one not common with the mass of the people. His line of least resistance was to do easily that which most people find so very difficult. Great men do not contradict human nature; they only illustrate its capacities and many-sidedness.

There does not seem very much to criticise in Mr. Shaw's confession that he had never been a Materialist, but always a Mystic. If "Mystic" is used as an equivalent for Idealist, the opposition to "Materialist" is most unfortunate. There are no greater Idealists in the social world than philosophic or scientific Materialists. If Mystic is not the equivalent of Idealist, the statement reads very much like pure cant—perhaps the result of too great familiarity with the pulpit.

Perhaps one ought to compliment Mr. Shaw on having crowded so much confusion in so small a space.

C. COHEN.

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

II.—MAJOR EVANS BELL.

MAJOR THOMAS EVANS BELL was chiefly known by his works on Indian affairs. He entered the army in 1842, and was employed in the suppression of Thugee. He served his country well in India, and probably in nothing better than in his continued advocacy in books and pamphlets of the just claims of the natives. But this independent attitude did not commend him to the authorities, and stood in the way of justly earned promotion. As a Freethinker, he is to be remembered by his concise little book, entitled *The Task of To-day*, in which, taking up Carlyle's injunction to do the duty nearest hand, he examines the religion in which he had been reared. During the early days of the *Reasoner*, Major Bell supported that paper with both purse and pen, writing many Freethought articles under the signature of "Undecimus." He, indeed, contemplated selling his commission to devote himself to Freethought, but, by the advice of friends, was deterred. He returned to India at the outbreak of the mutiny, and became Deputy Commissioner of Police at Madras. He probably had some share in leading Judge Strange on the road to Freethought.

The influence of Carlyle is notable in *The Task of To-day*, which was published by James Watson in 1852, and is dedicated to G. J. Holyoake. He says in his preface:—

> "Life is a very serious thing; every gleam of truth reveals to us more of the laws of absolute fact, inexorable and eternal, which make up the inscrutable Future and Invisible, as they do the visible and mysterious Present. Shall we raise our puny hands or voices and fight against those laws? Shall we lie against eternal truth, or shut our eyes and ears against it? I dare do none of these things deliberately. My share in the work of the world is doubtless of the minutest consequence, but to *me* it is of infinite consequence. To me it is of infinite consequence whether I live a traitor and a coward, or a true man. Good or bad, this is my work; I found I had it to do, and I have done it. May I ever do so."

The *Task* examines the Christian evidences with the result of showing that they were accepted in days of gross credulity, and have been largely maintained by pious frauds. Thus he says:—

> "There was exactly the same evidence, and no more, in the third and fourth centuries that there is now—namely, certain narratives, the earliest of which was certainly not written sooner than thirty years after the death of Christ; but the superstition and ignorance of those times were such that accounts of supernatural events met with easy credit, and were attributed by some to divine, and by others to diabolical agency, according as they approved or disliked the character of the miracle-worker, or the tendency of his doctrines.
>
> "Hardly two centuries ago a man in England was considered, even by the educated, as little better than an Atheist if he doubted that many old women were endowed by the Devil with the power of working miracles without number."

The frauds, he shows, were not confined to Catholics:—

> "Although modern Protestantism has never pretended to miraculous powers, yet Protestant pious frauds have always abounded, and abound in the present day. It is a gross fraud to gloss over and conceal the infamous characters and obviously interested motives of many of the principal actors in the Reformation, in England particularly, as Protestant writers have done. Awful interpositions of Providence, exaggerated and fictitious accounts of deathbed scenes, both of believers and infidels, the lying reports of missionaries, and, in particular, the long evangelical speeches they are so fond of putting into the mouths of their converts, are instances of Protestant pious frauds."

The alleged evidences of prophecy are equally examined, and paralleled by the evidence for Mohammedanism. The Bible is shown to bear many traces of superstition and savagery, and he proceeds to examine the evidence for an alleged Great First Cause. He concludes this section with the words:—

> "To act this life well it is not necessary to know the secrets of the Invisible, the destinies of worlds and systems, or the life beyond the grave, if a life there be. That is the department of speculation and poetry, and not of knowledge or of action. We owe no service to the Invisible and Unknown; our work is here before us."

The little book concludes with the contention that morality must be independent of speculation, and an exhortation to mutual help and frankness in proclaiming unbelief in dogmas which have only cursed mankind:—

> "How long [he asks] could the present social ostracism be pursued against avowed unbelievers if the words, 'I am not a Christian,' were calmly and gently, but firmly, pronounced, not obtrusively paraded, in the drawing-room, the court of justice, and the senate, whenever passing event called for such an expression of opinion from a candid and honest man? How long could the Christian superstition enjoy its galvanic life in England if every man whose heart and intellect revolted from it were henceforward to raise his voice and pen to denounce and to abolish it? And in the speedy destruction and abolition of its influence lies our hope of peaceable and harmonious progress."

Major Bell retired from India in 1865, but continued to largely interest himself in Indian affairs. He died September 12, 1887. The *Illustrated London News* shortly afterwards gave his portrait, which is that of a remarkably fine-looking man.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Wright's, 237 Essex-road, Islington, N): 7.30, Business Meeting—Election of Secretary and Treasurer, also Auditor's Report.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, E. Burke, "Sir Oliver Lodge and his Bubbles."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "The Lying Gospel."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Joseph McCabe, 12 noon, "Sir O. Lodge and Materialism"; 6.30, "The Religion of G. B. Shaw."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Rev. R. Roberts, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Elgerton Stafford, "The Coming of Christianity."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

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THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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It is a marvel if any mischief be in hand, if a priest be not at some end of it.—BISHOP LATIMER.

Freedom of Thought.

A History of Freedom of Thought. By Prof. J. B. Bury, Litt.D., LL.D. (Home University Library, 74.) London: Williams & Norgate. 1s. net.

THE modest article "a" in Professor Bury's title is a sort of deprecation of too drastic criticism of his little book; which, besides, is written for a very popular audience and not for a court of scholars and judges. On the whole, we should say that this volume is likely to do a great deal of good. The public to which it is addressed will gain a fair idea—not always in the best perspective—of the progress of freedom of thought, especially in religious matters, from the very dawn of history till the present day. And the lesson inculcated is one of mutual respect amongst men for their common rights of free thought and free expression.

We do not use the word *toleration*. That is but a landmark on the road to liberty. To tolerate a man is to put up with him. There is an inevitable insolence in the word. It expresses the attitude of bigots and tyrants when they find that persecution and oppression are not as easy as they were, and that certain concessions must be made to the growing power of dissent and independence. To use the language of the man in the street, toleration means that the upper dog is beginning to be a little afraid of the lower one.

One of Ingersoll's best epigrams is very germane to this point. The Church (he said) never left off burning people alive because she was ashamed of it; she left off burning people alive when there were too many people who objected to being burnt alive. Liberty is never conceded; it is always won. The only thing that nature really honors is strength. Even the most "enlightened" Christians have never been eager to abolish such agencies of persecution as the Blasphemy Laws. The pioneer work of that movement has always been done by Freethinkers, and the only effective way of destroying such laws is to multiply the number of people who resent their existence. At critical moments a few of the better sort of Christians—nominal rather than actual Christians—rally around the standard of liberty; but the great mass of Christians hold steadily aloof; and in these cases it is sadly true that whoso is not for us is against us.

Professor Bury reminds his readers that freedom of speech is "taken as a matter of course, and seems a perfectly simple thing, in most civilised countries. People are so accustomed to it that they look upon it as a natural right." "But this right," Professor Bury says, "has been acquired only in quite recent times, and the way to its attainment has lain through lakes of blood."

Why should this be so? Why should one man, or one set of men, come to the strange conclusion that he or they have greater rights of thought and speech than the other inhabitants of this planet? Why is it so hard to persuade human societies that "liberty to publish one's opinions and to discuss all questions is a good and not a bad thing"?

Professor Bury offers the following observations on this point:—

> "At present, in the most civilised countries, freedom of speech is taken as a matter of course and seems a perfectly simple thing. We are so accustomed to it that we look on it as a natural right. But this right has been acquired only in recent times, and the way to its attainment has lain through lakes of blood. It has taken centuries to persuade the most enlightened peoples that liberty to publish one's opinions and to discuss all questions is a good and not a bad thing. Human Societies (there are some brilliant exceptions) have been generally opposed to freedom of thought, or, in other words, to new ideas, and it is easy to see why.
>
> "The average brain is naturally lazy and tends to take the line of least resistance. The mental world of the ordinary man consists of beliefs which he has accepted without questioning and to which he is firmly attached; he is instinctively hostile to anything which would upset the established order of this familiar world. A new idea, inconsistent with some of the beliefs which he holds, means the necessity of rearranging his mind; and this process is laborious, requiring a painful expenditure of brain-energy. To him and his fellows, who form the vast majority, new ideas, and opinions which cast doubt on established beliefs and institutions, seem evil because they are disagreeable.
>
> "The repugnance due to mere mental laziness is increased by a positive feeling of fear. The conservative instinct hardens into the conservative doctrine that the foundations of society are endangered by any alteration in the structure. It is only recently that men have been abandoning the belief that the welfare of a state depends on rigid stability and on the preservation of its traditions and institutions unchanged. Wherever that belief prevails, novel opinions are felt to be dangerous as well as annoying, and anyone who asks inconvenient questions about the why and the wherefore of accepted principles is considered a pestilent person.
>
> "The conservative instinct, and the conservative doctrine which is its consequence, are strengthened by superstition. If the social structure, including the whole body of customs and opinions, is associated intimately with religious belief, and is supposed to be under divine patronage, criticism of the social order savors of impiety, while criticism of the religious belief is a direct challenge to the wrath of supernatural powers.
>
> "The psychological motives which produce a conservative spirit hostile to new ideas are reinforced by the active opposition of certain powerful sections of the community, such as a class, a caste, or a priesthood, whose interests are bound up with the maintenance of the established order and the ideas on which it rests."

This is a very philosophic explanation of the matter. But we do not think it covers the whole case. One of the most powerful influences is omitted from Professor Bury's catalogue. We refer to early education, which, in itself, and apart from all other considerations, is so potent in preserving what Comte called "Order" at the expense of what

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be called "Progress." The training of a child up to, say, seven years of age is, for the most part, practically decisive of its future life. It is not at all a question of right or wrong that we are considering; it is the force of the impressions made upon the plastic and susceptible mind of childhood—whatever they are. And it must be borne in mind that education in the past has consisted more in teaching what is believable than in teaching what is knowable. The result is that old beliefs are, as it were, planted in the minds of successive generations; so that the work of progress, including the discovery of truth, necessarily becomes a fight against an artificial occupancy of the human mind by ancient errors in order to make room for new truths. The mother, the teacher, the priest—the whole force of adult authority over the child—stand up afterwards in opposition to the approach of new ideas and sentiments.

Many Freethinkers, even now, feel the appeal of the past when they suddenly hear a church bell or church music, or the voice of prayer flowing forth from the "sanctuary." Momentary it may be, but the buried past is not altogether dead; it is still capable of sporadic thrills, though incapable of complete resurrection.

With regard to Christianity, of course, the real truth is what the profounder George Eliot presented to the attention of the shallower Professor Lecky. What was the real explanation of the dreadful persecutions set forth in Lecky's Rationalism? What, after all, was the use of narrating facts without stating principles? The secret of persecution was the doctrine of exclusive salvation. On this point Professor Bury is perfectly sound:—

> "But the fundamental principle lay in the doctrine that salvation is to be found exclusively in the Christian Church. The profound conviction that those who did not believe in its doctrines would be damned eternally, and that God punishes theological error as if it were the most heinous of crimes, led naturally to persecution. It was a duty to impose on men the only true doctrine, seeing that their own eternal interests were at stake, and to hinder errors from spreading. Heretics were more than ordinary criminals, and the pains that man could inflict on them were as nothing to the tortures awaiting them in hell. To rid the earth of men who, however virtuous, were, through their religious errors, enemies of the Almighty, was a plain duty. Their virtues were no excuse. We must remember that, according to the humane doctrines of the Christians, pagan, that is, merely human, virtues were vices, and infants who died unbaptised, passed the rest of time creeping on the floor of hell. The intolerance arising from such views could not but differ in kind and intensity from anything that the world had yet witnessed."

This was as true under Protestantism as under Catholicism. The historical evidence on this point is overwhelming. Jewel, indeed, in his *Apology for the Church of England*, rebuts the Catholic accusation of indifference to misbelief by pointing to certain heretics who had been put to death, asking at whose hands they suffered their punishment. "We killed them," Jewel exclaimed, "not you." That was the common spirit of the age, and the common outcome of earnest Christianity. The remarks of Professor Bury on this point are as true as they are creditable to his impartiality:—

> "Nothing was further from the minds of the leading Reformers than the toleration of doctrines differing from their own. They replaced one authority by another. They set up the authority of the Bible instead of that of the Church, but it was the Bible according to Luther or the Bible according to Calvin. So far as the spirit of intolerance went, there was nothing to choose between the new and the old Churches. The religious wars were not for the cause of freedom, but for particular sets of doctrines; and in France, if the Protestants had been victorious, it is certain that they would not have given more liberal terms to the Catholics than the Catholics gave to them."

Which is what we have always said.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Materialism: Its Meaning and Value.—IV.

(Concluded from p. 691.)

MODERN criticisms of Materialism are all preliminary defences of Vitalism in biology. Originally, Vitalism covered much more than the biological field, and in the history of the conflict between religion and scientific ideas every stage of the scientific advance has been contested by substantially the same arguments. Logically, indeed, the modern upholders of Vitalism are fighting at the wrong end. Once the principle of natural law is admitted, and the mechanistic or materialistic explanation accepted, no limits can be placed to its application. During the eighteenth century there was published in France a pamphlet bearing the title, *Ought Women to Learn the Alphabet?* It was a strange question, but it went to the heart of the subject. If women were allowed to learn the alphabet, argued the writer, on what ground could they be prohibited mastering the encyclopædia? If they ought to be stopped anywhere, it should be at the commencement. So with Materialism. Once admit that certain groups of phenomena—physical, chemical, etc.—exhibit no more than can be explained by the inevitable composition of natural forces, what real ground have we for believing that the principle will break down when applied to the phenomena of living beings?

None whatever. In the light of what has been said in previous articles, it will be plain that the question of the origin of life offers no fatal objection to Materialism. It is easy enough to say that Materialism cannot explain vital phenomena. The Materialist might fitly reply, If Materialism cannot, what can? It is not a question of materialistic impotence faced with spiritualistic knowledge. It is at best—or worst—theory against theory. And there is this important distinction between the two theories. On the one hand, Materialism is in line with the whole advance of human knowledge. There is no single known fact against it. Wherever ignorance has given place to knowledge, the principles of Materialism have been vindicated, and the supernatural pushed still farther back. All the Materialist really does is to assume that the future will resemble the past, and that natural causation will be found to be the key to unsolved problems, as it has been to those already solved. Still further, it is the only plan on which serious investigation is at all possible. You cannot study a mystery that is admittedly hopeless. And wherever scientific investigation is being pursued, it is on the assumption that the Materialist explanation is the true one. There is not a single investigator who expects to discover, as the result of his experiments in vital phenomena, a new and independent force. What he is looking for are the exact conditions under which vital phenomena originate. That is why physico-chemical formulas play so large a part in these investigations. For the search for the origin of life means only the search for those physico-chemical conditions under which vital phenomena appear. And when we know these, just as a knowledge of the conditions under which gravitative or chemical phenomena appear tells us really all there is to know about gravitation or electricity, so we shall then know what life is. Sir Oliver Lodge's comment that this will only tell us the condition under which life manifests itself, but not what life itself is, may be dismissed as pure nonsense. It is for the Supernaturalist to prove that beyond the thing we know as life there is something else that we neither know nor ever can know.

On the other hand, all the probabilities are dead against Supernaturalism, or Vitalism, in any form. As an instrument of investigation, it is not, and never has been, of the slightest use. The search for entities, whether vital, chemical, or physical, is of all quests the most hopeless. And it has now become so absurd that even Sir Oliver Lodge is forced to disown the name of "Vitalist," and to explain that to refer anything to "vital force" is

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a mere cover for ignorance. It tells us nothing, and leaves the whole problem exactly where it was, with the addition of having created an obstacle to future investigation.

Moreover, and this should never be overlooked in any discussion of the subject, Vitalism in any form is only primitive animism masquerading as science. Animism has it that the soul, or double, or life, of man is something dwelling within the body and directing its movements. This is the form taken by the vital principle in all ages; and between the primitive and the later form there is no substantial change. The "soul" of the modern is only the "double" or ghost of the savage refined and emasculated. But it is essentially the same thing, and ringing the changes on the name ought not to disguise the fact. Still further, the "soul" or the "vital force" would not be here at all but for the primitive ghost. When men in the position of Sir Oliver Lodge claim a place for a "directive force," or a "life force" working in conjunction with natural forces and yet distinct from them, they are not exhibiting the result of modern investigation; they are only exercising their ingenuity in devising formulas that will graft a primitive delusion on to ascertained facts. Behind the "directive force" of the modern is the "vital principle" of the mediæval metaphysician, and behind that again is the "ghost" of the primitive savage.

The extent to which the materialistic conception of nature dominates modern thought may be seen quite apart from the domain of pure science. Its influence is hardly less marked in the sphere of advanced religious thinking. In the first place, there is the general abandonment of the idea of a God who continuously interferes with natural operations. In place of a Deity who directly controls natural phenomena in the interests of man, we have a Deity who exists somewhere behind nature, responsible, it is said, for the existence of things, but, having created them, doing nothing but see them work. In practice, this reduces God to a negligible quantity. If things are what they are because of their inherent properties, it is not a matter of vital concern whether these inherent properties were originally called into existence by God or not. They are there, and affect all alike without distinction of person or creed. God does nothing *now*, and this conclusion is not in the least affected by the assumption that he once did everything in a supreme and final act of creation. It admits the first principle of Materialism that all phenomena are the resultant of a complex arrangement of natural forces. Materialism has always claimed that the closest scrutiny of the known world fails to reveal the slightest trace of superhuman or supernatural influence. It has nothing to do with a God who may exist at the back of everything—wherever that may be—and may leave the proof of his existence to those who make the assertion. If God is excluded from the world of natural phenomena, he has, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist.

The position is not improved for the Theist if, instead of a God at the back of nature, he assumes a Deity permeating nature. In the first place, a God who merely exists as something permeating everything is not a God at all. It is a mere conception, something in the nature of a universal ether, and lacks the essential characteristics of Deity—personality and intelligence. Some people seem to be under the curious delusion that God is to be saved by, so to speak, beating him out thin, just as others assume that the dignity of God is enhanced by his having nothing to do. To work for one's living used to be considered a sign of social inferiority, and is yet to a very considerable extent. "Gentleman" is still largely synonymous with one who doesn't work. But it is curious to find the same notion applied to a God whose claim to praise once rested upon his assumed care and watchfulness over all his creatures. An immanent God—to use the cant expression—is no more than an algebraic expression, but lacking the important function of utility.

In the second place, this does not escape the mechanistic principle, it rather asserts it. I have already pointed out that, so far as Materialism is concerned, it is a matter of indifference whether we call existence matter, or spirit, or merely X. The essential thing is that the resultant phenomena shall appear as the mathematical consequence of the workings of non-personal forces. Merely calling this substance—to use a technical term—God does not benefit supernaturalism and it does not injure naturalism. That is, in the minds of those who understand on what issue the dispute turns, although it may affect those who are influenced by mere phrases. To say that "matter" is neither ultimate nor omnipotent, but is the outcome of something still more ultimate, is only turning Materialism out by the door in order to readmit it by the window. What the Theist really does in these apologies is to bring his God within the materialistic category and treat it as a natural force operating in a fixed and definite manner.

In what has been said in these articles I have purposely stated the issue between Materialism and Spiritualism in the broadest terms, and have deliberately refrained from bringing forward a great deal of evidence in favor of scientific Materialism. The question of the origin of life, for example, by natural causation, is no longer a very serious subject of dispute in the scientific world. The vast majority of chemists and biologists agree on this as an inevitable assumption. All their researches are based upon it. The only question is, How did it occur? Under what conditions did the synthesis occur that brought this new factor into the world, and can we recreate these conditions for ourselves? Even though no success were ever met with in this direction, the origin of life by purely natural methods remains an inevitable assumption of all scientific thinking, and all we know is in favor of its accuracy.

I have also passed by the common assumption that the Materialist is called upon to prove in what way mind, or consciousness, is dependent upon material organisms. He is logically bound to do no such thing. We have not to find the connection between body and mind; that already exists as one of the indisputable facts of experience. What has to be found is the fact of their separateness, and that is wholly the work of the Anti-Materialist. The Supernaturalist first of all separates two things never found save in the closest possible connection, and then throws upon the Materialist the onus of saying how they can be connected. The real problem here is to discover in what way they can be separated.

What I have been, above all, trying to make plain, is that the materialistic or mechanistic conception of nature is an indispensable condition of sane, scientific, and profitable thinking. Until nature in any or all its phases is thought of as following a determinable order, human thought is little better than a chaos. If the determinable order is there, Supernaturalism—or its modern equivalent, Spiritualism—is doomed. If it is not there, sane science is impossible. This is the simple issue, and there is no logical half-way house. The ghosts of exploded theories linger, and recent events have shown, that even in the world of science, they are not without influence. But that influence is fortunately on the wane, and to-day the principles of the old Greek Materialists are triumphant all along the line. Time and labor, and a fuller knowledge have shown many of their speculations to be faulty, but experience has only justified the Lucretian claim that nature does all things of itself and without the aid of the gods.

C. COHEN.

The Cross.

IN modern speech the Cross means Christianity, just as the Crescent is often used as a synonym for Mohammedanism. More specifically the Cross signifies the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice of infinite merit, offered up on the Cross for the sins of the whole world.

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The leading article in the *British Weekly* for Oct. 30 is devoted primarily to a discussion of it in this sense. The writer, presumably the editor, Sir William Robertson Nicoll, is severely orthodox, holding that Jesus, by dying a sacrificial death, made himself responsible for guilty mankind. He died that we might escape death by being saved from our sins. Jesus is not merely an admirable character, a leader of men, a prophet full of wisdom, or a philanthropist, brimming over with enthusiasm, but the Savior of the world, who laid down his life for our redemption. To believe this concerning him is supremely difficult, Sir William admits; "to come with empty hands and *take*, to put ourselves in his debt for all that is called salvation, this is hard, so hard that we are tempted to regard it as unnecessary." We look upon it not only as hard, but as fundamentally irrational, immoral, degrading, and bound to result in the loss of self-reliance and self-respect. We agree that "nothing is so fruitless as appeals to men not Christians themselves to Christianise the social order." Non-Christians are much too sensible to undertake so foolish and so injurious a task. Nothing worse could happen to the social order than to become Christianised; but, thanks to the underlying common sense of the community at large, there is no danger of so disastrous a revolution ever taking place. On this point Sir William is unintentionally on our side. He says:—

> "It has not infrequently been said, with great confidence, that belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is impossible and irrelevant for the characteristically modern mind, the unexpressed inference being that the sooner it is banished from the minds of religious people—and specially of preachers—the better. Its impossibility for the irreligious modern mind is very credible; nothing in the creed, now or at any period of the world's history, can be understood or apprehended without faith, since everything in the creed is supernatural. But impossible for the mind of modern Christians—so to describe the Cross of Jesus is false. If modesty forbids us to come forward ourselves as convincing types of modernity, we may take one or two examples."

We are amazed beyond measure at the damaging admission so naïvely made in the above extract, which is that in the twentieth century "belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is impossible" to all who are not already in possession of it. The lost sinners of to-day are absolutely beyond the reach of salvation. Belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is essential to the saving of the soul; but for the irreligious modern mind that belief is impossible. From Sir William's point of view "this is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Preaching the Gospel to the irreligious is a culpable waste of time and energy, because in order to understand or apprehend the message it brings they must have faith, and faith is by a Christian minister declared to be impossible to them. Surely so unfortunate a pronouncement never slipped from a divine's pen before, and for him the worst about it is that it is only too true. This is probably why a reverend gentleman said the other day that the Church's hope of winning converts from outside is now almost wholly vain; if she is to survive she must breed believers within her own borders. It was a realisation of this ugly fact, no doubt, that led to the formation, largely at the instigation of Sir William Robertson Nicoll, of what is called "The League of Worshipful Children." This is the last hope of a falling Church, the last straw at which she can catch. Poor, innocent children, before they learn to discern between their right hand and their left hand, so many supernatural beliefs are forced down their throats. "Everything in the creed is supernatural," exclaims Sir William, in which the irreligious modern adult cannot believe; therefore, we must use our authority as parents, guardians, and teachers, to make believers of our children before they learn to think for themselves.

That, we repeat, is the Church's very last hope, and even this is not going to avail her much. It is a notorious fact that only a small proportion of religiously trained children become Church members. In spite of the vigilance of the teachers, the majority of them drop out of the Sunday-school into the outside world, where early beliefs become inoperative, if not non-existent. Sir William is certainly wrong when he claims that belief in the Cross as a Divine Atonement is possible for all modern Christians. Are Unitarians not numbered among the Christians? Is that the reason why they are excluded from membership in the Council of Free Churches? What about the growing class of scholars who style themselves Liberal Christians? Are they also to be denied the right to use the name? Unfortunately for Sir William, among these is to be found the very first "example" cited by him for his case—"Harnack, the greatest living Church historian." This eminent scholar does not believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ, nor in the Cross as a Divine Atonement in the orthodox sense. On this point Sir William and he are as wide apart as the poles. Dr. Nicoll's doctrine of the Atonement gets no certificate from Harnack. He supplies a most lucid account of the rise and evolution of the dogma, but he never adopts it himself. His able work entitled *What is Christianity?* is decisive evidence against the claim made on his behalf in the *British Weekly*. It is absolutely undeniable, therefore, that the quotation given from his writings does not even tend to "dispose of one tolerably widespread and intimidating misconception, according to which the Atonement is obsolete for typically modern Christian thought"; and to affirm, on the ground of it, that "it is something to have this point settled," is to commit a serious blunder. Harnack's supreme emphasis is not laid on the death of Jesus, but on his life and teaching.

Sir William is of opinion that the future of the Atonement is safe, "if men will only preach with their eyes on the New Testament"; but we maintain that that is possible only when the eye is a blindly believing one. Professor Benjamin W. Bacon is in charge of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis at Yale University, and Sir William cannot deny but that he keeps his eye pretty closely upon the documents under his care, with the result that he has discovered two conflicting gospels therein, and that he himself has adopted the one in which the Cross does not count. It must be admitted that, at last, even preachers are beginning to look at the New Testament through a critical eye, and to discern in it a considerable amount of legend embarrassingly mixed up with what they still treat as genuine history. The truth is that to a rapidly growing number of preachers the New Testament is no longer authoritative.

Sir William furnishes another guarantee of safety, thus:—

> "The future is safe, again, if men preach with their eye upon the human conscience. Every minister knows there are men who passionately avow their need of a dying Redeemer, and have no rest till they have found him; every minister knows there are situations, penitences, deathbeds in presence of which a man who has nothing to say about vicarious Atonement must acknowledge himself dumb and baffled."

There is such a conscience, to be sure; but it has been produced by such preachers as those who preach with their eye upon it. It is an abnormal, diseased, and demoralising conscience, whose only mission is to make wretched cowards of its unfortunate possessors; but it is as rare as it is unnatural. To-day very few indeed are afflicted with it. Despite all the efforts of the evangelical pulpit to keep it alive, to develop it in the young, to appeal to it in those who still retain some remnants of it, it is steadily becoming a forgotten bugbear of a dead past. This is why churches and chapels are emptying.

It does not seem to occur to Sir William that the Cross is many thousands of years older than Christianity. We know that in ancient Mexico the sacred tree was made into a cross on which was suspended a substance representing the Savior-god, which was eventually taken down and sacramentally eaten by the faithful. For the Persians the Cross was a charm against evil and death, while to the ancient Gauls it was a solar emblem endowed with creative

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and fructifying power. Indeed, the Cross was used in nearly all parts of the ancient world as a religious symbol, and generally closely associated with the Deity. In Egypt it was a symbol of everlasting life. When Christianity came it found the Cross in universal use; and it so often signified the death of a god or a god-man that it was chosen as the supreme Christian symbol. Our point, therefore, is that the Christian Cross is an imitation of innumerable Pagan Crosses, and that there is no more reality behind it than behind the others. As regards objective truth, they are all on a perfect equality. Man's salvation depends, not upon the efficacy of a Divine Atonement; but upon the sincerity and uprightness of his own actions. What he needs is not entire trust in an atoning sacrifice beyond the stars, but a deep-seated and dominating sense of honor, dignity, justice, and comradeship in his own breast, bringing him into a state of joyous harmony with his environment. The myths, even the Christian, are passing, and we are engaged in learning the truth about ourselves. "Everything in the Christian creed," Sir William tells us, "is supernatural," which is its greatest condemnation; but everything in the creed of science is natural, and this is its highest commendation.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Ugliness of God's Earth.

GOD'S earth is an exceedingly popular phrase. Speakers of all kinds use it publicly; and all sorts of people use it privately, when they wish to strengthen their words. Perhaps the picturesqueness of the phrase tends somewhat towards the glibness of its usual utterance. God's earth sounds finely. It is an oratorical "take." There is a grand ring about it. It gives some warranty for the accusation of having a comprehensive mind, a broad conception, and a capability of carrying some weight. In fact, so popular and so picturesque is the phrase that we might prophesy it will become, in the shades of the future, an oath.

The character of God, as represented by his children, is very similar in many respects to God's earth. When a religionist refers to God, he means you to imagine everything that is bright and beautiful about God's reputed nature; and when he says God's earth, he means you to think about everything that is lovely in God's earth. But immediately you begin to divest God's character and God's earth of verbal superficiality, you find both are dirty and clean, beautiful and ugly, revolting and appealing; that, in short, both contain all the antitheses you can imagine without being mentally absurd.

There are repulsive things in God's earth that an ordinary man would not own as his handiwork; but we must not forget that God has never personally claimed to be the maker of them; nor should we forget that God has never personally claimed the earth as his. Even an Atheist may be pardoned wishing sometimes, in his more rebellious moods, that God would hurry up and take possession. Only God can prove the existence of God. We are so astoundingly lacking in spiritual vision that we cannot even observe him trying; and we are afraid it would require some bold, uncompromising, realisable campaign against Landlordism to satisfy the doubtings of our sceptical minds.

Whenever I see the ugly in God's earth these doubtings—perhaps I should say denials—come upon me with redoubled force. My logic may not be of the best; but, for me, if there is no God in the ugly, there is no God in the beautiful.

In these modern days there is as much futility in attempting to restrict God's activity and presence as there would have been at any time in the past, had our forefathers been so foolish as to try. God must be everywhere or nowhere. His activity must be universal or a dream. Omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience were straightforwardly acknowledged as essential to God's nature by the theologians of yesterday; and to-day God must possess these traits or be cleared from man's mind. There can be no half measures, no compromises, no arbitration on the matter. It is useless to turn upside down and tell us, in words spelled and pronounced backwards, that all God did was to set the universe going. Assuming that true, God would probably have found it a more serious task, notwithstanding his omnipotency, to get rid of himself.

Religious sophists might pile their printed sophistries around us till we imagined that God's earth had suddenly become conical in shape, and we were standing at the base; but the result would be *nil* when compared with the simple deductions from the inevitable inferences of God's existence. That Freethought has been compelled to go from simplicity to scientific complexity of warfare may be regrettable in one sense; but, as the attacking force, it had to follow the enemy of social progress.

Spiritual religion, the stuff of to-day, has no recognition, or, rather, deliberately neglects the recognition of the ugly in God's earth. It resembles too minutely the problem of evil. There are the same difficulties to be overcome; the same glaring and growling contradictions to be tackled; the same ditches to be traversed; and our spiritualistic pastors like it not.

Often the statement, that God made the evil to teach us to love the good, has been uttered in the pulpit; and the people of the pews were satisfied. But one cannot very well say that God made the ugly to teach us to love the beautiful, and be assured of Christian satisfaction. Not that there is any real difference between the two statements, as statements; but perhaps because the clerical ju-jitsu experts managed to enrobe evil in the garments of purity, fascination, delicacy, loveliness, etc., etc. They contrived to manipulate the existence of evil in a manner absolutely impossible with ugliness. It might be argued reasonably that their very treatment of evil made it more palatable to the delicate Christian constitution, and was, consequently, of great assistance in its fertilisation. Evil became possessed of a theological survival value that ugliness could not possibly contain.

Ugliness never taught anyone to love the beautiful. You can't clothe ugliness in purity, fascination, refinement, and the rest. It was always a blot, always something that repulsed you, something that stirred hatred within you. The theologians cannot adorn ugliness, as they can and do adorn evil. They cannot apologise for its reality with as much fluidity as they use with evil. Ugliness baffles their divine powers of apologetic pleading. Unable to render a well-balanced account of assets and debits on ugliness, and its silent but strong denial of God's existence, the ministerial marionettes completely neglect it; and ugliness, in the quietude of mind that characterises the lover of the beautiful, conquers the idea of God.

Extravagantly it is said that God's earth is full of beauty; but it is strange that you cannot go far afield without witnessing many, very many, examples of the ugly in nature. Let the mind but fall from the peaks it likes to gaze at, and there, at your feet, lies an ugliness that ruins your joy. To endeavor to transform what the mind revolts from into something that urges and forces it again to the heights, giving and sustaining a renewed and more vigorous enjoyment, is but to ask for cynical laughter even from the most bigoted religionist. A Christian, sincere in his beliefs, and with a sensitive appreciation of loveliness in nature, would never be dishonest enough to apologise for the ugliness, saying God created it with the beautiful that we might learn to love the beautiful more and more. It is simply impossible to harmonise the modern idea of God with the ugliness of God's earth. The two ideas cannot exist simultaneously in the mind. Ugliness evicts God from the earth; and if this world is not God's earth, well, perhaps he owns some of the other planets.

ROBERT MORELAND.

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Acid Drops.

Florence Nightingale (what a lovely name!) was nominally a Christian, but actually a very unorthodox one. She said that Christ never mentioned what are now called "essential doctrines" of the Christian Church. Not even Dr. Clifford, with his Bible Syllabus for Children, could stand against this brave woman's censure of the lives of Bible Heroes. She wrote this in a letter to Jowett:—

> "The story of Achilles and his horses is far more fit for children than that of Balaam and his ass, which is only fit to be told to asses. The stories of Samson and of Jephthah are only fit to be told to bulldogs; and the story of Bathsheba to be told to Bathshebas. Yet we give all these stories to children as 'Holy Writ.' There are some things in Homer we might better call 'Holy' Writ—many, many in Sophocles and Æschylus. The stories about Andromache and Antigone are worth all the women in the Old Testament put together; nay, almost all the women in the Bible."

Bright little lady! We have said this hundreds of times. It is delightful to learn that Florence Nightingale was saying it too.

Bishop Welldon is at it again. He repeats—without a scrap of additional evidence, or indeed any evidence at all beyond his own uncorroborated assertions—that Christianity is the cause of the "elevation" of woman in Christian countries, though he admits that the said "elevation" has taken nearly two thousand years—as if some natural improvement might not be expected in that long tract of time! In India and China, he says, any advance in the status of woman has been recent, and is due to "contact with Christendom." But is not woman's advance in Christian countries as recent as recent can be? And is not all such recent legislation—as, for instance, the Married Women's Property Act—simply a return to the best days of Roman jurisprudence? Even in the matter of marriage and divorce English women are not yet on the level of the Roman women in the days of Marcus Aurelius. Husbands must be guilty of adultery and cruelty before innocent wives can divorce them. Adultery alone is not sufficient. But it was more than sufficient in Pagan Rome. Marcus Aurelius, in issuing a new decree against adulterous wives, provided that the husbands had shown them an example of fidelity, as it would be infamous to expect a fidelity which the complainants did not display themselves.

Bishop Welldon's reference to India is peculiarly unfortunate. He does not penetrate the veil of manners and customs. A good deal of what is called freedom in England deserves quite another name. Hindu parents certainly do not expose their young daughters to the gross eroticism displayed at what may be called crowding time in the principal streets of our great cities or on the promenades of seaside towns. Much of the seclusion of females in the East is due to affectionate guardianship, and not at all to oppression or contempt. Connubial affection, and reverence for motherhood, are at least as strong in India as they are in England. Architects are divided as to what is the most beautiful building in the world, but many would vote for the famous Taj Mahal at Agra. It was built by Shah Jehan out of love for his wife; a dead woman, but living still in his heart, and to live for centuries after him in a lovely memorial combining all that wealth and art could produce. Bishop Welldon looks round on the chimneys of Manchester, with all that they imply, and rebukes the country that boasts of the Taj Mahal for its want of respect for woman! Agra or Manchester—where would a woman prefer to live? The Jumna or the Irwell—in which river would she like to bathe?

The Bishop of Manchester (Dr. Knox: not to be confused with Bishop Welldon, the Dean of Manchester) has been protesting at a London meeting against the Church Pastoral Aid Society making grants to parishes where the eastward position was observed. This eastward position formed part of the Romeward drift. Is it so? Well, well! We are reminded of a saying of Sydney Smith's—who showed that he understood his "cloth" by referring to the three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. "Puseyism," said that witty parson, "consists of influxion and genuflexion, incense and nonsense, bowing to the East and curtseying to the West, posture and imposture."

Rev. William Edwards, Bangor, Carnarvon, left £4,033. Rev. Edmund Church Brace, St. Paul's Vicarage, Wimbledon, left £3,586. Not very large humps, but enough to keep the camel from threading the needle's eye.

Rev. Robert Chichester, of the Vicarage, Tamworth in Arden, left £4,830. As the landlady of a Southampton hotel said to us when we went down overnight to meet Samuel Putnam from America, "It is all I can make it"—as she finished adding up the bill. £4,830 is not a colossal fortune, but it was all the reverend gentleman could make it.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the African missionary, is lecturing in America, but likes life there as little as he did in England. He is longing to get back to Africa and the blacks. He thinks the life there is more wholesome. We daresay that in some respects this is true. Any way, Mr. Crawford's desire to get back is a commentary upon heroic sufferings described by other missionaries far away from home. The truth is that the vast majority of them have a far better time than they could ever hope for in their own country.

Mr. Percy Illingworth, the chief Liberal Whip, says he has not much patience with people who declare that the Christian faith is losing its hold over the people of these islands. After this we should not be surprised to hear that Mr. Illingworth is disgusted with those who believe that the dodo is extinct, or that Queen Anne is dead. If Mr. Illingworth's insight into the future of the Liberal Party is on all-fours with his expressed knowledge of the position of Christianity in this country, Mr. Asquith would do well to select a new officer. Mr. Illingworth calls himself an optimist. He evidently thinks that is synonymous with declining to recognise a wall, even when he has run his head against it.

Rev. Frank Swainson, Vicar of St. Barnabas, Hollowy, tells a different tale. He has been spending a holiday at Bexhill-on-Sea, and wearing undress uniform. He says:—

> "While dressed in flannels as a layman, and not as a parson, I have had an opportunity of talking to and hearing men. I find that men will talk far more freely to a man if they don't know he is a cleric. So I have been taking the opportunity, and, candidly, I have been shocked at the appalling indifference of men with regard to their souls. The vast majority seem concerned only about the things of the body. They will talk politics, grow enthusiastic over sport, tell questionable yarns, and all that sort of thing; but the moment a man introduces the real essential thing—religion—he is either boycotted or looked upon as daft by the 'man of the world.'"

This is a much more accurate view of the situation. People shun religion because they are not really interested in it. If they were, it would be as much a topic of conversation as anything else. And naturally, when a parson, or a religious crank, goes round, a great many either say nothing against religion, or they profess an interest they do not feel. It is only when the majority of people are off their guard that one gets their real opinions. If the world were suddenly attacked with an epidemic of outspokenness, men like Mr. Illingworth would receive the surprise of their lives.

There is a movement on foot in favor of what is called corporate prayer. Some clerical geniuses amongst the Nonconformists have conceived the idea that if people will only pray in groups some solid good may be achieved. Perhaps it is assumed that God must be approached in the same way as Parliament—by means of a monster petition. The old plan was for each one to pray "on his own," the new method is to inspire a kind of mock belief from the fact of numbers. The psychological point about it is that each one acquires a certain confidence in praying because he sees others around him doing the same thing. That, to some extent, guards the individual from recognising the folly of the practice. Only to some extent, however. The same forces that have broken down faith in individual prayers are still working, and are not likely to be checked by the new move. Collective folly is often easier than individual folly, but the same causes ultimately destroy both.

We are always learning. The *Christian Commonwealth* has discovered that the agreement between the preachers on "Citizen Sunday" is "significant of the deepening conviction that a spiritual revolution must accompany the swift changes now taking place in the environment." We have no objection to the word "spiritual" if it is taken to mean that considerations—other than those of cash or material—ought to govern human relationships. But that is not what the *Christian Commonwealth* means. What it means is that religion must accompany social change, and that is pure trade cant. And this is really all the preachers did say, apart from vague generalities with which everybody agrees, and which, therefore, neither helps nor injures anyone. They were agreed in their sermons, naturally, because they are all faced by the same danger—the escape of social affairs from the controlling influence of religion. And they naturally agreed that no social revolution was worth anything that left the clergy out of a job.

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Professor Driesch has been in London lecturing on the subject of Vitalism. The Professor is a champion of this scientifically forlorn cause, and mentioned in the course of his lecture that the one man who has done anything of real value on the subject of instinct is Professor Lloyd Morgan. We do not wholly endorse this opinion, although we thoroughly endorse the value of Lloyd Morgan's work. His *Habit and Instinct* and *Comparative Psychology* are in every way two fine works. What we want to point out is that Professor Morgan is a thorough-going anti-Vitalist, and one who takes the absolute dependence of vital and mental phenomena on material conditions as an established fact.

Mr. Thomas Pratt, speaking at the Leeds meeting of the National Chamber of Trade, told those present of the unfair competition of the Salvation Army with ordinary traders. The annual turnover of the Salvation Army, in its trading department, was more than £200,000 annually, and Mr. Pratt said that some of the money contributed for spiritual work was turned over to the commercial side. In one year £36,333 of the money collected for religious work was put into the trading concern as capital advanced. He advised traders to refuse contributions to the Army so long as a religious organisation was used for trading purposes.

We are not surprised at Mr. Pratt's indignation, but we were under the impression that the general facts were pretty well known. The Salvation Army is, and has been for years, mainly a trading concern. Most of its so-called charities are run as a business, and its benevolence is mainly exercised in the shape of the voluntary work done by members of local bodies. Its emigration agency is a pure business concern from top to bottom. It yields a handsome profit, although, from the nature of its advertisements, the public are led to believe to the contrary. The one general rule in the Army is, "When a thing doesn't pay, drop it." That is why shelters that are opened are closed when they cease to pay their way. Mr. Manson's book thoroughly exposed the whole concern, and no reply from the Army was ever forthcoming. It would almost seem that a people who can be imposed upon by such an organisation as the Salvation Army are past saving.

Writing of the Ritual Murder trial at Kieff, Russia, the *Evening News* says "the gross ignorance of the Jewish faith displayed by people who might be supposed at least to have read the Old Testament is nothing short of wonderful." Nonsense! Numbers of people who believe the Bible have never read it. That is usually why they do believe it.

"Respectability in the Churches must go," said Mr. Harry Jeffs at a Brotherhood meeting at the Empire Theatre, Southend-on-Sea. If the worshipers of Mrs. Grundy leave the Churches, the other worshipers will be easily counted.

"If you ask the man in the street to tell you the names of any six pieces of literature which he remembers, it will be safe to wager four are in verse," says the San Francisco *News Letter*. Unhappily, they might include "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood" or "Snookey Ookums."

In a review in *T. P.'s Weekly* of a volume of minor verse, it is stated that the new author snatches at the hem of Swinburne's garment, which is frayed by this time. Frayed or not, it will outlast *T. P.'s Weekly*.

Mr. Stephen Walsh, M.P., denies that the Welsh Colliery disaster was due to a "visitation of God." So do we, but on different grounds. Mr. Walsh says there is no greater blasphemy than to ascribe to God acts that are done by man. Well, but Mr. Walsh believes that there is a God and that he created man, so the difficulty is only moved back a step. Besides, if the evil in life is not a visitation of God, neither is the good, by exactly the same reasoning, and God is ruled out altogether. Mr. Walsh is fond of addressing religious meetings, and so we would bid him remember that if some men were responsible for the disaster, other men risked their lives in the work of rescue. God alone did nothing. And the irony of the situation is that it is not the men whom Mr. Walsh believes were responsible for the disaster, but others who were quite innocent. If these things do not make Mr. Walsh reconsider his religious position, nothing will.

The Rev. F. Dormer Pierce, of Southend-on-Sea, has some quaint notions concerning the Christian God. Speaking at a recent meeting in that town, he said Southend was "a place where men not only took a holiday from work, but a holiday from God as well." We were not aware that the All-Seeing Eye could be dodged in that way.

We don't vouch for it, but the *Daily Mail* reports that "a woman's gold and ruby ring, a gold brooch, and a man's gold ring have been found in recent collections at Brentwood Parish Church. Brentwood has a flourishing lunatic asylum.

A detestable outrage on George Meredith appeared in the advertisement department of last week's issue of a Socialist contemporary—at the top of the first column of the front page. The Waverley Book Company were offering for sale, on what is now the good old instalment plan, a certain *History of English Literature*—which is well puffed in the editorial department, in addition to other "Testimony that carries Weight." One would think that the advertisers of such a book would show some respect for English literature themselves. They do not display it, however, in *this* advertisement, which is started in the following manner:—

> "OUR LANGUAGE AND GLORIOUS LITERATURE.
>
> "'It was not got by miracle nor rape;
> It is the offspring of the patient year,
> Bequeathed from sire to son.'"

What on earth could such words apply to the English language and English literature? The word "rape" is ludicrously inapplicable in such a matter. And in what sense can a year be "patient"? We might also ask *what* year is to be singled out for such praise—and *why?* Why likewise *bequeathed?* Bequeath is an external word; an innate possession is transmitted. The Waverley Book Company should really explain. Had they hired a literary decorator, and had he consumed too much ginger beer over the task? Or had he attempted something original?

We soon saw what had happened, though we are at a loss to understand *how* it happened. The lines were reminiscent of a noble passage in George Meredith's "Ode to France" written in 1870:—

> "Lo, strength is of the plain root-virtues born:
> Strength shall ye gain by service, prove in scorn,
> Train by endurance, by devotion shape.
> Strength is not won by miracle or rape.
> It is the offspring of the modest years,
> The gift of sire to son, through those firm laws
> Which we name Gods; which are the righteous cause,
> The cause of man, and manhoods ministers."

Read those fine lines carefully, and again and again, if necessary, until you grasp all their significance and beauty; and then turn back to the abortion in the previous paragraph—and realise an English publisher's respect for English literature. If the History is anything like the advertisement what is it worth?

Mr. Edwin C. Walker has been contributing some interesting articles on "The Old Guard" in the New York *Truthseeker*. He has mentioned all sorts of Freethinkers on this side of the Atlantic, as well as on the American side. Some mistakes are natural in such a wide review. Here is one:—

> "Edward Truelove, a veteran of the second generation back; by selling the *Fruits of Philosophy* he precipitated a conflict in which Bradlaugh, springing into the breach in a fight not his personally, overmatched the best professional legal talent of Great Britain and won a victory prodigious in its consequences of good for freedom of speech and publication."

This is all wrong. Bradlaugh sprang into the breach, it is true, but it was in connection with Charles Watts's prosecution—not Edward Truelove's. Watts retired from the defence of the Knowlton pamphlet by pleading guilty and accepting a nominal penalty. Bradlaugh then published the pamphlet himself and challenged another prosecution. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment; but he succeeded in quashing the indictment on appeal, in consequence of an irregularity which his keen eye detected. Truelove was tried twice on one indictment for publishing Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Philosophy*, and, in spite of his age, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. He stood firm, and upon his release was presented with a testimonial and a purse of 200 sovereigns. That was in 1878.

There is a reference to ourselves in Mr. Walker's fina article:—

> "George W. Foote, founder of the *Freethinker*, and its most able editor, victim of the blasphemy laws, President of the National Secular Society, untiring tractarian."

We suppose that "most able" means "very able" or something of the kind. But it may easily be read otherwise. We take the opportunity, therefore, of stating that the founder of the *Freethinker* has been its only editor. During his imprisonment Dr. Aveling acted as "interim" editor, and

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during more recent illnesses the same service has been rendered by Mr. Cohen.

Ingersoll's very clever Christian Catechism, embodying ironically the Presbyterian creed of the famous Rev. Dr. Talmage, is peculiarly clever in its ending. Christianity is represented as the only religion that gives man support and consolation in death. Then comes the question, "What were the last words of Jesus Christ?" And the shattering answer is, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ingersoll ended at that. Further words would have been an anti-climax.

A few weeks ago we said that we had been turning over again the pages of old Bishop Latimer's sermons. He was a very outspoken preacher, even before nobles and royalty. Had he listened to Ingersoll he would probably have raised an objection as to the truth of a religion being proved by the support and consolation it gives a man in his last hours. In his fourth sermon before Edward the Sixth he oppugns the argument that a man's cause is good because "he seemeth not to fear death." Latimer proceeds as follows:—

> "The Anabaptists that were burnt here in divers towns in England (as I heard of credible men, I saw them not myself) went to their death even *intrepide*, as ye will say, without any fear in the world, cheerfully. Well, let them go. There was in the old doctors' times another kind of poisoned heretics, that were called Donatists; and these heretics went to their execution, as though they should have gone to some jolly recreation or banquet, to some belly-cheer, or to a play. And will ye argue, then, he goeth to his death boldly or cheerfully, *ergo*, he dieth in a just cause? Nay, that sequel followeth no more than this: A man seems to be afraid of death, *ergo*, he dieth evil. And yet our Savior Christ was afraid of death himself."

That *is* a clincher.

The Soul of a Doll is the alluring title of a book of verse. Souls are cheap to day.

"Thousands of children are damned for life during the first month of their existence," says an ex-police-court missionary. And millions are damned for ever after death, if Christianity be true.

"In the days to come music will be a department of the Government," prophesies Mrs. Katherine Tingley, a Theosophist. We hope that Salvation bands and bagpipes will be kept in their proper places.

Thomas Grant, a laborer, of County Armagh, has just died at the age of 108, and the editors are making headlines in the press about him. At that age Methuselah was still playing marbles.

"We all err, and it seems to me that a parson should err on the side of charity," says the Rev. A. J. Waldron. South London Freethinkers know how the reverend gentleman has followed his own advice.

"Should a Woman Tell?" is the title of Rev. A. J. Waldron's music-hall sketch. It might as well be called "Should a Parson Pry?"

We congratulate the Rev. A. J. Waldron on appearing in the *Daily Mail* picture gallery with Mlle. Gaby Deslys. According to the letterpress accompanying the block the reverend gentleman and his lady friend have had "some earnest conferences." She has certified his play to "have true Christian qualities." That settles it.

"Henry Smart, the mid-Victorian composer, whose centenary was celebrated yesterday at St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and many London churches, by the performance of his melodious music, had a fantastic hatred of 'Gregorianism.' This was partly for æsthetic reasons, but partly based, also, on religious grounds, for Smart, unlike most musicians, was an extreme Low Churchman. To a High Churchman who championed the cause of Gregorian chants he exclaimed, 'God will some day rain fiery crotchets upon your heads, and prevent you from ever again chanting your Gregorian groans.' Reminded that Gregorian tones are ancient Oriental music such as David probably played before Saul, he replied, 'Ah, now I can quite understand why Saul threw that javelin at David.'"—*Daily Chronicle.*

The Wesley Bible Union has been formed to oppose the "heretical" movement in Wesleyanism represented by the Rev. G. Jackson, the now famous professor at Didsbury College. Sir William Smith is the president, and the Rev. W. Spiers, of Hayward's Heath, the secretary, of this new Society. They and their supporters declare that nothing but loss and trouble comes from deserting "the doctrines formulated by Wesley." They are specially indignant at "advanced interpretations of Scripture." They appear to be proud of having nothing "advanced" about them. We wish them all the success they deserve.

The Dean of Rochester complains that the fifth commandment is turned upside down nowadays, and reads "Honor thy sons and thy daughters." Perhaps the charge is going a bit too far, but it was time that some change took place, especially in religious households. We hope the Dean of Rochester will get over it.

Mr. Asquith says that his old chief, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was a humorist, and adduces this as a sample:—

> "It was said that on the occasion of an election here Sir Henry was met in the street by a voter who came up to him and said, 'Sir Henry, I like you very much, but I would rather vote for the devil.' (Laughter.) Sir Henry at once replied, without turning a hair, 'As your friend is not a candidate you might just as well vote for me.' (Laughter and cheers.)"

How the thing is specialised! It was "here" and Sir Henry replied "without turning a hair." Somebody must have been pulling Mr. Asquith's leg. The story is far older than Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. It belongs to the John Wilkes budget. It has often been stolen and always spoiled in the stealing. Wilkes was a real wit—and the author of much wit in other men. And this devil story fits him to a t. We all know what his reputation was, and the voter's exclamation was not unnatural; but who would even think of talking in that way to the harmless necessary Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman? It takes a really dramatic narrator to tell the story, and that by word of mouth, for intonations are not printable. Wilkes's reply was swift and pointed. When the voter he was canvassing expressed a readiness to vote for the devil rather than for him, Wilkes replied "Yes, but in case your friend doesn't stand?" Only the human voice could do that full justice.

Mr. G. B. Shaw raised laughter at the Bradlaugh Dinner by stating that his next public engagement was at the City Temple. He addressed a "crowded congregation" there on October 31. Some of our readers will be interested in the following report which we take from the next morning's *Daily Chronicle*:—

> "Mr. G. Bernard Shaw informed a crowded congregation at the City Temple, representing the City Temple Literary Society, last night, that Christianity came to an end with the Crucifixion.
>
> "For that reason 'Christian Economics,' the subject of his lecture, did not concern them unless they had made up their mind to reintroduce Christianity into the world and into this country. At present all our institutions were deliberately organised for the prevention of Christianity. Was it worth while to undo the Crucifixion, to take up the tradition of Christianity again and see what we could do with it?
>
> "If we did, he recognised three main things to which we should stand committed as Christians. We should have to give up revenge and punishment completely and entirely: we should have to scrap the entire judicial and criminal system. We should have to stop putting people in prison, we should have to stop scolding and complaining and writing to the *Times*.
>
> "Then we should have to take, in a sense, no thought for the morrow—which would necessitate communism. And last, we should have to adopt the doctrine which was called the immanence of God, and believe that there was a divine spark in man.
>
> "But the only one of those doctrines which touched Christian economics, remarked Mr. Shaw, was that we should take no thought for the morrow. The weak point in communism was that it did not give the consumer any control over production. Therefore everybody must have an income, and naturally everybody must have an exactly equal income. What we had at present was not a distribution of income but absolute plunder. And in a Christian State, when a man was regarded as a bit of God, and his value was infinite, we could not buy him and sell him as we did now."

Laughter was also caused at the Bradlaugh Dinner by Mr. Foote's observing that if Mr. Campbell were to tire of his job Mr. Shaw might prove a competent successor. Mr. Foote's observation seems still more pertinent now.

Churches and chapels suffered severely during the late disastrous storm in South Wales. "Providence" doesn't recognise—certainly it doesn't spare—its own buildings on these occasions.

"Society is like a gigantic fat man troubled with all kinds of maladies and diseases in all parts of his enormous person." the Bishop of Oxford tells us. Just so. And Oxford mixture will not cure the complaints.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £241 11s. 11d. Received since :—N. Gould (S. Africa), £1 ; T. W. Key (S. Africa), £1 ; W. Fitzgerald, 10s. ; W. Dodd, 10s.

E. JACKSON asks for proofs of Mr. Lloyd's statement that Christ is "fully as mythical as Osiris, Adonis, Attis or Mithra, after whom he was modelled." We may save Mr. Lloyd some trouble by pointing our correspondent to two books—though we could point him to twenty : Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Robertson's *Pagan Christs*.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

GREEVZ FISHER.—You are mistaken. We didn't object to Mr. Shaw's fun. We enjoyed it and said so at the time. What we objected to was his bad arguments. We have done that before, and may do it again. If he replies to us our columns are at his service. But we cannot accept a proxy in such matters ; as, on second thoughts, you may perceive.

T. W. KEY AND N. GOULD, two South African subscribers, regret that the President's Honorarium Fund progresses so slowly (when they wrote) and hope to see it rally before the year is out.

TOM TAYLOR.—Much obliged for the book, and delighted to hear from one who has never missed a copy of the *Freethinker* from the first issue.

W. FITZGERALD.—Glad you still find this journal stimulating after all those years.

A. H. SMITH.—Mr. Foote is keeping fairly well, but wishes he could sleep better.

M. E. PROG.—We have strained a point for Mr. Lloyd's sake. How often we have printed that Tuesday is too late for paragraphs !

W. DODD.—We wish all were as considerate.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d. ; half year, 5s. 3d. ; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

London "saints" are reminded of Mr. Foote's two Sunday evening lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall (Dec. 7 and 14). Subjects will appear hereafter.

Mr. Lloyd had a large audience at the King's Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday evening. He lectures twice to-day (Nov. 9) at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. District "saints" will please note.

We are asked from time to time for the addresses of contributors to our columns. The only reply we can make is a general one. It is against journalistic etiquette to do anything of the kind. Letters addressed to a contributor at our office will, of course, be forwarded to him. The rest is no concern of ours.

The Edinburgh magistrates issued a proclamation prohibiting open-air meetings at the Mound, an open-air space off Prince's-street adjoining the National Gallery, unless permits from the magistrates were obtained. They were resisted by Mr. John M'Ara, who was supported by a public committee, and the Courts declared that the proclamation was illegal in itself and that it was unconstitutional, in any case, to discriminate as to who should and who should not hold public meetings at given places. The latest news is that the magistrates have agreed to pay the pursuer £200 damages, while reserving his right to get his conviction for breach of the proclamation set aside by the High Court. Another lesson in the wisdom of defying local despots, who are generally local bigots.

It is worth paying a shilling for the November *English Review* if only to see the last of the book-reviews for the month appearing in such a publication. Not, of course, that there is nothing else worth paying for. Both the editor and the sub-editor come out—or should it be come in ?—well this month ; the former's "Editorial Amenities" being very amusing, and, alas, in some respects, only too true. There are some outspoken things in a Layman's article on the Church Congress. Aleister Crowley is just as outspoken on "Art in America." There is a sentence at the bottom of p. 587 which shows that Mr. Crowley has not forgotten the ignominious part that a certain Agnostic played in the Boulter case. All the worshipers of the late Mr. W. T. Stead will resent the estimate of his favorite poet, James Russell Lowell. They will think it little, if anything, short of blasphemy—or even that final blasphemy which is never forgiven, either in this world or in the next. Perhaps the most interesting thing in this number of the *English Review* is a small batch of "Letters on Napoleon's Last Days." They were written by Dr. Shortt and his wife at St. Helena. The English physician was not allowed to treat or see Napoleon, but he attended the autopsy, and he certifies that, while all the rest of the body was sound, the stomach was "a perfect mass of disease from cancer." "In death," Dr. Shortt says, "his countenance was the finest I ever saw, expressing the greatest softness and placidity that can be imagined." Dr. Shortt saw him immediately after he expired, before any material alteration could have taken place. We ought not to close without mentioning Mr. Israel Zangwill's article on "The Militant Suffragists." He seems to think that Mr. Asquith is much to blame, and deserves any sort of treatment—including, we suppose, dog-whips and cayenne pepper.

Mr. F. S. Marvin, in the November *Positivist Review*, replies briefly but admirably to Professor Murray's curious criticism of the former's book *The Living Past*, especially in relation to Shakespeare. Mr. Marvin is not at all angry at being classed as a Shakespeare "idolator." He smiles very cheerfully and takes it as rather a compliment.

The Pioneer Press has come into possession of a parcel of an old pamphlet by Charles Bradlaugh, which deals with "The Compulsory Cultivation of Land." Many of his admirers will be pleased to see how much he anticipated Mr. Lloyd George in the matter of Land Reform. The price is threepence, with a halfpenny extra for postage ; and orders should be sent direct to the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

THE MIDNIGHT VISITOR.

Whose steps are those ? Who comes so late ?
Let me come in, the door unlock.
'Tis midnight now ; my lonely gate
I open to no stranger's knock.

Who art thou ? Speak ? Men call me Fame ;
To immortality I lead.
Pass, idle phantom of a name.
Listen again, and now take heed ;

'Twas false. My names are Song, Love, Art.
My poet, now unbar the door.
Art's dead, Song cannot touch my heart,
My once love's name I chant no more.

Open then now, for, see, I stand,
Riches my name, with endless gold,
Gold, and your wish in either hand.
Too late—my youth you still withhold.

Then if it must be, since the door
Stands shut, my last true name to know,
Men call me death. Delay no more ;
I bring the cure of every woe.

The door flies wide. Ah, guest so wan,
Forgive the poor place where I dwell ;
An ice cold hearth, a hearth-sick man,
Stand here to welcome thee full well.

Henri Murger ; translated by Walt Whitman.

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Free-Will and Necessity.—II.

(Concluded from p. 700.)

WITH these facts and reflections in mind, let us examine the doctrine of free-will. What does this doctrine mean? How far does it extend? If it be asserted that the Will is fully or absolutely free, facts and arguments abound to show that this is a fallacy. A man cannot will or wish that of which he has no knowledge. The child's wishes cannot be so numerous as those of the man, for his knowledge and capacities are so very circumscribed. Nor can the mere savage feel the same range of desires as the civilised man. The former, no doubt, longs for his dinner, and devours it with as keen a relish as the latter; but is it possible the savage can wish or will the same variety, styles of cookery, the service, surroundings, elegance, the caprice, it may be, as the civilised epicure? He can have no conception of such adjuncts to a dinner. Here the Will can be free only to the extent of knowledge and taste possessed; and so in a thousand other cases that might be instanced. Civilisation and culture vastly extend the play of the Will; whether they render it more free, is quite another question.

But what is Will? Is there not a pitfall in the word? Some people seem almost to personify it, or else to treat it as a member, an organ, or a special faculty of the individual. To me it seems the Will is no more a part of man's constitution, mental or physical, than his seeing, walking, or thinking. When we walk, see, taste, sleep, think, it is not any particular part of us that does it; it is the person as a whole. No doubt we use our legs to walk and eyes to see; but it is the individual that walks and sees. The Will is not a part of us; it is merely a state or condition we are in, a mental act, a desire, a wish, a purpose, a resolve. What more it can be I know not. I have no doubt that all the mystification thrown around the subject by metaphysicians has risen from theological bias; they have, for the most part, endeavored to harmonise man with moral government conducted by means of rewards and punishments, and so have corrupted the philosophy of *Willing* in favor of essential barbarity admitted into the government of mankind. The moment theology is dispensed with and the Will is examined apart from all bias, the truth appears. The Will in its highest phases is nothing more than the best and highest wish we have, developed into resolve or determination—if, indeed, wish and will can be separated or distinguished, even so far as that.

We cannot help wishing whatever our nature, circumstances, and sentiments incline us to. But our wishes are many, our wants and desires often clash one with another; present pleasures compete with more lasting ones in the future. Often there is a struggle between our desires, a wild and passionate turmoil, and each in turn gains a temporary victory; till one is decidedly conqueror we must be passive. Some men spend years in suspense, their desires all the while struggling in a drawn and wearisome battle. If men possessed Wills that could decide offhand, they would never submit to suspense of this sort; they would finish the quarrel and act in a prompt and ready manner. No doubt, in this respect, men immensely differ from each other; though everyone must have experienced the conflict of opposing desires, and the suspense, more or less severe and continued, to which I refer.

Now, in a battle of this sort, what decides the issue? Not the Will, for a whole host of Wills or wishes are often struggling together. A judicious man will reflect, weigh, balance the *pros* and *cons* as best he can, and, as popular language puts it, decide or resolve upon a certain course. Like an honest and enlightened jury, his verdict goes with the strongest evidence. As in physics, so in morals, the greater force always conquers or sways the less. You cannot conceive of a pound weighing as much as two pounds, or of a steam-engine of 1,000 horse power having the force of one of 5,000. So in morals, we cannot act without motives; the motives we can neither create, shape, destroy, nor resist; in every case the strongest motive sways us and bears us on to the commission of crime or the performance of a virtuous deed. Sometimes the prevailing motive is so strong, or its counter-agents so few or weak, that the person rushes to the deed with the force of a stone falling to the ground; at others, the motives are so evenly balanced that the stronger but just wins the day, and the individual goes to his deed (good or bad) slowly, with reluctance, with "almost half a mind" not to go at all.

The subject of motives is an immense one, and as intricate as extensive. The motive which weighs with one man and decides him, will scarcely, or not at all, move another; the motive that hurls a youth into action with a bound fails to stir him when he is an old man. The sight of distress does not move the miser—it opens the heart and the purse of the philanthropist; the vision of a beautiful female face throws a youth into a fever of excitement, rouses all the chivalry of his nature—it does not affect the old man; a gorgeous landscape fills the poet with ecstatic musings, and the Will to linger in view of it—the merely business man regards it from the £ s. d. point of view, and wishes it his own for the wealth it would bring. Yet in one respect we are all alike, for throughout life we are the sport of motives which we never made; if we escape from one it is to fall a prey to another. We can no more escape these motives than we can jump off the earth into some other planet; they dominate us from cradle to grave; their tyranny is unbroken, unrelaxing. We are no more free to leave our natural path through life than a planet is to escape from the gravitating force of the sun. Our life is decided for us by our antecedents, constitution, education, and surroundings. Could all the elements that enter into our life be sifted out, fully estimated in all their complexity, the mathematician might predict our whole future course as correctly as that of a planet. Even as it is, we can often form more than a happy guess of the actions of one we well know in new circumstances. We know what motives are most likely to sway him, and to what extent; we know what motives the new conditions will supply, and hence the predictions we venture to utter.

If this doctrine be true, says the orthodox, it is fatal to morality. So much the worse for morality, then. Nothing can be good which is not founded on truth. Morality founded on false motives is not the sort we want. If necessity be true, and that it is "all nature cries aloud through all her works," morality must be adjusted to that truth, not that truth to a false morality. Do we not find the solution of the difficulty in the doctrine of reaction? Every planet is whirled round in its orbit by the superior force of the giant sun; but the very smallest planet sways the sun to some extent. In chemistry also, and throughout nature, every action is attended by a reaction; influence and counter-influence run through the universe and through society. "No man liveth unto himself; no man dieth unto himself." Each unit is a necessary phenomenon, but so are his neighbors; we are all, in the main, swayed by the same leading motives; hence we act and react upon each other incessantly. We are all struggling for the same goal—happiness—the minimum of pain, the maximum of pleasure; the mass, or society, forms a stream or river; the units must go the general way, they must adjust themselves to their surroundings; but in doing this they move more or less their nearest fellows; those who cannot adjust themselves must be got rid of in some way, not from revenge, but from necessity. Necessity is everywhere; it compels most people to live as their neighbors do; it compels society to check, or expel, or destroy, those who injure it or endanger its interests. In society, man is played upon by a host of motives; by education he learns to play them off one against the other; habit, self-interest, respect for others, self-respect, love, hatred, likes, dislikes,

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hopes, and fears, all tend to mould his character and develop his nature. The bad man is he who shows little or no regard for others, who seeks his own pleasure at the unfair cost and expense of his neighbors; the good man is he who seeks his own happiness conjointly with that of others. The true type of social man is he who enjoys life and does the least harm to his neighbors, but the utmost good in his power; and that society is the best and most enlightened which can prevent the evil of the vicious by the infliction of the least possible pain; that can reclaim and utilise the worst of characters; and, above *all*, that can *prevent* crime, by educating and training the young, and by preventing gigantic monopolies in the few and the consequent poverty in the many.

In a word, when we regard necessity as swaying *all equally*, we shall perceive that so far from destroying morality, it tends to increase and establish it, by giving us the certainty that a wrong once done can never be undone, never atoned for, never expiated; and therefore must be prevented by all the motives that can be focussed upon those likely to commit it. The doctrine also shows us the folly of driving young criminals more deeply into crime by mere punishment, instead of teaching and encouraging them to do better for the future. When once the true doctrine of motives has been fully mastered, society and reformers will do their utmost to place the best motives before the young, so as to induce them, independently of priestly threats and Tory oppression, to do what is right. When this has been properly done, the system of bribery and intimidation, which goes under the names of rewards and punishments, may be laid aside.

Necessity does not destroy the Will, it creates it; for in every case a man wills or wishes in the direction of the strongest motive. The only freedom we can rationally hope for is exemption from ghostly and political tyranny; and that is enough. That freedom can be won only by the spread of education and enlightenment; so that each man may freely understand both his rights and his duties.

JOSEPH SYMES.

Pioneers of Physiology.

THE intellectual unrest which led to the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe manifested itself in more important ways. The outcome of the revival of learning, and the broadened human outlook which resulted, among other things, from geographical discovery, widened acquaintance with alien races and religions, and economic and commercial development; the revolt from Rome was accompanied by the re-birth of the spirit of inquiry into nature's secrets, which had for centuries languished under the iron hand of sacerdotal despotism.

The middle of the sixteenth century may be regarded as one of the most brilliant periods in the annals of the human race. The reign of Charles V. was nearing its end. Venice still proudly bore every outward appearance of splendor and prosperity, if internal decay had already set in. The Medici were reestablished at Florence, and that very remarkable monarch, Henry VIII., occupied the English throne. Twenty years had fled since the able, if cruel, Cortez had commenced the ruin of Mexico; Pizarro's later adventures had laid low the civilisation of Peru, and Europe was enjoying the proceeds of the plundered lands of the West.

Martin Luther was declining towards the grave; Calvin's baleful sceptre was in Geneva supreme; the Society of Jesus was come to check the heresies which abounded; the Inquisition was doing devil's work in Spain. Michael Angelo yet lived, and Titian's art was at the height of its glory. The old seats of learning were being humanised despite themselves, and new universities were everywhere arising. The study of Greek literature became fashionable; the printing presses of Venice and other cities were spreading books in every direction. The mighty Copernicus had prepared the way for the coming revolution of our concepts of the universe; the dirt and darkness of the Middle Ages disappeared in the dawn period of modern times.

In 1543 a Basel printer sent forth to the world a folio volume dealing with the structure of the human body, the work of one Andreas Vesalius. The publication of this book marks an epoch in the history of anatomy, as also in that of physiology and medicine. Under the benumbing hand of the Church, all inquiry had been stifled for a thousand years. The pioneer work of the ancients, when stamped with the authority of sacerdotalism, became the be-all and end-all of science. Woe was usually the lot of the man who dared to dissent from the dogmas to which the Church lent her countenance:—

> "As spiritual truths were learned from the study of the revealed word, so anatomical and medical truths were to be sought for, not by looking directly into the body of man, not by observing and thinking over the phenomena of disease, but by studying what had been revealed in the writings of Hippocrates and Galen. As the Holy Scriptures were the Bible for all men, so the works of the Greek and Latin writers became the bible for the anatomist and the doctor. Truth and science came to mean simply that which was written, and inquiry became mere interpretation."*

Against this state of things the mind of Vesalius arose in revolt. He dissected the human body, and described, not what he found in Galen, but what his own dissections disclosed. He placed fact above authority, never hesitated to point out where Galen was mistaken, although he insisted that the Roman physician must be followed when correct in his conclusions, for the very excellent reason that his conclusions were in harmony with demonstrable truth.

Vesalius' path was prepared by his few predecessors who had dared to depart with fear and trembling from the beaten track. In the fourteenth century, Mundinus risked the censure of the Church when he dissected the human corpse; but her power, as yet unshaken, was directed towards the prevention of the sacrilegious use of the anatomist's scalpel. As a result, Mundinus found no one venturesome enough to continue his work. In the sixteenth century, however, the Church had declined in power, and Carpi, another Italian, resumed the studies of the earlier anatomist. But his peace was of short duration; he was compelled to leave Bologna, which was the centre of his teaching, and live in a state of exile in Ferrara.

The next anatomist of importance was the celebrated Sylvius, and from him Vesalius received his first anatomical instruction. The young Vesalius, while quite a boy, had taken the keenest interest in dissection, and had seized every available opportunity to examine the structure of such animals as came his way. Although Sylvius was an anatomist of standing—the fissure of Sylvius being named in his honor—he was wedded to the old traditions in too great a degree for the liking of Vesalius. When the bodies of men and other animals were shown to the students, the barber servants clumsily dissected the corpses in a manner which excited the contempt of the newcomer. Possibly Vesalius thought it was the duty of the Professor to carry out the dissections himself. In any case,—

> "At the third dissection at which he was present, he, already well versed in the anatomy of the dog, irritated beyond control at the rude handling of the ignorant barbers, pushing them on one side, completed the dissection in the way he knew it ought to be done."

Besides attending the lectures of Sylvius, Vesalius became a pupil of Günther, but neither of these was able to afford him the opportunity of making a thorough dissection of the human body. It was only on rare occasions that a human corpse was exposed to the view of students. The great majority of the bodies shown were those of the lower animals. All

* Sir Michael Foster, *History of Physiology*, p. 4.

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that was then available for the study of human anatomy was a hurried, and sometimes secret, examination of the remains of a patient who had succumbed to disease.

Resurrection-men existed long before the time of Jerry Cruncher, and it was not supremely difficult even in the sixteenth century to gather up a skeleton in the burial-grounds of Paris. In many of the cemeteries the bones of the unhonored dead lay scattered about in all directions. Just as Hamlet meditated over the skull in the Elsinore graveyard, so Vesalius spent many days in studying the bones he picked up in the burial-ground adjoining the Church of the Innocents at Paris. And he has recorded how, in another graveyard, "he and a fellow-student nearly left their own bones, being on one occasion attacked and in great risk of being devoured by savage, hungry dogs, who had come there in search of bones." By such dangerous and awkward means the undaunted Vesalius collected the materials for a work which contains a full and accurate description of the human skeleton.

The wars which then raged drove Vesalius from Paris to Louvain, where he continued his anatomical researches with unflagging zeal. Leaving Louvain, he proceeded to Venice, where he crossed the path of one who bore the sinister name of Ignatius Loyola. Vesalius was a student, and Loyola was a monk, at the Hospital at Venice.

> "One was gathering a rich harvest of exact knowledge which six years later he was to embody and give to the world in a great book, the beginning of biologic science. The other was busy with a scheme for the spiritual welfare of mankind, which six years later took shape in the order of the Jesuits. The one with his eyes fixed on man's body brought forth a work the fruits of which have profoundly influenced, and are still profoundly influencing, men's minds. The other, with his eyes fixed only on truth and goodness, began that which, after him, became the incarnation of Authority; an engine powerful, it is true, for good, but often used for the support of lies and for the maintenance of evil."

In the Venetian republic Vesalius was free from molestation, as its enlightened rulers were not overburdened with orthodoxy. The young anatomist—he was only twenty-two—was in 1537 appointed to the Medical chair in the Venetian University of Padua, to which was subsequently added the professorship of Surgery with the care of Anatomy. Vesalius conducted his own demonstrations before the students with signal success, and his anatomical lectures were addressed to crowded and enthusiastic audiences. There were many difficulties in obtaining the materials he employed in his ocular demonstrations of anatomical truth. Vesalius therefore petitioned all the doctors to permit him to study the bodies of their fatal cases. He approached the judges for the purpose of employing the corpses of condemned criminals in his public dissections. Other methods were sometimes adopted, as the following curious episode proves. He himself has told us how, "learning of the death and hurried burial of the concubine of a monk, he got possession of the body, and proceeded at once to remove the whole of the skin, in order that the peccant holy man, who had got wind of the matter, might be unable to recognise his lost love."

It was only in the Freethinking Republic of Venice that such knowledge as that obtained by Vesalius was possible. Wherever the Church's power was unimpaired, every hindrance was offered to the advance of physiological and anatomical science. The strange devices to which Vesalius was compelled to resort become perfectly explicable when that circumstance is borne in mind. As a result of five years' unwearied toil, at the early age of twenty-eight, Vesalius, in 1543, brought forth his great work on the *Structure of the Human Body*. This work laid the foundations of modern morphology and modern physiology; and although Vesalius made no personal contributions of importance to the latter science, he made smoother the paths of the physiological pioneers who succeeded him. It was no mean task to convince the world that the old anatomical methods were wrong, and that the only rational way of determining the structure and functions of the living organisms was to abandon the truth of authority and to embrace the authority of truth. Vesalius insisted that a knowledge of the architecture of the animal frame was a necessary prelude to any real acquaintance with the activities of the living creature. Moreover, an understanding of the structure of the skeleton was by him regarded as the only real safeguard against physiological error.

Having reconstructed and reformed the science of human anatomy, Vesalius might, in a better world than ours, have entered into his just reward. But the crown of the reformer is ever the crown of thorns. While he was preparing his work for the press, some of his friends tried to persuade him not to publish it; they said that its appearance would ruin its author's career. And to some extent it did. After the completion of his book, Vesalius left Padua, with the consent of the senate, for the space of a year, his pupil, Realdus Columbus, becoming his temporary successor. With the appearance of his book arose a howl of anger. The powerful Sylvius and others stormed against him, "reviling him in a free flow of adjectives." Returning to Padua, Vesalius found his views unpopular even there; his pupil Columbus had deserted him, and gone over to the enemy. He vindicated the truth of his teachings in lectures at Padua, and asked his opponents to witness the evidences of his discoveries in the dissecting theatre itself. At Pisa, where the great Cosimo de' Medici of Florence was creating a University, Vesalius might have been installed as professor. But the friendliness of the Florentine ruler was insufficient to overcome the feelings of bitterness engendered by the bigoted conduct of the old-fashioned professors. The mighty work which Vesalius had built up with such infinite pains was treated as the product of a blasphemer's brain. Mortified beyond measure, the great anatomist consigned to the flames manuscripts of various kinds containing invaluable records of his observations and thoughts; and the Emperor Charles V. requesting him to accept the post of Court Physician, he turned his back on the University which he had adorned by his presence, and brought his brilliant scientific career to a premature close.

The remainder of Vesalius' life proved comparatively uneventful. When Charles V. sought repose in a cloister, the services of Vesalius were transferred to his son. But in the Spain of Philip II. the pursuit of science was impossible. As Sir Michael Foster truly says:—

> "The hand of the Church was heavy on the land; the dagger of the Inquisition was stabbing at all mental life, and its torch was a sterilising flame, sweeping over all intellectual activity. The pursuit of natural knowledge had become a crime, and to search with the scalpel into the secrets of the body of man was accounted sacrilege. It was for a life in priest-ridden, ignorant, superstitious Madrid that Vesalius had forsaken the freedom of the Venetian Republic and the bright academic circles of Padua."

In the withering atmosphere of Madrid, Vesalius cast many a wistful glance towards Italy. His old affection was deeply stirred when the anatomical writings of Falloppius, who now occupied Vesalius' former chair at Padua, came into his hands. Becoming more and more dissatisfied with his unproductive court life, he made a journey to the East for the purpose of escaping it. At this period Falloppius died, and Vesalius received an invitation, if we may trust to traditional statements, to return to the scene of his Paduan labors. But, on his return voyage from the East, he was seized with a serious illness, and died on the island of Zante in 1564.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Human pride is skilful to invent
Most serious names to hide its ignorance.—SHELLEY.

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Religion and Morality.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 690*)

THESE are real services; but, to say nothing of its anti-human and anti-social doctrines, they should not make us forget the frightful tyranny with which the religion of Jesus has burdened both spirit and body. The ancient world—above all, the Roman Empire, with its incongruous Pantheon—practised religious toleration until the day when Christianity came to sap the political constitution itself. The Christians had then their martyrs, and those martyrs were worthy of admiration. Nothing is finer than self-sacrifice for what is believed to be the truth. But the persecuted were scarcely in power before they surpassed their persecutors in cruelty. The rites of Pagan worship became high treason, which the Theodosian code unhesitatingly visited with capital punishment; the temples, even the finest, were demolished, and the idols destroyed. The Church haughtily arrogated the right of persecution, and used it largely from Constantine and Theodosius to the threshold of contemporary history.....

Here I end my exposition. As usual, I have let the facts speak for themselves. They are eloquent, and tell us loudly enough the good and evil that religions have done to morality. Doubtless they have contributed to tame man's evil passions, by adding to the curb of laws that of religious cruelty; but their special share consists above all, as we are coming to see, in a deviation of the moral sense. Religious morality does not test the value of actions according to their social utility, but according to priestly fancy or the apprehension of a beyond. In its eyes, to eat forbidden food is as grave, if not more so, as to commit a murder; asceticism is, in certain religions, the supreme virtue. Lastly, when morality becomes divine, not only is it regarded as immutable and beyond improvement, but a right is claimed to impose it, if necessary, by fire and sword.

In this last respect the palm belongs beyond question to Christianity. Without doubt she has had her martyrs, but she has made many more; glorifying her own, vilifying others, and thus habituating men to the idea that they should be ready to give their life for her faith. The teaching has its value, but not that of the seas of blood it has cost.....To resume, what arises above all from our inquiry is that we should not ask religious conceptions to regulate conduct. Amongst the gods of the great religions those of Epicurus have alone been wise. Their great business was to relish their nectar; they ignored the human animalculæ. But the other gods have been pesterers and despots; they have meddled at random with our affairs; and in the interest of social progress we should remind them that their kingdom is not of this world, and exclude them from it.

—From Letourneau's *L'Evolution de la Morale*, translated by

G. W. FOOTE.

Correspondence.

ATTACKING THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you kindly give this letter room in your magazine? I am not a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, but a friend lent me a copy and I was much interested in your article "Bible Blunders." I agree most heartily with many of the things you say; we Christian Freethinkers are trying to say the same Sunday by Sunday, and we are with you absolutely in your work of smashing the old mechanical notion of "inspiration" in favor of something more natural and spiritual. Your words, "No one can be assured that God has spoken unless God speaks to him *individually*," and "Revelation must always be *personal*," are splendidly true. External authority, whether of Bible or Church, is no authority at all unless ratified by our own consciousness. Conscience is the only authority, the value of the Bible lies in the fact that so much in it appeals to our conscience.

The sentence in your article with which I cannot agree is the following: "Freethought must keep on attacking the Bible." Surely not? Is not your meaning rather this: "We must keep on attacking *worn-out views* about the Bible"? Because a few fanatics have made a fetish of the world's greatest book, are we therefore to tear it in pieces as an imposture? No; rather as true Freethinkers to separate the kernel from the husk, to destroy Bibliolatry but not the Bible, and so set it up once again in its true greatness, as a book *like other books*, the greatest and most useful of them all. All of us, Sir, are liable to prejudice one way or the other, but we must overcome it, as it is as culpable on our part as on that of the ignorant Bible-worshiper. We are out for truth and nothing else, you in the press and we in the pulpit, and may the spirit of truth guide us into all truth.

