

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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DR. DIGGLE SQUEERS,

DOTHEBOYS' HALL, THAMES EMBANKMENT.

(With apologies to the author of "Nicholas Nickleby.")

LORD COLERIDGE.

ELEVEN years ago I was tasting the sweets of Christian charity in Holloway Gaol. I had been sent there for a crime known to the law as "blasphemous libel." That is, I was editor of the *Freethinker*, which was conducted on essentially the same lines then as it is now. My real crime was attacking Christianity in a way that Christians did not like. I never meant them to like it. Had I done so, my paper would have been a dismal failure. Christians would have flattered it out of existence. As it was they had a right to detest it. But they had no moral right—although they had a legal right—to indict me in a Christian court, to try me by a Christian jury, to sentence me by a Christian judge, and to incarcerate me in a Christian prison. They should at least have taken me before an impartial tribunal.

The judge who presided at my trial was a disgrace to the bench. He insulted me most grossly, and acted throughout as counsel for the prosecution. Writing so many years after the occurrence, and in cold blood, I have no hesitation in describing Judge North as the vilest bigot I ever encountered.

The sentence passed upon me by this contemptible fanatic was one of imprisonment for twelve calendar months. It was the highest penalty the law allowed. I
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left the dock for the cells of Newgate, and afterwards those of Holloway Goal, with a heart too high for his reach. I was lifted up with a proud disdain of all who had assisted in the solemn farce of my trial. And this feeling sustained me to the very end. On the morning of my release, Mrs. Besant rather twitted me with being the only cool person in the whole company. The fact was that the wild rejoicing and congratulation of my friends could not shake off from me, all at once, the settled mood in which I had lived through that evil year.

Weeks rolled by in the solitariness of my prison cell, till one afternoon I was summoned to see a visitor. It was Charles Bradlaugh. He came with an order from the Home Office. The indictment in which he had been included with me, and which had been removed by a *certiorari* from the Old Bailey to the Court of Queen's Bench, would be tried in a few days. Mr. Bradlaugh said he meant to insist on being tried separately—as was just and wise. In that event his case would precede mine. What did I intend to do? If I pleaded inability to defend myself while in prison, and asked for a postponement until after my release, I should probably never hear of the indictment again.

My mind was soon made up. Mr. Bradlaugh's suggestion was well meant. He spoke in kindness to one already stricken. But I formed my own judgment. At the Old Bailey I had been tried like a rat in a corner. In the

Court of Queen's Bench I could secure the moral advantage of a defence before the Lord Chief Justice of England.

My trial took place on April 24 and 25, 1883. It was presided-over by Lord Coleridge, who treated me not only with impartiality, but with a generous consideration. In the midst of a legal illustration, which might be construed as a reflection on my character, he suddenly checked himself, and said, "I mean no offence to Mr. Foote. I should be unworthy of my position if I insulted anyone in his." Nothing could exceed the delicate pathos he threw into that noble sentence. I could have kissed his lordship's hand.

Judge North did not remember what he called my "great ability" until he made it the ground of a vindictive sentence. In summing up he said I had wasted time, and certainly he listened to me with obvious impatience and many interruptions. Lord Coleridge recognised my right to defend myself. During the whole of my long speech he leaned his head upon his hand, and looked steadily at me, without once shifting his gaze; and when I concluded he said he would not sum up that evening, as he was not strong. "And that," he added to the jury, "will give you a full opportunity of reflecting on the very striking and able speech you have just heard." It was a handsome compliment, and, situated as I was, I felt profoundly grateful.

Judge North prated about my "indecent," meaning of course my *indecorum* in attacking his faith. Lord Coleridge assisted me in repelling this odious insinuation. The following passage occurs in his summing up:—

"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; and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind."

This was admirably put, and again I felt grateful. I did not mind the "blasphemy," but I wanted it to be *clean* "blasphemy."

Judge North tried to stop my reading passages to the jury from the leading sceptical writers of the age. I read similar passages to the jury in the Court of Queen's Bench, and Lord Coleridge said I did so "very properly." He confessed he had a difficulty in distinguishing some of them from the incriminated parts of the *Freethinker*. "They do appear to me," he said, "to be open to exactly the same charge and the same grounds of observation that Mr. Foote's publications are." (Judge North, by the way, always called me "Foote".)

Judge North delighted in the opportunity of trying and sentencing me. Lord Coleridge said the Blasphemy Laws were "unpleasant for a judge to administer." The chivalry of his nature made him shrink from trying, and still more from sentencing, a man who was merely accused of opposing his (the judge's) own religion.

Judge North refused to renew my bail when the first jury disagreed, although I was entitled to it by the immemorial practice of English law. He actually prolonged the sessions in order to have the pleasure of sentencing me himself; and a well-selected jury, only empanelled to try my single case, gave him that satisfaction. There was also a disagreement of the jury in the trial before Lord Coleridge. But his lordship did not hurry on another trial. He saw I was weakened by prison fare and confinement, and said he would take my defence whenever I pleased. "I have just been informed, and I hardly knew it before," he said, "what such imprisonment as yours means, and what, in the form it has been inflicted on you, it must mean." Lord Coleridge in his private room—as I happen to know—expressed his disgust at finding that I was imprisoned, for so long a period as twelve months, like a common thief. Had I been found guilty (the prosecution was abandoned), he would have made me a Queen's Bench prisoner, and shifted me to the civil side of Holloway Gaol.

Lord Coleridge's figure is indelibly impressed on my memory. I shall never forget his stately dignity, his melodious voice, his exquisite elocution, his choice language, and his perfect urbanity. Nor can I forget that his generous words turned the tide of public opinion in my favor. I suffered much in that year, but Lord Coleridge was a bright and steadfast star in the night of my imprisonment. And now that he is dead, I lay my poor tribute reverently upon his grave.