With many thanks to you for allowing me to express myself in your pages.

A CHRISTIAN FREETHINKER.

[This correspondent is a *bona-fide* clergyman of the Church of England, and there is a ring of sincerity in his letter. When the Bible *is* treated like other books our quarrel with it will be at an end. Meanwhile it occupies a false and usurped position, and we must continue our efforts to bring it down on what Thomas Paine called the democratic floor. Of course we don't want to destroy the Bible as a book; we want to destroy it as the Book of God.—EDITOR.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT. 30

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Judge, Lazarnick, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Shore, Silverstein, Thurlow, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were admitted for the Preston and West Ham Branches.

The action of Mr. J. W. Gott in connection with the unauthorised use of the Society's name was again discussed, and no reply having been received from Mr. Gott to the Executive's resolution, the following was carried unanimously:—

> "That, as Mr. Gott has not thought fit to reply to the Executive's letter of remonstrance as to the abuse of the Society's name, and has driven incivility to the point of insolence in refusing to send the Executive a direct answer to their request for an undertaking that he desist from the same, it is hereby resolved that his membership shall not be renewed at the expiration of the current year."

The recent prosecution at Bolton and its result was reported.

The Annual Dinner was discussed, and the Secretary instructed to arrange for the 1914 Dinner to be held on a day other than Tuesday, to enable provincial members to take advantage of the mid-week railway excursions to London.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

All the world over, savages and semi-civilised people are in the habit of sacrificing human victims, whose bodies are buried in the field with the seed of corn, or other bread stuffs. Often enough the victim's blood is mixed with grain in order to fertilise it. The most famous instance is that of the Khonds of Orissa, who chose special victims, known as Meriahs, and offered them up to ensure good harvests. The Meriah was often kept years before being sacrificed. He was regarded as a consecrated being, and treated with extreme affection, mingled with deference.—*Grant Allen.*

Obituary.

On Sunday, October 26, one of the old Secular brigade passed away in his eighty-fifth year. Our late friend, Mr. J. E. Schofield, of Oldham, had been a reader of the *National Reformer* in former days and continued a reader of it so long as it was issued. He afterwards took up with the *Freethinker*, and has purchased and read that journal up to the end. Mr. Pegg, of Manchester, kindly undertook the last offices in connection with his interment by giving a suitable rendering of Austin Holyoake's Secular Burial Service, which was well received by the relatives and friends at the graveside.—J. E. BROADBENT.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Challenge of Atheism."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, R. H. Rosetti, "God, Faith, and Morality."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, John M. Robertson, "Christianity in the Melting-Pot."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Some Heroes of Our Cause"; 6.30, "The Passing of the Sabbath." Tea at 5.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 46 SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Half measures are always dangerous.—NAPOLEON.

The Revival of Faith.

WHEN Artemus Ward was asked to address a gathering of young men on "Science," he readily agreed, because, he said, he knew nothing whatever about the subject. And knowing nothing, he could "expatiate" with the utmost freedom. He knew of no facts that could get in his way, and so limit his oratorical flights; all he had to do was to talk, and talking was part of his professional duty. Next to talking on a subject of which one knows nothing, the next easiest thing is to talk about the future—not the immediate future, but a future that is a good convenient distance ahead. If it is far enough away, no one can contradict with authority; and if anyone does so, there are always plenty who will be in agreement with the "Futurist." Nature has thoughtfully provided fools enough, for there always appears to be enough on hand to provide a comfortable community. And if the future talked about has to do with another life and another world, the game is easier still. You may rest quite assured that you are as well informed on the topic as anyone; and with knowledge at a minimum, credulity always soars sky-high.

Almost, but not quite, of the same character is the current cant about the revival of faith. Here some few facts are available, but they are of the slenderest possible character. Every time a professional revivalist visits a neighborhood, and ropes in all revivalistic debauchees in the neighborhood, a great revival of faith is reported. If a clerical congress is held, the parsons present—drunk with their own eloquence, and bored with that of their fellow-speakers—report a great awakening of religion. Professional evangelists of the Gipsy Smith type send to the papers accounts of the number of souls saved—much like a Red Indian "brave" exhibiting the scalps of his victims; and once again religion is on the boom. Like a petrol engine, religion seems wholly dependent upon a series of explosions, although it differs from the machine in not getting any "forrader." When the explosion is done, religion is, at best, where it was, and at worst has progressed backward.

"J. B.," of the *Christian World*, discovers indications of a revival of religion in the fact that William Watson, in a recent sonnet, expresses his profound gratitude that he has recovered his faith in God. Not having read the sonnet, I can't say how far this description is justified; but if Mr. Watson is grateful for the recovery of his faith, no one need complain. We hope God—if there be one—is equally appreciative of William Watson. At any rate, if a ledger account is being kept by the recording angel, precious little profit will be shown. At best, it is only one strayed sheep recovered. And if one has returned, many others have gone astray. Mr. Watson has returned to God; but meanwhile a score have gone to the Devil. And the success of a business is determined, not by the profit on a single transaction, but by the profit or loss on the whole of the trading.

Of course, the address of Sir Oliver Lodge at the British Association comes in as another significant indication of the revival of religion. Until something new comes along, that address is a standing dish with the Churches. Sir Oliver Lodge knows better than this. He knows that he stands practically alone in the scientific world. He has, substantially, said as much. Moreover, he is not a convert. He has not, like William Watson, been wandering outside, and now returned to the fold. He was always within—in a sense; and even now one may seriously question whether his attachment to religion is at all greater than it was years ago. But the mass of scientific men are not with him. In public they listen decorously; in private they smile. And if few of them speak out, one has to just put their silence to the general timidity of English intellectual life.

Having discovered a non-existent revival, "J. B." next discusses the cause of its being. He says:—

> "We may first note the breakdown of all substitutes for religious faith. We have lived now through a tolerably long era of attacks on Christianity. England, the beginner of so many things, was the beginner here. It was from Bolingbroke and the English Deists of the eighteenth century that Voltaire got the lessons which he carried into France. Diderot and the Encyclopædists pushed from Deism to Atheism, and set the tone to generations of Continental thinking."

All except the last sentence is false, and that winds up with a piece of characteristic Christian dissimulation. On the Continent, Deism was pushed to Atheism. Of course, it would never do to point out that the same process of development took place in this country. At all costs the delusion that there are no Atheists in England must be maintained. As a matter of fact, Deism always holds within itself the possibility of Atheism, and the course of events in England offers no exception to the general rule. The struggle of eighteenth century Christianity against Deism was only an incident in the history of Freethought. Christians saw the weakness of the Deistic position clearly enough—none more so than Bishop Butler, one of the most acute minds on the Christian side. His attack helped materially to drive home the logic of the Deistic position. And, thanks largely to the attack on Deism, Freethought, which entered into it as Deistic, emerged purified, as Atheistic. True, it has never been as generally outspoken here as on the Continent, but reticence does not alter facts. Instead of Atheists we have crowds of Agnostics, and wherein lies the difference between the two, "no man knoweth unto this day."

It is easy enough to talk of Christianity having lived through a long era of attacks, but how far is this true? In what sense has Christianity lived through the storm? If anyone will contrast Christian doctrines now with what they were a century or so ago, he will realise that Christianity has really only saved itself in name. In essentials it has surrendered to the enemy. What has become of the orthodox Christian cosmology, of witchcraft, of miracles, of hell-fire, of Biblical inspiration, and of numerous other teachings? Suppose the current Christianity of Paine's day had been that of some of the "advanced" Christians of our own, would he have ever written the *Age of Reason?* It is hardly likely. Assuming Paine to be alive to-day, with his opinions unchanged, how much fault would he find with the teachings of some preachers? Very little, I fancy. But does this mean, or would it mean, that Paine

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had become converted to Christianity? Not a bit of it. It would only mean that Christianity had become converted to Paine. In its most advanced form to-day, Christianity is little more than the eighteenth century Deism it so bitterly opposed, with a liberal dash of the word "Christ." Amongst the bulk of liberal thinkers, even in this country, far from Christianity having lived through an era of attacks, the Christianity that was alive at the commencement of those attacks is now completely destroyed. Without the spoils of office it is questionable if even the name would have survived; but these have been weighty enough to secure the continuity of name if nothing else.

There is no revival of religious faith in any genuine sense of the term. There is only a continuous endeavor to state a number of beliefs in a way that will not offend advanced thought, and which may pass for Christianity. The use of even such an expression as "religious faith" is a proof of this. What is really meant is *Christian* faith. But this would be too precise, too definite, and would have roused uncomfortable reflections. So it is *religious* faith that survives—a vague, indefinite, comprehensive something or other, with a comforting dash of respectability about it. Once upon a time, the important question was, "Are you a member of *the* Church?" Then it was, "Are you a member of *any* Church?" Later, "Are you a Christian, even though of no Church at all?" And now it is a fearsome "Well, are you religious; do you believe in anything?" with a "For God's sake say you believe in a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something somewhere or other." Anything will do so long as you can use the word "religion." One could really respect a Church that stood to its doctrine against the hosts of advanced thought. Even though destruction were certain, it would be honorable. But Christians who swallow defeat after defeat, and whose only concern appears to be that of exhibiting the excellence of their digestions, can arouse little else than contempt.

It is, indeed, one of the curiosities of the present position that the Freethinker who attacks Christianity is, as often as not, met with the defence that no one believes in it. If he argues that the affairs of the world do not exhibit the care of a benevolent Providence, he is told that this is an old-fashioned notion, and that Christians no longer believe in a particular Providence. If he asks for proofs of the power of prayer, he is told that these are not objective, but subjective—they exist only in the minds of believers. If he attacks the inspiration of the Bible, he is told that all books are inspired, and that the Bible has naturally the same faults that mark other writings. He denounces hell, and is laughed at for being old-fashioned. He criticises the orthodox conception of God, and is told that he is caricaturing Deity. The Bible is the same, the creeds are the same, and yet they mean something entirely different to what they have always been taken to mean. It is a convenient discovery—particularly as these new interpretations happen to represent the minimum of concessions to attacks that can no longer be warded off.

A genuine revival of religion is to-day next door to an impossibility. Certain backward sections of the community may be galvanised into activity, but the bulk of opinion is against them. The mass of people cannot escape the contagion of widespread knowledge and of progressive ideas. For knowledge is no longer the property of a few. General education and cheap publications give all who care to have it the rudiments of a genuine knowledge of nature and of life. And in the last resort these are the only safeguards against superstition. A civilisation may remain in the era of the stone age, but it does not advance to a knowledge of metals and then go backward. The Churches, however powerful they may be, cannot take away from us what we know; they can only strive to prevent our knowing more. But their main task is not even this. Their chief work is to strive by all sorts of fanciful and dishonest interpretations, by confusions of thought, and looseness of speech, to give an air of culture to a mass of superstitions that had their origin in the fear-haunted brain of the primitive savage.

C. COHEN.

Secularism Justified of Her Children.

AS a proof that religion is natural and necessary to man we are confidently assured that no sooner is he in trouble than he falls upon his knees in prayer. In health and prosperity his constant temptation is to forget God and eternity, and live as if the present were his all in all; but at the approach of sickness, failure, poverty, or some great calamity, he turns his eyes heavenwards and implores God to come to his aid. This may be perfectly true of many people, who, while neglecting religious practices, have not entirely lost their religious beliefs. When misfortune overtakes them those beliefs become active, and they experience a religious revival. We have no desire to throw any suspicion upon the statement that the cultivation of religion, especially in times of trial and sorrow, yields a certain amount of gladness and joy. There have been saints whose supposed communion with God in Christ filled their hearts, at times, with ineffable bliss. It was their lot, occasionally, to enjoy delicious foretastes of the blessedness of heaven. But the peace and rest which religion affords are painfully spasmodic; they come and go in the most tantalising fashion imaginable. Indeed, even at their best there is something uncanny and weird about them. What people call the consolations of the Gospel seem to be playing hide-and-seek with the most fervent believers; and in reality they are not *consolations* at all. We read: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"; but the sense of his helpful presence is the least dependable thing on earth. In another place we find this impassioned but hopeless cry, "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord; why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Here is a more desperate outburst still: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou answerest not; and in the night season, but find no rest." This is the commonest complaint made against the loving Heavenly Father in the Bible. Jesus is reported to have made it in his dying agony on the cross.

Thus the consolations of religion are most unreliable, being whimsically administered. Besides, the habit of depending upon them produces an extremely abnormal state of mind. The true disciple of the Galilean despises human comfort, in the belief that he has that which is Divine. Thomas à Kempis tells us that the "holy martyr Laurence with his priest overcame the world, because whatsoever seemed delightsome in the world he despised." Consolation is represented as a gift which God imparts or withholds just as he pleases. In the *Imitation of Christ* the believer is addressed thus:—

> "When therefore spiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it with thankfulness; but understand that it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine.....When consolation is taken from thee, do not immediately despair; but with humility and patience wait for the heavenly visitation; for God is able to give thee back again more ample consolation."

Were we to examine the lives of some of the great saints of history we would learn that the consolations of religion failed them when most needed. St. Bernard, of Clairvaux, was one of the saddest of men. His anxieties were overwhelming, and to peace of mind he was a stranger. This world was the valley of desolation, and he passed through it suffering grief and pain, and longing for the rest that remaineth to the people of God beyond the tomb. During his last illness the sorrowing monks prayed earnestly for his recovery, and it was supposed that

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their prayers were partially answered in the prolonging of his life; but he remonstrated with them, saying, "Why do you thus detain a miserable man? Spare me. Spare me, and let me depart." Take another less known but more admirable character, Madame Desbordes Valmore, the pre-eminently pious French poetess. She was an exceptionally Godly woman; but the so-called consolations of religion availed her nothing. Bitter trial, poverty, and bereavement were her lot in life. She was alone, without brothers or sisters, alone and severed from all whom she had loved; and this is her sad plaint:—

> "What can one say in the presence of these decrees of Providence? If one has deserved them, the case is more sad. I often search my heart and try to find out what may have caused me to be so heavily smitten by our dear Creator; for it is impossible for his justice to punish thus without a cause, and that thought very often suffices to overwhelm me."

It is incontrovertible that the consolations of religion are purely imaginary. The things which God is believed to have prepared for them that love him are not bestowed upon them in this world. What he gives them here is tribulation, to qualify them for the better life hereafter. They assemble in their churches and chapels and sing—

> "Brief life is here our portion:
> Brief sorrow, short-lived care:]
> The life that knows no ending,
> The tearless life is there.
> O happy retribution!
> Short toil, eternal rest,
> For mortals and for sinners
> A mansion with the blest."

This life, therefore, is to be endured as a much-needed discipline, not enjoyed as Nature's gift. It is of necessity a life of suffering and sorrow and disappointment, and we are to go through it as prisoners of hope. Now, a falser and more demoralising doctrine than this was never promulgated, and if people really believed it, which they do not, their existence would be infinitely more miserable than it is. We have just had the honor of an hour's interview with a great hero who manfully renounced such wretched teaching many years ago. We refer to Mr. Frederic William Walsh, of the Royal Midland Counties Home for Incurables, Leamington Spa, with whose history readers of this journal have been familiar for the last few years. It will be remembered that some seventeen years ago Mr. Walsh, working as a mechanic in Birmingham, met with an accident which resulted in serious spinal injuries. Paralysis ensued, depriving him of his speech and the use of all his limbs, and necessitating his lying flat on his back ever since. The head is the only part of the body over which he has the least control. For two or three years he had no means of communicating with those around him. One day a pencil was accidentally left on his bed, and he caught hold of it in his mouth. After long and laborious practice he learned to write, holding the pencil between his teeth. At the time of the accident he was an ardent believer, and the dogma he cherished most gratefully was that of immortality. He wrote an essay on "The Philosophy of Salvation," which was published. In this he expatiated on the Fatherhood of God, on love as the essence of his nature, and on humanity as the peculiar object of his boundless affection. But in proportion as he faced the facts of life, particularly the facts of his own history, the belief in a God of justice and love weakened within him, and finally became an utter impossibility to him. He studied science, philosophy, and history, with the result that he became a firmly convinced Freethinker. He is an honored member of the National Secular Society, and does his utmost to spread the principles of Secularism. He has no need of the consolations offered by supernatural religion, because he finds ample solace in the intellectual contemplation of Nature and her activities. He has periods of unconsciousness, when for a week or a fortnight he is dead to the world, and sometimes he suffers excruciating pain; but he remains bright and cheerful through it all. It does one good to see the sweet smile on his expressive countenance, and to read his intelligent and interesting contributions to the conversation. He is profoundly interested in all the political, social, literary, and religious movements of the day. Last April a Paper composed by him, on "Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity," was read before the Leamington Literary and Philosophical Society, and is now published as a pamphlet of thirty-four pages (Lyceum Press, 87 Hanover-street, Liverpool, price 3d.). As a sample of his style, which reveals his noble character, we quote the following extract. Having described the Positive religion, he says:—

> "Her priests are men of science, poets, artists, historians, teachers, and writers, guarding their sincerity as they guard their honor, each bringing his little to the Treasure House of Humanity; all gladly working for Humanity; all loving that for which they labor and offer themselves up as a daily sacrifice; and all helping the development of Altruism. I see politics being purified of self-interest and duly subordinated to morals; the social origin of wealth recognised and being socially applied to the amelioration of society; men working with heart and will at their daily avocations, with more leisure, a larger, richer, and fuller life. I see woman as man's true providence, consecrating the home with a larger love and deeper sympathy. I see the Religion of Humanity as a unifying force inspiring and enlarging unselfish affection, lifting man above himself into a communion with Humanity, through whom he lives and for whom he gladly works."

Here is a glowing optimist in a Home for Incurables, the whole of whose body is useless and an impediment, save the head, for whom Supernaturalism is non-existent, and who regards his life of intercourse with the great and noble of all ages well worth living.

J. T. LLOYD.

Freedom of Thought.—II.

A History of Freedom of Thought. By Prof. J. B. Bury, Litt.D., LL.D. (Home University Library, 74.) London: Williams & Norgate. 1s. net.

PROFESSOR BURY argues that reason was free in Greece and Rome. There were serious drawbacks, however, in the case of Greece. All the world remembers the martyrdom of Socrates. Several other distinguished Greeks met with a somewhat similar fate. With regard to the popular sentiment on such matters, it was pointed out by Leigh Hunt that most of the great poets, who were generally sceptical in relation to the orthodox religion, were reported to have come to a bad end. But persecution was not organised in the Greek states, neither was there any interference with literature. The latter is also true of Rome, and is worthy of special notice. For as soon as the Christians got into power they burnt pagan and heretical books, and in this they were wise with a sinister wisdom. To kill unbelievers, and to leave their writings to work mischief, was a policy that Christians never tolerated, even in their hours of greatest weakness.

"The general rule of Roman policy," Professor Bury says, "was to tolerate throughout the Empire all religions and all opinions. Blasphemy was not punished. The principle was expressed in the maxim of the Emperor Tiberius: 'If the gods are insulted, let them see to it themselves.'" Rome, indeed, in the matter of religion, was like England in India. The empire was bound to be neutral in the presence of a multitude of faiths, all of them right individually and all of them wrong collectively. One result, in the case of India, is that there is no Blasphemy Law protecting any particular religion; and another result is that Secular Education prevails throughout India, although it is not yet adopted in England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland.

Christian historians, even in the earliest ages, were such frightful liars that it is unsafe to believe anything they say without corroborative evidence. They lied, in fact, on principle; and in some in-

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stances they not only confessed it but boasted of it. Eusebius himself owned to having related less what was true than what was edifying. Professor Bury, of course, knows this as well as we do; but we do not think he has made sufficient allowance for it. George Long, the classic translator of Marcus Aurelius, and historian of the Roman Republic, has dealt in his footnotes to the great Emperor's *Meditations* with the allegation that he punished the Christians. The allegation is left but just credible. Yet it was seized upon by John Stuart Mill to show how even the wisest and best of men may be led into evil policies which meaner and baser men escape. Renan knew what he was saying when he challenged anyone to produce a single law against freedom of thought in the whole of Roman jurisprudence before the days of Constantine,—who, it will be remembered, was the first Christian emperor. This challenge of Renan's is, or ought to be, well known. It should have made Professor Bury hesitate to speak in the following peremptory manner:—

> "Under Trajan we find that the principle had been laid down that to be a Christian is an offence punishable by death. Henceforward Christianity remained an illegal religion. But in practice the law was not applied rigorously or logically. The Emperors desired, if possible, to extirpate Christianity without shedding blood. Trajan laid down that Christians were not to be sought out, that no anonymous charges were to be noticed, and than an informer who failed to make good his charge should be liable to be punished under the laws against calumny. The Christians themselves recognised that this edict practically protected them."

We presume that Professor Bury is aware that the authenticity of this part of Pliny's correspondence has been challenged. It is certain that the Christians stuck at nothing in the way of forgery, and to forge this particular passage was not a very difficult accomplishment. Even if it be a genuine portion of the original text, it does not follow that the word "Christians" applies absolutely and exclusively to the worshipers of Jesus of Nazareth. In any case, the Christians were not punished for their religious beliefs, but for their religious practices, and for running amok, as it were, amongst other religionists in the Empire. This is conceded, it is indeed emphasised, by Professor Bury. The Roman tradition of toleration was broken, if it *was* broken, to check the intolerant; for the Christians boasted that, when they gained the upper hand, they would make their fellow citizens worship as *they* did. There would be no toleration of false gods when Christ's kingdom came on earth.

We are delighted to note that Professor Bury refers to the Christians as having "invented a whole mythology of martyrdoms." "Many cruelties," he adds, "were imputed to Emperors under whom we know that the Church enjoyed perfect peace."

The first thing the Christians did when they came into power, under Constantine and his successors, was to destroy the literature of their Pagan adversaries. The wily Paley blandly observed that "the writings of Celsus are lost." He did not tell his readers *how* they were lost. He could not afford to disclose the fact that they were destroyed by imperial edicts issued at the instigation of the Christian Church. The writings of Porphyry were destroyed in the same way. Not a single copy was allowed to survive. Far more than Strafford the Christian Church might have claimed the motto of "Thorough." Nothing of the kind had been attempted by the Pagan authorities. "It is particularly to be observed," Professor Bury says, "that no effort had been made to suppress Christian literature." Rome was not fighting against opinions; she was fighting against what she regarded as dangerous anti-social fanatics, who threatened the peace and prosperity of the Empire. And subsequent events showed that the Emperors were not far out in their calculation.

To the Dark and Middle Ages a brief chapter is devoted by Professor Bury. He heads it "Reason in Prison." It was during "the period in which the Church exercised its greatest influence" that "reason was enchained in the prison which Christianity had built around the human mind." The next chapter deals with the Renaissance and the Reformation. Let us take the latter first. We quoted last week a strong passage from Professor Bury's denunciation of the intolerance of the Protestant Churches. He adds that "Luther was quite opposed to liberty of conscience and worship, a doctrine which was inconsistent with the Scriptures as he read it." Calvin's "fame for intolerance" was still blacker. He established a theocracy at Geneva, where "liberty was completely crushed, and false doctrines were put down by imprisonment, exile, and death." One wishes that room had been found for Gibbon's noble passage on Calvin's hunting down of Servetus.

The vital movement of that age was not the Reformation but the Renaissance. Professor Bury writes eloquently on this topic—giving all honor to the science represented by Galileo, and the burning zeal of propaganda as represented by the martyr Giordano Bruno. Humanism had in it a principle of growth:—

> "We shall see how reason and the growth of knowledge undermined the bases of theological authority. At each step in this process, in which philosophical speculation, historical criticism, natural science, have all taken part, the opposition between reason and faith deepened; doubt, clear or vague, increased; and secularism, derived from the Humanists, whether latent or conscious, substituted an interest in the fortunes of the human race upon earth for the interest in a future world."

Professor Bury rightly mentions Montaigne, the first of the Humanists; and even Milton, for his splendid plea for unlicensed printing; but he omits one name—the greatest of all—that of Shakespeare; against whom he seems to have contracted a prejudice, if one may judge by a recent article of his in the *Positivist Review*, to which attention has already been called in our pages.

Passages in favor of freedom of thought abound in Shakespeare. He chose the beautiful lips of Portia to condemn the folly as well as the wickedness of torture, which was then common in the jurisprudence of Christendom. Where else may we find a similar protest in contemporary literature? In the really greatest of Hamlet's soliloquies, which therefore is never heard upon the stage, occurs the grand passage which made so deep an impression on the mind of Shelley:—

> "Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust in us unused."

What reply had the priests and dogmatists to that challenge? Or what to the following challenge, written in language that only the Master could wield?—

> "What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
> The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
> And mountainous error be too highly heaped
> For truth to o'er-peer. —"Coriolanus," ii., 3.

Listen, finally, to this consummate utterance:—

> "For truth can never be confirmed enough,
> Though doubts did ever sleep. —"Pericles," v. 1.

It is impossible to go beyond that. And no one but Shakespeare ever reached it—in spite of certain pages in Mill's *Liberty*, echoed from Milton's *Areopagitica*.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Some Emotions and a Moral.

> "It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
> Their saints, their —— all they fear or hope
> Are lies, and lies." —BROWNING.

LOW burned the nursery lights. The little motherless girl had been tucked up cosily, and the kiss of good night was still moist upon her father's cheek. The father lingered near the child's bedstead, and stood looking out upon the star-lit sky. The tie

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between them was strangely close, and it had been drawn closer still by the death of the child's mother. He, a silent, reticent man, had been content to leave the child to the care of his wife, who was now no more. A convinced Freethinker, he had allowed perfect freedom in his home, and had not interfered. Now, "the poppied sleep, the end of all" had come to his wife, and he would have to look more closely to the little one.

As he stood gazing out upon the glories of the night, he was startled to hear sounds of partly repressed sobbing from the child's bed. The surprised man quickly and silently approached the child. There was something wrong, for the girl's head was feverish, and the large tears rolled down her cheeks.

The strong man stooped over the little girl, placing the small arms around his own neck, and clasped the terror-stricken child to his heart. There had never been any secrets between them. For a minute or two the frightened child sobbed in his arms, and then in whispering tones the father asked what was the trouble.

"Daddy, I don't want to go to hell."

The man was taken unawares, between the points of his armor. He had expected many things at the hands of Fate, but never this. Between the soothing caresses he said, "Girlie, who has been talking to you about hell?"

The answer came in a broken, confiding whisper, "The rector told me last Friday, and—he said you were a wicked man because you were an infidel, and you would go to hell, too."

To the man the issue was clear. The priest and the father were to battle for supremacy in the mind of the young child.

"Listen, girlie! the rector does not know any more of death than other people, and he has no right to frighten you. There is no hell, dear. It is all a mistake. Who would burn a little girl?"

As he spoke, the sobs ceased at the words. The child was listening, and soon the young thoughts forsook the nightmare inventions of the priests. Talking tenderly, almost like a mother, her father soon had her in conversation on other subjects, until sleep came and found her holding her father's hand. The man was driven back on his own thoughts. For the moment the victory was for Freethought, but what of the future. The shadow of Priestcraft had fallen upon his hearthstone. Would it return?

Leaving a kiss upon the lips of the sensitive, sleeping child, the father again took his silent post at the window. The sunset flared like a huge torch upon the far horizon. One could easily imagine the glare to be that of the fires of the Inquisition, lighting up the blackened limbs of heretics, who were being burned for the good of their souls. The mere thought made his heart thrill with a strange awe. As he watched the silent vanishing of the noiseless sunlight, the place became a sanctuary of dreams. What visions were those that floated before his eyes? What faces defiant of death! The pale face of Giordano Bruno, the mournful countenance of Lucilio Vanini, the sad features of Joan of Arc. He saw the flames licking round Michael Servetus; Galileo in his dungeon; and the erect figure of Francisco Ferrer fronting the rifles of the soldiers.

Dark Ages! Was not any age dark in which shadows of Priestcraft could fall, lessening, eclipsing, the little sum of human happiness, so hardly won for the race by centuries of striving.

The sun had now set and disappeared. Would that superstition had gone with it.

The next day the child was withdrawn from religious instruction in the school, and Priestcraft claimed one victim the less.

MIMNERMUS.

Many mediocre authors, exercising the most complete sincerity, find ample appreciation in the vast mediocrity of the public, and are never troubled by any problems.—*Arnold Bennett.*

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

III.—EVAN POWELL MEREDITH.

I NEVER met the author of *The Prophet of Nazareth*, though I had the honor of eliciting some articles from him contributed to the *National Reformer*, on the subject of the early Christian love feasts and immorality. They were signed "Lucianus," a signature which, like those of "Julian" and "Celsus," has been taken by more than one writer in the Freethought ranks.

Evan Powell Meredith was born in Wales in 1811. He was educated for the ministry at Pontypool College, became a pastor in the Baptist connexion, and an eloquent preacher in the Welsh tongue. He made a translation of the Bible into Welsh. Study of the Scriptures led him to see through their pretensions, and about 1844, as he states in the preface to his largest work, he quietly withdrew from Christianity "whose doctrine, after considerable examination and research, he had ceased to believe, and, therefore, could no longer conscientiously preach." He adds that he had, ever since his secedure, almost daily pursued his researches after the real origin of the Christian religion. These studies he pursued to the last, and he had, I believe, prepared a work on the Gospels, which never appeared. What became of it on his death at Monmouth, July 23, 1889, I cannot say. Mr. Meredith lived a very secluded life. Probably he could have done much had he taken to Freethought advocacy in Wales; but he remained a Deist all his days, and possibly did not care to co-operate with Secularists. Mr. Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth* was evoked by the offer by Mr. George Baillie, of Glasgow, of a prize for the best essay on the question whether Jesus predicted the last day of judgment, and the destruction of the world, as events inevitable during the then existent generation of men. The prize was only ten guineas, a sum which could never have compensated Mr. Meredith for a tithe of the labor he put into his performance. But his motive was not gain. As he states in his preface,—

> "He thought that thus to write on a given subject was an inoffensive and a favorable manner of making some of his theological views known to Christians generally, and particularly to those who had studied in the same college with him, and had taken so much pains to brand him as an infidel."

The Prophet of Nazareth is one of the most convincing works ever written. It thoroughly exhausts its subject, and the upholder of the supernatural character of Christianity is left without a leg to stand upon. Nor is it wanting in eloquence, as the following passage may testify:—

> "There is no man, however depraved, who is not more or less strongly prompted by his own feelings to be just, from a love of justice,—to be benevolent from a spontaneously kind emotion,—and to do good, in general, from a love of virtue. The threats of hell and the promises of heaven, as incentives to virtue, together with the whole tenor of the superstitious creeds prevalent in the world, have made man believe that he is much more immoral, and more helpless, than he really is. Free him from the trammels of book-revelations—let him study nature alone—and man will make rapid strides towards happiness. He has already discovered that his degree of enjoyment is in proportion to his moral and intellectual progress. He has learned that all his miseries arise from a violation of the natural laws—either by him, or by members of the community in which he lives—and that all his happiness is the result of obedience to these laws, in discovering which, and learning to obey them, he daily progresses, gathering a thousand facts from his own experience, as well as from that of others. When mankind, universally, will learn to obey these laws, each individual will feel intense pleasure in promoting the happiness of others, which cannot fail to secure the happiness of the whole race. Then will knowledge and benevolence be inseparably connected in each individual, and vice and misery accidents in human life—rarely witnessed. The progress in knowledge and happiness which man has already made, by *studying nature*, warrants this conclusion, and forbids us to prescribe limits either to the high degree of knowledge he is capable of acquiring, or the intensity of happiness he is capable of enjoying."

In 1865 Mr. Meredith entered into some correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, in consequence of his hearing that dignity deliver a sermon in which he advocated the utility and advantages of wealth. Our Freethinker strongly contrasted the preaching of the bishop with the doctrines of Jesus, as found in Matthew vi. 25-34, xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18; and John v. 27. At first his lordship fenced in his reply, stating that he had been misrepresented, and had not inculcated the pursuit of riches. Mr. Meredith produced a shorthand report bearing out his representations, and persisted in asking an explanation. The bishop now changed his tack, and said he had no time for correspondence. About the same time the Rev. J. F. Francklin, vicar of Whaplode, Spalding, having perused "some extracts from

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your horrible and blasphemous production, entitled *The Prophet of Nazareth*," addressed him an arrogant epistle against employing his "ungodly pen in the service of Satan." He was answered at length, and the letters to the bishop and the vicar were published under the title of *Amphilogia*.

To those who enjoy the sight of Christians squirming and wriggling in the grasp of a hard-fisted Freethinker, *Amphilogia* affords excellent reading. But, of course, Mr. Meredith's chief service to the cause was his great work on *The Prophet of Nazareth*. The world of letters was then giving much attention to Bishop Colenso's work on *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua*. But Mr. Meredith struck a blow, not at any outwork, but at the very citadel of Christianity; and, in dealing with the prophecies of the gospel, he hit the Christian superstition in its weakest part. As long as that superstition endures his work will retain its value, though in these days, when great books are felt to be more than ever great evils, it is to be wished that someone may condense its six hundred pages to sixty.

IV.—MYLES MCSWEENEY.

was but a lad when I first heard the rich brogue of this Irish advocate at the Brill, Somer's Town, adjacent to the spot now crossed by the Midland Arches. The humorous way in which he referred to the myths of "Jasus and the Vargin" was irresistibly funny. His pet subject was the non-historical character of these legendary personages, and he brought to bear on his topic intimacy with the rites and doctrines of the Roman Church, in which he was educated, and a wide acquaintance with mythological lore. Born at Enniskillen in 1814, he early migrated to London, and, hearing the Rev. Robert Taylor at the Rotunda in 1830, adopted the views of the "Devil's Chaplain." When I knew him he was a peripatetic stationer and book dealer, living in a very humble cottage down Westminster way. Yet his room was filled with books explaining "all the mythologies." Many of them were rare and valuable. There were the works of Drummond, Bryant, Maurice, Holwell, Pluché, Savory, Asiatic Researches, etc., mostly picked up secondhand during his peregrinations. Nor were later books wanting, such as those of Dr. Inman, presented by the author, whom McSweeney supplied with many books, as he did also Bishop Colenso.

He sold me some books, said to be "worth their weight in gold," and lent me others, from some of which I enlarged drawings for his lectures. Every Sunday he went from place to place discoursing on some phase of his constant theme. On one occasion I recollect that he took the chair for Mr. Bradlaugh at the Hall of Science, when our leader was lecturing on some similar topic to his own. I once accompanied McSweeney to a meeting of the old Anthropological Society to hear a paper by the Rev. Dunbar Heath. Myles opposed, and afforded much amusement by his rich brogue, and the Irish humor with which he satirised the lecture. At this meeting William Simpson — "Crimean Simpson," of the *Illustrated London News*, who was as good an antiquary as he was an artist—was present and spoke. Some years afterwards, under the pen-name of Phandye, Simpson contributed to the *Secularist*, when under the conduct of Mr. Foote, an amusing skit, entitled "Is Myles McSweeney a Man, a God, or a Myth?" applying his own principles to resolve the living man into a solar hero. Myles was a good-humored man, and took the skit well. For his plainness of language about "Jasus and Mary," and what he considered the remnants of phallic worship in Christianity, he was regarded as coarse. Essentially he was not so. I well remember the fatherly way in which he advised me, while in my teens, to abstain from all indulgences and adopt the Stoic philosophy, which he not only held, but acted up to. For drawing my attention to the noble counsels of Antoninus and Epictetus I owe a debt of gratitude to this self-taught Irishman.

"Larn abathinince," he said, "afore ye thry motheration." His information was good and extensive, and it was at his tongue's tip. But two things he lacked that were essential to his studies—a sound knowledge of languages and philological evolution, and a knowledge of "primitive culture" and evolution. His mind was formed in the pre-Darwinian era. His writings in the *National Reformer* and *Secular Chronicle* are only valuable for their out-of-way information, which some other might shape to better purpose. The same criticism may be passed on a pamphlet on *Moses and Bacchus*, which he published, and which he intended to follow by *Biblical and Mythical Parallels*, which he compiled. An American, Mr. T. W. Doane, has since carried out this project in a way which reminds me of McSweeney's idea, which never received sufficient encouragement to obtain book form.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's death was bound to be the occasion of an orgy of hypocrisy in the English newspapers. First of all, they praised him beyond his merits as a biologist, in order to set him up as a "spiritual" rival of the "Agnostic" Darwin. The idea of his equality with Darwin never occurred to Dr. Wallace himself; first, because he was a very modest man,—secondly, because he knew better. He recognised and confessed that, although he had conceived the idea of the struggle for existence, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest, at the same time that Darwin did, he had not the qualities which Darwin displayed in working out that great idea of evolution and establishing it to the satisfaction of the scientific world. We do not hesitate to say, either, that Dr. Wallace could never have written—no other man could have written—that magnificent chapter in the *Descent of Man* in which Darwin presented with masterly power, and astonishing brevity—the whole case for the natural development of man from a lower form of life, and his natural development from the moment when he might be called man up to the highest intellectual, moral, and æsthetic culture of modern civilisation.

Wallace was a great and good man, but he was not a Darwin, and it is no use pretending that he was. He was always under the dominion of preconceptions. He wanted to find that the truth corresponded with his religious beliefs, and he repelled it when it presented itself in opposition to his prejudices. In the early stages he refused to accept Darwin's view of the origin of man. He gave way at last, but it was when he would have been almost a laughing-stock if he had held out any longer. When he wrote *Darwinism*, which is a most admirable statement of the evolution theory, he had to give his adherence to what he had resisted in the interest of his religious faith. "I fully accept Mr. Darwin's conclusions," he wrote, "as to the essential identity of man's bodily structure with that of the higher mammalia, and his descent from some ancestral form common to man and the anthropoid apes. The evidence of such descent appears to me to be overwhelming and conclusive." This was clear enough, but Dr. Wallace's opposition to Darwinism did not cease. He carried it on on other grounds.

It was admitted by Dr. Wallace that the tendency of Darwinism was to "the conclusion that man's entire nature and all his faculties, whether moral, intellectual, or spiritual, have been derived from their rudiments in the lower animals, in the same manner and by the action of the same general laws as his physical structure has been derived." But this was sheer Materialism; so Dr. Wallace set about searching for something to support his spiritualistic philosophy. He had to bring "the spirit world" in somewhere, and he had gone wrong before. His new theory was that it intervened at three stages; first, when life appeared; second, when consciousness began; third, when man became possessed of "a number of his most characteristic and noblest faculties." It was all very ingenious, but also very fantastic. Moreover, the "spirit world" was an arbitrary assumption. It was not what the scientists call a *vera causa* —a true or real cause. Natural Selection, on the other hand, *is* a *vera causa*. Darwin did not invent it; he pointed to it as a recognised power which was plainly seen in operation; what he did was to extend it over the whole range of organic existence,—including, if we may say so, man's head as well as his feet, and his loves and hatreds as well as his mouth and stomach.

From the nature of the case there could be no *disproofs* of Dr. Wallace's moonshine theories of human evolution; but also, from the nature of the case, there could be no *proofs*. He was simply gratifying his own religious emotions. And he went on doing that to the end of the chapter. His arguments about this world being the centre of the visible universe, and the only one that could be inhabited, etc., did not convince the experts in astronomy or any other science; although they mightily pleased the champions of all forms of Christianity, which, whatever they differ about, agree at least in this, that man ("proud man" "most ignorant of what he's most assured") is the end and crown of creation.

Dr. Wallace was a god-send to the Christian theologians. They made the most of him; indeed, they made too much of him. For he was not with them, after all. He rejected all their doctrines, and, as far as we can see, their God.

Dr. Wallace's funeral was another outrage added to the long list of body-snatching performances by Christian

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Churches. The Bishop of Salisbury officiated at the service. But that was not enough. Rev. James Marchant (of all men!) was brought in to speak "the final words at the interment." We suggest that both these men of God should read the passage in Dr. Wallace's *Autobiography* in which he refers to the good that might have been done if the pulpits of England had, for the past hundred years, been devoted to useful secular subjects instead of to endless sermons on one monotonous topic. Besides, we repeat, Dr. Wallace was not a Christian, nor even a Theist, in the ordinary sense of the word.

We wish to pay a tribute to Dr. Wallace's simple and beautiful character. He always had the welfare of humanity at heart. His later sociological writings were sometimes self-contradictory, but they were animated by a high and noble spirit. It was elevating to come into contact with such a nature.

"God's Word has been translated into 500 languages and dialects," said the ex-Bishop of Tinnevelu, speaking at Southend-on-Sea. South Sea Islanders and Esquimaux must have quaint notions of the European "God" after reading of Ezekiel's celebrated banquet in the vernacular.

"God has so made the British Empire that it cannot be destroyed except by ourselves," says Mr. Norman Angell. Is John Bull to be the next deity?

The Bishop of Ripon has been presented with a pastoral staff which cost over £200. The "sheep" subscribed the amount.

"There is much less preaching of 'hell-fire' than there was," admits the Rev. John Collins, of Edgware, to a *Christian Globe* interviewer. An unsolicited testimonial to the work of the *Freethinker*.

When a Church of England candidate presents himself for ordination as deacon he must declare his "unfeigned belief in all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." This formula has been altered in the case of priests, and in the Lower House of Convocation an attempt was made to alter this also. The motion was defeated, so that the deacons will have to go on making false declarations, or the office will be limited to such as are silly enough to be telling the truth. The *Guardian* thinks that some way should be found by which the burden of conscience would be removed, and at the same time "the supremacy of Holy Scripture as the revelation of God and the final test of Christian truth" maintained. To one who isn't a theologian this looks very much like finding a plan whereby a man may swear to a lie while persuading himself it's the solemn truth.

We agree with Bishop Boyd Carpenter that the best protection against "evil publications" is a widespread, healthy public opinion. But we do not agree that this is being created, or is likely to be created, by the various religious bodies that exist for that purpose, or by the sermons of more or less prurient-minded parsons. We need not bother about the very obvious advertising of certain books given by these agitators, nor the equally obvious fact that ninety-nine per cent. of these self-constituted censors are totally unfitted by nature and education to tell a good book from a bad one. Their notion of literature is the Sunday-school tract, with a dash of Marie Corelli or Hall Caine. A greater evil of these societies for the suppression of undesirable books is that they do not suppress. Very largely they pander to the notion of obscenity, much as as a lecture on "Sex" to "men only" does. This disguised pruriency forms half the attraction of the propaganda. And they certainly do nothing to create a taste for healthy literature. You can't preach a healthy public opinion into existence, and you can't preach an unhealthy one out of existence. That is the long and the short of the whole matter. An unhealthy public opinion is not the result of bad literature being in existence, it is to a much greater extent its cause.

One of the speakers at the meeting deplored the sale of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and said that it should only be permitted circulation in the original. How a book that is bad in English can become good in Italian is rather more than we can understand. This speaker said he quite agreed with a writer in the *Times* who said that the *Decameron* was "a thoroughly immoral book, and Boccaccio well knew it was immoral when he wrote it." The *Times* ought to have known better than to have printed such rubbish. The *Decameron* is one of the masterpieces of Renaissance literature, and is, as a matter of fact, a vast improvement in moral tone on much of the literature that preceded it and surrounded it. The licence it reflects is the licence of its day, and that belonged to a society that had been Christian for centuries, and in which the Christian Church was all-powerful. Anyway, we heartily pity the poor devil who can't read the *Decameron* without getting his morals corrupted. We should hesitate in leaving him alone with any female for whom we had regard.

In a religious contemporary we notice bold advertisements informing the readers how to make their fortunes from oil shares; how to avoid baldness; many patent medicine puffs, and several columns of fiction. That editor knows his public.

The *Daily Chronicle* tells us that Irish priests receive many gifts in kind from their people. So do the gentlemen in the same line of business on the Gold Coast.

Winds of God is the title of a new novel. A chilly subject.

The Bishop of London is convinced that "there is nothing like personal service among the poor to break down a man's disbelief and to lead him to adopt the Christian faith." If his Lordship turned the handle of a mangle for a year it would not prove that the whale swallowed Jonah—nor even that Jeshua of Nazareth rose from the dead.

Dr. Clifford has been helping a united mission in Paddington, and reports the results in the usual high-flown evangelistic style. The mission achieved the remarkable result of getting Christians of various denominations to work together—really a remarkable result considering all we hear about Christian love and brotherhood All the preachers had a good time, but when one looks for the important thing, a different note is struck. How many non-Christians were converted? None are reported, so we may safely assume none were caught. Dr. Clifford says that the outsider "has not been brought within our ecclesiastical edifices to the extent we had hoped. The hoary prejudice against the Churches is still operative." This is only Dr. Clifford's "slim" way of stating an unpleasant (to him) truth. Nearly every house in the district was visited, and the result has been—nothing. It is not a prejudice against the Churches that Dr. Clifford has to fight, it is unbelief in Christianity.

We are getting on. A candidate in the Manchester municipal election received, and published, a letter from Mr. Harry Lauder, strongly commending his candidature. The candidate was successful, too. Some time ago one of our daily papers consulted Mr. Lauder on the question of the number of battleships we ought to have. Now he issues commendatory letters to candidates for public office. The democracy should be grateful to Mr. Lauder. So far as we know, his sole qualifications are that he sings Scotch songs and draws more than a Scotch salary.

Dean Ring (Roman Catholic) has been complaining that in several Protestant wills lately it has been stipulated that any of the beneficiaries who embrace Roman Catholicism shall forfeit their legacies. Dean Ring regards this as an unjustifiable interference with liberty of conscience, and we agree with him that it is so. Only wills of a similar character are made on the Catholic side, and then it is left for Protestants to complain. The truth of the matter is that no Christian—Catholic or Protestant—really believes in a genuine liberty of conscience. He will place unfair obstacles to mental freedom while he is alive, and, if possible, after he is dead. Dean Ring asks whether Protestantism is so bankrupt in logic and reason as to require the support of penal enactments? We have often asked the same question; but so far as Dean Ring is concerned, we would remind him to look at Catholic Spain, and see what occurs there. And we have not heard of any vigorous protests against the Blasphemy Laws that exist in England. As a matter of fact, Christianity has always been propped up by the law, and with the full consent of all classes of Christians.

When one comes to look at the matter closely, making a legacy depend upon a certain profession is a superb piece of irony. It is putting a cash value on religious conviction. The dying man says, in effect, "Being Christians, my family are not likely to change their opinions if it means a loss of money." And events prove that he is usually right. Henri IV. said that Paris was well worth the price of a

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mass. The modern Christian says, in the same way, a good legacy is well worth a profession of religion.

Mr. Bernard Shaw says that his plays are performed in Germany "with the assistance of the Emperor, and the Imperial City, in a magnificent theatre, which is free of rent, and magnificently subsidised." This is quite a striking testimonial to the revolutionary character of Mr. Shaw's work.

"The entire social order of England as we have it at present is anti-Christian." This was one of the remarks made by Mr. Bernard Shaw at the City Temple, before an audience—to quote the *Christian Commonwealth*—"better prepared than any other audience in England to understand his message." This was one of the remarks that attracted great attention, and one would like to ask "When was there any social order genuinely Christian?" Let Mr. Shaw and his City Temple audience read their New Testament carefully and see if they can detect there even the framework of a social order that would be likely to endure for a single twelvemonth. As a matter of fact, the establishment of a social order of any kind was the last thing the New Testament writers had in their minds. They had rules for a select company of believers, but none for a general body of citizens of all tastes and capacities and opinions. How little they had the establishment of a social order in mind is shown by their striking neglect of family life. The need of a social order is not really Christianity's message. This has been forced upon Christian preachers by the march of events—much as Mr. Shaw himself has been forced upon a City Temple audience.

"If I had a neurotic daughter," Mr. Bernard Shaw writes to the *Times*, "I would rather risk taking her to the Palace Theatre than to a revival meeting." This will not sound strange to many of our readers who recollect some of Mr. Cohen's articles on sex and religion. "Nobody," Mr. Shaw adds, "has yet counted the homes and characters wrecked by intemperance in religious emotion." If such statistics were kept the chapel might find its attitude of moral superiority to the theatre "and even to the public-house" difficult to maintain.

That fatuous person, the Bishop of London, volunteers to "accept Mr. Shaw's challenge." Three hundred years ago he would have got Mr. Shaw sent out of the world with a solution of continuity between his shoulders and his ears, or dangling at the end of a rope. But the challenge cannot be accepted in that way nowadays. "I summon the Christian forces of London to my aid," he cries, "and I gladly take up the glove which is thrown down." Yes, but *how* does he take it up? Is he going to trust to his own natural faculties in an intellectual duel with "G. B. S."? We pity him if he is. We fancy, however, that he knows a game worth two (or twenty) of that. He boasts of having put down the living statue business some twenty years ago. Did he? We doubt it. Fashions in the "nude" change as in everything else. Besides, if it comes to that, one might ask the Bishop how much of the anatomy of "the Savior" is left to imagination as he hangs upon the cross.

Reynolds' published a snapshot of "Gaby Deslys off to America." We did not see Waldron in the group. What was the matter?

M. Pierre Loti bears a dignified attitude towards the Bulgarian bully who announced that he was coming to France to challenge the great French writer for stating the truth about the horrors of the war waged against the Turks by the Balkan (Christian) Allies. M. Loti kept silence until so many of his friends offered to accept the challenge for him—he himself being retired from the French naval service and over sixty years of age. He feels bound to speak publicly now. He begs his friends to let the Bulgarian challenger alone. "I am conscious," he says, "of having fulfilled a sacred duty in availing myself of the notoriety of my name to establish the true role during the war of the calumniated Turks and the so-called Christian allies. I confined myself to saying without hatred what I had seen, and especially to reproducing, after verification, more overwhelming testimony, which has since acquired the value of historic documents." M. Loti says that he did justice to the indisputable courage of Bulgarian officers. But it is necessary to discriminate. "Military courage," he continues, "is only truly sublime in the case of civilised men whose pity, whose very nerves, revolt against the necessity of wounds and blood; but in the case of the sanguinary soldiers, delighting afterwards in mutilating their prisoners, in having their hands red with blood, courage loses its value, and approximates closely to that of the mad bull in the ring."

Mr. J. M. Robertson, as President of the Rationalist Peace Society, delivered an address at Caxton Hall on Monday evening. The suffragettes paid him a visit there in order to show how little they cared for peace, reason, or anything else except their own object. They insisted on being ejected, and Peace and Rationalism were left in possession of the field.

Another mere man has tried the hunger-strike. It was Mr. James Byrne, of the Irish Transport Workers' Union. He was awaiting trial on a charge connected with the Dublin strike. He had a handsome public funeral. But he had better have kept alive. It is sometimes harder to live and fight for a cause than to die for it. His act was ill-advised—but he had the courage of his own convictions, and we take off our hat to his memory.

Annie Winifred Holman, of Bournemouth, three years of age, daughter of a licensed victualler, said her prayers one night and then slipped off the bed on the back of her head, and died soon afterwards. The jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death. But what was "Providence" doing?

In the recently published book, *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle*, by Mr. H. N. Brailsford, the author refers to "Tom" Paine, but he never once makes the mistake of writing "Bill" Godwin.

"To grow to full stature we must imitate Christ," says a writer in a pious contemporary. Recruiting sergeants will find this recipe useful in dealing with undersized clients.

"Materialism is the danger of the age," says the Earl of Selborne. Yet the dear clergy are always informing us that Materialism is dead—though nobody ever heard of its funeral.

Undertakers' men have threatened to strike at Liverpool, and coffin-makers have promised to join them. We foresee a risk of the dead "speaking."

The Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith, speaking at the Queen's Hall, London, last week, at a meeting in connection with the Cavendish Association, said "there was no evidence to show that Christian ideals had grown less powerful or more dim." Maybe! But they are not as fashionable as they used to be.

The Dean of Rochester has been advising girls to "never read novels in the morning." Does he include the Bible?

Bishop Boyd Carpenter, presiding at a conference of publishers, editors, newsagents, and librarians, at the Guildhall, London, recently, said a Government measure was in preparation regarding objectionable publications. Will the Old Testament be included?

In the latest report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, just issued, there is no mention of the success of the version of "God's Word" in the cannibal dialect, which was advertised some years ago. Have the cannibals eaten each other? Or have they eaten the missionaries?

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Adams, of Newton Longville, Bletchley, celebrated their diamond wedding on Nov. 6. The old gentleman has twenty-nine grandchildren, and he presented them with Bibles in honor of the event. Their religious education must have been very much neglected to make such a present desirable. For you can't realise on a Bible if you get hard up.

Father Bernard Vaughan deplores the apathy of Catholics in the matter of charity. There were only about a hundred present at the Catholic United Charities' sale of work which he opened in London recently. Yet there were from seven to eight million people living in Greater London. It was shameful. Father Vaughan said he felt his heart bleeding. He could go away in tears. But why on earth doesn't he think a little instead of jawing so much? Giving to the poor, as the Bible says, is lending to the Lord. Why then don't the rich Catholics shell out? Why do they neglect such a good investment? Is it (we ask with fear and trembling) that they mistrust the security?

Father Vaughan looks very like a failure. He has been trying to raise the birth-rate in England for years—and still it goes down. He should turn his attention to something else.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £244 11s. 1d. Received since :—H. Good, 6s.; C. Heaton, 5s.; Dovre, £2 2s.; H. Boll, 5s.; Pretoria Freethinker, 10s.; Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee (quarterly), £1 4s.

C. HEATON.—Glad you still find the *Freethinker* both instructive and entertaining. The circular you refer to *is* "all right."

J. T. LLOYD.—You will see it was lucky that you wrote. We wish you first-rate audiences at Glasgow and freedom from the colds that are oftener caught in trains than got rid of there.

M. CLARK.—Pleased to hear from a twenty years' reader.

G. BRADY.—Thanks for your kind reply; also for the *Freethinker* volumes on the way.

J. B. IRVINE.—You have a legal right to withdraw your child from religious instruction in any elementary public school. In regard to private schools you have no legal right, but an arrangement is generally possible nowadays between parents and principals.

F. H. COPLAND.—Passed over to shop manager. Sorry the paper has not reached you lately. It has been sent regularly from our office. Will you make inquiries at your own end?

H. BOLL.—Thanks for good wishes with subscription.

R. STIRTON.—Glad your list is "on the up grade again." Accept our thanks for your generous service in the matter.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures in London for the first time since his illness on the first Sunday in December at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. He will occupy the same platform on the following Sunday. He is devoting his time mainly to literary work at present, of which his friends will hear more in due course.

Mr. Lloyd lectures at Glasgow to-day (Nov. 16). Particulars of time and place will be found among "Lecture Notices." We do not know the subjects, as we have received no notice from Glasgow this week, but on any subjects Mr. Lloyd will be interesting and informing.

We beg to call our readers' attention again to the old pamphlet by Charles Bradlaugh on Compulsory Cultivation of the Land. It shows how far Mr. Lloyd George was anticipated by the wicked "Iconoclast." Admirers of Bradlaugh should order a copy of this pamphlet. They will find it very interesting from the personal point of view. Order of the Pioneer Press and send threepence-halfpenny.

We are trying to do the Rev. Joseph Hocking a good turn by supplying him with a little information, which he needs very badly. He told a London audience last week that Bradlaugh was dead, and Atheism was dead, and "There was not a man to stand up and proclaim a Godless life to-day." We beg pardon for correcting so great a man, but there are scores of Atheist speakers to-day. He might also find that a paper called the *Freethinker* publishes Atheism for thousands of readers every week. The *Clarion* publishes the same sort of thing, and only kicks at the *word* Atheism.

Ingersoll on Oratory.

"WHAT advice would you give to a young man who was ambitious to become a successful public speaker or orator?"

"In the first place," said Colonel Ingersoll, "I would advise him to have something to say—something worth saying—something that people would be glad to hear. This is the important thing. Back of the art of speaking must be the power to think. Without thoughts words are empty purses. Most people imagine that almost any words uttered in a loud voice and accompanied by appropriate gestures constitute an oration. I would advise the young man to study his subject, to find what others had thought, to look at it from all sides. Then I would tell him to write out his thoughts, or to arrange them in his mind, so that he would know exactly what he was going to say. Waste no time on the how until you are satisfied with the what. After you know what you are to say, then you can think of how it should be said. Then you can think about tone, emphasis, and gesture; but if you really understand what you say, emphasis, tone, and gesture will take care of themselves. All these should come from the inside. They should be in perfect harmony with the feelings. Voice and gesture should be governed by the emotions. They should unconsciously be in perfect agreement with the sentiments. The orator should be true to his subject, should avoid any reference to himself.

"The great column of his argument should be unbroken. He can adorn it with vines and flowers, but they should not be in such profusion as to hide the column. He should give variety of episode by illustrations, but they should be used only for the purpose of adding strength to the argument. The man who wishes to become an orator should study language. He should know the deeper meaning of words. He should understand the vigor and velocity of verbs and the color of adjectives. He should know how to sketch a scene, to paint a picture, to give life and action. He should be a poet and a dramatist, a painter and an actor. He should cultivate his imagination. He should become familiar with the great poetry and fiction, with splendid and heroic deeds. He should be a student of Shakespeare. He should read and devour the great plays. From Shakespeare he could learn the art of expression, of compression, and all the secrets of the head and heart.

"The great orator is full of variety—of surprises. Like a juggler, he keeps the colored balls in the air. He expresses himself in pictures. His speech is a panorama. By continued change he holds the attention. The interest does not flag. He does not allow himself to be anticipated. He is always in advance. He does not repeat himself. A picture is shown but once. So an orator should avoid the commonplace. There should be no stuffing, no filling. He should put no cotton with his silk, no common metals with his gold. He should remember that 'gilded dust is not as good as dusted gold.' The great orator is honest, sincere. He does not pretend. His brain and heart go together. Every drop of his blood is convinced. Nothing is forced. He knows exactly what he wishes to do—knows when he has finished it, and stops.

"Only a great orator knows when and how to close. Most speakers go on after they are through. They are satisfied only with a lame and impotent conclusion. Most speakers lack variety. They travel a straight and dusty road. The great orator is full of episode. He convinces and charms by indirection. He leaves the roads, visits the fields, wanders in the woods, listens to the murmurs of springs, the song of birds. He gathers flowers, scales the crags, and comes back to the highway refreshed and invigorated. He does not move in a straight line. He wanders and winds like a stream.

"Of course, no one can tell a man what to do to become an orator. The great orator has that wonderful thing called presence. He has the strange something known as magnetism. He must have a flexible, musical voice, capable of expressing the pathetic, the humorous, the heroic. His body must move in unison with his thought. He must be a reasoner, a logician. He must have a keen sense of humor—of the laughable. He must have wit, sharp and quick. He must have sympathy. His smiles should be the neighbors of his tears. He must have imagination. He should give eagles to the air, and painted moths should flutter in the sunlight.

"While I cannot tell a man what to do to become an orator, I can tell him a few things not to do. There should be no introduction to an oration. The orator should commence with his subject. There should be no prelude, no flourish, no apology, no explanation. He should say nothing about himself. Like a sculptor, he stands by his block of stone. Every stroke is for a purpose. As he works the form begins to appear. When the statue is finished the workman stops.

(To be concluded.)

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Gustave Courbet: Realist.

TIME is the great vindicator of all things. High and low, great and small, all must submit to her final ruling. You cannot escape her. Pæans of praise and crowns of laurels may be yours; torrents of abuse and the marks of insult may be another's. But Time alone can adjust these rights and wrongs. The poet Shelley, during his life and after, suffered all this abuse and insult. And so with the musician Wagner, and the painter Courbet. These great geniuses had to bear the vicious onslaught of those utter mediocrities, the puritans of art and society. It is the lot of everyone, as Murger says in *La Bohème*, who "dares to harness audacity to their talent." The audacity of Shelley, Wagner, and Courbet consisted in holding to, and practising, something more than the fatuous screed of "Art for Art's sake." They preferred the higher doctrine of "Art for Life's sake."

Shelley is one of the world's great poets; but he was an Atheist and a Republican, and he said so. It took the world half a century to get over his saying so. Wagner is one of the world's great musicians; but he was a Freethinker, a State-banned rebel, and a disturber of conventional art. It took the world almost as long to forgive him his heresies. Courbet is among the world's great painters (although not yet recognised); but he was an Atheist, an Anarchist, and a rebel in art, and although thirty years have passed since his death, yet abuse and insult still cling to his name. But Time's judgment is near at hand. Perhaps her voice may even now be heard.

I.

Last year a book was published, entitled *Gustave Courbet*, by Leonce Benedite. It is the first and only book in English on this great master. The author is a State curator—*i.e.*, an "official"—and I suppose that is why the old abuse and insult has still to be maintained against the artist. But more of this presently. This year we have a work by one of our own art *littérateurs*—Sir Frederick Wedmore—entitled *Painters and Painting*, which contains a great pronouncement upon our subject. Courbet is here considered "a very giant of painting," and "the greatest master of *la bonne peinture*." It is surely the first words of Time's vindication.

II.

Courbet began his career in a revolution, and finished it in one. He came to Paris in 1839, at the age of twenty, to study law; but he soon abandoned books and briefs for the brush and palette. At twenty-two he was actually a painter. Two years later he exhibited, and won recognition with his *Courbet with the Black Dog*. It was the first "blow struck for realism," as he himself would say. The stormy days of '48 came, and with the triumph of the political rebels arose the success of the art rebels—the Romanticists. Courbet was with them in their revolt against "official art"; but he was naturally, as a realist, poles asunder from them in their conception of art. As he said in 1855, "I have not imitated the old, nor copied the new. I have simply sought to nurture my own intelligent and independent individuality." And thus it was that, in 1849, when his *After Dinner at Ornans* flashed upon the world of art, that both the arch-Romanticist, Delacroix, and the arch-Classicist, Ingres, looked with disfavor upon the work.

Whatever critics may attempt in classifying Courbet's art, we must remember that he himself wished to be called a "realist," believing, as he did, that "in pictorial design just as in literature, reality, the thing seen, and the emotion felt or witnessed or divined, must be the basis of the performance that is to last." Courbet's "realism" was, then, *the thing seen*. His art was based upon synthesis, not upon analysis. It was not the object in precise detail, but the object under the artist's sense of feeling, distance, movement, atmosphere, as he really *saw* it. That is what Courbet considered Truth in Art.

In judging art or literature, it is always interesting to seek the personality that is bound up causally with it. Courbet was an inherent rebel. His "rebellion" was part and parcel of his physical structure. No one who has ever seen his portrait could doubt that. It moulded not only his personal character, but his art also. His "realism" was nothing if not the result of sheer physiological necessity. Just as he was forced, by the very nature of his being, to take a stand for truth in art, so he was impelled towards truth in life. As a "realist," his view of the riddle of the universe led him to Atheism. As a "realist," his view of society led him to Anarchism. It was the one immutable physical law all round—necessity.

Few artists, not even Manet, have been subjected to such a vocabulary of abuse as Courbet and his realism. But the truth is, he had something more than mere art opposition to contend with. There were political and clerical enemies that worked behind the scenes; for Courbet was not content with holding the tenets of Anarchism and Atheism, but he must preach them, and, what is more, practise them. Courbet was a friend and disciple of Proudhon, the author of *What is Property?* They first met in 1848, and some years later collaborated in a work entitled *The Principles of Art, and its Social Purpose*. From the days of '48 to 1871, Courbet was an *habitué* of the revolutionary groups, and ever voicing the necessity for the "social revolution." This gave umbrage to the "respectable" folk. It is worthy of note that among his portraits are those of the rebels *Henri Rochefort*, *Jules Vallès*, and *Cluseret*, as well as *Proudhon and his Family*. There can be no doubt that many of his detractors were influenced more on account of his social and religious heresies than his art heresies. His "respectable" friends were continually urging him to keep solely to his art. It was either Baudelaire or Champfleury who said to Courbet one day: "You are talking too much and painting too little." To which Courbet replied: "Here's another fellow who has sold himself to the government!"

Courbet believed, as may be judged from his book just referred to, in a social purpose in art, both in the didactic and subjective sense, such as attracted G. F. Watts, and in the concrete and objective, which was the mission of William Morris. How much of the former he expressed in his works, we have subjects only to guide us, although Proudhon read a social moral in them all. Courbet loved "the people," and some of his finest studies are taken from them, which seems to bear out Mazzini's idea that the power of genius was strengthened by the sense of social aim. *The Stonebreakers*, *The Poor of the Village*, *The Beggar's Charity*, *Peasants of Flagey*, and *Haymakers Nooning* belong to this class. One of these, *The Beggar's Charity*, will one day be considered among the greatest creations of the painter of Ornans, although it is scarcely ever mentioned. *The Stonebreakers* has figures life-size, and you can almost feel the heavy toil. Proudhon called it "morality in action." One critic, attempting a sneer at the artist's creed, said it would make an excellent altar-piece in a church for Agnostics.

Courbet extended his humanity even to animals. Look at the dogs in *At Bay* (in the Louvre), hesitating between the antlers of the wounded stag and the huntsman's whip. I think it was Max Nordau who said that Courbet gave his animals souls. Another canvas of "pity" is *Run Down in the Snow*, where you see the poor hunted doe at the end of the chase, panting and helpless in the snow. He painted a good number of these subjects—*The Fox Hunt*, *Dogs and the Hare*, *The Quarry*, *The Hunter by Water*; and humanitarians will always reverence Courbet for them.

Over Courbet's studies from "the people" the critics had stormed and raved with such phrases as "painting dirt," "brutalising art," "reasoned ugliness," etc. They could scarcely adopt this language

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with his animal subjects; so they tried another tack. One critic defied the painter to specify the breed of his dogs. Edmond About was in great humor at the way Courbet's huntsmen held the horn. Maxime du Camp asked the artist if he was aware that hunting in the snow had been prohibited since 1844, and ended by saying: "It is of no great matter, but I understood that the realist only painted what he saw." And this was the stuff that passed for criticism, and the public accepted it as such. How foolish it all was, even in fact. We can now read in a letter of Courbet's (1853) where he actually relates his experience in following a chase over the countryside up to his thighs in snow. As for About's humor over the horn, Courbet was right. The *cor de chasse* is held as he depicts it. Of course, About had most likely only seen the *cor chromatique*, and imagined they were both held alike.

In 1868 Courbet produced a work entitled *The Return from the Conference*, which exasperated the critics more than ever, on account of its satire upon priests. Courbet, as I have said, was an Atheist, and an anti-clerical to boot.* He used to boast that he was "the pre-appointed historian of the priests," whom he hated. As early as 1850 his *Funeral at Ornans*, which Sir Frederick Wedmore considers "one of the great pictures of the world," gave offence by reason of its caricature of officials and priests. Chennevieres called it "impious." Gautier said the faces reminded him of a menagerie. But this work was respectability itself beside the *Return from the Conference*. Courbet was quite prepared for an "uproar" with this picture, and he got it. The *Salon* indignantly refused it as "an outrage on religion and morality," and even the *Salon des Réfuses* wouldn't touch it. Proudhon, of course, gave his benediction. He called it "an inevitable reaction of Nature against the Ideal." The picture represents several *curés* returning home from a conference. They have all dined well, if not wisely; and one, more tipsy than the rest, is astride a donkey, supported very indifferently by two others, who have also had more than sufficient of "the mellow." There are some half-dozen of these precious soul-savers, and a delicious piece of study they make. A peasant standing by is convulsed with laughter, though his wife, out of sheer habit, is on her knees in reverence.

On the refusal of the picture by the *salons*, Courbet threw his house open for the public to view it, and determined to paint companion pictures, one of which was to be *La Coucher de la Conférence*. Champfleury then wrote to Buchon (both friends of Courbet):—

> "Courbet has been telling Saint Beuve that he is going to paint another picture of the priests.....He is making a great mistake.....Whatever he may say—*The Return from the Conference* was a great setback. .....In Heaven's name keep him from symbolism and satire."

Well, it seems that friends finally dissuaded Courbet from his project, although *La Coucher* was not altogether forgotten, as it appeared in a series of vignettes in a pamphlet entitled *Les Curés en goguette*, published at Brussels in 1868. Champfleury uses a mild word when he says *The Return* was a "setback." It might have been that then, but the clericals bore that picture in mind when they took their revenge upon Courbet at the suppression of the Commune.

III.

Of Courbet's connection with the Paris Commune of 1871, M. Benedite, in his recent book, has repeated the old jargon about the Vendôme Column. Courbet, as is well known, took a prominent part in the Commune, and during its brief *régime* the well-known Vendôme Column was destroyed. Courbet has been charged with being the chief instigator of its destruction, and history has laid the sole blame upon him. M. Benedite says that Courbet had recommended its destruction even in the days of the Government of National Defence. This is not true. Courbet did not recommend its *destruction*, but suggested its *removal* to the Esplanade des Invalides. Its destruction had certainly been advocated, not by Courbet, but by no less a person than Auguste Comte, and a certain member of the government that afterwards sent Courbet to prison for "vandalism"—Ernest Picard. The decree for the demolition of the column was passed by the Communal Council on April 12, and as Courbet was not elected to the Council till April 16, he could not take any active part in the decrees. M. Benedite says further that Courbet "urged" the Commne to carry out the project. When and where was this urging? I have read every line of the sittings of the Commune in its *Journal Officiel*, but have seen nothing of this save one instance, which, M. Benedite must know, Courbet disclaimed.

Of course, this story has served for forty years an excellent purpose for all Courbet's art detractors, to say nothing of political and clerical enemies. But surely it is high time that we inquired a little further than from these. However, right or wrong, Courbet paid the penalty in full during his life. Arrested and tried by the Courts-Martial, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine. That was not all. He was made a social outlaw, and his name and pictures were spat upon. In 1872, when he sent his picture *Le Femme de Munich* to the Salon, the jury rejected it, one of them—Messonier—saying they would not even look at it. "It is not a question of Art," he said, "but one of dignity." At Ornans, his native town, the municipal council actually removed his statue, a gift, of the *Pêcheur de Chavots* from the Iles-Basses fountain.

The heaviest blow came the following year, when the Chamber voted for the reconstruction of the Vendôme Column, and mulcted Courbet in its cost, over three hundred thousand francs. Poor Courbet fled to Switzerland, thinking to evade this cruel demand. But his property at Ornans and Paris was seized. The Prussians had already destroyed his studio at the former, and now the State despoiled his two in Paris. Pictures entrusted or lent to friends were seized, valuables and moneys at banks, all were impounded. And so Courbet went into exile, and in the little republic of the canton of de Vaud he found not only shelter but honor. But his art days were over. In November, 1877, came the news of the sale of his pictures, and they had gone for a pittance. A month later "amnesty" came, not from France, but from one who gave peace as well as pardon—Death!

IV.

Courbet's *chef d'œuvre* now hangs in the Louvre. It is called *The Wave*, and this is what Sir Frederick Wedmore says of it:—Courbet's "noble painting," says the writer, "is a new thing in painting: a piece than which no sea-piece by Turner or by Constable, by Cotman or by Boudin, can possibly be more expressive. Again it must be said quite plainly, *The Wave* is one of the world's masterpieces."

H. GEORGE FARMER.

* Among his most intimate friends, who were all militant Freethinkers, was Hippolyte Barnout, a well-known architect, editor of *The Atheist*, a Freethought journal of the 'sixties and 'seventies.

Pioneers of Physiology.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 716.*)

As we have seen, Vesalius established modern anatomical science on a purely inductive basis. Some of his conclusions were criticised, and in a few instances corrected, by his disciples; but these amendments were made in terms of observation and experiment. The truth was in each instance ascertained, not by an appeal to the written word of Galen or Vesalius, but by a further study of the facts themselves. Thus was the road made clearer for the even greater revolution which William Harvey was destined to accomplish.

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Had the physician Michael Servetus devoted less attention to the barren fields of theology, and more attention to the productive pastures of science, his services to civilisation would have been far greater than they were. An early suspect, he was compelled to flee from Spain in order to escape the clutches of the Inquisition. He studied astronomy, geography, jurisprudence, meteorology, in turn, and strove to pierce the secrets of God through a knowledge of the human frame.

> "To know, said he, the spirit of God, we must know the spirit of man; and to truly know the spirit of man, we must know the structure and working of the body in which the spirit resides."

To this end he studied the human body, and passages in his *Restitutio* prove that he was well on the road towards an understanding of the true processes of the circulation of the blood. But his career was destined to be a short one. The father of Unitarianism refused to recant his anti-Trinitarian heresies, and was burnt alive by the command of that unbending upholder of the right of private judgment, John Calvin, at Geneva in 1553.

> "With him, or at the same time, there was burnt the whole edition of 1,000 copies of his book, the *Restitutio*, with the exception of some copies that had passed into the hands of friends."

Servetus was a martyr to the twin causes of Science and Freethought; but however much the enemies of enlightenment obstruct the paths of progress, they have never yet succeeded in permanently arresting the advance of the human spirit. At the time of Servetus' tragic death, Gabrielus Falloppius was teaching anatomy from the chair of his noble and approved good master, Vesalius, at Padua. The Falloppian tubes and the Falloppian canal perpetuate his name. But he made no particularly important contributions to the progress of physiology, and it is with the epoch-making demonstration of the processes of the blood that the remainder of this article is mainly concerned.

A more important link in the chain of physiological evolution is represented by another pupil of Vesalius—Realdus Columbus, the man who opposed, and as some think betrayed, his master. There seems little room for doubt that Columbus stole, and stole without the slightest compunction, not only from Vesalius, but from Servetus also. His posthumous work, *De Re Anatomica*, was modelled on Vesalius' *Fabrica*.

> "The frontispiece even, is a bad imitation of Vesalius' frontispiece, and the work ends as does Vesalius' with a chapter on vivisection, the one being little more than a varied repetition of the other."

His indebtedness to Servetus is plainly proved by the fact that in describing the pulmonary circulation, Columbus practically repeats the Spanish physician's statements.

Nevertheless, it is only just to remember that Columbus described, and correctly described, the pulmonary circulation. And he showed that all the blood vessels were filled with that ruddy liquid, and that the spirits and vapors with which the vitalists of that day peopled the arteries were entirely mythical.

A further advance was made by Caesalpinus of Pisa towards the solution of the blood's circulation. He discovered that—

> "the heart, at its systole, discharges it contents into the aorta (and pulmonary artery), and at its diastole receives blood from the vena cava (and pulmonary vein)."

Although the valves of the veins appear to have been known to earlier inquirers, Fabricius, a pupil of Falloppius, was the first to explain their structure. He clearly recognised that the valves of the veins, while in no way obstructing the flow of the venous blood towards the heart, would offer serious opposition to the flowing of blood from the heart. But Fabricius was too much under the influence of traditional doctrines to fully appreciate the true meaning of his discovery. He regarded the valves as regulating organs merely, and compares them with the mechanical appliances with which water is dammed up for future use.

It was reserved to William Harvey to gather together into one harmonic whole the discoveries of Fabricius and his forerunners, and to reveal to the world the real mechanism of the circulatory system which forms the foundation of modern physiology.

Harvey was born at Folkestone in 1578. His father was a yeoman, and his brothers were successful merchants in London City. After taking his Arts degree at Cambridge in 1579, he proceeded to Italy to study medicine under the celebrated Fabricius at Padua. In 1602 he received the Paduan degree of Doctor of Medicine, and returned to England in the same year.

Settling in London, he soon joined the Royal College of Physicians, and was appointed Physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1608. Six years later he commenced his famous lectures on Anatomy at the College of Physicians, in which he propounded his theories concerning the heart and the blood. His written work, however, the *Exercitatio*, was not published until 1628.

Harvey's growing fame increased his medical practice, and he numbered Francis Bacon and the Earl of Arundel among his patients. He accompanied the latter on his embassy to Ferdinand II, and sometimes caused his patron considerable anxiety for his safety. Harvey wandered far in search of objects of natural history in a country overrun by robbers, who had been made what they were by the Thirty Years' War of religion. The country had been reduced to such a sorry state that Harvey tells us in a letter written at the time that—

> "By the way, we could scarce see a dogg, crow, kite, raven, or any bird, or anything to anatomise; only sum few miserable people, the reliques of the war and the plague whom famine had made anatomies before I came."

This, however, was not Harvey's only experience of the dire disasters of war. Physician to Charles I, he was naturally a cavalier, and was consequently regarded with disfavor by the Parliamentary Party. It appears that during the Civil War, "his lodgings at Whitehall were searched and not only the furniture seized but also invaluable manuscripts and anatomical preparations." To this exasperating destruction of precious scientific material, the poet Cowley thus refers:—

> "O cursed war! who can forgive thee this?
> Houses and towns may rise again,
> And ten times easier 'tis
> To rebuild Paul's than any work of his."

When Harvey first set his mind to master the motions and uses of the heart, the perplexities of the problem were so hard to overcome that he was inclined to abandon his search as hopeless. But patient study at last showed him that—

> "the motion of the heart consists in a certain universal tension.....that when the heart contracts it is emptied, that the motion which is in general regarded as the diastole of the heart is in truth its systole."

Stated in other words, the heart throbs, not when it sucks blood in, but when it drives blood out. From this discovery flowed important consequences. It was at once apparent that the blood which each systole discharges into the arteries sets up a pressure on its containing vessels which causes the pulses; the artery swells at different points of its course, not in order to suck blood into it, but simply because blood is driven into it by the pressure of the constricting systole of the heart.

Following this discovery, Harvey soon gained a clear conception of the working of the auricles and ventricles and valves of the central blood vessel. Every mystical element in the motions of the heart was now eliminated; the pulsations of that organ were fully interpreted in terms of stress and strain. And now, guided by the considerations which had led to a complete explanation of the circulation of the blood within the heart itself, and throughout its

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neighboring vessels, Harvey ventured to put forward a conception which—

> "was of so novel and unheard of a character that in putting it forward he not only feared injury to himself from the envy of a few, but trembled lest he should have mankind at large for his enemies."

Yet this startling departure merely consisted in applying to the circulation, as a whole, the self-same laws which governed the lesser circulation of the heart and its adjuncts.

In thus extending his principle, Harvey was guided by purely materialistic considerations. He argued that at every heart-beat a certain quantity of blood passes from the vena cava to the aorta, and that in a short space of time the heart derives from the veins and sends to the arteries all the blood that the human body contains. In the words of that eminent physiologist, the late Sir Michael Foster:—

> "It is obvious, therefore, that the blood which the heart sends along the arteries to the tissues cannot be supplied merely by that blood which exists in the veins as the result of the ingesta of food and drink; only a small part can be so accounted for; the greater part of that blood must be blood which has returned from the tissues to the veins; the blood in the tissues passes from the arteries to the veins, in some such way as in the lungs it passes from the veins (through the heart) to the arteries; the blood moves in a circle from the left side of the heart, through the arteries, the tissues and the veins to the right side of the heart, and from thence through the lungs to the left side of the heart."

Harvey's investigations showed clearly why the heart was emptied when the vena cava—the vein which fed it—was obstructed, and why it became swollen with blood when the aorta—the artery into which it discharged its blood—was tied. It was now obvious why a ligature which pressed on the veins, caused a limb to swell with blood, whereas a ligature which embraced an artery blocked its channel and made the limb pale for want of blood. Now was made plain the reason why the body could be drained of its entire blood supply by opening a single vein. And now became apparent the purpose which the valves of the veins served in the circulatory system, and the whole process of circulation became purely mechanical in its workings.

Harvey's demonstration was a great triumph for scientific Materialism. As Sir Michael Foster says:

> "Harvey's argument is essentially a physical mechanical argument; the problem which he puts before himself to solve is essentially a mechanical physical problem; the solution of that problem at which he arrived is essentially a mechanical solution of the phenomena of the circulation."

In our day paper psychologists, as Maudsley contemptuously calls them, continue to befog the problems of brain function with fancies and fictions. And in Harvey's time, the problems of blood circulation were obscured by theories concerning the existence of various kinds of spirits—natural, vital, and animal. Once only does Harvey condescend to notice these imaginary entities, and he then proceeds to demonstrate the truth of his discovery on purely mechanical principles. As a result, the "spirits" disappeared, and although their names lingered long afterwards, no physiologist of later times has ever regarded them seriously.

The main feature of Harvey's discovery was, that the blood which courses through the body is the same blood which again and again returns to the heart. It travels from the arteries to the veins in the tissues, and from the veins to the arteries through the lungs and heart, undergoing changes in the substance and pores of the tissues, and in the substance and pores of the lungs.

In the absence of the microscope, which came into use later, Harvey was unable to demonstrate the complete course of the circulation. He had no conception of the marvellous capillary system which unites the arteries with the veins. The capillaries were discovered by Malpighi some fifty years later, and the Italian physiologist actually showed them to the wondering eyes of the aged Harvey, who, in his declining days, was thus enabled to realise the complete circuit of the blood through the body.

The life and labors of William Harvey serve once again to illustrate the oft-urged verity that—

> "the greatness of all great men is partly built on the worth of those who have gone before. In science, no man's results are wholly his own; like living things, they come from something which lived before. Vesalius, Fabricius, and the rest led up to Harvey; but they were not Harvey. He was himself, and his greatness is in no wise lessened by its having come through them."

T. F. PALMER.

The Vultures of Faith.

WICKED, blatant infidel,
For Jesus caring naught,
Take this warning—cease your scorning,
Listen to be taught.

In the morning of your days
You may laugh at death;
But there'll come a time, my friend,
When you'll fight for breath.

When around your dying head
Things will fade to mist,
Will you then our faith despise,
Wicked Atheist?

Many such as you have laughed
At the thought of hell;
'Twas an easy thing to do—
Youthful, strong, and well.

But the reaper's shadow came,
Health fled from them fast,
Sight grew feeble, pulse grew slack,
They believed at last.

Wicked, blatant infidel,
Death may come to you,
Night or morning, without warning,
Hear the Gospel true.

. . . .

Puny little Christian soul,
Paltry little worm,
Maggot who infests the dead,
Cease awhile to squirm.

Keep your promises and threats,
And your craven fears,
For a muddy mind like yours
Or your dull compeers.

Many lies contain a germ
Of the precious truth;
Fear of death is rarely found
In healthy, lusty youth.

You do well to seek, my friend,
Moribund recruits;
For the crack-brained ranks of faith
Vigor little suits.

In the darkness of our days,
Like a hungry beast,
On the brain that now decays
Superstition feasts.

And for every falterer,
Through fear or feeble mind,
The fertile liars of your breed
A thousand "converts" find.

Christian vulture, hover on
At the feast of death,
Croak your warning night and morning
With your tainted breath.

Mental racks and moral cripples,
Minds in last decay,
You may keep—let cowards weep
And tremble while you bray.

Putrid soil belief may nourish,
Keep your barren ground;
Philosophy will only flourish
Where the sane abound.

H. W. THURLOW.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, Miss K. B. Keogh, "*Androcles and the Lion.*"

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, C. H. Smith, "Evolution."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): 12 noon and 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, Lectures.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Chas. H. Johns, "Swinburne."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Stewart, "Vegetarianism and Social Changes."

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Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

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Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

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Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....*day of*.....*190*.....

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He that would end his days well must spend them well.
—HENRY MONTAGU,
Earl of Manchester (seventeenth century).

From the Capitol Terrace.

THE day will surely come when high-spirited men will rejoice in the traditions of nations once opposed to their own;—rejoice, and not merely show respect. I dreamed of such a time when, one Sunday evening, in November, 1913, I walked slowly along the broad Pennsylvania Avenue towards the Capitol at Washington.

Only the day before, I had looked from a rising ground into the smoky valley of Monongahela at Pittsburg, Pa., and watched the gigantic steel-works making machinery for five continents. This was a throbbing representative of the industry of the American people, unresting, inventive, passionate. Now I had come to the serenity of the Federal City, where the genius of the Republic broods over the dominion that stretches from ocean to ocean, and from the lakes of the St. Lawrence to the tides of the Mexican Gulf. Daylight was gently lessening, and an orange glow brightened the West. The sunset rays sparkled on the glass in the windows of the dome which rose over a most glorious pillared building constructed of sandstone and marble. This was the Capitol, the corner-stone of which was laid by George Washington, September 18, 1793.

Open-air speaking is permitted at certain spots along the Pennsylvania Avenue, and I paused to hear what two small groups of citizens were listening to. One group were gathered about a wild-man-of-the-woods sort of orator (he said he lived with the eagles on the hills of California!), who had lifted on high a pole bearing a placard; and on the placard ran the inscription, "Did Adam belong to the Colored Race?" As it happened, the wild man's remarks were very irrelevant, and I had no time to wait for the development of the argument; and I am still unable to say whether there are good reasons for believing Adam to have been a negro. I suppose, but I am not sure, it would follow that Eve was a negress, since she evolved her beauty from a rib of her honored spouse. A negress, spectacled and anxious, stood among the crowd, and I could not help wishing she might be comforted by the lecturer's assurance that she and Eve had close resemblances.

The next group were somewhat listlessly attending to a band of Evangelical missioners, some white, and some mulatto. When a feeble hymn had creaked its last bar, an elderly colored preacher, whose grey hair and brown face were contrasted with a white tie and white collar, opened the Bible, and read the text "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" For various reasons, I felt melancholy myself as I hearkened; everybody else looked melancholy; and the good old evangelist (should he happen to read these lines!) may take it from me that his sermon quite distinctly affected a contributor to the *Freethinker*.

But the gold and crimson light on the dome of the Capitol drew me forward. I halted again when I saw the Peace Monument under the shadow of the trees at the entrance to the Grounds. It commemorates the close of the Civil War, 1861-5, and America weeps at the record of pain and death, and Victory upholds the wreath, and Peace offers the olive branch. Then I hastened up many steps to the noble terrace that extends along the western front. Here I meditated, while the crescent moon graced the twilight, and the lamps of the city flashed out along the avenues.

It seemed to me so natural that, when all humanity becomes consciously, as well as historically, one race, the generous heart should pass from land to land, and be glad impartially to recall the story of the struggles and achievements of each people. Wars and massacres we must everlastingly regret, and the act of disembowelling one's fellow-man can never become sacred in history or art. But, above all the lamentable brutalities which have accompanied the progress of civilisations and the strife for liberty, there soared the spirit,—pure relatively, and ever purer as the ages succeeded,—which aspired towards human idealisation. We can none of us work more devotedly for a cherished cause than did our forefathers; but we can work more intelligently, more wisely, and more fraternally. In other words, we shall learn how to improve the world without war, and reconcile conflicting interests without malice.

When that necessary qualification is made, however, I claim that we may honorably and joyfully sympathise with the valiant efforts of our ancestors and predecessors to break fetters, political or spiritual, under no matter what star, or on no matter what far shore. Willingly and patriotically, I render homage to the finer souls among our barbaric English fathers, the feudal baronage that aided in the establishment of our Parliament, the seventeenth-century Puritans who removed the bauble of Divine monarchic right, and the Radicals and Trade Unionists who laid the basis of the democracy that is not yet completed in our islands. With equal admiration, I salute the makers of the French Revolution,* and the initiators of that tremendous upheaval which introduced a new age, a new thought, and a new popular activity. In like manner, and without any national class-distinctions, —without, for instance, implying that Spain is decadent and the Turks moribund,—may we not be happy to greet every sign of growth, of spontaneity, enlightenment in Turk, Spaniard, Chinaman, or African; and every record of progress in the annals of the past in every quarter of the globe?

Hence, English of the English as I am, I do not see why I should not be proud in America's pride, and catch the inspiration of her dignified rebellion against the unreasoning demands of my own fatherland. On this terrace of the Capitol, and under this starry heaven (for night has now fallen on the pilgrim), I applaud the courage and resolution which nerved Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Paine, Franklin, to direct the destinies of the United States towards a glory that never could have been attained by a people that submitted to injustice. And, again, why should not I, English as I am, respond to the grandeur of Lincoln's consecration—with the

* So much so, that I follow the Positivist plan of dating letters from the year 1789, this present year being the 125th.

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exception of one phrase,—of the Gettysburg cemetery?—

> "The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here, to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause to which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

We will except the phrase *under God*, and the Gettysburg address has additional force; for it then expresses the self-reliance of the human heart, determined at all hazards to prove its power for heroism and an ever-enlarging co-operation.

What I have said comes to this, that we are approaching a stage of human thought at which, instead of studying the attributes of God, we shall contemplate the achievements of a civilisation that has incessantly struggled to purify itself, and that conducts this struggle in all peoples, and not merely in a nation here or a nation there. How rich is history in treasures of bravery and sincerity if only we searched its pages with a keener sense of human values! How rich is daily life all over the world, if we will but open our eyes to the endless creation of generous ideas and generous service! These riches are a universal heritage. The glory of one country is the glory of humanity, and he who acts finely does it for mankind.

Such were my thoughts on the esplanade of the Capitol of Washington.

As I returned along the Avenue, the ancient preacher was wearily terminating his sermon, and still he sighed,—"O wretched man that I am!"

Poor soul! The Nineteenth Century, in its more foolish moments, taught this negro mind a creed that was already declining. Education and the Twentieth Century will bring in music instead of this wheezy dirge.

F. J. GOULD.

Washington, D.C., U.S.A., November, 1913.

Nonconformist Cant.

OF all shams in the modern religious world, the sham of Nonconformity is about the worst. Nonconformists talk loudly about their having a "Free" Church, when as a matter of fact the average Nonconformist chapel is more hidebound by orthodox dogmas than any other. It is, indeed, one of their complaints against the Church of England that too much freedom is allowed its ministers, and more than once Nonconformists have urged the State to interfere and put down illegal religious practices. They denounce Churchmen for accepting State aid, and at the same time seek relief from taxation by every possible means. They denounce State patronage, and eagerly grasp and loudly demand official recognition at State and municipal functions. They talk about freedom of opinion, and meanwhile help to maintain Blasphemy Laws and Sunday laws specially intended to oppress one set of opinions and maintain another set. If Nonconformists were genuine in their talk, these laws would be swept away almost at once. As it is, they continue with their cant about freedom and equality until the very name of Nonconformist has become a synonym for deep-grained hypocrisy.

I am, of course, speaking of Nonconformists as a whole. There are exceptions to the general run, but these only serve to throw into greater relief the truth of what has just been said. Amongst these exceptions is Mr. Halley Stewart, a gentleman well known as a Nonconformist and for his lifelong devotion to principle. Mr. Halley Stewart was for several years President of the Secular Education League; he did valuable work while he held that office, and is still doing valuable work as a member of the League's Executive. He is also an ardent Liberationist, and, above all, he is one who, in whatever movement engages his services, never belies his principles. He is a Nonconformist in the fullest and truest sense of the word; denying the right of the State to patronise or support religious opinion with all the greater vehemence when, by a turn of the political wheel, the opinion receiving such support happens to be his own. Such devotion to principle is exceedingly rare in the Nonconformist world, and a recent occurrence shows how much Mr. Halley Stewart stands alone when he tries to induce his friends to act on their professed principles.

The Liberation Society is a body organised for the purpose of liberating religious opinion from State patronage and State control. So far—in theory—its program is wholly commendable. In practice the Society is not so commendable, as will be seen. On November 11 the Liberation Society held its Triennial Conference at the Holborn Hall. The Chairman said that 146 Free Church Councils and other organisations had sent delegates. So there was a good representation, and the delegates in their speeches breathed a whole-souled devotion to principle and religious liberty. Dr. Clifford wrote expressing "sorrow" at his inability to attend, accompanied by the characteristic expression—

> "We know our minds. We are convinced that anything short of the complete neutrality of Parliament towards Churches is unjust to the people, injurious to religion, a source of division among Christians, an obstacle to social progress, and confusion and weakening to the Church that accepts it."

Here is high principle for you! Here is a man who is evidently so wedded to principle that he would go to the stake sooner than surrender. At least it would seem so. When it is remembered, however, that Dr. Clifford regularly accepts State aid for his own church in the shape of relief from taxation, and quite as regularly upholds the State teaching religion in schools, one begins to be a little bit suspicious. We will return to Dr. Clifford in a moment.

At the Liberation Society's meeting, just towards its close—it was probably deferred as long as possible, Mr. Halley Stewart moved the following resolution:—

> "That, while regretting the difficulties which have so long prevented a settlement of the Education question, this conference renews and emphasises its conviction that no system of national education can be satisfactory unless it recognises that it is unjust for the State either to impart or pay for religious instruction, and that the entire responsibility for such instruction rests upon parents and Churches."

Now, this was a resolution that ought to have been carried unanimously. It was no more than a plain affirmation of the principles that all the speakers had been proclaiming with might and main. If that resolution was in place anywhere, it was in place at a Liberation Society's meeting. How was it received? The resolution, says the report before me, "met with considerable opposition on the ground that it was bad tactics to confuse the Disestablishment question on which they were agreed with the debatable question of Secular Education." The debatable question of Secular Education! In the name of all that is reasonable, what is in it debatable about among a body of men who really believe in the disestablishment of religion? Mr. Halley Stewart properly replied that the Liberation Society existed to propagate principles, not to support compromises. Perhaps he should have said *ought* to exist for that purpose. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority did not agree with him. Out of several hundred delegates, only twenty-one supported the resolution, probably not more than about four per cent. of those present. A more disgraceful exhibition could hardly have been given. And one's admiration for Mr. Halley Stewart's action is increased by the sweeping nature of his defeat.

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What is the Liberation Society after? What is the world of Nonconformity after? A speaker who preceded Mr. Halley Stewart, the Rev. H. J. Taylor, said that the attitude of the State should be complete neutrality towards the Churches. Dr. Clifford, also, in his smug manner, wrote of the neutrality of Parliament toward Churches. What does it mean? What a great many simple souls imagine it means when they hear this protagonist of the Passive Resisters roll out the expression, is the neutrality of Parliament towards all *opinion*. That, however, is not what Dr. Clifford means, although it suits his game to let people think this is what he means. What he is fighting for, what evidently the Liberation Society is fighting for, is *the equal patronage of all forms of religious opinion by the State*. They practically say to the State:—

> "We do not ask you to cease making other people pay our rates, we do not ask you to cease to patronise religion, to give it official recognition on State occasions, or to repeal laws made for the protection of religious opinion. With all these things we are content. But we complain that this patronage is not equally distributed. You favor one Church more than another. When you plunder the general public, you give one Church more than others. We do not object to the plunder, we do not object to the patronage, all we ask for is equal shares."

That is really the attitude of the average Nonconformist. Analysed, it is the morality of the thieves' kitchen. The State is to treat all Churches alike. It is to be neutral towards them, but not towards those who do not belong to any of the Churches. They exist to be fleeced, and the Liberation Society, with Dr. Clifford, then appeals to those that are fleeced to see that what is taken from them is shared equally among those who take it. It reminds one of a couple of highwaymen compelling a coach full of victims to divide the "swag" equally between them.

Twenty-one people in an audience of several hundreds voted in favor of the State leaving religion alone. All honor to the twenty-one. All the rest voted in favor of the State disestablishing one Church, and establishing all the others. That is really what the vast majority of Nonconformists in this country want—equal establishment of all sects by the State. And for my part, I am convinced that the last state would be worse than the first. No more fatal blow to genuine progress in this country could be conceived than the equal establishment of all forms of religious opinion. Dr. Clifford may be right that the present form of establishment leads to division among Christians. That is one of the securities we have of at least the possibility of progress. And, contrariwise, he may be right that his form of establishment—which he facetiously calls disestablishment—would lead to greater unity among Christians. It would, in all probability. On the one side there would be greater union in making demands of the State; and on the other hand there would be greater unanimity in stifling all opinions that threatened the security of religious belief. And from both eventualities, in the words of the Litany, "Good Lord deliver us."

There is only one form of disestablishment that it is worth while any honest and intelligent person troubling about. That is a disestablishment of the Church that involves the disestablishment of religious opinion. To disestablish a Church and to establish the opinion for which the Church stands is securing by an act of hypocrisy what has been surrendered to the force of facts. The duty of the State is to *ignore* religious opinion altogether, and to treat Churches exactly as it treats other associations of men and women—protect them so long as they are exercising those legal rights that are possessed by all. A genuine propaganda of disestablishment would have supported Mr. Halley Stewart's resolution. It would also support the exclusion of religion from all State offices and municipal functions. It would decline a State subvention in the shape of either a direct money grant or of a remission of rates. It would ask no more for itself than it asks for every other form of opinion—and that is protection from direct aggression, and liberty to propagate itself by its own methods and at its own expense. A Liberation Society that aimed at this would command the respect of all. A Society that merely aims at securing equal patronage by the State deserves the contempt of all.

Above all, a Society that upholds the State teaching of religion to children, and opposes it being so taught to adults, only adds cowardice to its other qualities. The adult can resist where the child cannot. The child is helpless in the hands of its elders. It looks to them for protection and for guidance. And we protect it by exposing it to the assault of teachings that everyone knows and admits are of doubtful veracity. We guide it by leading it into paths out of which it must afterwards find its own way at the cost of much time and pain. That the State shall cease to force religion upon adults is an act of social and political justice. But that the State shall cease to exert its powers to force religion upon the child involves more than mere political and social justice, it touches upon some of the deeper aspects of human morality.

C. COHEN.

Reasons for Not Being a Christian.

THE Rev. G. Stanley Russell, M.A., minister of St. Anne's Congregational Church, has published four sermons the object of which is to inform his readers why he is a Christian, Protestant, Free Churchman, and Congregationalist. We are only concerned with his reasons for being a Christian. Mr. Russell confesses that in passing from youth to manhood he "had to fight his way through the deserts of intellectual doubt." In this connection he repeats the common but wholly inexcusable lie that "the old Atheist lecturer of the Charles Bradlaugh type was extinct as the dodo." If Mr. Russell does not know that such a statement is utterly false he must be going through the world with his eyes shut. "Atheist lecturers of the Charles Bradlaugh type" are more numerous to-day than ever, and several of them have recently been prosecuted under the odious Blasphemy Laws. The reverend gentleman falls into another grievous mistake when he says that "it is now generally admitted that if the mind that is abreast with modern thought and steeped in modern culture is to have a religion at all, the only possible one is Christianity." As a matter of fact, the mind so described has, as a rule, no religion at all, in the conventional sense. Ever since Huxley's day the adjective by which it generally qualifies itself is "Agnostic." But when such a mind has a religion, it is not necessarily Christianity. Is Mr. Russell aware how many hundreds of cultivated British people are avowed Buddhists, simply because they are convinced that Buddhism is a sounder philosophy of life than Christianity? If he were to make inquiry he would soon learn how untrue and absurd his assertion is. A third blunder committed by the preacher in his introduction is the statement that "those who to-day maintain aloofness from the faith do so not from motives of hostility, but from a sheer indifference which has either never given a consideration to its value, or which regards it as an idealistic teaching too high for a busy and complex world to attain." The majority of those who hold aloof from Christianity do so, not because they are indifferent and thoughtless, but because they are unable to believe in its truth, while some disbelieve it so thoroughly that they are bound to maintain an attitude of active hostility to it.

At this point Mr. Russell asks, "What is Christianity?" and declares that if we look around us on the Church of to-day we shall only be driven to bewilderment and despair by the many conflicting and sometimes degenerate conceptions of it which are offered for our acceptance, while if we consult the theo-

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logical libraries we shall find not only conflict of opinions, "but also a degree of verbosity and juggling with words which may make us conclude" that the game is not worth the candle; but the curious thing is that the reverend gentleman, though himself a divine, answers the question thus: "Christianity is Jesus; the real Jesus, the human Jesus." The peculiarity of this answer is that it is no answer at all, because Jesus, the real Jesus, the human Jesus, is an unknown quantity, existing only in the imagination of the preacher. The Gospel Jesus was superhuman, and consequently unreal.

Now, strangely enough, Mr. Russell assigns the alleged historicity of the human Jesus as his first reason for being a Christian. In the most oracular manner possible he affirms that "the man of Galilee actually lived and moved and spoke and died," forgetting that the *actuality* of Jesus is the point in dispute. We repeat that the Gospel Jesus was super-human and supernatural, and therefore unhistorical. Such a being never lived, and so far as we know, never shall live. In each of the Four Gospels Jesus is "the Son of God." In two he is supernaturally born, in one he who is supernaturally born is the Word of God, who by means of that birth becomes flesh, while in the four he supernaturally rises from the dead and ascends to heaven. A being of whom such miracles are reported is not human and cannot be historical. Mr. Russell quotes Tacitus, John Stuart Mill, Lecky, and Morley as witnesses to his historicity; and yet he cannot but know that not one of these distinguished men can be claimed as a believer in the Gospel Jesus, or as a follower of the Christ. Assuming, without even attempting to establish, the actuality of "the sublime Mystic of the Galilean hills," the reverend gentleman proceeds to expatiate upon his perfect and compassionate humanity and his perfect purity, which is a very easy thing to do in the absence of knowledge. At some points, however, the panegyric touches historic ground, and we can challenge it. Take the following example:—

> "Hospitals are one of the results of the coming of Jesus; the great river of human philanthropy not only rose among the hills of God but rose from the fathomless well of the compassion of Christ. The leper, the lunatic, and the rest of the family of affliction who could render no service and represent no tangible value to the community were uncared for until Jesus came and imbued the world with a new and deeper spirit of compassion. Woman was a slave and a plaything until the Man of Nazareth by his own example inspired mankind with chivalry, and placed her not under man's feet but by his side."

We are surprised that a Master of Arts, who presumably has read history, should betray such gross ignorance and invincible prejudice. Possibly it is an instance of prejudice concealing knowledge that we have here. In any case, the preacher unblushingly contradicts the unanimous testimony of historians. In ancient Greece care for the weak was a duty universally imposed upon the strong. In a work often attributed to Aristotle we read: "What the strong may gain by their work for the weak, the weak in their old age receive from the strong." Plato describes honor to parents as "the first and greatest and oldest of all debts" (*Laws*, 717). Orphans were objects of great attention. Both Plato and Aristotle strongly insisted upon the duty of the State to provide for them. Poverty was relieved with the utmost scrupulosity. There was systematic poor relief for the infirm, and relief for the children of those fallen in war. While those who could but did not work were severely punished, yet for those who were unable to work on account of bodily defects and infirmities there was a system of public relief. We also read of mutual aid societies. Strangers and travellers were amply provided for at inns or resting-places in the temples. At the temples, too, the sick received free medical treatment. As Mr. C. S. Loch, Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, London, well says, "the 'sons' of Asklepios became a profession, and the temple with its adjacent buildings a kind of hospital." Lecky informs us that Rome was not one whit behind Greece in the matter of private and public charities. While stating that "public hospitals were probably unknown in Europe before Christianity," he admits that medicines were distributed to the sick poor, that there were infirmaries for slaves, and military hospitals, under Paganism. Why, we know from the Edicts of King Asoka that two hundred years before Christ India was dotted with hospitals both for man and beast; and as there is no difficulty whatever in accumulating examples of the most tender charity practised by the much-maligned Romans, it is impossible to believe that, whereas the charitable institutions of the Emperors Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian embraced all the orphans and the minor children of the whole Empire, the sick poor were neglected. The truth is that Christianity closed the Pagan hospitals by force. So strong was the prejudice against the Asklepian temples, which were also hospitals, that by the end of the fifth century not one of them remained.

The allusion to the position of woman in pre-Christian times is calculated to entirely mislead the thoughtless and unlearned among the readers of Mr. Russell's sermon. To say that woman was "a slave and a plaything" until Jesus came is to give expression to an unmitigated falsehood. In Rome, from the earliest times woman enjoyed greater independence and liberty than she has ever done, even to this day, under Christianity. On the woman question Jesus never uttered a word, nor left his disciples any example. This is what Mommsen says about woman under the original constitution of Rome:—

> "Woman did not indeed occupy a position inferior to man in the acquiring of property and money; on the contrary, the daughter inherited an equal share with her brother, and the mother an equal share with her children" (*History of Rome*, vol. i., p. 57).

By the year 169 B.C. the family jurisdiction over women was becoming practically more and more antiquated. As Mommsen says:—

> "Even in public matters women already began to have a will of their own and occasionally, as Cato thought, 'to rule the rulers of the world.' Their influence might be traced in the comitia, and already statues were erected in the provinces to Roman ladies" (vol. ii., p. 384).

At this time almost the only disability woman had to endure was that of perpetual guardianship by her family, her own son often becoming her guardian. Now, between the years A.D. 130 and 180 there flourished an exceptionally great jurist, called Gaius, who wrote a remarkable work, entitled *Institutes*, which was unfortunately lost. In 1816, however, Niebuhr had the good luck to find it at Verona; and, as Sir Henry Maine informs us, this is what it says about the law of Perpetual Guardianship, which from the mature Roman jurisprudence had entirely disappeared:—

> "The great jurisconsult himself scouts the popular apology offered for it in the mental inferiority of the female sex, and a considerable part of his volume is taken up with descriptions of the numerous expedients, some of them displaying extraordinary ingenuity, which the Roman lawyers had devised for enabling women to defeat the ancient rules. Led by their theory of Natural Law, the jurisconsults had evidently at this time assumed the equality of the sexes as a principle of their code of equity.....The consequence was that the situation of the Roman female, whether married or unmarried, became one of great personal and proprietary independence, for the tendency of the later law was to reduce the power of the guardian to a nullity, while the form of marriage in fashion conferred on the husband no compensating superiority" (*Ancient Law*, pp. 127, 129).

Sir Henry Maine does not hesitate to add (p. 129) that under the Christian emperors there took place "a reaction against the liberal doctrines of the great Antonine jurisconsults." We have fallen back upon these incontestable authorities to show the readers of Mr. Russell how unspeakably groundless and absurd his remark about woman is.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

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The Truth About the Holy Land.

"Within the walls and behind the door [of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem] there has been much fighting among the representatives of the Church of Christ: the result, at the moment, being a sullen truce which leaves the building in the joint occupation of the Greeks, and Latins, and the Armenians. As at any moment the ministers of God may be seized with a passion to murder their brethren in the faith, a Turkish soldier, fully armed, stands on duty in the little chapel which professes to be the actual place where Christ was born. This is a picture to contemplate—a Mohammedan soldier keeping watch over the spot where the shepherds found 'the babe lying in a manger.'"—SIR FREDERICK TREVES, *The Land That is Desolate*, p. 123.

"A Protestant, familiar with the Holy Scriptures, but ignorant of tradition and the geography of modern Jerusalem, finds himself a good deal 'mazed' when he first looks for the sacred sites. The Holy Sepulchre is not in a field without the walls, but in the midst and in the best part of the town, under the roof of the great church which I have been talking about. It is a handsome tomb of oblong form, partly subterranean, and partly above ground, and closed in on all sides except the one by which it is entered. You descend into the interior by a few steps, and there find an altar with burning tapers. This is the spot held in greater sanctity than any other in Jerusalem. When you have seen enough of it, you feel perhaps weary of the busy crowd, and inclined for a gallop; you ask your Dragoman whether there will be time before sunset to send for horses and take a ride to Mount Calvary. Mount Calvary, Signor? Eccolo! it is *upstairs—on the first floor!*"—A. W. KINGLAKE, *Eothen* (Nelson's edition), pp. 152-3.

THE average untravelled Englishman, who has been trained from earliest childhood to believe in the historical accuracy of the Bible, pictures to himself Palestine, the country of the Bible, as a land of ravishing beauty. He may hedge somewhat on Jonah in the whale's belly, or privately rationalise in the matter of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still. He may whittle away the Deluge until it is quite a private affair, extending only a hundred miles or so. He may extend the six days of creation into millions of years, and have his own opinion as to Balaam's talking ass; but no doubt has ever disturbed his mind as to the accuracy of the description drawn by the Hebrew prophets of the country in which they lived.

He reads of it as being a "land flowing with milk and honey," of the "Rose of Sharon," of the "Balm of Gilead"; and, from the sermons he has heard, he gathers that the life of Jesus was spent in an environment of lilies, cornfields, and vineyards. The picture is completed by the multitude of cheap prints and oleographs of picturesque shepherds and their flocks; or the shores of Galilee, dotted with the white sails of fishing boats in the distance.

This was the belief in which we ourselves were trained, helped by an immense Bible containing hundreds of illustrations bearing out this view of the Holy Land—a belief long since dissipated by true accounts of the country by modern travellers.

Sir Frederick Treves, the well-known surgeon to the late king, is the latest traveller to record his experience of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in a book entitled *The Land That is Desolate* (Smith Elder, 1912).

Sir Frederick Treves utterly demolishes the popular idea of Palestine as a land of plenty, and shows the country in all its natural desolation. Of the far-famed Sharon, he says:—

> "The Plain of Sharon is emphatically not beautiful, from its vastness and monotony it is very wearisome. It is as level as a billiard table and almost as smooth and as uniformly green. One thinks of the Rose of Sharon and imagines banks and terraces covered with some such transcendental crimson rambler as runs riot in old Persian embroideries, but the Rose of Sharon, the learned say, is no other than the sickly narcissus" (p. 22).

Of the hills of Judæa, where Samson lived, he observes:—

> "It cannot be claimed that the scenery of the country where the drama of Samson's life was played can add one single touch of vividness or of character to the familiar history. The background, indeed, is as negative as a bank of mist. Keith truly says, in his *Land of Israel*, that 'the rounded and rocky hills of Judæa swell out in empty, unattractiveness, with nothing to relieve the eye or capture the fancy.'"*

Of the valley of Sorek, where lived Delilah, the woman beloved by Samson, he remarks: "The fascination of Delilah must have been great indeed if she could attract any but a prospective stone merchant to this wizened place" (p. 31).

Of the road to Jerusalem, Sir Frederick says: "I know of no approach to any town that is quite so austere, or so haunting as this. The road toils ever upwards, hidden from the sight of the world, along an interminable valley of stones, along a melancholy ravine, sullen and secretive." At the end of this pass, open country is reached, and finally a place called Bittir, a dismal and barren place where goats and human beings search for a living among the rocks and stones.

Bittir stands at the entrance of the gorge which leads up to Jerusalem, and our author declares:—

> "Throughout Palestine I met with no spot which appeared to be so well fitted as this to be the scene of Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, since the place is so unhappy-looking, so bleak, and so full of the shadow of death."

The train,—

> "after crawling out of Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones, loiters across a rock-strewn plain of unreasonable ugliness, and, finally, with every symptom of extreme exhaustion, staggers into the terminus of Jerusalem."

Jerusalem itself, within the walls, is described as—

> "made up of a tangle of lanes and byways of infinite and alarming complexity.....The traveller wanders to and fro expecting every moment to find himself in an honest roadway open to the sky, but such a fair street he will never find. Jerusalem appears to be composed wholly of intriguing, bewildering slums. Let the curious turn aside but a few paces from a known path, and he may be lost for hours. This is one of the most impressive and memory-haunting things in the sorrowful city—this human labyrinth, devilish in its ingenuity, baffling in its maniacal aimlessness, mocking in its elfish trickery."

Of the celebrated Via Dolorosa, the Path of Pain, along which Christ is reported to have walked to the place of crucifixion, we are told:—

> "The Via Dolorosa which pilgrims come thousands of miles to see is quite a modern lane. For some distance it is a paved passage between blank walls; it then changes to a mean street, and at last ends ignobly in the bazaar in a vaulted passage full of noisome shops. Along this dirty and callous street the Stations of the Cross are marked by inscribed stones let into the walls, or by other insignia. Here, for example, is indicated the exact spot where the cross was laid upon Jesus. Here is the place where He sank under the weight of His burden. Here is the point in the lane where He met His mother, and a little farther on is the spot where Veronica wiped the sweat from his brow. A picturesque mediæval house, projecting over the street, is pointed out as the house of the rich man Dives, while near the fifth station there is—built into the wall—a stone which has a hollow in it caused by the pressure of the hand of Christ. The Via Dolorosa is a mere fiction, a lane of lies, a path of fraud. The present road does not appear to have come into existence until the sixteenth century, and, according to Dr. Sanday, 'its course has been frequently changed.' It is a great commercial asset, however, so it can be understood that when next its direction is modified there will be keen competition to turn it to individual advantage" (p. 54).

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is described as "a show-place full of objects of doubtful authenticity, and, in its dark alleys and deep crypts, a kind of necromancer's cavern." In the side wall of the Chapel of the Sepulchre is an oval opening which, says Sir Frederick, "suggests the orifice of a shooting gallery at a fair. Sir Rider Haggard compares it to a "hawse-pipe in the bows of a steamer." It is through this hole, on Easter Eve, that—

> "fire descends from Heaven to the Holy Sepulchre, where it is received by a minister of God, who passes it, in the form of a lighted taper, to the yelling multitude

* Sir Frederick Treves, *The Land That is Desolate*, p. 33.

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without. This Easter scene has been described by many with varying degrees of disgust. It is only to be equalled by those degrading religious orgies which are to be met within the forests of savage Africa" (p. 77).

He quotes Dean Stanley as speaking of it as "probably the most offensive imposture in the world."

The Pool of Bethesda, which, as our author points out, in the account in the Gospel of St. John, suggests a wide sheet of limpid water, surrounded by a cloister of some magnitude, "is far down at the bottom of a pit." And "In the cistern, which could not accommodate a larger multitude than five or six, is water which would probably be condemned by any medical officer of health. This is the Pool of Bethesda." The Pool of Siloam is no better, for we read, "The Pool of Siloam is described as 'an evil-smelling mud hole.' It is a wretched spot.....The village of Siloam is, I think, the most abject hamlet I can call to mind" (pp. 109-10).

Some five and a half miles south of Jerusalem lies the town of Bethlehem. Says Sir Frederick:—

> "Imagination has endowed this way with picturesqueness, but a chilled upland in Derbyshire, where stone walls and a thorn bush may be the only features in the landscape, is to be preferred to the country towards Bethlehem."

A little way beyond Jerusalem, on the Jericho road, lies Bethany. Sir Frederick describes the place and its inhabitants, as follows:—

> "It is now represented by a few wretched hovels, grey, filthy, and ruinous—a slum detached from a city, a pitiless man-hating spot. The houses piled up on the hill would seem to be as empty as a heap of skulls, their staring windows sightless as the eye sockets of the dead. The inhabitants are reputed to be the dirtiest and most importunate in Palestine. This reputation is maintained. The hamlet stands in all the effrontery of shameless squalor, at the head of a dejected valley. Being on the verge of the desert of Judæa, the view southward from poor Bethany is very grievous.
>
> "Accompanied by a yapping crowd of children, who are extravagantly unclean, the visitor is taken to the house of Martha and Mary. This is a mere penance observed by pilgrims and others, for the spacious building may as well be called the house of Ananias and Sapphira. He is finally invited by a dozen begrimed hands to enter the tomb of Lazarus, this sepulchre being the joy of Bethany. The children smile through their dirt as they reiterate the invitation, for, seemingly, they know that the burying-place of Martha's brother has changed its site from time to time. It is possible that at this point the tourist rebels, for there is little object in descending into a foul street cellar for the purpose of being shown a grave in which Lazarus did not lie" (p. 131).

The country between Jerusalem and Jericho is described as "a weary desert, grey with melancholy, bare to pitifulness, and silent as a land of the dead"; it is "a mean country, a waste of innumerable hills .....hills that are dead. Their bones, in the form of grey rocks, show through the tattered covering of threadbare grass and wiry shrub. The whole place is treeless.....The monotony of the way is unspeakable."

Sir Frederick, of course, visited the Sea of Galilee, only to sustain further disillusion, for we learn that the far-famed water of Galilee,—

> "On nearer view, fails to exhibit any hitherto undiscovered charm. It is still a lonely stretch of water, as monotonous and unsympathetic in its environment as the basin of a reservoir.....It may seem a sanctified experience to walk in meditative mood by the Sea of Galilee in the still of the evening, but when one has to pick one's way among aggressive filth, and to hold a handkerchief to one's nose all the while, even the enchanting story of the lake avails for little" (p. 194).

In fact, the Holy Land may be summed up in the writer's words as "A country of imposture and make-believe" (p. 23). And he warns "Those who find comfort in the belief that—

> 'There is a green hill far away,
> Without a city wall,'

And who would keep that vision clear and unspoiled, should never come nigh Jerusalem" (p. 84). Sir Frederick Treves appears to accept the Bible as substantially correct as an historical record. And to square the present desolate condition of the land with the Bible description, he suggests that in ancient times it was better cultivated and more thickly populated; but he produces no evidence in favor of this view, and, in fact, there is none to produce. In spite of the many years, and vast sums expended by the Palestine Exploration Fund, the results have been meagre in the extreme compared with the discoveries in Babylonia, Egypt, and Assyria, and shows that the land was most prosperous under the rule of the Romans.

Scientists are agreed that the geology and climate of the country have not changed since ancient times. It is a small country, about the size of Wales, and before its conquest by the Romans it was often the contending ground of the great empires of Babylonia, Egypt, and Assyria, to one or other of which the country was nearly always a vassal.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

John Bright. By R. Barry O'Brien. London: Thomas Nelson. This is one of the volumes in Nelson's Shilling Library. We have looked into it to see what is said about Bright's attitude and speeches on the Bradlaugh question, and we have not been able to find a single word on the subject. We wonder if this omission was intended to please the Catholics. Whatever the author's motive, he has been guilty of a very disreputable proceeding. Biographers are under obligation to tell the truth about the men and women they undertake to present to the public. Partisanship of any kind is bad enough, but to select the facts is downright dishonesty. And in this instance the selection is a very foolish one. The Bradlaugh question cannot be suppressed. It has its indefeasable page in English history. And it is to John Bright's credit that he dealt with it, from first to last, in a lofty and generous spirit. Other men, even Mr. Gladstone, made mistakes in connection with it, but Bright never made one—he was right every time. And the explanation is that his public life, as well as his private life, was guided by principles. He consulted them, and them only, when he wanted to know what he ought to say. This also must be said. Bright was scrupulous in giving Bradlaugh credit for the most honorable intentions. He plainly told the bigots in the House of Commons that some of them had far less reason to talk about conscience and honor than Bradlaugh had. When this was laughed at Bright said something stronger. It was loftily said, and it was full of true humility. Only a fine nature could have said it as an impromptu in reply to an interruption. "I pretend," he retorted, "to have no conscience and honor superior to the conscience of Mr. Bradlaugh." He stuck to that. He meant it. And before he finished that speech he sent a still heavier explosive into the ranks of the "Christian gentlemen" who were baiting Bradlaugh. "To a large extent," he told them, "the working people of this country do not care any more for the dogmas of Christianity than the upper classes care for the practice of that religion."

John Bright's attitude on the Bradlaugh question did him infinite credit, for he had not only to fight his natural enemies but also to fight many of his natural friends; and that is the greatest test of a man's sincerity and courage. Yet this noble episode in Bright's career is carefully concealed by his biographer. What on earth is the reason? We have suggested one, but there may be another.

Bright was the greatest orator of his time (he preceded Bradlaugh). We heard him once at an open-air election meeting at Birmingham. Joseph Chamberlain spoke first, and was much applauded; but the speech was that of a smart commercial traveller of politics, with the inevitable reference to *Pickwick*, and we did not notice anyone shedding a tear at his departure. Chamberlain drove off to another meeting, and up came John Bright. No one could help noticing the leonine head and face, though it must be admitted that the nose was hardly in keeping with the other features. How the audience looked up to him! "Now," they seemed to be saying to each other, "we are going to hear something." And they did. The slow, low, sympathetic voice (all the poetry, pathos, and passion of the human voice are in the lower register) in six sentences made everybody forget Joseph Chamberlain and *all his tribe*, and "ah's" responded to the inspired and inspiring statement that failure was impossible in that contest because the soil

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of Birmingham had been consecrated and reconsecrated to the cause of freedom.

Who can ever forget, having once read it, that pathetic speech in which Bright told how Cobden came to see him and begged him to come out and fight the Corn Laws. Bright had just lost his young wife—her body was still unburied. "I was in the depth of grief," Bright said, "I might almost say of despair, for the light and sunshine of my house had been extinguished. All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life and of a too brief happiness, was lying still and cold in the chamber above us." Every man in that meeting who had lost a wife, every man who feared to lose a wife, was caught by the throat. One who was present told us years afterwards that the meeting was shaken by a great sob. But the orator retained command of himself and went on with his narrative.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron is in a fair way to be made a saint. A *Daily Mail* reporter thus describes him at the production of his sketch at a music-hall: "He sat full in the light, smiling at the painted lady in tights and on all generally, while the wreaths of smoke from his cigarette curled above, forming a kind of halo round his head." We hope Waldron will not have a set back. It would be sad to see his halo in the sale-room.

The worst thing said about Waldron's play appeared in the *Daily Sketch* (Nov. 12). Mr. W. R. Titterton, representing that journal, went to see "Should the Woman Tell?" He found that there was nothing indecent or suggestive in it, but —— "It is just the sort of thing clergymen would give us if they ran the halls. *In which case I am sure I would not take my daughter there.*" The italics are Mr. Titterton's.

Mrs. Dan Crawford, wife of the African missionary, told the following story to an audience at Westminster Chapel. She was taken dangerously ill when visiting a native chief. There was no food suitable to her, and her native boy said, "Your God has forgotten; he is not a God of love." Just then an eagle carrying a fish in its mouth was seen flying high up in the sky. The bird was just over a broad river, and it suddenly dropped the fish. Even then this remarkable eagle took care not to drop the fish in the river. Right in the midst of the water was a little flat rock, and on "this the eagle dropped the fish." Mrs. Crawford "owed her recovery to the providential supply of food, and the faith of her companions was restored." Now, we like this story, but we suggest that the next time it is told it would be more effective if a bottle of quinine and a hammock chair were added. The Westminster Chapel congregation would not be at all alarmed. They would probably relish it the more.

Some of the comments on Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's death are really funny. Here is one by "Historicus" of the *Methodist Times*. Wallace, we are told, "had none of the narrowness of outlook that blinds the vision of some great scientists." We do not wish it to be understood that we attribute narrowness of mind to Alfred Russel Wallace. But what is the matter with the other scientists? As a mere matter of fact, Wallace's scientific limitations were marked. And by the narrowness of other scientists one just has to understand scientists who refused to be caught by a disguised—or refined, if you will—animism.

The *Guardian* wishes that Wallace had "strengthened his religious belief with less questionable support than the phenomena of Spiritualism," but is thankful that he had some religion, even though, from its own point of view, it was quite wrong. And it adds, "It counts most of all that whatever may be said of the logical import of evolution, this famous exponent of the idea was no Materialist." That is a piece of true theological criticism. The only interest in the subject is so far as it supports religion. And even if the idea makes for the disentegration of religion, it is something a scientist declined to call himself a Materialist. Materialism, however, does not depend upon whether certain people choose to call themselves Materialists or not. It depends upon the sanity of its method and the fruitfulness of its principles. And Wallace lived to see these become the commonly accepted data of all scientific work—even of his own.

Leave it to the Bishop of London to say the silly thing when the time arrives—and often when it hasn't arrived. "Thank God," he says, on the question of music-hall sketches, "the Christian folk of London are in a vast majority, and the question we have to make up our minds about is: Are we going to be masters in our own home?" A little less silly, and the remark would be impertinent. "London is ours"—that is, it belongs to the Christians. Everybody else is here on sufferance. And we are convinced that the Bishop really thinks this to be the case. Years ago, when the Bishop was "spreading" himself in East London, and drawing meanwhile a large salary from a sinecure attached to St. Paul's, he asked Mr. Cohen why Secularists, if they were dissatisfied with this Christian country, didn't leave it and settle in some new land? The reply he got was that when one found rats in one's house one didn't sit on the doorstep waiting for them to leave. One bought vermin destroyer and cleared them out. The Bishop has yet to learn that none but a fool ventures to claim civilisation as the property of a sect.

We venture to say that the Bishop of London and his helpers offer more encouragement to indecency in the course of a week than the worst music-hall does in the course of a year. They incite people who go to music-halls to *look* for indecency. And nothing in the world could be worse than that.

The Bishop of London's secretary says that the morality of the music-hall stage is to be watched from the auditorium with even greater rigor than ever in the future. Are the pious "deadheads" going to use telescopes instead of opera glasses?

The Yellow Press editors have been manufacturing headlines concerning two men who ordered a £13 supper at a Paris restaurant, and then refused to pay. It is a lot of money for a meal, but the last supper mentioned in the Gospels has cost humanity more.

Beiliss, the Jew recently acquitted in the ritual murder trial at Kieff, has received an offer to appear on the stage in several European cities. If the Carpenter of Nazareth were alive to-day he would be similarly exploited by his wooden-headed followers.

A low class paper devoted to sporting interests is naturally Conservative and Christian, and perhaps we ought not to be surprised at its combining deep piety with excessive vulgarity. But it might as well pay a little regard to truth occasionally in order to prevent itself from becoming intolerably monotonous. It is a pure fiction, with reference to Bradlaugh and Northampton, that "there stands a statue of him in bronze, erected outside a public lavatory." We assisted and spoke at the unveiling of that statue; it was not in bronze, and we saw no public lavatory near it, though one may have been erected since. It was in the middle of a large square, and we suppose it has not removed to another spot since.

Evan Roberts has been figuring in the newspapers again. He is the most melancholy memento of the Welsh revival. The orgy of excitement was too much for him, and it appears that he will never recover from it. He has lately refused to visit his dying mother. In this he resembles another revivalist who would not go out from a meeting to see his mother and other members of the family. The revivalist species always have marked characteristics in common.

More trouble in Wales! It seems that railway companies are in the habit of running cheap Sunday excursion trains from English districts to popular places in Wales, with the result that the "Sunday calm" is rudely broken. There is "intense indignation," of course, and only "a degree less acute" is the annoyance of Sunday motor traffic and Sunday golf. This is all very distressing, and doubtless if these distressed Welsh people had their way they would erect a Sunday barricade all round the Principality, with "Abandon all enjoyment, ye who enter here," liberally displayed.

Mr. Bottomley narrowly escaped joining the train-wreck near Melun. The train he was travelling by was pulled up just in time to prevent it from dashing into the two trains already in collision. Mr. Bottomley speaks with horror of the "mass of burning wreckage and writhing humanity" he saw before him. "And in the midst of it all," he says, "priests prated of the love of God, whilst ordinary men and women flung themselves into the flames to rescue the sufferers—for love of mankind. Said a fellow-passenger to us, 'We have had a Providential escape.' *We!* Twenty honest postal clerks burnt to ashes! *He*, a wholesale jeweller—and *we*—well, never mind about ourselves. Verily, God 'moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform'! *God!* It was the work of the Devil!" It was the work of neither, Mr. Bottomley, though the sentiment does you

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credit. If it were the work of either it would be the work of both, for God and the Devil are the Siamese twins of theology, and, like Wordsworth's cropping sheep, they move altogether or not at all.

"G. B. S." is having a fine old time. Headlines—such as "Mr. Shaw on This," "Mr. Shaw on That," and "Mr. Shaw on the Other" are now of frequent appearance in the *Daily News* and other halfpenny papers. We shall come to "Mr. Shaw on Babies" presently. And when we do the Bishop of London and Father Vaughan will take a back seat.

The London Wesleyan Methodist Council has passed a resolution "welcoming the Bishop of London's attitude with reference to Mr. Bernard Shaw's recent pronouncement on the indeterminate standard of morality concerning music-hall performances, and heartily responds to his call for support in the matter." What composition! Before the Council takes up any more Godly resolutions it should learn to write English.

We referred last week to the author of the *Age of Reason* being called "*Tom* Paine" in one of the latest volumes of the "Home University Library" by H. N. Brailsford. We do not wish to suggest, however, that the author is in any other way unfair to Paine; on the contrary, he makes him the object of some very eloquent praise. The little book altogether is well-written, and rather more than that in several parts. It is entitled *Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle*, the price is only one shilling, and the publishers are Williams and Norgate.

What we want to draw special attention to in Mr. Brailsford's book is an extraordinary misreading of a passage in Shelley's *Prothemeus Unbound*. The passage occurs at the soaring end of Act III.:—

> "The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
> Passionless."

That is how Mr. Brailsford reads it. And he waxes facetious over this "passionless" man of Shelley's fancy as a most uninteresting personage. We daresay he trusted to the old punctuation, which is very obviously wrong, making Shelley say the very opposite of what he means. A note of interrogation should follow "passionless":—

> "but man
> Passionless? no, yet free from guilt or pain,
> Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
> Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
> From chance, and death, and mutability,
> The clogs of that which else might oversoar
> The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
> Pinnacled dim in the intense inane."

Mr. Brailsford should rectify his nasty blunder in the next edition of this volume—for we hope another edition, at least, will be called for.

The worst misreading of a great poet we remember is that of Mr. Hudson, who edits one of the numerous pocket editions of Shakespeare now on the market. He puts Hamlet's "The rest is silence" into the mouth of Horatio—and defends it! It is impossible to go beyond that.

Two hundred lives are already known to be lost in the Great Lakes storm in America, and the number is sure to be found much larger as the bodies get washed up on the shores. Altogether it was a fine effort on the part of "Providence."

An earthquake has destroyed ten small towns in Peru, and some hundreds of people have been killed and a greater number rendered homeless. "Our Heavenly Father" is somewhat careless of his children.

We have heard of men sinking with weights attached to them, but we never heard until just lately of a man sinking with a Bible in his hand. This was the case in the drowning of Roger Sowerbutts Cornall, the assistant scoutmaster, one of the victims of the *Mirror* disaster in the Thames. According to the report of the inquest in the *Gravesend Standard* (Nov. 11), Mr. Cornall, "who was a devout Wesleyan, was conducting prayers with the boys, and had an open Bible in his hands to read a passage of scripture, when the ketch was struck by the steamship *Hogarth*." What a testimony to Providence! It couldn't have been worse for the poor man if he had been reading the *Age of Reason*.

Rev. Philip Bernard Wingate, rector of Tarrant Keynston, Blandford, Dorset, left £16,919. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

John D. Rockefeller has given £75,000 towards the £800,000 cost of the new buildings in New York City connected with the Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations. Rockefeller knows what he's about.

The Rev. T. Simpson, of Brecon, suggests that ministers should witness football matches in order to cure their "mental disease." Coming from such a source, this is "the unkindest cut of all."

"A specialist" informs the Rev. F. B. Meyer that he must break off all engagements and take a complete rest for three months. The reverend gentleman obeys the medico's orders, and will doubtless find the prescription agreeable. But what will happen if Jack Johnson comes to London again during Mr. Meyer's absence? One shudders at the thought.

Dr. Headlam, late Principal of King's College, says that so long as Christianity is an unrecognised religion—unrecognised by the State, that is—its influence would never extend far. We are inclined to agree with Dr. Headlam on this point. A study of Christian history will show that in every country where it has established itself it has been by the aid of the State. First of all as the State Church, and afterwards by the creation of laws devised for the protection and propagation of Christianity. Wipe all these out to-day, leave Christianity absolutely unassisted by State power and prestige, and in the course of a generation or two its power would hardly be worth troubling about.

The Berlin police, instigated by the Emperor, are prohibiting meetings of the "General Church Strike" Committee on a day which is set aside for humiliation and prayer for the kingdom of Prussia. "The feelings of Church circles must not be wounded" by opposition on that day. Poor dear Church circles!

The late Mr. Justice North sent the editor of the *Freethinker* to prison for twelve months for "blasphemy"—that is, for attacking the Christian religion (as it were) without a permit from the police. Mr. Foote was, and is, an Atheist. Mr. Justice North was (we don't know what he *is*) a Christian. Christianity teaches "Blessed be ye poor." Mr. Justice North has left £87,986. Mr. Foote will be lucky to leave anything. Which is the more profitable, Christianity or Freethought? And which was the more honest man, the judge or the prisoner?

Mr. Steel Maitland, M.P., has been chaffing Mr. Lloyd George for likening himself to so many Biblical characters. Mr. Maitland likened him to Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, who took the gift which his master refused, and "was a leper ever afterwards," as the Conservative orator put it. How these Christians love one another!

The Catholic *Universe* breaks out in a fresh direction. A correspondent of that paper writes to know why the "lurid and luring" titles of "lower-class melodrama" are permitted, such as *The Worst Woman in London*, *Her One False Step*, etc. When pruriency sets out on a purity crusade, there is no telling where it will stop. We would like to suggest, on our own part, they should turn their attention to "lurid and luring" sermons "to men only," and congresses and meetings on "Social Purity," both of which attract "nice" people with "nasty" minds. And, above all, the editor of the *Universe* might start a crusade against the erotic hymns and manuals in use in his own Church.

An increase of the dog tax was contemplated at Hamburg. When it became known there was a great commotion amongst the dog owners, who threatened that they would leave the Church if the idea were not dropped. They appear to have thought that they couldn't pay more for dogs and keep the clergy too.

The silk hat is being displaced by the cloth cap, one of the most hideous and inartistic head coverings which the mind of man has devised. If this sort of thing continues people may yet return to the "blankets" and sandals of the twelve disciples, or even the more primitive clothing of Eden.

"Why not advertise the Army?" is a query in large type in a recent issue of the *Daily Mail*. If this refers to the Salvation Army, there is small need to ask the question.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1918.—Previously acknowledged, £249 3s. 1d. Received since:—R. Wood, 5s.; A. D. (Glasgow), 10s.; A. W. Coleman (Sydney), £2 2s.; F. E. Willis, 5s.

R. WOOD writes: "Every little helps. If only a considerable number of sympathisers got this well into their heads, the President's Honorarium Fund would grow more satisfactorily."

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. NEWBURY.—Sorry cannot forward it in this case.

J. E. REMSBURG.—Very pleased to see your handwriting again. Order passed over to shop manager.

W. GARTON.—The Northern Tour, as it was called, lasted six months, and cost the Secular Society, Ltd., £180, to say nothing of Miss Vance's extra work at headquarters and unlimited gratuitous advertisements in this journal.

A. D.—Sorry it was omitted last week.

E. SCHMIDT.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. TOMKINS.—Two have been dealt with. The other one is out of date now. Thanks all the same.

W. HIRD.—There is nothing new in charging Darwin with intellectual dishonesty. Christians have been doing that for fifty years. Very likely they will do it for another fifty years. But they cannot affect his place in the firmament of fame. They remind us of dogs howling at the moon.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

A. W. COLEMAN (Sydney).—The President's Honorarium Fund is not up to the best level this year. But it has suffered from the death of several generous subscribers. There is satisfaction in our having friends in all parts of the world. Thanks for your good wishes.

W. DAVIDSON.—Pleased to hear that everything went off well at Edmonton, and that our advice was found useful.

F. E. WILLIS.—We think there is a chance of your good wishes being realised.

S. A. COSCORN.—Draw up your own advertisement, and we will insert it gratuitously.

C. BRADY.—Arrived safely. Much obliged.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that their letters cannot be attended to in this column.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Our London readers are reminded once more of Mr. Foote's two special lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall on the first two Sundays in December. An advertisement of them appears on the last page of this week's *Freethinker*. Further details will be announced in our next issue.

We have to devote another (final) article to Professor Bury's book. It seems to us really necessary to do this, for reasons which will appear in the article itself.

We have had next to no intercourse of late years with J. H. Levy, whose death we see recorded in the newspapers. But we knew him rather intimately a good while ago, and we had a high opinion of his intellect and character. His articles signed "D." in the *National Reformer* were very able and well-written, and would have done credit to any journal. The *Daily Chronicle* says that Mr. Levy was "a very high-minded man and would never accept fee or reward for his services." The first statement is true; the latter statement is not true. We happen to know that Mr. Levy was paid for the "D." articles in Bradlaugh's paper. And why not? What is there discreditable in reasonable pay for good work?

Mr. Halley Stewart is one of the few public men we have come across who are as true as steel to their principles on all occasions. He is a real Radical stalwart. No one takes a more logical, or a bolder, view of Secular Education than he does. He is not frightened by the fact that this subject is one on which Freethinkers and Christians may agree together, and on the same grounds of honesty, equity, and good citizenship. Not an inch does he give way in order to please or flatter his Nonconformist brethren. He tells them plainly that it is their recreancy to the old Nonconformist ideal of the total separation between Religion and the State that is responsible for all the present trouble. We are delighted to see that he stood his ground bravely at the recent annual meeting of the Liberation Society, as appears by the following report from the *Westminster Gazette* (Nov. 12):—

> "On the subject of religious instruction in State-supported schools, Mr. Halley Stewart moved a resolution 'regretting the difficulties which have so long prevented a settlement of the education question,' and stating further that 'this conference renews and emphasises its conviction that no system of national education can be satisfactory unless it recognises that the State has no right either to impart or pay for religious instruction, and that the entire responsibility for such instruction rests upon parents and churches.' In a closely reasoned speech, Mr. Halley Stewart claimed that secular teaching in the schools was the only logical position of Liberationists. Where it had been tried a higher morality was to be found than in places where religious teaching was given at the expense of the State.
>
> "Mr. Charles Steele, C.B., seconded, and confessed that as a Passive Resister he objected to the intrusion of the State into the domain of conscience. They had not yet got a national system of education, and he was convinced that they could only give secular education in the schools and religious teaching outside the schools.
>
> "A speaker asked Dr. Massie whether the ideal of the society on the matter included the Lord's Prayer, the singing of a hymn, and the reading of a Bible lesson without exposition. In reply, the Chairman stated that he did not think the things mentioned were included in religious instruction, but he considered these to be a compromise. In the States they were allowed, though there was no law on the subject.
>
> "Lieut.-Colonel Seton Churchill was in favor of religious teaching, and questioned whether it was wise to weaken the cause of Disestablishment at the present time by suggesting secular education in the schools.
>
> "Some other speakers also took the same line, but the amendment was defeated, and the original resolution was carried by a large majority."

The following appears below a portrait of Mr. Foote in the New York *Truthseeker* (Nov. 1):—

> "One of the most brilliant writers of the English language is G. W. Foote, Editor of the London *Freethinker*, former associate of Charles Bradlaugh as publisher of the *National Reformer*, and Bradlaugh's successor as President of the National Secular Society. He started the *Freethinker* in 1881, and in point of years of service is the oldest of the Freethought editors. He is an orator of rare abilities. In 1883 he was prosecuted for Atheism, or blasphemy, and spent a year in the Holloway jail. His judge and sentencer, who is not remembered for anything else, was named North. At the age of 63 Mr. Foote retains the mental vigor and alertness of his prime, and remains the favorite writer and speaker of the English Freethinkers."

Our boots will fit us after this, but we are apprehensive about the hat. And it is not long since we bought a new one, which we provide ourselves with once a year, unless we can elude the wife's vigilance. We hope the *Truthseeker's* flattering notice won't result in a fatal shock to our hatter when we pay him our next annual visit.

Apart from whatever is wrong with the eulogy, there is one mistake to be corrected in the *Truthseeker* paragraph. Mr. Foote had no connection whatever with the publication of Bradlaugh's paper, but he was a well-known contributor to its columns.

Our portrait in the *Truthseeker* does us more or less than justice now. It appears to be derived from a photograph we had taken in America in 1896. We must send Mr. George Macdonald a photograph taken more recently, which has some artistic merit, and which most who have seen it call "good" and "satisfactory."

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Dr. George Brandes, who is visiting England on his way to America, is to be entertained at a dinner at the Hotel Cecil, but as the tickets are one guinea each (including wine) the function will not be of much practical interest to the readers of the *Freethinker*. The reception committee have arranged for a lecture by Dr. Brandes on "Shakespeare." It will take place at Caxton Hall on Tuesday evening, November 25, at 8.45 p.m. Reserved seats are 7s. 6d. and 4s. Unreserved seats 2s. 6d. Obtainable from Chappell's Queen's Hall Box Office.

Mr. Thomas William Stewart's trial for "blasphemy" took place at the Staffordshire Assizes on Monday. He was charged with "committing blasphemy by attacking Christianity by ribaldry, profanity, and indecency." He elected to defend himself, and we do not know precisely the line he took, as we have only a brief report of the case before us as we are going to press. We are afraid, however, that justice was not done to the legal side of the case, which is now of the utmost importance. Mr. Justice Coleridge's summing up is far too brief in the summary report to authorise us in trusting to it in that form. We must wait till next week. Meanwhile we regret to say that the jury returned a verdict of Guilty. Sentence was deferred and the prisoner released on bail.

There is no end to the books published reconciling science with religion, and Professor Bonney has just added one more to the pile. He concludes that the recent advances in physics have in no way made Theism more difficult—rather they have produced the opposite effect. We quite agree that they have not made Theism *more* difficult. As the difficulties were already insuperable, it is not easy to see how they could become more so. But how have the advances in science made the approach to Theism easier? One would imagine that something had been discovered pointing to the existence of a God. Professor Bonney, as a man of science, knows that not only is this not the case, but also that it is impossible that it should be so. As a theologian, Professor Bonney forgets both his science and his caution. Such statements impose only on the unwary, and one suspects that very often they are deliberately concocted for their benefit.

The Great Iconoclast.

"THAT distinguished man," as Gladstone on more than one occasion called him, the illustrious Charles Bradlaugh, began his career as a Freethought lecturer under the name of "Iconoclast," a breaker of idols. His mission was to make men think. In order to effect his purpose, he found it necessary to destroy many of their objects of worship. With his great iconoclastic club he shattered their idols. He destroyed the Bible fetish, and convinced the crowds that flocked to hear him that the Bible was a human production, full of errors, absurdities, and anomalies, opposed alike to science, philosophy, and common sense. He shattered the old conception of the God of the Bible—old Jahveh—and trampled the fragments of the old god in the dust. Nor did he stop there. With tremendous force he brought his club down upon the Christian fetish—the supernatural Jesus of the Gospels. He showed that no such being ever lived—that a supernatural man-god was an absurdity. Nor was that all. When he had demolished the gods, he turned to priests and kings, and demonstrated the hollowness of their pretensions. He hated all shams, and ruthlessly tore the masks from the faces of charlatans. No wonder that the priests and the privileged of all sorts hated him; but the people who heard him gave heed to his teachings and followed him. And his teachings are bearing fruit day by day as the years roll on; and, personally, I feel proud of the fact that I lived in the age that produced Charles Bradlaugh—that I lived to see him and hear him many times, and that my life has been influenced in many ways by his mighty personality and his wise and practical teachings.

More than once I have heard it said by persons who never heard Bradlaugh that though he was a great orator and intensely earnest in all he did, he was deficient in humor. Only those who never knew Bradlaugh could make such a statement as that. How could he be a great orator unless he were also witty and humorous? An orator who was always grave, and never gay, would soon become tedious. To hear Bradlaugh lecture on the Bible, and point out the absurdities of it, or to hear him criticise the contradictory passages in the Gospel narratives, was to be convulsed with laughter by his native wit and humor. Indeed, he bubbled over with them both. More than once I have laughed till I cried over the grotesquely absurd position in which he placed the writers of the Gospels; how cleverly he pointed out their discrepancies and contradictions; how skilfully he examined the arguments of the theologians who tried to establish the inspiration of these writings and the divine character of Jesus, and tore them (their arguments, not the poor parsons) into very rags and tatters by the brilliancy of his wit and logic. Bradlaugh was great as a lecturer, but he was greater still as a debater. Nobody who ever heard him in debate would be ever likely to forget him. To have heard him, as I did on several occasions, in debate with the Rev. Brewin Grant and others, was to have heard speeches from Bradlaugh that were matchless for their eloquence, their logical force, and thrilling effect; and when Brewin Grant replied by making a number of malicious innuendoes and wicked slanders as the safest way of establishing the superiority of Christianity over Secularism, Bradlaugh rose to a height of eloquence and oratory that came like an avalanche upon his opponent, and overwhelmed and crushed him. Bradlaugh was not only great as a Freethought orator—he was great in many other respects; in fact, he was full of talent, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. Great orator, great debater, great thinker, great lawyer, great statesman. With all these great qualities in combination, what could not a man with his great physical and intellectual energy do? He seemed only to have to will to do a thing, and forthwith it was accomplished. The most distinguishing characteristic of Charles Bradlaugh was his intense earnestness. Some of the superfine people sneered at him, said that he was vulgar and unrefined, and tried to ridicule him; but all to no purpose. Bradlaugh pursued his course undismayed, and in time brushed aside every obstacle. And now, after he has been dead over twenty years, the result of his great work is beginning to be realised. The clergy of the Church of England are reluctantly constrained to admit that the old Hebrew God, Jahveh, is really shattered; that this old anthropomorphic conception of Deity can no longer hold the place it did in Christian theology; and that even the man-God, Jesus, has been effectively dislodged from his pedestal by Bradlaugh and other iconoclasts.

Bradlaugh unquestionably did a great work in this country as the champion of intellectual liberty, and his labors in this direction have inspired others to continue the great work which his indefatigable energy, his will-power, and his enthusiasm enabled him to accomplish.

According to Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Bradlaugh did not take the rational course in knocking down the Christian idols. What he should have done was to have followed the line of least resistance, and when "he met one of these idols he should have taken off his hat and filled his pockets." Mr. Shaw did not say what with. Obviously, if Mr. Bradlaugh had followed the line of least resistance he would have done what other Freethinkers, unhappily, had done before him; and when he stood for Parliament in 1868, he would have let the people know nothing about his Freethought views; he would have kept them to himself, or written about them in expensive books, and then, perhaps, he would have got returned early in his career as Member of Parliament, and, no doubt, would have soon made his way to Cabinet rank and have become Prime Minister of this country. But the great Iconoclast was not built that way. He was not a man who could hide any of his views which he thought would benefit mankind any more than Mr. Shaw could hide his heretical views—as he demonstrates in his plays; for assuredly the author of *Androcles and the Lion* laughed con-

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sumedly over the childish ideas of the Christians in that clever play.

In Mr. Bradlaugh's day a frontal attack against all these primitive superstitions was the only effective method. A few eminent men of science, a few distinguished philosophers and thinkers, were doing useful work in the direction of undermining the very foundations of all religious superstitions; but their work was slow and unobserved by the masses of the people. Mr. Bradlaugh came out into the open, a physical and intellectual giant, and threw the weight of his great intellect and argumentative skill and wonderful eloquence into the work of shattering the edifice of superstition, section by section. I have said that one of the secrets of Mr. Bradlaugh's great success was his intense earnestness. If he had been constantly laughing and joking at the Christian doctrines, and not seriously examining them, people might have said, "this blasphemer is not to be taken seriously, he is only joking"; but when they saw what he did and how he went about his work, they said, "we had better be careful about this man for he means what he says and says what he means." The clergy felt that if they did not defend their creed their occupation, like Othello's, would soon be gone. And when he had shattered their idols one after the other they exclaimed "Great heavens! what will he do next?" His mental and physical activities were marvellous. He would be occupied all day in arguing a legal question, probably with three judges, and at night he would be found at the Hall of Science, fresh as a daisy, delighting his followers with a faithful description of his efforts to free the press from the tyranny of either a Liberal or Tory government. Or he would appear at the great St. James's Hall in Regent-street with a number of other speakers, mostly Members of Parliament, and after they had all spoken on the subject under consideration, he would be called upon to wind up the meeting, and do so in a brief, impassioned speech so full of cogent reasoning and mighty eloquence that would so stir his audience as to cause them to rise from their seats and wave their handkerchiefs and shout their approval in a way that would demonstrate beyond doubt that Bradlaugh was their great hero and a real savior of mankind.

And if the Jews claim that Moses, the Christians that Jesus, and the Mohammedans that Mohammed were inspired, Freethinkers can without irreverence claim that Charles Bradlaugh was equally inspired; for assuredly no man could move the people as he did in his day and generation. So self-reliant in all he did, so courageous, no man ever trusted reason more than he; and so we may say of him in the language of the poet—

> "Honor to him who, self-complete, if lone,
> Carves to the grave one pathway all his own,
> And heeding nought that men may think or say,
> Asks but his Soul [Reason] if doubtful of the way."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Worrying Women!

FREQUENTLY in the columns of the *Freethinker* it has been asserted, and proved, that Religion attached itself to movements *after* they became sturdy of growth and showed ample evidence of their likelihood to survive. Different writers have given us many examples of this safe attitude of the Church to human progress. We are quite familiar with the historic treacherous knavery of an institution whose living pillars are capable of anything if only they can keep themselves firmly founded and erect; and to discover the Church doing something purely unselfish would, most certainly, occasion us great surprise.

Within comparatively modern times the Church has bitterly, but unsuccessfully, attacked at least three great human movements, and has turned sycophantically to admire them when it realised they were here to remain. The Rationalist—or, rather, the Freethought—movement, the Scientific movement, and the Humanist movement have all been vigorously assailed by Christianity during their infancy; and we have experienced the questionable pleasure of witnessing a complete reversal of the tactics used by the unscrupulous agents of a nefarious establishment.

These exhibitions of fawning imbecilic complacency would sicken a heart of adamant. There is a baseness about the mental manœuvrings of the Church that is sufficient, in itself, completely to nauseate the hardest stomach. The longer you study the cravings of the Church for power, the more repellant becomes the utter depravity of its methods. Ignominiously neglected by every movement that sought the emancipation of the mind and body from thraldom here upon earth, the Church, exercising a long-practised ingenuity, has tried to ally itself to those movements, after having opposed them tooth and nail.

Naturally you loathe a man who kicks you when you are down. Naturally you loathe him still more when he performs insincere genuflexions once you have gathered strength greater than his own. Your antipathy fills you with an uncontrollable disgust; and it may be enough to say that, if you turn from him, you act leniently and charitably.

The Church has treated those three movements in that detestable manner; and now the Feminist movement comes into parallelism, in this respect, with the others. Suddenly aware that there are possibilities in the Women's movement, that it shows traces of abiding power, the Church has turned one of those brilliant somersaults for which it has become infamous in the minds of unprejudiced people. It now fawns upon what it fought. It professes to admire what it certainly despised. It offers sympathy and encouragement to what it did most to handicap. It speaks of liberty to what it enslaved. It proffers bread to what it stoned. Another heavy, damning proof of the incorrigible hypocrisy of the Church has been laid, by itself, upon the crumbling walls of the religious edifice. Another occasion for laughter, and another occasion for unswerving enmity, have been afforded us.

The whole history of Christianity is bespattered with black stains; and nowhere, perhaps, are the evil influences of religion made so manifest as in its treatment of women. Socially and psychologically the utter perniciousness of Christianity may be authenticated beyond the least suspicion of doubt simply by studying the relationship between the Church and our womenkind.

Psychological science has grave tasks before it; and it may be that one of the gravest will be the tracing of the dastardly enslavement of the female mind by Religion.

Lacking the inventive faculty, we might even say with a close approximation to truth, lacking the spirit of revolt, which, after all, is but the inventive faculty used in the domain of ideas, the female mind has been, in the past, an easy prey to a circle of thought that enclosed conservatism and excluded change. Religion made the most of the inadaptability of the female mind to the rough ways of pioneering. The comparative, let us say, absence of intellectual revolt from the woman mind, no doubt due, if indirectly, like so many things, to the demands of the physical constitution, Religion made one of its principal supports. Without the assistance of that mental limitation or conservatism, engendered by the restrictions imposed upon women by nature's necessity for propagation, Religion might long since have disappeared. But, ever 'cute to the boons and blessings of expediency, it has deftly enwoven its polished tinsel threads of thought around the mother-mind. It has played upon the chords of motherhood with a minstrel's artistry, ay, even while it affected to despise the contact with a woman's body, alleging unholy such a union. With an albescent hypocrisy it has glorified maternity that it might obtain the child-mind as a reward for its adoration, even while it bedeviled the body of the woman. It hung a

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curtain of mysticism around the unborn child; and the mother-mind was within beside the child. It illumined the inseparable bonds with its soft seductive light, until the female mind became habitually religious.

Religion, as far back through the stages of social evolution as science can take us, has never given the denial to our indictments. From the religious mystification of barbaric procreation right down to the christening service of to-day, Religion has stood, with outstretched arms, beside mother and child. Anthropology is full of instances of the interfering power of Religion over the mother-mind at times when its encroachments were most selfishly opportunate.

Inevitably Religion waxed good of growth. It practically bent the female mind to its own wishes. The natural tenderness, the fear of danger, the inclemency of change, the projected hopes and swiftly fleeting joys and sorrows that are the mother-mind's nature, as sunlight makes the day, Religion transformed into the richest loam for the spread of its weeds.

The weeds are becoming, with the thinning of religious belief, more refined in texture of root, stem, and leaf; but the crop is still heavy, and the soil still retains much of the ancient fertiliser.

However, a new fear floats vaguely in the clerical atmosphere, irritating the Christian serenity afresh. Another problem worries the venerable dignity of the Church. The spirit of revolt animates the minds of women. A new consciousness of their individuality is springing up. The opening gates of the intellect are providing new avenues, giving rise to new desires, new wants, new longings. What though Freethought, the strongest enemy of the holders of the gate keys, the real opener of the gates of the mind, is forgotten in the new movement? That the first step in the work is accomplished is enough to warrant the claim to success, if it be true that Religion guarded the closed gates and Freethought shattered the locks.

The suspicious outlook of Religion upon the Feminist movement seems to corroborate what has been said. Where will these newly opened avenues of thought lead? Religion is asking itself. How far will the women-minds go? What strength will they attain? How much will their ideas change towards me? How will the results affect me? What attitude am I now to adopt?

Religion is worried. It feels insecure. This rebelliousness of the woman-mind is straightly antagonistic to all the teachings of the Church; and the Church experiences great mental discomfort at the incomprehensible revolt against all its most cherished beatitudes. The women-minds are apparently treating the instructions of the Church, nay, its commandments, with contempt. There is danger ahead.

At the recent congress, so deeply concerned were the pillars of the Church, it was said that the Church should support the Feminist movement; if it didn't, both the Feminist movement and the Church would be the losers. We agree. The Church would lose its life-blood. The Feminist movement would lose its irrationality.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Freedom of Thought.—III.

(Continued from p. 724.)

WE have to begin by offering a kind of apology to Professor Bury. We mixed him up with Professor Gilbert Murray in our last article. There was no insult in that, as it happens; but every man prefers his own identity to another's,—and in any case a mistake is a mistake, and is to be corrected. We suppose it arose from the fact of our reading a new book by Professor Murray in the same series at the same time. The reader will understand that it was not Professor Bury but Professor Murray who was responsible for the adverse remarks on Shakespeare in the *Positivist Review*. But all the rest of our criticism *re* Shakespeare applies to Professor Bury. We hope we have made this clear. But you never can tell. For a blunder is a good deal like a lie in this, that it often has a peculiarly malign power of longevity and reproduction.

We now resume our criticism of Professor Bury's book, starting with the fifth chapter, in which he traces the growth of toleration on the continent of Europe, in North America, and in Great Britain. "The Puritans who fled from the intolerance of the English Church and State and founded colonies in New England, were themselves equally intolerant," Professor Bury says, "not only to Anglicans and Catholics, but to Baptists and Quakers." This statement errs on the side of moderation. "Equally" might well be changed for "more." And this renders the conduct of those Puritan persecutors all the more detestable. Moreover the good Protestants were worse than the Catholics, as they usually have been wherever they have had the opportunity. Take the case of Maryland. Under the humane Lord Baltimore, this Catholic colony passed an Act of Toleration in 1649. No Christian was to be molested in regard to his religion. But the law was heavy on outsiders. "Anyone who blasphemed God or attacked the Trinity, or any member of the Trinity," Professor Bury says, "was threatened by the penalty of death." Tolerance amongst Christians, however, attracted Protestant settlers, until at last they became a majority, when they introduced (1654) another Toleration Act excluding Catholics and Episcopalians from legal protection. Six years afterwards the Baltimore *régime* was revived, but on the accession of William III., of ever blessed memory, the Protestants came into power again and once more excluded Catholics as well as other non-Protestants from toleration.

Justice is hardly done to Cromwell, who was far in advance of his time in the matter of religious freedom. It is easy to misunderstand his attitude towards the Catholics. They were a political party then, always ready to fight openly, as their leaders fought secretly, for the overthrow of the Commonwealth and the restoration of the Monarchy. Cromwell had no objection to the Catholic faith in itself. He allowed the banished Jews to return to England, he did his utmost to protect the Quakers, he appears to have had no animosity towards downright unbelievers. He had naturally what one may call a civilised mind. He was an Independent and more than an Independent. Party after party, sect after sect, found that he was too broad-minded for their shibboleths. The Scotch Presbyterians learnt this at a bitter cost. They thought that when the State Church fell with the Monarchy the religious life of England was to be organised on the Presbyterian model. But they got their lesson, and a grim one it was, at Preston, at Dunbar, and finally in Cromwell's "crowning mercy" at Worcester.

"The Presbyterians," as Professor Bury says, "regarded toleration as a work of the Devil, and would have persecuted the Independents if they could." But they had to reckon with the genius and the sword of Cromwell. He had not fought through a ten years' civil war to exchange one tyranny for another. And he was for a practical, statesmanlike settlement of the country. Anglicans were outlawed by the parliament, but Cromwell treated them as ordinary citizens as long as they kept from plotting against the established Government. His policy was to be at peace with every man who would be at peace with him.

Professor Bury devotes a careful paragraph to Milton's famous plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing—the *Areopagitica*. He does well to notice that Milton "places freedom of thought above civil liberty." John Locke's equally famous *Letter Concerning Toleration* receives a fuller treatment. Locke excluded Catholics from toleration on the ground that they are "in the service of a foreign prince—the

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Pope." He also excluded Atheists:—

> "Those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an Atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides also, those that by their Atheism undermine and destroy all religion, can have no pretence of religion to challenge the privilege of a Toleration."

This was unworthy of the manly mind of John Locke, for he knew many virtuous Freethinkers (including Anthony Collins) who were to all practical intents and purposes Atheists. But he stated very clearly the sum and substance of English law on the subject. The only *argument* ever advanced in support of the Blasphemy Laws is that the very existence of human society rests upon the sanctity of the oath, and that the sanctity of the oath rests upon belief in God. But the oath is no longer necessary; in fact, it is destroyed by being made optional. Bradlaugh's Act makes one man's word as good as another man's oath. Belief in God is therefore no longer indispensable in courts of justice, and the whole foundation of the Blasphemy Laws is thus subverted. We should be glad of the opportunity of arguing that they have really been repealed by the march of events and the progress of legislation.

Some interesting and important pages are devoted to a very interesting and (in its time) important book—the once famous *Dictionary* of Peter Bayle. Bayle was very learned, very sceptical, and terribly ironical. His tributes to Christianity made the clergy mad. He was almost the equal of Gibbon in this respect. Professor Bury gives the following example of what a Scotsman would call his pawkiness:—

> "The *Dictionary* was also criticised for the justice done to the moral excellences of persons who denied the existence of God. Bayle replies that if he had been able to find any atheistical thinkers, who lived bad lives, he would have been delighted to dwell on their vices, but he knew of none such. As for the criminals you meet in history, whose abominable actions make you tremble, their impieties and blasphemies prove they believed in a Divinity. This is a natural consequence of the theological doctrine that the Devil, who is incapable of Atheism, is the instigator of all the sins of man. For man's wickedness must clearly resemble that of the Devil, and must therefore be joined to a belief in God's existence, since the Devil is not an Atheist. And is it not a proof of the infinite wisdom of God that the worst criminals are not Atheists, and that most of the Atheists whose names are recorded have been honest men? By this arrangement Providence sets bounds to the corruption of man; for if Atheism and moral wickedness were united in the same persons, the societies of earth would be exposed to a fatal inundation of sin."

It was an exquisite joke. And if, as Goldsmith said, there are two classes of people who dread ridicule—priests and fools—Bayle must have been a terror to both.

Voltaire's name naturally follows that of Bayle. This is what Professor Bury says of the great man whom Victor Hugo called "laughter incarnate for the salvation of mankind":—

> "Perhaps no writer has ever roused more hatred in Christendom than Voltaire. He was looked on as a sort of anti-Christ. That was natural; his attacks were so tremendously effectual at the time. But he has been sometimes decried on the ground that he only demolished and made no effort to build up where he had pulled down. This is a narrow complaint. It might be replied that when a sewer is spreading plague in a town, we cannot wait to remove it till we have a new system of drains, and it may fairly be said that religion as practised in contemporary France was a poisonous sewer. But the true answer is that knowledge, and therefore civilisation, are advanced by criticism and negation, as well as by construction and positive discovery."

This eulogy is on the lines of Buckle's. It is clear and uncompromising, and we are delighted to see it in a book for the people, who have mostly heard of Voltaire as a very subtle, insinuating, and malicious scoundrel, who held a very profitable working contract with the Devil.

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

Ingersoll on Oratory.—II.

(Concluded from p. 729.

NOTHING is more difficult than a perfect close. Few poems, few pieces of music, few novels, end well. A good story, a great speech, a perfect poem, should end just at the proper point. The bud, the blossom, the fruit. No delay. A great speech is a crystallisation in its logic, an efflorescence in its poetry.

"I have not heard many speeches. Most of the great speakers in our country were before my time. I heard Beecher, and he was an orator. He had imagination, humor, and intensity. His brain was fertile as the valleys of the tropics. He was too broad, too philosophic, too poetic for the pulpit. Now and then he broke the fetters of his creed, escaped from his orthodox prison, and became sublime.

"Theodore Parker was an orator. He preached great sermons. His sermons on 'Old Age' and 'Webster' and his address on 'Liberty' were filled with great thoughts, marvellously expressed. When he dealt with human events, with realities, with things he knew, he was superb. When he spoke of freedom, of duty, of living to the ideal, of mental integrity, he seemed inspired.

"Webster I never heard. He had great qualities, force, dignity, clearness, grandeur; but, after all, he worshiped the past. He kept his back to the sunrise. There was no dawn in his brain. He was not creative. He had no spirit of prophecy. He lighted no torch. He was not true to his ideal. He talked sometimes as though his head was among the stars, but he stood in the gutter. In the name of religion he tried to break the will of Stephen Girard—to destroy the greatest charity in all the world; and in the name of the same religion he defended the fugitive slave law. His purpose was the same in both cases. He wanted office. Yet he uttered a few very great paragraphs, rich with thought, perfectly expressed.

"Clay I never heard, but he must have had a commanding presence, a chivalric bearing, a heroic voice. He cared little for the past. He was a natural leader, a wonderful talker—forcible, persuasive, convincing. He was not a poet, not a master of metaphor, but he was practical. He kept in view the end to be accomplished. He was the opposite of Webster. Clay was the morning, Webster the evening. Clay had large views, a wide horizon. He was ample, vigorous, and a little tyrannical.

"Benton was thoroughly commonplace. He never uttered an inspired word. He was an intense egotist. No subject was great enough to make him forget himself. Calhoun was a political Calvinist—narrow, logical, dogmatic. He was not an orator. He delivered essays, not orations. I think it was in 1851 that Kossuth visited this country. He was an orator. There was no man, at that time, under our flag who could speak English as well as he. In the first speech I read of Kossuth's was this: 'Russia is the rock against which the sigh for freedom breaks.' In this you see the poet, the painter, the orator.

"S. S. Prentiss was an orator; but, with the recklessness of a gamester, he threw his life away. He said profound and beautiful things, but he lacked application. He was uneven, disproportionate, saying ordinary things on great occasions, and now and then, without the slightest provocation, uttering the sublimest and most beautiful thoughts.

"In my judgment, Corwin was the greatest orator of them all. He had more arrows in his quiver. He had genius. He was full of humor, pathos, wit, and logic. He was an actor. His body talked. His meaning was in his eyes and lips. Governor O. P. Morton, of Indiana, had the greatest power of statement of any man I ever heard. All the argument was in his statement. The facts were perfectly grouped. The conclusion was a necessity.

"The best political speech I ever heard was made by Governor Richard J. Oglesby, of Illinois. It had every element of greatness, reason, humor, wit, pathos, imagination, and perfect naturalness. That was in the grand years, long ago. Lincoln had reason, wonderful humor and wit, but his presence was not good. His voice was poor, his gestures awkward; but his thoughts were profound. His speech at Gettysburg is one of the masterpieces of the world. The word 'here' is used four or five times too often. Leave the 'heres' out, and the speech is perfect.

"Of course I have heard a great many talkers, but orators are few and far between. They are produced by victorious nations—born in the midst of great events, of marvellous achievements. They utter the thoughts, the aspirations of their age. They clothe the children of the people in the gorgeous robes of genius. They interpret the dreams. With the poets they prophesy. They fill the future with heroic forms, with lofty deeds. They keep their faces towards the dawn—towards the ever-coming day."

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

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There are two virtues which Christians have found it very hard to exemplify in practice. These are modesty and civility.—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Blasphemy.

WE have been reviewing Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* at some length, and this week's instalment was to be the conclusion of our criticism. We intended to point out that the worst part of the book—if we may use such an unpleasant word in this connection—is what he calls "The Progress of Rationalism" in the nineteenth century. His knowledge of the subject is inadequate. He almost appears to consider that the principal part of Freethought is the sixpenny reprints of the Rationalist Press Association. No doubt those reprints have done some good, but they frequently suggest funicular railways to extinct volcanoes. To take them as representing the main work of the Freethought movement in England is a most absurd mistake. Professor Bury is too fond, also, of taking academical gentlemen, like Leslie Stephen, as being the main moving agencies in Freethought propaganda. He evidently knows extremely little of the popular side of the movement—the great appeal to the people through a long succession of speakers and organisations from the days of Richard Carlile down through Taylor, Southwell, Watson, Holyoake, and Bradlaugh to the recent and present work of the *Freethinker*, the National Secular Society, and all sorts of "spurt" societies that come and go and leave *some* sort of impression behind them, however difficult it may be to estimate. Nor does he allow for the tremendous effect of Darwin's philosophy upon the minds of the more thoughtful multitude. Everybody is an evolutionist now, except the Salvation Army, the rural clergy, and the Christian Evidence Society. But in the sixties and seventies the great battle of evolution *versus* special creation raged in the streets as well as in the high places of "culture." There is nothing like it now, because the fight is over, and one side is victorious and the other side is defeated. But it is fair to say that it was the popular Freethought movement, after all, that caught the full significance of Darwinism and its inevitable effect upon the thought and life of future mankind.

Professor Bury does not recognise the vast importance of Lord Coleridge's judgment on the Blasphemy Laws—or rather the Common Law of Blasphemy—in 1883. We say this at the risk of being considered egotistical. We really cannot help being involved in the case. It is an undoubted fact that some of the old "blasphemers," such as Taylor and Southwell, made brilliant speeches against their indictments. Holyoake made a very able speech at his trial in 1842. But he spoke for nine hours, and he used to say, humorously, that he deserved the sentence for the length of his address. Those speeches, and many more, were worthy of considerable applause as oratorical efforts. But they were immethodical and even chaotic. Our own speech (we venture to say), before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in the Court of Queen's (now King's) Bench in 1883, was the first *scientific* defence of "blasphemy." Mr. Atherley Jones, the leading counsel in the Boulter case, in handing us back the verbatim report, which he had borrowed, remarked: "You did it completely; there's nothing more to be said." It was that scientific presentation of the Freethought case and the right of free speech which arrested and maintained Lord Coleridge's attention. He saw the importance of the occasion; he prepared his own charge to the jury with great care—and he revised and published it in a separate form soon afterwards. That judgment of Lord Coleridge's—which might hardly have been delivered except for the character of our own speech—which forced consideration and argument from the court—marks an epoch in the history of the Blasphemy Laws. He did not meddle much with the Statute. That was only too clear and explicit. But all prosecutions had been under the Common Law—which, as we ourselves pointed out to the jury, is subject to change with the changes of human intelligence and human society. And what was the Common Law of Blasphemy? No matter what it *had* been, what was it *then*? Lord Coleridge laid it down that toleration had grown with the times, and that it had reached a stage where the very fundamentals of Christianity might be attacked, if only the decencies of controversy were respected. It was on that rock that we founded the Secular Society, Ltd., which became the model for succeeding organisations.

Attacking Christianity is, in itself, perfectly legal; although it may be done, as other things may be done, in an illegal way. Professor Bury does not quite see the scope and force of this dictum. "Some of the judges," he says, "seem to have taken the line that it is not blasphemy to attack the fundamental doctrines provided 'the decencies of controversy' are preserved, but that 'indecent' attacks constitute blasphemy. This implies a new definition of legal blasphemy, and is entirely contrary to the intention of the laws." But what is the good—we mean for practical purposes—in talking in this way? Sir J. F. Stephen objected to Lord Coleridge's new reading of the Common Law as illogical. It might be as full of illogicality as an egg is full of meat. But there it was. It occupied the field. It could not be exorcised by all the logic in the world. And it occupies the field still. It is not accurate to say that *some* judges accept it. *All* judges accept it. It has been accepted by every judge who has tried a "blasphemy" case since Lord Chief Justice Coleridge laid it down. It is too late to challenge it now.

It leaves the Christians, of course, in a very mean position. We do not dispute that. We rather enjoy contemplating it. They take down the old rod of persecution which still hangs behind their door, and which they refuse to dispense with altogether, as it reminds them of other and better days, but they find that they cannot beat an educated unbeliever with it. They can only beat the uneducated or half-educated; those who are reckless or unskilful in the use of language. They can no longer use their old rod upon the backs of leading Freethinkers; they can only use it upon the backs of commoner soldiers, and they are sometimes obliged to find victims amongst the very camp-followers of the Freethought army.

How is it then, it may be asked, that we have been constrained to observe that blasphemy prose-

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cutions never fail. This is a simple question, and the answer is equally simple. The determining factor is the way in which "blasphemy" prosecutions are conducted. You take a Freethinker and put him in the dock. That is something against him to begin with. If he is not guilty what is he there for? You charge him with attacking Christianity in a vulgar, indecent manner. "Indecent" is one of the most elastic words in the English language. It usually means no more than "indecorous." But it is a good strong word, and is therefore in frequent request. You call a man's conduct "indecent" if he but picks his teeth with a match, or even a fork, at a Lord Mayor's dinner; and you would use the same word if he were guilty of personal exposure or of handling young persons improperly. A capable defendant would be able to point out the trickery of the word "indecent" and guard himself against it. But able defendants in the dock, especially for the first time, are not exactly frequent. The word is usually pressed for all it is worth upon the jury. Rhetorical exaggerations transform a mouse into a monster. And who *are* the jury? Twelve actual or professed Christians, most likely. And as "blasphemy" means attacking Christianity in a way distasteful to Christians, the jury are asked in effect, "Gentlemen, do you like that?" Of course they *don't* like it—and that means a verdict of Guilty. It is the greatest joke in the world since butchers got upon the bench to try sheep.

There is no positive guarantee for freedom of thought and speech until the Blasphemy Laws are repealed. Suppose the educated opponents of Christianity are safe now. "Can we be certain," Professor Bury rightly asks, "that there may not come a great set-back?" It came once and buried the civilisation of Greece and Rome. Will it *never* come again? Who knows? Let the friends of freedom be always on their guard. The wise old Greeks made the goddess of wisdom a goddess armed.

We shall deal with the Stewart case at length next week. Meanwhile we hasten to say that Lord Coleridge, the jury, and the prosecution are all to blame. If the sentence includes hard labor it is an illegal sentence. "Blasphemy" is a misdemeanor, not a felony, and cannot be punished in that way. And if the prisoner said nothing worse than the sentences which were quoted several weeks ago, we are ready to brand the trial as a travesty of law and justice.

We desire to close this article with an interesting quotation from Professor Bury on the subject of Atheism and Agnosticism:—

> "The Agnostic holds that there are limits to human reason, and that theology lies outside those limits. Within those limits lies the world with which science (including psychology) deals. Science deals entirely with phenomena, and has nothing to say to the nature of the ultimate reality which may lie beyond phenomena. There are four possible attitudes to this ultimate reality. There is the attitude of the metaphysician and theologian who are convinced not only that it exists but that it can be at least partly known. There is the attitude of the man who denies that it exists; but he must be also a metaphysician, for its existence can only be disproved by metaphysical arguments. Then there are those who assert that it exists but deny that we can know anything about it. And finally there are those who say that we cannot know whether it exists or not. These last are "Agnostics" in the strict sense of the term, men who *profess not to know*. The third class go beyond phenomena in so far as they assert that there is an ultimate though unknowable reality beneath phenomena. But Agnostic is commonly used in a wide sense so as to include the third as well as the fourth class—those who assume an unknowable, as well as those who do not know whether there is an unknowable or not. Comte and Spencer, for instance, who believed in an unknowable, are counted as Agnostics. The difference between an Agnostic and an Atheist is that an Atheist positively denies the existence of a personal God, the Agnostic does not believe in it."

We propose to discuss this hereafter.

G. W. FOOTE.

Reasons for Not Being a Christian.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 740.*)

WE have seen with what glaring effrontery the Rev. Mr. Stanley Russell, in his eagerness to exalt Jesus, falsifies history. There is no truth whatever in the assertion that the Galilean ever morally transformed the world, which is proved by the simple fact that the world never stood in greater need of moral regeneration than it does at this moment. Thus the reverend gentleman's first reason for being a Christian falls ignominiously to the ground, and rises again as a powerful reason for *not* being a Christian. Mr. Russell's second reason for believing in Jesus is even worse than the first. To hold the view that "the message of Jesus is the only one that can give the world and the soul progress, development, expansion, and expression" is to labor under the vainest of delusions. The preacher waxes hilariously sarcastic at the expense of a writer who thought he had made a tremendous discovery when he found the Golden Rule—"Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you"—among the sayings of Confucius. He replies to that writer only by complaining that "he does not tell us of the great thoughts that Jesus has given to the world which are not to be found in the writings of the Chinese philosopher." That is really too funny for words. Will the reverend gentleman mention a single thought expressed by the Gospel Jesus with which the world had not been familiar centuries before his time? He goes on to say that when a man imagines that Christianity is a competitor with Confucianism, Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, he only shows himself "woefully ignorant of the true character of these systems." We make bold to retort that, judging by the descriptive allusions to them in this sermon, Mr. Russell's ignorance of the three Pagan religions named is simply colossal. He dismisses the God of Mohammed as a hard and cruel being who produces "the isolation and almost slavery of the Eastern woman, the bloody wars of conquest—so-called religious, the stagnant, unprogressive life of the East," and who, consequently, "has no message for an age which is the most active and complex of all the world's history." This is a wicked caricature of the Mohammedan religion. The Koran represents Allah as merciful, admitting the doers of good works into Paradise; and as just, punishing the doers of evil. What about the Christian God who consigns, not doers of evil, but unbelievers in Christ, to endless torment in hell-fire? Jesus is made to say, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," while Mohammed is represented as advising his followers thus: "Allah has given each of you intelligence and common sense. If you are in a difficulty or perplexed, do that which your mature judgment tells you is good and right, and that will be the voice of Allah speaking unto you."

The reference to religious wars shows how utterly blind prejudice is. It is a notorious fact that Christianity is the most warlike religion the world has ever seen. It has come down the ages swimming in the blood of Pagans and heretics. Has Mr. Russell never heard of the odious Crusades, themselves essentially criminal and opening the way to the commission of innumerable hideous offences, with a death-roll of nine millions? Has he never read the heart-breaking story of the Albigensian massacres which resulted in the extermination of tens of thousands of France's best citizens? This is Dean Milman's candid description:—

> "Never in the history of man were the great eternal principles of justice, the faith of treaties, common humanity so trampled under foot as in the Albigensian War. Never was a war waged in which ambition, the consciousness of strength, rapacity, implacable hatred, and pitiless cruelty played a greater part. And throughout the war it cannot be disguised that it was not merely the army of the Church, but the Church itself in arms. Papal legates and the greatest prelates headed the host, and mingled in all the horrors of the

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> battle and the siege. In no instance did they interfere to arrest the massacre, in some cases urged it on. 'Slay all, God will know his own,' was the boasted saying of Abbot Arnold, Legate of the Pope, before Beziers" (*Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., p. 208).

It would be difficult to find a parallel to this bloody war in history. At the taking of Beziers twenty thousand people were put to death, the faithful sharing the fate of the heretics. Is our friend ignorant of the Thirty Years' War, which was waged between Catholics and a militant union of Lutherans and Calvinists, and during which the population of Germany was diminished from twenty to fifty per cent? When it began there were 400,000 people in Würtemberg, but by 1641 only 48,000 were left. Can Mr. Russell contemplate the conquest of Mexico and Peru without blushing for very shame? Brutal in the extreme was the persecution of the Anabaptist movement at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and of the Huguenots, which brought about eight bloody civil wars, and which has for its high-water mark of inhumanity the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The truth is that Mohammedanism has no religious wars to compare either in number or in blood-thirstiness with those for which Christianity must be held responsible.

Mr. Russell is equally mistaken about Buddhism. Fancy a Master of Arts in the twentieth century defining *Nirvana* as "that cessation of all activity which was the only cure for sin." Every scholar knows that *Nirvana* "is the realisation of the final culminating stage in a single stream of life evolving from eternity. The victim of that stream's current has now become the master. The plant, to shift the metaphor, that takes years to reach florescence has burst into flower, and tastes its 'crowded hour of glorious life'" (Mrs. Rhys-Davids, M.A., *Buddhism*, p. 170). It is quite as great an error to declare that "Christ is the source and inspiration of all the new-found liberty" of China under the recently established Republic. There are a few Christians in the country, but it is a monstrous falsehood to assert that China turns to Christ to-day, rather than to Confucius or Buddha. China is not a Christian country, nor do its inhabitants show the least tendency to adopt the religion of the West.

Mr. Russell's third and last reason for being a Christian is a purely sentimental one. "I am a Christian," he says, "because of living and personal experience of the redemptive grace and power of Christ." We do not doubt the reality of the feeling, or the sincerity of the experience; but we do not only doubt, but deny, its evidential value; and our denial of its evidential value is based upon the fact that its effect upon character and conduct is more injurious than beneficial. One of the fruits of Christian experience is overweening egotism, proud arrogance, or haughtiness. Shakespeare speaks of "arrogant Winchester, that haughty prelate," and the same adjectives can be applied to every earnest Christian everywhere. Even Mr. Russell is so anxious to depreciate non-Christian religions that he fails to be just to them. They all "lay over the lands and hearts of those who profess them a great dark pall of pessimism, stagnation, and bondage." They are so imperfect and corrupt that it would degrade Christianity to enter into competition with them. In other words, Christians are the only sane, wise, and good people on the face of the earth. A religion that engenders such hateful arrogance is self-condemned. Another fruit of Christian experience is hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is a feigning to be what one is not, a fault of which every zealous Christian cannot help being guilty. To be in Christ is to be a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and, consequently, a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth. Listen to the heavenly citizen's wail:—

> "'Tis weary waiting here;
> I long to be where Jesus is,
> To feel, to see him near."
>
> "Here in the body pent,
> Absent from him I roam,
> Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,
> A day's march nearer home."

How often have we heard a congregation sing such hymns with a fervor that could be justified only by an unspeakable longing for immediate translation into the glory land. Emotionally, for the time being, the singers no doubt did yearn indescribably for the "blessed home beyond this land of woe, where trials never come, nor tears of sorrow flow"; but the so-called happy experience was an emotional disease. It was a longing that did violence to the nature of those who cherished it. In sane moments even the greatest saints do not wish to leave the earth that gave them birth. When sickness assails them, instead of shouting "Hallelujah! the glorious change is at hand," they send for the doctor and do everything within their power to keep out of Paradise. "The desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better" than to remain here, is unnatural and essentially hypocritical, and its influence upon character cannot be wholesome. It is well-known that as members of society, the most emotional disciples of the Lamb are in no sense superior, if equal, to other people.

Mr. Russell's reasons for being a Christian impel us to reject Christ altogether. We reject him because he never lived, because the claims made on his behalf are discredited by all history, because faith in him produces hypocrites and persecutors, and because the religion that bears his name has always been, and is, pre-eminently a religion of the sword. Mr. Russell calls him "the one Man amongst men," and "the incomparable Master in insight and in purity," and then admits that—

> "The love of Jesus, what it is,
> None but his loved ones know."

We maintain that if what the Bible and Mr. Russell say about him were true, "his loved ones" would include the entire human race, and pain, sorrow, evil, vice, dissention, and wrangling would be unknown. Instead of that happy state of things, we have Christendom, which is an armed camp, and Christians who are perpetually crucifying one another and looking down with disdain or feigned pity upon all outsiders.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Purity Crusade.

JUST at present the British Public is passing through one of its periodic attacks of aggressive morality. Meetings are being held all over the country, new societies are being formed, books are being published—the inevitable Harold Begbie has, of course, issued a shilling shocker packed with extravagant verbiage—and all sorts of things are being denounced. Music-halls, picture palaces, advertisement hoardings, books, are being attacked in a frenzy of purifying zeal. And with Mr. Begbie as fugleman—his pamphlet was written at the request of the Free Church Council—we are warned that bad as things are, they will become much worse unless something drastic is done. Hence the societies, meetings, books, and general furore in the name of morality and religion.

Putting on one side the immense amount of exaggeration involved in this agitation, it may be admitted there is room and need for improvement. But was there ever a time when there was not? Things are not worse than they were; they are, I believe, better. The tendency is to improvement, not to deterioration. And, after all, it is not fundamentally a question of how bad things are, but of the methods employed to make them better, and of the cause of their being as bad as they are. As things go at present, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that whatever improvement occurs will not happen as the consequence of what is being done by this shrieking community of puritan reformers, but will transpire in spite of their efforts. The utmost effect of their conduct will be to change the form of the particular vice attacked, and that may easily be a change for the worse instead of for the better.

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The clergy are, of course, taking an active part in this agitation, and there are several reasons for this. It is a *safe* occupation in this country. Agitation concerning other subjects soon brings a clergyman into conflict with some of his congregation. If the clergy were to make a united attack, say, upon the ground landlords of London, and show that responsibility for overcrowding, with its consequent ill-health and ill-conduct, rests largely with them, there would be trouble. So would a general campaign on the housing question, or on the conditions under which labor is employed. But music hall managers, lessees of dancing academies, variety artistes—we except Harry Lauder—are not, one may assume, great patrons of the Churches, and it is quite safe to attack them. The occupation gives the minimum of risk with the maximum of profit. And where a licence is involved it is tolerably easy for people in position to bring effective pressure to their aid.

And it is safe from another point of view. There is no more elastic word in the English language than "indecent." It may mean anything, from the color of a necktie to positive obscenity. But while it may be applied to anything, it almost invariably suggests *impurity*. And that suggestion does the trick. The man who raises the cry feels himself surrounded with a halo of virtue. Those who listen are afraid, for the most part, to demur, because there is the easy retort that it involves the support of immorality. And the general lack of moral courage is such that once a thing is labelled indecent most people will refuse to have anything to do with its defence. More than that, they are often impelled to take a hand on behalf of the "Moral Crusade" in order to vindicate their reputation—and for other reasons.

These other reasons are important. Those who have watched this agitation, and others of a similar character, cannot have failed to observe that the subject has, for a large number of people, a very strong and a very unhealthy attraction. They attend meetings and they read the literature published because they anticipate revelations of a very peculiar character. The pornographic taste that in some people is gratified by the reading of "suggestive" books, is in other people gratified by hearing these things denounced on the public platform. The gross exaggerations concerning the "White Slave" traffic, so cleverly and so clearly exposed, from official information, by Mrs. Billington Greig, is a case in point. The speakers simply allowed their minds to run riot. A single case became thousands! "I have heard" became "I have known." And the audience was in no mood to cavil at statements, no matter how extravagant. Mr. Harold Begbie follows the same line. He tells of a child of *four years of age* kept in a house of ill-fame for an immoral purpose. The baby was rescued by a lady, but was kidnapped again, and has never been heard of since. Such a statement should either not be made at all, or, if made, should be accompanied by the fullest proof. At least, we should have been told what steps the police took in the matter.

And one great consequence of these agitations—so long as they remain in the hands of this class—is not hard to foresee. People are taught to look for indecency, and to find it, either where it does not exist or where it would remain unnoticed. The Bishop of London boasted the other day that he and other Christians put down the Living Pictures a few years ago. Does that mean that London became purer afterwards? According to the mouthpieces of the present purity crusade, London was never so impure as at present. What did the Bishop and his helpers actually achieve? This: they made the exhibition of living pictures indecent to nearly everybody that saw them. People who went to the music-halls could not help looking for the indecencies the Bishop had so kindly pointed out to them. Whether the exhibitions were indecent before the Bishop's crusade is a matter of opinion. That they were so afterwards is certain. They were made so by the prurient parsonic mind. If the Bishop had been present at the Crucifixion, no doubt his chief complaint would have been that Jesus lacked sufficient clothing to appear before a mixed multitude.

A little while before this we had the row over the nude statuary outside the offices of the British Medical Association. For weeks men and women were incited and invited to go and look at these statues, which were declared to be too indecent to be tolerated in a Christian country. And thousands of Christians went—most of them appeared to suffer gladly—and examined through opera-glasses the "indecent" statuary. The same thing over again. But for the religious crusaders no one would have thought them indecent. But they were made indecent for a time, until these pious hunters had found some fresh and more timid quarry. For the statues were not removed; they were not even draped. The British Medical Association had no licence that was at the mercy of these people, and it treated them with contempt. No one calls these statues indecent now. They have been rescued from indecency by being left alone.

So, also, Mr. Harold Begbie refers to a picture that for some years has shocked his pure soul. It is a commercial advertisement in the shape of a poster "which represents the kiss of a man and woman—a kiss of surrender and abandonment." I don't know the picture, and am not aware of ever having seen it. But it is quite possible that I may look for it now, and try to find the indecency that has shocked so pure a mind. And I will undertake to say that no class of the population will look out more eagerly for this picture than Mr. Begbie's readers. If the publishers of the book—the National Council of Evangelical Churches—wish to raise money, I would advise them to reprint and sell this particular poster as a picture postcard. There is no fear of its having a good sale among their *clientèle*.

There are two types of men that trouble the world. One man runs to uncleanness of action. He is a bad enough type, and the proper subject for police attention. But he is, after all, comparatively harmless. His character marks him as one to be avoided, and generally he is avoided. The other type offers a much more serious problem. It runs to uncleanness of mind. This kind of individual is difficult to shun, and, under the guise of a super-sensitive purity, an air of impurity is spread over the whole of life. Nothing is safe from him, and his purity of mind is such that a woman's ankles or an undraped statue throws him into a perfect quiver of unexpressed sensualism. At a meeting the other day some of the speakers took it into their heads to advocate the suppression of certain books. Among others, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio. What is it that has made the *Decameron* a pornographic work? The vast majority of readers who came to the book without any such suggestion would not find it so. The truth is that the *Decameron* is a pornographic book chiefly because the unclean Puritans have for years advertised it as such. I only had the pleasure of hearing the late M. D. Conway on two or three occasions. But on one of these he earned my admiration by advising everyone of his audience to read the *Decameron*. To give that advice in England argued courage.

For myself, I question whether people are ever made worse by reading any book; or if they are, then I should place the demoralisation caused by so-called "good" books as much greater than that by books classed as bad. In reading, as in life, what one gets out of a book is mainly what one puts into it. A natural taste for the vicious and for the depraved will poison a book as it will poison social intercourse. And the remedy in either case is not suppression, but education. Not the policeman, but the tutor. Or, if one has to attribute evil to the reading of a book, then a conclusive case could be made out for the statement that no book in the world is responsible for so much, and so widespread, harm as the Christian's fetish—the Bible.

I am happy to conclude with something from a Bishop. At one of these "purity" meetings Bishop Boyd Carpenter said that the real cure was not to

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suppress literature, but to elevate public opinion. That is the whole truth in a nutshell. Do that, and the work is accomplished. Without that, nothing is of avail. But to do that the work must be taken out of the hands of journalists and parsons who fatten on the tastes they denounce. We are dealing with a public opinion that has been demoralised by Christian training and Christian tradition. It has narrowed the very conception of morality until it has come to mean little else than sexual relationships. How to overcome the essential ill-health of the Puritan mind is the vital problem. In his book on *Woman* the Rev. Principal Donaldson relates the well-known story of Phrynne, whose lawyer won her case by suddenly exhibiting her nude body to the jury. But he properly reminds his readers that this was no appeal to their sensual passions. On the contrary, it was an appeal to their highest artistic instincts. What would have happened at any time had something of the same kind been tried before a Christian jury? Which would it have appealed to in their case—the artistic or the sensual? On the answer to that question hinges one's judgment of the real influence of Christian Puritanism on human life.

C. COHEN.

The Genesis of the New Spirit.

Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle. By H. N. Brailsford. (Home University Press.) 1913.

SOME great Freethinkers have been once more brought to the notice of the general reader by the publication of Mr. H. N. Brailsford's book, *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle;* and their admirers have reason to be grateful for this illuminative volume which has been issued in the "Home University Series" by the famous firm of Williams & Norgate.

The great poet and his guide, philosopher, and friend, William Godwin, died so long ago that one would have thought that the facts concerning their lives were well known to every lover of literature. Yet Christian writers have ever been loth to admit Shelley's Freethought, and Godwin has been treated with the scantiest courtesy, and his action presented in the worst possible light. Being religious themselves, orthodox critics have pretended that men of genius cannot be Freethinkers; and so they tell lies, and strain their faculties to disprove what these men asserted all through their lives.

The fact has so often been ignored, but Shelley was in the direct line of succession of the great Freethinkers. He really belonged to an order of writers of which Rousseau and Voltaire are the best-known representatives. They all wrote, not merely for artistic, but for propagandist ends, to impress their ideas upon others by force of eloquence. In the last analysis they are alike in their Freethought. Shelley did not originate the philosophy in his poetry; he merely adopted it directly from Godwin and indirectly from the great French iconoclasts. As Mr. Brailsford points out acutely, "Godwin in short explains Shelley, and it is equally true that Shelley is the indispensable commentary to Godwin." It would be no paradox to add that Godwin formed Shelley's mind, and that *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas* were the greatest of Godwin's works. With the proud record of half a century's work for Freethought, William Godwin could at least claim that he had done a man's part in purging the veins of men of the subtle poisons which dwarf them.

Literature was not merely a pastime to Shelley and Godwin, and Shelley in particular was ever a pioneer. From the days of *Queen Mab* to his latest poem, he was fighting for Liberty. Except that the later works strike deeper notes than those he had used with such exuberant resonance in his youth, there is no change. He died, so to speak, sword in hand, and his epitaph is in our hearts.

Yet there is another man who has, and deserves, a place in this most interesting volume; a man who has written his name for all time to see, and that is Thomas Paine. In a generation of brave men, he was the boldest and noblest. No wrong found him indifferent; and he used his pen not only for the democracy which might reward him, but for animals and slaves. Poverty never left him, yet he made fortunes and gave them to the cause he loved. The *Age of Reason* was the bravest thing he did, for it threatened his name with an immortality of lying abuse. "Where Liberty is, there is my country," said Franklin; and Paine's magnificent answer was, "Where is not Liberty, there is mine." It is the watchword of the soldiers of Freethought, the marching music that sent Paine himself forth as a knight-errant, that sent Lafayette to America, and Byron to Greece, and inspired so many poets from Shelley to Swinburne.

Full justice is done to these men in Mr. Brailsford's admirable book. He starts with an account of the effect of the French Revolution in England, and shows clearly and distinctly the connection between the French and the English Freethinkers; and one of the most delightful chapters deals with the work of Mary Wollstonecraft.

It is greatly to Mr. Brailsford's credit that he does not slur over Shelley's Freethought. He tells us plainly that Shelley was an Atheist, and adds: "Like Godwin, he felt that the God of orthodoxy was a tyrant, and he revolted against Him, because He condemned the world which He had made." And, again, he points out that "Nothing could be more absurd than to call Shelley a Pantheist. Pantheism is the creed of conservatism and resignation, but Shelley felt the world as struggle and revolt." After this tribute, it is the more to be regretted that Mr. Brailsford allows himself to lapse into writing of "Tom" Paine instead of Thomas Paine, a palpable form of insolence. The obvious admiration of Mr. Brailsford for the great Freethinker does not minimise the offence, for the effect upon the popular mind is to range Paine among men who are patronised—a perfectly intolerable suggestion.

The scope of Mr. Brailsford's volume is very wide, for one may regard the period from Paine to Shelley as the beginning of the new era. Out of the charnel-vault of Kingcraft and Priestcraft, Rousseau and the other great French Freethinkers saw in vision the ideal society of the future. Of this new evangel Paine was the prophet and Shelley was the poet. It was precisely because their hearts were aflame with human sympathy that their works have vital and permanent effect. They both devoted themselves to the idea of the perfectibility of human nature. It is the very mainspring of their prose and poetry. In the *Rights of Man* and the *Age of Reason*, no less than in the *Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound*, its expression glows with the solemn and majestic inspiration of prophecy. Liberty is yet to be won; may it be our task to hasten the coming of that glorious day when the world will be one country and to do good will be the only religion.

MIMNERMUS.

MIRACLES.

Of all the modes of evidence which ever were invented to obtain belief to any system or opinion to which the name of religion has been given, that of miracle, however successful the imposition may have been, is the most inconsistent. For, in the first place, whenever recourse is had to show for the purpose of procuring that belief (for a miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show), it implies a lameness or a weakness in the doctrine which is preached. And, in the second place, it is degrading the Almighty into the character of a showman, playing tricks to amuse and make the people stare and wonder. It is also the most equivocal sort of evidence which can be set up; for the belief is not to depend upon the thing called a miracle, but upon the credit of the reporter who says that he saw it; and, therefore, the thing, were it true, would have no better chance of being believed than if it were a lie.—*Thomas Paine.*

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Acid Drops.

The following appeared in the *Daily Citizen* of Thursday, November 20:—

> "Refusal by the chairman of the Bench to take the word of a man who said he did not believe in God led to the adjournment of a case of alleged trespassing in search of game at Morpeth Police Court yesterday.
>
> The defendant, a Longhurst miner named William Snowball, elected to give evidence, but refused to be sworn on the Testament, saying he was a Secularist.
>
> Captain Mitford (the chairman): Don't you believe in God?
>
> The Defendant: I don't know what God is.
>
> Captain Mitford: Miserable man! I refuse to take the word of a man who does not believe in God.
>
> Mr. Shaw (solicitor for the defendant): Do your worships think he is not capable of speaking the truth?
>
> Captain Mitford: I don't believe him.
>
> Mr. Shaw: Snowball does not believe in the Testament.
>
> Captain Mitford: No man is capable of speaking the truth who is such a fool as not to believe in God.
>
> Mr. Shaw indignantly objected to the position taken up by the Bench, and asked for the case to be adjourned until the next court.
>
> Captain Mitford: The case will be adjourned. We cannot believe the word of a man like that."

One expects to meet insufferable fools on the magistrates' bench in country places, and Captain Mitford evidently belongs to a well-known species. But what was the clerk of the court doing that he did not tell this impudent bigot that the witness was entitled to affirm, and on the very ground on which he was rejected and insulted, namely, that he had no religious belief?

Captain Mitford's dictum is that "No man is capable of speaking the truth who is such a fool as not to believe in God." We always thought it was rather rogues than fools who were incapable of telling the truth. Rogues, of course, are usually Christians. And the fact is not surprising. There is a personage called the father of lies in the Bible. It is the clergy's old friend the Devil. Yet he would be a most eligible witness in Captain Mitford's court. *He* is not a fool—*he* is not an Atheist, never was, and never will be—*he* has a most satisfactory belief in God. He would suit Captain Mitford down to the ground.

Bradlaugh's "Oaths Act" is some twenty-seven years old and apparently it hasn't reached Morpeth yet. We have again and again suggested that the Lord Chancellor should circularise the Police and other courts on this matter. Nothing, however, has been done. Lord Chancellors are high and mighty persons; far too big for their boots, and far too lazy for their salary—which is £10,000 a year.

Jim Larkin may be all right from other points of view, but he talks too much about "God" for our taste. At the Albert Hall meeting he brought in "the living God." Perhaps it was only sonorous verbiage. We hope it was. For the help that "God" (living or dead) has rendered the strikers at Dublin is easily measured. Mr. Larkin seems grateful for very small mercies.

We have heard that God doesn't understand Welsh. At least an old Englishwoman is reported to have said so when she heard the prayers going on in a Welsh chapel. It now appears that there are other languages not understood by the same personage. There was a gipsy funeral at St. Mary's Cemetery, Ilford, recently, and the short service included the pouring of wine over the coffin. A Catholic priest asked the parents why they did not attend mass. "We can only pray in Romany," the father replied, "and God does not understand the language."

There is a great Protestant eruption in the town of Hawick just now. The leader of the Protestant mob is Mr. James Macdonald, who titles himself "pastor." He has been having packed "houses" at all his meetings—at which he takes "silver collections." The "pastor" denies that he is married, but admits having had an illegitimate daughter when he was younger. Two local ministers investigated his career, and afterwards issued a pamphlet denouncing him as unworthy to represent any good cause. They suggest that if he isn't married he ought to be. It must be said that the Roman Catholics of the town have behaved like intelligent and law-abiding citizens; against abuse hurled at them from every quarter, they have not retaliated, and the rabid clamoring of the vulgar mob they have treated with silent contempt. At the commencement of the eruption, the fight was between the Protestants and the Romanists. Now, as can be seen from the leaflet, the camp of the Protestants is divided. "After 1900 years' profession of the gospel of love your neighbor as yourself, Christendom is an armed camp."

Mr. Thomas Hardy, whose humaneness is known to all his readers, is not often moved to public speech outside his novels. But he has been so moved lately by the opposition offered on Wareham Town Council to a proposal to establish a system of painless slaughtering of animals for food. In a letter to the *Dorset County Chronicle* he says: "I regret to see that the excellent movement for the painless slaughtering of animals for food should be obstructed in any way. The movement is belated enough already in not having been reached until after twenty centuries of what is supposed to be a humane religion." The sting of Mr. Hardy's letter is in the tail. The sarcasm should make the Christians blush—if they have a blush left in stock, which seems rather doubtful.

The Middlesex Licensing Committee have prohibited all picture shows on Sundays. They have no legal right to do anything of the kind. Why don't the picture show managers defy this usurpation?

The Archbishop of Canterbury presided at a convention last week for the closing of publichouses on Sunday, and was supported by two bishops, a Jewish rabbi, and representatives of the Salvation Army and other fancy religions. The Archbishop based part of his appeal on behalf of the 300,000 people engaged in publichouses. We shall believe in his Grace's disinterestedness for the working classes when he sees that organists, choir boys, vergers, and church cleaners are paid adequate wages.

The bishops are engineering a crusade against the music-halls, and seem to be as zealous as the old-time Puritans. How is it that these prelates are so much less sensitive when they read the lurid pages of the Old Testament?

The clergy are making a great outcry against the tango and other popular dances. Perhaps they prefer David's famous dance. It was an active performance, and the man after God's own heart wasn't hampered with much clothes.

The Bishop of Bristol has been appealing for sympathy—and contributions—for the "poor" clergy. He says that, unlike the rest of the world, when he wakes on Sunday there is no day of rest for him. On the contrary, his Sunday is "the most onerous, the most trying of all the days of the week." Shame! The public should insist on the clergyman having his day of rest—and let him take it on Sunday. When Sabbatarianism is the question, the clergy ought to set a good example.

I believe, says the Bishop, as an inducement to subscribe, that no clergyman should receive less than £200 a year, that if all care and financial anxiety were removed from the clergy they would do their work better and with a lighter heart. We do not doubt it for a moment, but the statement holds good no more for the clergy than for other people. *Everyone* would go about his or her work if the financial anxiety of making ends meet were removed. The statement is really a truism; and we do not see why public appeals should be made on behalf of the clergy more than on behalf of all other people. We believe in a "living wage" for everyone, but other people do not first of all make a talk about their being "called" to their vocation, and then appeal to the charity of the general public to raise their wages. Besides, the proper people to raise the salary to £200 a year are the better-paid clergy. Let the bishops set the example of "shelling out."

Commenting on the latest "blasphemy" case, the *Christian World* says:—

> "No man has a right, whether talking on religion or on any other question in public, deliberately to use language that deeply hurts the feelings of the average listener. If a Christian speaker used unpardonably vulgar and violently provocative language, calculated to cause a breach of the peace, against a denomination other than his own, or against agnostics or atheists, he would have no reason to complain if the law stopped him."

We are sorry to say this superficially fair comment rings very hollow. In the first place, the *Freethinker* must not hurt the feelings of his listeners. The *Christian* must be so violent as to threaten an immediate breach of the peace before action is justified. And we would like to know whether the *Christian World* has ever even heard of a Christian speaker being threatened by the police because he

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used vulgar and abusive language concerning non-Christians? Week by week in the London parks some of the vilest abuse and slander is showered upon Freethinkers by paid Christian speakers. When have the police interfered? Would any magistrate grant a warrant against such a speaker if a Freethinker applied for one? The notion is so absurd that no one would dream of making such an application. It is neither the abusive nor the provocative language that is objected to. It is the attack on Christianity that is resented; and the *Christian World* knows that as well as we do. And the peculiar feature of the present situation is the aggravated cowardice of the Christian world. Once upon a time Christians had at least the courage to attack the leaders. Now they dare not fly higher than the rank and file.

Bishop Welldon's letter in the *Manchester Guardian* on the Stewart case is characteristic of the writer. He has apparently but one objection to "blasphemy" prosecutions, and that is that the victim is apt to regard himself, and to be regarded by others, as "a martyr for his religious opinions." In other words, Christianity stands to lose more than "Infidelity" from such prosecutions. Were it the other way about Bishop Welldon would find no fault with them. It is not a question of principle, but a question of profit and loss.

We quite follow Bishop Welldon's conclusion. "Christianity," he says, "is not unable to defend itself against all reasonable attacks, and persons who attack Christianity with the poisoned weapons of indecency should be punished, not as infidels, but as evil-doers." Quite so. It is Bishop Welldon's religion that must not be attacked except with the greatest care and solemnity. It is Bishop Welldon's religion, in attacking which a disputant who commits the slightest indiscretion is in danger of imprisonment. It is Bishop Welldon and his fellow-religionists who are to decide what is indiscreet and even what is "indecent." The Christians are the upper-dog in this game all along. They complain, they prosecute, they try, they give the verdict, they sentence, and they imprison. The "infidel's" role is to grin if he can and bear it as he must.

What is "indecency" in the discussion of Christianity? We challenge Bishop Welldon to give a straight answer to this question. Taking the word in its natural sense, we challenge him to find any "indecency" whatever in the words alleged to have been uttered by this Wolverhampton "blasphemer." The word "indecency" is a trick word. It is used in one sense with a hope, and indeed a knowledge, that it will be understood in another. You may say that a man's conduct at a dinner-table was positively indecent, and lead people to think that he was filthy in act or speech, whereas all he really did was to eat peas with a knife.

When a man's honor and liberty are at stake, Bishop Welldon, you should speak of him with some degree of accuracy—that is, honesty. We do not appeal to you as a Christian. That would be a waste of words. We appeal to you as a human being. It is you, sir, and not the "blasphemer" in prison, who has used "poisoned weapons." At the worst he has only used the common language of the man in the street. You have used words so as to cover a crime with a lie.

We are pleased to see the following from Mr. H. W. Massingham in reference to the many free speech prosecutions of recent years:—

> "The Larkin trial was no worse than the Crowsley trial, or the Bowman trial, or the Mann trial, or the blasphemy prosecutions. These things seem right enough to officials, advised by officials; they seem wrong to the man who breathes the comparatively free air of the street. He knows that if he is a Liberal or a Labor man, or even an average good-tempered Briton, with a Christian bias, that the men who talk 'blasphemy' are not the worst, but sometimes the best of citizens."

Mr. Massingham has been a long time coming to it, but it is something that he has at last arrived. We warned the public, at the first of the "blasphemy" trials, that there was more in the matter than what merely affected Freethinkers; and the present Government, thanks probably to its Nonconformist leaven, has all along been seeing how far it could curtail the most dreaded enemy of all governments—Free Speech. Some of those who stood idly by while Freethinkers were being prosecuted, because they did not agree with the opinions persecuted, have now reaped their reward in the persecution of opinions with which they had some sort of sympathy. We hope that by now these people will have fully realised the folly of their conduct, and bear the lesson in mind on future occasions. Freedom is the proper concern of all, and all should rally when it is attacked in any direction.

It is very difficult for a Christian to do justice to another religion—sometimes impossible. Professor Margoliouth has at times written very sympathetically of Mohammedanism, but he has just fallen into a very serious blunder. Writing an account of Mohammedanism for the benefit of the *Church Family Newspaper*, he points out that the Mohammedan identifies the State with his Church, and finds it difficult to separate religion from politics. In neither of these particulars does Mohammedanism differ much from Christian practice; but the remarkable statement follows that the Balkan States, when attacking the Ottoman Empire, were believed to be engaged on Crusades. Now, as a matter of fact, the Turks deliberately refrained from any appeal to religious feeling during the war. It was not they who believed the attack to be a Crusade, it was the Christians themselves who called it so. More than that, the constant appeal to the country was to Christian feeling as against Mohammedan domination. The Cross against the Crescent was the great rallying cry, and the whole of the religious press of the country openly, and indirectly, exulted in the prospect of the Turks being driven out of Constantinople and Santa Sophia reconverted to Christian worship. It is really very soon—too soon—to write that the religious feeling in the Balkan War was imported by Mohammedans.

The *Catholic Times* is highly indignant because the French Government gave the railway servants who were killed in the recent disaster what it calls a "Pagan funeral." The Government did not, of course, prevent the relatives of the men taking the bodies and giving them a religious funeral; and as this was not done, one must assume that those chiefly concerned were content. The Government did all it could properly be expected to do. It saw to the funeral; there were wreaths of flowers sent; and the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber, with other Ministers, delivered addresses. Nothing else was possible or proper. The State did not employ these men as Catholics, but as citizens, and as citizens killed in the discharge of their duty it paid them civic honor. Suppose some of these men had been Jews. Would the *Catholic Times* advise that the representatives of the Government should have arranged a Jewish funeral? The French Government acted in a perfectly dignified manner; although one need not expect Catholics to appreciate a policy that aims at remaining neutral towards all forms of religious opinion. Neutrality is, to them, only another name for persecution.

The same journal points out that "it would not be easy to find in Europe another city where the toiling classes frequent the churches so regularly and in such large numbers." Perhaps not; but if reports are to be trusted, it would not be easy to find another city in Europe where the conditions under which people live are so utterly demoralising. Perhaps there is a very close connection between the two things. For our part, we believe there is; and we also believe that one result of the present trouble will be that a great many will have this connection brought home to them.

Fifteen tons of Bibles were sent out in two days lately from the famous House in Queen Victoria-street. It was a great weight. But theological literature is generally heavy.

Canon O. P. Wardell-Yerburgh, vicar of Tewkesbury, went hunting with the Ledbury hounds. He had better have resembled Jacob than Esau. It was his last hunt. He was taken ill on the way home and died in a cottage to which he was carried. His complaint is said to have been "overwork." Some people will be apt to think it was "overriding."

Rev. C. G. Duperier, Eyre Lodge, Portobello, left £7,753. Poor clergy!

Rev. Benjamin Watkins, vicar of Little Aston, Staffordshire, left £11,230. Oh those "poor clergy"!

Rev. Robert Jackson, of Buckingham-place, Clifton, left £30,735. "Woe unto you rich!" Quite so. The reverend gentleman took the risk.

"It is a great error of modern times to mistake erudition for education," says Mr. M. E. Sadler. It is a mistake much fostered by the clergy of all denominations.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that he never envies young men. Are they becoming scarce in the Church?

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Mr. E. O'Donnell, lecturing at Chelsea recently, proclaimed his belief in a future life for the "animal creation." In which case we hope that fleas and bugs will be self-supporting.

The Rev. F. Dormer Pierce, of Southend-on-Sea, has raised an outcry about a theatrical poster, which he considers harmful to the young people. Yet he belongs to a profession which forces Biblical nastiness into the hands of little children. Some of these clergymen will get into trouble. They denounce pictures and performances until people fancy there must be something really spicy in them; but they turn out to be by no means indecent, and the pious patrons are proportionately disappointed, and full of moral indignation at being deceived.

The near approach of the merry birthday of the Man of Sorrows reminds us of the close association of godliness with gluttony. Pudding and piety seems to be the recipe for the great festival.

John Belsham, aged thirty-four, residing in Hackney, was a printer. After being confined to his room for eight weeks suffering from consumption of the throat, he was told on November 14 that he could not live through the day. His wife brought in a clergyman and Holy Communion was celebrated at the house. Soon afterwards he was found with his throat cut. Such is the bracing and consoling effect of religion! It may be, however, that the poor fellow thought that, being prepared for heaven, he might as well go there at once, and thus avoid the many a slip which the proverb says is met between the cup and the lip. The coroner's jury returned a verdict of "Suicide by cut throat"—which was short and sweet. It left all other questions open.

Ten towns have been wrecked by earthquake in Peru. Over 200 persons were killed in one town—Abancay. More credit to "Providence"!

The new super-Dreadnought, the *Iron Duke*, went faster than was expected on her trial trip. Make-believe gave way to real earnest. The great battleship, warned by "wireless," raced for all she was worth to the relief of a burning steamer, the *Scotsdyke*. She arrived just in time to save everybody on board. It was done so nicely, neatly, and calmly that the pet dog was the first to enter the life-boat. *Après vous, monsieur!* The *Iron Duke* will never do a better deed than she did that day.

Monsignor Benson says he saw seven miracles at Lourdes one afternoon. Very likely. Some people always see what they want to. But did other people see them too? Ay, there's the rub.

"There have of recent years been some black deeds done in China, but it is pleasant to note that Mr. Ernest H. Wilson, V.M.H., whose book, *A Naturalist in Western China*, has just been published (Methuen, 30s. net), bears testimony in his Preface to the kind treatment which he always received in the course of his various travels in the Middle Kingdom. He has made four different expeditions to the country, covering in all nearly eleven years, but in all his wanderings he has been singularly fortunate. 'The Chinese,' he says, 'treated me always with kindly courtesy and respect. I was in interior China during the Boxer outbreak and the Russo-Japanese war, and visited places shortly before or after anti-foreign riots, but never experienced any incivility meriting the name.' This testimony from such a quarter is very interesting."—*Westminster Gazette* (Nov. 19).

There is an increasing scarcity of choir boys, and at a Harrow church women have replaced the boys. If this state of affairs continues, there will not be any male persons in the churches with the exception of the parsons. And did not Sidney Smith say that they were a third sex?

The Sunday School Union has a musical instrument department, and they supply articles on the easy payment system. Probably this is to prepare the scholars for the heavenly choir.

Rev. W. J. Cunningham Pike, of Chelsea Congregational Church, explains that the walls of Jericho did not fall down flat, but sank into the earth until the top of the walls were flush with the ground, so that "Rahab and her house" (that is, her brothel) were comfortably on the ground floor, and very accessible, we presume, to business visitors. Some people will say they understand it now. Others will say that all lunatics are not in asylums.

Rev. Thomas Ghent, curate of St. Andrew's, Stockwell, could not induce a special jury to give him a verdict and damages in his action for slander against Mr. Arthur Fitzgerald, a police-sergeant. It was alleged that the man of God had been too familiar with the man in blue's wife. After nine days' trial the jury disagreed. The reverend gentleman is either fortunate or unfortunate. We don't know which.

"Vanoc" in the *Referee* finds that the saddest event of 1913 is "the silence of the clergy on things that count." By this he means that they are silent on the most important social problems. But why should they be otherwise? All social problems pertain to this world. All religious problems pertain to another world. Why should not the clergy attend to their own problems? You reply that these problems are no longer of any importance. Very well, then; let the clergy engage in some better occupation. Their opinion on secular problems is of no more value, and often less, than the opinion of laymen.

Our old friend Mr. J. Barry—an N. S. S. vice-president and a member of the board of directors of the Secular Society, Ltd.—wonders why the Tory sporting paper referred to in last week's "Acid Drops" thinks it witty to remark that the Bradlaugh statue at Northampton is situated near a public lavatory. Mr. Barry points out that the late King Edward's statue on the best spot that could be selected on Tooting Broadway is similarly situated. And in this case the lavatory preceded the statue. So that the insult, if it is an insult, was absolutely premeditated.

Harry Lauder's motto should be "This way to the stars!" He was in the pulpit again last Sunday—at Anerley Congregational Church. It was the afternoon meeting for men, but the ladies were admitted "on this occasion only" to the galleries, the men being on the ground floor, so that the place must have looked a good deal like a Jews' synagogue. Harry has only one subject, "Pit Ponies." But he opened the ball with "Annie Laurie," and he finished with, not the "Rock of Ages" but "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep." Some of his hearers, perhaps, felt like that on the Saturday night. Of course we exclude the ladies.

Soon after the death of Ingersoll we remember reading some pious vulgarity from the pen of a professional Christian about the bearing of the women of the Ingersoll household when they had to part for ever from the body of the dear husband, the dear father, the dear head of the family. That was what you might expect, the wretched bigot said, in the bereavement of "infidels." The body is all, and they cling to it with wonderful tenacity, and at the final parting they refuse to be comforted. Whereas a Christian's thoughts are all about the soul on these occasions, and they accept the balm of consolation. Mrs. Ingersoll had to be led away from her husband's corpse when they took it to the crematorium. Well, was that never done for a bereaved Christian man? Let us see.

We have lately been reading again the Life of Edmund Burke. A man of genius, a great writer, the assailant of the French Revolution, the champion of Church and State, the apologist of Christianity. Burke stood as the representative of religion, not only for England, but for the whole of Europe. Now, Burke was wrapped up in his only son, for whose future he had formed the highest expectations. The young man was his father's pride, joy, and hope. But he was cut off in the bloom of his promise, and Burke abandoned himself to the very desperation of sorrow. His was "a grief that would not be comforted." Let us hear his biographer:—

> "The grief of Burke was appalling. He would now sit in that unnatural calmness of despair, which is yet more terrible than the most stormy displays of passion, and now bursting into a frenzy of grief, would rush into the chamber where his son lay, and throwing himself on the body, call in accents of the most fearful anguish for 'the hope of his age, the stay of his life, the only comfort of his declining and now joyless years.'"

Burke was a Christian, Mrs. Ingersoll is a Freethinker. Both acted alike in a sudden bereavement. Why? Because both were human, both natural, both sincere, and both loved. The orthodox ruffian referred to in the previous paragraph resembled them in none of these things. Therefore he did not understand.

A Yankee millionaire has raised a costly monument to "the memory of Adam, the first man." We hope the "grand old gardener" is duly grateful.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £252 5s. 1d. Received since:—W. J. Conroy, 10s.; B. N. Kotaka (India), 3s.; R. Young, 10s.; (Mrs.) A. Brooks, 2s. 6d.; S. Valentine Caunter, £1 1s.; D. J. D., £5.

W. J. CONROY.—You wish us "good health and general happiness." Thanks. But the two things are practically identical in our case. We live, and want to live, for "the best of causes."

D. DAWSON.—The extract you send us from Dr. C. W. Saleeby in the Harmsworth Self Educator is good (not special) English, but from a ratiocinative point of view it is about worthy of an errand-boy who has just begun attending Sunday-school. His first two sentences are enough to settle his position as a thinker. "Purpose is an attribute of mind," he says. Yes, but what is *mind?* The real question is evaded. "A man's body," he says, "is a machine and so is a motor-car." A man's body is *not* a machine. It evolves from a living germ. Did anybody ever see a motor-car growing from an egg? A motor-car is *put* together; all its parts, too, can be renewed if necessary. Dr. Saleeby might tell us where a man can get a new heart, new kidneys, a new liver, new lungs, or a new head. If the last were possible, we could name a good many people who should make an early application.

FRED COLLINS.—You will see by advertisement and paragraph that we have decided to do so.

E. W. COX.—(1) Our shop manager has written you to the effect that we don't do any outside printing. We wish we did no inside printing either. But we are forced into it by the insecurity of the *Freethinker*, which we will never place at the mercy of others while the Blasphemy Laws exist. (2) There is absolutely no contemporary evidence of the historicity of the Jesus of the Gospels. A passage exists in Josephus, but it is a patent forgery, and as De Quincey said, has "long been abandoned by all men not lunatic." Bishop Warburton called it "a forgery, and a very clumsy forgery too." (3) Glad to hear you distribute two copies of the *Bible Handbook* every week, and hope the fact will encourage others to do similar missionary work for Freethought.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

E. B.—Your weekly cuttings are always welcome.

G. W. S.—We had already referred to Captain Mitford, the Morpeth magistrate. Thanks all the same. We wonder what Thomas Burt would think of this religious fossil. Perhaps as we do, that he is only fit for a museum of antiquities.

J. BARRY.—We have used your letter as material for an "Acid Drop." Thanks.

T. E. MILLER.—It is as Heine said,—the fool crop is perennial.

H. J. SMITH.—Memorials to the Home Office have only once succeeded in getting the sentence of a prisoner for "blasphemy" remitted, and that was when Mr. Gott's wife died suddenly while he was in Armley Gaol. The memorial effort is really antediluvian. There is now a criminal Court of Appeal, which did not exist in 1883, and an application to that Court is the proper procedure now. We are quite ready to assist in that line of action, or even to take the full responsibility of it, provided we are allowed full control. Neither Mr. Stewart nor any of his friends seems capable of managing it. There is no time for beating about the bush.

R. N. M. N.—We have made use of it. Of course we have to be very cautious. The *Freethinker* would get no mercy in a libel action.

J. B.—We had already written on the matter. Thanks all the same. A question might be put to the Lord Chancellor if Parliament were sitting—if any "noble lord" had the courage to do it. We are keeping fairly well and fit for work.

A. C. WELLS.—They would look funnier in the paper you cut them from than they would in our columns. Force of contrast, you know.

T. M.—We don't print your name in full as it may do you an injury. Pleased to have your letter and the cuttings.

A. HOLLINSON.—See paragraphs. Thanks.

H. J. HASTINGS.—May find it useful.

G. CROOKSON.—Mr. Manning Foster is wrong in calling those alleged verses of Robert Burns's in the *Daily Citizen* "An Unpublished Poem." They have been printed scores of times, in newspapers and separately. They are no more Burns's than they are ours—and we wouldn't own them. They are the work of an imitator. Let any real admirer of Burns read the fourth verse, for instance, and see if he can find any touch of "Rab's" fire, humor, and felicity in it. It is easy to imitate Burns's versification, but not his genius.—With regard to the other matter, you are quite right; we know all the facts.

W. W. KENNETT.—See our front-page article. The value of a "flood of lecturers" depends a lot upon the lecturers. The late methods of defence rather multiply than diminish "blasphemy" prosecutions. Nobody is bound to take our advice, but those who choose to disregard it must take the moral as well as the personal responsibility for the consequences.

J. H. B.—Such cuttings are always handy.

THOMAS FOWLER.—Thanks, though the matter has been dealt with. See "Acid Drop."

CONNIE BROOKS.—"Demagogue" doesn't necessarily mean anything offensive, though as a matter of fact it does in common usage. Don't be hurt about "the dismal doctrines which Bradlaugh taught." Adjectives are handy when arguments cannot be answered.

D. J. D.—Thanks also for your pleasant letter.

J. HALLIDAY.—Professor Loeb's experiments with the eggs of sea-urchins were made in 1890, and may be found fully described in the lectures of the Marine Biological Laboratory (U.S.A.) delivered in 1893. The essence of the experiment consisted in taking the unfecundated eggs of sea-urchins and fertilising them with prepared sea-water. The experiments proved the possibility of substituting physico-chemical agencies for living ones. When placed back in sea-water the chemically fertilised eggs developed into free-swimming larvæ.

MARK MELFORD.—Received. Will have attention as soon as possible.

R. YOUNG.—If all Freethinkers subscribed according to their means there would be plenty of money for all legitimate party objects.

H. BLACK.—Thanks for your trouble. It was good of the *Manchester Guardian* to print those extracts from our defence before Lord Coleridge in 1883.

W. DODD.—We offered help before, and it was rudely repelled. We are not repeating the performance. At the same time, we shall be quite willing to see that those dependent on Mr. Stewart are properly cared for during his imprisonment. Everybody who knows us knows that, we believe.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote has been pressed to give his lecture on "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*" at the Queen's (Minor) Hall next Sunday (Dec. 7), and he has agreed to do so His subject on the following Sunday will be "Shaw Among the Prophets"—in allusion, of course, to "G. B. S.'s" recent religious developments, especially in connection with the City Temple.

Mr. Cohen lectures at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, Birmingham, this evening (Nov. 30) There should be a crowded meeting, and no doubt there will be if the weather behaves decently.

Mr. Foote has promised to pay Glasgow a lecturing visit early in March. It is not so much the lecturing as the travelling that has given him pause hitherto. He has always been glad to see the Glasgow "saints" and they have to all appearance been glad to see him. But he really wishes Glasgow were nearer. He has to leave home at 9 30 a.m. on Saturday to get to Glasgow at 10 30 p.m., and the long journey home again has to be negotiated on Monday. But what is the use of talking? Glasgow won't come nearer. And one has to fall back on the spirit of the old saying that "if the mountain won't go to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain."

We repeat that it is not so much the lecturing in itself that is burdensome in Mr. Foote's case. He got through his lecture in the big Birmingham Town Hall comfortably enough; a few weeks later he lectured in the fine Stratford Town Hall without turning a hair. No doubt the Queen's Hall lectures will be quite successful from that point of view.

The November number of the *Humanitarian*, edited by Mr. H. S. Salt, contains a long and excellent article by Edward Carpenter on "Sport and Agriculture." There is also a firm reply by Mr. Salt to a writer in the *New Age* who contends that care for the lower animals should be dropped in order that all reforming energy may be concentrated on

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man. Mr. Salt's reply seems unanswerable. His replies usually are of that character.

The *Manchester Guardian* also published a special article on "The Blasphemy Laws: their Origin and Present Scope" from a legal correspondent. This writer contends, as we did at our trial in 1883, that it is only the "feelings of members of the Church of England that are to this day protected by special and exclusive criminal sanctions." It is the State establishment of religion that is the real ground of the Blasphemy Laws.

Under the heading of "The Blasphemy Laws" the *Manchester Guardian* published the following leaderette on the Stewart case:—

> "Mr. Stewart was sentenced at the Staffordshire Assizes yesterday to three months' imprisonment for blasphemy. A man of the same name was sentenced at Leeds two years ago for the same offence, and the sentence will confirm the doubts so widely expressed then about the wisdom of these blasphemy laws. The summing-up of Mr. Justice Coleridge seems to have been quite admirable in its clearness. The question, he said, was whether the lecture complained of was an honest discussion of the fundamentals of religion—in which case there was no offence,—or whether it was meant merely 'to outrage, insult, or ridicule' the feelings of Christians, 'to scandalise, not to prove false' the doctrines attacked. The jury found for the second alternative, and the prisoner was condemned. Such passages as were cited from the lecture were pointless, vulgar, and irreverent, and amply justified what the Judge said about them. We may agree about that and still regret the legal anomaly which treats lapses from good taste in these matters as a crime. If the blasphemy laws were abolished, there would still be ample protection against the grosser kind of offences. If the lecturer used foul language, he could be prosecuted as hundreds of men are every Monday morning; or, again, if his language was such as to threaten a breach of the peace, the powers of the police are ample. Public decency and religious sensibilities, we think, would actually be safer from offence under the ordinary law than under the special protection of the blasphemy laws."

This is as much as one could expect from an English newspaper, and more than one could expect from most of them.

We are pleased to see a column devoted to the new "blasphemy" case in the *Inquirer*—an organ of the Unitarian Church in England. Our contemporary is as fair, we suppose, as any religious paper will ever be on this subject. One thing, of course, it never alludes to, and does not even appear to see; namely, that the "blasphemer" has moral rights of his own, no less than his fellow citizens have. The *Inquirer* argues the question almost entirely from the religious point of view. Prosecutions are bad because they tend to injure Christianity; not because they violate the liberty of the persons who are attacked. Still, it is something, nay, it is a good deal, that the Unitarian organ is in favor of abolishing the Blasphemy Laws altogether. We have pleasure in quoting the following passages:—

> "What we desire to protest against is the revival from time to time of an obsolete crime called blasphemy.....
>
> "In prosecutions for blasphemy it is not what a man says that matters, but the way in which he says it. It would be recognised as intolerable if a scholar of distinction were sent to prison because he arrives at conclusions destructive of the fundamentals of Christianity, and possibly sins against good taste by barbing his criticism with unpleasant sarcasm. But as soon as the same conclusions are translated into the language of the street corner or the secular hall, it is pounced upon by the law as a criminal outrage against the Christian faith. In other words, 'blasphemy' in the modern world is a matter of manners rather than opinions, and as a crime it quite eludes definition. In any case, if the law is set in motion, we should like to ask why the offender is not simply bound over to keep the peace instead of being sent to prison with hard labor?"

Blasphemy as a crime "quite eludes definition." That is true and well said. Yet the same writer says that he is prepared to take the judge's description of the "blasphemer's" coarseness and vulgarity, without a moment's inquiry as to what the man actually said. We are bound to say that this is a shocking blunder. No man's liberty is safe if he may be prosecuted and imprisoned for the use of words as to which the public is not allowed information. We put it to the *Inquirer* seriously. Would this amiable trust in the judge be displayed in the case of any other crime?

In reply to a brief and pointed letter from Mr. Ewart Hopper, of Jarrow-on-Tyne—a well-known Secularist, by the way—on the Stewart case, the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* appends the following note: "We have no sympathy with any prosecution for opinion, and think that these blasphemy cases are a great mistake."

The Protagonist of Greek Materialism.

ALL forms of faith and philosophy are the outcome of evolution. To this rule modern scientific Materialism strictly conforms. In ancient Greece, the materialistic philosophy found its first recorded exponents. Leucippus, the pioneer of the atomic school of Greek philosophy and forerunner of the greater Democritus, was born at Abdera somewhere about 500 B.C. Thirty or forty years later, Democritus first saw the light in the self-same city. Abdera was the wealthy and cultured centre of an Ionian colony on the Thracian coast. The father of Democritus was a man of substance, and we have every reason to believe that his son received an excellent education. His home instruction completed, Democritus travelled widely in the East in search for knowledge, and studied diligently in Egypt for seven years. He returned to his native land rich in information, though poor in pocket, but quickly secured a high reputation for goodness and wisdom. By almost universal consent he was the greatest physical philosopher and the most cultured thinker of his age. Of his voluminous writings, mathematical, physical, ethical, and musical, the merest fragments survive, and these were collected with loving and patient industry by Mullach, and published at Berlin in 1843.

The works of Democritus, according to Diogenes Laertius, were seventy-two in number, and for purity of style, compared favorably with that of Plato:—

> "The absurd epithet, the 'laughing philosopher,' applied to him by some unknown and very superficial thinker, may possibly in some measure have contributed to the fact that for centuries his importance was overlooked.....In the variety of his knowledge, and in the importance of his influence on both Greek and modern speculation he was the Aristotle of the fifth century, while the sanity of his metaphysical theory has led many to regard him as the equal, if not the superior, of Plato."*

The year in which Democritus died is uncertain, but his life was useful and blameless, and it ended at an advanced age. A clever pen-picture of the sage is to be found in Burton's inimitable *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In the Reader's preface of that learned and instructive book, occurs the following quaint passage:—

> "Democritus, as he is described by Hippocrates, and Laertius, was a little, wearish old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company in his latter dayes, and much given to solitariness, a famous philosopher in his age, coaevous with Socrates, wholly addicted to his studies at the last, and to a private life; writ many excellent works, a great divine, according to the divinity of those times, an expert physician, a politician, an excellent mathematician, as Diacosmus and the rest of his works do witness. He was much delighted with the study of husbandry.....He knew the natures, differences of all beasts, plants, fishes, birds; and as some say, could understand the tunes and voices of them. In a word, he was *omnifariam doctus*, a general scholar, a great student; and, to the end that he might better contemplate, I find it related by some, that he put out his eyes, and was in his old age voluntarily blind, yet *saw more than all Greece besides*.....Such a one was Democritus."

On the authority of Shelley, Liberty spake, and like a sunrise on the sea, Athens arose. But although the intellectual indebtedness of modern Europe to classic Greece is almost incredibly great, and although a free spirit pervaded Attic life, we must remember that the mass of the population, then, as now, was sunk in superstition. And interested parties could always inflame the spirit of religious intolerance against the reformers of the time. Socrates drank the bitter cup of poison and Aristotle fled from Athens when the charge of Atheism threatened his life. The philosopher, Protagoras, was also obliged to flee; and his work upon the gods was publicly burnt. Anaxagoras was arrested and took to flight. Theodorus, and very

* "Democritus," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

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probably Diogenes of Appolonia, were persecuted for their anti-theistic heresies. "And all this happened in humane and enlightened Athens."

Small wonder, then, that Democritus made contemptuous concessions to the superstitions of the hour. Not that these were very great: the wonder really is that they were so small. His system is consistently anti-theistic so far as its science and philosophy are concerned. But while he dismissed the notion of the interference of the gods in the creation and regulation of the universe, he yielded to vulgar prejudice so far as to allow the existence of an order of beings of human form, who were grander, less liable to dissolution, and with greater length of life than ordinary men possess. These divinities dwelt in the upper regions of the air, and the popular faith in their existence was accounted for by Democritus as resulting from a general desire to explain the phenomena of thunder, lightning, and earthquakes. Writes Lange, in his famous *History of Materialism*:—

> "With few great men of antiquity can history have dealt so despitefully as with Democritus. In the distorted picture of unscientific tradition almost nothing appears of him except the name of the 'laughing philosopher,' while figures of incomparably less importance extend themselves at full length. So much the more may we admire the tact with which Bacon, ordinarily no great hero in historical learning, chose exactly Democritus out of all the philosophers of antiquity, and awarded him the premium for true investigation, whilst he considers Aristotle, the philosophical idol of the Middle Ages, only as the originator of an injurious appearance of knowledge.....In Democritus he found a kindred spirit, and judged him across the chasm of two thousand years, much as a man of his own age."

Dr. Spedding, the great Baconian expert, fully subscribed to Lange's estimate, and proved to Professor Tyndall that the mighty Francis looked upon Democritus as a man of weightier metal than either Plato or Aristotle.

In his attitude towards Nature, Democritus displayed an essentially modern mind. Like contemporary men of science, the sage of Abdera never allowed the gods to participate in the laws which govern natural phenomena. Briefly stated, the Atomic Philosophy consists in the following propositions:—

> "1. From nothing comes nothing. Nothing that exists can be destroyed. All changes are due to the combination and separation of molecules.
>
> "2. Nothing happens by chance; every occurrence has its cause, from which it follows by logical necessity. The common notion of chance is merely a cloak for human ignorance.
>
> "3. The sole existing things are atoms and empty space; all else is mere opinion.
>
> "4. The atoms are infinite in number and infinitely various in form; they clash together, and the lateral motions and whirlings which thus arise are the beginnings of worlds.
>
> "5. The varieties of all things depend upon the varieties of their atoms, in number, size, and aggregation.
>
> "6. The soul consists of fine, smooth, round atoms, like those of fire. These are the most mobile of all: they interpenetrate the whole body, and in their motions the phenomena of life arise." *

The first five propositions practically represent the atomic theory of modern physics. A slight change in terminology is almost all that is necessary to bring them into line with the best-established results of the most recent science. The final proposition enunciates the existence of finer atoms which occupy the office of the nervous system, whose functions were unknown to the ancient world. Although they were pictured as individually without sensation, the phenomena of life and mind were regarded as the consequence of the combination of the atoms into groups.

The ethical teachings of Democritus were also of a high order. The acquisition of peace of mind he considered as the chief aim of life. The purest joy and the truest happiness are only to be reached through the exercise of the higher mental activity when this is exerted in the endeavor to understand the world in which we live. The blessedest peace of mind is his whose conduct is exemplary and whose conscience is clear.

That such a man as this should have been dubbed the "laughing philosopher" seems supremely ridiculous, if by such a nickname was meant a man to whom nothing was really solemn or profound. The stories which make Democritus a mere dabbler in mystic and secret doctrines are equally absurd. Out of the multitudinous medley of fables and fancies which surround his name, the certainty emerges that his life was devoted to scientific researches which were as serious and practical as they were extensive. Mullach, after a careful study of the whole case, came to the conclusion that Democritus possessed the greatest culture and displayed the deepest philosophical insight of all the pre-Aristotelian thinkers. And he more than hints that the Stagirite sage was materially indebted to the study of Democritus's writings for that wealth of knowledge which has compelled the wonder and admiration of all the modern world.

In more than one respect, the atomic philosopher bears a striking resemblance to our own master-thinker, Herbert Spencer. The philosopher of evolution rated the thinking power far above that of mere erudition. And, in speaking of the Greek sage, Lange justly says, "It is significant that a man of such extensive attainments has said that 'we should strive not after fullness of knowledge, but fullness of understanding.'" And when Democritus refers to his achievements, he appears to attach more importance to his mathematical method, the benefits he had derived from his intercourse with thoughtful men, and the enlarged outlook upon life which a critical study of foreign races and countries helps to confer on the reflective observer, than to all his written works.

The circumstance that the man and his labors have been recognised and vindicated by thinkers of the calibre of Bacon, Lange, Lewes, and Tyndall, and that his pioneer work is now adequately acknowledged by our leading physical philosophers, must not blind us to the fact that for more than two thousand years the star of Democritus was eclipsed by lesser lights. Religious prejudice was doubtless in a great degree responsible for this. But Democritus' distaste for dialectical display, and his constitutional indifference to fame, were certainly contributory causes of the neglect into which he fell. He visited Athens without making his presence known to its numerous philosophers. That he was a scorner of mere word-spinning, an art in which the Sophists excelled, and in which even Socrates and Plato took the keenest delight, is amply evidenced in his works. Democritus was of opinion that truth is more readily extracted from error, than sifted from confusion. One of his moral aphorisms declares that "He who is fond of contradiction and makes many words is incapable of learning anything that is right."

Materialistic views concerning Nature dominated the philosophy of Greece in the fifth century before Christ, when Democritus and Hippocrates were exercising their greatest influence. The immediately succeeding period, which was that of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, was marked by a metaphysical reaction. But from the school of Aristotle proceeded men who returned to more rational modes of thought.

There can be little doubt that the main doctrines of Democritus were adopted by Epicurus, and incorporated with his philosophy; and, in the noble poem of the later Roman, Lucretius, has been preserved for all time the speculations of the two Greek sages, in the form of a stately literary masterpiece.

Thus, in the case of Democritus, we possess a fuller knowledge of his doctrines than of those of many old-time thinkers whose writings have survived in less fragmentary form. It is no longer disputed that the philosophy of Democritus was clear

* Tyndall, *Belfast Address*.

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and consecutive. His doctrines followed through logical necessity from his atomistic postulates. Subjected to revision with the expansion of the human understanding, and the extension of knowledge, the leading principles of the ancient Greek Materialist still form the foundation stones of the many-winged mansion of modern physical science.

T. F. PALMER.

The Garden of God.

WE were sitting on an old seat in a garden. A lilac tree, heavily laden with bunches of white flourish, screened us from the sun-rays. Before us, stretching out on a southern declivity, lay the garden, full of flowers of all colors, resplendently dressed in the glory the sunlight gives them. The air was fragrant with their rich breathings, and the only fault of the picture was that it did not belong to us.

Conversation lagged and finally became tedious and dropped off to sleep. Our pipes went quietly, glad to escape from the application of matches, and we slipped into peaceful harmony with the garden.

Being Sunday, it was more or less natural that my thoughts should take to themselves a religious coloring, and that they should choose to go roaming along the bordered walks of a garden was, in the environment, also more or less natural.

Some time before I had read a sermon entitled the Garden of God. Although, like many people, I love gardens, that sermon did not awaken in me any longing to get there. I disposed of both sermon and garden with a grunt of disgust. He was an inefficient assistant gardener, the fellow who wrote that sermon. I wondered why he did not get the sack. His tools were badly made, and his style of showing a visitor round was most deplorable for one who received a training in the part from so marvellous a master gardener as God. The assistant's sermon wearied me before the amen; but the phrase remained in my memory.

And so it was that, on a lovely Sunday forenoon, in ideal surroundings, when the peacefulness and stillness that have characterised the Lord's Day since the very dawning of time, hung like an invisible but golden mantle of divine grace around my soul, my thoughts, after many wanderings, became entangled in some briar bushes growing in the Garden of God.

The Garden of God is, strangely enough, divided into two; and as I slowly walked along the broad, bordered path that separates the parts, I noticed that the older gardeners lived in the old, and the younger ones in the new. In the former the flowers were all of the Scots thistle type, dogmatically assertive, so to speak, and were labelled in a manner to suggest various ideas still to be found in all church catechisms, prayer-books, hymnaries, and permanent things like those. The flowers, undoubtedly, were born in the open, reared in it, and died in it. They were "everlasters," and looked such, if you deliberately disregarded the inevitability of death.

Some young genius from the other side had managed to perform a bit of audacious vandalism, I thought; for above every label was another bearing the words, "of the species, Churchianity."

On the other side of God's Garden the flowers were very tender, very beautiful. Their tints were innumerable. Delicacy of nuance, apparently, had been made a fine art in their cultivation. Langorous odors pervaded the atmosphere. Soil, flowers, colors, air were all ultra-refined. Nothing harshly antagonistic to this excellence of refinement brutalised one's artistic temperament. Everything was exquisitely lovely. Most of the flowers were unnamed, probably because of their novelty. Some varieties had labels, but it was impossible to discover the appellations owing to the number of corrections on the labels. Seemingly the different assistant gardeners had quarrelled over the nomenclature, and, consequently, nothing definite had been decided.

In the old garden, scattered here and there, the eyes found relief in resting upon an unassuming bunch of quietly colored and lowly little flowers; but in the new garden the very delicacy of every kind of flower possessed an assumption that plainly asserted superiority. They forced their refinement upon you till it became intrusion. Their spirituality oppressed you. You began to rebel against the affectation of their elegance and purity. Their charming tenderness nauseated you. They were all too etherealised; and this esemplastic nature of theirs grated on your nerves till you thought the Devil was in it and you asked him peremptorily to keep it and take it home.

Traversing the intricate design of paths that formed the garden plots into grotesque shapes, this riotous objection became more powerful than restraint within me. Heedless of the many assistants effeminately pottering about, I deliberately kicked down a languid rose-tree. Immediately I felt relieved; and proceeded to continue the nerve-enlivening process; but in a second the Philistines were upon me, their emasculation having been roused to the anger of a tigress, and I was unceremoniously pitched into a huge clump of briars that suddenly and mysteriously grew out of the earth to receive me. The atmosphere around me changed in temperature. It was chilly and bracing, lifegiving; and the sweet perfume of the briars was delightfully pleasant and fresh after the erotic sensuality of the hothouse flowers.

Rapidly I disentangled myself from this uncanny growth in the Garden of God, and as rapidly I endeavored to pick out the thorns from my clothing. Then, after pulling off a small branch which I rammed in my pocket, I made a bee-line for escape.

Perhaps the thorn-pricks irritated me; perhaps the sickening spirituality of God's new garden still annoyed my rebellious mind; at any rate, my condemnations of the conjuring tricks of those assistant gardeners were rather bitter as I wended my way up the glen to the hill, where I would be completely purged by the wind. It was all very well for those insipid assistants to prate about the improvement of their flowers over the neglected occupants of the old garden; but the briar bushes they kept in reserve up their wide sleeves, tended, I thought, rather to negate the much-beloved advance in the art of religious horticulture. Besides, I thought, hothouse flowers are rubbishy things at the best; likewise the people who dote on them. There's too much of the nursery about God's modern garden; it requires too much attention, too much care; and the flowers demand too much fondling. This striving after spirituality ——

"Coo-oo-ee! Dinner-time." The voice echoed away up the glen I imagined I was climbing, and forced me to leave the hill-top for the afternoon. We rose from the seat, and, as I knocked the ashes from my pipe, I surprised my companion by saying, "There go the remains of the Garden of God."

ROBERT MORELAND.

SELECTIONS FROM INGERSOLL.

Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith.

If the people were a little more ignorant, astrology would flourish; if a little more enlightened, religion would perish.

I want no heaven for which I must give up my reason, no happiness in exchange for my liberty, and no immortality that demands the surrender of my individuality.

Arguments cannot be answered with insults. Kindness is strength. Anger blows out the lamp of the mind. In the examination of great questions every one should be serene, slow-pulsed, and calm. Intelligence is not the foundation of arrogance. Insolence is not logic. Epithets are the arguments of malice.

Across the highway of progress the Church has always been building breastplates of Bibles, tracts, commentaries, prayer-books, creeds, dogmas, and platforms; and at every advance the Christians have gathered behind these heaps of rubbish and shot the poisoned arrows of malice at the soldiers of freedom.

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Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

V.—JULIAN HIBBERT.

ON November 28, 1833, a scene was enacted at the Old Bailey which may serve to measure the distance from that time to this. It was deemed worthy of some prominence in the papers, and is thus reported in the *Annual Register* for that year (p. 159). It was in the case of a young man named Berthold, who was tried for stealing a boa:—

> "The first witness who presented himself for the prisoner gave his name as Julian Hibbert, but, on being tendered the book to be sworn, he said he had no belief in its contents. The Recorder: 'Is it the Old or New Testament?' Witness: 'It does not matter; I have no belief in either. I made the same objection here two years ago, and was rejected.' Mr. Phillips: 'Then, sir, why do you come here now?' Witness: 'Because I was subpœnaed.' Mr. Phillips: 'Are you of any creed at all, sir?' Witness: 'No, sir.' Mr. Phillips: 'Are you a Deist?' Witness: 'No, sir.' Mr. Phillips: 'Are you an Atheist?' Witness: 'Yes, sir, I am.' (Strong marks of disapprobation and disgust from all parts of the court followed this declaration.) Mr. Phillips (to witness): 'Go down, sir; I will not ask you a single question.' Witness, with the most perfect *nonchalance*, replied, 'Very well, sir,' and descended from the witness-box amidst loud hisses. Mr. C. Phillips, however, called him back, and, addressing him, said: 'Perhaps, sir, you misunderstand the question, or we have mistaken or misunderstood you; I hope you did not mean to say that you are an Atheist?' Witness: 'Yes, sir, I do.' Mr. Phillips: 'Do you know what an Atheist is?' Witness: 'It is a negative term.' Mr. Phillips: 'What does it mean, sir?' Witness: 'It means a man that does not believe in the existence of a God.' Mr. Phillips: 'And do you mean to say, sir, that you are such a person?' Witness: 'Yes, sir.' (Disapprobation manifested by every individual in court.) Mr. Phillips: 'Witness, I will not disgrace myself by asking you another question.' The witness then retired amidst the strongest manifestation of disgust and execration from all present."

Within two months of this scene, on January 23, 1834, the execrated Atheist was dead. He was but thirty-three years of age. Richard Carlile, who knew him well, and who at that time did not call himself an Atheist, wrote of him in the *Gauntlet:* "Though avowedly an Atheist, he was the best specimen of human nature that I have seen, read, heard, or thought of." Julian Hibbert came of a wealthy family, whose fortune had been made in the West Indies. He was a second son. Educated at Eton and Cambridge, he closely pursued studies all his life. This, possibly, acting on a delicate constitution, may have contributed to his early death.

Hibbert probably was attracted to Freethought by the prosecutions of Richard Carlile and his shopmen. Of Carlile he was a munificent supporter. Learning that a distinguished political prisoner had received a gift of £1,000, he remarked that a Freethinking prisoner should not want equal friends, and gave Carlile a cheque for the same amount. Julian Hibbert also spent nearly £1,000 in fitting up Carlile's shop in Fleet-street. Mr. G. J. Holyoake says: "Mr. Carlile said to us on one occasion, that Mr. Hibbert, from first to last, gave £7,000 in furtherance of his advocacy of free discussion in religion." He contributed "Theological Dialogues" to the *Republican*, and of these articles I possess the original MSS. In some sort also I may, perhaps, consider myself as having inherited his work, inasmuch as he commenced and published in 1826 *A Dictionary of Modern Anti-Superstitionists*, or "an account, arranged alphabetically, of those who, whether called Atheists, Sceptics, Latitudinarians, Religious Reformers, etc., have, during the last ten centuries, contributed towards the diminution of superstition. Compiled by a searcher after truth." He refrained from giving his name through modesty, and the philosophy which loses the individual in his work; for we have seen he was ready enough to expose himself to execration when he thought the interests of justice demanded it. The Dictionary evinced great scholarship and research. It was, however, conceived on too extensive a scale, and in 128 pages, all that was issued, it only reached to the name of Annet.

Julian Hibbert also compiled "Chronological Tables of English Freethinkers," which were published in the *Reasoner* for 1855. In my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations* I have expressed my acknowledgments to Hibbert, whose idea I carried out on a more modest scale, and I only hope that in another fifty years my own work will be superseded by a better. Julian Hibbert set up a private printing-press at No. 1 Fitzroy-place, Kentish Town, and had, at great trouble and expense, special founts of type cast in uncial Greek, with which he was never satisfied. He was, indeed, as Carlile wrote, "as scrupulous and accurate as a classical scholar as he was noble in nature, punctual in morals, and amiable in manners." In his preface to *The Book of the Orphic Hymns*, the first work published in this type, he thus humorously defends his fad, not only as a matter of taste, but also as a matter of religion:—

> "If orthodoxy or heterodoxy (salvation or perdition) depend upon the appearance of part of a single Greek character in the faded writing of some half-a-dozen mutilated old books, surely every true believer ought to devote a considerable portion of his mortal existence to the study of those letters, the right or wrong understanding of which will, no doubt, equally open to him the gates of Heaven or of Hades."

We may be quite sure the book of Orphic hymns, though now valuable, never paid for the type-founding. His next work in uncial Greek was of more general interest, being the treatises of *Plutarch and Theophrastus on Superstition*, which he edited with notes, a life of Plutarch, and learned appendices "On the Supposed Necessity of Deceiving the Vulgar," "Of Persons Falsely entitled Atheists," "Various Definitions of an Important Word"—viz., the word "God," and a catalogue of the principal modern works against Atheism.

In 1831, Julian Hibbert, being in ill-health, gave his press and types to James Watson, who had been his printer. James Watson, while working on Carlile's *Republican*, was attacked by cholera, which terminated in typhus and brain fever. He said:—

> "I owe my life to the late Julian Hibbert. He took me from my lodgings to his own house at Kentish Town, nursed me and doctored me for eight weeks, and made a man of me again. After my recovery Mr. Hibbert got a printing press put up in his house and employed me in composing, under his directions, two volumes, one in Greek and the other in Greek and English" (W. J. Linton, *Memoir*, p. 31).

Hibbert also wrote in, and helped to sustain, Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*, taking much interest in the fight for an unstamped free press up to the month of his untimely death. His will was proved, and the personal effects sworn under £8,000 by his executors, two good Freethinkers—William Devonshire Saul, of Aldersgate-street, wine merchant; and J. Brooks, of Oxford-street, bookseller. He directed his body to be given to an anatomical school, and requested that no person should wear mourning for him, or take any further notice of his memory. He bequeathed £492 to Carlile's printers, being the sum Carlile was indebted to them, in place of a legacy. To Henry Hetherington and James Watson he left £500. He had bequeathed a like sum to the Rev. Robert Taylor, but this he revoked by a codicil, in consequence, as he states, of Taylor having married a lady of large fortune.

The obituary notice in the *Annual Register* (p. 217) says: "Hibbert never partook of animal food, but lived in a rigid and abstemious manner. He had some landed property, and the residue of his estates becomes the property of his sister." A portrait of him is extant, and was engraved in the *Reasoner* for July 1, 1855. His face is a very attractive and sweet one, closely resembling that of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

CONSCIENCE.

Men speak of conscience as an inward guide
Intelligence possessing, to decide
What's right, what's wrong, what's false, and what
  is true;
What they ought not, and what they ought to do.
He has done right, 'tis said, who has obeyed it;
Yet conscience is but that which man has made it;
'Tis educated with us, and we find
Its teachings but the echo of the mind.
"Do as your conscience teaches you to do"
Is not the maxim to adhere to.
A better one would be, "Do as you ought";
For conscience only teaches what it's taught.

CARLOS.

She attended a spiritist séance
  Soon after her poor husband died,
And to find out if he were in heaven
  She called on his spirit and cried,
"Oh, John! are you here, John?" "I am, Jane,"
  A voice that she knew well replied.

"Dear John, I've a question to ask you,
  Say—if you're permitted to tell—
Are you happier now where you are, John,
  Than when upon earth you did dwell?"
"Yes, Jane, I am happier far, Jane."
  "In heaven, John?" "No, Jane, in hell."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Davidson, "Christianity and Civilisation."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, M. Hope, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

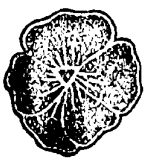
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, C. Cohen, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): 6.30, Alexander Maclaren, "A Plea for Scottish Nationalism."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Spencer Leigh Hughes, "What is Truth?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "What is Christianity?"

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CONTENTS.

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 49 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

Grammars of rhetoric and grammars of logic are among the most useless furniture of a shelf. Give a boy "Robinson Crusoe." That is worth all the grammars of rhetoric and logic in the world—MACAULAY.

Milton's Plea for Liberty.

LIBERTY was not utterly unknown in England before the age of Milton. Not only was it frequently claimed by Wicklif and his followers in religion, and by the popular party in rebellion after rebellion against royal and aristocratic tyranny, but the House of Commons itself, notwithstanding the restricted suffrage and the high-handed methods of Feudalism, was always a citadel of freedom, as far as it was then capable of being understood. During the reign of the Tudors, English liberty was at a low ebb; yet there was great intellectual movement in that fateful period, and the seeds were then sown of the epoch-marking revolution of the seventeenth century, which saw the beginning of all the liberties we now enjoy. From the moment the Long Parliament met, the fate of kingcraft and priestcraft was sealed. Religion itself was, it is true, only tentatively and hesitatingly discussed by a few bold spirits; but the principle of authority was everywhere challenged, and in that principle lay the secret strength of every form of despotism. There could not be a fitter moment for a vindication of liberty, not in the style of apology, but in the lofty manner of a prophet. Fortunately, the hour had found its man. The greatest genius in England, he who is reckoned with Shakespeare a twin pillar of the mighty temple of English poetry, sprang to fulfil the task. What could be better than that the noblest of causes should be championed by the noblest of men? Milton's *Areopagitica* was the first set defence of liberty in our English tongue, and, although it has been supplemented, it can never be superseded. It is a splendid arsenal from which whole generations of the soldiers of freedom have selected their choicest weapons; Damascene blades of rhetoric that flash gloriously as they cut and parry, exquisitely fashioned stilettos of sarcasm for close thrusts, superb long-range rifles of argument, and mighty artillery of sonorous and majestic eloquence.

Old Henry More, the Platonist, who wrote many a bulky volume himself, described his own time with disgust as "this scripturient age." The sneer is common, and it always comes from the greatest sinners. Carlyle expressed a wish that the tongues of one whole generation might be cut out, and all printing suspended, to give an age "run to tongue" an opportunity of digesting its knowledge in silence. Yet the Sage of Chelsea himself, in less splenetic moments, when the hag dyspepsia relaxed her hold upon him, allowed that "of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things called Books," and that the noble art of printing "is like an infinitely intensated organ of speech, whereby the voice of a small transitory man may reach not only through all earthly space, but through all earthly time." Ephemeral literature may be superabundant, but every good thing has its price. How many ephemeral lives are there for one immortal? How many myriad miles of flats and bogs and swamps for a Mont Blanc or a Chimborazo? Why complain, then, if a myriad commonplace men scribble for every man of genius? It is nature's method. Enough that the better *does* exist! The trashy books, like the trashy lives, pass and perish; but a good book, as Milton finely says, "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life."

Yet all books were once treated as interlopers, or like foreigners in a despotic country. They had to carry a passport, and conform to the most rigorous conditions on pain of capital punishment, without a trial by judge and jury. Church and State looked upon them as the chiefs of a black tribe might look upon a casual white man straying in Central Africa. They were to be closely watched, if not suppressed, and care was to be taken that they did not multiply. They only existed on sufferance, and the men who wrote them were regarded as pestilent busybodies or imps of Satan, born disturbers of the peace, and natural enemies of "the powers that be." While custom kept men placid it was easy to govern them, but who could rule them when they were set thinking? It was like sailing a ship in the Maelstrom.

As the venerable and sagacious Blackstone tells us in his *Commentaries*:—

> "In England, as in other countries, the art of printing soon after its introduction, was looked upon as merely a matter of State, and subject to the coercion of the Crown. It was therefore regulated with us by the King's proclamations, prohibitions, charters of privilege, and of licence, and finally by the decrees of the Court of Star Chamber, which limited the number of printers and of presses which each should employ, and prohibited new publications unless previously approved by proper licensers."

Henry VIII., as head of the Church as well as the State, assumed absolute control over all printing, both lay and ecclesiastic. Letters Patent were at first granted for the exclusive right of printing the Bible, and to this day the Authorised Version is only issued by the King's printers. In the reign of Mary (1555) the Stationers' Company was established, with a monopoly of printing presses, but subject to the regulations of the Star Chamber. The number of men and presses was strictly limited, and nothing was to be printed without the licenser's approval. In 1585 the Star Chamber restricted all presses to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and undertook to examine all manuscripts that were candidates for publication. Archbishop Laud is said to have instigated the first establishment of regular licensers, a trick of tyranny borrowed from the Inquisition. According to the decree of the Star Chamber in 1637, all books were to be examined before being entered with the Stationers' Company, by some of the following officials: the Lord Chief Baron or one of the Chief Justices for law, the principal Secretaries of State for history and politics, and the Archbishop of Canterbury (that is, the noble Laud himself) for divinity, physic, philosophy, and poetry. The number of master printers was limited to twenty, and of printing presses to forty; and restrictions were put upon type-founding. Laud was evidently resolved that the flock God had given him should not suffer from book-headache.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be continued*)

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The Natural History of Religion.

The Divine Mystery. By Allen Upward. (Garden City Press.) 10s. 6d.

IT is unquestionable that there is a strong spirit of religious reaction abroad. It is just as certain that the naturalistic study of religion is everywhere making headway. Nor need the two things be unconnected. The reaction may be largely due to the best brains leaving the old creed, and so giving the intolerant elements always present a chance of activity. And at the same time this would give the more scientific mind a freer chance of following its bent. However that may be, a great number of works are now being published on the subject of religion that clearly advocate the naturalistic point of view. They accept religion as a natural fact, but not an eternal one. It is associated with human nature, but it is not essential to it. The whole of the mental attitude of these writers is governed by the conclusion that the study of religion is the study of an illusion—an illusion that is universal in its extent, important in its consequences, but none the less an illusion. They do not inquire whether religion is true; they take for granted that it is not. They merely inquire how it is that people came to have religious beliefs, and what were the conditions that determined their perpetuation. Explanation has become synonymous with annihilation.

A year or so ago I noticed in these columns a very striking work by Mr. Allen Upward called *The New Word*. That work was a very strong appeal on behalf of truth, with a powerful indictment of religion in general and of Christianity in particular, in cultivating its opposite. Mr. Upward has now issued a volume planned to form the first of a series of three, intended to elucidate the history and significance of Christianity, which he calls "the greatest revolution in history." There is a sense in which this description might pass, but I do not think that this is Mr. Upward's meaning. Christians are fond of using this expression because it gives to their creed an increased importance. But in reality the revolution effected by Christianity, as such, was very slight. All the elements of the Christian superstition were present in the old Pagan Empire, and these slowly gained in strength during many centuries. Christianity did not so much effect a revolution as it marked the culmination of a series of changes that had been long in progress. The study of this "revolution" consequently becomes a study in sociology. It is a study of those social conditions that gave to certain slowly developing ideas an ultimately commanding influence.

Apart from this criticism, one may say that Mr. Upward has written an extremely suggestive work. And it is not the less valuable because he so often suggests a difference of opinion—at least in my own case—on the minor details of a thesis with which one is, in the main, in agreement. For instance, Mr. Upward finds—as do all other serious investigators—the origin of religious ideas in the ignorance of primitive mankind. And it may also be accepted that the origin of a special religious caste—wizards, priests, or prophets—began in certain individuals being credited with greater influence over natural or supernatural forces. But I do not know that this will justify Mr. Upward's conclusion that the wizard was originally a weather-wizard. There is no evidence that primitive man is much more concerned with the weather than with other things. It is true that in course of time the function of a weather prophet becomes a very general one, but that is mainly because human ignorance concerning the weather is more persistent than his ignorance concerning other things. Even among ourselves we continue with prayer for a good harvest, long after we have dropped all faith in prayer as affecting a number of other things. The truth is that in the history of man religious ideas are associated longest with just those things concerning which it is difficult to get precise knowledge. They die soonest where knowledge is most easily available. That is why we pray that a man may be cured of a fever, but never that a severed leg may be restored.

The worship of the living, says Mr. Upward, is older than the worship of the dead. This is quite true, although it may easily be that we should have no worship of the living had it not been for the dead. It seems beyond reasonable question that the idea of a "soul" animating the body was first suggested to man by the phenomena of dreaming, and received powerful enforcement by the fact of death with its close superficial resemblance to sleep. Once this notion is abroad, it receives, naturally, all sorts of queer developments. Moreover, Mr. Upward is departing a little from the evidence when he says that "the spirits of cowards and fools did not receive worship, but only the spirits of the brave and wise." There is no evidence that I know of to support this view. The fact seems to be that primitive man worships almost anything without special regard to moral or mental qualities. A crocodile or the spirit that is supposed to send a disease will receive the same homage as agencies of a more benevolent character. What does impress primitive man is *power*. Anything that affects him, that has power to injure him or help him, may become an object of worship. It is only later, with a greater degree of moral and social development, that the good and the wise become specially selected as objects of religious worship. Religion is not only deeply rooted in fear, but when the element of fear weakens, religious beliefs usually lose their force.

One very pleasing feature of Mr. Upward's book is that it does not hesitate to affiliate the Christian theology to early and contemporary savage practices. The chief interest of research in this direction lies in showing how the Christian theology has its origin in savagery, and is, in fact, a mere continuation of savage beliefs under other names and forms. The vast majority of writers, while pointing to this conclusion, for various reasons, fail to state it explicitly. They stop short at the very point where their studies become of the greatest value. Of course, informed readers draw the inevitable moral, but they are, unfortunately, few. Mr. Upward escapes this reproach. He points out, for example, how the Christian doctrine of the Eucharist is no more than a form of the ancient ceremony of god-eating, and that the words, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," might have been spoken, and probably were spoken, over many ancient religious ceremonies that Christians now call "savage" or "heathen." And, taking the old folk-poem of *John Barleycorn*—too lengthy to quote here—he shows how, verse by verse, the visit of the three kings, the killing of John, his burial, and resurrection, with the drinking of his blood, repeats the legend that thousands of Churches retain as a veritable historic fact. Mr. Upward well says:—

> "There is an awful instinct inherited from thousands of years of Pagan Culture behind the gruesome phrases of our popular hymns: 'The water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed,' and 'There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins.' When we hear language like that smiting the walls of glorious cathedrals, the Gothic walls seem to melt away, and we stand once more on the Pictish hillside among the ring of naked savages who strike their knives into the dying Genius (God) and smear themselves with the red ooze. The civilised conscience must not be expected to share this joy."

Behind every religion the savage; behind every priest the medicine-man. That is the true lesson of anthropology.

Mr. Upward is also well advised in bringing back the doctrine of the Divine Birth to its roots in savage belief. Carefully analysed the doctrine of the divine birth of Jesus is only a survival from the time when all birth was divine—that is, when all children were believed to be the incarnation of the tribal ghosts. Mr. E. S. Hartland has shown that even to-day there are still existing tribes of people who have only the vaguest idea as to the father's share in the procreation of children. There has never been a

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doctrine of a divine mother, because a woman's share in the birth of a child was obvious. But the man's share—owing to the intervening period of gestation—was a slow discovery. It is a trifle far-fetched to say, as Mr. Upward does, that "Heredity first presented itself to the savage mind as a form of resurrection"; but it may be taken for granted that the belief of the Australian blacks, that the new-born child is the "avatar" of one of the tribal ghosts, represents a once common frame of mind. On this basis is built both the general doctrine of reincarnation and the Christian doctrine of the divine birth of Jesus—the latter being far nearer the savage prototype than the former. And as it is common for deposed gods to become demons, so we find in mediæval Christendom numerous stories of demons begetting children on the bodies of witches. Between the child who is the product of a demon and a witch, and the one who results from intercourse between woman and a deity, the distinction, from the point of view of a scientific anthropology, is unimportant.

I do not agree with Mr. Upward that the simplest origin to ascribe to asceticism is "the practice of putting to death the aged members of the clan." The religious origin of this practice is clear. It is connected with the notion of the ghost world, the object being to send one's relatives into the next world before reaching a state of decrepitude. Asceticism in origin is part of the practice noted by Mr. Upward in the earlier portion of his book, namely, the practice of producing abnormal states of mind as a means of intercourse with the supernatural. Of this practice, fasting and self-torture are the most common and the most persistent form. It is at the root of the world-wide opposition between "worldly" pleasure and "spiritual" development. The ascetic is everywhere credited with a closer communion with the supernatural. His is the one prominent form of the religious ideal, because the ascetic has been a powerful cause in the perpetuation of religious belief.

I have been dwelling more on points of disagreement than I had intended when I began, but it ought to be said in justice to the author that these disagreements do not affect the main thesis of the book. Mr. Upward's work is of the best kind, because it not only suggests many agreements, but also awakens almost innumerable lines of inquiry. In his main object Mr. Upward has undoubtedly succeeded—and that is to provide a synopsis of those fundamental conceptions upon which Christianity, as a distinct religion, is built. In the two volumes that are to succeed *The Divine Mystery*, Mr. Upward will, I presume, be concerned with the actual formation of the Christian religion. And the affiliation of Christian doctrines to primitive religious ideas is exactly what the world now needs most. The spade work has been well done and the ground well prepared. Substantially, we know the origin of religious ideas. We know how they originated in the fear-haunted brain of the primitive savage. The pressing need to-day is for a clear and explicit description of the way in which these took shape as Christian teaching, and of the sociological causes that enabled that religion to rule the Western world.

C. COHEN.

The Alleged Manliness of Jesus.

EXTRAVAGANCE is one of the most prominent characteristics of the Christian pulpit. This is to be accounted for by the fact that most of the subjects discussed by the preacher are of such a nature as to render a moderate treatment of them extremely difficult, if not impossible. They are chiefly subjects concerning which absolutely nothing is known. There is no theme on which the pulpit speaks with such glowing eloquence and offers such endless information as on that of the existence, character, and works of God, simply because there is no other theme about which it is so profoundly ignorant. The preacher would never dream of talking about a brother man whom he knows in the intimate, familiar fashion in which he talks about God whom he does not know. He undertakes to tell us, not only what the Divine Being is doing to-day, but also what he did in eternity, before the Universe was created; not only what he does and has done, but also what he thinks and feels about everything both under and above the sun. He never hesitates to assure his hearers that he is in possession of all the Divine counsels and knows exactly what the Lord thinks of dancing, theatre-going, card-playing, and Sunday golf. Indeed, he has the audacity to call himself God's man, God's spokesman, or God's vicegerent; and whenever he enters the pulpit he pretends to deliver God's message. We read the other day of a man who had been pastor of one church for the space of forty years; and during that period he had given his people between four and five thousand messages from God, which means that for forty years he had played the liar, speaking familiarly and fulsomely about and in the name of a being concerning whom he knew nothing at all.

The extravagance of the pulpit extends to all subjects. In the *Christian World Pulpit* for November 26 there is a sermon by the Rev. H. J. Nicholas, an American divine, on "The Manliness of Christ," which bristles from beginning to end with wild, whimsical, irresponsible statements. The very text chosen betrays the reverend gentleman's lack of sound judgment: "I find no fault in him.....Behold the man" (John xix. 4, 5). There is no allusion to manliness in those words, nor to anything else upon which a discourse on character could legitimately be based. We are not surprised, therefore, to find the whole sermon heavy-laden with unfounded and unverifiable assumptions. The central assumption is that "we go for the highest type of manhood to Jesus Christ, for he was at once God and man." We do nothing of the kind, for the simple reason that a God-man is a mythological being, for whom history has no place. It is perfectly absurd to say that the Gospel Jesus "represented manhood in its ideal condition realised." It is equally silly to assert that "he was the highest type of manhood physically," or that "he must have been of a perfect physical nature." As to his physical constitution, the Gospels furnish no information whatever. The words usually regarded as having been fulfilled in him describe him as having neither "form nor comeliness," so that when "we see him there is no beauty that we should desire him," and "as one from whom men hide their face, he was despised, and we esteemed him not." We admit that there is no warrant whatever for applying such terms to him; but there is even less foundation for Mr. Nicholas's assumption that he was physically perfect.

Equally groundless is the claim that Jesus "was the highest type of manhood in his manner." Mr. Nicholas describes his manner thus:—

> "Bold without being brazen; humble, but not servile; gentle, but not given to weakness; strong without being tyrannical; helpful, but not intrusive; religious, without hypocrisy; devout, but not gloomy; social, without frivolity; firm, but not unreasonable; chivalrous, but not self-seeking; submissive without compromise; righteous, but not rigorous; truthful, but not blunt; optimistic, but not obsessed."

Words, words, nothing but words. As a matter of fact, the Gospel Jesus often showed exceedingly bad manners. His treatment of his mother as a boy of twelve, and again as an adult was so unfilial, and his conduct generally so wayward as to drive his relations to the conclusion that he was insane. Mr. Nicholas affirms that he was charitable with charlatans and fair with foes. We ask, on what occasions? Where are the instances? We know that in controversy the Gospel Jesus was much given to cursing and swearing. Read Matthew xxiii. and you will see him in a temper, calling the Scribes and Pharisees all sorts of offensive names, such as "serpents," "offspring of vipers," "hypocrites," "blind guides." You cannot conceive of a fair-minded debater saying

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to his opponents: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John viii. 23). It is impossible to read such passages impartially without arriving at the conviction that Jesus was by no means the highest type of manhood in his manners. A loving son and brother would not have refused to see his mother and brethren who had probably come a long way with the object of getting into affectionate converse with him for a few moments. Jesus not only declined to receive them but cruelly denied the relationship between him and them. He was above all earthly ties and bonds, being the second man from heaven.

It is instructive to note that Mr. Nicholas, while claiming Jesus as the highest type of manhood the world has ever seen, fails to show us that ideal manhood in contact with the world. Nothing is easier than to paint an ideal character, but what we want to see is character in action. Up to his thirtieth year, with one doubtful exception, we know nothing of Jesus of Nazareth. When Mr. Nicholas declares that "he was a craftsman continually following the trade of his father and helping him in his shop," he is merely drawing upon his imagination. History there is none to attest his statement. The story of Jesus' home life at Nazareth is not told. What his parents, brothers and sisters, and neighbors thought of him, we have no means of ascertaining. Do we know much more about him during his public ministry? The Gospels deal with him only in his capacities as teacher, miracle-worker, and healer; on the subject of his private life and character they are entirely silent. Mr. Nicholas does not even attempt to analyse his manhood, though he talks grandiloquently about its being developed in the home, the shop, in teaching and in service, and tested in the wilderness by Satan, when craving food for body and mind, and particularly when cruelly persecuted and misrepresented by his enemies; but he deliberately ignores certain expressions in the Gospels, because they belie his picture of Jesus. He quotes the words, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again." If to revile signifies to address people with abusive, opprobrious, scandalous, and contemptuous language, Jesus was certainly guilty of reviling. He reviled the lawyers; he reviled the national leaders; he reviled the rich, though he often dined with them; and he reviled all who did not believe in him. His passiveness was purely an imaginary virtue. Mr. Nicholas alleges that his manhood was gloriously triumphant to the very last; but surely the reverend gentleman forgets the Garden of Gethsemane. His courage completely deserted him there, and he whimpered like a coward as he contemplated what lay before him. He shrank from his fate, and besought his Father to relieve him of the necessity of meeting it. The author of Hebrews states that he "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death." Mr. Nicholas observes that "he is the Divine square and compass for the measurement of every other character"; but that is not true. As we watch him in the garden, his sweat like great drops of blood falling to the ground, in an agony unspeakable imploring for a door of escape, we are reminded of Xenophon's description of the courage of Socrates after the sentence of death had been passed upon him:—

> "It is indeed acknowledged that no man, of all that are remembered, ever endured death with greater glory; for he was obliged to live thirty days after his sentence, because the Delian festival happened in that month, and the law allowed no one to be publicly put to death until the sacred deputation should return from Delos; and during that time he was seen by all his friends living in no other way than at any preceding period; and, let it be observed, throughout all the former part of his life he had been admired beyond all men for the cheerfulness and tranquillity with which he lived. How could anyone have died more nobly than thus? Or what death could be more honorable than that which any man might most honorably undergo? Or what death could be happier than the most honorable?" (*Memorabilia*, p. 149).

Jesus' courage failed him, not only in Gethsemane, but also on the cross, as is testified by the cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Socrates was a much greater and stronger man than Jesus, though he never claimed to be more than a man. Of course, the Jesus Christ portrayed by Mr. Nicholas never lived at all. He is a theological creation, and nothing more. But though the Gospel Jesus is represented as being the Word of God become flesh, he is anything but a perfect character. Whenever he comes to a trying pass in his career he utterly breaks down, crying; and whenever opponents stand in his way, his wrath kindles, and he curses them saying, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" The divines have made an idol of him, and our business is to smash the idol, and make its worship impossible.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Wait Till You Come to Die."

> "Why does not God give me the evidence? They say he has. In what? In an inspired book. But I do not understand it as they do. Must I be false to my understanding? They say: 'When you come to die you will be sorry you did not.' Will I be sorry when I come to die that I did not live a hypocrite? Will I be sorry I did not say I was a Christian when I was not? Will the fact that I was honest put a thorn in the pillow of death? God cannot forgive me for that. They say when he was in Jerusalem he forgave his murderers. Now he won't forgive an honest man for differing with him on the subject of the Trinity. They say that God says to me, 'Forgive your enemies.' I say, 'All right, I do'; but he says 'I will damn mine.' God should be consistent. If he wants me to forgive my enemies, he should forgive his."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *The Dying Creed*, p. 24.

> "Cases of recantation, if they were ever common, which does not appear to be true, are now exceedingly rare; so rare, indeed, that they are never heard of except in anonymous tracts, which are evidently concocted for the glory of God rather than for the edification of Man. Sceptics are at present numbered by thousands, and they can nearly always secure at their bedsides the presence of friends who share their unbelief. Every week the Freethought journals report quietly and as a matter of course, the peaceful end of 'infidels' who, having lived without hypocrisy, have died without fear. They are frequently buried by their heterodox friends, and never a week passes without the Secular Burial Service, or some other appropriate words, being read by sceptics over a sceptic's grave."—G. W. FOOTE, *Infidel Death Beds* (1888), pp. 6-7.

> "These their idle tales of dying horrors."—T. CARLYLE, *Essay on Voltaire*.

IT has been my lot, upon several occasions, to be told—to the accompaniment of a warning finger—that it was all very well for me to oppose the belief in God and the Bible *now*, but my sentiments would be very different when I came to die. It is the sort of thing one expects to hear, and does hear, from Salvation Army orators. But the people we are speaking of are not Salvationists, neither are they conspicuous for religious fervor; they attend no place of worship, and in the ordinary affairs of life are shrewd and capable, quick to grasp a fact, and see through a fallacy.

This groundless belief is more widely held than many Freethinkers are aware of; courtesy restrains many from giving utterance to the belief; fear of ridicule restrains others. I have been acquainted with men for years before discovering they held it.

It is worth while to examine the cause of this belief in the miserable end of infidels and unbelievers. There is no need to go into the facts of the matter; that has already been done by our Editor, in his admirable *Infidel Death-Beds*, in which the true facts as to the dying moments of all the best-known unbelievers are given from the best authorities.

Before proceeding to dissect this ancient belief, it will be as well to analyse the meaning and application of the word "Infidel."

Dr. Wace—a Doctor of Theology and the head of a college for training clergy for the Church—once told the late Professor Huxley that, instead of

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calling himself an Agnostic, he ought to use the older and more "unpleasant" name of "Infidel." The Professor, in declining to adopt Dr. Wace's suggestion, caustically remarked that—

> "'Infidel' is a term of reproach, which Christians and Mohammedans, in their modesty, agree to apply to those who differ from them. If he had only thought of it, Dr. Wace might have said 'miscreant,' which, with the same etymological signification, has the advantage of being still more 'unpleasant' to the persons to whom it is applied. But why should a man be expected to call himself a 'miscreant' or an 'infidel'?" *

He goes on to remark that the earliest Christians, up to twenty or thirty years after the Crucifixion, would have considered Dr. Wace himself an infidel. Professor Huxley relates how, when visiting the Hazar Mosque in Cairo—in ignorance that he should have been provided with proper authority—he was surrounded by a swarm of angry Mohammedan students, and he observes:—

> "If I had known Arabic, I suspect that 'dog of an infidel' would have been by no means the most 'unpleasant of the epithets showered upon me, before I could explain and apologise for the mistake. If I had had the pleasure of Dr. Wace's company on that occasion, the undiscriminating followers of the Prophet would, I am afraid, have made no difference between us; not even if they had known that he was the head of an orthodox Christian seminary" (p. 234).

Moreover, says Huxley:—

> "I do not care much what I am called by other people, and if I had by my side all those who since the Christian era have been called infidels by other folk, I could not desire better company. If these are my ancestors, I prefer, with the old Frank, to be with them wherever they are." †

The reason why Freethinkers object to the term "Infidel" is because Christians have attached a sinister meaning to the word which it did not originally possess. Any etymological dictionary will give the derivation of the word, from *fides*—faith, and *in*—not, meaning not of the orthodox, or prevailing faith. But, like the word "Miscreant," which originally only meant "misbeliever," it has come, in popular estimation, to mean one who rejects the moral law with the divine law; and, as the Freethinker does not reject the moral law, and, in fact, rejects the divine law in the name of the moral law, he naturally objects to the name of "Infidel" for the same reason that he would object to the name "Miscreant."

But, to return to our subject, why should the Freethinker be afraid to die? If he does not believe in the continuation of his existence in another life, what has he to be afraid of? Again, if he does not believe in the existence of an angry God who invented a hell to put him into, how can he be afraid of him?

The fact is, it is the Christian who has every reason to fear death; for him it means the continuance of his existence either in heaven or hell, *and he can never be certain which*. His Savior is reported to have explicitly declared, "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, *and few there be that find it*" (Matthew vii. 14). And, again, "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew xx. 16). According to this deliverance, we may expect, at the judgment day, to see Voltaire and Paine leading the way, while the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury will come under the heading "also ran." It is the universal teaching of all Christian sects and Churches that if a man is sure of his own salvation, he is in a very parlous state. He is declared to be a Pharisee, accused of spiritual pride, and generally considered to be on the broad road to destruction.

Some of the greatest believers have had the gravest doubt of their own salvation, and the thought has embittered their last hours. Poor Cowper, the Christian poet, who led a most blameless life, upon being asked how he felt, is said to have replied, "Feel? I feel unutterable despair." Dr. Johnson feared he might be damned. "What do you mean by damned?" was the soothing question of a bystander. "Sent to hell and punished everlastingly" † was the grim answer of the dying man. The great Cromwell was harassed by similar doubts and fears.

It is one of the worst features of this creed that the fear of eternal punishment has poisoned the lives and embittered the deaths of multitudes of tender and sensitive men and women, whose moral conduct has been beyond reproach, while the real criminals suffer nothing from these terrors which are supposed to deter them from their crimes. As Colonel Ingersoll, with mordant irony, has remarked:—

> "All kinds of criminals, except infidels, meet death with reasonable serenity. As a rule, there is nothing in the death of a pirate to cast any discredit on his profession. The murderer on the scaffold, with a priest on either side, smilingly exhorts the multitude to meet him in heaven. The man who has succeeded in making his home a hell meets death without a quiver, provided he has never expressed any doubt as to the divinity of Christ or the eternal 'procession' of the Holy Ghost." ‡

Compare the edifying end of Peter Smith, a murderer, as described by a New York paper, against the end of the other eminent and pious Christians we have quoted. It is as follows:—

> "Deep from the heart of this noble priest prayers kept wending their way up to the throne of grace. Frequently the voice of Smith blended with that of his spiritual adviser as he joined him in asking for the mercy of God on the sins of his past life. When not listening to the consolations that the prayer-book and ritual of the Catholic Church afforded, Smith paced up and down the corridor with the death-watch, smoking cigars furnished by these kind-hearted deputy sheriffs. The smoke of their havanas united with his and formed, as it were, an incense that wafted the religious words that he not infrequently uttered to the great beyond." ‡

This murderer died in the odor of sanctity, peacefully, quite easy in his mind; confident in the declaration of his Savior that there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just men,§ and looking forward with joyous anticipation to a triumphant reception in Abraham's bosom.

What a beautiful religion! A religion which brings torment to the last moments of the tender and sensitive Cowper, who could not hurt a fly or a worm, and yet brings comfort, solace, and assured salvation to the wretch whose life has been a curse to everyone connected with him, and who, after a life of debauchery and crime, at last pays the penalty on the scaffold, from which he generally forgives his enemies, beseeches everyone to embrace the religion in which he finds so much joy, and invites them to meet him in the kingdom of heaven.

Surely the corrosive acid of Swift, in his most man-hating moments, never penned a more biting satire of human imbecility, not even in that horrible satire on the human race, the *Voyage to the Houyhnhnms*.

Science knows nothing of personal immortality, or of a future life beyond the grave. The belief arose in the dreams and illusions of primitive man during the ages of deepest ignorance. It was easy to believe in heaven, where the gods dwelt, when the sky was believed to be a solid blue vault, with little holes in it for the stars to shine through, and windows through which the gods let the rain come down.

It was easy to believe in hell, when it was believed that the earth was flat, like a table; that hell was underneath, and that volcanoes were openings into the infernal regions. One of the questions recorded in a school-book of the Middle Ages runs,

* T. H. Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition*, pp. 233-4.
† *Science and Christian Tradition*, p. 230.

* "The Art of Dying," *Nineteenth Century*, July, 1884; cited in *Freethinker*, July 8, 1894.
† *Oration on Voltaire*, pp. 24-5.
‡ The (New York) *Evening Telegram*, May 5, 1887; cited in the *Freethinker*, June 26, 1887.
§ Luke xv. 7.

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"Why is the sun red at its going down?" the answer being "Because it looketh down into hell."

But science has destroyed the crystal vault, and all the gods have fallen into the void. Science has demonstrated that the earth, instead of being flat, is a ball travelling in an orbit, and that there is no room for hell or the Devil and his angels. Science, by destroying the belief in a future life, and in gods and devils, has robbed death of its terrors.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Sir Oliver Lodge on "Continuity."

If the address delivered by Sir Oliver Lodge before the British Association for the Advancement of Science is carefully studied, it will be observed that the distinguished physicist, instead of presenting proofs to show that science had finally succumbed to metaphysics, was simply asking for a hearing from his colleagues.

His words, "Allow us, anyhow, to make the attempt; give us a fair field; let us try what we can do in the psychic regions, etc.," is the language of one who is pleading for sympathy rather than of one who thinks he has humbled science at the feet of theology. His distinguished colleagues gave Sir Oliver Lodge not only a fair but also an earnest hearing.

But the consensus of opinion was that the address contained nothing that was in any way new or startling. "Sensational disclosures expected in some quarters were not forthcoming," writes the London *Times*. One of the scientists present at the meeting characterised the address of Sir Oliver as "a rhapsody on faith."

Sir Oliver himself, in stating the position of the men of science on the value of psychical research, said that "scientific men have not universally accepted any conclusions—not even telepathy." Again, Sir Oliver speaks of running "the risk of annoying my present hearers."

Let me say a word about Sir Oliver, and then about what I regard as the reasonable attitude on the interesting question of a life beyond the grave. Sir Oliver Lodge is a distinguished physicist. In his own department he has no superiors. It is admitted also that Sir Oliver is a confirmed Darwinian, and, though he leans toward the supernatural, he is by no means an orthodox believer. There is not an evangelical church that could consistently admit him into its fellowship.

Between the "God" advocated by Sir Oliver and that of the Bible or the creeds there is absolutely no resemblance. Yet a pinch of incense he occasionally throws upon the old altars.

Sir Oliver has been a member of the Psychical Research Society for thirty years, and has been converted to the belief in the spirit world. He thinks that a communication between the living and the dead has been established. This is also the claim of the Spiritualists. Spiritualism is nothing new.

But did the distinguished scientist present a single fact about discarnate intelligence which could be considered adequate? Speaking for myself, I cannot affirm immortality or eternal life.

But not to affirm it does not mean to deny it. To be able to deny it I must understand what I am denying. But I cannot understand eternal life; therefore I refrain from either affirming or denying it. In the meantime I am more than willing to listen to arguments from those who think they are equal to the task of solving the problem. But will there be any morality in the world if we leave the question of a hereafter undecided? Well, whether there will be or not has nothing to do with our ability or inability to prove an eternal hereafter.

One of the points in Sir Oliver's address which seems to have given great comfort to the metaphysicians was the difference between appearance and the reality.

The world appears to be flat, but it is not; the sun appears to set, but it does not; the planets appear like points of fire—twinkling candles—but they are vast bodies. In the same way death appears to be the end of life, but it is not—there is no end to life. But this is defective reasoning.

We know the world is not flat by actual demonstration. We know the truth about the stars by the help of the telescope and mathematics.

Death appears to be the end of life, and it is, until Sir Oliver Lodge or the clergy shall prove that it is not.

It has been demonstrated that the loss through disease of certain cerebral cells would destroy memory and affection, as well as thought. Is the "soul" then a cell of the brain? But whatever our guesses about the life beyond the grave, it is in our power to pitch the life that now is to the height of our ideals.—*M. Mangasarian: Truthseeker* (New York).

Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George, in his "Holloway Empire" speech, sounded the praises of Nonconformists for their love of religious liberty. We deny, however, that they ever had any such affection. They object to persecution, it is true, when they are the sufferers. Not otherwise. Hardly a whisper is raised amongst them against the late epidemic revival of the Blasphemy Laws. It is nothing to them that Freethinkers go to prison for "offences" against Christianity. What they love is not liberty but self-assertion.

We beg to ask Mr. Lloyd George a serious question. How is it that "blasphemy" prosecutions always occur under Liberal governments? We are not carrying on a discussion. We state a fact, and ask a question. And all we desire is a plain answer.

The Blasphemy Laws ought long ago to have been treated as obsolete. The late Mr. Justice Stephen said that they probably were so, in his *Digest of the Criminal Law* before the epoch-marking events of 1883. But our own prosecution and imprisonment for "blasphemy" undeceived him on this point. The fact is that laws which can be used against unpopular principles and unpopular men can never be regarded as obsolete until they are repealed—if we may be permitted that Hibernicism. There are scores of old laws which really are obsolete, because nobody ever thinks of invoking them, but this obsolescence is easily explained. They are not laws which one class of people could use to the detriment of another class. Such laws are no use to anybody—not even bigots. But the Blasphemy Laws are a perpetual appeal to Christian fanaticism and malice against Freethinkers. That is why they should and must be abolished altogether. The only remedy is "Repeal."

Abraham Arthur Ascoli, a pensioned policeman, committed suicide by hanging at St. George's Church, Westcombe Park, East Greenwich, where he was employed as verger. Of course the "sacred edifice" had to be reconsecrated. But as there was no money in it, being a purely domestic affair, the Bishop of Southwark did not officiate personally, but sent the Archdeacon of Lewisham as his proxy.

God was cleared out of that church by one man and brought back by another. And the people who believe, and practise that, put other people in prison for "blasphemy"! A mad world, my masters!

The National Church League, with Sir Edward Clarke at its head, calls upon the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England to save it from the Romanising party who are placing a volume called *St. Swithun's Prayer Book* in the hands of candidates for confirmation. This book is said to contain devotions "involving invocation of and confession to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints; teaches the doctrine of the Mass; enforces the duty of private confession to a priest; and contains suggestions as to topics of confession calculated to defile the minds of children." If all this is true, why are "blasphemy" prosecutions confined to Freethinkers?

"To be or not to be?" Shall the "Tango" be prohibited or not? is being debated at the Vatican. What a question to trouble the Pope's head with at his time of life and in his state of health! But nothing has ever been too large or too small for the Papacy. It is like the trunk of an elephant, which pulls down trees and picks up pins.

The German Emperor has given three thousand marks to the London Missionary Society. It is not an open gift. The Kaiser knows his business too well for that. It is towards the work of two of the Society's missionaries (Germans, of course) in Samoa.

In a letter to the *Times* lately, Dr. Clifford sought to reconcile his opposition to Catholicism with his advocacy of Home Rule. His argument is perfectly sound. He states that the liberty of political action which he demands for himself he claims also for all his fellow-citizens, "irrespective of their religious faith and ecclesiastical associations." But what Dr. Clifford rightly concedes to Catholics he would unjustly withhold from Freethinkers. To the latter he persistently opposes the giving of political justice. If there were a grain of consistency in his constitution, he would be as zealous an advocate of Secular Education as he now is of Irish Home Rule. He has been a great leader in the movement for the Disestablishment of the Church; but he is

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cowardly afraid of identifying himself with the principle of the disestablishment of religion in State-aided schools. Consistency is not Dr. Clifford's jewel.

The Rev. H. B. Freeman, of Burton-on-Trent, told the Church Lads' Brigade, the other day, that God is an object of fear, and that brave soldiers always owe their heroism to their fear of the Almighty. There were signs that this wholesome fear of God was declining to-day. This the reverend gentleman greatly deplored. Naturally, for in proportion as the fear of God dies down, reverence for the parson vanishes. So long as the Heavenly Judge is feared, his earthly representatives will be held in some degree of awe. Mr. Freeman need not lose heart, however, because superstition dies hard; but, hallelujah, it *is* dying.

Apropos of our note last week on the conditions of Dublin and the religion of the people, here is a further word worth bearing in mind. It comes from a religious writer in the *Church Family Newspaper*. He says: "It was assumed that nothing could shake the faith of the Dublin laborers in their Church and its ministers. Industries were raised on this staple fact." Quite so; and what the conditions were under which these people lived the world has only just learned. Those interested knew that things would be all right so long as the people could be kept devoted to their "Church and its ministers." It is when the alliance is broken that people ask themselves whether social conditions are all they ought to be. Some of our ardent social reformers will yet be forced to recognise that all attempted social reform will fall short of effectiveness so long as the "great lying creed" is left dominating the minds of large masses of people.

While on her way to church, Ellen Good, of Hackney, fell from a tram and died from a fractured skull. Probably "Providence" was too busy calculating the number of idle words being used, not to mention the fall of the sparrows.

"Some of the world's rulers could make bread and butter by mechanical toil if the necessity arose," says the *Daily Mirror*. Very likely. But how many of them could earn more? The "Lord's anointed ones" do better to rely on a Civil List, with every item payable in advance.

In view of the sudden interest of the clergy in economics, it is interesting to find a writer in a recent issue of the *Referee* calling attention to the miserable wages paid to church organists, which, he says, is "an insult to the profession," and he calls upon the Incorporated Society of Musicians to interfere on behalf of the organists.

England has probably the most disgusting, lickspittle press in the world. There are papers that encourage "King" Carson in his impudent preparations for flat rebellion, and others that encourage Mrs. Pankhurst in instigating her amazons to burn down the property of their fellow-citizens for "political" reasons, but none of them has a word to say in protest against the imprisonment of poor sceptics for discussing Christianity in the language of their class, without annoyance to anyone except super-sensitive policemen. These journals pander to all superstitions, social as well as religious, and especially to the monarchical superstition, under which the King is fairly on a level with the Deity, and all royal persons whatsoever are above archangels, principalities, and powers. There was a very pretty sample of this in the *Daily Mirror* the other day (Nov. 28). The front page contained an alleged "new and beautiful birthday portrait of Queen Alexandra." It represented a tall, slim lady, a little, if at all, over twenty years of age. A fake photograph, of course, designed to show that royal ladies never grow old, but always retain "enduring youth and grace." This nauseous sycophancy was accompanied by the statement that the Dowager Queen was celebrating "her birthday" on the following Monday. No allusion was made to the *number* of the said birthday. It would never do to print such semi-blasphemous figures.

The *Mirror* went on to quote the "memorable poem" in which Tennyson welcomed the Princess Alexandra, as she then was, to England as the bride of the then Prince of Wales, who died as King Edward the Seventh. The "Welcome to Alexandra" is dated March 7, 1863. Tennyson welcomed her as "the sea-kings' daughter" coming to marry "the heir of the kings of the sea." But the *Mirror* must print it in the singular, and with capital letters, as "the Sea-King's" daughter—as though Tennyson were referring to her father, the King of Denmark, instead of to the old Vikings. What can be expected, however, but mental sloppiness of the "loyal" fakers of Queen Alexandra's portrait?

Rev. James Orr, Professor of Theology in the United Free Church College, Glasgow, left £4,284 7s. 1d. Not a big fortune, but a fair-sized one for Scotland where even the godly are thrifty.

£800,000 has been collected in fifteen days in the United States for the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. The success of the effort is said to be due to "organisation." The begging was comprehensive and pertinacious. It appears to have been directed by millionaires, including Mr. George Perkins, formerly partner of the late Pierpont Morgan. Millionaires know the value of Christianity. They patronise it for the same reason that Constantine made it the religion of the Roman Empire.

Christianity is the only religion that gives a man fortitude in trouble and consolation in suffering. Yet the Rev. William Charles, a retired Nonconformist minister of Hawthorn House, Ravenhill, near Swansea, was found hanging from a rope in the bathroom.

Bramwell Booth has made it up with his brother Ballington Booth. The family quarrel lasted seventeen years. How these godly people do keep it up!

Evan Roberts's old father has been to Leicester, but he failed to obtain an interview with his son, who is either a lunatic or worse. Nor even the cry of his sick mother to see her boy before she dies makes any impression upon him. He seems to be following Jesus Christ literally by hating his father and mother.

We are glad to find the *Christian Commonwealth* pointing out, in the course of an interview with Professor Gilbert Murray, that the great master of Greek literature "acknowledges himself a Freethinker." Those who are acquainted with Professor Murray's writings—including, of course, his wonderful translation of Euripides—hardly needed this assurance. We may say that none but a Freethinker could have given these translations of one of the greatest of the Greek Freethinkers. On his own account the *Christian Commonwealth* reviewer adds: "I gathered that this meant that he had not become associated with any organised form of religion. He stands, indeed, for freedom in thought much as the makers of the French Revolution—Condorcet and the rest—claimed of thought." We do not know how the interviewer gathered that Professor Murray's freethinking only meant that he was not attached to any Church; there is nothing in the reported interview that would give one that impression, and one may safely say that if anything had been said to that end it would not have been omitted.

Professor Murray pointed out that the golden age of Athens was a period of extraordinary vitality, and mentioned as an illustration that their books of science remained the chief text-books for some 1,500 years. This is true, with slight modifications, but it is quite as much a condemnation of the influence of Christianity as it is of the power of Greek thinking. The truth is that with the advance made by Greek science, and the fruitful speculations bequeathed to the world, there was no reason why their writings should not have been superseded in a couple of centuries. But superstition, as usual, blocked the way. And later Christian superstition very effectively perpetuated these text-books by imprisoning or killing all who attempted an improvement. Preserved some of these books, that is; for it must be remembered that the Church selected not the best, but those that suited its own teaching best. It sanctioned the Ptolemaic astronomy, and damned the Pythagorean, for example. And when the study of science revived, it was to the Greeks that earnest students, treating the Christian centuries between as a negligible quantity, turned. There is small need for wonder that Christian apologists have systematically slandered both the Greek and the Roman civilisations. The only chance of making their own dingy history bright was to completely blacken that of other peoples.

A discussion is going on in the *Guardian* concerning fox-hunting parsons. And one writer opines that a parson in the saddle with the hounds in full cry is a preferable sight to a parson playing croquet with the neighboring spinsters. So far as spinsters are concerned, we should say very much preferable.

A manifesto, signed by a number of prominent clergymen, dealing with the question of "The Living Wage," has just

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been issued. It refers to "the failure of our almsgiving to provide any real remedy for social ills," and "the actually demoralising effect of so much that is done in response to the cry of need." Both these aspects of the matter have been dealt with for years by Freethinking reformers, and the clergy are, as usual, only reaching a conclusion that others have reached long before. For the rest, the manifesto makes the usual appeal to the "Christian conscience," which is about as helpful as the lamb's appeal to the wolf in the old fable. The "Christian conscience" has allowed all our present evil social conditions to accumulate, and it will rest content with their existence just so long as the non-Christian conscience tolerates them. It would be well if the clergy would make a start with the living wage on many of the industries closely connected with the propaganda of religion itself.

Lord Headley has become a Mohammedan. We congratulate him on getting rid of two gods out of three. We hope he will get rid of the other one also in the course of time.

Mr. Israel Zangwill is a born optimist. He is always hoping something impossible—such as the return of the Jews to Palestine. His latest hope is for "one universal religion." The idea is like that of co-operation amongst tigers and sharks.

Really, one might very easily compile a volume on the silly things said by the Bishop of London. We do not mean things that only those holding different beliefs to the Bishop would consider silly, but which would be admitted as such by most people not qualifying for an idiot asylum. Here is a sample. To an audience gathered in the Guildhall he said everyone present should thank God "for the purity of his daughters, and the honor of his home, and the chastity of his wife, for he owes all that to living in a Christian country." Really, an educated rabbit that had been taught to speak might well be ashamed to talk in this strain. Does the poor man really think there were no honorable homes, pure daughters, or chaste wives before Christianity appeared? And the man who says this one day will on the next be shrieking about the "White Slave Traffic," immoral plays, and obscene literature, all in this Christian country. We hesitate somewhat at frequent reference to such a person as Bishop Ingram; but he is one of the leading dignitaries of the English Church, and as he is there we may as well utilise his existence to point out what an intellectually decrepit thing Christianity has become.

The Bishop of London is not only a fool, he is something worse (if possible) than that. He continues his talking crusade against the stage, on account of what he calls its indecency and suggestiveness. He scorns the suggestion that he and his likes need not go to theatres unless they choose; and why should the views of Bishops be made a criterion for other people? Well now, we put it to his thin-nosed lordship, whether it is not his first duty to attend to his own business first? There is a book called the Bible which is placed in the hands of children in the elementary public schools of England, as the basis of religious and moral instruction. That Book contains passages of most infamous filth; passages that could never be uttered on any stage or printed in any other form. It ought to be kicked out of all schools for children; yet is kept in them, and the children are bound by law to attend them. We say this dirty book should be kicked out, but if it can't be done yet it should at least be subjected to a drastic spring-cleaning. This is what the Bishop of London should be doing, if he had any sense and honesty. Surely a man holding one of the dirtiest books in the world in his hands, while railing at the plays put upon the stage in theatres doubly licensed—first by the public authorities and then by the Lord Chamberlain—is an impudent jackass, whose braying ought to be suppressed as a public nuisance.

Another of the Bishop of London's delusions (or pretences) is that people who go to church are more able to control their passions than those who don't. We should hardly have thought his lordship was so ignorant of the police and legal news in the daily press.

The Bishop of London says that he had Christian opinion behind him in his crusade against Living Pictures some years ago. Exactly! All the clergy were in that demonstration: priests, parsons, preachers, rabbis, and Boothites. What noses these people have?

Three centenarians died last week, and the newspapers are jubilant. They have given up crowing over the Biblical patriarchs who were trundling hoops at the age when our long-livers are carried to the cemetery.

"Youth is the time to lay the foundations of wide knowledge," sagely remarks Lord Haldane. That is the time when the clergy love to impress the "truth" of the Bible stories, such as "Balaam's Ass" and "Noah's Ark," borrowed from a book which sceptics are liable to imprisonment for criticising.

T. P.'s Weekly quotes a saying that "David's wife was an elderly Puritan." Her husband was earlier, especially when he had an appointment with Bathsheba after the "Splash me" business.

The *British Weekly* says that women are long-winded. Yet Solomon was more loquacious than all his wives. And nearly, if not quite, all the editors of religious periodicals are men.

Signor Marinetti, the leader of the Futurists, says that the adjective must be abolished. In that case the peripatetic patterers of the Christian Evidence Society will be unable to follow their noble employment. And "blasphemy," which is now a matter of adjectives, will die a natural death.

Tennyson had a "double" in Leslie Stephen, and Professor Schrader was very like Huxley, says the *Daily Chronicle*, whilst Alma Tadema was scarcely distinguishable from Du Maurier. The *Chronicle* forgot to mention the Christian Trinity, which Matthew Arnold said resembled three Lord Shaftesburys.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that Disestablishment is essentially a layman's question, because if the Church is "despoiled" of its property laymen will have to make good the deficiency. But suppose they don't? If the clergy really thought that the laymen would make good the deficiency, we don't believe the clergy would bother much. But they know they won't. And there is small chance nowadays of Parliament imposing a new tax for the upkeep of religion—that is, unless the Church offered to go halves with the Nonconformists.

We quite envy the information some people have at their disposal. Here is a clergyman's—the Rev. H. J. Nicholas—description of Jesus Christ, as given in a recent sermon:—

> "Not only was he a perfect specimen of manhood, physically, but he was the highest type of manhood, in his manner: Bold without being brazen; humble, but not servile; gentle, but not given to weakness; strong without being tyrannical; helpful, but not intrusive; religious without hypocrisy; devout, but not gloomy; social without frivolity; firm, but not unreasonable; chivalrous, but not self-seeking; submissive without compromise; righteous, but not rigorous; truthful, but not blunt; optimistic and not obsessed; helpful according to reason; and just according to reasonableness."

That's all. Presumably, the preacher's vocabulary ran short at this point, or he would have mentioned other things. He might have easily claimed him as a pioneer in aviation. All that is puzzling us is, How did Mr. Nicholas come to know all this?

"In the last analysis," says Mr. R. J. Campbell, "all our scientific facts are inconceivable." Rubbish! How can a *fact* be inconceivable? To call a thing a fact is evidence that we have a conception of it. If we cannot conceive a "fact," it is not only not a fact, but we do not even know there is a fact to be known. Stupidity in the pulpit ought to rank as a fine art.

Even the convicts at the prison "hotel," Camp Hill, Isle of Wight, are divided up by sectarian feelings. The more notorious criminals have set up a caste system; they won't consort, or talk at the dinner-table, with criminals of less repute. There are also sharp cleavages of opinion. Home Rulers and Ulsterites are at daggers drawn. Religion, of course, is the greatest divider of all. It is true of prisons, as of all other places, that (as Swift said) most men have religion enough to make them hate each other.

"There's life in the old boy yet." Bishop Samuel Thornton, D.D., who is 78 years of age, has just married a second wife, the first one having died in 1909. The reverend gentleman is almost a second Moses.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, December 7, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London, W.; at 7.30, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*."

December 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £260 11s. 7d. Received since:—Harry Shaw, 10s.; Joseph Bryce, 10s.; George Brittain, 2s. 6d.

W. O. KELLERMAN.—You have filled in our address carefully with your order, but you have omitted your own. Please send it at once.

C. S. WORMALD.—The Fighting Fund closed long ago, so the balance is placed to your credit. We don't wonder that you find you cannot do without the *Freethinker* although you have left the old country for Canada. We have known several subscribers like you in that respect.

E. GWINNELL.—The second volume has not been published.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

JOSEPH BRYCE.—Pleased to see your handwriting again.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

A. A. WELLS.—We are afraid you will never find wit or humor in that pious journal. Your excuse is that you did not buy it.

INQUIRING CHRISTIAN.—The earliest manuscripts of the Gospels are claimed to belong to the second half of the fourth century.

W. T. NEWMAN.—Yes, we shall be happy to "name" your little boy at Queen's Hall on the second Sunday evening (Dec. 14). Please supply Miss Vance, the N. S. S. general secretary, with full particulars. We are delighted to hear of your wife's attachment to the *Freethinker*, as well as your own, and of the sympathetic newsagent's remarks upon it as containing "something to think about and remember."

W. PHILLIPS.—We are having it seen to.

LORENZA GARREAU.—Glad to have your thanks for our paragraph on the death of your father, the late J. H. Levy. You say well that the *Chronicle* need not have resorted to untruth about him, while there was "so much good and true to be said." Do not miss the notice of your father in the December *Humanitarian*, concluding "He will be greatly missed in the fight for freedom and humanity."

EWART HOPPER.—Thanks for your interesting letter. We note that you are a son of the Mr. Hopper we alluded to. Never mind the anonymous postcard. The writers of such things are vermin, and there is pretty sure to be more stink than profit in hunting them down.

J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham).—Glad to hear Mr. Cohen had so good an audience, in spite of many counter attractions.

S. MOSCOU.—Send along your advertisement. We will insert it gratuitously, but we cannot undertake to draw such things up.

M. CLARK.—We have no recollection of the H. R. Elliot who says he "lectured ten years ago in Hyde Park from the infidel platform under G. W. Foote."

J. HARRISON MAXWELL.—(1) "Vote early for the Protestant and Temperance Candidates" is indeed rich. Evidently the two species must not be confused. The joke is richly completed by the protest in the address against "the introduction of Sectarian candidates." (2) We hope to resume writing on Shakespeare in the new year. It is surprising to find so many readers interested in what we have to say on that subject.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

London "saints" are reminded of Mr. Foote's two Sunday evening lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. Some of them may be able to help in the advertising of this effort. Small, neat bills, easily pocketed and easily distributed, can be obtained of Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., or at our publishing office on the ground floor of the same building. We hope a good many will take a hand in this easy missionary work. It is quite impossible to advertise these lectures all over London commercially. The area is too vast—the expense is too great. We simply *must* rely to a great extent on the goodwill of our friends in this matter.

Lancashire and Yorkshire "saints" should note that Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Dec. 7), afternoon and evening, at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. We hope the audiences will be worthy of the lectures. That will mean a crowd.

There was a very interesting article in a late number of *Harper's New Magazine* by Vilhjálmur Stefánsson on "Christianising the Eskimos." The writer evidently thinks that the Eskimos were very good people when they were "heathen" and that Christianising them has done them more injury than benefit. The conclusion is a conversation between Mr. Stefánsson and his native servant. The latter admitted the Eskimos tell as many lies now as they ever did, and steal just as frequently. But they don't work on Sunday. Which is about the only difference—for the better; for a lazy Sunday suits the Eskimos capitally, and they regard the Christians as very clever to think of such a thing.

The following is from last week's *Truth*:—

> "While Mr. Justice Coleridge has been on circuit the name of his father, the Lord Chief Justice, has been curiously brought before him twice. In one case counsel referred to the story of Constance Kent as being almost exactly similar. The first Lord Coleridge's defence of Constance Kent is famous in criminal annals. In the trial for blasphemy at Staffordshire Assizes the defendant Stewart referred to Lord Coleridge's views in the Bradlaugh case. Mr. Justice Coleridge has not followed in his father's steps in giving four months to Stewart. The law as to blasphemy is an antiquarian curiosity, and prosecutions for witchcraft would hardly be more out of date and oppressive. A sober controversialist to-day can argue the subject in print or on platform without let or hindrance, and to prosecute a corner man because he does so in the style of the mob orator is to declare that bad taste is a crime. To deal with obscene language, or language calculated to bring about a breach of the peace, the common law is quite strong enough."

We suppose "the Bradlaugh case" was the Foote case. It was in connection with the *Freethinker* prosecution that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge delivered his famous summing-up.

Mr. John Masefield is returning to his old love, the *English Review*. A new poem of his, "The River," appears in the December number.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will be held at Frascati's on January 28. This is later than usual, but it will be specially associated with the birthday of Thomas Paine (Jan. 29) and the deathday of Charles Bradlaugh (Jan. 30). The Chairman's address will take the form of a critical eulogy of both those great men.

We were going to write this week on the Stewart (Blasphemy) case, but the paucity of information we have been able to obtain is such that writing an article on the subject in these circumstances is like making bricks without clay. The difficulty in obtaining information is extraordinary. Stewart seems to have let himself be surrounded by people who could not possibly be of any particular use from any point of view. We must let the whole matter stand over till next week. Meanwhile we may say that we have signed the petition for Stewart's release, or his better treatment in prison, by making him a first-class misdemeanant. We have tried to find out whether Lord Coleridge did, as the newspapers reported, add "hard labor" to Stewart's sentence, but we have failed. If "hard labor" was added it was an illegal sentence. The case should have been carried to the Court of Appeal, and we offered to see to that being done. But nothing *was* done—except begging for money. We never know anything so badly bungled. We suppose it is the natural result of very common soldiers posing as generals of army divisions.

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Animal-Eating Plants.

AMONG the many marvels of the vegetable world there is probably none more remarkable than the story of the carnivorous plants. Widely distributed throughout the world, some five hundred species of dicotyledonous plants are to be met with which, in some way or other capture insects and similar animals, whose bodies they digest or absorb.

It was in the summer of the year 1860 that the attention of the great Charles Darwin was drawn to the insect-catching habits of the common sundew. He noticed that a surprisingly large number of insects were captured by the leaves of this plant, which was growing on a Sussex heath. "I gathered by chance a dozen plants," he says in his famous work on *Insectivorous Plants*,

> "bearing fifty-six fully expanded leaves, and on thirty-one of these dead insects or remnants of them adhered; and, no doubt, many more would have been caught afterwards by these same leaves, and still more by those as yet not expanded. On one plant all six leaves had caught their prey; and on several other plants very many leaves had caught more than a single insect. On one large leaf I found the remains of thirteen distinct insects. Flies (Diptera) are captured much oftener than other insects. The largest kind which I have seen caught was a small butterfly; but the Rev. H. M. Wilkinson informs me that he found a large living dragon-fly with its body firmly held by two leaves. As this plant is extremely common in some districts, the number of insects thus annually slaughtered must be prodigious."

Darwin then began a profound and prolonged study of this plant, the common sundew (Drosera rotundifolia), as also of other insectivorous plants; and, notwithstanding the researches of innumerable subsequent investigators, the Newton of Biology remains our leading authority on animal-feeding vegetable organisms.

Darwin's experiments on the sundew yielded highly remarkable results. But before dealing with these it will be well to pen a description of this remarkable carnivorous plant. In Professor Anton Kerner's important *Natural History of Plants* is to be found a fine colored plate depicting the sundew in company with another insectivorous plant, natural size, growing amongst sedges on an upland moor. The most striking feature of the plant consists in its rounded leaves surmounted by delicate red filaments, provided at their tip with a glistening droplet of liquid. These filaments are formed on the upper surface and margin of the sundew leaf. These filaments or tentacles, as Kerner says, look like pins stuck in a flat cushion, and are unequal in size. The longest filaments are ranged round the outermost edge of the leaf, and gradually become shorter as they approach the centre. Each leaf is furnished on an average with about two hundred of these filaments. The free extremities or heads of these filaments are glandular in nature. Each of them secretes a transparent, thick, sticky substance, and this substance shines and glistens in the sunlight much after the manner of a dewdrop; and to this circumstance is due the name of the plant. Stimuli occasioned by falling rain or the blowing wind excite no answering movements in the sensitive filaments. But if grains of sand, bits of coal, particles of paste, drops of wine, or any other non-nitrogenous matter be brought into contact with the enlarged extremities of the filaments, an augmented supply of the sticky substance arises and the secretion assumes an acid form, but the sensitive tentacles make no response, and no other change of importance takes place. The result is far different when an insect mistakes the glittering liquid on the tip of the tentacles for honey. If an insect alights on a leaf and in so doing touches the glands, or even if a piece of meat or other nitrogenous substance be artificially placed on the filament heads, the discharge of acid juice increases and a ferment also makes its appearance. "The action of this ferment on compounds is entirely similar to that of pepsin, and we may even go so far as to speak of it as pepsin."

The winged creatures that are lured to the leaves are soon enmeshed in the sticky liquid and endeavor to release themselves from its unpleasant embrace. But the harder they struggle the more they besmear themselves, and become more and more at the mercy of the treacherous fluid. The fight for freedom is very transient; their breathing organs are choked with juice, and they are quickly suffocated.

A few minutes after a gland of one of the sensitive filaments has been stimulated through the attachment to it of a dead or living animal organism, the entire system of filaments undergoes a change. In the first place, the tentacle bearing the gland originally irritated by the presence of the captured animal begins to bend inwards. About ten minutes after the first tentacle or filament commences to move, those nearest to it follow its example. Ten minutes later, those next in succession bend likewise until, in the course of from one to three hours, all the tentacles are inflected and converge upon the unfortunate insect. It may be remarked that the insect or other captured creature does not necessarily alight on any particular part of the leaf's surface. But wherever the prey is deposited, in that direction the filaments always bend. It has been proved experimentally that when morsels of meat are placed one on the right, and the other on the left half of the same leaf, the two hundred tentacles form into two groups, and each group gathers round one of the fragments of meat. This phenomenon also occurs if two insects become entangled on a leaf simultaneously, one on one side and one on the other. But when all the tentacles converge towards the centre of the leaf, as soon as this convergence has reached its maximum, the leaf strongly resembles a clenched fist.

As Darwin points out, the sundew gathers most of its nutriment from the animal substances it captures and digests. The plant flourishes on poverty stricken soil where hardly anything but moss—a plant which derives nearly all its nourishment from the atmosphere—can exist. The roots of the sundew are, in consequence, remarkably small. And this adaptability to poor soil may be said to characterise the entire group of insectivorous plants. In whatever continent these carnivorous plants are found they all agree in inhabiting damp spots such as heaths, the banks of brooks, bogs, marshes, and moors where water is abundant but where the barren earth is unable to yield those inorganic nitrogenous substances which are essential to the well-being of ordinary vegetable life.

Reference has already been made to the intense irritability of the sundew's tentacles. Darwin discovered that a bit of thin human hair 8-1,000ths of an inch in length, and weighing merely 1-78,740ths of a grain when placed on the sensitive tentacle, though largely supported by the secretion, is sufficient to cause the tentacle to move. "It is not probable," he writes,

> "that the pressure in this case could have amounted to that from the millionth of a grain. Even smaller particles cause a slight movement, as could be seen through a lens. Larger particles than those of which the measurements have been given cause no sensation when placed on the tongue, one of the most sensitive parts of the human body."*

The sundew's responses to stimuli set up by nitrogenous and non-nitrogenous fluids and solids are also well worthy of notice. Darwin's researches proved that the sundew's leaves "detect with almost unerring certainty the presence of nitrogen. A decoction of green peas or of fresh cabbage-leaves made by keeping them for a long time in merely warm water is far less efficient."

These remarkable results led Darwin to study the plant's powers of digestion. His experiments demonstrated that its leaves carry on the functions of true digestion, and he proved in detail that the glands absorb the digested substances. These re-

* *Insectivorous Plants*, p. 263.

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searches fully established for the first time the existence in the vegetable kingdom of a function which had been previously regarded as special to the animal world. The intimate primal relationship of the botanical and zoological provinces of the kingdom of life was further evidenced by the study of the acids and ferments which enable carnivorous plants to assimilate their animal food. "The gastric juice of animals contains, as is well known, an acid and a ferment, both of which are indispensable for digestion, and so it is with the secretion of the sundew." Darwin was forced to conclude, from experiments conducted with a great variety of substances, that those substances which the secretion of the sundew digests completely, partially, or not at all, are acted on in precisely the same manner by the gastric juice of an animal stomach.

In another interesting carnivorous plant, Dionæa muscipula, commonly known as the Venus' flytrap, the late Professor Burdon Sanderson detected a resting and an action current of electricity, and was of opinion that "the property by which the excitable structures of the leaf respond to stimulation is of the same nature as that possessed by the similarly endowed structures of animals." Professor Kerner arrived at a similar conclusion, and says that "The analogy existing between these processes, especially the conduction and liberation of a stimulus, and similar phenomena of the muscles and nerves of an animal organism" is as complete as in the case of the sundew. And he goes on to state that—

> "It is a noteworthy fact that, in the flytraps, actual electric currents have been observed, which prove that the greatest resemblance exists to muscles and nerves as regards electro-motor action also."*

The range of this plant is restricted to a narrow strip of country in the east of North America (from Long Island to Florida) wherever peat bogs abound. The blossoms rise on a long stalk in the centre of the plant, and the leaves are arranged in circular form, their under surfaces resting more or less on the earth. These leaves are about four inches in length, and the two halves of the leaf are movable on one another along the midrib, and, when irritated, close together just as a book would close if provided with an automatic closing-spring. Each edge of the leaf is furnished with from twelve to twenty long teeth "which interlock in rat-trap fashion with those on the other side." The leaf-centre carries numerous digestive glands, and each half of the leaf-blade possesses three highly sensitive hairs which bend down when the leaf closes over its prey. If one of these sensitive hairs be irritated by an insect settling on the leaf, in eight or ten seconds the leaf shuts up. The glands rapidly exude their digestive juice, and the digestion of the insect occupies a week or a fortnight, according to the size of the prey. When the meal is completely absorbed the leaf is reopened, and is ready to receive the next insect visitor.

Doubt was at one time thrown on the utility of the insectivorous habit to the Venus' flytrap and other carnivorous plants. Certain of these plants that were kept in greenhouses were thought to flourish better without animal food than with it. But careful experiment has since proved that when the plants which are provided with moderate supplies of meat and other nitrogenous matter are compared with those that are denied flesh food, the former are unquestionably the larger and healthier plants. The earlier observations and experiments were vitiated by the fact that the plants were overfed, and in consequence suffered, and in some instances died, from indigestion.

Another insectivorous plant of rare occurrence is found in Portugal and Morocco. It appears to flourish more extensively on the Oporto hillsides than elsewhere, and numerous observers have noted that immense numbers of flies become attached to the leaves. The insect-catching merits of the plant —Drosophyllum lusitanicum, as it is termed—are well known to the peasants, who keep it in their cottages for the purpose of catching flies.

> "A plant in my hothouse caught so many insects during the early part of April," writes Darwin, "although the weather was cold and insects scarce, that it must have been in some manner strongly attractive to them. On four leaves of a young and small plant, 8, 10, 14, and 16 minute insects, chiefly Diptera, were found in the autumn adhering to them."*

The butterworts and the various species of the genus Nepenthes are all carnivorous in habit. The thirty-six species of Nepenthes, or pitcher plants, unlike the common butterwort, are all confined to the tropics. They are distributed from New Caledonia and New Guinea over tropical Australia to Madagascar, and through the Sunda and Philippine Islands to Ceylon, Bengal, and Cochin China.

Varying as the carnivorous plants do in their methods of capture, they all agree in assimilating animal food. The pitcher plants are provided with pitfalls which ensnare insect prey; others, such as the sundew and Venus' flytrap, exhibit movements in securing their victims. And among the various lessons these plants teach is the lesson that a beautiful and harmless leaf may in the course of evolution become changed into a death-trap which is fatal to vast numbers of ants, beetles, butterflies, tiny crustaceans, flies, and other living creatures.

T. F. PALMER.

* *History of Plants*, vol. i., p. 151.

* *Insectivorous Plants*, p. 332.

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

VI.—WILLIAM JOHN BIRCH.

IT was only in his old age that I had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Birch. His appearance was truly venerable, and his portrait (which adorns my room) is always remarked as that of an extremely fine-looking old man. Mr. Birch was born of a well-to-do family on January 4, 1811. He was educated at Baliol College, Oxford, and graduated M.A. at New Inn Hall. He became a barrister-at-law, but was never under the necessity of practising for a livelihood.

During the prosecution of the *Oracle of Reason*, in 1842, Mr. Birch came forward as a generous supporter of that paper and of the Anti-Persecution Union. He contributed to C. Southwell's *Investigator* valuable articles on "The Blasphemy Laws" and on "Money the Motive in the History of England." He also wrote in the *Movement*, the *Reasoner*, and the *National Reformer*. To him Mr. Holyoake dedicated his *Last Trial for Atheism*, as "a friend who was twice a friend, who helped us when we were unknown and struggling." Through his liberality "The Library of Reason"—a valuable set of reprints from Hume, Spinoza, Hibbert, Ensor, Burdon, Southwell, Strauss, Lyell, etc.—was issued, edited by W. Chilton. The *Reasoner* and the publications of the Fleet-street House, under Mr. Holyoake, were also aided by his ever generous assistance. On one occasion he gave Mr. Holyoake 600 acres of land in Canada, with the purpose of forwarding Secularism; but when the bulk of Mr. Birch's large fortune was lost Mr. Holyoake returned the land-script.

In 1848 Mr. Birch published his principal work, *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*. Mr. Birch held that Shakespeare was a sceptic in regard to a future life, and devoid of reverence for the fundamental dogmas of religion. This position he endeavors to substantiate by a thorough examination both of his dramas and poems. He also wrote a work on *The Real and the Ideal;* and in a pamphlet, *Paulan Idea not a Fact*, first questioned the existence of the Apostles to the Gentiles. In 1856, he published *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of the Bible*. In his preface he states:—

> "The principal inquiries in this book are the sum of what is taught in the Bible about a God, a Providence, and a future state; the Messianic idea, religion, and morality; the nature of things and of men. We shall inquire whether God and Christ are ideas or facts; or, in other words, whether they personally existed. We shall inquire whether the Bible is a revelation of a God, or a revelation that we know nothing about him."

In this book Mr. Birch strongly contended that education should be in morality, and not in religion. He says:—

> "Nothing creates such a difference between mankind as religion. There often would be nothing but love between

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individuals, arising from their natural disposition, if they were not severed by religion. As there is said to be no morality without religion, unbelievers are treated as having no morality, and believers are absolved from morality towards them. We believe there can be no morality with religion."

Mr. Birch published through Mr. Truelove, in 1870, *The Jesus Christ of John Stuart Mill*, by "Antichrist," quoting on the title-page, "He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son, and confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 John ii. 22, iv. 2, 3, and 2 John 7). This showed his standpoint. Like all Mr. Birch's productions, it was somewhat desultory. He wrote, like St. Paul, in an unconnected way, but he culled good things from all quarters. The work was adversely criticised in the *National Reformer*, and did not sell well. He also published anonymously *Bible Bestiality and Filth from the Fathers*, and a little book with much information on nicknames, entitled *Tom Paine, Charlie Bradlaugh, and Bob Ingersoll*.

Mr. Birch had a fine library and was a voluminous reader. He carried to excess the good habit of taking notes of what he read. To this I ascribe the fact that, although reading and writing all his long life, he never attained concise statement. He was always reminded of what others had said, and this led to over-much quotation and digression. Every theme elaborated itself to huge dimensions. To me he confided, when he went to Italy, the whole of his manuscripts, weighing many hundredweight. They are full of rare information; yet no publisher would venture to print them.

As a gentleman of means and leisure, Mr. Birch collected, read, and made notes upon, I think, every work on the subject of Christian origins and early Christianity, published either in English, French, or Italian. His conclusions, though expressed on many points with the caution of one who had a legal training, was emphatic on the crucial question. He held that no such person as the Jesus Christ of the Gospels ever lived. He thought the character an ideal, amalgamating Pagan myths on a Jewish basis. To the subject of the existence of Jesus, and cognate questions of Pagan religion and mythology, Josephus, Philo, the early Christian Fathers, etc., he devoted immense research, to which at least one individual (and that the present writer) is much indebted.

Mr. Birch, in the days of Garibaldi and Mazzini, had been a generous supporter of the cause of Italian freedom. He usually spent the winter in Florence, where he was well known both to the English colony and to the leading Italian Freethinkers and men of letters, such as Count Ricciardi and Angelo de Gubernatis. His wide reading was always at the service of others; and several of the Freethinking writers who gathered round Thomas Scott were indebted to him for assistance with their works. He died at Florence on April 4, 1891; and it is simple truth to say he was deeply lamented by all who knew him.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Benedict Spinoza.

THE fame of Spinoza, like that of so many of the world's teachers, has undergone remarkable changes. For many generations after his death he was the object of almost universal execration; Spinozism and Atheism were identical terms; to express any sympathy with the spirit or admiration for the intellect and life of the outcast philosopher was to incur the certainty of being regarded as a wilful child of the Devil. Now, however, the poor Amsterdam Jew is elevated to the metaphysical throne, and before him loyal subjects bow. "The Systematic Atheist" of Bayle is the "God-intoxicated man" of Novalis; since the time of Lessing and Mendelssohn he has profoundly influenced Germany's noblest minds, in particular that of her greatest poet, Goethe; in France he has extorted the homage of the subtlest thinkers; and even in England, averse from ontological speculation as our best intellect is, his rigorous logic and supreme mental grasp and spiritual insight have won high and intense admiration. The grand simplicity of his life, too, has been fully recognised, and no longer are senseless accusations hurled at his memory. Even the most determined opponents acknowledge that his character was free from meanness, egotism, baseness, and chicane; nay, they are compelled to admit his claim to rank among the few combinations of sublime genius and heroic fortitude of which the human race can boast. Every one, agreeing or disagreeing intellectually, must feel when perusing his works that they are in the clear air of a great man's presence.

Baruch Despinosa, or, to use the Latin equivalent, Benedictus, was born at Amsterdam on November 24, 1632. He was the eldest of three children—himself, and two sisters, Miriam and Rebecca. His father, one of the Jewish fugitives from Spain, who settled in the Netherlands to avoid their Christian persecutors, was in comfortable, if not affluent circumstances, and derived his income probably from trade. He is reputed to have been a man of excellent understanding, and of this he gave evidence in the care he took to secure to his son the best education the Jewish schools of Amsterdam afforded. The classical languages of Greece and Rome had no place in the curriculum of the Jewish seminaries, but evidently the study of Latin was not interdicted, as Greek was by the Christian hierarchy, for amongst the Jews physicians and naturalists abounded. The Law and the Prophets were expounded by the rabbis, and diligently studied by the scholars, and the pupils who evinced extraordinary aptitude were selected for study in higher branches of education, with a view to becoming teachers themselves. Young Baruch, a remarkably quick and inquisitive boy, found means to supply himself with Latin, by aid of a German teacher, and afterwards with Greek. The boys on the upper form had the use of a well-furnished library, in which, probably, Spinoza pastured; at least, we know that at a very early age he became acquainted with the writings of Descartes. Pollock says that his use of Latin in his principal writings is not exactly classical, although it shows a perfect command over the language. His knowledge of Greek "was more limited, and by his own account not critical. Of modern languages he knew French, German, and Italian, besides Portuguese and Spanish, one or both of which were native to him. It appears from evidence made public early in the last century, but afterwards lost sight of until quite recently, that he always regarded Dutch as a foreign language, and wrote it only with difficulty."

In his fifteenth year Baruch was already remarkable for Biblical and Talmudic lore. The Rabbi, Saul Levi Morteira, superintendent and occasional teacher of the upper division of the school, had noticed his great promise, and is said to have taken unusual pains in aiding and directing his studies, flattering himself, doubtless, with the hope that his young pupil would some day occupy a distinguished place among Jewish teachers. But, alas for his preceptors, the curious and eager mind of the boy shot ahead of their limits; doubts, which if they entered his tutors' minds had entered only to be stifled, were to him the unsuspicious dawnings of intellectual life. His questions perplexed and annoyed Morteira, who found here material that could not be fashioned into orthodox shape. For awhile, doubtless, no open profession of heresy was made, but the strife within him must have been intense and distressing. At first he endeavored to find some ground of reconcilement between Reason and Scripture, but in vain. "I aver," he says in the "Tractatus," "that, though I long sought for something of the sort, I could never find it. And although nurtured in the current views of the sacred Scriptures, and my mind filled with their teachings, I was nevertheless compelled at length to break with my early beliefs."

His hesitating answers to delicate questions from those who sought him because of his scholarly reputation soon made him an object of suspicion. He became cautious and reticent in his intercourse with the elders of the congregation; he abandoned regular attendance at the Synagogue, and, indeed, gave good cause for being regarded as a very perverse youth. Whether propensely or from instigation, two young men of his own age, amongst others who sought his assistance in the tangled mazes of theology, pressed him on some of the most delicate topics of their faith. His cautious replies roused their anger, and excited them to revenge. At first they spread disadvantageous rumors against him, and then denounced him to the heads of the Jewish Synagogue as an apostate from the true faith. Cited before the elders, he indignantly denied having uttered some of the statements imputed to him. He was reprimanded, and ordered to make instant submission and acknowledgment of wickedness. This he refused to do; such procedure was insufferable to his proud nature. Threat of excommunication was then made, but without effect, and the contumacious youth retired from the presence of his judges.

On July 6, 1656, the Jewish synagogue at Amsterdam was crowded with excited men of Israel, assembled there to witness the excommunication of the recusant Spinoza. Angry frowning faces, and lurid dark eyes, told more eloquently than any words how enraged the faithful were, and how absorbed in the zeal of persecution. What mercy could be shown to a perverse youth who deliberately forsook the religion of his own people and forefathers, and opposed himself to the matchless wisdom of all their rabbis? While the anathema was being pronounced, the long, wailing note of a great horn occasionally sounded; the lights, seen brightly burning at the beginning of the ceremony, were extinguished one by one as it proceeded, till at the end the last went out, and the congregation were left in total darkness, and in the solemn, mysterious gloom the faithful responded with fervid *Amens!*

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Dr. Van Vloten fortunately, obtained a copy of the curse against Spinoza from the then secretary of the Portuguese Jewish Church at Amsterdam. It is in the Spanish language, and is thus rendered into English by Pollock:—

> "With the judgment of the angels and of the saints we excommunicate, cut off, curse, and anathematise Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of the elders and of all this holy congregation, in the presence of the holy books; by the 613 precepts which are written therein, with the anathema wherewith Joshua cursed Jericho, with the curse which Elisha laid upon the children, and with all the curses which are written in the law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night. Cursed be he in sleeping and cursed be he in waking, cursed in going out and cursed in coming in. The Lord shall not pardon him, the wrath and fury of the Lord shall henceforth be kindled against this man, and shall lay upon him all the curses which are written in the book of the law. The Lord shall destroy his name under the sun, and cut him off for his undoing from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the book of the law. But ye that cleave unto the Lord your God, live all of you this day.
>
> "And we warn you that none may speak with him by word of mouth nor by writing, nor show any favor to him, nor be under one roof with him, nor come within four cubits of him, nor read any paper composed or written by him."

"With these amenities, the current compliments of theological parting," says Matthew Arnold, with delicious humor, "the Jews of the Portuguese Synagogue at Amsterdam took, in 1656, their leave of their erring brother, Baruch or Benedict Spinoza. They remained children of Israel, and he became a child of modern Europe."

Amsterdam, at least the Jewish part of it, was in an uproar; but the innocent cause of the commotion was probably not much disturbed. Excommunication from one church in the midst of many others was not fraught with such dreadful consequences as followed excommunication where but one church existed; there was a great world outside the Jewish fold affording ample space for movement. He is said to have sent a reply in Spanish to the anathema, but Van Vloten in vain, though eagerly and industriously, searched for it. When informed of the excommunication, he is said to have replied: "Well and good; but this will force me to nothing I should not have been ready to do without it." The greatest trial of all was yet to come. No orthodox Jew could shelter beneath his roof one under the ban of excommunication, even though his own son. Spinoza had, therefore, to quit his home for ever.

Spinoza's classical acquirements stood him now in good stead. He at once found an engagement in the educational establishment of Dr. Francis Van den Ende, amongst whose pupils were the sons of some of the wealthiest and most distinguished citizens. Van den Ende was skilful, accomplished, and, in private, of irreproachable character, but was suspected of adding a grain of Atheism to every dose of Latin. At the doctor's school commenced also the one romance of the outcast's life. Van den Ende's daughter, a charming girl of twelve or thirteen, assisted in the tuition of the younger pupils; indeed, it is said (and upon its possible truth Lewes draws a very pretty picture of dawning love) that she aided Spinoza in his Latin studies. This, however, is highly improbable. That he became deeply attached to her is, nevertheless, certain; and he seems to have cherished the hope of one day being able to make her his wife. He is reported to have said to one of his friends that "he had made up his mind to ask Mdlle. Van den Ende in marriage, not carried away by her charms as one of the most beautiful or faultlessly formed of women, but admiring her, loving her because she was rarely gifted with understanding, possessed of much good sense, and, moreover, of a pleasant and lively disposition." When the maiden grew to womanhood years after, poor Spinoza was not the only suitor; he had a rival in a certain Dietrich Kerckkrink, a much wealthier man than himself. The rival's attentions were backed with costly presents, and finally the fair one consented to become his wife.

Such is the old story of Spinoza's love affair. "But here romance," says Martineau, "not the first time, gets itself into a scrape by neglect of dates. Dr. Van Vloten, provokingly turning to the register of this marriage on February 5, 1671, finds that the bride was then 27 years of age, and could not have been more than twelve in 1655, the reputed time of the rivalry for her hand." Despite the facts, however, Martineau clings to the old story as highly probable; and something of the same disposition is shown by Pollock, who remarks that Beatrice was only nine years old when she showed herself to the eyes of Dante and became immortally the "glorious lady of his soul."

(To be continued.) G. W. FOOTE.

To plough is to pray; to plant is to prophesy, and the harvest answers and fulfils.—*Ingersoll.*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOV. 27.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davidson, Judge, Moss, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Thurlow, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Birmingham and West Ham Branches and the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported the result of her inquiries from the various restaurants *re* the Annual Dinner, and it was resolved:—

> "That the 1914 Dinner take place at the Restaurant Frascati, Oxford-street, on Wednesday, January 28."

The Morpeth Police Court case, in which Captain Mitford, J.P., recently refused to take the word of William Snowball, who, being a Secularist, refused to be sworn on the Testament, as he did not believe in God, was reported by the Secretary, who had also written to Snowball's solicitor, Mr. Shaw. The matter was fully discussed, and the Secretary was instructed:—

> "(1) To write officially to the Lord Chancellor, calling his attention to the case.
>
> "(2) To suggest to Snowball, through his solicitor, that a mandamus should be obtained to compel the J.P. to hear the case without comments of an insulting nature; and, further, to inform him that if this course becomes necessary, and the defendant is unable to bear the cost, the Executive will render him reasonable support."

The conviction of T. W. Stewart for blasphemy was discussed, and the President informed the meeting that he was making personal investigation as to the legality of the sentence, and a petition for Stewart's release was signed by all present, as a protest against blasphemy prosecutions.

A resolution submitted by the Kingsland Branch, was adjourned for consideration until the next meeting.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

JAHVEH AND JESUS.

While, however, there is an enormous improvement, if we compare the administration of human affairs by Jehovah (*i.e.*, the Old Testament God) and by God (*i.e.*, the God of the New Testament), there is nevertheless a blot upon the character of God (*i.e.*, the God of the New Testament) which suffices, if rigorously balanced against the failings of Jehovah, to outweigh them all. It is the eternity of the punishment which he inflicts in a future life. No amount of sophistry can ever justify the creation of beings whose lives are to terminate in endless suffering.—*Viscount Amberley, "Analysis of Religious Belief,"* vol. ii., p. 371.

Inquiry into the evidence of a doctrine is not to be made once for all, and then taken as finally settled. It is never lawful to stifle a doubt; for either it can be honestly answered by means of the inquiry already made, or else it proves that the inquiry was not complete. "But," says one, "I am a busy man; I have no time for the long course of study which would be necessary to make me in any degree a competent judge of certain questions, or even able to understand the nature of the arguments." Then he should have no time to believe.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Man is by birth so poor a creature that he is good only when he dreams. He needs illusions to make him do what he ought to do for the love of good. This slave has need of fear and of lies to perform his duty. You get the mass of men to make sacrifices only by giving them assurances that they will be paid back. The self-denial of the Christian is only a shrewd calculation, an investment for the sake of the kingdom of God.—*Renan.*

Obituary.

Mr. James Cossey, an ardent Freethinker, a member of the late Bishop Auckland Branch of the N. S. S., died after a few weeks' illness at Ferryhill on Sunday, November 23, aged 64. Admirer of Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote, and other leading Freethought advocates, and always ready to defend the cause and its leaders. He was buried at Ferryhill Cemetery on November 26, the funeral being a silent one, in accordance with his wishes. We extend to the widow and family our heartiest condolence.—W. R. JULER.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Passing of the Christian Sabbath."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, "Beelzebub," "Christ and His Teachings."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, E. Clifford Williams, "Atheism v. Theism."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Guy A. Aldred, 12 noon, "New Gods for Old"; 6.30, "The Folly of Worship."

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THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of life.
—INGERSOLL.

Feelings and Opinions.

IN discussion it is almost inevitable that things will be said which are likely to make supersensitive people wince. An expression thoughtlessly uttered may touch some among one's hearers upon a tender spot, or disturb an idea that one is in the habit of regarding as worthy of a special measure of respect. Or certain associations may have gathered round some special belief, and a brusquely spoken sentence may produce the sudden reaction of an electric shock. Such occurrences are almost inevitable; and it is surprising how anxious the average Christian is to avoid this happening. His concern for these tender associations is such that he never ceases to demand that in discussion beliefs shall be treated with the greatest possible respect. Not a sentence, not a word, must be uttered that is likely to wound the feelings of the most sensitive. If one does not agree with the opinions of one's hearers, nevertheless one must refrain from saying anything that they will consider unpleasant. Sentiments must be respected; feelings must not be lacerated.

I have omitted to say that the sentiments and feelings that are to be so carefully respected and so tenderly treated are the Christian's own. Where the opinions of other people are concerned, he shows no such concern. He does not hesitate to attack the opinions of others with the ferocity of a savage, and the language of a thorough-paced hooligan. He will use ridicule or sarcasm, slander or abuse, just as it suits his case or pleases his humor. If the Freethinker ventures to retort in kind, he will be solemnly reminded that religion is a sacred subject, and he has no right to outrage people's feelings by attacking it. And, apparently, he has a genuine belief to this effect. More, he not only believes it himself, but has somehow managed to make a great many who are intellectually opposed to him believe it also. There are scores of people who seem to have the belief that if a man does not believe in religion or in Christianity, he ought to either keep his opinions to himself, or express them in a very deferential manner. The social opposition to Freethought rests not so much upon the opinions held by Freethinkers, as upon the fact that some of them are so ill-bred and so inconsiderate as to openly express them. If they would only keep quiet, they might be forgiven. But they *will* speak out, and that appears to embody the undescribed but unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost.

Now, I am not going to argue that the Freethinker wounds the feelings of Christians as a kind of payment for the Christian having wounded his. Nor am I suggesting that in future discussion should be conducted so that neither party feels his sentiments shocked. That would really mean an end to discussion altogether. Everyone in discussion says things about his opponent's opinions that his opponent would not say about them himself, and I do not see how this is to be avoided so long as conflicting opinions are brought to the point of open opposition. What I am going to submit is the simple proposition that whether my feelings are hurt or not in the course of a discussion is entirely my own concern—not that of my opponent's. His duty is to say exactly what he believes to be true, and while avoiding all personal abuse, to say it in the manner best calculated to carry conviction to my mind. My duty towards him is of precisely the same kind. If by some means or other I have got it into my head that certain of my own opinions must be treated with a special measure of tenderness or consideration, the responsibility is mine, not my opponent's. The opinions are not his, he does not regard them as either true or valuable; he may even believe them to be false and mischievous, and he is in no way bound to deal with them save in the way that one usually deals with what one regards as false and dangerous things.

It must be observed that this solicitude concerning people's feelings only arises in connection with religion. In politics or in other matters feelings are left to take care of themselves. In the political world members of the Conservative party are not over careful whether or no they wound the feelings of Mr. Lloyd George. And Mr. Lloyd George is certainly not in the habit of treating the feelings of Conservatives with very great consideration. Even within the religious world the same thing obtains. Consider the language of Protestants concerning Roman Catholics, of Churchmen about Nonconformists, and of Nonconformists about Churchmen. The plea is raised not only in connection with religion alone, but solely as concerns the relations of unbelief with religion. The Freethinker is asked to observe towards religion a degree of solicitude and carefulness that no one else is asked to observe towards any opinion whatever. And he is asked to do this on a ground that every Freethinker is bound to challenge—namely, that religious opinions are concerned with things of great and even transcendent value.

Well, I deny this altogether. I deny that religious beliefs—the belief in a God, or a soul, or a future life, or the divinity of Jesus, or similar beliefs—are in themselves of the slightest value to anybody. There are a thousand and one things concerning which our opinions are of infinitely greater consequence. For instance, our opinion about Mr. Churchill's increased armament crusade, or Mr. Lloyd George's land campaign, or the Government Home Rule Bill, are of infinitely greater consequence than opinions concerning God and the soul. (In themselves, that is, because circumstances may arise that would make our opinion of even the habitableness of Mars of very great consequence indeed.) What we believe about militarism and various legislative proposals must profoundly affect the lives of every one of our fellow-citizens. But believing in a God or a soul may leave our relations to our fellows quite unaffected. The varieties and contradictions of religious opinions and doctrines are in themselves evidence of their small value. Were religion really of vital concern to life it could not be set on one side, as it is set on one side by a growing number of people. There is no natural, vital fact that can be ignored as religion is ignored. And this setting on one side of religion proves that the value of religion is purely adventitious. It is something we import

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into religion, not something that naturally belongs to it.

There is no more mischievous maxim current than the one that we ought to respect one another's opinions. We ought to do nothing of the kind. Opinion deserves our respect only in proportion as we believe it to be true. In proportion as we believe it to be false, it deserves nothing but contempt and exposure. Whether the opinion be connected with "sacred" or secular subjects makes not the slightest difference. No man has the right to demand that I shall respect his opinion so long as I believe it to be false. What he is entitled to demand is that I shall respect his right to express whatever opinion he believes to be true. There is a clear justification in social utility for this, but there is neither sense nor social utility in respecting opinions merely because they are called religious. Moreover, it is exactly the right to express opinion that the Christian most strenuously resents. *His* opinion that a Freethinker is a source of moral and "spiritual" corruption may be shouted from the housetop and treated with all deference. My opinion that I am at least as good as a Christian must be expressed with all due regard to the tender feelings of the Christian advocate—if, indeed, I am allowed to express it at all. The feelings of Christians are outraged because picture shows or concert-halls are open on Sunday. They are not forced to attend either; but it is enough they are open, and in the name of their outraged feelings they demand that they be closed. But Freethinkers may be debarred from all sorts of pleasure on Sunday; their "day of rest" may be made hideous by church bells, Salvation Army bands, and street-corner preaching, without their feelings being considered in any way whatever.

It is not because the Freethinker sets a smaller value upon opinion than the Christian, but because he prizes it higher, that he so often "outrages" religious feeling by his speech. He is really moving upon a quite higher moral plane than that upon which the Christian habitually lives. To him opinion is something that counts for too much in the history of progress to be set on one side as of small consequence. Every opinion carries with it certain social responsibilities, and the responsibilities of unbelief are at least as important as those of belief. No Freethinker objects to a Christian preaching his opinions; he would say it was the Christian's duty to do so. But it is not a duty confined to Christians. It is the duty of everyone to proclaim an opinion as false when it is seen to be so. The plea that the time is not ripe for speech is the plea of a coward. If no one spoke the time never would be ripe. "Not ripe" only means not quite safe; nothing more. Really, the proper time to call a lie a lie is when it is seen to be a lie; not to wait until there are enough singers to make a respectable chorus. Truth often suffers more from the timidity of its friends than from the malignity of its enemies.

In practice the claim that religious feelings must be protected from assault, involves, if necessary, more or less persecution. And it means persecution in its most cowardly form. To say that an opinion is false and shall be suppressed by the simple process of imprisoning or killing those who entertain it, is a straightforward and intelligible proposition. But to grant the right to express that opinion, and yet to say that it shall be expressed in a manner agreeable to the feelings of those who do not agree with it, is persecution plus cowardice. In either case, whether the direct and more courageous plan, or the indirect and more cowardly method is followed, opinion can only be sheltered from attack at the cost of cultivating cowardice and hypocrisy. Conformity is secured by robbing the nation of that which is vital to genuine progress. Error is more firmly established, and religious health becomes the equivalent of social disease. Hypocrisy becomes a marked social characteristic. It is not even the hypocrisy of conscious dissimulation. That is a comparatively healthy form, because it evidences the capacity for seeing the real thing. The hypocrisy generated is of the kind that, although there is a total divorce between theory and practice, there is a curious unconsciousness that we are all the time living a lie. It is an hypocrisy that is ingrained, organic, and secured by a process of elimination that has been at work for generations. Religious opinion has been protected from attack by a lowering of the intellectual values. And when the history of religion is closed, this may well stand out as its greatest crime against the progress of humanity.

C. COHEN.

The Holy Ghost.

THE Third Person of the Trinity has played a most conspicuous and tragical part in the history of Christendom. In the Nicene Creed he is defined as "the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who, with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets." Like the Second Person, he is from the First, but in a different way. The Son is *begotten*, while the Spirit *proceedeth*, though both are said to be of the substance of the Father. In the Athanasian Creed we find the following illuminating sentences:—

> "The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding."

The Arians did not accept that teaching, but they were not to be listened to, being, as the godly Athanasius politely called them, "Devils, Antichrists, maniacs, Jews, Polytheists, Atheists, dogs, wolves, lions, hares, chameleons, hydras, eels, cuttle-fish, gnats, beetles, leeches." In the use of such elegant invectives against opponents, theological controversialists have never been surpassed. What was meant by *proceeding* no human being could tell, though we are assured by a twentieth-century divine that "the procession of the Spirit from the Son is not to be understood in precisely the same sense as the procession from the Father." The Eastern Church rejects the doctrine that the Spirit proceeds from the Son, declaring that the procession is from the Father alone. Some theologians have advocated the view that the Holy Ghost is the maternal principle in the Godhead and as such shared with the Father in the generation of the Son, just as Isis shared with Osiris in the generation of Horus.

In the Trinity there are three persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, the Father being the fountain-head of the strange union; but the curious thing is that neither Father nor Son is known except through the Holy Ghost. Does it not follow that the Holy Ghost works exclusively through Nature and through man? The Bible furnishes several striking instances of his ceaseless activity. In Joel i. 3, 4, we read thus:—

> "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation. That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."

In verses 15-20 of the same chapter we find this appalling picture:—

> "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as destruction from the Lord shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God? The seeds rot under their clods; the garners are laid desolate, the barns are broken down, for the corn is withered. How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate. O Lord, to thee do I cry; for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field. Yea, the beasts of the field pant unto thee; for the water-brooks are dried up, and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness."

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The day of the Lord was thus "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the dawn spread upon the mountains." Then follows a vivid and accurate description of a terrible visitation of locusts :—

> "A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth, the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and none hath escaped them.....They leap upon the city; they run upon the wall; they climb up into the houses; they enter in at the windows, like a thief. The earth quaketh before them; the heavens tremble; the sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining" (ii. 3-10).

The prophet calls the locusts an army of the Lord, who utters his voice before it, and whose camp is very great. The horrors of such a visitation only show that "the day of the Lord is great and very terrible." The Rev. Dr. Simpson, Canon of St. Paul's, London, tells us, in a sermon upon "The Outpouring of the Spirit," which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for December 3, that "the Christian believes that the Divine Spirit operates as certainly in the falling rain, in the succession of the seasons, in the courses of the stars, as in the prayer of the contrite, the mediation of the saint, the redemption of mankind"; but does the Christian believe, like Joel and, apparently, like Dr. Simpson himself, that the same being operates with equal certainty in the devastating earthquake, the devouring locusts, and the all-destroying volcanic eruptions? Does he believe that the Holy Ghost visits the beasts of the field and the birds of the air with famine because he is angry with mankind, or that he gives cleanness of teeth and want of bread to all who forget him, that he withholds the rain from a godless city and grants it to a pious one? Of course, if the rain comes from God, so does the drought; if the thunder is his voice, so is the earthquake his servant.

We maintain that if a spirit operates in all the activities of Nature it would be a horrible lie to call it the Holy Ghost. Nature is heartless, cruel, unmoral, neither rewarding virtue nor punishing vice. In her sight saint and sinner are alike. The Psalmist says that "the Lord is mindful of his own," but Nature shows them no favor whatever. When the earth quakes they perish like the others. No Elijah is fed by ravens when famine haunts the land. No man of God is favored when the ship goes down, or when the red-hot lava overwhelms the city. Many Christian believers now admit this without hesitation, but, at the same time, hold the view that the Holy Ghost is all-powerful in the world of mind. Dr. Simpson expresses himself with great clearness and vehemence on this point. He says :—

> "It is a not infrequent charge against the clergy of the modern age that they are exchanging a spiritual for a material Gospel, and proclaiming a social rather than a Divine Christ. Now, I protest from the bottom of my heart that it is the duty of the Christian minister to preach the forgiveness of sins and not the reconstruction of society. Eternal salvation, not economic revolution, is now as it has ever been, the hope of a sinful race. Nothing short of the outpouring of the Spirit in its fullest Pentecostal form is the promise which alone can satisfy the needs and longings of mankind."

That is no doubt orthodox, evangelical teaching; but the reverend gentleman will surely admit that no such outpouring of a supernatural spirit has ever taken place. It has never come to pass, as predicted by Joel, that the Lord has poured out his Spirit upon all flesh. The story of Pentecost in the Acts is plainly a legend. The Holy Ghost has never done a single thing to justify the Church's faith in him. The people who are spoken of as being filled with the Spirit are as fallible and weak as others. Ministers of the Gospel are successes or failures for precisely the same reasons as members of other professions. The power to draw and keep a congregation is entirely human. When an exceptionally clever and powerful discourse has been delivered the remark is generally made that it was a special exhibition of the Holy Spirit's presence. It is never anything of the sort. The effectiveness of a sermon is dependent upon the preacher's ability, intellectual and emotional preparation, the state of his health, and the degree of receptiveness on the part of his hearers. The best oration ever composed falls flat if the human conditions are not favorable. The Church differs in no sense whatever from any other human organisation except in the silly, supernatural claims it makes on its own behalf, not one of which has been established by a single well-attested fact. It prospers or languishes according to the nature and efficient or inefficient working of its machinery. It has never furnished the smallest iota of evidence of the presence within it of a superhuman spirit or power. The Church is, therefore, of necessity a lying institution, with no truth in it. The Holy Ghost, described in the New Testament, has always been conspicuous only by his absence and inactivity; and if there be no Holy Ghost the blessed Trinity disappears, its complete illusoriness being an established fact.

The only conclusion to which we can reasonably come is that the belief in the Holy Ghost is and has always been a great obstacle to human progress. Dependence upon him is fatal to the growth of self-reliance, which is an essential condition of genuine reform. The supernatural must be completely dropped before we can really begin to set the world right; and it is highly comforting to know that it is being abandoned now by ever-growing numbers of our fellow-beings. That is why there are so many prosecutions for blasphemy just now; and even these do their share in accelerating the departure of the Holy Ghost.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Wait Till You Come to Die."—II.

(Continued from p. 774.)

> "Where, among the educated and refined, much less among the masses, do we find any ardent desire for a future life? It is not a subject of drawing-room conversation, and the man whose habit it is to buttonhole his acquaintances and inquire earnestly after their souls is shunned like the Ancient Mariner. Among the clergy it is not thought polite to refer to so delicate a topic except officially from the pulpit. Most ominous of all, as indicating the utter absence of interest on the part of the public, is the silence of the press, in the columns of which are manifested daily the works of the flesh."—PROFESSOR WILLIAM OSLER, *Science and Immortality*, pp. 22-23.

> "I find that when a Christian loses a friend the tears spring from his eyes as quickly as from the eyes of others. Their tears are as bitter as ours. Why? The echo of the promises spoken eighteen hundred years ago is so low, and the sound of the clods upon the coffin so loud, the promises are so far away, and the dead so near."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *The Dying Creed*, p. 31.

> "The proper study of a wise man is not how to die, but how to live."—SPINOZA, *Ethics*, iv., 67.

IT was reserved for Christianity to surround death with supernatural terrors. To the Pagan philosophers these terrors were of the very essence of superstition, the doctrine, says Lecky, "that he who has earnestly, though no doubt imperfectly, tried to do his duty has nothing to fear beyond the grave, had been the consoling faith of all the best minds of antiquity."*

To the ancient Greeks, says a competent authority,—

> "there are none of the haunting uncertainties of modern religion about the Greek view of life; no dark corners, no likelihood of skeletons in the cupboard. It is a clear air, and in it we are not baffled by mists, which rise and fall, but never lift; and which hold behind them endless possibilities that can never be quite brought to the test."†

"He was waiting for no glory to be revealed," says the same writer, "with which the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared. The glory was already present to his eyes"‡ in

* Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, vol. i., p. 379.
† R. W. Livingstone, *The Greek Genius and Its Meaning for Us* (1912), p. 122.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

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that splendid civilisation, in some respects so far ahead of our own.

As Goethe observed of the sepulchres of Athens:—

> "The wind which blows from the tombs of the ancients comes with gentle breath as over a mound of roses. The reliefs are touching and pathetic, and always represent life. There stand father and mother, their son between them, gazing at one another with unspeakable truth to nature. Here a pair clasp hands. Here a father seems to rest on his couch and wait to be entertained by his family. To me the presence of these scenes was very touching. Their art is of a late period, yet are they simple, natural, and of universal interest. Here there is no knight in harness on his knees awaiting a joyful resurrection. The artist has with more or less skill presented to us only the persons themselves, and so made their existence lasting and perpetual. They fold not their hands, gaze not into heaven; they are on earth, what they were and what they are. They stand side by side, take interest in one another; and that is what is in the stone, even though somewhat unskilfully, yet most pleasingly depicted." *

As Lessing observes in his essay on this subject:—

> "Revelation has made Death the 'King of Terrors,' the awful offspring of sin and the dread way to its punishment; though to the imagination of the ancient heathen world, Greek or Etrurian, he was a youthful genius—the twin brother of Sleep, or a lusty boy with a torch held downwards." †

Among the greatest of the Romans the same opinion prevailed. Says Lecky:—

> "Cæsar could assert in the Senate, without scandal and almost without dissent, that death was the end of all things. Pliny, perhaps the greatest of all Roman scholars, adopting the sentiment of all the school of Epicurus, describes the belief in a future life as a form of madness, a puerile and a pernicious illusion.....That the sleep of annihilation is the happiest end of man is a favorite thought of Lucretius." ‡

Says the same historian:—

> "Panætius, the founder of Roman stoicism, maintained that the soul perished with the body, and his opinion was followed by Epictetus and Cornutus. Seneca contradicted himself on the subject. Marcus Aurelius never rose above a vague and mournful aspiration. Those who believed in a future world believed in it faintly and uncertainly, and even when they accepted it as a fact, they shrank from proposing it as a motive. The whole system of stoical ethics, which carried self-sacrifice to a point that has scarcely been equalled, and exercised an influence which has rarely been surpassed, was evolved without any assistance from the doctrine of a future life." §

The Pagan philosophers taught that death is "a law not a punishment"; while Christianity taught that death was introduced into the world as a punishment inflicted for the sin of Adam:—

> "The first taught that death was the end of suffering; they ridiculed as the extreme of folly the notion that physical evils could await those whose bodies had been reduced to ashes, and they dwelt with emphatic eloquence upon the approaching, and, as they believed, final extinction of superstitious terrors. The second taught that death to the vast majority of the human race is but the beginning of endless and excruciating tortures—tortures before which the most ghastly of terrestrial sufferings dwindle into insignificance—tortures which no courage could defy—which none but an immortal being could endure."‖

Lecky says:—

> "By the philosophers the ascription of anger and vengeance to the Deity, and the apprehension of future torture at His hands, were unanimously repudiated; by the priests the opposite opinion was deemed equally censurable."

And he further observes:—

> "The main object of the Pagan philosophers was to dispel the terrors the imagination had cast around death, and by destroying this last cause of fear to secure the liberty of man. The main object of the Catholic priests has been to make death in itself as revolting and appalling as possible, and by representing escape from its terrors as hopeless, except by complete subjection to their rule, to convert it into an instrument of government. By multiplying the dancing or warning skeletons, and other sepulchral images representing the loathsomeness of death without its repose; by substituting inhumation for incremation, and concentrating the imagination on the ghastliness of decay; above all, by peopling the unseen world with demon phantoms and with excruciating tortures, the Catholic Church succeeded in making death in itself unspeakably terrible, and in thus preparing men for the consolations it could offer." *

The same historian observes:—

> "The Catholic priests resolved to base their power upon the nerves; and as they long exercised an absolute control over education, literature, and art, they succeeded in completely reversing the teaching of ancient philosophy, and in making the terrors of death for centuries the nightmare of the imagination" (p. 211).

So omnipotent did the idea of death become, that the people of the Middle Ages actually began to represent life as a dance of death. Death was represented as a grisly skeleton, armed with a dart or a bow and arrow. In these gruesome illustrations of the dance of death, familiar to all students of those times, death leads his victims to an untimely grave; he plays the fiddle at weddings, he beats the drum for soldiers in battle, he bears the priest's bell when the priest carries the sacrament, he plays the flute for the dancers, he throws the dice for the gamblers. With bow and arrow he is seen hunting the hunter; with dart poised to strike he stands over the miser; he is seen standing beside the scholar, the sculptor, and the painter; he is shown in every conceivable phase of life, beside the baby in the cradle to the man in the decrepitude of old age. Holbein's "Dance of Death" is the best known to our generation. Holbein executed a series of woodcuts for this, which were published in book form, with explanatory verses, in 1538. It became the most famous work of his life, and appeared in many hundred editions in French, Latin, Italian, and German.† And Holbein, it should be recollected, was a Protestant.

Nothing illustrates more vividly the contrast between the Middle Ages—the Ages of Faith—and our own time than the difference in the treatment of death. There is a million-fold more reading matter issued to-day than during those ages; but there are no dances of death published now, except, maybe, a reproduction of some of the old ones as an antiquarian curiosity. The present generation are more intent upon making the best of this world; in striving for better conditions in this life than in concentrating their attention upon a mythical life to come. We are returning, after nearly two thousand years of madness, to the sane and healthy view of death held by the ancient Greeks and Romans.

Martin Luther himself remarked upon the different view taken of death by the ancients, before the advent of Christianity. He says:—

> "If it were a light and easy matter for a Christian to overcome death, if he knew it was not God's wrath; that quality makes death bitter to us. But a heathen dies securely; he neither sees nor feels that it is God's wrath, but thinks it is merely the end of nature. The epicurean says: 'Tis but to endure one evil hour." ‡

Lecky said that he knew nothing in the world sadder than this saying of Luther's on the matter.§

"Wait till you come to die." When the Freethinker hears these words, he knows that he is confronted by a survivor from the Dark Ages. That, in the speaker's mind, is a vision of the infidel stretched on a bed of sickness, thinking despairingly of the wrath to come, of the angry Judge, of the

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* Cited in Percy Gardner's *New Chapters in Greek History*, p. 325.

† Note to *Coleridge's Biographia*, cap. xxii.; cited by Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i., p. 210.

‡ Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i., p. 182.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 184.

‖ Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i., pp. 208-209.

* Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i., p. 210.

† Dr Paul Carus, *The Open Court* (January, 1898), p. 44.

‡ *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, p. 319. Hazlitt's translation, Bohn's edition.

§ Lecky, *History of Rationalism*, vol. i., p. 379; note.

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devils waiting to bear his soul to the infernal regions. This is what he learned from his grandmother, and does not doubt it, and he cannot understand that anyone else can have the temerity to dismiss these tales of devils and hells as so many old wives' fables, of no more reality than the tales in the *Arabian Nights*. He thinks that the sceptic is not sincere in his disbelief; that his unbelief is a pretence born of bravado, which, in the hour of death will desert him—hence his miserable end. As Colonel Ingersoll has well remarked:—

> "For many centuries the theologians have taught that an unbeliever—an infidel—one who spoke or wrote against their creed, could not meet death with composure; that in his last moment God would fill his conscience with the serpents of remorse. For a thousand years the clergy have manufactured the facts to fit this theory—this infamous conception of the deity of man and the justice of God." *

Mr. Bernard Shaw once remarked that most people believed in God, because they were afraid that if they did not he would strike them dead. The person who tells you to "Wait till you come to die" may be safely classed among this kind of believer.

(*To be continued.*) W. MANN.

Christianity and the Mailed Fist.

> "If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity."
> —JOHN STUART MILL.

CHRISTIAN apologists are never tired of boasting of the tolerance of the religion they profess. At the present moment, when a Freethinker is in prison because of his Freethought, it is well to attempt to dispel the gross ignorance everywhere displayed as to the persecution of "infidels" by their orthodox opponents. Curiously, although trials for blasphemy have been numerous, the comparatively enlightened nineteenth century holds the record for the number of blasphemy and free speech convictions, and the early years of the present century bid fair to rival the record of its predecessor. The reason is not far to seek. The working classes have woke to intellectual issues, and Church and State have united in an unholy alliance to strangle Freedom.

A hundred years ago Thomas Paine was dead, but his books were alive and were being circulated. This was one of the earliest efforts to rouse the workers with the Freethought evangel, and the Freethinkers suffered terribly for publishing that thunderous engine of revolt, the *Age of Reason*. There were critics of the Bible, it is true, before Paine's day, but they were mainly scholars, whose works were not easily understood by ordinary folk. Paine himself, a man of genius, had sprung from the people, and he spoke their tongue and made their thoughts articulate. But boldly as Paine might write, his books would never have been read at all but for the courage of the Freethinkers. Richard Carlile, the lion-hearted, endured over nine years' imprisonment. The clergy were aroused by so determined a resistance, and hesitated at nothing. They even attacked women, and Carlile's brave wife and sister were dragged to gaol for two years each. His shopmen divided among them about forty years' imprisonment. Think of it! One small circle of Freethinkers serving between them over fifty years in prison for the right of free speech.

The example of Paine was soon emulated. Haslam's *Letters to the Clergy* put the absurdities of Christianity in plain fashion before the people, and this was followed by Clarke's *Critical Life of Jesus*. Robert Cooper's *Holy Scriptures Analysed* was another powerful attack on Bibliolatry. Thoroughly alarmed, Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, voiced the terror with no uncertain sound in the House of Lords. Great excitement followed, and the State clergy and Dissenting ministers for the first time joined hands, and started many new prosecutions against the Freethinkers. John Cleave and Henry Hetherington were both prosecuted and sentenced. The Freethinkers were in a fighting mood, and they tested the law to see if it could reach high-class culprits. A prosecution was commenced against Moxon and other publishers for selling Shelley's *Queen Mab*, for which so many infidels had suffered. The ruse succeeded, and Freethought won a step forward.

The first distinctive Freethought periodical, the *Oracle of Reason*, edited by the brilliant and audacious Charles Southwell, was the next storm-centre. Before many issues had been published the editor was prosecuted, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. Holyoake, the second editor of the paper, was the next victim. For a blasphemous remark after a lecture he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Thomas Paterson, the third editor, shared the fate of his predecessors. His defence, published under the caustic title of *God versus Paterson*, was astounding in its audacity, and earned for its author the title of "Bulldog." Up in Scotland two Freethinkers, Robinson and Finlay, were sentenced for selling blasphemous works. Then a Freethought heroine, Matilda Roalfe, stepped into the breach, and was sentenced for selling the *Age of Reason*. Her sacrifice was not in vain, and the hydra of clericalism was forced to recoil by the sheer courage of the blasphemers.

There was rest for a few years; but in 1857 a poor Cornish well-sinker was sentenced to nearly two years' imprisonment for chalking blasphemous words on a parson's gate. Happily, this case attracted the attention of two Freethinkers of European reputation, Henry Thomas Buckle and John Stuart Mill, who stirred the intellectual world by denouncing such abominable persecution. The prosecuting counsel was John Duke Coleridge, afterwards Lord Chief Justice, and, by the irony of events, the judge in the memorable blasphemy trial of 1883. It was in that year that the *Freethinker* trials took place, when Mr. G. W. Foote was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and his two colleagues, Ramsey and Kemp, to nine and three months' respectively. Petitions for release were signed by almost everybody of intellectual eminence in England. An agitation was commenced against the Blasphemy Laws, which Judge Stephen well described as "ferocious," but which yet disgrace the Statute Book of a civilised country. The prosecution of 1883, indeed, elicited such widespread condemnation that for some years the law fell into abeyance; but during the past few years there has been a revival of persecution, directed against isolated and unimportant Freethinkers.

Imprisonment was by no means the only indignity imposed. Daniel Eaton, besides being prosecuted seven times, had the pillory inflicted and £2,500 worth of literature destroyed. The poet Shelley was deprived of the custody of his children, and a similar dishonor was inflicted on Mrs. Besant many years later. A large number of the prosecutions of the unstamped press were simply disguised blasphemy trials. The authorities covered the odiousness of their acts under cover of proceedings against unstamped papers or pamphlets. Bradlaugh had to win his seat at Northampton in the face of awful opposition, and only his alertness prevented his imprisonment for blasphemy. The late Marquis of Queensberry was deprived of his seat in the House of Lords on account of his infidelity. Last, but not least, thousands of pounds bequeathed for Freethought purposes in the past were devoted to other channels; but happily Mr. Foote has stopped this highway robbery. In addition, our leader, in his attempts to free us from our fetters, has been involved in constant lawsuits, personal abuse, and has been the victim of a concerted press boycott.

Never in the whole course of its contest with other religions or ideas has Christianity turned its lying face to be smitten. Not once in the realities of its evolution has it manifested even "goodwill to men"

* *Oration on Voltaire*, p. 23.

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opposed to its own creed. In the past, the Church of Christ bribed the weak and murdered the strong among her opponents. In the twentieth century she is buying apostates all over the non-Christian world by means of medical missionaries, and in England venting her spleen on unfortunate stragglers and camp followers of the army of Freethought. O Religion of Love! How many crimes have been committed in thy name.

MIMNERMUS.

The "Blasphemy" Case.

SOME years ago there was a swarm of prosecutions for what may be called "blaspheming" the German Emperor. They were worked down so fine at last that even good monarchists were obliged to lift their eyebrows. One worthy citizen had to do time for suggesting that a musical composition of William's, of which he was very proud just then, was not quite equal to Beethoven; another was imprisoned for suggesting that the Emperor's personal beauty was a shade less than Apollo's; and another suffered for the opinion that the Emperor's sermons on board his yacht were not equal to Luther's. Nobody knew where this deification of William was going to end. It threatened to go beyond the "Me and God" of the versified satire. So the good sense of the nation cried "Halt!" And the *lèse-majesté* business has been worked more temperately ever since.

Now just as *lèse-majesté* may be called "blaspheming" a sovereign, so may "blasphemy" be called *lèse-majesté* against God. No particular God, but any God that happens to rule the roost at a certain time and place. In England, of course, the matter is rather complicated. There seems to be a syndicate of deities in this country. You have to deal respectfully and tenderly with God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and even God the Devil, who is quite a respectable character now, and plays the part of leader of the opposition, standing towards the Trinity very much as Mr. Bonar Law stands towards Mr. Asquith. There is also a female Deity worshiped by the Catholics, who stands closely related to the Trinity and in a certain way with their friendly adversary.

You are to deal tenderly and respectfully with these personages, not for their own sake, but for the sake of their worshipers. These people have exquisitely sensitive feelings. You would not think so if you judged by their own language in religious controversy. You have to take their word for it. If you hesitate to do so they are able to provide you with much stronger reasons than logic and sense could supply. They have the argument of prosecution and imprisonment at their command. You had better admit that their feelings are of the very highest sensibility. Contradiction gives them shocking pain. Opposition drives them mad with agony. Even the slightest sign of dissent throws them into a fever.

We understand that Stewart is not a very persuasive speaker, but we cannot ascertain that he said anything worse than the half-dozen sentences we quoted some weeks ago. Lord Coleridge must have been playing to the gallery in declaring that he could conceive of nothing "more coarse, vulgar, or more distasteful." He also showed that there is nothing in heredity to secure that a wise and tolerant father shall have a wise and tolerant son.

It was on this basis that Thomas William Stewart (we will drop the ridiculous "Nikola") was tried for "blasphemy" at the Stafford Assizes, found guilty, and sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Had he spoken of Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism, Anarchism, or any other "ism" of that kind, he would have committed no crime. His offence was speaking of Christianity in a way that Christians dislike. Just as if any Freethinker had ever been able to speak of Christianity in a way that Christians liked.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London has been explaining the action of the ecclesiastics concerning metropolitan amusements. "We do not even attack mere vulgarity. All we attack is indecency and suggestiveness." Dr. Ingram should apply the same treatment to his own Book—first of all. And if "vulgarity" is not attacked in London why is it made the ground of a Blasphemy prosecution at Wolverhampton and the Stafford Assizes?

The Bishop of London says that God made the world, and it is a beautiful world. Man himself is the author of all the evil in the world. All the Bishop has to do now is to tell us who made man?

The following lovely cutting is from a leading article in the *Daily Chronicle* on "The Balkan Tangle":—

> "It is reported that Servia and Montenegro have agreed on their new frontier in the Sandjak of Novibazar, but similar reports have before proved premature. Of the misery in the conquered regions, especially those under Servian sway, there is unhappily much evidence. Albania and Bulgaria both swarm with refugees. The Albanians come mostly from the Diakova district, where the notorious Servian regicide, General Popovitch, is in command, and bring terrible tales of extermination and village-burning, men, women, and children perishing without respect to age or sex. Against the Macedonian Bulgars Servia has enacted what is probably the harshest coercion Act of modern times. Under it any Servian district police officer may proclaim any resident in his district guilty of treason. There is no trial; the officer merely pronounces sentence; the maximum is death, the minimum five years' imprisonment. If a proclaimed man absconds, he becomes at once liable to the maximum penalty, and if anybody harbors him, they share his guilt."

We prefer to add nothing. The cutting tells its own story.

James Murray Bett, in the London Bankruptcy Court, pleaded that his failure was due to the "Act of God," as most of his assets were destroyed by a hurricane. His argument was not refuted, but his discharge was suspended for two years—which is scarcely fair.

Should a Woman Tell? is the title of the Rev. A. J. Waldron's playlet. It is a question in which the clergy are developing a serious interest, if we may judge by the recent newspaper reports of clerical misdoings.

We were unable to attend the lecture by Georg Brandes on Nietzsche. We therefore turned to the next morning's newspapers for what we hoped would be a good report. We found the longest in the *Daily Chronicle*. But it was not a report of the lecture, to which only a few lines were devoted. It was mainly a report of the remarks of the chairman, Mr. G. B. Shaw, who introduced the lecturer with one speech and buried him under another. It was a great pity that Shaw acted in this grotesque way. To be always talking, and generally about yourself, is sometimes not an entertainment but an affliction to your audience; especially when it is not your audience at all but another man's. Unfortunately, it is a besetting sin of too many chairmen to mistake themselves for the lecturer. But a man of Mr. Shaw's sagacity ought to have seen that all he was required to do was to welcome M. Brandes, and to keep order if necessary.

It may be, of course, that the *Chronicle* made Mr. Shaw's offence worse than it was. He was not responsible for the unmannerly brevity of the report of M. Brandes' lecture. He is responsible, however, for playing up to the policy of certain newspapers to report clowning rather than philosophy—what is merely amusing instead of what instructs and elevates. And he pays the penalty of this—for many people have long ceased to take him seriously, which is, in its way, a misfortune. At the Essex Hall meeting in favor of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, in March last, there were men on the platform who had fought hard for many years for that object, whereas it was about the first meeting of that kind which Mr. Shaw had ever attended. Some of those men represented important sections of the "advanced" community. But they and their object were nothing. The newspaper men were instructed to "report Shaw." Which they did. And the result was that the public were practically informed that the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws was necessary in order that Mr. Shaw might write a play on Mohammed. It was not known, or not remembered, that Voltaire had written a play on that subject, that it had been translated into

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English, and put upon the stage in London. The courage required to write another play on Mohammed in the twentieth century, instead of the eighteenth, does not seem quite supernatural. The Blasphemy Laws, at least, are hardly a sufficient deterrent. It is to be hoped, therefore, that Mr. Shaw may yet pluck up courage for the great attempt.

An article in the *Christian World* for December 4 bears the title "Old Testament Medicine," and one would naturally expect that it would deal with the medical knowledge displayed in the Bible. Not a bit of it, however. The article describes the knowledge of drugs and maladies possessed by the ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. All students are aware that these peoples had a very considerable body of solid knowledge at their disposal, and although in no case had they quite freed themselves from the primitive animistic theory of disease, still many of the things were known to them that the modern world has rediscovered within recent times. The peculiarity of the *Christian World* article, however, is that, having pointed out how much the ancient peoples knew about drugs and disease, it quietly assumes that this was "Old Testament Medicine." This is, of course, wide of the truth. Old Testament "medicine" represents a much lower level of culture than that enjoyed by the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians, just as the civilisation of the Biblical Jews was upon a much lower level. In the Bible the cure for disease is almost invariably of a supernatural kind, and disease is nearly always supernaturally cured. Recent discoveries concerning the civilisations of remote antiquity only prove that in dealing with the early Biblical Jews we are dealing with a people only a degree removed from savagery.

The *Christian World* writer also refers to "the medical world of the New Testament, which owed its success to the advances of the Greek practitioners." This is a quite gratuitous piece of "bluff." There is not the slightest trace in the New Testament of any influence of Greek medical science. Comparing Galen or Hippocrates with the New Testament theory of diseases is exactly on a level with comparing our own medical science with African fetish worship. Faith and prayer are the stock-in-trade of the New Testament healer. Disease is caused by demons and cured by religious incantation. If there is one thing clear to demonstration, it is that in the sphere of disease and its treatment the New Testament represents a reversion from a fairly advanced state of knowledge to a condition of primitive savagery. And, more than anything else, the New Testament was responsible for the eclipse of ancient medical learning and long sway of curing disease by prayer, by relics, and by the casting out of demons. These things are so obvious and so easily demonstrated that one would have thought Christians would at least have had the sense to be silent on the subject. But pious impudence seems without bounds, and pious credulity to be without limits.

"I heard a clergyman tell a rather good story the other day. Two spiders met in a church. 'Hullo,' said one to the other, 'I hope you've got comfortable quarters?' 'No,' was the reply; 'I haven't. I'm in the churchwarden's pew, and he's always jumping up and bobbing in and out and disturbing me.' 'Oh,' said the spider who had made the inquiry, 'I'm much better off. I've been here three months and I haven't been disturbed once. I'm in the Poor Box.'" *Referee.*

Clerical jobs go begging in Shakespeare's county. Canon F. R. Evans, rector of Bedworth, Warwickshire, has advertised six weeks for a curate without getting a single answer. All we can suggest is raising the salary.

What humbug there is in English religion,—which is supposed, we understand, to be a species of Christianity. God is said to be no respecter of persons. That is the pious theory, but it is very different in practice. A deputation to the Dean of Exeter persuaded him to add the name of a very well-known "person" to one of the set prayers in the Church service. "God" was asked to pity "all those who are any way afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate" —and "especially Emiline Pankhurst." Why especially to her? Would her name have been introduced to the Almighty in that fashion if she had been a distressed washerwoman? The explanation of the Dean's action is to be found in the thousands of pounds subscribed to the Pankhurst organisation on Sunday evening. It is not the lower orders who can give two subscriptions of £1,000 each on one evening—to say nothing of five hundreds, two hundreds, and one hundreds. Evidently all you want to command the clergy is plenty of cash. They'll arrange with God for all you want for a sufficient consideration.

More floods in Texas. Many persons have perished through the rising of the Brazos River. No doubt their relatives are bursting to cry "Three cheers for Providence!"

Dr. C. E. Jefferson has a lengthy article in the *Constructive Quarterly* on "The Church and World Brotherhood." He says that the two principal problems before the world are "How to federate the nations, and how to federate the Churches." We quite agree in the importance of the first, but the second is neither important, desirable, nor possible. It is not important, because the doctrines of the Churches play a steadily decreasing part in the life of the world. It is not desirable, because, were it possible, it would mean the creation of a power operating with the single regard to the welfare of its own organisation. A federation of Churches would mean, for aggressive purposes, the recreation of a universal Catholic Church, and what that meant the history of Europe tells plainly enough. The welfare of the world has been negatively dependent upon the fact that a universal Church did not exist except in name. And, on a smaller area, the welfare of that country has been most assured where the divisions among Churches have been the most numerous. Where the Churches can unite, the result is disaster. Fortunately, such a union is not possible. The doctrines of the Churches are too discordant, and their aims too conflicting. And if they drop the doctrines, forgo their aims, and unite in preaching the doctrine of "social service," they are helping to strengthen the very cause that is largely responsible for the contempt in which they are now held.

Dr. Jefferson does, in fact, fall back upon this last line. He says, "It is a striking fact that men will work together long before they are willing to worship together." This is quite true, as we have often pointed out, and its truth arises from the fact that while social life is an essentially unifying force, religion is a naturally disruptive one. Place a number of men together in any kind of social life, and sooner or later they will establish some sort of a working agreement. They will learn to maximise their agreements and minimise their disagreements. Put a number of men together in a religious relationship and the reverse will happen. Differences, slight at first, will gradually assume mountainous proportions. The whole history of religion is a history of disunion. Religion begins everywhere in agreement and ends in disagreement. It is only the compelling force of social life that secures the measure of agreement that actually exists.

Dr. Jefferson sees this—in a way—in the sentence above quoted, but he adds, "The modern emphasis on social service is a mighty forwarder of Christian union," and his advice to the Churches is to utilise this in their own interests. The advice was not needed. The Churches have always done this, and are doing it still. The exploitation of the social side of human nature in the interests of supernaturalism is one of the most important facts in European history, even in human history. But why should this phase of human nature be utilised to advance the welfare of the Churches? Social effort is an end in itself—or, at least, it is directed towards its own specific object. To use this in order to advance the welfare of the Churches is to divert it from its proper purpose, to stunt the development of social life, and to foster the growth of vested interests and unscientific beliefs. If the Churches have anything vital in them they should be able to live without attaching themselves, parasite-like, to something outside themselves. If they cannot do this, the sensible course is to sweep them out of the road.

In the Berlin districts covered by the (State) Church Synod there are sixty-eight State churches, with accommodation for 86,000 persons. A church census was taken on a recent Sunday, and it was found that 11,252 were present. A great many reasons are given for this abstention of so large a number of people, but none of them hit the mark. Comparing these figures with those supplied by the church census taken in various parts of England, they are not very dissimilar, and so general a result argues an equally general cause. And when all other reasons have been examined, only one remains of any value—that is, the general decline of religious belief all over the civilised world. People cease to attend church because they are ceasing to believe in Christianity. That is the only theory that covers the facts. And against this decay of belief the Churches, singly or collectively, are powerless. It is possible for a powerful organisation to fight and crush an individual; but against the slow, but steady, development of the race the most powerful organisation is ultimately powerless.

A wonderful old man is Mr. Moses, a retired barrister, of Slough, who sings in public at the age of eighty-four. A

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still more wonderful man was the Mr. Moses mentioned in the Bible, who wrote an account of his own funeral.

Mr. A. G. Hales has written to the *Daily Sketch* suggesting that music-hall artistes should hold an inquiry into the morals of the clergy, in view of the large number of cases in which vicars and curates have been before the courts. He adds, "I consider it much safer to send my children to a music-hall than to church."

The Dean of Durham has been condemning the miserable rule of compulsory celibacy which still binds so many Christian priests. Alas! so many "sons of God" give the glad eye to the daughters of men.

Dr. Marie C. Stopes, who has been appointed Professor of Palæobotany at London University, says that until she studied, it had never dawned upon her that Noah's Ark only contained animals and that the plants would have been destroyed. The realisation that science leads to questioning the truth of the Christian superstition accounts for the undying hostility of the clergy against ordered knowledge. "There is no darkness but ignorance."

"Our knowledge merely helps us to die a more painful death than the animals that know nothing," says M. Maurice Maeterlinck. Priestly lies have turned death into the King of Terrors for believers.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope get their copies of *Old Moore's Almanac*, they will suffer from "cold feet," as our American friends express it, for the prophet forecasts "religious scandals" for 1914 on a larger scale than usual. These distinguished ecclesiastics ought to be used to such troubles by this time.

The Tango dance has found a eulogistic patron in the Rev. Thomas Hannan, rector of St. Peter's Episcopal church, Musselburgh, near Edinburgh. It was danced at a concert in aid of the church funds. The reverend gentleman said it was graceful and dignified. King David's performance takes a back seat.

Mr. Lloyd George's notions of "religious equality" are strictly limited to Christians. Paradise exists as long as no Christian denomination has any advantage over any other Christian denomination. This kind of equality is not extended to Freethinkers. Whether they are in prison or out of it does not trouble Mr. Lloyd George in the slightest degree. This is shown clearly enough in his letter to the Liberal candidate at the Wick by-election. Nonconformists and Episcopalians are all he recognises as having any practical interest in what is rather facetiously called "toleration." He is comparatively a young man yet, though, and he may live to find that he will have to say "Yes" or "No" to the Freethinkers' demand for "religious equality" as against the Christian sects who monopolise it at present.

Mrs. Florence L. Barclay, the authoress of several sentimental novels, including *The Broken Halo*, contributed a column headed "Scripture and Life" to Monday's *Daily Chronicle*. We never read greater trash on the subject, but we dare say it was highly relished by the bulk of the lady's readers. She indulged in one of the cheapest tricks of Christian controversy; a trick that requires no brains, but only a large supply of impudence. It consists in quoting Christian testimony to the matchless beauty and benign influence of the Bible. Even this is done with the maximum of unfairness by Mrs. Barclay. The use she makes of Ruskin shows inexcusable ignorance or reckless untruthfulness. She entirely misrepresents what Ruskin really says about his mother's making him read the Bible with her when he was a child. It was not reading the Bible as the Bible, but reading it closely and carefully under his mother's keen supervision, that gave Ruskin (as he says) his chief skill in the weight and value of words.

Mrs. Barclay appears to think that Abraham Lincoln and George Eliot were Christians. It is a pity that her education on these matters has been so sadly neglected. She makes a great deal of Sir Walter Scott's calling for the Bible to read on his death-bed. She might also have mentioned if she knew it—that Tennyson did *not* call for the Bible. He called for Shakespeare. And he died with his finger in the pages of "Cymbeline." Moreover that volume was placed in his coffin and buried with him in Westminster Abbey. We don't recollect hearing of any explosion in consequence.

Two or three weeks ago it was announced that Lord Headley had been converted to Mohammedanism. It is now stated that several other people of note have followed his example. It is very much like the case of the man who gave up the errors of the Church of Rome in order to embrace those of the Church of England, but if Mohammedans were to carry on a really active propaganda in England we see no reason why they should not gain converts. In Africa, Mohammedanism can beat Christianity easily, and there are plenty of people in this country on the look out for a new religious sensation.

Bishop Gailor says the negro needs something "that will make religion and morality identical." The *New York World* suggests that if the negro ever finds it he should pass it along to the whites.

Rev. Haurnett Mason, of 6 Brookside, Cambridge, left £18,880. He might be forgiven, on the ground that he had been for fifty years Hebrew Lecturer at St. John's College.

We take the following from the *Daily Mirror* (Dec. 5):—

> "Mr. George Lansbury, who is off to America, is, unlike many of his Socialist colleagues, a devout High Churchman. Formerly a Freethinker, he attended, some years ago, a mission service in the East End which was conducted by the Rev. Basil W. Maturin. Before he left the mission he was converted."

We should like to see a few more details of that sudden conversion; although, it must be admitted it is a good deal like Mr. Lansbury. We should also like to hear from anyone who ever knew Mr. Lansbury when he was a Freethinker as alleged. Not that we dispute the allegation. Oh dear no! But we are fond of certitude in these matters—which the Christians never are. Anything that pleases them satisfies them. They are so plentifully supplied with "the will to believe."

More "Providence." Canon Ross-Lewin, vicar of Benfieldside, after addressing a missionary meeting at Consett, Durham, dropped dead upon the platform. We are told that not a sparrow falls without God's permission. Is it the same with clergymen?

We wonder how many of our readers could say straight off if the word *India* occurs in the Bible, and if so, whether they could quote chapter and verse where it is mentioned. To save them time in solving the problem, we annex the passage:—

> "Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus [this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over one hundred and seven and twenty provinces] that in those days....." (Esther i. 1).

A similar passage occurs in Esther viii. 9. Crudeu, with the delightful vagueness dear to ignorance, describes India as "A considerable country in the East." Shakespeare did better than that: "Her bed is India, there she lies a pearl."

Some of our special "saints" hardly realise the power and privileges their position carries with it; so, for their benefit, the scriptural authority for it is annexed:—

> "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the *saints*? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that ye shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor. v. 1-3).

Thus spake the Apostle Paul, and our "saints" should ever bear in mind the responsibilities attaching to their high office, for shall not even the angels stand up before them for judgment?

Sir Charles H. Hawtrey cites Moses against the clergy in the Church and Theatre controversy:—"Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi."

The Jews were taught to honor their fathers and mothers. Jesus Christ, being a Jew himself, improved on that. He taught that no man could be his disciple who did not hate his father and mother. On this basis we must hold that Evan Roberts is a very good Christian. He refuses to see his parents. He tells them plainly, "Your own sins have separated you from me." When he condescends to particulars it appears that their "sin" consists in "unbelief" in him. He has the impudence to call unbelief "persecution." He calls himself "a man of God" and he dogmatises—like all the rest of them. One has only to look at his portrait to see that his chief disease is personal vanity.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, December 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London, W.; at 7.30, "Shaw Among the Prophets."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £261 14s. 1d. Received since:—W. P. Adamson, £1 1s.; J. de B. and Wife (S. Africa), £10; T. W. Wickes, 5s.; "Starshine," 10s.; J. Pendlebury, £1.

DISGUSTED (Newcastle).—You or anybody can answer the question as well as we can. Many of the clergy are more orthodox in the pulpit than they are outside it.

E. B.—Much obliged for the budget.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

J. DE B. (S. Africa) sends a generous subscription for himself and wife for the President's Honorarium Fund. They have increased the amount this year on account of the insufficient response to the appeal for this Fund, which, however, has progressed rather more rapidly during the last few weeks. "We were much concerned," our correspondents write, "to hear of Mr. Foote's illness, but hope that he has quite recovered." They add "best wishes for the *Freethinker*."

G. E. FRANCIS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

L. GENTLE.—We had seen it. Thanks all the same. We wanted a longer report of Lord Coleridge's speech.

W. GREGORY.—We don't feel sure of the point. All we can say is that we are sorry the two dates clashed, but ours had long been announced, and a little respect to the Queen's Hall meetings might not have been out of place.

T. M. MAILEY.—Mr. Cohen's book on Determinism deserves all your praises. We agree with most of what you say about the other.

J. JORTRAN.—You can't expect military and clerical men at Conservative meetings to take an interest in the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, or any other kind of justice to Freethinkers. We should also like to see some propaganda at Oxford.

J. PENDLEBURY.—Thanks for letter as well as cheque.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.—Miss Vance, general secretary, acknowledges: M. Morris, 10s. 6d.

SOME correspondence stands over unavoidably till next week.

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

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

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

There was a capital audience at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening, including a goodly number of ladies, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*" was followed with the keenest attention and greatly applauded. Mr. A. B. Moss was, of course, an excellent chairman. Several questions were asked and answered, and the meeting then dispersed with every mark of satisfaction.

"Shaw Among the Prophets" is the title of Mr. Foote's second (and, for the present, last) lecture at Queen's Hall this evening (Dec. 14). The Shaw is our only Shaw, the great "G. B. S.," who declared himself a "mystic" at the Bradlaugh Dinner and a believer in some sort of a God. Mr. Shaw's religious developments during the past eight or nine years are amusing as well as instructive—as we think the audience will find; and a good many people, besides avowed Freethinkers, should be interested in what Mr. Foote has to say upon the subject.

Arley Lane, of the *Birmingham Weekly Mercury*, devotes two columns to Mr. Cohen's recent lecture at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, on "The Challenge of Unbelief." He complains of the paucity of ladies in the audience, but he says that they always prefer emotion to intellect—which, if not altogether true, may account for some of them practising arson as a policy of social progress. Arley Lane hints, of course, that if Mr. Cohen wants to fill the King's Hall with ladies he will have to take a leaf from the book of Jim Larkin, Gipsy Smith, or Evan Roberts. Which is very likely true, only Mr. Cohen isn't likely to take the "tip." The size of his audience is not the sole consideration in his propaganda. With regard to the opposition after Mr. Cohen's lecture, Arley Lane remarks that the man who undertook the job was not fit for it. "To deal adequately," he says, "with trained and educated speakers of Mr. Cohen's ability, specially trained Christian workers are needed." Of course they are. But one is obliged to smile at Arley Lane's suggestion that the Bishop of Birmingham should raise "an army of able volunteers." Birmingham isn't Belfast.

We don't want to be mistaken. In the reference to the size of Mr. Cohen's audience we don't mean that it was a small one. We have already reported that it was a large one.

We hope our readers keep an eye on the *English Review*. It is one of the very best of the monthlies, and its energies are not overlaid with any cowardly worship of the respectabilities—which is so common in latter-day English literature. The December number only lacks one thing: an article on something very special and specially well written, standing out above the crowd. Mr. John Masefield opens with a poem called "The River," which, in our opinion, contains more vigor than poetry. One thinks of what Crabbe might have made of such a theme. Mr. Wells starts a new prophetic sketch of "The World Set Free," depicting a state of society that is going to be highly interesting if we ever reach it; but who knows whether it will be any happier than what we are used to? Mr. Frank Harris contributes a powerful short story called "The Yellow Ticket," dealing with some strange aspects of Russian life. Mr. L. March Phillips writes agreeably and ably on "Modern Thought and the Renaissance." There is food for thought in Mr. Holbrook Jackson's "The Creation of Taste"—in spite of his endorsement of the hackneyed praise of the Bible as literature. The other contents include a good article by Mr. E. S. Haynes on "The Taboos of the British Museum Library"—a subject which really demands attention. The editor's monthly notes are on "Albert Hall Revolutions." He does not consider them dangerous. His comments on them are vividly written.

Mr. Foote will probably contribute again to the *English Review* in the new year. He received a flattering invitation to do so after his Meredith article in the March number. But he found, after all, that it would be more prudent to act on medical advice for the rest of the year by going more slowly, doing only what had to be done, and letting the rest slide. The year is now nearly out, and Mr. Foote's pen, at least, will be wielded more actively when the Christmas holidays are over.

Raymond A. Coulson's article in the *Sunday Chronicle* will do good, inasmuch as it will set many readers of that journal thinking. But why does he deal with Atheism without trying to understand it? He fancies that the Atheist is a person who "sets up another dogma" in place of the dogmas of Theism or Christianity. Probably he has heard that Atheism says "there is no God." He is mistaken. We advise him to study the subject a little further.

The *Westminster Gazette* is responsible for the following paragraph on the latest "blasphemy" case:—

> "The recent imprisonment of a man in Staffordshire for breaking the Blasphemy Laws has raised once again the whole question of whether at this time of day these laws ought to be allowed to remain on the Statute-book. As a fact there are a good many Acts still on the Statute-book which are by this time obsolete or out of date. It does not always follow that they should be repealed without anything being put in their place, but in this matter of the Blasphemy Laws we certainly support any movement which aims at making it impossible to punish a man for his opinions. That he should remain under an obligation to express his opinions in such a way as not to lead to disorder is reasonable enough. We hope that the Government will look into the matter, and in this matter of the Blasphemy Laws, as a start at any rate, set to work to make the Statute-book more consonant with present day ideas."

We are afraid that our contemporary doesn't see that the mere retention of the word "blasphemy"—which is inseparably connected with *religion*—would make the alteration of the law it suggests impossible. Persecution still remains while it is only Freethinkers who are prosecutable and punishable for using "undesirable" language in religious discussion.

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Austrian Bigotry at Prague.

AT the recent International Freethought Congress at Lisbon the choice was made of Prague as the seat of the next International Congress, which is fixed for the autumn of 1915. The Bohemian Freethinkers have for a long time been actively preparing the ground for this important event by an intensive cultivation of Freethought, and during the last few weeks the Clericalist Government at Vienna took alarm and wreaked cowardly revenge upon the organisers of the phenomenally successful movement of Freethought which has its seat at Prague. As this outbreak synchronises with the incarceration of a blasphemer in free England for speaking disrespectfully of "the Deity," and with the race hatred against the Jews in Russia, it may be taken as symptomatic of a general wave of reaction which, in France as in Spain, in Italy as in the Balkans, is visibly threatening the cardinal principles of civic progress and intellectual liberty throughout the world. In these matters the Freethinkers of one country cannot afford to isolate themselves within a ring fence of selfish indifference to the problems of propaganda and persecution affecting their fellow-workers and intellectual congeners in other lands. The hand that throttles the Freethinkers at Prague represents the same constrictive force of bigotry which murdered Hypatia and Bruno and Ferrer, and which only sentences Stewart to hard labor because the thumbscrew is unknown to modern English legislation.

On November 18 of this year all the journals at Prague connected with the Czech Freethought movement were seized by the police. The offices of the various Rationalist societies were closed and placed under official seals. The property of the two Freethought societies—the "Demosthenes" Society and the "Krematorium" Society—has also been confiscated. Veritable ghouls for the glory of God, the police have not even deigned to spare the funeral urns in which were deposited the ashes of the deceased members of the Cremation Society! In addition, the fortune of the editors of the Czech Rationalist societies has been sequestrated. As my friend Dr. Otto Karmin* very properly remarks, this arbitrary act of bigotry and theft is the answer of the clericals to the progress made by the Rationalist movement in Bohemia, and, particularly, to the legacy of 100,000 crowns which a Czech citizen of Vienna, M. Lustig, bequeathed to the Austrian Freethought societies. The gentle reader who may be curious to know more about the character and achievements of the Freethought movement in Bohemia, which is now the victim of these abominable outrages, is referred to my article in the *Freethinker* of January 7, 1912.

The police authorities in Prague have been careful to seize the lists of the members composing the German and Czech Freethought societies in Bohemia. Their object is quite obvious—to harass the members by vexatious prosecutions and to tear up the organisations by fines, imprisonment, and the wholesale terrorisation or ruin of the university professors, schoolmasters, and public functionaries of all kinds connected with the movement.

This prosecution is the third outbreak of the kind to which the cause in Bohemia has been subjected. Some rather full details of the two earlier prosecutions were given in my above-mentioned *Freethinker* article. In 1909, the Augustus Smetana Society—a philosophic society founded by a Catholic priest who left the Church—having been dissolved on the pretext that in protesting against the murder of Ferrer it had entered upon the domain of politics, a new society was formed bearing the title of "The Political Freethought Club." In May, 1911, the Minister of the Interior having interdicted the formation of this group, the high tribunal of the Empire declared that this interdict constituted a violation of the right of association as recognised by the Constitution. The bigots have accordingly renewed the charge, with all the forces of law, religion, and order at their disposal, for the purpose of crushing out of existence all liberty of thought and speech in that anachronistic Papal fief, the clericalist Austrian Empire. An international protest is being organised at Brussels against these high-handed proceedings, and it is hoped that all Freethought or Rationalist societies in England and America will send their protests to our dear friend Eugène Hins at Brussels, and will follow the example of Geneva, which, under the able leadership of Dr. Karmin, has issued its protest in the name of the French, German, and Italian-speaking Freethought societies in Switzerland.

Prague has already received in its hospitality an International Freethought Congress—that of 1907, where Ferrer's presence did so much to awaken an intense enthusiasm for Rationalism in the Bohemian people. In 1915 the Czech nation will celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of John Huss, and the Czech Freethinkers are anxious that the Freethinkers of every country will assemble that year at Prague, in order that the celebration of the memory of the martyr of Constance may signalise a new stage in the renaissance of the national and intellectual life of the Czech people. If in other countries Freethought springs from the conflict on the one side between the Roman Catholic Church and its rival religions, and on the other side between religion and the spirit of liberty and science, in Bohemia Czech Freethought, besides these resources of inspiration, has others which are racy of its heroic soil, on which the blood of martyrs innumerable has been spilt in the name of God and his Christ. Freethought amongst the Czechs springs directly from the national traditions and from the history of the Czech people in the course of her long and ensanguined conflict with the all-devouring aggressions of Rome. The philosophic consecration of the memory of John Huss is to be found in the vindication and triumph of the Freethought principles of Rationalism.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

* *La Libre Pensee internationale* (Lausanne), November 29, 1913.

Milton's Plea for Liberty.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 769.*)

LAUD being settled, and the Star Chamber itself abolished, the English press burst into the most exuberant freedom. The licensers were disregarded, the Stationers' Company treated with disdain, and illicit publishers openly put their imprint on works that stooped to no tribunal but the public. Among these were Milton's two *Tractates on Divorce*, which roused the ire of the Westminster Assembly, who named him in a batch of eleven "sectaries and heretics." On August 13, 1644, Mr. Herbert Palmer, preaching to the two Houses of Parliament, denounced Milton's second *Tractate* as "a wicked book abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt." Following this, the Stationers' Company, egged on by the Presbyterian divines, petitioned the House of Commons to put a stop to such flagrant violations of the law, and of their trade privileges, as were involved in the wholesale circulation of unlicensed books. Milton was particularly mentioned as a peccant author. The House referred the matter to the Committee of Printing, and they judiciously let Milton alone.

The Committee of Printing were, in fact, a new censorship. This novel licensing board was appointed by Parliament in June, 1643, to "prevent and suppress the license of printing"; in other words, to prevent the diffusion of Royalist tracts and journals. The Ordinance declared that no—

> "Book, Pamphlet, Paper, nor part of any such Book, Pamphlet, or Paper, shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched, or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unless the same be first approved

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of and licensed under the hand of such person or persons as both or either of the said Houses shall appoint for the licensing of the same, and entered in the Register Book of the Company of Stationers according to ancient custom."

The Wardens of that Company, and certain officers of Parliament, were ordered to ferret out contraband literature, and to bring the writers, printers, publishers, and dispersers before either of the Houses or the Committee of Examinations. Justices of the Peace, Captains, and Constables were to assist in this laudable work, to apprehend offenders, and, in cases of opposition, to break open doors and locks.

Within a week after the passing of this Ordinance the licensers were appointed. Divinity, being a burning question, was thought to need the service of twelve examiners. Seven of them, if not eight, were members of the Westminster Assembly, and all the rest were parish ministers in or near London. These were good securities for orthodoxy, and Milton had excellent reason for thinking that "New presbyter is but old priest writ large." Miscellaneous literature was handed over to three other licensers; law-books to certain Judges and the Serjeants-at-Law; mathematical books, almanacks, and prognostications to a Reader of Gresham College, or a certain Mr. Booker, who was perhaps thought to be skilled in the black art; and "small pamphlets, portraitures, pictures, and the like" to the Clerk of the Stationers' Company.

These licensers went to work, and the result was that, while only 85 books were registered in the first half of 1643, no less than 333 were registered in the second half. Yet the new law was defied by several publishers, and among them Milton's. After the petition of the Stationers' Company in 1644, both Houses of Parliament assisted in strengthening the law, but prosecutions were stayed by Cromwell's great Toleration motion which passed the Commons on September 18, and "caused a sudden pause among the Presbyterian zealots," being, indeed, "a demand generally for clearer air and breathing-room for everybody, more of English freedom and less of Scottish inquisitorship." The Scotch were, in fact, carrying their "guid conceit o' theirsels" too far. They joined England in the revolt against their Stuart king, but fancied they could bind England afresh in their Presbyterian chains. Eventually, they saw their mistake, but it was not until Oliver Cromwell had frightfully pounded them at Preston, Dunbar, and Worcester.

Milton's natural bent was "beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies," but he loved liberty sincerely, and knew that she and truth were inseparable twins. For this reason he had avoided the Church, for which his parents destined him, perceiving that "he who would take orders must subscribe slave," and preferring "a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." For this reason also he had joined in the controversial fray, forsaking poetry for the "cool element of prose," and undertaking tasks wherein, as he himself says, he had the use but of his "left hand." And now for the same reason Milton forged on the strong anvil of his mind a new thunderbolt of freedom. Utterly repellent to his broad spirit was the notion of handing all the wits and thinkers in England over to the tutelage of a body of orthodox gentlemen, who were empowered to stifle the offspring of laborious brains, and to act as mental abortionists. On November 24, 1644, appeared his *Areopagitica*, "A Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England." The book bore the name of no printer or publisher; in defiance of old laws and new, it was unregistered and unlicensed. The title-page bore four lines from Milton's favorite "Euripides," which he rendered into English as follows:—

> "This is true Liberty, when free-born men
> Having to advise the public may speak free,
> Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise,
> Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace;
> What can be juster in a state than this?"

It was a fashion of that time to give Greek names to books. Milton's title was borrowed from an oration of Isocrates, addressed to the Areopagus of Athens.

Professor Masson says he has "sometimes been angry" at the public choice of the *Areopagitica* as the one of Milton's pamphlets "by which to recollect him as an English prose-writer." Yet, if a choice must be made, how could there be a better? It is, as Professor Masson allows, "the most skilful of all Milton's prose-writings, the most equable and sustained, the easiest to be read straight through at once, the fittest to leave one glowing sensation of the power of the author's genius." Certainly it is the *Areopagitica* which most fully justifies Macaulay's eulogy of Milton's prose-writings. "As compositions," he says, "they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery."

Milton opens with a handsomely turned compliment to the Parliament. Allowing that the Commonwealth ought to have a vigilant eye on books—of which more anon—he recommends wariness, for "as good almost kill a man as kill a good book." True, no age can restore a life, yet "revolutions of ages do not often recover the loss of a rejected truth." Readers of Mill's *Essay on Liberty* may remember how he elaborates this striking truth.

Next, an appeal is made to history. Licensing was unknown to the ancients, and even Constantine and his successors only condemned books to be burnt after they were "examined, refuted, and condemned in the general councils'" According to Milton, this discipline was not more severe than what was formerly in practice; but the voice of history is against him on this point. When he rushes on to the policy of the Popes he reaches firmer ground. The Papacy and the Inquisition were safer objects of attack than the early Church, and Milton baits them mercilessly, laughing at their "purgatory of an index," and mocking their last invention of ordaining that no book should be printed "unless it were approved and licensed under the hands of two or three glutttonous friars." This is followed by a specimen of their *imprimatur*. "Sometimes," says Milton in a rollicking vein, "five imprimaturs are seen together, dialogue wise, in the piazza of one title-page, complimenting and ducking to each other with their shaven reverences, whether the author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his epistle, shall to the press or to the sponge."

Knowing his audience, and having a personal inclination that way, Milton quotes from Scripture, dwelling especially on Paul's "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," and "To the pure all things are pure." Knowledge cannot defile unless the will and conscience are defiled already. Besides, good and evil grow up inseparably in the field of this world. Virtue consists in seeing and knowing, and yet abstaining. Ignorance is not innocence. "I cannot praise," he exclaims, "a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

Milton then proceeds to examine the alleged mischiefs of free printing and free reading. If the spread of infection be feared, the censorship will have to be very drastic; the Bible itself will have to be removed, "for that ofttimes relates blasphemy not nicely, it describes the carnal sense of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against Providence through all the arguments of Epicurus"; and for these causes the Bible was put by the Papists in the first rank of prohibited books. Besides, if the English press be gagged, objectionable foreign books will creep in, and these will be read by the learned, who will distil their poison for the illiterate. Learned men must

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therefore be most closely fenced round, and to do this the licensers must assume "the grace of infallibility." This capital point has also been enforced by Mill. Further, such restraint will lead to "the fall of learning and of all ability in disputation." This is obviously unjust. Why should one man wear a strait waistcoat because another is mad? "If it be true," says Milton, "that a wise man, like a good refiner, can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book, yea, or without a book; there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool that which, being restrained, will be no hindrance to his folly."

Why also, Milton asks, should we stop at books? All our surroundings influence us, and to be consistent the State must meddle everywhere

> "If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song must be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gestures, motion or deportment be taught our youth, but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of. It will task more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers?"

And so on for a couple of pages. "Reason is but choosing," Milton finely says, and you cannot remove more than a fraction of life's temptations by the most rigid censorship. Besides, virtue consists in motive, and depriving men of all opportunity of evil would not rob them of their evil inclinations. "Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure," says Milton, "he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness."

As for the "preventing of schism," Milton reminds the Parliament that Christianity itself was once a schism, and the licenser who is "to sit upon the birth or death of books" needs more than human wisdom never to suppress the truth in his prevention of error. Ten to one he will stifle all novelties, and every truth is a novelty at first. "The hide-bound humor which he calls his judgment" will let him pass nothing but "what is vulgarly received already." For this reason Sir Francis Bacon said that "such authorised books are but the language of the times." Licensing treats learned men like children; it is a burden on "the hapless race of men whose misfortune it is to have understanding," and it is also "an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole nation."

Milton beautifully says that truth is like a streaming fountain; "if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition." A man may be a heretic in the truth. How many Protestants, who rely upon their pastors, show as much "implicit faith as any lay papist of Loretto":—

> "A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbors in that. What does he, therefore, but resolves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual movable, and goes and comes near him according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and, after the malmsey or some well-spiced bruage, and better breakfasted than He whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion."

This capital passage is one of the few in which Milton displays a sense of humor. The climax is especially shrewd.

Milton has another gird at the Presbyterian divines, and twits them with being blinded by the blaze of Calvin's beacon. "The light which we have gained," he says, "was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge." He protests against "the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds," and warns the new tyrants that it is necessary to reform even the reformation itself. After a noble apostrophe to London, then the vital centre of the new freedom, he argues that differences are a good sign of health and vigor, and utters the fine aphorism that "opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making." He is dull-witted who groans over "parties and partitions." "Fool!" exclaims Milton, "he sees not the firm root out of which we all grow, though into branches." England is not decaying, but casting off the old skin of corruption:—

> "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unsealing her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."

This magnificent passage is one of the ultimate glories of our literature. Surely the man who wrote it deserves a niche in the sanctuary of every English heart.

The rest of the *Areopagitica* is a direct and noble appeal to the Parliament to abolish the licensing system, to let books enjoy the same freedom as men, to give them liberty, and punish them only when they have sinned. "Liberty is the nurse of all great wits," says Milton. "Give me," he exclaims, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Aye, and "though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter?"

Unfortunately, Milton himself halted in sight of the goal; he hesitated to run the whole course, and fight the good fight to the end. At the very outset he seems to approve the Grecian laws for the suppression of "atheistical and blasphemous" books, and at the conclusion he will not hear of tolerating "popery and open superstition," still less what is "impious" and "against faith." He only pleaded for charity and peace among dissentient Protestants. Great as was his genius, noble as was his nature, he could not absolutely free himself from the prejudices of his age. He showed that the horizon of the very loftiest is bounded. Yet in pleading for such liberty as he thought desirable he was obliged to maintain principles that overshot the mark he aimed at. The full meaning of a great idea cannot be perceived at once. Milton saw deeper than most of his contemporaries, though his vision was still limited; he felt more than they of the spirit of liberty, though it did not animate his whole nature. Sufficient unto the day was the service he performed. Other ages brought other tasks. The time came when other hands hurled the thunderbolts he forged at other barriers to freedom than those he assailed, when his own lightnings were darted to every point of the compass; for at last Liberty, like Wisdom, is justified of *all* her children.

G. W. FOOTE.

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Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

VII.—JAMES WATSON.

THE subject of my present sketch was one of those quiet, unassuming, unobtrusive workers whose services to the good old cause are too little known, but, where known, should be highly appreciated. Born of poor parents in an obscure town, Malton, in Yorkshire, September 21, 1799, a taste for reading led him in a Freethought direction. Employed at Leeds, he became acquainted with such Radical works as Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, Cobbett's *Register*, and Carlile's *Republican*. When Carlile was imprisoned with his wife and sister for selling blasphemous publications, he appealed to lovers of free discussion to serve in the shop. Humphrey Boyle was the first volunteer from Leeds. He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. When sentenced, May 27, 1822, Boyle remarked: "I have a mind, my lord, that can bear such a sentence with fortitude." Of similar stuff was James Watson, the second volunteer from Leeds. He, too, was arrested in February, 1823, for selling Palmer's *Principles of Nature*. His trial took place on April 23. In his defence he endeavored to prove from the Bible that Palmer was justified in what he had written, but the judge told him he "might quote from the Bible, but not comment upon it." He was convicted and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in Coldbath Fields Prison, and to find bail for good behavior for two years. In prison Watson read Hume, Gibbon, and Mosheim, which he said "would have made me a Freethinker if I had not been one before." He afterwards conducted Richard Carlile's business until Carlile's liberation from Dorchester Gaol in November, 1825, and then became a compositor on Carlile's *Republican*. Attacked by cholera, he was nursed by Julian Hibbert, who employed him on his own projects, giving him his own type and presses, and at his death leaving him a legacy of £500. In the meantime Watson suffered another six months' imprisonment for selling Hetherington's unstamped *Poor Man's Guardian*. With the legacy from Hibbert, James Watson constituted himself a sort of society for promoting useful knowledge. He set up as bookseller and publisher, issued many Freethought works, such as D'Holbach's *System of Nature*, Volney's *Ruins of Empires*, Paine's *Age of Reason* and *Common Sense*, Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, Frances Wright's *Few Days in Athens* and her *Lectures*, R. D. Owen's discussions and pamphlets, Shelley's *Queen Mab* and *Masque of Anarchy*, Byron's *Cain* and *Vision of Judgment*, J. Clarke's *Letters to Adam Clarke*, Godwin's *Political Justice*, Lamennais' *Modern Slavery*, Evans Bell's *Task of To-day*, Powell's *Bible of Reason*, *Yahoo*, *Ecce Homo*, *Human Origin of Christianity*, Hume's *Miracles*, Diderot's *Thoughts on Religion*, Lawrence's *Lectures on Man*, Engledue's *Physiology*, Dr. T. Cooper's *Rights of Free Discussion*, T. Cooper's (the Chartist) *Purgatory of Suicides*, Southwell's *Impossibility of Atheism*, Holyoake's *Rationalism*, *Logic of Facts*, etc.

The list is a goodly one, though far from complete. It represents valuable works, tending in the direction of mental emancipation and of political and social reform; works tabooed by the privileged classes, and many of which they had sought to suppress. Let it be remembered, too, that the cheap publication of such works was the direct incentive to that rivalry of new cheap literature intended to counteract the supposed pernicious effect of the dissemination of "infidelity and sedition." I do not scruple to say that, by his publications, James Watson did more for the real education of the people than some vaunted societies and wealthy firms with all the influence of respectability at their backs. His publications, though cheap, were not of the "cheap and nasty" order. They were neat, well printed, and showed throughout a publisher who loved sound thought and sound work in every department. Mr. W. J. Linton, his friend for forty years, says:—

> "There was no mistaking an edition by J. Watson. To him life and all its circumstances were to be kept in wholesomeness, though means of beautifying might fail him. The pride of the poor man was his. His honesty should be clean skinned and pure, if his clothes were threadbare; his public appearance, as his home, ever dignified, made worthy of respect. Serving in his shop, he had pleasant and informing words for all who sought his wares; the character of this or that book about which you asked might be trusted to his judgment. His conversation, if you cared to make acquaintance with it, supplemented what he sold—what he had given, if apostles in his day had been able to print and live without death.....He was of the stuff of those old martyrs who smiled when they were flayed alive; who thrust their hands into fire to pluck out unharmed their more tender souls. For the respect in which his probity and his business qualities were held, his name as treasurer of subscriptions in aid of political sufferers may be voucher enough. He was one to whom you might have trusted untold gold; he could not have wronged you of the smallest coin."

Mr. Linton gives a pleasant instance of how principle was more than profit with Watson. In '38 Linton projected a cheap library, for the people, of extracts from works beyond the purchasing reach of working men. Watson laid before him the difficulties, and, finding him resolute, offered him (a nameless stranger) his books and services. When the account was made up he found there was no charge for folding and stitching. Watson had been sure the book could not pay, and he and his wife had folded and stitched every copy to save Linton so much expense.

By judicious investments in works of solid value, James Watson served the cause in perhaps the most effective way in which it can be served—by the spread of its literature. He did this more for the sake of propaganda than for profit, but by economy he was able to retire when between fifty and sixty. On January 23 1854 a public tribute was paid to him at the Literary Institution, John-street, Fitzroy-square, at which Mr. W. D. Saull presided, and Messrs. T. Cooper, R. Moore, W. J. Birch, R. Le Blond, and G. J. Holyoake testified to his great services to the Freethought cause. He lived at Norwood until November 29, 1874, and in Norwood Cemetery a plain granite obelisk bears the following inscription: "James Watson, 1874. Erected by a few friends as a token of regard for his integrity of character and his brave efforts to secure the right of free speech and a free and unstamped press." A Memoir, by his friend, W. J. Linton, to which I am indebted for most of these particulars, has a copy of Watson's photograph as frontispiece, and is a modest, yet not unworthy, memorial of a sterling though little-known Freethinker.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

Correspondence.

LIBERATION SOCIETY AND SECULAR EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been called to an article on "Nonconformist Cant" in your issue of November 28. Mr. Cohen says in the course of the article that "out of several hundred delegates only twenty-one supported the resolution"—*i.e.*, the resolution in favor of Secular Education which Mr. Halley Stewart submitted to the Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society. The fact, of course, is that *only twenty-one voted against* the resolution.

DAVID CAIRD, *Secretary*.
Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control.

Mr. Cohen writes:—"Unfortunately, I cannot now say on which paper's report I depended for the figures concerning the Secular Education vote at the Liberation Society's meeting. I see so many papers during the week, and, of course, do not preserve them all. It is, therefore, impossible for me to say definitely whether I misread the report or the report misled me; but as I am usually very careful in such matters, I cannot help thinking that it was the latter. Still, whatever the cause, the fact remains that my article converted a majority of twenty-one into a minority of twenty-one, and for that I must express sincere regret. It would have given me much greater pleasure to have chronicled a victory for Secular Education than to have recorded its defeat, and the Liberation Society is entitled to my apologies for having, quite innocently, misrepresented its proceedings."

"WAIT TILL YOU COME TO DIE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The article of Mr. Mann in this week's *Freethinker* reminds me of an incident in which I was involved a few years ago. Whilst cycling in the traffic, I was knocked under a pair of horses, and, being unable to free myself from the machine, I had to be dragged out. Probably I was not under the horses for long; but both horses were kicking out continuously, with the result that my machine was bent into all shapes by the horses' hoofs, and made useless. I was underneath all the time, expecting the next blow would be on my head, and I had no doubt whatever in my own mind that my "hour had almost come." Did I turn my thoughts to Jesus? No; I simply thought it was all over with me, and my only desire was to say Good-bye to my wife and children before I "passed away." Of course, it is very absurd to say that an Atheist cannot face death. Only a very ignorant Christian could be guilty of such a blunder.

Probably very few people have been so near death, and perhaps my experience will interest you, and also your readers, if you think it worth printing.

I may say that the cause of my "downfall" on this occasion was a clergyman (also cycling), who rode out of a side street on his wrong side, and cleared off without speaking to me. Peradventure he was praying for my life to be saved? I never thought of it in this light before! In any case, I should have appreciated a few kind words, or a cheque for the cost of a new machine much more.

L. W. WILLIS.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Shaw Among the Prophets."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. J. Darby, "The Present Attitude of Science towards Religion."

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

COUNTRY.

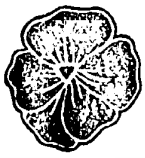
INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 12 noon, "Conscription"; 6.30, "Freethought at Home and Abroad."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Joseph A. E. Bates, "The Twilight of the Gods."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.



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THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

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There are in nature neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences.—INGERSOLL.

The Message of Christmas.

THE Rev. Dr. Orchard frankly admits that "we can be almost certain that December the 25th was not the birthday of Christ." "Early tradition," he adds, "is quite ambiguous. It is much more likely that the date was chosen because it would help to replace the Roman Saturnalia which was celebrated at that time." According to the reverend gentleman, it is immaterial on what day Jesus was born, "for his birth has made every day sacred to his name." We are called upon to celebrate his birth because he brought something new into the world, or because he himself *was* something new. But we deny that he either brought or was something new, and challenge Dr. Orchard to prove his statement. We are convinced that the Christian religion does not contain a single original idea, and that not one of the alleged facts upon which it is claimed to be founded can legitimately be regarded as unique. In his article on "The Christianising of Christmas" in the *Christian World* for December 4, Dr. Orchard says:—

> "It is indisputable that at the time of Christ the Roman Empire was flooded with myths which have resemblances to the story of Christ's life and death, and these resemblances, although they have been unwarrantably exaggerated, are in their general outlines sufficiently remarkable. These myths were not only floating about as stories, but were dramatised, and their presentation was made the chief object of certain mystery cults."

While making that admission, however, he ridicules the contention that Christianity had a mythical origin. He asserts that "it is certainly a curious example of literary criticism to suggest that the extraordinarily vital atmosphere of our Gospels can have had any such origin." But surely the reverend gentleman must be aware that the Christianity of the Pauline epistles is not to be found in the Gospels. The Pauline Christ is a radically different person from the Synoptic Jesus. In the Gospels baptism is not described as a sacrament, nor is the eucharist represented as mystic communion with a crucified and resuscitated Christ. Whatever his motive may have been, Paul made Christ exceedingly like Osiris and Mythra. Why was such a resemblance established by the Apostle to the Gentiles, rather than by James, a pillar of the Jerusalem Church?

Dr. Orchard imagines that Christianity conquered "a world deluged with myth and mysteries" simply because it was something greater than a myth. He asks derisively, "Did one myth eat up all the others miraculously, like Moses' serpent?" Certainly not; the triumph of the Christian myth over all the others was perfectly natural, and, in the circumstances, inevitable; but Dr. Orchard does not play the part of an impartial historian when he declares that with its conquest faith, hope, and love came to a great renaissance. As a matter of fact Christianity did not win Europe by merit, but by force; not by love, but by the sword. The Pagan myths were suppressed by law, not superseded by a nobler and more acceptable evangel; destroyed by the civil arm under Theodosius the Great, not outgrown by a truer and more virile faith. Dr. Orchard's account of it is false to history:—

> "Jesus brought what the myths had created a desire for, and answered the fevered yearnings that they expressed. It was this which laid the train for the new fire to run through the Empire, and, because a real life had come, wiped out all the mysteries."

The mysteries were wiped out not because a real life had come, but because the head of the Empire adopted the Christian myth and made it his business to stamp out all rival cults. Theodosius prohibited every portion of the Pagan worship, and razed to the ground all the Pagan temples.

In our day even the historicity of a merely human Jesus is either denied or doubted by many first-class scholars; while the belief in an incarnate Christ is quite impossible to the bulk of thinking people. Dr. Orchard maintains that a proper contemplation of Christmas will give us "the realisation that God has been revealed in all his glory within human personality, and on the plane of this mortal life." "Only this," he continues, "can make us sure that at the heart of things there is a Spirit of the same nature as Jesus, warm with our humanity, glorifying in having lived our life and tasted our death." Listen to this:—

> "The answer which Jesus brings to our longing for a friendship at once personal and infinite, the reality and certainty which he gives to ideals that are otherwise only torturing dreams of the impossible, the shock and challenge that crucifies the world for which we have lived, and which no imaginative biography could ever administer: this is what Christmas means in its Christian sense."

Then the meaning of Christmas in its Christian sense is a vain and mischievous delusion. There is no evidence whatever of the presence of a tender and loving Spirit at the heart of things, we do not naturally long for an infinite friendship, we can testify that high and beautiful ideals are not "torturing dreams of the impossible" apart from Christ, and it is an undeniable fact that there are thousands of men and women of the purest motives and cleanest lives who have never come within the sphere of Christian influence. They have a deep sense of the absolute nobility of motherhood, and of the absolute purity of everything connected with our entrance into life, as well of the glorious possibilities of the life we all live, though they have never heard of Dr. Orchard's great Revealer and infinite Friend. According to Dr. Orchard, Christians need to be driven "back to the supreme joys which are to be found in family life, and which gather round the cradle," and nothing can do that but a realisation of the revelation of God which Christmas embodies; but the supreme joys of home-life are experienced by the ordinary Chinaman, who says, "Every day is happy at home, every moment miserable abroad." It is the general feeling throughout China that there is no place like home. It is the emptiest cant to describe all the good things of life as gifts brought to us by Christ. They are possessed and enjoyed by all who cheerfully obey Nature's laws, and the intensity of their enjoyment is determined by temperament, not by belief or unbelief in Christ.

The world has hailed innumerable virgin-born Saviors. Has Dr. Orchard forgotten the Inscription

from Halicarnassus in which the praises of Augustus are so sweetly sung? It is worth giving in full:—

> "When the eternal and immortal Power which generated the world had added to all other abundant blessings the greatest good by granting to men, to our real good fortune, Cæsar Augustus, the father of his native town the divine Rome, the indigenous Jupiter, and at the same time the Savior of the whole human race, for the sake of which Providence, paying regard to the prayers of all, has not only fulfilled but also surpassed them; for peace prevails on earth and sea; the cities flourish; law and harmony and peaceableness are found; there is a fine abundance of all good things; men are filled with the best hopes for the future, and joyful courage for the present: therefore should [the birthday of Augustus be celebrated] with games and contests, with sacrifices and songs."

Augustus never became the Savior of the whole human race, any more than anybody else; but under him Rome became pre-eminently powerful and prosperous, and enjoyed many years of perfect peace. While he lived the Gospel Jesus was an agitator. His advent did not secure peace on earth and goodwill toward men. After a short period of popularity he became a thorn in his country's side; and the hatred against him grew into such a passion that in his thirty-second year he was put to death as an enemy of his nation. Ere long the belief arose that he was still alive, and his disciples began to declare that he was the Savior of his people Israel. Then Paul came along and proclaimed him the Savior of the world, the only one who could deliver mankind from all the evils through which they suffered; and now every Christmas Day his advent as such is celebrated in mawkish hymns and carols. But he is no more the Savior of the world than was Cæsar Augustus. The Savior of the world is non-existent. The Christian message of Christmas, therefore, has not a word of truth in it, and a lying message cannot possibly be morally elevating.

That being so, we firmly hold that the Saturnalia, which Christmas was intended to replace, was a much wholesomer festival, being originally, no doubt, in celebration of the winter solstice. At Christmas winter receives notice to quit, and all life experiences a potential renewal. It was the turn of the year that people hailed during the Saturnalia, which lasted nearly a week. They gave themselves up to joy and merriment. All schools were closed; no war could be declared or battle fought. Distinctions of rank vanished, masters and slaves sat at the same table, the latter being waited upon by the former. There was a universal exchange of gifts, and all classes mingled freely, the word having gone forth that all men were brothers. The beauty of that ancient festival is gone, and with it the visible tokens of universal brotherhood. To us, however, the twenty-fifth of December comes, not as a Christian festival, but as the day on which we merrily welcome the renewed promise of life.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Failure of Faith.

IT is really not a difficult thing to find out what Atheism is. Nor does it require a superhuman degree of intelligence to understand it. Half an hour's careful study of anything written by a representative Atheist would enable any person of normal education and brains to know precisely what is the Atheistic position. He might not agree with it when he does understand it. He would be quite within his rights in calling it stupid, or inconclusive, or to assert that it was less satisfactory than the position of the Theist. All these things are matters of opinion, and in such respects each individual must decide for himself. But what Atheism is, is hardly more a matter of opinion that what natural selection is, or what is meant by radio-active matter. It is primarily a question of fact; and every writer owes it to himself, to his readers, and to those whom he criticises, to set himself right in this direction—even if it delays his writing.

Mr. Raymond Coulson's article in a recent issue of the *Sunday Chronicle* on "The Failure of the Churches," is a case in point. It is all the more regrettable because, in the course of his article, Mr. Coulson has a good many things to say to the Churches that are well worth the saying. He points out how critical the position of the Churches is, and that their vitality to-day consists almost entirely in making themselves centres of social activity. They are, he says, "little more than politico-ethical organisations, and they are all wobbly at the edges," while their efforts "to Bowdlerise science and misinterpret the Bible in order to make the two things fit, demonstrate nothing but the extremely parlous state of modern theology."

There are many other good things in Mr. Coulson's article, but his remarks about Atheism might have been made by the most commonplace pulpiteer, and his view of the function of reason in relation to religion is highly fallacious. To take the case of Atheism first. Probably as an apologetic foil to his attack on the Churches, Mr. Coulson posits a dogmatic Atheism in opposition to a dogmatic Christianity, and so succeeds in demonstrating that one is as bad as the other. We no longer, he says:—

> "Talk about the 'dark-souled Atheist,' with a capital A. We do not regard him as a sort of intellectual Lucifer, a fallen angel of the mind. We recognise him, on the contrary, as a conscientious but rather stupid person. Having denied one dogma it seems merely silly to take the trouble to set up another on no better evidence."

There is an air of superiority about this passage that might be annoying if it were not so common. The "blindness" and the "folly" of Atheism have been very often in the mouths of religious people, and as they have naturally done most of the talking, they have succeeded in infecting the rest of the world with the notion that there really is a degree of stupidity associated with the Atheistic position. But I can assure Mr. Coulson—as one whose business in life it is to understand Atheism—that Atheism does not purpose merely putting one dogma in the place of another. What is a dogma? Mr. Coulson seems to be under the impression that a dogma is something that has nothing whatever to do with reason. This is quite a vulgar fallacy. A dogma, as Newman pointed out, is no more than a proposition. It is not reached independently of reason, it is reached by reasoning, whether the reasoning be sound or unsound. The notion—to use another of Newman's terms—only becomes a dogma when we decline to reason further concerning it, and declare that other people must accept it on our authority. That is the way in which all religious dogmas have taken shape. First a proposition established upon what was believed to be a rational basis, and then its creation as a dogma by forbidding people to rationally examine it.

This point is worth bearing in mind, in view of what Mr. Coulson has to say of the functions of reason and religion. For the moment I only wish to point out that there are no dogmas associated with Atheism, and cannot be, for the simple reason that the very kernel of the Atheistic position is a reasoned attack on Theistic beliefs. The Theist comes forward with a belief in God which he declares to be either superior to or independent of reason, or which he forbids us to critically examine. The Atheist declines to be warned off examination, he denies that it is either superior to or independent of reason, and he demonstrates—to his own satisfaction, at least—that the existence of the God posited in unproved and inconceivable. Now, you may say that the Atheist has or has not made his case good. But you cannot, in common sense or justice, say that he desires to merely replace one dogma with another. To make such a statement passes, usually, without comment, only because it falls in with the unthinking humor of the crowd.

Having said this, I can now turn to Mr. Coulson's conception of the part played by reason in relation to religion. "The conflict of religion and science," he

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says, "began as a misunderstanding, and is ending as a farce." Ending as a farce, yes; because nothing could be more absurd than the antics of those who are trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. But the conflict did not begin as a misunderstanding; were if so, it might have been brought to an end long ago. The conflict began, and is rooted, in two fundamentally opposed modes of thinking. The religious conception is, in itself, quite as truly due to a process of reasoning as is any later scientific conception. The fault in it is due to the fact that it blunders as to the nature of the forces at work. It conceives natural phenomena as due to the action of beings similar in nature to man himself. On the other hand, pure science commences just so soon as the conception is formed of a force operating that is determinable and knowable, and quite insensible to human cajolery and blind to human hopes and fears. The conflict does not begin in misunderstanding; it begins because the two conceptions are radically opposed, and it is perpetuated simply because religion cannot grant all that science assumes without signing its own death-warrant, just as science cannot admit what religion claims without surrendering its character as science. The struggle is fiercest precisely when each side has the clearest comprehension of all that it stands for.

"Pure human reason," says Mr. Coulson, "can never by any possibility produce a theory to explain the reason." It is very difficult to say just what pure reason can or cannot do, but I am quite certain of this—if human reason cannot do it nothing else can. How does Mr. Coulson imagine that even a religious theory appeals to man except through his reason? Evidently he thinks that religion is concerned with the emotions only. This is not true; but even then you can't, so long as you indulge in any form of teaching, appeal to emotion except through reason. Purely sensuous surroundings, such as one might meet in a play of color or perfume or sound, might appeal direct to the emotions; but exhortations to do or to abstain, the presentation of God as a creator or a governor or a parent, must be an appeal to reason primarily. If Mr. Coulson will ponder the first half-dozen chapters of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, he will discover what an unreasonable position he has taken up on this question.

Mr. Coulson is quite correct when he says that if you do not accept the religious theory you cannot be argued into it, and also that "when religion condescends to reason she steps down from her impregnable fortress into a field where she must inevitably go down." I should query "impregnable," but otherwise I agree with him. But this is not because religion is in "its essence independent of all processes of human reason," but really because the reasons it adduces no longer appeal to an educated mind. When, for instance, a preacher gives a recovery from sickness as a reason for believing in prayer, he is arguing in a way that makes no appeal to one who has even a moderate acquaintance with modern scientific thought. Religious reasoning did once appeal very powerfully to people, and does so still when it can strike a sufficiently primitive type of mind. It fails more easily now, and bids fair to fail still more decisively in the future, because the general mental environment has undergone a profound alteration. It is for this reason that, as Mr. Coulson says, argument rarely converts a man. This is because the moment you set him reasoning—and you necessarily do this so soon as you start arguing—you bring into operation the power of the mental environment in which he lives. You set the better knowledge of the present at work upon the imperfect knowledge of the past. And inevitably the later knowledge—given time—triumphs.

The difficulty before the Churches is not at all due to their endeavoring to reason. They have always reasoned, and always will reason. Their difficulty centres in the fact that their reasoning rests on premises that no longer appeal to people with any force. They can no longer use the argument of a future life with any effect. If they utilise hell, they disgust; if they utilise heaven, they weary. They cannot reason upon a basis of miracle; a diffused scientific knowledge causes people to laugh at such primitive arguments. It is no use claiming a supernatural origin for the Bible; the world is aware of many other writings with a similar claim, and the blunders of each are fairly well known. In desperation, the Churches resort to a "social preaching"; convert themselves into "Institutional Churches" in which the claims of religion are based on a billiard-room or a smoking concert, or a free-and-easy musical evening. And this only makes matters worse; for it means the encouragement of a way of looking at life that has already robbed the Churches of best part of their congregations.

The choice before the Churches is plain: either a quick dispatch or a lingering death. To oppose wholeheartedly the non-religious spirit of the time means the former; to compromise with it, to meet it half way, means the latter. It might set itself in stern opposition to modern thought and die with honor. It prefers to compromise and live a little longer, even though it dies finally covered with contempt.

The whole of the failure of the Churches is due to the fact that people have ceased to believe. Every other reason advanced is no more than an excuse. Fundamentally it is not the Atheist, or the Agnostic, or the Secularist that religion is fighting; it is civilisation that is attacking it. Human life begins under the dominance of religious beliefs. Religion shapes to a very considerable degree the beginnings of all human institutions. All human culture, once we emerge from the very primitive type, becomes consequently a fight against the tremendous influence of religion. The fight is of necessity a long one, but time is on the side of civilisation. It is often said that the Catholic Church is the only dangerous Church, because it can afford to wait. That is true. It can wait longer than any *individual*. But there is one thing that can wait longer even than the Catholic Church. The race can outlast the Church, and against the slow but ceaseless movement of human development the gods themselves are ultimately powerless.

C. COHEN.

Anatole France.

M. ANATOLE FRANCE, the foremost figure in European literature, was entertained royally in his seventieth year at the Savoy Hotel recently by a representative gathering of English writers. The act conferred credit upon all present, for they were paying their respects to one of the greatest masters of literature, and a very eminent Freethinker.

Of all the notable Continental writers, M. Anatole France is the most Voltairian, for he carries on the same splendid tradition. As he so wittily expressed himself at the banquet, he is a symbol, as the citizen Momoro represented the Goddess of Reason at the festivals of the French Revolution. The word Voltairian means also something of tone and character, something of an alert but indulgent regard, a delicacy of touch, a subtle irony which immediately suggests the very ideal of the French intellect:—

> "Ravishing as red wine in woman's form,
> A splendid Maenad, she of the delirious laugh,
> Her body twisted flames with the smoke cap crowned."

Seventy years of age by the book, M. Anatole France has built up a splendid reputation, not only as a writer but also as a humanitarian. A convinced Freethinker, it was only natural that he should take up the brilliant sword of his wit by the side of the Atheist, Zola, in the terrible days of the Dreyfus struggle, when the heroic Zola championed truth and justice in the supreme hour of danger. It was an example of magnificent courage. Honest to their own injury, brave against the enmity of tens of thousands, these Freethinkers raised the world's opinion of human nature.

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M. France's literary forefathers are Rabelais, Swift, and Voltaire, three of the most virile names in literature. Yet he is no copyist, but strikingly original, modern, and Parisian. The thing he has in common with these great men is his whole-hearted hatred of injustice and his power over language. Although a master of the lash, he uses his whip caressingly. He does not cut his subject to ribbons like Swift; nor, like Voltaire, overflow with an adroit and subtle humor which stings like a thousand wasps. Rather is he like Rabelais, who shifts satire into the realm of imaginative comedy, and pities while he smiles.

Rabelais was so much more tolerant than Swift, who, writing in the shadow of the Christian superstition, found all the world a dunghill and man the most loathsome thing that squatted upon it. But Rabelais, out in the open, with all the winds of the renaissance blowing upon him, was more than a mere satirist. Under the motley of the buffoon beat as generous and as kindly a heart as ever throbbed in the service of humanity. M. France possesses no small share of the tolerant humor of Rabelais, and at a distance of several centuries carries on the same intellectual tradition.

Although M. France has written quite a number of books, his works have a uniform excellence, and it is difficult to pick out any representative masterpieces. He has written no *Candide*, no *Les Miserables*, those seminal masterpieces which represent the sum total of their authors' genius. Like his illustrious countryman, Montaigne, he is not to be judged by a single essay. And, like Montaigne, he is a philosopher in disguise. He has used the novel as a medium of expression, personal and intellectual. In those charming pages of *La Vie Litteraire* he has smilingly told us that he is not speaking pontifically, but only talking of himself; sending his mind adventuring among the masterpieces. Similarly in his novels, he is always as personal and as intimate as Charles Lamb. In his *Isle of the Penguins* he puts modern society under the microscope, and in *The Gods Athirst* he unfolds himself on the subject of the French Revolution. Yet this genial satirist can, in another mood, give us delightful glimpses of his own childhood. *My Friend's Book* is as tender, delightful, and trifling as heart could desire, and in that perfect chapter, "The Hermitage of the Jardin des Plantes," he describes Pierre Noziere's childish passion towards saintship with inimitable grace and irony:—

> "My sole idea was to live the life of an ascetic.....In order to lose no time in putting my ideas in operation, I refused to eat my breakfast. My mother, who knew nothing of my new vocation, thought I was ill, and looked at me with an anxiety that it pained me to behold. Nevertheless, I persevered with my fasting, and then, remembering the example of Saint Simeon Stylites, who spent his life on a pillar, I climbed up on to the kitchen cistern, but it was impossible to live there, for Julie, our cook, promptly dislodged me. Though I had thus been ousted from the cistern, I pursued with undiminished ardor the way of perfection, and next decided to imitate Saint Nicholas of Patras, who gave all his riches to the poor. My father's study window looked out on to the quay, and from it I proceeded to fling down a dozen coppers or so which had been presented to me because they were new and bright. These I followed up with marbles, humming-tops, whip-top, and eelskin whip.
>
> "'The child is crazy,' exclaimed my father, as he shut the window.
>
> "I felt angry and mortified at hearing this judgment passed upon me, but I remembered that my father, not being a saint like myself, would not share with me in the glories of the blessed, a reflection from which I derived great consolation."

No one but a Frenchman could have written this passage, and of this delicate and delightful stuff is woven the golden fabric of his genius. So original, so modern, is this great author who, among other names, has been called the pope of Freethought.

To this most distinguished of living Continental writers we owe much of the present proud position of Freethought—for scepticism is nothing if not intellectual. In the far-off days, Francois Rabelais caught a glimpse of the dawn of liberty, and largely through his magnificent genius it has now permeated all classes of society. M. Anatole France stands for the liberation of the intellect no less than Rabelais. He is like his illustrious predecessor, first and last a Freethinker, and has the same abiding faith in the triumph of what our own George Meredith calls "the best of causes."

MIMNERMUS.

"Wait Till You Come to Die."—III.

(Continued from p. 789.)

> "He [Voltaire at 84] was an intellectual monarch—one who had built his own throne and woven the purple of his power. He was a man of genius. The Catholic God had allowed him the appearance of success. His last years were filled with the intoxication of flattery—of almost worship. He stood at the summit of his age. The priests became anxious. They began to fear that God would forget, in a multiplicity of business, to make a terrible example of Voltaire. Towards the last of May, 1778, it was whispered in Paris that Voltaire was dying. Upon the fences of expectation gathered the unclean birds of superstition, impatiently waiting for their prey."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *Oration on Voltaire*, p. 26.

> "I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils."—FRANCIS BACON, *Essays* (Bohn's Edition), p. 159.

> "Lord Playfair asked every doctor he met, for nearly twenty years, if he ever knew a patient afraid to die; and except in two cases the answer was 'No.'"—*Daily Express* (June 2, 1900).

> "Let us never forget that it was Christianity which turned the death-bed into a 'bed of agonies,' and that, by the scenes which since then have been enacted thereon, and the terrible sounds which here, for the first time, appeared possible, the senses and the blood of posterity were poisoned for a lifetime."—NIETZSCHE, *The Dawn of Day*.

RELIGIOUS people think that the last moments of a dying person are the most momentous in all the years of life. This is an entirely artificial sentiment, due to the idea that the last moments on earth are the prelude to an eternal life—either of joy or pain—elsewhere. That this is true may be observed by the difference with which they regard the last moments of a faithful dog, or other animal, not furnished with an immortal soul.

This belief in the enormous value attached to the last words of the dying has been responsible for the fabrication of those pious lies about infidel death-beds. It has also been responsible for the production of a still larger number of pious death-beds, where the dying see the heavens opened, hear angel voices, and so on. Doubtless, in the state of physical and mental weakness to which the dying are reduced, and after they have been properly "prepared" by the priest and coached by pious friends, some hysterical Christians have seen what they have been told others have seen in like circumstances.

The power of suggestion over the human mind is now recognised by all psychologists as enormous; and no doubt the followers of other religions, such as Mohammedanism, also occasionally see such things, but in such cases *they only see what they have been taught to believe they ought to see.*

Dr. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, of New York, says:—

> "During the past thirty years I have seen many die, and many who thought themselves to be dying who afterwards recovered, but I have no ground to suppose any of the visions supernatural, nor have I seen any indication of the development of a faculty of cognising another world."

Mr. Buckley says devout and consistent Christians sometimes die in great agony of spirit, while total unbelievers pass calmly away, their minds unruffled by apprehension or remorse. The fact, as stated, is that "when the dying appear to see anything, it is in harmony with the traditions they have received." Thus, dying Catholics may have visions of the Virgin Mary, because they have been trained to supplicate her, and have had her image before them in the church; but she never appears to Protestants who have not been trained in their youth as

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Catholics, and "Where wicked persons see fiends and evil spirits, they harmonise with the descriptions which have been given in their sermons, poems, and supernatural narrations with which they have been familiar."*

But a very large discount must be made from these death-bed tales, which, if not altogether false, are highly embellished. Medical testimony is altogether against them. Dr. Cyrus Edson, writing on the subject, says:—

> "Nothing is more common than to hear from the pulpit pictures in words of excitement, of alarm, of terror, of the death-beds of those who have not lived religious lives, yet, as a rule, if these pictures are supposed to be those of the unfortunates at the moment of death, they are utterly false. In point of fact, ninety-nine of every hundred beings are unconscious for several hours before death comes to them; all the majesty of intellect, the tender beauty of thought or sympathy or charity, the very love for those for whom love has filled all waking thoughts, disappear. As a little baby just born into the world is but a little animal, so the sage, the philosopher, the hero, or the statesman, he whose thoughts or deeds have writ themselves large in the history of the world, become but dying animals at the last. A merciful unconsciousness sets in as the mysterious force we call life slowly takes leave of its last citadel, the heart, and what is has become what was. This is death."†

A greater authority than Dr. Edson gives a similar testimony. Sir William Osler, the Oxford Professor of Medicine, gives the result of his experience during a long life devoted to the practice of medicine. He says:—

> "The popular belief that however careless a man may be while in health, at least on the 'low, dark verge of life,' he is appalled at the prospect of leaving these warm precincts to go he knows not where—this popular belief is erroneous. As a rule, man dies as he has lived, uninfluenced practically by the thought of a future life. Bunyan could not understand the quiet, easy death of Mr. Badman, and took it as an incontestable sign of his damnation. The ideal death of Cornelius, so beautifully described by Erasmus, is rarely seen. In our modern life the educated man dies usually as did Mr. Denner in Margaret Deland's story (*John Ward, Preacher*), wondering, but uncertain, generally unconscious and unconcerned. I have careful records of about five hundred death-beds, studied particularly with reference to the modes of death and the sensations of the dying. The latter alone concerns us here. Ninety suffered bodily pain or distress of one sort or another, eleven showed mental apprehension, two positive terror, one expressed spiritual exaltation, one bitter remorse. The great majority gave no sign one way or the other; like their birth, their death was a sleep and a forgetting. The Preacher was right; in this matter man hath no pre-eminence over the beast—'as the one dieth so dieth the other' (Ecclesiastes iii. 19)."‡

Out of five hundred deaths, only two showed terror and one spiritual exaltation! Both, probably, due to religion. Under the light thrown upon the subject by these statistics, these tales of infidel, and pious, death-beds begin to wilt. They are seen to be the pious fictions which they are; at any rate, the infidel variety, which is now almost exclusively confined to the death-beds of Voltaire and Thomas Paine, which we will, for that reason, shortly examine.

The common fable as to Voltaire's death, runs, that the doctor found Voltaire in great agony, exclaiming, "I am abandoned by God and man," and offering him half his wealth for six months of life; the doctor answering, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks"; and Voltaire replying, "Then I shall go to hell and you will go with me!" and soon after expired. Another account pretends that Voltaire died raving, and that Marshal Richelieu was horrified by the scene and obliged to leave the chamber; as if it were possible for an old man of nearly 84, at the point of death, to die raving!

Carlyle, the historian, in his *Essays*, and Parton, in his monumental *Life of Voltaire*, are agreed as to the facts regarding Voltaire's death. Parton says:—

> "Belle-et-Bonne, who never left his bedside during these last days, said to Lady Morgan in Paris, forty years afterwards, as she did to everyone with whom she ever conversed on the subject, 'To his last moment everything he said and did breathed the benevolence and goodness of his character; all announced in him tranquillity, peace, resignation, except a little movement of ill-humor which he showed to the curé [parson] of Saint-Sulpice, when he begged him to withdraw, and said, "Let me die in peace."'
>
> "He lingered until late in the evening. Ten minutes before he breathed his last, he roused from his slumber, took the hand of his valet, pressed it, and said to him, 'Adieu, my dear Morand; I am dying.' These were his last words. He died peacefully and without pain, at a quarter past eleven, on Saturday evening, May 30, 1778, aged eighty-three years, six months, and nine days. This last incident Wagnière reports upon the authority of Morand, who was watching with his master that night."*

Such was the calm and serene end of the man whom Lord Morley speaks of as "the very eye of modern illumination."

The testimony of the domestics of the household in immediate attendance on Voltaire is clinched by the testimony of Dr. Burard, who attended Voltaire through the whole course of his illness, and who says: "I feel happy in being able, while paying homage to truth, to destroy the effects of the lying stories which have been told respecting the last moments of Mons. de Voltaire." He declares that Voltaire "retained his faculties up to the last moment, and the fooleries which have been attributed to him are deserving of the greatest contempt." The tale attributed to Marshal Richelieu, he says, "is as unfounded as the rest."

Further details may be found in Mr. G. W. Foote's valuable *Infidel Death-Beds*, where Dr. Burard's signed testimony may be found.

The ignorance of the purveyors of these malicious stories is well illustrated in an incident recorded at a lecture given by Mr. Bradlaugh at Wigan in October, 1860: After a lecture, a reverend gentleman—Mr. Woodville Woodman, of Bolton—told the audience that the triumph of Atheism in the French Revolution had produced such disastrous results that Voltaire, when he returned to France after the Revolution was over, expressed his regret for what he had done!

Mr. Bradlaugh, in reply, said:—

> "This is, I suppose, another case of the resurrection of the dead! Our friend tells us what Voltaire said after the Revolution was over. Now, as Voltaire died ten years before the Revolution began, he has given us some information that is somewhat startling!"†

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Catholic and Protestant.

SPAIN is the victim of Christianity. Catholicism is Christianity to the evolutionist, and Spain is the typical Catholic country. Shut out by the solid barrier of the Pyrenees from free intercourse with the rest of Europe, and imbued with the belief that the greatest of all earthly objects is the maintenance of the Catholic religion, she has been a standing object-lesson in the blessings of Christianity when unchecked by other influences. To the Spaniard religion is not an amusement, or a social decoration, or an artificial aid to morality; to him it is a passion that inflames his whole nature, and makes all other things look comparatively trivial; all other things, that is, but the lust after ill-gotten wealth, which somehow or other has always been singularly compatible with the strongest faith and the most ardent devotion.

Protestants will of course deny that Roman Catholicism is Christianity. They have the real article themselves. But if there had been no Catho-

* Cited in the *Freethinker*, March 18, 1894.
† *North American Review*, August, 1893.
‡ Sir William Osler, *Science and Immortality* (1906), pp. 35-7.

* Parton, *Life of Voltaire*, vol. ii., pp. 610-11.
† The *National Reformer* (March 26, 1893), p. 205.

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licism there would have been no Protestantism. Historically, as Michelet observed, Protestantism is an estuary, and Catholicism as the main sea. It is from the Catholic Church that every Protestant sect derives its doctrines, and from the same Church that all Protestant sects derive their Bible. Christianity contains certain fundamental ideas, and it is these, and not selected texts from a large and self-contradictory Scripture, that the evolutionist and the historian have to deal with. These ideas, in the course of ages, found practical expression in certain institutions, and those institutions are all marshalled under the Catholic Church. Nor is Protestantism, as some Rationalists affirm, a better religion than Catholicism. There is less of it—that is all. It is only better as a mild attack of fever is better than a severe attack of fever. And many Protestants have it very mildly. With hosts of them it is a slight recurrent disorder, coming on once a week. Others have just enough religion to amuse them, and get a little æsthetic tittilation at church or chapel instead of at the theatre or the music-hall.

Protestantism with supreme power would make as great a desolation as Catholicism with supreme power. Scotland under the Presbyterian yoke was as ugly a place to live in as Spain under the Catholic yoke—in some respects far uglier. Give the clergy power, and it doesn't matter whether their dogmas are fifty or a hundred; their tyranny is just the same, they hate and persecute science and Freethought, and make their teaching the alpha and omega of human wisdom. Those who think that Protestantism, in itself, was more favorable than Catholicism to the growth of natural knowledge and the free play of the human mind are simply ignorant of the facts of history. All the early Protestant "reformers" were absolutely opposed to any freedom of travel beyond the point they had reached themselves. They imprisoned, tortured, and burnt heretics with the greatest alacrity. Only by a kind of accident did freethinking creep upon the scene. The appeal to a multifarious book like the Bible divided Protestants among themselves. They kept each other in check, and made a ring which bolder spirits gradually entered. Equilibrium, so to speak, was maintained by antagonistic forces that could not destroy each other. Was it not Voltaire who complained that in England he found twenty religions, but only one sauce? But did he not soon perceive that this was the secret of English freedom? In France there was one church big enough to swallow all others, and it did so; while in England there were twenty churches, all hating each other, but all obliged to keep a certain measure of peace and toleration. And in the midst of that peace and toleration there was a chance for a more daring originality.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

Lord Radstock, who died recently in Paris at the age of eighty, had "devoted the last half of his life with fine enthusiasm to Christian evangelisation." So says a well-known morning newspaper. The truth is that the man was an arid, barren bigot. His way to heaven was the only way. And what a way it was! The final display of its spirit was in the Torrey-Alexander mission; which, by the way, was an ignominious failure. Mr. G. W. Foote and the late Mr. W. T. Stead, working in loyal co-operation, settled its hash in London by settling Torrey's hash as a reckless slanderer of historic Freethinkers, such as Voltaire, Paine, and Ingersoll. Lord Radstock dropped a lot of money over "the conversion of London," which the Torrey-Alexander mission impudently undertook. The mission itself broke up soon after. Torrey left England fatally discredited, and he has never returned to the scene of his conviction as a malignant liar.

A sentimental semi-Christian paper, which mainly relies on the Rev. R. J. Campbell's commercial value, but does not disdain other lines of business, has been publishing notes of the "Faith that I live by" elicited from a number of more or less distinguished people. Madame Albani, who was once a great singer, says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." That is what Job is made to say and Handel sang. But if the lady will take the trouble to look into the matter she will see that the English Bible text is all wrong. Job said nothing about a redeemer. He did not live in a pawnbroker's shop. What he really said was that his avenger (*goel*) lived; meaning that his candid friends were wrong in representing his sufferings as the result of his sins, that his innocence would yet be established, and that he would live in health and wealth again and triumph over his accusers. This proper reading of the text was always known to scholars. It is now acknowledged by common-garden divines. We are sorry to spoil Madame Albani's dream; but, after all, truth is truth—though it was a Roman, not a Christian proverb, that said it should prevail.

Mrs. Besant's answer is characteristic. She starts with "I believe." What on earth does it matter what she believes? There are thousands of beliefs in the world, and hers is only one of them. What does she *know*? That is the question. She has never answered that since she left Atheism (and logic) for Theosophy (and imagination). It shows a kind nature, of course, to believe that we are all going to glory. "Travelling towards perfection," as Mrs. Besant calls it. Florence Nightingale and Jack the Ripper travel together, though they don't know it. Such a delightful gospel, and so easy to understand! No wonder some people pay five shillings to hear it. They must find it very reassuring.

Georg Brandes interposes a word of sense:—

> "We must build upon something sure. But under all the uncertainty and doubt which surrounds us one thing is certain and is not to be argued away; it is the pain. All human beings know that it is highly unpleasant to suffer and a great refreshment to be healed, to be unbound, to have the doors of our prison opened, to attain justice. And there is no other healing nor enfranchisement nor justice on earth than that which is carried into effect by us, there is no doubt what we have to do."

Presumably this is a translation of what Georg Brandes wrote. It is not the best of English, but it is intelligible. And it means this—joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, are the great facts in life. And the great truth is that man has no other "Providence" than himself.

Mr. W. J. Bryan, the U.S.A. orator, who nearly gained the presidency once under the rotten flag of a double currency—which was handsomely supported, of course, by all the silver mine owners—has not kissed the blarney stone, for he was born with all its traditional virtues as an innate possession. The one noticeable sentence he ever uttered was that "Mankind should not be crucified on a cross of gold." It was at a political convention, and the "blasphemy" of the utterance should have been shocking to any believer in Christ and the crucifixion. But politicians make anything subserve their purposes. Statesmen do not. That is the difference. Ingersoll, the "infidel," talked common sense and common honesty on the subject. He was in favor of the dollar coinage, but he wanted it to be an honest dollar, even if it were three feet in diameter! The logic and humor of the argument made it irresistible. It sank into people's minds, while Bryan and his clap-trap "cross of gold"—as the event proved—were soon discredited and forgotten. Bryan, however, still works religion for all it is worth. He has even grown familiar with God. He is ready to give the Almighty a testimonial or "character" at any moment. One feels that the Deity ought to be very much obliged. It must be very consoling to feel that you have an eloquent and influential friend like Mr. Bryan when you need one. Just listen to the God-comforting Bryan:—

> "Man needs faith in God to strengthen him in his hours of trial, and he needs it to give him courage to do the work of life. How can one fight for the principle unless he believes in the triumph of the right? How can he believe in the triumph of the right if he does not believe that God stands back of the truth, and that God is able to bring victory to truth?"

Speak for yourself, Mr. Bryan. You have a right to do that. But don't arrogate the right to speak for everybody else. When were you elected the representative of "man"? Plenty of men find themselves quite able to do "the work of life" without "faith in God"—quite as able as you are with it. These men smile at your assurance that "God stands back of the truth," and would like to know why he so seldom pushes it forward.

Mr. Maarten Maartens, the Dutch novelist, says he is of the same faith as Abraham and Goethe (what a collocation!) of Michael Angelo and Shakespeare; namely, the faith expressed in the sentence "Thou doest all things." There

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is no law against using Shakespeare's name in this way, but intellectually and morally speaking it is a crime. Mr. Stopford Brooke has lately confessed, in his new book, that Shakespeare progressed in scepticism throughout his tragedies, and that the culmination was reached in *King Lear*, where divine justice was not only doubted but denied.

We won't trouble about the "faith" of several pious ladies such as Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler and Katherine Tynan, but pass on to other repliers, at least to one—Sir Hiram Maxim, who declares that he was miserable in believing that "angry and bloodthirsty gods, and innumerable devils and ghosts roamed about the earth making it very hot for mankind"—and that the faith in which he is happy and prosperous now is in the non-existence of these beings.

Lord Redesdale, speaking at the dinner given in honor of M. Anatole France at the Savoy Hotel, said that we owed champagne and the novel to the Church. Was he alluding to the Bible?

To add to the solemnity of "God's birthday," shopkeepers are advertising chalk eggs and indiarubber Gorgonzola. Appropriate diet for the "birthday" of a mythical personage.

The celebration of the Mohammedan festival of the Moharrum at Agra, India, resulted in a series of rows between the processionists and the Hindus. A number of persons were seriously injured and one killed. Yet the clergy are always assuring us that religion has a civilising influence.

The "waits" have been celebrating the merry birthday of the Man of Sorrows. A contemporary mentions a juvenile troup who sang "Christians Awake" outside a Jewish gentleman's residence. Those "waits" did not wait long.

A new star in London, runs a placard. Not the "star" of Bethlehem.

"Flight into Egypt—New Style" is the profane headline in the *Daily News and Leader*, concerning an aeroplane trip. Naughty! Naughty! That pious journalist may yet find himself in that place so often referred to in sermons.

It is announced that the English press has reached the unanimous decision not to publish any newspapers on Christmas Day. We are greatly impressed with the Christ-like character of this resolve—particularly when we remember that, owing to the absence of a travelling public and other prevailing conditions, newspapers are generally published on that day at a loss. Once again do we see that the path of godliness alone profiteth man.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is appealing for more sympathy towards the working classes from the Church, and is "afraid" that unless it is forthcoming the Labor movement may develop anti-religious tendencies. We are afraid the Labor movement is not the place for a man with strong "spiritual" yearnings such as Mr. Macdonald possesses. For our part, we are convinced that the less the Labor movement, or any other movement, has to do with the clergy as an organised body the better. What any movement needs that is worthy of living is, first of all, self-respect. And no party and no leader that possesses this would go round snivelling to the clergy to be more sympathetic towards them. It is curious that just at the time when other forms of thought have ceased to appeal to the Churches for either support or patronage, the leaders of the Labor movement—or some of them—should be taking up this elsewhere discarded attitude. It is often said that many of the Labor leaders are Sunday-school teachers. It may be that the wisest of those in the Labor movement will yet live to trace their greatest disasters to that circumstance.

A curious and, from one point of view, interesting leading article appears in the *Church Times* on "Blasphemy Prosecutions." It points out that the tendency is now to convict for nuisance rather than impiety, and that this bids fair to become the rule in the future. This may be true enough so far as the alleged reason for prosecution is concerned, although the introduction of the word "blasphemy" shows there is more than this in it. The *Church Times* obviously favors a genuine prosecution for blasphemy, although it lacks the courage to say so. It says that if we are content to regard blasphemy prosecutions as prosecutions for nuisance, or outraging people's feelings, "one rule must be applied to all religions alike, and the Christian lecturer in Hyde Park will no more be able to describe Mohammed as the false prophet, or the god Krishna as a filthy and licentious deity.....Are we prepared for this?.....It seems impossible to lay down the broad ethical rule that no one shall say anything publicly about the religion of others which shall not wound their feelings."

There is much in this with which we agree—much that we have already said. If Christians are really honest in their desire that religious subjects shall be treated "reverently," and so as not to wound the feelings of those who believe in the religion attacked, the rule should apply all round. It should be as binding on Christians as on Freethinkers. But that, we know, is not the case. No judge in England would protect a Mohammedan, or a Parsee, or a Brahmin against the coarsest of abuse from a Christian. It is the Christian only who prosecutes, and that fact alone stamps these prosecutions as religious. Besides, if protection from indecency and abuse is sought for, the ordinary police laws are quite adequate.

The *Church Times* touches the root of the subject when it says, "Our own view is that the abrogation of civil penalties for blasphemy should only be part of a complete and entire renunciation by the State of all responsibility in respect of religious truth. Such a radical revolution, however, is indeed remote." This is really touching bottom. So long as the State makes itself responsible for the teaching of religion, it does stand as a protector of religion, although it need not be that the State should punish with imprisonment one who speaks disrespectfully of a subject it teaches. It is not so, for instance, with regard to education. Religion, however, is in a slightly different category, and there is connected with it the evil tradition that they who hold religion up to contempt must be punished. Therefore, the secularisation of the State *is* the only way out. And the completion of this is not by any means so remote—of necessity—as the *Church Times* thinks. The State has already declined to say what religion individuals shall profess, or whether they shall have any religion at all. It leaves the relation of a God entirely to the individual's own choice, and treats it as a matter that concerns only the man and God—if there is one. And it is only a step further for the State to leave the gods to look after their own. The *Church Times* says the law punishes defamation of the King or Queen, and "it cannot adopt a lower attitude in respect of blasphemy against Almighty God." To this the reply is simple. King and Queen are portions of the British State, so far as we are aware; "Almighty God" is not. Besides, the King and Queen could hardly be expected to go into the courts of law to defend their characters against every rogue or fool who chose to advertise himself by uttering reckless statements about them. This applies, of course, to all heads of states, whatever the form of government may be.

Rev. Robert J. Roberts, rector of Hopesay, Shropshire, left £20,630. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

Rev. John Bush Early, of 73 Crouch-street, Colchester, for thirty-three years rector of Holy Trinity Church, left £12,373 18s. 2d. It was all bequeathed to his housekeeper, Mrs. Emily Jane Cartaar. No doubt it was the proper thing to do.

The estates of professional Jesuites don't figure as large in Scotland as they do in England. Naturally. But we note that the Rev. Adam Scott Matheson, and the Rev. James Black, both of Glasgow, left £6,923 7s. 11d. and £6,746 1s. 9d. respectively.

James Phillips, a young man of Cowley-road, Ilford, being summoned for travelling on the Great Eastern Railway without paying his fare, was fined 20s. and 4s. costs. The plea that he "attended a church and bore a very good character" was of no avail. This sort of thing is always pleaded when fraudulent travellers are found out.

A Christian Yahoo is once more repeating the libel that we were sent to prison in 1883 for "obscenity" in the *Freethinker*. Now there never has been anything of that kind in our pages. We have been far more careful than any other paper we know of to avoid anything that malice could possibly twist into an improper meaning. We have even refused to print a dirty text from the Bible, although it might have been legitimately used in furtherance of our purpose or our argument. And this general reply to the said Christian Yahoo may be supplemented by a particular. No such word as "obscene" or "indecent" occurred in our indictment; no such word was whispered or suggested in

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the course of our trials. Such words were more than whispered out of doors in bigoted and malignant journals. We drew the jury's attention to this abuse of language in the course of our address at the third trial; and we were generously aided by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in his summing up. This is what he said to the jury:—

> "Mr. Foote is anxious to have it impressed on your minds that he is not a licentious writer, and that this word does not fairly apply to his publications. You will have the documents before you, and you must judge for yourselves. I should say that he is right. He may be blasphemous, but he certainly is not licentious, in the ordinary sense of the word; and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind."

There you are, you Christian Yahoo! You knew all about this yourself, but you were careful to hide it. And now you had better tell the handful of silly dupes left you what *you* went to prison for some ten years before. We think it was in 1878, but no doubt you will recollect the date better than we do.

Another Yahoo—unfortunately *not* a Christian—is throwing out what he knows to be lying insinuations about our use of money in "blasphemy" cases. The only "blasphemy" case we ever took up was Mr. Harry Boulter's. It was at his own request, we had full freedom of action, and full responsibility. But we stood throughout the fight not as Mr. G. W. Foote but first as Chairman of the Secular Society, Ltd., which guaranteed the sum of £200, and secondly as President of the National Secular Society. The public subscription was opened in that Society's name; every penny acknowledged by us in the *Freethinker* went through the Society's bank account; every penny expended was on the order of the Society's Executive, by means of its cheques, and through the hands of its Secretary. This was stated publicly at the time. It should not need to be stated again. How the case was fought is a matter of history. Everything was done in a business-like way, including a verbatim report of the trial, which was published in the *Freethinker*. And our own share of the work, gratuitously rendered, is best known to those who were behind the scenes. Not a single farthing's advantage accrued to any member of the National Secular Society.

We see the suggestion that we did not take the trouble to *obtain* information about the Stewart trial. We think our readers will prefer to believe *us* on a matter of this sort. We applied to Mr. Pack by letter for such information. He kindly replied that he was not present at the trial, as we supposed he had been, and that he had not seen Stewart at any time during the "blasphemy" proceedings. But he had sent on our letter to someone else, who took no notice. And the someone else happens to be the author of the false suggestion.

Rev. C. Lea-Wilson, who has been doing missionary work in a district of the White Nile, a thousand miles south of Khartoum, being interviewed by a Reuter correspondent, gives a good account of the natives there. "They are jet black, typical negroes," he says, "and do not practise either cannibalism or human sacrifices. They have admirable qualities, and I have never seen among them a case of cruelty to women or children." He couldn't say that of England, or any other Christian country.

Thanks are owing to Mr. John Benson, of South Woodham, Essex, who drew attention to the falsity of the suggestion in the *Daily Chronicle* by Mrs. Barclay that George Eliot was a "conventional Christian" and believed that "the Bible was of more than divine origin." Mr. Benson points out that in her early womanhood she ceased to attend any place of worship, and that Herbert Spencer recorded that her summary of religious belief was "God is inconceivable, immortality is unbelievable."

There was some humbug, at least, about the dinner at the Savoy to Anatole France. Marie Corelli helping to honor such a man is really a joke of the first water. Nor did many of the other diners belong to the intellectual circles that Anatole France represents in his own country and in its literature. The guests speech was full of beauty and courtesy, but it sustained the character he claimed for himself of "never having dissembled his thoughts." He told his auditors that "the great, the true France" was "the France of the eighteenth century, the France of Montesquieu and Voltaire." Some of those present need to be told that truth often—although they were honoring Anatole France.

A letter reached the Savoy dinner from Dorchester. It was one Freethinker greeting another. Thomas Hardy's tribute to Anatole France was a gem. It threw all the rest into the shade.

The newspaper comments on the Anatole France dinner were flabby and foolish. The utmost care was taken to hide the fact that the great Frenchman was a thinker as well as a novelist. What a press we have in England! Full of cowardice and hypocrisy.

"Wanted a new head," runs an advertisement. It does not refer to the Bishop of London.

In a letter from the Gold Coast by a missionary, quoted by the *Evening News*, it was stated that when he went to find a case of Bibles at the Customs he was informed that there were 16,000 cases of gin and some hundreds of whisky waiting to be delivered. The Gold Coasters are well supplied with the means of spiritual and spirituous intoxication.

"Mythical Policeman" reads a scare-line in the Yellow Press. It won't attract Christian readers, for they pin their faith to a mythical Carpenter.

"Burned to death at 83" is the cheerful headline in a daily paper concerning a Kensington woman. If she had been a Freethinker, the treatment would have been continued in another place.

The *Daily Mail* recently asserted that Shakespeare "never once attempted to anticipate the drab heresies of Tom Paine." The youthful scribes of the yellow press are too young to have read Shakespeare or Paine, and when they grow up they will know better.

Do people read Shakespeare? We often wonder. There was a note in the *Star* the other night about the expression "There's hair, like wire," and its age was proved by a quotation from Spenser's "Epithalamiam," in which the bride's hair is likened to "golden wire"—which is not very flattering, although it is evidently meant to be so. A more apposite quotation might have been found in Shakespeare's hundred-and-thirtieth sonnet:—

> "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wire, black wires grow on her head."

The matter is not one of much importance. But it is enough to make us repeat the question, Do people really read Shakespeare?

When we say that the matter is not one of much importance, we mean the simile and not the sonnet. The sonnet itself is of great importance in relation to the problem of the sonnets—if, after all, there *is* such a problem.

A writer in the *Daily Mail* says that the vast majority of the congregations in the Churches consists of old ladies with a sprinkling of old gentlemen. He has overlooked the sprinkling of the very young people, which is charged for at the usual rates.

"That cheap American platitudinarian, Ingersoll." We were rather surprised to see this silly insolence in the *Sunday Chronicle*. Is it due to the Roman Catholic influence on that journal? Anyhow, the writer might try his hand at a few Ingersollian platitudes. Some of us could anticipate the result.

Rev. Hyman Redgrave, vicar of St. Paul's, Burslem, who was found guilty by the chancellor of the diocese, and five assessors, of immoral conduct with Hannah Gater, the twenty-two year old daughter of a potter of Burslem, has been deprived of his living by the Bishop. What hugging, kissing, etc., the reverend gentleman (for he is still that) does in future will no doubt be done less publicly. It is fair to say that the Consistory Court did not go to the length of finding him guilty of adultery, but they declared that there was "the gravest suspicion" of it.

"The birthplace of the novel was the Garden of Eden," says the *Daily Mail*. Freethinkers have always insisted that it was fiction.

The *Daily Mail Year Book* devotes four pages to flying in 1913, and gives records in airmanship. There is no mention of the record trip made by the hero of the Four Gospels.

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £274 10s. 1d. Received since:—Mrs. B. Siger. 2s. 6d.; George Lunn, 10r.; One of the Old School. 10s.; Ernest, 2s.; T. Margerston, 5s.; T. W. Hicks, 5s.; N. Jacobson (S. Africa), 17s. 6d. Per N. Jacobson: Barney Kouler (S. Africa), £1 1s.; Jacob Kouler (S. Africa), £1 1s.

B. SIGER.—We have passed over what was meant for Miss Vance. Thanks for good wishes.

AUSTIN RUSSELL.—See paragraph. It is not worth more attention. Thanks.

R. BENNETT.—Three officers, and one person, are quite a new sort of a trinity; and the one appointing them all, including himself, who is two, railing at the N. S. S., with its representative Executive and Annual Conference, as a wicked autocracy, is certainly, as you say, an extraordinary joke. The thing itself has been dead, buried, and resurrected more times than Lazarus.

GEORGE LUNN.—Pleased you think this journal gets better as it gets older; also that you speak so highly of our colleagues' contributions as well as our own. We should relish no praise in which they were not included. Your connection with the Freethought movement dates from 1876. It is a good spell of time. Our own is even longer. We smile sometimes at the thought that we have been speaking and writing for Freethought ever since 1869—nearly forty five years, with the exception of the one year that we were fastened up by the Philistines—With regard to your question, you appear to want an encyclopædia rather than a dictionary. But good encyclopædias are expensive, and bad ones are worthless. We should say that Chambers' *large* single-volume Dictionary is about as good as you could obtain.

C. J. P.—We were present too at the Shelley Society meeting you refer to. As a matter of fact, we opened the discussion, and can corroborate your statement as to Mr. Shaw's declaration. Thanks for the Brough extract. Is your new address the permanent one?

S. V. G.—Much obliged, but we will not pursue the matter, at least as far as the family are concerned.

R. H. ROSETTI.—See paragraph. Thanks.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks.

ETHEL BRABY.—We answered your question before. The writer is unable to help you in locating the reference. We may as well state, with regard to one passage in your letter, that Mr. Foote does not write pseudonymous articles in the *Freethinker*—or anywhere else, for that matter. Neither is he in any way connected with the other journal you mention. We cannot answer letters like yours by post.

ERNEST.—The matter is being inquired into.

OLD FREETHINKER (Barnsley).—We are fully acquainted with all the facts you refer to, and they may have to be faced later on. But you are mistaken in supposing that Stewart has any connection whatever with the N. S. S., nor should his record, whatever it is, stand in the way of the strongest opposition to his prosecution and imprisonment for "blasphemy." What we do is always thought out, and there is sure to be a lot to be said for it.

N. JACOBSON (S. Africa).—Thanks for your successful efforts to promote the President's Honorarium Fund. The annual subscription to the journal is placed to your credit.

WILLIAM OWEN.—All right. The difference is slender, and your date is booked.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's two Sunday evening lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall have been gratifyingly successful. The first audience was very good, and the second was considerably better,—in fact, it frightened the little boy that Mr. Foote "named" (Raymond William Newman), who looked upon that sea of faces, and then upon the "namer's" mouth, and proceeded to open his own. But things went a bit smoother when he got hold of a beard with one hand and an eyeglass chain with the other. It is pleasant to add that the fine audience included a really large proportion of ladies. Their faces are more mobile than men's, and it is encouraging to see their appreciation of a good point or their recognition of a good joke. Besides, they represent the future through their maternity,—for the mother means the children in the long run; and when Mr. Foote has so many ladies listening to him he says to himself, alluding to the priests, "Now we *are* getting at you. We are spoiling your abominable business at its source." But to return to the lecture. Mr. Foote felt in excellent form, and the meeting appreciated the fact, judging by the laughter and applause, and by the way in which his answers to an uncommon number of questions were cheered. Mr. Jones made a capital chairman, and we are glad to hear that his announcement of Mr. Walsh's pamphlet cleared out every copy on the bookstall—and would have cleared out many more.

By a process of exhaustion the conclusion reached with regard to Queen's Hall is that regular Sunday evening Freethought meetings there will always be too expensive. Mr. Foote's two recent meetings have been eminently successful, the second being some twenty-five per cent. larger than the first. But after another lecture or two the cost begins to tell—not upon the business of management, but upon the pockets of the audience. The audience is drawn from all parts of Greater London, and the total expense of travelling, refreshment, and the price of a seat, may easily reach 2s. or 2s. 6d.—and more than that if a man brings his wife or daughter, or other persons in whom he may be interested, with him to the lecture. Few can afford this Sunday after Sunday, so that only a percentage of the potential Freethought audience manages to reach Queen's Hall on any particular evening,—a rally taking place only when there is something special.

Mr. Foote's friends throughout the country will be glad of the assurance that his general health is a good deal improved. The proceedings at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening lasted nearly two hours, and what with the lecture and the answers to questions he must have been on his legs for quite an hour and a half; but he was not particularly tired at the end, and his voice gave him no trouble at all. And though he had to travel before the meeting and travel after it—leaving home at 4 15 and arriving there again at 12.15—he was no worse than just a little flat on the Monday morning.

Thanks are due to the *Star* (London) for its friendly announcement of Mr. Foote's lecture on "Shaw Amongst the Prophets." It was a gleam of light in the darkness of the press conspiracy of silence against the President of the National Secular Society.

Mr. Cohen lectured to an excellent audience at the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday evening. We are glad to hear that this deserving institution is maintaining its own so well in the midst of multiplying counter attractions.

The conclusion of our article on "Benedict Spinoza" stands over until next week. It is in type, but cannot be fitted into this week's make-up.

We are not adding much to what we wrote last week on "The 'Blasphemy' Case." What we desire to say for the present is contained in this paragraph. First of all, we wish to correct the idea that going to prison is the way to abolish the Blasphemy Laws. It simply whets the orthodox appetite for more victims. It was not our own imprisonment in 1883, but the defence we made, happily before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, that stopped "blasphemy" prosecutions for twenty-five years. Unfortunately the men attacked now are incapable of making a proper defence. No doubt that is why they are attacked. What is wanted, we repeat, is to frustrate every application of the Blasphemy Laws by rendering a conviction extremely difficult, if not impossible. That is the only way. With regard to the Stewart case itself, there should have been a concerted meeting of protest in London and the case should have been carried to the Court of Appeal. Both proceedings would have been simple enough; the latter might have succeeded,—at any rate, it would have meant a splendid advertisement for the cause of "repeal." But as Stewart apparently chose to leave his case in utterly incompetent hands, everybody else was rendered helpless for want of a status in the matter. In a soft moment—all of us have such—we signed the "Humble Petition" got up so rapidly by the Rationalist Press Association; and if such documents were any good the names upon it should have secured Stewart's immediate release; but as it is nothing has occurred up to the present—just as we expected.

The Inverness Library Committee has decided, though only by the narrow majority of 7 to 6, to open the reading-room during certain hours on Sunday. All the stock arguments were used against it in the discussion, including that hardy veteran "the thin end of the wedge." We are glad to note that the lady members voted with the majority.

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The Story of the Squirrel.

THE common European squirrel is one of the most interesting and attractive of our native animals. It is a sharp-toothed, active creature, provided with a tail very nearly as long as its body. From the tip of its nose to the base of its tail the average sized squirrel measures just over eight inches, while its caudal appendage from its base to its termination measures seven inches. The tail is remarkably bushy, but the hair is thicker in winter than in the warmer season of the year. When reposing on its hind legs, its appearance is suggestive of that of a miniature kangaroo; but the arched nose and alert eye betoken more intelligence than that well-known Australian animal seems to possess. In company with many other mammals, the color of the squirrel's fur varies considerably with the season's changes. During the dark and dismal winter the rodent's fur becomes of a sombre brown on the head, along the back, and down the middle of the tail, while the sides of its body assume a distinctly grey color. Its limbs vary from bright red to chestnut, and its throat, chest, stomach, and the inner sides of the limbs turn white. Towards the end of April the winter dress is discarded, and in the early summer the frolicsome squirrel darts and leaps in his arboreal habitat in a mantle of bright chestnut, red above and beautiful white below. In winter the dense plumes which adorn the sides of the animal's tail are dark reddish brown, but as the summer advances these plumes incline towards a buff color, and examples are sometimes encountered in August in which the sides of the tail are of the color of cream. The fur of the squirrel is also of economic importance. Russia and Siberia yield six or seven million skins every season, and on the Lena alone, squirrel-trapping is an extensive business. It provides an occupation for large numbers of people, some of the hunters having as many as a thousand snares.

As a rule, squirrels are strictly monogamous and pair for life. They breed once, and occasionally, in exceptional circumstances, twice a year. When the young are expected, a nest is constructed of moss, leaves, dried grass, and similar materials, in a hollow tree or on a forked bough. The nest is provided with a cover to protect the young from the rain. The offspring usually appear in June, and a litter generally consists of four or five; but although the young seem fully able to support themselves by the time they are six or eight weeks' old, they remain with their parents until the following spring. Family quarrels then arise; the children are driven away, and the old animals repair their nest for the coming litter.

When eating, the rodent reclines on its hind legs, with its handsome tail coiled over its back, and grasps its food with its forefeet, or what are practically its hands. Its powers of locomotion are very considerable, as its limbs possess great pliability. When on *terra firma*, it leaps rather than runs, and when it is in its native element among the trees it bounds from bough to bough, its well-proportioned tail aiding its rapid flight as it moves through the air with its outspread limbs.

The squirrel's diet is a varied one. Its chief food is nuts, seeds, and fruit, but it easily accommodates itself to flesh foods, and in the absence of its ordinary nutriment would soon adapt itself to carnivorous habits. In the spring, when nuts are scarcely obtainable, the animal varies its diet of bark and tender leaves by sucking the eggs of thrushes, robins, and wood pigeons, and even devouring the newly hatched birds.

"The squirrel," says Sir Harry Johnston, in his *British Mammals*,

> "destroys large quantities of pine cones, and as its attitude towards mankind is very monkey-like and 'cheeky,' it seems to take a pleasure in attacking these pine cones immediately over the head of one who has retired to the forest to paint, or to meditate over a book. In tearing away the segments of the pine cone to get at the pith of the interior and the seeds, the squirrel showers down these rather moist and sappy fragments on the human being beneath, accompanying this inconvenient action with spitting and swearing sounds, or else conducting this mischievous operation in profound silence, and thereby startling one all the more by raining down unexpectedly a mass of half-chewed débris."*

Where squirrels abound they are regarded with a frosty eye by the forester, who is more concerned with the well-being of his young and struggling trees than with the whimsicalities and æsthetic charms of this destructive rodent. For the squirrel is capable of doing considerable damage to plantations of young trees. The animals tear away the bark and impede the flow of sap, and when this happens to young larches the tops of the trees wither and die. The pretty and playful squirrel is welcome, and more than welcome, to the beech mast, pine cones, acorns, and hedge nuts which he devours; but his destruction of saplings and his growing fondness for the eggs of birds, as well as their young ones, are more serious offences.

But these little shortcomings seem to Sir Harry Johnston to be fully atoned for by the squirrel's undeniable beauty and irresistible fascination. Still, one is inclined to pardon the woodman's anger, and to think that the introduction of this lively rodent into Regent's Park was a grave blunder. To the Londoner, his feathered songsters are much more valuable than squirrels; and the bird's-nesting fraternity among ourselves plunder the nurseries of birds almost everywhere with impunity. The birds of London are to many thousands of people the greatest treasure which our parks contain.

In the autumn the squirrel makes preparation for the impending winter, and gathers together considerable quantities of acorns, hazel nuts, and other nutritious foods. The most surprising places are selected for the granaries, and each pair of animals provides itself with one or more stores. Mr. W. S. Dallas, in speaking of a pair of squirrels kept under observation in a Berkshire garden, referred to the very improvident habits of these animals. They concealed their fruit kernels, horse-chestnuts, crocus-bulbs, potatoes, and other treasures in all sorts of queer places, and then forgot them. When the snow covered the ground, the animals were to be seen scampering about and peering into every nook and cranny to discover their hidden stores. Much of their hoard was buried among the roots of trees and shrubs, and was almost inaccessible when the snow had fallen.

But this detracts very little from the undoubted intelligence of these rodents. All it proves is that they have hardly adapted themselves as yet to an active winter life. It is extremely probable that in quite recent times the hibernating habits of the squirrel were of general occurrence. The animal's skill in cracking and paring nuts has reached a high state of efficiency. When the wild wood-nut is brown and hard, as it becomes when fully ripe, the squirrel makes a circular cut round the shell with his incisor teeth, so that it splits in half and leaves the kernel clear. The nut is then eaten, but every particle of skin is carefully removed before the rodent will deign to devour it.

In the southern counties of England, more especially during the genial winters of the past twenty years, the thrifty hoarding habit has been less and less observed. The squirrel's winter sleeping arrangements have also undergone some modification.

> "In bleak districts with a poor food supply during the winter, the squirrel curls itself up in some sheltered hole or cranny in a tree trunk and passes into a torpid condition, only reviving when the sun shines brightly. During these spells of warmer weather in the winter it leaves its hiding-place and searches for hoarded nuts, returning to sleep again after a good meal."

But in the neighborhood of Bournemouth and other southern stations the squirrel is as frequently met with in winter as in summer, particularly where it is fed

* *British Mammals*, p. 227.

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Sir Harry Johnston is not far wrong in thinking that this interesting vertebrate has "all the impudence and much of the fascination of the monkey, whom it imitates also in its wastefulness and its chattering cries." The animal's voice varies considerably; it will give vent to a succession of metallic sounds, which it follows with a rapid series of spitting squeaks. It has a positive passion for indulging in these vocal performances in the presence of the human biped who has invaded its woodland home. At the sight of a man the animal will simulate the greatest indignation, while half mockingly leaping among the branches or running round the trunk of some forest tree. Inquisitive as a monkey, the animal is in reality rather fond of man's society—of course, at a reasonable distance. This is soon made manifest to anyone reading or sketching amid the woodland wilds. The furry rodents will chase one another with the most awful curses, as if they were scornfully indifferent to the presence of so strange an animal as man.

> "Then they will affect to be excessively frightened at their own audacity, and hide palpitating round a tree trunk, scrambling round, however, in a minute or two to gaze at you with their large liquid eyes and to spit and swear from their open mouth, with the points of their little brown teeth just showing."

Although it is practically useless to attempt to tame the adult animal, the young are easily domesticated, and are among the most adorable and even affectionate of our pets. The squirrel is one of the most picturesque of our native creatures as it gambols among the boughs, and within reasonable limits it should be cherished and enabled to propagate its kind. Its nest is the best made by any mammal, and, apart from human intervention, it has little to fear save its inveterate enemy, the marten, which is much more powerful, and climbs equally well.

The squirrel is to be found at the present day throughout the entire Palæarctic region, from Ireland to Japan and from Northern Italy to Lapland, and its fossil remains have been traced as far back as the Cromer Forest Bed. It has lived in England since the Pleistocene period, and is now abundant everywhere in this country and in the woodland areas of Wales. It is rather scarce in Ireland, and there exists a tradition of its having been introduced there. It has had a chequered career both in Northern England and in Scotland, and, indeed, in the latter country bade fair to become extinct. But with the extensive tree planting in Scotland in the eighteenth century it again spread rapidly, and is now by some regarded as a positive nuisance.

Probably as late as a century ago it was quite unknown in the Lake Districts, but is now fairly abundant through Cumberland and Westmoreland. It appears to have been a common animal throughout the Scandinavian peninsula since the advent of man. In the Northern mythology the squirrel appears as the messenger of the gods, who carried to the other animals the news of the world's doings.

Extinct members of the squirrel family are fairly numerous. The genus Sciurus, to which the animal belongs, is an ancient mammalian form. Its fossil remains have been found in the Miocene and even in the Upper Eocene formations of Europe.

T. F. PALMER.

Angels of Dispeace.

MILITANT Atheism is dead. Publicly we are informed of its decease; but privately the informers know and say that it is energetically alive.

The compartment was occupied by four pastors and myself. Being unprepossessing in appearance, the black-frocked gentlemen did not deign to notice me. My presence was insignificant. They were well-fed, very respectable representatives of the cloth; and the miner who looked through the window, grimaced, spat, and passed on. Obviously, he did not envy them their cigars; but he might have concealed his contempt just a little. His uncultured rudeness removed him a degree farther from Paradise.

Conversation at first ran along trivial lines. They interchanged pastoral confidences, sympathised with each other, enjoyed the human weakness of airing grievances, and spoke without restraint concerning the things of their hearts. But their hearts were empty of God, or their mouths would have been full of him.

One does not like to be too severe; but commandments *are* commandments. Pastors will tell you that because certain commandments came from the Lord God, they are even something more for which no word is available. Deliberately to disobey the heavenly mandate constitutes a fault that merits the superlative measure of divine wrath, you will be told. Even to allow worldly things, like cigars and confidences, however pleasurable and innocent, to cast the charm of distance upon God is a grievous error. According to pastors, God comes first. He should occupy our thoughts always. We should never lose sight of him. To live the Christ-life should be our all-consuming desire. God must ever be our guiding star, our heavenly flame, our permanent companion, our one hope in this world, our only hope in the next.

No wonder the dirty, ill-clad, unhumanlike miner passed by.

To disobey God is to blaspheme; and where is the Christian who does not blaspheme? Not a day is sent into the past but Christians send with it God and his commandments. The positiveness of the Diety is as a feeble flickering of the last of a weary life compared with the steady glare of the never-absent negativeness of it.

If God is God, if his commandments are to be considered such, then the first people to actualise them should be his earthly apostles, even if it mean breaking every human law, neglecting every human conventionality, disregarding every human instinct, personal and social, and drawing near unto the liberating gates of death itself.

Should God's commandments be limited by custom and environment? Are they not the only thing of importance here, there, anywhere? Has God to take a back seat to human triviality? Must his voice be drowned in the clamor of the commonplace? Perish the thoughts! And then, even if the practice of these imperishable commandments means death, does not death mean the glorious entrance to the home of the blessed and the everlasting life?

In this frame of mind I settled myself behind a paper to listen to the ministerial conversation; and to extract some information from it. One of them bewailed the gradual decrease, within recent years, of the number of attenders at his weekly prayer-meeting. So heart-breaking had the attendance become that he had found it expedient to cancel the meeting altogether. After spending much time in careful study, it was very discouraging to witness the few people who assembled to hear him. ("Where two or three are gathered together," etc.) Another poured oil on the troubled waters by remarking that his morning meeting for young folk had recently been abandoned for the same reason. And so, for a while, the tale went on uninterruptedly. Church membership was falling off; church enterprises were being sadly neglected; interest in the welfare of the church was on the wane; fewer children were to be seen in the Sunday-schools, and fewer people in the pews; and all this despite the carefulness of preparation, the devotion to the work, and the self-sacrifice of ministers.

One of the holy quartet struck rather a pathetic note. His pastorate was in a little mining town. During the last few years a great change had slowly taken place in the attitude of the people to their minister, causing him to suffer much mental anguish. Once he had been the well-beloved shepherd. Now he was only a sheep like them-

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selves. No longer was he welcomed at the house doors. In fact, so disagreeably conscious of the "Hallo! here-ye-are-again-damned-nuisance" attitude of the people was he, that he had been forced to forgo visitation for quite some time back. He felt as if something were slipping away from him; as if the dignity of the church were being, if not despised, at least disregarded.

He was perfectly convinced the change had begun after the visit of an agitator, who, apparently, had poisoned the minds of the flock on the matters of religion and churchgoing; and he bitterly resented the intrusion of these free-speaking, bombastic representatives of a quiet, orderly Trades-Unionism.

Another gentleman, who bossed a city church, volunteered the suggestion that they should be pleased they had provincial charges. These things were nothing, absolutely nothing, compared with the awful difficulties with which city ministers had to contend. Agitators! Why there were Atheists actually fighting them at street corners! Picture palaces and secular meetings of all kinds had robbed the Sabbath of all its holiness.

But he didn't get far in his tirade against Secularism; for the meek-looking member of the party interjected something about the Materialism of villages and provincial towns being as great, comparatively, as that of cities nowadays. Gambling, drinking, whippet-racing, and the rest of the people's rough pleasures, were dragged in to support the statement. It was a great wild sea of Materialism, and on the froth of the waves were agitators and Atheists, Angels of Dispeace that they were, as the meek man thought.

It was a meaty bone thrown to starving dogs, except that there was sufficient meat to prevent them bickering over its disposal. After a spate of quite illogical and uninteresting opinions, the unanimous conclusions were that the people were going to the Devil; that only a soul-stirring revival could avert the catastrophe; and—wonder of wonders!—that such a reawakening of religious beliefs was farther off now than ever; that, in fact, it was impossible, owing to the increasing number of agitators and Atheists, and their cheap publications.

Coming from the adversely affected side, this recognition of defeat was interesting. Another step was required to complete the journey. It was left for the meek man to accomplish. After a short silence, he said: "Well, what are we gentlemen doing, or going to do, in the circumstances? Are we going to shirk the bitter end, to be honest or dishonest? Are we to continue telling lessening congregations that the hope of the world is religion, when the hope is hopeless? for that is the position our conversation has led us into. Must we continue making claims for Christianity in the face of an all-powerful Devil? Religion may remain with the individual few; but our conclusions tell us that the Church's day is done. It has become a torn page of history, existing in the book of life because bound with it; and the hands that would ruthlessly tear it out altogether are doing so gradually with stern resolve. What must we do?"

The meek man's questions remained unanswered; for the train stopped, and a ticket-collector entered to save the situation from its awkwardness. The compartment filled up; and from the faces of the meek man's companions I noticed they, at least, were not sorry the conversation had been providentially brought to an end.

There are some men who give of the strength of their minds for the betterment of man, and their reward comes as the bitter-sweet. They are the Angels of Dispeace.

ROBERT MORELAND.

It isn't true that the laws of nature have been capriciously disturbed; that snakes have talked; that women have been turned to salt; that rods have brought water out of rocks. You must in honesty confess that, if these things were presented to us for the first time, we should smile at them. —*Dr. Conan Doyle, "The Stark-Munro Letters," p. 43.*

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

VIII.—DR. THOMAS INMAN.

IT was through Myles McSweeney that I became epistolarily acquainted with the author of *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*. Myles recommended me to the Doctor to make some drawings to illustrate his works; and this led to a good deal of frank correspondence, in which the Doctor treated me as one very much older than I then was. All bore on his discoveries of the evidences of phallic worship, which, as is often the case with discoverers, Dr. Inman pressed beyond their real importance. I have since learned that neither McSweeney nor Dr. Inman was original in the detection of phallicism as underlying Christianity. Earlier even than Payne Knight, Higgins, or Dulaure, was a Kabbalist crank in the last century, a Frenchman, whose work on *Les Mystères du Christianisme*, published in 1771, is certainly one of the most curious volumes it has ever been my lot to look into. The Old and the New Testaments, and the seven sacraments of the Romish Church, are interpreted phallically. Dr. Inman had, however, arrived at his view independently, though he doubtless derived some hints from the *Anacalypsis* of Godfrey Higgins. His researches were originally into the meanings of names, and the mere inquiry why John was convertible into Jack led to some extraordinary results.

Dr. Inman was a Liverpool physician of high standing. He was born at Leicester, January 27, 1820, and his father became director of the Bank of Liverpool, and his brother founded the famous shipping firm of that port. Educated at King's College and London University, he took the degrees of B.A. and M.D., settling at Liverpool, where he became lecturer on botany, medical jurisprudence, therapeutics, and the principles and practice of medicine. He was for some time President of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society, and was physician to the Royal Infirmary of that city. He wrote several medical works, and his volumes on *The Preservation of Health* and *The Restoration of Health* are still worth reading. Dr. Inman was original-minded in his profession. He published a work, entitled *Foundation for a New Theory of Medicine* (1861), in which he regarded all disease as arising from a deficiency of vital force; and in his treatment he frankly placed dietetics before drugs, which, he pointed out, were chiefly respected because they deranged the vital force. He stated, as the conclusion of his large medical experience, that "the physician could do harm, but that his power for good was limited." But it was chiefly as an archæologist that his Freethought manifested itself. In his principal work, *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*, he examines all the cognomens in the Bible, eliciting many curious facts that lie behind those names, and showing there was no essential difference between the faith of the Hebrews and that of other Semites. Incidentally he notices that the alleged sojourn in Egypt left no evidence of having modified Israelitish languages, names, or faith. He held that Biblical testimony itself disproved the story of the sojourn in Egypt.

In my essay on "Phallic Worship Among the Jews," in *Bible Studies*, I have given my opinion on the views of Dr. Inman more fully than is possible here; and I shall therefore at once pass to his less known Freethought work, *Ancient Faiths and Modern*, which was published at New York, though printed at Edinburgh, in the year of his death (1876). In the preface he tells how he came to doubt the nostrums both of physical and spiritual doctors. He says:—

> "The physician, when professing to cure, has too often assisted disease to kill; and he who has the cure of souls has invented plans to make believers in his doctrine miserable. The first fills his coffers proportionately to the extent to which he can protract recovery; the second becomes rich in proportion to the success with which he multiplies mental terrors, and then sells repose. The one enfeebles the body, the other cripples the intellect, and aggravates envy, hatred, and malice."

On examination, he says:—

> "I found that in every nation there have been, and still are, good men and bad, gentle and brutal, thoughtful and ignorant; that the best men of Paganism—Buddha, for example—did not lose by comparison with the brightest lights of Christianity; and that such large cities as London and Paris have as much vice within them as ancient Rome or modern Calcutta. I found, moreover, that there is a culpable coloring in the accounts given by Christian travellers of Pagan countries. The clerical pen rests invariably and strongly upon the bad points of every heathen cult, and contrasts them with the best elements of Christianity."

Dr. Inman entered considerably into the question of the rival merits of Christianity and Buddhism, and gave his preference to the latter as a non-persecuting system, and as containing no obscene stories such as those of the Bible. He says:—

> "If we now ask ourselves what parts of the Bible most offend the sense of propriety, we should answer that they

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are its untenable cosmogony; its preposterous accounts of the longevity of the men reported as being the earliest formed; the legend of the flood; the origin of the rainbow; the tales of Moses, Pharaoh, the plagues of Egypt, the sojourn in the desert, the capture of Canaan, the miraculous battles. We would wholly expunge the fabulous account of Elijah and Elisha; the ravings after vengeance uttered by the prophets; the apocryphal episodes described in the books of Jonah and Daniel; every obscene story and disgusting speech or writing, whether uttered as a threat against Israel or his enemies. In like manner, we would wish to expunge from the teaching of Jesus everything relating to the immediate destruction of the world, everything connected with community of goods, the advantages of beggary, and the potency of faith and prayer. We would suppress every miracle, and say nothing of a resurrection of the dead Jesus. We would equally abandon any attempt to describe Heaven or Hell or any immediate state. When all these were removed from the Bible, we positively should have very little left, except a certain amount of morality which is sound, and a large portion which is radically bad."

Ancient Faiths and Modern, like all of Dr. Inman's works, abounds in a variety of learning culled from all quarters. He concludes the book with a challenge to the champions of orthodoxy. He says:—

"I defy scholars to prove that the Israelites were ever, as a body, in Egypt; that they were delivered therefrom by Moses; that the people wandered during forty years 'in the desert,' received a code of laws from Jehovah on Sinai, and were, in any sense whatever of the words, 'the chosen people of God.'

"I assert that the whole history of the Old Testament is untrue, with the exception of a few parts which tell of unimportant events—*e.g.*, it is probable that the Jews fought with their neighbors, as the Swiss have done in modern days; but I do not believe the tale about Samson, any more than that of William Tell.

"I assert that there is not a single true prophecy in the whole Bible which can be proved to have been written before the event to which it is assumed to point, or which is superior, in any way, to the oracles delivered in various ancient lands.

"I assert that the whole of what is called the Mosaic law had no existence in the days of David, Solomon, and the early Hebrew chieftains or kings, if they are thought to deserve the title."

This was plain and to the point, and I am not aware of any orthodox champion who has successfully taken up his challenge on these topics.

In 1871 Dr. Inman retired from practice, and resided at Clifton, near Bristol, where he died on May 3, 1876. He was a man of handsome presence, and his genial temperament made him generally popular, despite his outspoken heresy. His antiquarian works will long hold a distinguished place in the cabinets of the curious.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

"Shaw Among the Prophets."

MR. BERNARD SHAW has often been witty at the expense of other people, but he has never been exposed to such a fusillade of wit as at the meeting on Sunday at the Queen's Hall, London, when Mr. G. W. Foote lectured on "Shaw Among the Prophets."

Mr. Collette Jones presided, and prior to the address Mr. Foote performed the pleasing ceremony of naming Raymond William Newman, the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Newman, who were both present.

The lecture, which dealt with Mr. Shaw's opinions on religion, was in Mr. Foote's happiest vein. It was, the lecturer said, to be regarded as a polite duel, and not so bad as a match at the National Sporting Club. Mr. Shaw was a wit and humorist, and must make allowance for the possibility of those faculties in other persons.

In the old days of the Shelley Society—which Mr. Foote said was defunct, but Shelley was not—Mr. Shaw declared himself a Republican, a Vegetarian, and an Atheist; a proceeding which nearly broke up the society. When *Man and Superman* was published in 1903, he was still an Atheist. In the following ten years, however, he had become more orthodox on the subject of marriage and religion. The import of *Man and Superman* was that we shall never have real progress in the world until we breed the right kind of children. We come from lowly origin, and our object should be to breed only what is human, and to leave the tigerish element behind. The present habit of allowing lunatics on holiday to increase the population was wicked. If the Bishop of London wanted to marry, he would say to him, My dear sir, don't.

Mr. Shaw regarded *Man and Superman* as a Bible, a sixpenny book of religion; but this was not a new idea, for more than a hundred years before Thomas Paine wrote a sixpenny book on religion. In Mr. Shaw's lecture on "Modern Religion" he seemed to have a poor idea of any other religion than his own, which was a characteristic of pious people generally—say, for instance, the Christians in Belfast, who without religion would be a happy family. Mr. Shaw also contended that men must have a religion if they were to do anything; and religion just meant having convictions and being in earnest about them; so the question to ask was, whether a man was serious? Fancy Mr. Shaw asking such a question.

Mr. Shaw stated that he was very active in preventing people baiting Bradlaugh in the days of the Parliamentary struggle. But Bradlaugh was first elected in 1880, and at that time Mr. Shaw was a youth. He did not become prominent until the nineties. Mr. Shaw says he has never been a Materialist, but this is a quarrel over words. Bradlaugh himself was a Monist. Mr. Shaw says that he went to the Hall of Science after Bradlaugh's death, when the Secularists were looking for another leader, and his address there threw the audience into transports of rage. But this was not the case, for Mr. Shaw was merely invited to lecture to fill a vacancy on the platform. Mr. Bradlaugh was recently dead, Mrs. Besant was chasing will-o'-the-wisps, Mr. Symes was in Australia, Mr. Collins in New Zealand, and Mr. Aveling had taken up with Socialism.

Mr. Shaw contended that he was religious, and says he believes in the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Trinity; but, unless he meant what the Christians do, he was merely playing with words. The Rev. R. J. Campbell appears to have converted Mr. Shaw to the view that Jesus had actually existed, whereas modern scholarship showed that the Christ of the Gospels had no more real existence than the Knights of the Round Table or William Tell.

Mr. Shaw was severe on the Methodists, and had a great hatred of the doctrine of the Atonement, but there was nothing novel in this, for Thomas Paine was ashamed of it at eight years of age, and all decent people had left it behind.

Mr. Shaw claimed that he had taken out his watch and challenged the Deity to strike him dead. People had stated that they had actually seen Bradlaugh do the same thing. God never did it, nor did Bradlaugh, for he was not an ass. If Mr. Shaw ever did it, he was more foolish than he has ever been taken for. Mr. Shaw admits his deity has no existence, for he says his god is only coming into existence. Sir Oliver Lodge says the same thing in other words. He says to the Deity, "Don't despair. Help is coming—from Birmingham."

Mr. Shaw says he is a mystic—that is, a man in a mist—"the most unkindest cut of all." There is something impish in his genius. There is no new religion, for superstition is as old as man's ignorance, solid as his credulity, and lasting as his weakness. Are we to think that this new profession is the result of keeping bad company at the City Temple? Or is it the result of caring more for the applause of society than for the welfare of ordinary men?

C. E. S.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Mr. Alfred Clarke, of Birmingham, at the age of sixty-two. He was an old friend of ours, and a close friend of the late Mr. Horace W. Parsons. They used to attend our Birmingham lectures together, and it was usual for them to spend some time with us at our hotel when we visited the city for the purpose of the Town Hall meetings. Mr. Clarke called on us the last time we lectured there. He was suffering from an internal complaint, and he did not expect to meet us again. His death took place at Selby Oak Infirmary, and his relatives gave him a Christian burial, though it is difficult to believe they did not know that this was against his wishes. They even followed it up with a pious mourning card, which would be a source of amusement to him if he could read it. Mr. Clarke's resources were sadly diminished by long illness and indifferent business (he was a dentist), but what little is left is willed to the Freethought movement.—G. W. F.

With dramatic suddenness Mr. Walter Russell Juler, whose account of his friend Cossey's death appeared in these columns only a few weeks ago, died, in his fifty-eight year, at his residence, 10 Locomotive-terrace, Tudhuls, near Willington, Durham, on the 10th inst. Mr. Juler was an enthusiastic convert, and a warm-hearted admirer of Mr. G. W. Foote and the *Freethinker*. The remains were interred in the presence of his sorrowing family, his fellow-workmen, and a few representative Secularists from Newcastle and South Shields, at Newfield Churchyard, on Saturday, December 13. Mr. Juler's decease is a decided loss to the Freethought movement in Bishop Auckland district, where he was an active and zealous worker for the cause.—R. C.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Bible Blunders."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, W. Davidson, "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, A. Aladin, "Man—His Creative Powers and His Dreams."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): E. Morris Young, 3, "Necessity the Key to Progress"; 6.30, "Religions Drawback to Progress." Tea at 5.

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THE

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIII.—NO. 52 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1913 PRICE TWOPENCE

The community which dares not protect its humblest and most hated member in the free utterance of his opinions, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves.—WENDELL PHILLIPS.

A God in a Cradle.

NEARLY two thousand years ago a young Jewess was married to an elderly Jew. Her name was Mary and his was Joseph. Two commoner names could not be found, nor probably two commoner people. They discovered nothing, wrote nothing, said nothing, and did nothing of any importance. Their sole achievement was producing children, of whom they had about a dozen. But producing children is a very ordinary feat, especially among Jews, who have always been notably prolific since the days of Pharaoh. Where Joseph and Mary were born nobody knows, and the date of their birth is equally obscure.

We possess just as much information about the time and place of their death. Nothing is known as to where they were buried, or what inscription was cut on their tombstones. History is silent as to what undertaker carried out the funeral arrangements. Their biographies might be written in twenty lines without containing twenty facts.

Joseph and Mary were, according to custom, betrothed before marriage. No doubt they had a pleasant time. Joseph adjourned to the old people's house at the close of his day's work, after a good wash and a brush-up, and took Mary for a walk in the gloaming. They chattered as lovers have always done, Joseph's arm slipped round her waist, she leaned her head on his shoulder, and they kissed each other under the winking stars. When they returned Joseph looked as though he had never been within ten feet of the girl, and Mary's aspect would have defied the innuendoes of a Mephistopheles.

But one night poor Joseph's felicity was, unconsciously to himself, invaded by a stranger. After he had gone home to dream of his sweetheart, and Mary had retired to her maiden pillow, she received an unexpected visit from a handsome young archangel, named Gabriel. His features were inexpressibly beautiful, his form was more perfect than Apollo's, his brown locks hung in graceful curls about his ivory neck, and his splendid wings glowed with all the colors of the rainbow. Had he been an ugly burglar, Mary would have hidden her head under the clothes; but she was so fascinated by his immortal loveliness and his seraphic smile that she sat up and stared at him with mingled alarm and admiration.

Gracefully bowing his graceful head, Gabriel stated that he was sent from heaven to inform her that she should have a child without Joseph's assistance. She was naturally startled at this intelligence, but Gabriel assured her that with God nothing was impossible, and before he left she was fully persuaded that his prophecy would be fulfilled.

Mary hid all these things in her heart. She said not a word to Joseph or the old people, until her condition could no longer be concealed, when she told them everything. Her parents laughed at her story, and it was with great difficulty that her mother was restrained from giving her a bald head. As it was, she gave her an illuminated face. Joseph swore that her story was a flam, and walked out of the house, vowing never to see her again. He then went home, drowned his sorrows in three bottles of wine, and fell dead—asleep.

While in this condition he had a dream. Gabriel appeared to him, stated that Mary's baby was "of the Holy Ghost," and warned him against treating her with any cruelty or disrespect. When he awoke he believed it all, and soon afterwards he married his young woman, much to the delight of the old people, who had anticipated a frightful scandal.

Some profane persons say that Joseph was easily satisfied. They doubt whether any young fellow courting a girl nowadays would believe such a story on the same evidence. They object that a dream is a shadowy basis for the doctrine of the incarnation. They assert that if Jesus wanted to prove his divine origin beyond all dispute he should have dispensed with a mother as well as a father. That, they say, would have been a miracle; but there is no miracle in a child being born without a father, for it happens every day. Let the reader, however, pay no heed to these sceptical wretches, as he values the salvation of his immortal soul. Belief is easy, and hell is hot.

In due course (reader, you *must* believe it) Mary's miraculous baby came to light. Raphael's pictures, which were painted from original photographs, give us an idea of his beauty. And this beautiful baby was God. His name was Jesus (or Joshua), but he was really God.

God cried, and screamed and kicked. God flung about his little legs, God made aimless dashes into space with his little arms. God stared foolishly at his own little toes. God smiled when he was comfortable, and howled when pricked by a nasty pin. God was suckled at Mary's breast. God lay in a cradle and was rocked asleep. God had the measles, and perhaps the whooping-cough and scarletina. Eighteen centuries later God would have been vaccinated. God learned to walk by the family furniture. God often tumbled down on his nose or on the broader part he once displayed to Moses. God was taught his letters. God got spanked when he misbehaved, and, as soon as he was big enough, God went out and played at marbles and mud-pies with other boys, some of whom he thrashed, and some of whom thrashed him.

P S.—We do not believe a word of the foregoing narrative. It is not *our* "blasphemy"—it is *Bible* "blasphemy." And if justice were done the publishers and vendors of that book would take the place of the "blasphemer" who is now studying "Christian charity" in Stafford Prison. The above article is taken from a longer one which we wrote and published in the first Christmas Number of the *Freethinker*, within a year of our own imprisonment for "blasphemy" in 1883-84. It was our answer, as it were, to our prosecutors. It showed how little they had intimidated us by twelve months' imprisonment. Its reproduction shows how unrepentant we are after the lapse of thirty years. It will also show whether they have the courage to attack those who are *not* helpless.

G. W. FOOTE.

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The Forlorn Atheist.

IN dealing with Mr. Coulson's article on "The Failure of the Churches," there was one point that I left untouched, but which is well worth a word of criticism. This was concerned with the assumed forlorn state of those who have rejected religious beliefs, and who are supposed to be drifting about in a more or less miserable condition, casting envious looks towards those who are still within the ranks of the faithful. Mr. Coulson speaks of the Agnostic with his "chilly and negative creed," just as many other writers depict the Atheist having given up religion with much heartburning, and living in a constant state of regret that he is not as others are. For much of this talk many Freethinkers—of a kind—are themselves to blame. In the issue of the *Sunday Chronicle*, for example, following that in which Mr. Coulson's article appeared, a correspondent writes from Manchester:—

> "It must not be forgotten that thousands of Agnostics were once among the 'faithful'; that they reluctantly left the fold because they could not reconcile the teachings of the Church with their notions of truth.....
>
> "It need hardly be stated that the Agnostic is never up against genuine Christianity (some of us are bold enough to declare we have that), but against 'Churchianity' and shams."

I cannot say what some "Agnostics" do or do not believe—that species is divided into so many varieties that it is difficult to be certain on this point—but I can say that every Freethinker who understands Freethought is "up against" genuine Christianity with much greater vigor than he opposes the adulterated article. For the adulteration consists in mixing up with Christianity a number of social and ethical teachings to which it can lay no exclusive claim. Genuine Christianity is orthodox Christianity, and the more orthodox the more genuine. It embraces the belief in miracles, in prayer, in possession, in hell and heaven, in angels and in devils, and in other things that modern thought unhesitatingly condemns. The Christianity that is popular is not genuine; it is a hotch-potch of ideals and teachings to which Christianity can lay no real claim. My own complaint is, not that I disagree with current Christianity because it is not pure, but because it offers people what is not Christianity—because it gets them to support Christianity under false pretences. A Freethinker ought to be a clear thinker; and it is hardly clear thinking to talk about Agnostics or Atheists claiming to have a "genuine Christianity," as though that were a valuable article. Christianity is bad when it is genuine; it is also bad when it annexes good humanitarian teachings and robs these of much of their force by the association.

This talk of Agnostics being genuine Christians belongs to the same class as references to a man like Bradlaugh being a real Christian, or a Christian without knowing it. It is an insult disguised as a compliment. Bradlaugh was not a Christian, consciously or unconsciously. If Christians mean that he was a better man than the vast majority of Christians, they will be saying nothing but the truth. But his superiority was not due to his having "genuine Christianity," but to selecting the humanitarian elements from current life, and leaving the Christian ones rigorously alone.

So much by the way. Now let us get back to the unhappy Agnostic—or Atheist. Mr. Coulson most probably knows a number of Agnostics. I daresay he also numbers Atheists among his acquaintance. How many of them does he find in urgent need of consolation, or living in a state of regret that they are no longer Christians? After an experience of nearly a quarter of a century among them, I have failed to discover any of this particular type. On the contrary, the invariable testimony is that they are happier as Atheists than they were as Christians, and that their outlook on life is more cheerful and inspiring. And when they say this, their testimony is final. You cannot go behind it and prove that they are less happy than they were, or that they do regret their lost beliefs without knowing it? Why, then, is there this constant talk about the disconsolate unbeliever? Really it is all a pose with the ordinary journalist. He does not know these miserable Freethinkers; he has only heard about them from religious sources, and he repeats the legend as a concession to orthodox feelings.

I have the greatest possible difficulty in realising how anyone could regret a discarded belief. Like most people, I have shed a few in the course of my life, but I cannot honestly say that I ever experienced any sorrow or looked back upon them regretfully. I can quite appreciate the fact that the surrender of beliefs may be the occasion of a great deal of pain and discomfort. But this arises from quite other causes. Let us take a common case. A man moving in Christian circles, with his family and friends and business associates all Christians, finds his belief in Christianity slipping from him. He sees that to take the honest course and to openly avow his altered convictions means loss of position and friends, and a rupture of family ties. If his friends were not Christians, and had been brought up in a mentally healthy manner, these circumstances would not arise. Being what they are, neither appreciating the nature of intellectual processes, nor of mental honesty, unpleasantness is certain. The man feels keenly the rupture of old associations, the more keenly because the change of mental attitude implies the possession of a rather more sensitive organisation than is common. The result is a period of stress and storm—not due to the loss of a belief, but to the loss of all that intolerance says shall be its consequence.

Assume another set of conditions. Suppose that the man's friends said no more about his change of opinion or religion than they would if he changed his opinion as to the nature of gravitation. How much of this greatly talked-of mental regret and pain would be experienced? Evidently none at all. It is not, then, the belief that one surrenders with reluctance; it is not the lost belief that anyone wishes he still had; it is wholly a question of social and domestic relations broken as a consequence of the dehumanising tendency of a religious education.

Let us take a further step. I have often been asked whether Atheism could ever satisfy human nature, and sometimes have been told that it would not do so. I have invariably replied that Atheism satisfied me, and so far as I represented human nature the answer always seemed conclusive. At all events, what we are satisfied with will be largely determined by what we are looking for, and to a smaller degree by the kind of human nature we are endowed with. A whisky-soddened organisation will not be content with lemonade, and a constitutionally unreflective and superstitious character will not be satisfied with Atheism. All he can do is to say that, as a religious person, he would not be an Atheist. That seems rather a silly thing to say, but it is really what the religious person does say, and a great many religious sayings are silly when we analyse them. And if, after a long course of mental development, the religious man outgrows his beliefs and arrives at Atheism, he can quite as truthfully say that religious beliefs would not satisfy him. And the one statement is as true as the other. Of course, Atheism will not satisfy the religious person. Equally, of course, religion will not satisfy the Atheist. Both are content where they are, and when they arrive anywhere else, they will experience the same mental contentment—that is, so long as the change is not accompanied with social or domestic penalties.

Why on earth should the convinced Agnostic or Atheist feel his position chilly or comfortless, or leave his religion reluctantly, or look back upon it regretfully? As an Atheist, one lacks none of the qualities of mind or nature that one possesses as a Christian. It is a crude and utterly false notion that as a religionist certain qualities are exercised, that

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atrophy through disuse when one becomes an Atheist. This notion belongs to the crude psychology of the City Temple. All the qualities of mind exercised in connection with religion are exercised in connection with non-religious subjects. The strength of religion really lies in giving our normal, human, and social feelings a religious interpretation. One does not cease to admire, to love, to venerate, to praise honesty and truthfulness and cleanliness because one has ceased to use the traditional jargon. But one does these things in the name of humanity, not in the name of God. There are, as I have often had to point out, no such things as religious feelings, there are only religious beliefs and ideas, and the exercise of ordinary human feelings in connection therewith.

That being so, all that Atheism does is to strip these feelings of their religious disguise and make plain their real nature. It leaves all the legitimate avenues for their exercise and gratification absolutely untouched. It does not deny the reality or value of a single human quality; on the contrary, it emphasises their significance. It is true that the Atheist would arrange human qualities in accord with a different scale of values to that adopted by Christians, but that is about all. He would place more reliance upon reason and less upon mere faith. He would place less emphasis upon self-sacrifice and more upon self-development. He would have less to say on the charity of mere alms-giving, and more on the charity of sympathy and intellectual hospitality. He does not talk about our "poor, weak, human nature," and he does not go about fearing lest each new advance in knowledge should bring the social structure about his ears. Wrong the Atheist may be; cheerful and hopeful the Atheistic position unquestionably is. And it is one of the curiosities of the situation that they who proclaim human nature too poor and too weak to stand alone, should charge those who take the opposite view with having a cold and cheerless philosophy to offer the world.

It is too much to expect that religious preachers will drop this kind of chatter. It is a profitable line and they will work it as long as they can. The only time when a preacher talks sense is when his congregation refuses to listen to nonsense. But it is time, now that Atheism is so common, that journalists and others made themselves better acquainted with the subject. Above all, it is distressing to find Freethinkers acquiescing in this half-sorrowful pose, and speaking as though their surrender of the religious *idea* involves great heart-burnings, and leaves them to dolefully wander through life as they best know how. The Atheist has nothing to regret because he has left nothing behind him worth regretting; and to many, the losing of religion brought positive relief. It is strange, that having nearly killed the legend of the dying Atheist shrieking out for forgiveness for his unbelief, we should be confronted with living ones stalking through life miserable and depressed because they have a little more common sense than their fellows. Sterne thought but poorly of the man who could travel the world from Dan to Beersheba and cry "all is barren," and it would be equally surprising to find the Atheist, with the whole world of nature and of human nature before him, regretting the childish trumpery of the Christian creed.

C. COHEN.

What a Century Has Done.

AT this season of the year we naturally indulge, as Freethinkers, in more or less edifying comparisons between the present and the past, and examine the prospects of our propaganda. Of course, we must judge to-day in the light of yesterday, and appraise the future by the help of that judgment. Our first question is, Has "the best of causes" made any substantial progress during, say, the last hundred and twenty years? Are we nearer the goal now than we were then? It is well known that the French Revolution of 1789 was, at first, enthusiastically welcomed by the majority of thoughtful people in this country. There was already in existence here a Society for the express purpose of commemorating the English Revolution of 1688. On November 4, 1789, this Society observed its anniversary at the meeting-house in the Old Jewry, when a celebrated Welshman by the name of Richard Price, a Unitarian clergyman, preached a remarkably bold sermon on the "Love of our Country," in which he maintained that "ignorance is the parent of bigotry, intolerance, persecution, and slavery." Eloquently he sang the praises of three great principles, liberty of conscience, the right to resist power when it is arbitrary and oppressive, and the right to choose our own rulers and to depose them when they misbehave. His peroration was a magnificent prophecy in the following grand style:—

> "I have lived to see thirty millions of people indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice, their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. And now methinks I see the ardor for liberty catching and spreading, a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience."

The sermon was followed by a stirring speech delivered at a public dinner at the London Tavern. The result of these two audacious deliverances was that the preacher from Newington-square shot at once into front-rank popularity, and the cause of the Revolution became a passion throughout the length and breadth of the land. The fire burned fast and furious, the temperature rose to a great height, and societies sprang up at various centres to supply the requisite fuel.

Ere long, however, two formidable obstacles blocked the way to victory—Burke and the French Terror. Burke was a great statesman, and his opposition to the Revolution, though for a time unavailing, was bound, in the long run, to exert a tremendous influence upon British thought. He saw fit to reply to Dr. Price's utterances, who readily returned the compliment. Meanwhile, the statesman stood practically alone, his party being almost to a man against him. His appeal was to the order of the world which was pre-ordained and sacred, and with which we had no right to interfere. Parliament as then composed was in his estimation a complete representation of the commoners of Great Britain, though Old Sarum, without constituents, had two members, while Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, and Bradford, with their teeming thousands, had not one among them. The existing order was an inheritance from Providence, which it was the imperative duty of statesmen to safeguard at whatever cost. It was the shallowest and most fallacious of arguments, and Paine, in his *Rights of Man*, smashed it to smithereens. But the inhuman excesses of the Terror yielded it an apparently irrefutable confirmation, and the British people rallied to its support. Though Burke despised the common people, calling them in his wrath the "swinish multitude," there took place a wonderful reaction against the Revolution. There was quite a revolution going on, the object of which was to put down the Revolution; and it succeeded to an amazing extent. The friends of the Revolution were marvellously courageous and energetic. The Corresponding Society boasted of thirty thousand members in London alone, all of whom cried aloud for Parliamentary reform. Thomas Hardy, its founder, William Godwin, its philosophical defender, Thomas Holcroft, Horne Tooke, and many others of the leaders, were strong, brave men, who loved righteousness and truth, and fearlessly fought for what they believed to be the right; but against Burke and the Terror they could not possibly succeed. In May, 1794, the Corresponding Society held its anniversary dinner at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, when the band played "Ca ira," the "Carmagnole," and the

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"Marseillaise." Speaking of this occasion Mr. Brailsford says:—

> "That dinner must have marked the height of the revolutionary tide in England. The reaction was already rampant and vindictive, and before the year 1794 was out it had crushed the progressive movement and postponed for thirty-eight years the triumph of Parliamentary Reform. It requires a strenuous exercise of the imagination to conceive the panic which swept over England as the news of the French Terror circulated. It fastened impartially on every class of the community, and destroyed the emotional balance no less of Pitt and his colleagues than of the working men who formed the Church and King mobs. Proclamations were issued to quell insurrections which never had been planned, and the militia called out when not a hand had been raised against the King throughout Great Britain.....A mob burned Dr. Priestley's home near Birmingham for no better reason than because he was supposed to have attended a Reform dinner, which he in fact did not attend. Hardy's bookshop in Piccadilly was rushed by a mob, and his wife, about to be confined, was injured in her efforts to escape, and died a few hours afterwards. A hunt went on all over the kingdom for booksellers and printers to prosecute, and when Thomas Paine was prosecuted in his absence for publishing the *Rights of Man*, the jury was so determined to find him guilty that they would not trouble to hear the case for the Crown" (*Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle*, pp. 38, 39).

The spirit of persecution now mercilessly stalked along from end to end of the land, and no lover of truth and freedom was safe. At Essex a dissenting minister named Winterbotham preached a sermon somewhat resembling, but of a milder character than the one alluded to by Dr. Price; but the poor fellow was tried for it and sentenced to four years' imprisonment and a fine of £200. Mr. Brailsford mentions an attorney, one John Frost, who for casually saying that in his opinion we could manage very well without kings was imprisoned, set in the pillory, and struck off the rolls. In the year 1793 the Reformers of Scotland arranged to hold a Convention at Edinburgh to advocate shorter Parliaments and universal suffrage. The idea of uttering sedition in any shape or form was entirely foreign to its promoters. The Convention met and held several perfectly orderly sessions, but one day the magistrates entered and had five of the delegates arrested without rhyme or reason. They were tried before a judge and sentenced to fourteen years' exile at Botany Bay, of whom only one lived to return to his native land.

At this period religious persecution flourished abundantly. Burke declared that Atheists were "infidels or outlaws of the constitution, not of this country, but of the human race." In 1797 a man called Thomas Williams, a poor bookseller, sold one copy of the second part of the *Age of Reason*, and a society sometimes known as the "Proclamation Society," and sometimes as the "Vice Society," undertook his prosecution. He was tried before Lord Kenyon, who pompously announced that the Christian religion was part of the law of the land, and the jury brought in a verdict of "Guilty." Sentence was postponed, and the wretched man had to languish in gaol from June, 1797, till April 28, 1798, when he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, and to be bound over in his own recognizances for £1,000. Williams humbly begged that he might be supplied with a bed, but Lord Kenyon said sternly: "I cannot order that. I daresay you will be treated properly. I wish to have it understood that this statement is a very great abatement of the punishment, as in modern times, within the period I have sat in Westminster Hall, three years' imprisonment has been ordered for an offence of much less enormity than this, for this publication is horrible to the ears of a Christian" (Mrs. B. Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinions*, pp. 31-34). And all this cruel, inhuman treatment for selling a single copy of the second part of the *Age of Reason!*

Well, we have made considerable progress since then. We are still objects of ostracism, calumny, even black lying, and sometimes of prosecution and imprisonment under the odious Blasphemy Laws; but an impartial student of history must admit that our present treatment, even at its very worst, is enormously humaner than it was a century, even a quarter of a century, ago. There is still much room for improvement, and we must keep on agitating and educating public opinion until the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws and of the various Lord's Day Observance Acts has become an accomplished fact. As we are about to commence another year of service in the cause of freedom, let us fill our minds with the absolute conviction that Truth is mighty and must prevail and completely shatter the grievous yoke of superstition; and while cherishing and acting upon this rational conviction, may we all have A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Wait Till You Come to Die."—IV.

(*Continued from p. 805.*)

> "The Church has taken great pains to show that the last moments of all infidels—that Christians did not succeed in burning—were infinitely wretched and despairing. It was alleged that words could not paint the horrors that were endured by a dying infidel. Every good Christian was expected to, and generally did, believe these accounts. They have been told and retold in every pulpit of the world. Protestant ministers have repeated the lies invented by Catholic priests; and Catholics, by a kind of theological comity, have sworn to the lies told by the Protestants. Upon this point they have always stood together, and will as long as the same falsehood can be used by both. Upon the death-bed subject the clergy grow eloquent. When describing the shudderings and shrieks of the dying unbeliever, their eyes glitter with delight. It is a festival. They are no longer men; they become hyenas; they dig open graves; they devour the dead. It is a banquet. Unsatisfied still, they paint the terrors of hell. They gaze at the souls of the infidels writhing in the coils of the worm that never dies. They see them in flames—in oceans of fire—in abysses of despair. They shout with joy; they applaud. It is an *auto-da-fé*, presided over by God."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *Oration on Voltaire*, pp 25-26.

WE will now deal briefly with Thomas Paine, whose death-bed is generally coupled with that of Voltaire as dreadful examples of infidel wretchedness at the moment of death.

The first part of the *Age of Reason*, in which Paine attacked the inspiration of the Bible, was written in Paris during the French Revolution, while he was in momentary fear of arrest by the Revolutionary Tribunal. His friends were falling fast under the guillotine. To quote his own words, "I appeared to myself to be on my death-bed, for death was on every side of me, and I had no time to lose. This accounts for my writing at the time."* He had not finished this first part more than six hours before he was arrested and taken to prison. The guard, however—whose kindness Paine acknowledges—allowed him to hand the manuscript to Joel Barlow to be conveyed to the printer.

The second part of the *Age of Reason* was actually written while Paine was in prison. Rickman says:—

> "Paine, while in the Luxembourg prison and expecting to die hourly, read to Mr. Bond (surgeon, of Brighton, from whom this anecdote came) parts of his *Age of Reason;* and every night when Mr. Bond left him, to be separately locked up, and expecting not to see Paine alive in the morning, he [Paine] always expressed his firm belief in the principles of that book, and begged Mr. Bond should tell the world such were his dying sentiments. Paine further said, if he lived he should further prosecute the work and print it. Bond added, Paine was the most conscientious man he ever knew." †

There is not much resemblance here to the orthodox picture of the terror-stricken infidel faced with death. Paine's only anxiety was lest he might be executed before the *Age of Reason* was finished, and its so-called blasphemies printed and given to the public.

* Moncure Conway, *Life of Paine* (Centenary edition, 1909) p. 196.
† *Ibid.*, 208.

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His escape from the guillotine—if it had happened to a believer—would have been cited as a miraculous interposition of Providence. For when the fatal chalk mark, which denoted that he was to be executed in the morning, was placed on his cell door, it was inadvertently placed inside the door instead of outside; so that, on the following morning, the door being closed, the guards passed it by. This saved his life until his enemies, in their turn, perished under the guillotine, and he was liberated.*

In a pious work, entitled the *Life and Gospel Labors of Stephen Grellet*, there is a most circumstantial account, given by a certain Mary Hinsdale, that she heard Paine, on his death-bed, cry, "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me"; she also heard him declare, "If the Devil has ever had any agency in any work, he has had it in my writing that book [the *Age of Reason*]." This statement has been the foundation for all the lying fables circulated about Paine's death-bed. But, fortunately, we have the best of evidence as to the falsity of this statement.

Sturdy old Cobbett, who, from being one of Paine's most violent assailants, became converted, through Paine's political writings, into one of his most eloquent defenders, investigated this story on the spot—in America, where Paine died.

Paine died at the house of Madame Bonneville, a French lady who fled to America from the French Revolution. The true account of his death is given by Moncure Conway in his standard *Life of Thomas Paine*, a work which cost him many years of patient research. It runs as follows:—

> "After the years in which the stories of Paine's wretched end have been accumulating, now appears the testimony of the Catholic lady,—persons who remember Madame Bonneville assure me that she was a perfect lady,—that Paine's mind was active to the last, that shortly before death he made a humorous retort to Dr. Romaine, that he died after a tranquil night.
>
> "Paine died at eight o'clock on the morning of June 8, 1809. Shortly before, two clergymen had invaded his room, and so soon as they spoke about his opinions Paine said: 'Let me alone; good morning!' Madame Bonneville asked if he was satisfied with the treatment he had received in her house, and he said 'Oh yes.' These were the last words of Thomas Paine" (p. 322).

During Paine's last days, he received many visits from Mr. Willett Hicks, a broad-minded Quaker, who visited Paine as a friend, and without any objective religious design. Willett Hicks told Gilbert Vale—the author of a *Life of Paine*—that after Paine's death he was beset by pleading questions from his Quaker brethren, "Did thee never hear him call on Christ?" "As for money," said Hicks, "I could have had any sum."

It was Willett Hicks who—when following the funeral of Paine—being told by a Christian gentleman that Paine would get a good share of purgatory before the Devil would let him go, replied that "he would sooner take his chance with Paine than any man in New York on that score."†

Now, the Mary Hinsdale (then known by her maiden name, Mary Roscoe) who floated the pious fable of Paine's death-bed recantation, was a servant in Willett Hicks's house, and ten years after Paine's death she pretended that she had been sent with some delicacy to Paine, and had heard him say the words we have before quoted.

Willett Hicks "declared she never saw Paine at all."‡ When she was hunted out by Cobbett, "she shuffled, she evaded, she affected not to understand," says Cobbett, and finally said she had "no recollection of any person or thing she saw at Thomas Paine's house."§ Cobbett declared the whole story of Paine's recantation to be "a lie from beginning to end." Finally, the same Mary Hinsdale afterwards "reported," says Moncure Conway,—

> "that a distinguished member of the Hicksite Society, Mary Lockwood, had recanted in the same way as Paine. This being proved false, the hysterical Mary sank and remained in oblivion, from which she is recalled only by the Rev. Rip Van Winkle."*

Thomas Paine never altered his opinions. Willett Hicks, the Quaker, says so. Madame Bonneville, the Roman Catholic, says so. So do the numerous clergymen and others who pestered Paine's last days by beseeching him to repent. The evidence is overwhelming.

These death-bed lies are easy to concoct, but not easy to disprove; we commend to the evangelical clergy who are so fond of using the "Infidel Death-bed" argument the following Roman Catholic account of the deaths of Luther and Calvin, the founders of the Protestant Churches. It is taken from a book written by Mgr. Segur, published in Boston by T. B. Noonan & Co., entitled *Plain Talk About the Protestantism of To-day*, where we are told:—

> "Luther died forlorn of God, blaspheming to the very end. His last word was an attestation of impenitence. His eldest son, who had doubts both about the reformation and the reform, asked him for a last time whether he persevered in the doctrine he preached. 'Yes,' replied a gurgling sound from the old sinner's throat—and Luther was before his God" (p. 225).

Calvin, continues this Christian priest, died of scarlet fever, devoured by vermin, and eaten up by an ulcerous abscess, the stench whereof drove away every person. In great misery he gave up his rascally ghost, despairing of salvation, evoking the devils from the abyss, and uttering oaths most horrible and blasphemies most frightful (p. 225) †

Do we believe these "idle tales of dying horrors," as Carlyle called them? No, we do not; they are Lies, Lies, Lies. But they illustrate the power of religion in making men bear false witness when it tends to the glory of God. We do not believe that any other motive but religion would induce anyone to such wickedness as putting lies into the mouth of a man after he is past the power of contradicting them. Sir Richard Burton, the famous traveller and linguist, was a well-known Freethinker, but when he was lying unconscious on the verge of death, his Roman Catholic wife called in a priest, who administered the sacrament to the unconscious body, and Burton was claimed as "reconciled" to the Catholic Church. The same farce was played over the body of Littré, the great French Atheist.

During Charles Bradlaugh's last illness, his daughter—knowing the manners and customs of Christians in the matter of dying Freethinkers—took the precaution to get the signed testimony of the doctor and nurses who attended her father's last illness. It was well she did so, for the usual batch of lies appeared. Even such well-known public people as the late Mr. Charles Cooper, editor of the *Scotsman*, the late Sir Isaac Holden, and the Countess Wachtmeister declared that Mr. Bradlaugh changed his opinions before he died.

Mr. Bradlaugh's daughter says:—

> "The very last words I heard him utter during the night of his death were reminiscent of his voyage to India. Never throughout the whole time did he by sign or sound indicate that there was the smallest change in his opinions."‡

(To be concluded.) W. MANN.

"God's Birthday."

> "On looking out of the window this morning I noticed that my neighbors were drunker than usual, and I remembered that it was the birthday of their redeemer."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

THERE is a legend as old as any in the Christian Church, which has put the premium upon gloom and has made it part and parcel of the orthodox

* Moncure Conway. *Life of Paine*, p. 209.
† Conway, *Life of Paine*, p. 322.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 324.
§ G. W. Foote, *Infidel Death-Beds*, p. 74; citing the *Republican* (Feb. 13, 1824), vol. ix., p. 221.

* Moncure Conway, *Life of Paine*, pp. 324-5.
† See "Acid Drops," *Freethinker* (Dec. 18, 1892).
‡ *Did Charles Bradlaugh Die an Atheist?* by his daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, p. 13; 1913. (Watts & Co.)

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superstition. It is that Christ was never seen to smile, but often to weep. This does not concern Freethinkers overmuch, for those unrepentant sinners do not think it likely that the "Man of Sorrows" would, as Shakespeare puts it, "laugh mortal." Man is, however, a laughing animal, and in this he is superior, if in nothing else. To be ashamed of laughter, to hold back merriment and mirth; to live in gloom and seriousness may suit the ascetics, but is unworthy of men, who love sunshine and the song of children, and the open breezy day, rather than the spectral quiet and gloom of the cloister.

Hence the convivial nature of Christmas Day, alleged to be the birthday of Christ, has frequently been noted to the discomfiture of theologians, who object to the rationalistic explanation of Christianity. "God's birthday" is an orgy of gluttony and godliness, and the reason for this is an excellent piece of Christian evidence, for it plucks the heart out of the orthodox superstition.

Christmas Day was not kept regularly until many generations after the alleged birth of Christ. When first observed, it was kept on varying dates. The precise time of Jesus' birth, like that of James de la Pluche, was "wropt in mystery"; but it certainly was not in December. Why, then, do Christians observe Christmas Day on December 25, and why is the birthday of the ascetic "Man of Sorrows" a veritable carnival of conviviality?

Like all human institutions, the Christian Churches and their feast days have had to contend in open warfare for survival. The festivals of Pagan Rome were numerous, and it was in competition with the feast of the Saturnalia, one of the principal Roman festivals, that Christmas Day came to be instituted by the Christians, and the date fixed as December 25. The anniversary of Saturn was an old-established institution, and the propensity of converts from Paganism to cling to custom proved invincible. If the apostates were to be retained in the folds of the new religion, it was imperative for the Christians to incorporate the old under the mask of the new.

This struggle for survival has been maintained ever since. In the past the Church sought for adherents by increasing her festal days, and she crushed opposition by bribing the weak and murdering the strong. In the twentieth century she is cajoling apostates all over the non-Christian world by means of medical missionaries, and at home by instituting Pleasant Sunday Afternoons in the place of painful Sabbaths, and by hypocritically identifying herself with social measures which appeal to the working classes.

Even the Christian festival itself, with all its hypocritical profession of goodwill, is largely pretence and make-believe. Not once in its persecuting history has the Christian Church manifested "goodwill to men" when those men were opposed to its own creed. The nations which worship the Prince of Peace keep millions in the grasp of militarism from the Elbe to the Spree, from the Seine to the Neva. Whether the nation be England, America, France, Russia, or Germany, the fact is the same. With the gospels on their tables and the creeds on their lying lips, the nations have priestly blessings on their warfare, and invoke Christ before launching their battleships.

Slum landlords, the employers of sweated labor, dealers in adulterated goods, see no inconsistency in murmuring in their seats at worship, "Return good for evil," "Blessed be ye poor," and the rest of the parrot recitative of peace and forbearance. When Freethinkers point out the inconsistency of such conduct, they are regarded as madmen, and insulted and imprisoned. Yet who can deny that, if Christ's commands had any power, it would be viewed as a frightful crime to make weapons of murder or to grind the faces of the poor. The old jest that "singing hymns never prevented a grocer from sanding his sugar" expresses in a sentence what may be said in all seriousness of the powerlessness of Christianity to affect daily life and conduct.

For of all powerless things on earth, Christianity is the feeblest, even though sovereigns are still consecrated, multitudes still baptised, parliaments and tribunals still opened, and myriads of churches and chapels still built in its name. It has become a hollow make-believe, a robe with a corpse hidden within it. There is no Devil there at all except the men who make money out of this sham, and who hiss at the thinkers who would free mankind from their influence.

The Freethinkers are not frightened by bugbears of ignorance and superstition. They stand calmly where they have arrived, knowing that in the fulness of time the altar of Christ will be superseded by the altar of Truth. Even the festival of Yuletide will gain by the change, for no longer will it be associated with an organised hypocrisy, nor will it be a pretended celebration of an event that never happened.

MIMNERMUS.

Acid Drops.

The *Daily Mirror* struts and brags as if it had saved the life of Mrs. Williams, who was sentenced to death for the murder of her little boy. What saved her was the fact that she was going to be a mother again. Her sentence is commuted to penal servitude for life; which, by the way, does not necessarily mean that she will be imprisoned for any great length of time. Of course the *Daily Mirror* printed a few more final letters on the matter, and naturally there was one from Bishop Welldon, the Dean of Manchester. Look at this as a sample of the reverend gentleman's wisdom. After remarking that the hanging of a woman would be a departure from general usage, he continued:—

> "I approve that usage of a humane instance of the privileges accorded to women, just because they are women. I hope that women will not forfeit their privileged position."

Does he approve it? But the non-execution of female murderers in no way depends upon *his* approval. And how on earth could women forfeit their privileged position, when it is theirs merely *as* women? Can they unsex themselves? The Bishop is in a sad muddle.

The principal business streets in the borough of Southend-on-Sea, which includes the "aristocratic" Westcliff-on-Sea—have been decorated for the Christmas holiday at the expense of the local tradesmen, who want to bring people from far and near outside their shops, where, like the good Christians they are, they labor not for meat which perisheth. (*N.B.*—The "meat" in this case applies to everything eatable.) The decorations are not exactly artistic, but there is an attempt at something beyond red, white, and blue electric lights here and there. King George's crown is not forgotten; in fact, he seems to be the presiding genius of the show. We do not notice a single religious element; it is the display of a secular festival throughout; and Jesus Christ has not so much as a look in the celebration. Yet there are a lot of bigoted Christians in Southend and Westcliff; and, with the aid of the county licensing magistrates, they have closed the Sunday picture shows for a good many years. Why then is poor Jesus Christ treated in this insulting manner? It is done, of course, in the name of *business*, which is now the most sacred word in the English dictionary—beating "God," "Christ," the "Holy Mother," ay, and the "Holy Father" into fits. Moreover, it is sad to say, that the "Let us pray!" in the Lord's house on Sunday is too often translated into "Let us prey" on the Monday morning.

One of life's little ironies is displayed in the fact that the Southend Municipal Cemetery is under the control of the local Entertainments Committee. They might plead that some of their clients join the "heavenly choir."

Lord Haldane has been telling Anglicans and Nonconformists that if they don't agree—and he is afraid they won't—on the subject of religious instruction, they will both be put out of the elementary schools in England. It is their quarreling, he says, which is making it impossible to do anything like justice to Education in this country. Is this a foreshadowing of Secular Education. We hope so. But you can never be sure of these slippery politicians.

Mr. Asquith received a Nonconformist deputation on the educational question. Dr. Clifford was the chief speaker,

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and was assisted by Rev. F. B. Meyer and Rev. J. Scott Lidgett. Who wants to know any more? These Nonconformists know their book. They are not the three blind mice.

Sir Edward Grey states plainly that the sole cause of the Home Rule quarrel is religion. Belfast would be a happy family if it were not for the mutual hatred of Catholic and Protestant. Perhaps the Bishop of London will remember this when he turns his attention to Ireland again.

The Bishop of London is a sad nincompoop, and there are a great many clergymen in his diocese to match him. No less than 452 of them have signed a request for public prayer on the Irish question. The idea is that the supporters and opponents of Home Rule may gather up under the banner of the Church, who will say, "Bless you, my children!" Then the wisdom of the Lord will descend upon them, they will agree with each other at once, and a settlement of the Irish question pleasing to all parties will take place immediately. Carson and Redmond, Asquith and Bonar Law, Sir Edward Grey and Austen Chamberlain, Lloyd George and F. E. Smith, will fall upon each other's necks and weep for joy. And all will be for the best in the best of all possible worlds. What a lovely picture! And what a lovely lot of fools believe it will be realised.

"Artifex," in the *Manchester Guardian*, falls foul of Mr. Hugh S. Elliott for some of his remarks concerning the relation of neural states to neural processes. He says, by way of introduction, that Mr. Elliott is the author of "a remarkably poor book on M. Bergson." Of course, one way of meeting sneers of this kind is to reply in directly opposite terms. As a matter of fact, Mr. Elliott's criticism of Bergson is anything but a "poor book." So far as it goes, it is remarkably well done; and Mr. Elliott went the right way to work when he reduced the position of M. Bergson to plain language. In the long run, this is the most effective way of dealing with one who deals very largely in words. "Artifex" would doubtless have been better pleased if Mr. Elliott had indulged in page after page of metaphysics on the opposite side, but the result would not have been nearly so conclusive. Mr. Elliott's was one of the few pieces of writing on the subject that really pricked the bubble of Bergsonism.

The particular statement that "Artifex" falls foul of is this: Mr. Elliott, he says, writes that—

> "Physiology has proved beyond any power of doubt that all our acts, all our thoughts, and all our emotions are dependent purely and exclusively on material events proceeding in the brain, and that these material events are set going by the ordinary laws of matter and motion. A human being, like all other animals, is an excessively complex organism, of which every movement is a necessary consequence of some previous arrangement of material particles. The whole is susceptible of complete explanation in terms of physics and chemistry; there is unquestionably no such thing as a vital force, nor is there the least rag of evidence in favor of the existence of a soul."

"Of course," says "Artifex," "this is pure nonsense."

It is easy enough to polish off a statement that one doesn't like with an "Of course"; but, with the exception of two or three words in Mr. Elliott's summary, all he says is the commonly accepted ground of all scientific investigation. There is not a physiologist or psychologist of any authority who does not assume in all his investigations that neural processes do provide the equivalent of mental states. How they do this is quite another question; and while there is a wide divergence of opinion on this second question, there is a fairly general agreement on the first. "Artifex" says "we are no nearer an explanation to-day of how a series of chemical changes and molecular movements in the brain issue in a fact of consciousness than we were a century ago." "Artifex" invites plain speaking, and so we beg to say that if he really understood what he was talking about he would not make much of this. The only kind of explanation here or elsewhere is the establishment of equivalents. How a union of oxygen and hydrogen issues in water we do not know, and we do not know because the "how" is meaningless. All we do know is that one is the equivalent of the other. And it is the same with psychology. When it has been shown that neural processes always accompany mental states, we have laid the foundations of a science of physiological psychology. When we are able to show how these neural states vary with given mental states, our science will be complete. That is as far as we can ever get—either in this or in any other matter. A complete scientific explanation is the demonstration that, in the case of any two series, one is the equivalent of the other; and that, given one, the other invariably follows. What "Artifex" and his kind lack is a little acquaintance with scientific method.

One other point in conclusion. It is generally thought by writers like "Artifex" that it is the duty of the Materialist to point out in what way body and mind are connected. This is not the case. The connection of the two is axiomatic; it is an everyday experience. What has to be shown is how they can be disconnected. In what way can the one exist apart from the other? Mr. Elliott is quite right in saying that there is not a shred of evidence in support of the existence of a "soul."

The Poor Clergy Relief Corporation advertises the fact that it has relieved no less than 32,000 cases of clerical distress. The glorious Gospel does not appear to prevent the clergy's sweating one another.

The London Missionary Society has an accumulated deficiency of over £100,000. Some of the aborigines may breathe again, for the European capitalist soon follows the colporteurs.

"We can only express our gratitude in symbols," says a writer in a church magazine. The clergy see to it that those symbols are £ s. d.

Why is it that theatrical people are made so much of by the newspapers? One would think, from the interviews they undergo, that they were of great authority in all departments of human life and thought; whereas, on the whole, it is notorious that they are very much the contrary. Sir Herbert Tree, for instance, having arrived at the age of sixty, was interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Chronicle*. Amongst the views he expressed was one on books and reading. There were rows of books on the wall of the room he was sitting in, but "he declared that he had not read more than ten books in twenty years. The neglect of books is Sir Herbert's prescription for retaining youth. 'Otherwise,' he says, 'you think in quotations.'" Now is not this ridiculous? And is it not entirely false? The most original minded men, of course, are the great poets, and great poets have always been great readers. Emerson justly notes that Shakespeare was a great reader. Did *he* think in quotations? Other people think in quotations from him. Ben Jonson, of course, was an extremely learned person. Spenser was learned too, though not quite a rival to Ben. Milton's choice erudition is proverbial. Dryden read extensively. Pope was probably less so, but many good books passed through his hands. When we come to later English poets, such as Cowper, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, we find that they were all great readers. Shelley was hardly ever without a book. Coleridge read everything. His annotations enriched the margins of half the world's literature. Tennyson was well read; one scarcely knows what Browning had *not* read; and George Meredith's reading was evidently wide and deep. Macaulay was not much of a poet; but he was reckoned amongst the great prose writers; he was an insatiable reader, he had also a marvellous memory, yet the books he perused did not impair the value of the books he wrote himself. Sir Herbert Tree was clearly talking nonsense. All men do that at times, but their is no reason why their absurdities should be paraded as wisdom.

The Rev. Albert Swift fell dead from his bicycle last week. As he was not a Freethinker, there is no moral.

"Providence" has been active through the volcano in Ambrym Island in the New Hebrides. Six new craters were formed. Large portions of the island have been devastated by fire, lava, and cinders, and most of the inhabitants had to be rescued by boats and ships. "He doeth all things well."

The Bible God's first commandment was "Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." It was given a long time ago, but it has never lost its power, especially with the clergy, who are amongst the foremost promoters of the population. Here is the Rev. J. Carden, for instance, who has just been ordered by the Brentford magistrates to pay towards the upbringing of a child. The mother, who is only nineteen years of age, was formerly a domestic servant in the reverend gentleman's employ. Such patriarchal morality is not unnatural in devout readers of the Old Testament.

"Studies of Men Mended" is the title of a Religious Tract Society publication. It sounds cracked.

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Dean Inge explains the presence of pain in the world in this way. God, he says, "wished us to find out all his laws, so far as they concerned us, and he would go on punishing our ignorance until we did find them out." "God," we should imagine, will not feel flattered by the apology. If he wanted us to find out all his laws, there seems an obvious way in which this could have been done. But man was not told what the "laws" were; he was not even told he had to find out. Nay, one of the earliest offences of man, according to the Bible, was that of seeking to know too much. God doesn't tell man what these laws are; he fashions him in ignorance, allows him to grope about in ignorance, and all the time punishes him for not having knowledge. The stupidity of clerical apologies almost passes comprehension. And yet some of these clergymen are intelligent enough in other directions. It is when they turn on the religious tap that they become supernaturally silly.

"Vanoc," in the *Referee*, wants to know why we cannot agree upon a "unit of happiness," and says "that once we establish the principle that all legislation increasing unhappiness, no matter by what fine names it may be called, is bad legislation, we shall be on the road to secure the continuity of policy that we now lack, and that alone can save us." This is hardly a "unit of happiness"; it is rather a test of conduct, in legislation and elsewhere. And it is the one that Bentham, and Mill, and Spencer, and Freethinkers generally have always insisted is the only rational one. Freethinkers have a habit of "getting there" first, not because they are blessed with a superhuman degree of intelligence, but mainly because they look at life without their vision being blurred by a fog of superstition.

Apropos of nothing very pertinent, "Vanoc" remarks "Mr. Bradlaugh was regarded by those who professed and called themselves Christians as an extremely wicked man, instead of what he really was—a good man with extremely bad taste." Comment of this kind is really impertinent, and the less excusable because it so wholly unnecessary. Bradlaugh fought the allied forces of vested interest, tyranny, and superstition, and in the end won the respect and admiration of the best of his enemies. We are not aware that "Vanoc" has ever attempted a task of this kind, and if he did attempt it, we have little evidence to believe that his efforts would meet with any measure of success. All the bad taste we know of concerning Bradlaugh is that he declined the cowardly policy of refusing to call a lie a probable truth, and expressed his opinions in plain, unmistakable English. And that is the kind of "bad taste" that a Christian community never forgives.

Speaking at a Labor gathering, Mr. John Hill, Secretary of the Boilermakers' Union, said that the Labor movement was not prepared to shed any members to secure alliance with the Church. We were pleased to notice this observation, and should be better pleased to see leaders of the Labor movement spending less time on the impossible task of placating and capturing the Churches. They might just as well appeal to the capitalists right off to join the Labor movement. It should be plain to the dullest that the clergy are coquetting with the Labor movement only because of what they can get out of it. Their interest is wholly a professional interest, and a great many very earnest spirits among the rank and file are more than disgusted at some of the leaders so openly playing into their hands. The report before us says that it is impossible to forecast what the result of this conference between the Churches and Labor (held at Newcastle) will be, but the tone and temper of the Labor speakers displayed little readiness to recognise any good in what the Churches are trying to do. That is, to our mind, the most cheering feature of the gathering. It shows that some are beginning to see through the vague amiabilities of a handful of clergymen, and are a little alive to the dangers of the proposed alliance.

The Bedford family never did a single stroke of work to earn their immense wealth. It all came to them as a gift from Kings who robbed the nation. Their high and mighty lives have always been parasitic. One of them had the impudence—and, as it turned out, the imprudence—to twit Edmund Burke with his pension. Burke's reply was that he himself was but a minnow while the Duke of Bedford was a huge whale disporting himself in an ocean of royal bounty. Burke's pension, too, died with him, while the Duke of Bedford's went on from generation to generation. It goes on still. The present holder of the title (and the plunder) has just sold a portion of his London estates for a sum said to run into millions. What is sold is the right to levy rent, market tolls, etc., etc., on the traders and inhabitants who operate or reside in that part of London. And the value of that right goes on increasing under the pressure of business and population. Nor is that all. The holders of that right are able to banish anybody they please from the most desirable district in London. Many years ago negotiations were carried on for a vacant shop in Chandos-street; everything was satisfactory on both sides, and the agreement was just going to be signed, when a notification came from the Duke of Bedford's agent that the transfer of the lease would not be sanctioned, as a Freethought publishing business could not allowed on the Bedford estate. Material property and moral despotism went together. And they go together still.

In an article on "Black Magic," by a "Psychical Expert," in a morning newspaper, it is stated that "Among the 'intellectuals' there are thousands of men and women who, after abandoning Christianity, have, in the search for some kind of spiritual life which is an essential craving of the human heart, plunged into the dark labyrinths of occult science." *Essential craving of the human heart!* Is it not a high-faultin' equivalent for an *Ancient habit of the human system?*

Hans Schmidt, the priest who murdered Anna Annuller last August, and threw portions of the dismembered body into the Hudson River, was hunted down by a clever detective whose only clue was the tag of a pillow-case in one of the parcels. The priest confessed his guilt on being arrested, and declared that he was commanded by his patron saint, Elizabeth of Hungary, to offer up a sacrifice which was to be consummated by his drinking the blood of the offering. The trial is now proceeding, and the holy priest seems likely to die in a chair. No doubt he will go to glory after a little purgatorial cleansing. Where his victim has gone is unknown.

Two nude figures in bronze representing, Adam and Eve, at Potsdam, were flung into a ditch by some pious inhabitants who were shocked at the absence of clothing in the statues. Piety and pornography go together in Germany as elsewhere.

The cost of living is going up, and, owing to the unrest among undertakers, it looks as if the cost of dying were going up too. Perhaps the dear clergy may join in, and want heavier fees for post-mortem rites.

Things one might have said otherwise are only too common. Everybody knows the scriptural one: "And he said unto them saddle the ass, and they saddled *him*." Here is a trade advertisement now in use: "Why wait for indigestion? Take Beecham's Pills." Here is a dairy advertisement in South Essex: "The only firm that keep cows in the borough." Meaning, "The only firm in the borough that keep cows."

We saw one of our most "blasphemous" old jokes reprinted (slightly spoiled, of course) in a London evening paper lately. It was about the nigger preacher who, when he stated that the Lord made the first man out of clay and stuck him up against the palings to dry, was asked by one of his congregation, "Who made de palins?" Whereupon the preacher complained that such questions would upset any system of theology.

A few years ago Rev. C. F. Spurr went to Melbourne, Australia, one of his objects being—as was generally stated at the time—to overthrow the system of Secular Education as it exists in some of the colonies. He is now returning, and the Secular Education question is where it was, while Freethought generally is more advanced than when he arrived in the country. The *Christian World* says that the Australian Government has recognised the value of Mr. Spurr's work by presenting him with a set of 200 slides for lecturing purposes. The recognition is rather amusing. We believe the Australian Government will present slides to any likely person who cares to convert himself into an emigration agent by lecturing on Australia. We have no doubt that the wine-growing firms in Australia would also be pleased to show their appreciation of Mr. Spurr's services by presenting him with a few hundred thousand circulars for distribution at the lectures on Australia.

At the London County Council Education Committee meeting, the Rev. U. J. Somerville objected to Meredith's *Ordeal of Richard Feverel* as unsuitable for use in women's institutes, but afterwards withdrew his opposition. Was he afraid of being confronted with the Bible?

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To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £279 4s. 1d. Received since:—Constance, £1 5s.; W. R. Angell, 5s.; Richard Allen (New Zealand) £1; Mrs. Turnbull and Family (Glasgow) £1; Immanuel, 10s.

ORDINARY Correspondence stands over till next week, owing to our having to go to press so early, in consequence of the holidays.

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

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

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We have great pleasure in reproducing the following leaderette on the Stewart case from the *Manchester Guardian*:—

"THE BLASPHEMY CASE.

"Exactly a month ago on Monday last a Mr. T. W. Stewart was sentenced at the Staffordshire Assizes to four months' imprisonment for 'committing blasphemy by attacking the truth of the Christian religion.' At the time we commented on the sentence, but it then seemed possible, if not likely, that the Home Secretary might see his way to advise the exercise of the prerogative of pardon, and that in a few days' time the convicted man would be free. Nothing of the kind has happened; Mr. Stewart seems to have been forgotten both by the public and by the authorities, and there seems every reason to believe that unless his case is strongly taken up he will have to serve out his sentence. We publish to-day an article by Professor Gilbert Murray calling public attention to the subject. The arguments which he brings forward will, we are convinced, commend themselves to all fair-minded and thinking people. The punishment inflicted is indeed indefensible, bearing in mind the latitude allowed, and rightly allowed, to learned persons whose offence is, essentially, the same, but who are protected by the freedom to express any opinion which is in this country permitted to people who expound their views either in print or the lecture-room. It cannot be right that professors and learned writers should go free and an itinerant lecturer be convicted simply because the former know the canons of good taste better than the latter, or are more moderate in their statements of the same views. There ought not to be one law for the educated and another for the ignorant or half-educated. 'Coarseness,' 'bad taste,' and 'speaking so as to excite ridicule' cannot surely be attributes converting the permissible into the criminal in public debate. If Mr. Stewart was obscene he could have been summoned and punished for obscenity; if he incited people to break the peace, he could have been dealt with for that too. But to put into action against him, and for the second time, so rusty and questionable a weapon as the Blasphemy Law is a disgrace to the legal system. We hope Mr. McKenna will look into the case."

Stewart's case has not been "forgotten" in the *Freethinker*. We are now considering whether some more effective public action cannot be taken.

Professor Gilbert Murray's letter referred to in the previous cutting from the *Manchester Guardian* deserves the thanks of every friend of liberty and justice. The following passage will be of considerable interest to our readers:—

"Mr. T. W. Stewart is quietly left to serve out his sentence in Stafford Gaol. No responsible person seems to be stirring on his behalf; yet I have the greatest difficulty in finding anyone who seriously approves of his prosecution or defends the Blasphemy Acts. The Judge who sentenced him seems to have carefully guarded himself against expressing any approval of the law which, as he explained to the jury, he had to administer. The present Prime Minister as long ago as 1889 voted for a Bill providing that 'after the passing of this Act no criminal proceedings shall be instituted in any court against any person for schism heresy, blasphemous libel, blasphemy at common law, or Atheism.' The present Lord Chancellor voted with him. The present Law Officers of the Crown have expressed no public or official opinion on the question, but I do not think that any person who knows either Sir John Simon's or Sir Stanley Buckmaster's record can suppose that on this point they are less liberal than Mr. Asquith and Lord Haldane. I have made a point of consulting some Liberal divines of high authority in the Church, and find them speaking with the same voice. They do not differ from the opinion of the Blasphemy Law expressed by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen in the *Fortnightly Review* for March, 1884: 'No one can be more convinced of its utter unfitness for these times, if indeed it was ever fit for any times.' Yet no one moves for the alteration of the law; and the Home Secretary does not let Mr. Stewart out of prison."

Professor Murray points out that the alteration made by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in 1883 in the Common Law of Blasphemy simply comes to this that "working men and imperfectly educated speakers are punished" while "highly educated sceptics can say or write what they like." The offence of "blasphemy" becomes merely a matter of taste.

We are extremely pleased to quote Professor Murray's statement as to the real extent of Stewart's "offence."

"But the cynical man of the world has another argument. 'It is all very well,' he sagely suggests, 'to say that it is only a question of bad taste. But a jury would never convict a man unless he had said something frightfully obscene.' The answer is simple. If Stewart is to be punished for obscene language, let him be charged with it and defend himself. Do not charge him with one offence and condemn him on another, of which not a word has been said. But there is also in this case another answer. Through the kindness of Lord Coleridge I have been allowed to see the shorthand report of the two lectures on which Stewart was condemned, and though I do not for a moment agree with their opinions or admire their style, they certainly afford no foundation for any charge of foul language or obscenity."

Our readers will recollect that we have repeatedly written to the same effect. We reprinted the "blasphemy" alleged against Stewart at his first appearance before the Wolverhampton magistrates, and we declared that if the worst sentences had appeared in the local press, from which we borrowed, the prosecution was ridiculous even under the existing law, and the motive of it nothing but sheer malignant bigotry. Professor Murray's testimony as to the peccant parts of Stewart's lectures is extremely valuable.

The *Young Liberal* for November (we regret we have only just seen it) had a strong editorial paragraph in favor of Secular Education. Incidentally it asked "what sort of Nonconformists are those who believe that the State should teach 'religion'—save the mark!—at public expense in the public elementary schools?" A jesuitical letter from the Rev. Dr. Clifford appears in the December number. Dr. Clifford is in favor of Secular Education *plus* the Bible; which is like being in favor of Teetotalism *plus* Whiskey. We are delighted to see that the *Young Liberal* takes him to task and leaves him in a sad state of delapidation.

A lady, giving no address, and no other name than "Constance," sends a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund. The handwriting is not that of a young person; it is even a little shaky; but it shows character and refinement, and an open, liberal nature. *Constance!* What a lovely name! It combines every grace with every dignity. And what a woman Shakespeare depicted under that name in the play which holy motherhood and divine childhood render so supernally sacred. There are no perfect masculine names, but how many perfect female names may be found in the pages of Shakespeare, without going any further. Portia, Desdemona, Cordelia, Ophelia, Imogen, and the rest. "One of Shakespeare's women" was the highest praise Shelley could give to a lady friend. And the Bible is woman's best friend—is it? Nonsense. Besides it is too late. The place is already filled by Shakespeare.

We have received an offer from an old member of the N. S. S. and reader of the *Freethinker* in Burmah to make up the deficiency on the President's Honorarium Fund for 1913—that is, to make up the round figure of £300. We go to press too early to deal with this communication further this week. We shall have something to say about it in our next issue. Meanwhile those who intended to be in the subscribers' list should not hold back. That wouldn't be fair.

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Christmas.

AT the present time we have many holidays in the year; the greatest of them all is Christmas, and there is every reason in the world why Christmas should be the greatest holiday to the inhabitants of the northern temperate zone.

Many thousands of years ago the people did not have fine and comfortable houses to protect them from the inclemency of the weather; they lived very much the same as the birds do at the present time; they had a comfortable and joyous time of it during the warm months of the year, and then suffered and died in the cold months. The increase of both men and beasts was retarded by the same cause—cold winters and the absence of food.

As man advanced a little in civilisation he became aware of the fact that the sun was the most important thing in existence. The sun was the god of light and warmth. It was the sun that caused vegetation to grow; in fact, the sun did everything, and was therefore worshiped. They noticed, however, that the demon of cold and darkness ruled the world for a portion of the year, and as the sun appeared to travel to the south, to rise later and set earlier each day, it appeared to them that the demon of darkness was getting the better of the god of light. They observed that this went on for some time, until the god of light resumed his power; when the god of light would for a time again triumph over the demon of cold and darkness. With the crude instruments at their disposal, they were not able to determine the exact day that the sun commenced its northern march. It really commenced between December 21 and 22, but it only showed on their instruments on the 25th. Therefore, December 25 became a day of rejoicing and merry-making, their prayers had been answered, the god of light and warmth had overcome the demon of darkness and cold.

Not only was this day fixed as being *the* holiday of the year in Asia, Europe, and a part of Africa, but it was observed in the same manner in Mexico long before there was any communication between the eastern and the western world.

For a time, the Christian Church attempted to suppress this day as a Pagan institution; but it had been observed for so many thousand years that this was found impossible. The people would not give up their holiday. A very brilliant idea then occurred to the high officials of the Roman Church; so, in the fourth century, they got over the trouble by announcing that one of their principal gods was born on December 25, and by this wise action the old Pagan holiday became the principal Christian holiday of the world.

(SIR) HIRAM S. MAXIM.

The Protestants Protest.

FROM a Secular and even Protestant view the ostentatious attendance of the President at the annual Thanksgiving Mass, held in St. Patrick's Cathedral (Catholic) in Washington, accompanied by members of his Cabinet, justices of the Supreme Court, the diplomatic dignitaries, congressmen, and senators, is a national scandal. How far back the custom extends we are not prepared to say, but it seems to have come in with the Roman Catholic regime under McKinley. President Taft's flagrant disregard of the proprieties in this respect was the most conspicuous. The preparations made at the cathedral for receiving the President and his train have each year increased in pomp and show. Last year, as described by the press, they were "on a grander scale than ever before. Cardinal Gibbons sat on a scarlet throne on the right of the altar," and about him were his clergy and his chaplains. Only cardinals have thrones in this country. The President and his escort sit humbly in seats ten feet below.

The news that President Wilson has accepted an invitation to attend Thanksgiving Mass this year, and that there will be added millinery and magnificence, arouses the Protestants of Washington to protest. On November 18 resolutions prepared by the Rev. Dr. Randolph H. McKim, former president of the Episcopal House of Deputies, were adopted by the clergy of Episcopal, Lutheran, Baptist, and Disciples of Christ Churches, expressing their indignation at this favoritism shown the Church of Rome by the President of the United States. The resolutions read:—

> "The attendance of our Chief Magistrate and members of his Cabinet, year after year, has been made use of to give color to the Roman claim that the service is now the official celebration of Thanksgiving Day in our national capital.
>
> "This fact has been understood in the United States and abroad to give the Roman Catholic Church a prestige and pre-eminence over all other Churches. Every effort is made by the Roman hierarchy to give this Roman Mass the color of an official function.
>
> "We protest against the attempt to convert our national Thanksgiving Day into a Roman Catholic festival in a service entirely out of harmony with the history of the genius of our country and the spirit and purpose of the day.
>
> "We desire to give voice to the widespread feeling of indignation among millions of Protestants of America against the efforts of the Roman press and the Roman hierarchy to exploit the presence of our Chief Magistrate and some of his Cabinet (which we are convinced has only been intended as an act of courtesy and goodwill) for the purpose of glorifying the Roman Catholic Church and giving this service an official characterisation it does not and cannot possess."

These Thanksgiving Masses, called Pan-American or All-American, are said to have been worked up by Monsignor Russell, of Washington. We may assume that Russell proceeded under the direction of his superior, Cardinal Gibbons, who got the idea from Rome. The Pan-American Mass is held in Washington instead of some other American capital in order to get the President of the United States, for the other countries of America are Catholic and their officials go to Mass without special invitation.

While the Protestant protest is welcomed as bringing the sectarian aspect of the President's offence up for comment and criticism, it is, after all, something of a joke. The Thanksgiving proclamation, without which there would be no Thanksgiving Mass on Thursday, is a Protestant affair. It is the Protestants who have mocked the secular theory of our government with their religious fasts and feasts, their sabbaths and holy days. The Catholics, in seizing upon Thanksgiving Day to make capital for their Church, are using Protestant material. Protestants feathered the shaft that now penetrates their gizzards. They are glad enough to have the Presidents attend their churches, as all our Chief Magistrates of late years have done, because the attendance of a President means prosperity of a parish. The Rev. Mr. McKim's denomination has nothing to complain of. When the Episcopal clergy assembled in Washington during Taft's administration, Taft gave them a room in the White House for a meeting-place, and made them a speech. The Catholic Church, very likely, is entirely satisfied with the precedents for official recognition of the Church that have been established by Protestants. Protestants are the stair-builders for the ascent of the Catholic prelates to a place above the President.

A Catholic President, were one to be elected, could not by the rules of his Church worship with a Protestant congregation, and in attending St. Patrick's Cathedral he would not be open to unfavorable comment. Should he, however, invite a gathering of Catholic bishops to meet in the White House, as Taft invited the Episcopalians, every other denomination would rightfully "put up a holler." And yet we heard no objection from Roman prelates when the clergy of the Rev. Randolph McKim's communion

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occupied the Blue Room, although protest was certainly justified. Who but the Episcopal prelate has assumed the title of "Bishop of Washington"?

When the Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists, and Disciples of Christ place themselves squarely on Secular ground, and, affirming the Nine Demands of Liberalism, utter a protest whenever any denomination or any religion receives the patronage of the State or the favor of any law, and resent the proclaiming of religious holidays or the enforcement of religious holy days, the appointment of chaplains of any sect whatsoever, or any religious services in political assemblages—when they all agree to this, their criticism of the Catholic Church will at least be consistent. Until then, in the scramble for recognition, it will be each sect for itself and the Devil take the hindmost. And the hindmost will not be the Roman Catholic denomination.

Truthseeker (New York). G. MACDONALD.

Benedict Spinoza.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 781.*)

SPINOZA never felt his vocation to be that of an instructor of youth, as indeed he subsequently confessed on being offered a professorship in the University of Heidelberg, and the drudgery of an usher's place was extremely distasteful. He, therefore, remained but a brief period with Van den Ende. Fortunately, there were other means open of earning bread. It was the custom for the youths in Jewish schools to be prepared for professional life, or initiated into some handicraft, as well as instructed in book-lore. Spinoza had acquired the art of grinding and polishing lenses for optical purposes—spectacles, reading glasses, microscopes, and telescopes—and had attained to such proficiency in the business that his manufactures were readily disposed of, their sale producing sufficient to supply his modest wants.

Naturally, while he remained in Amsterdam, he had to brook the scowls of his former co-religionists, which perhaps he soon learned to bear with equanimity. But he had yet to experience to what lengths fanaticism would go. A hot blooded fanatic waylaid him one night, and attempted his assassination. Happily the intended victim perceived the gesture of the villain as he raised his arm to strike, and foiled him by a rapid movement. The dagger thrust was received through the coat collar, and Spinoza escaped with a slight wound on the neck.

The chiefs of the synagogue, sensible of Spinoza's magnificent intellectual gifts, were still anxious to secure his service, notwithstanding the terrible excommunication they had themselves pronounced. Intimidation had signally failed to induce submission; might not some more successful method be adopted for the recovery of the precious lost sheep? Might not a pecuniary bribe affect what threats had failed to achieve? They offered to remove the ban of excommunication, and to guarantee to him for the rest of his life a pension of 1 000 florins per annum, if he would acknowledge his error and submit to the mildest censures of the Church. Egregiously had they mistaken the character of the man. He had no error to acknowledge, and money was the last thing for which he cared.

Censure, excommunication, attempted assassination, flattery, and bribes, all had failed to move the obstinate heretic; if not to be won, he must somehow be removed. As a last resource they petitioned for his expulsion from the city. But there was no precedent for such banishment. Amsterdam was a free city, where all religious denominations were tolerated. Nevertheless the magistrates, unwilling to disoblige a powerful section of the community, referred the case to the Synod of the Reform Church, for their advice and opinion. With characteristic intolerance the Synod recommended a temporary banishment at least. Whether the authorities acted on this advice or not is unknown; but it is certain that for some reason Spinoza left Amsterdam towards the close of 1656. He was yet only twenty-four years old, and the events recorded since the excommunication had all occurred within the space of a few months. He found shelter with a Christian friend, whose hospitality overleapt the narrow bounds of sectarian intolerance. The name of this good man is unrecorded, but his house still remains, and the lane in which it stands is still known under the name of Spinoza-lane.

We lose sight of Spinoza for some years until 1660, when he was still residing at Rhynsburg; but in all probability a portion of the interval was spent at Amsterdam. He still practised his handicraft of glass-polishing, and earned an independent livelihood, asking gifts of no man. Those four years were as important as any of his life, for during that time there dawned on his mind those great principles which were to be indelibly stamped with his name. He had also formed many valuable friendships with Dr. Louis Meyer; Drs. Bresser and Shaller, physicians; Simon de Fries, a young gentleman of fortune, of whom we shall hereafter hear good account; and, above all, Henry Oldenburg, with whom throughout his lifetime he maintained correspondence. Oldenburg was the intimate friend of Robert Boyle, and helped in the foundation of the Royal Society of Great Britain. He was also the Hague Consul in London when Cromwell was Protector, and distinguished himself by highly commendable efforts to secure toleration for the Jews in England.

Spinoza appears to have quitted Rhynsburg in 1664 for Voorburg, within about a league of the Hague. His exposition of the Cartesian philosophy had brought celebrity, and he found himself obliged to intermit his studies and meditations to receive friends, and sometimes curious strangers. About two years after his arrival at Voorburg he settled finally at the Hague, boarding at first with the widow Van Velden, in a house on the Veerkay, and occupying the rooms in which Dr. Colerus, his biographer, afterwards lodged; but subsequently, finding the cost of living with Madam Van Velden too great for his means, removing to fresh quarters in the house of Henry Van den Spyck, a painter, which overlooked the Pavilion Canal; and here it was that he passed the rest of his days.

Among Spinoza's warmest friends at the Hague was the unfortunate Grand Pensioner, Jean de Witt, who was, in 1672, literally torn to pieces by an infuriated mob, who baselessly suspected him of complicity with the hated French. The philosopher himself, it may here be remarked, narrowly escaped the same fate a little later, and under the following circumstances:—Lieutenant-Colonel Stoupe, commander of a Swiss regiment in the service of France, being a man of intellectual mark, and anxious to converse with Spinoza, induced the Prince de Condé, Generalissimo of the French Army, to invite the renowned philosopher to their headquarters. The invitation was accepted, but, Condé being suddenly summoned to Paris, his guest waited a week or ten days at Utrecht in hope of his speedy return; then, as much delay occurred, Spinoza took his way back to his home at the Hague. The populace, ignorant of literary or scientific curiosity, could only interpret the visit as treason to the State. They must have made some threatening demonstrations against the philosopher, for poor Van den Spyck became greatly alarmed, and besought his lodger to quit the house. Spinoza, disdaining flight, assured the timid man, and bade him fear nothing; "for," said he, "I can easily clear myself of all suspicion of treason. There are persons enow at the Hague who know the motive of my journey, and who will right me with my townsmen. But be this as it may, should the people show the slightest disposition to molest you, should they even assemble or make a noise before your house, I will go down to them though it should be to meet the fate of the De Witts." Fortunately, the popular fury subsided, and Spinoza and his host suffered no further molestation.

Jean De Witt was leader of the Republican party, and it was by his strenuous opposition that the Prince of Orange failed in his purpose of having himself elected Stadt-holder for life. Spinoza was Republican on principle and from impulse, feeling the dignity of independence himself, and anxious also to secure it for his fellows. A brotherly affection sprang up between these men. "In all Holland," says Froude, "there were none like these two; they had found each other now, and they loved each other as only good men love. From him Spinoza accepted a pension, not a very enormous one—some thirty-five pounds a year; the only thing of the kind he ever did accept. Perhaps because De Witt was the only person he had met who exactly understood what it was, and weighed such favors at their exact worth, neither less nor more." This pension was not, however, the only thing of the kind Spinoza ever accepted. Simon de Vries, later in life, brought him a thousand florins as a gift, or rather as a meagre instalment of a heavy debt owing by the pupil to the teacher. Spinoza "laughingly assured him that he was in no need of money, and that such a sum would turn his head. Simon then made a will, bequeathing the whole of his property to Spinoza, who, on hearing of it, at once set off for Amsterdam to remonstrate against such an act so unjust to Simon's brother. His arguments prevailed. The will was destroyed, and the brother finally inherited. Now came a struggle of generosity. The heir protested that he could not accept the property unless he were allowed to settle five hundred florins a year on the disinterested friend; and, after some debate, Spinoza agreed to accept three hundred."

These windfalls made no difference, however, in his mode of life; he was as abstemious as ever, even to the verge of indiscretion. "It approaches the incredible," says Colerus,

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"with how little in the shape of meat and drink he appears to have been satisfied; and it was from no necessity that he was constrained to live so poorly, but he was by nature abstemious." His ordinary daily diet consisted of a basin of milk porridge, with a little butter, costing about three-halfpence, and a draught of beer costing an additional penny. Occasionally he indulged in wine, but his consumption of that luxury never exceeded two pints a month. Once a quarter he regularly settled his accounts, "to make both ends meet, like the snake that forms a circle with its tale in its mouth," as he playfully said. "Though often invited to dinner," says pastor Colerus, "he preferred the scanty meal that he found at home to dining sumptuously at the expense of another." Yet against this man, for generations, vulgar pretenders to philosophy cast the epithets of "immoral" and "epicurean." His epicureanism stands confest to gods and men at the rate of twopence-halfpenny a day.

It must not to be supposed that Spinoza was in any way parsimonious. On the contrary, he was ever liberal to the full extent of his scanty means, affording willing aid to the suffering or needy. Once, at least, he shows himself in the prominent light of a lender; for one to whom he had lent two hundred florins, as we learn, became a bankrupt; whereupon the philosopher calmly remarked, "Well, I must economise, and so make up the loss; at this cost I preserve my equanimity."

Spinoza's fame continued to extend. Early in 1673 he received an invitation, through the learned Fabricius, from the Prince Palatine, Charles Louis, to fill the vacant Chair of Philosophy in the University of Heidelburg, a lucrative and honorable post. After some hesitation, probably to avoid hurting the susceptibilities of his friend, the philosopher declined the chair, "not knowing," as he says in his answer to Fabricius, "within what precise limits the liberty of philosophising would have to be restricted." Louis XIV offered him a pension if he would dedicate his next work to him; this also he refused, "having no intention of dedicating anything to that monarch."

Spinoza's personal appearance is described by Colerus, in whose days there were many persons living at the Hague who had been well acquainted with the great man. He was of middling height and slenderly built; with regular features, forehead broad and high, large eyes dark and lustrous, full dark eyebrows, and hair of the same hue, long and curling. The prevailing expression of the face was that of thought overcast with melancholy. He was never seen either sorely depressed or greatly elated. His dress was that of a sober citizen, plain yet scrupulously neat, for he despised a disorderly and slovenly carriage as a sign of affectation or of a mean spirit. He mostly spent his time in his own room, engaged in his handiwork (at which he continued to labor), in meditation, or in writing. When wearied with these he would join Van den Spyck and his family in the evening, smoke a pipe of tobacco, and take part in their ordinary chat.

Towards the end of his life Spinoza appears to have been affected with a chronic form of pulmonary consumption. He complains frequently to correspondents of not feeling well. With the coming of 1677 he grew more seriously indisposed. On Saturday, February 20, he wrote to his friend, Dr. Louis Meyer, requesting a visit, but was still able in the evening to join the family circle and enjoy his pipe. Early the next morning Dr. Meyer arrived, and found his patient worse than was imagined. The philosopher partook of a little chicken broth, and the worthy doctor remained in attendance with him. The painter and his family went to church, and never saw their friend in life again; he had been seized with a sudden difficulty in breathing, and passed peacefully away about three o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, February 21, 1677, aged forty-four years and three months. The funeral took place on February 25, the remains of the philosopher being followed to the grave by a numerous train of respectful inhabitants of the Hague.

Malevolent rumors were circulated as to the manner of Spinoza's death. It was reported by some that he had taken drugs and unconsciously slid into death: by others that he had been heard to exclaim: O God, have mercy on me, a miserable sinner! Colerus made inquiries concerning these rumors, which, of course, proved baseless. A sale of the philosopher's effects realised 400 florins (about £40). Rebecca Spinoza appeared on the scene, but swiftly retreated on finding no spoil. A desk, containing the immortal "Ethics" in MS., was forwarded by Van den Spyck to Jan Reiuwertz a publisher in Amsterdam.

W. Frederic Pollock's work on Spinoza is a monument of learning and criticism, and Dr James Martineau's *Study of Spinoza* is worthy to rank beside it. Dr. Willis's *Life, Correspondence, and Ethics of Spinoza* is worth consulting, although it is said by very good authorities to be exceedingly untrustworthy. Readers of French will find an admirable translation of Spinoza's principal writings by Emile Saisset. Froude has an article on Spinoza in his *Short Studies*, and G. H. Lewes devotes to the subject a chapter of his *Biographical History of Philosophy* and an article in the *Fortnightly Review* of April 1, 1866. Matthew Arnold's essay on *Spinoza and the Bible* is written in his finest vein.

We conclude with a parting advice. Let the curious reader not be deterred by the rigorous metaphysical system of Spinoza. All such constructions are arbitrary, and of little value except as an exercise for the intellect. They are merely the forms into which a man puts such genius as he has, and that is what the earnest student will seek to discover. In Spinoza's works he will find a rich reward; for his great thoughts on religion, morals, and philosophy are like perfectly wrought statues, which every one may place in the sanctuary of his life.

G. W. FOOTE.

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

IX.—JUDGE STRANGE.

THOMAS LUMISDEN STRANGE was one of the most earnest of the band of Freethinkers who gathered round Thomas Scott. He was an illustration that a good Christian makes a good Freethinker. When a young man he experienced "conversion," and, belonging to the straitest sect of religionists, the Plymouth Brethren, it is almost a wonder that he ever got outside the wall of that exclusive body. But he was ever an earnest truthseeker, and his very earnestness brought him to the light. Educated as a barrister, he threw himself into evangelical work, and so set was his mind to religious subjects that in 1852 he published a work entitled *The Light of Prophecy*: Being an Attempt to Trace out thereby the Coming Judgments and the Promised Glory. There was also published extracts from this work, entitled *Light on the Future*. The publisher says that, some time ago, his brother gave him the work, printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press, Bangalore, 1852, and adds: "I cannot find out who T. L. Strange was, or if he is at present alive; but I have little doubt he would be well pleased to find in England an echo of his wonderful work." The curious thing is that the publisher lived at Malvern, where Judge Strange resided during the latter part of his life. He also wrote *Observations on Mr. Elliott's "Horæ Apocalypticæ,"* in which he sought to refute the historical system of interpreting the Apocalypse. Mr. Strange was in the Indian Civil Service, and was animated by a desire to bring the natives to his own faith. He obtained a judgeship in the High Court at Madras, which he occupied about thirty years, and he published a *Manual of Hindoo Law*, Madras, 1856 and 1863.

Among the natives of India he was bound to receive some impressions adverse to the exclusive claims of his own faith. He found a people essentially moral and religious, yet moved by an ancient faith different from his own. In the preface to his work on the *Sources and Development of Christianity* he says:—

> "At one time my duties in India involved the charge of a jail and attendance at the execution of criminals. Trials calling for the sentence of death had to be referred to the superior court at Madras, for whose benefit the whole of the examinations had to be translated. There was always time in these cases a considerable interval between the trial and the sentence and its execution. I was then a devout Christian, and used to take advantages of my opportunities to 'bring' the prisoners who were in these risks 'to Jesus.' They were ordinarily of the uneducated class; but one was otherwise, having been a servitor in a pagoda. He had professed himself influenced by what I had put before him; but when we met at the gallows he proclaimed his trust to be in Rama, and not in Christ. He died earnestly, calling upon his fancied mediator and savior."

This set the judge thinking. He continues:—

> "What are we to say to such a phenomenon? Rama's character is painted in the most exalted colors, and is described in a history considered to be an embodiment of divine truth. Rama was a god incarnate, devoting himself for the good of mankind. What is there to induce a follower of his to relinquish him for just such another form, presented to him from a foreign quarter? And do a man's eternal prospects depend upon his critical selection of the true history? Happily, the means are ample for our extrication from any such dilemma, and, as I may acknowledge to have been the case in my own instance when I was involved in these meshes, it is simply ignorance of the true character of the materials before us, coupled with a vein of superstition, inherited, working round us, and cultivated in us from early youth, that forges those bonds in which mankind are held to the prevailing baseless expressions of belief."

The complete breakdown of Mr. Strange's faith occurred from reading, in an orthodox work, an attempt to reconcile the facts of palæontology with the Bible statement that death came into the world through the sin of Adam.

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Looking into the matter, he learnt that the earth's strata also contained evidences of man's existence for some immeasurable time before the period assigned to Adam. The fall of the first Adam necessarily shook the position attributed to the second Adam. He says, in his introduction to *Contributions to a Series of Controversial Writings*, issued by the late Mr. Thomas Scott (1881):—

> "I proceeded to make as close and as full study as my opportunities gave me of the Biblical statements, and especially of the representations of Christ as a real personage; and, as I proceeded, every figuration broke down before me, and appeared even traceable to remote Oriental heathen sources."

He closely examined the alleged evidences, and came to the conclusion that:—

> "There is a very decided gap between the occurrence of Christianity and the era asserted for the facts alleged as those on which the system has its foundations. It follows that the facts themselves, so bound in an historical expression of them at a particular period, cannot have been enacted, and that the creed has otherwise to be accounted for."

Truth thus discovered, Judge Strange was not slow in communicating it to others. For Mr. Scott's series he wrote a number of tracts, afterwards collected as *Contributions to a Series of Controversial Writings*. This volume contains "How I Became, and Ceased to be, a Christian," "A Critical Catechism," "The Bennett Judgment," "Clerical Integrity," "Communion with God," "The Exercise of Prayer," "The Christian Evidence Society," "An Address to all Earnest Christians," "The Portraiture and Mission of Jesus," "The Christian Evidences," "The Pauline Epistles," "Scripture and Science," and "The Supreme Power in the Universe." His larger and more important works are *The Speaker's Commentary Reviewed*, a criticism of dishonest orthodox defences; *The Bible: Is it the Word of God?* a valuable and an extended examination of the fetish books in the form of a dialogue between a pundit and a student; *The Legends of the Old Testament*, in which their similarity to Hindu and other legends is pointed out; *The Sources and Development of Christianity*, in which he traces the era of Christianity, its constituents, its phases, the construction and integrity of the Christian records, and the Gentile moulds of Christianity; *The Development of Creation on the Earth*, in which the teachings of science are contrasted with those of Scripture; and *What is Christianity?* an historical sketch embellished with a chart illustrating the interval between the alleged time of Christ and that of the alleged evidence. His opposition was not only to the miracles and alleged facts of Christianity, but also to its principles. In regard to its central doctrine of atonement, he said:—

> "It is impossible that the sin of one man can be imposed upon another. It is by a fiction, not to be realised by the mind, that the transference is to be. Can blood of any sort wipe away sin? Sin has to be repented of and turned from, and can be got rid of in no other manner."

Judge Strange was a diligent student and writer, and ever an earnest advocate of practical piety in life and conduct. He died at Norwood on September 4, 1884, at the age of seventy-five. Major-General Forlong was appointed his literary executor.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

The Missing Link

ONE of the Chicago physicians who attended the recent Medical Congress in London is a prominent Catholic. He is in charge of a Catholic hospital in this city. He returned from the Congress fully convinced of the truth of Darwinism. He said so in print over his own signature. Of course, if Darwinism is true the Catholic Church is lost. Honest people who believe in Darwinism will sooner or later stop repeating in church on Sundays "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and all that in them is," etc., when on every other day they shout from the housetops that the world was not created in six days, nor was it created at all.

Curiously enough, a few days after the physician's declaration of faith in evolution, Bishop McGavick, auxiliary bishop of the Chicago archdiocese, denounced Darwinism and declared that it was "a passing phase of scientific thought." He also said that "the proofs thus far advanced in its favor are trifling and wholly inconclusive." Which of the two is telling the truth about evolution?

Father Kelly, another priest, says that the position of the Catholic Church on evolution can be expressed in two words—"not proven." We suppose this gentleman believes in the infallibility of the Pope, the miraculous birth of the Virgin, the transubstantiation of the wafer, and in the annual liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, because they "are proven." And what is the evidence that evolution is "not proven"? The Catholic Church says so. What is the evidence that the doctrine of creation is proven? Again, the Catholic Church says so. "How easy is't then," to quote Shakespeare.

Another divine calls attention to the missing link. Let the scientists first find the missing link before they try to convert *him*. But what about the missing links in theology? Where are the originals of the Gospels? If one link is all that is missing to complete the chain of evidence in favor of Darwinism, how many links are missing to prove Supernaturalism? The priest who has unbounded faith in the mysteries of his Church insists on seeing all the "links" before he will accept evolution. Unwittingly, he pays a great compliment to science. In religion one does not have to be particular, but in science the evidence must be convincing. It all shows how very much more conscientious even the priests are with science than they are with theology.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THE FAITH-HAG.

And third came she who gives dark creeds their power,
Silabbat-Paramasa, sorceress,
Draped fair in many lands as lowly Faith,
But ever juggling souls with rites and prayers;
The keeper of those keys which lock up Hells
And open Heavens. "Wilt thou dare," she said,
"Put by our sacred books, dethrone our gods,
Unpeople all the temples, shaking down realms"
The law which feeds the *priests* and props the
But Buddha answered: "What thou bidd'st me keep
Is form which passes, but the free truth stands:
Get thee unto thy darkness!"

—*Sir E. Arnold, "Light of Asia."*

That which mankind needs most is to secure standing room for his genuine convictions. He must be true to himself and sincere with others. We must strive to remove all artificial hindrances to the progress of civilised communities. There are certain institutions, habits, and customs which have been outgrown by the more civilised of the human race, and which cannot be protected from eventual destruction, and it would surely be a blessing to have such things removed at once, and thus shorten the period of transition always so inconvenient and distressing. We are now in the midst of a period of demolition and suffering. Perhaps several generations of our race will have to endure this dreary sojourn amid ruins. But sooner or later men will find out how to secure their own comfort and convenience, and coming generations will attain to a peaceful happiness far beyond anything yet experienced by their race.—*Max Nordau.*

The first use of all knowledge is the right ordering of al actions.—*Herbert Spencer.*

My task is to destroy old and wrong notions and shame their vendors out of circulating them. Religious notions and practices are all wrong, most of them as false as possible. And if truth is a benefit to man, and falsehood an injury, no work could be greater or more useful than mine. Let those who think otherwise enjoy their own opinions; that is nothing to me. I follow my own leading. Let others do as they can.—*Joseph Symes.*

I am just and honest, not because I expect to live in another world, but because, having felt the pain of injustice and dishonesty towards myself, I have a fellow feeling with other men who would suffer the same pains if I were unjust or dishonest towards them. Why should I give my neighbor short weight in this world because there is not another world in which I should have nothing to weigh out to him? I am honest because I don't like to inflict evil on others in this life, not because I am afraid of evil to myself in another. It is a pang to me to witness the suffering of a fellow being, and I feel his suffering the more because he is mortal, because his life is so short, and I would have it, if possible, filled with happiness, and not misery.—*George Eliot.*

I would rather know that all the earth,
That every source of joy, of lov , or mirth,
And everything of live that loved the light,
Would sleep forever in eternal night, fell
Than think one soul on which the light of reason
Should suffer torment in a Christian hell.—*Anon.*

Many men believe not themselves what they would persuade others.—*Ben Jonson.*

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCH.

THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Bathcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and "bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— "free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by "two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary "thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the "said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....*day of*.....*190*.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

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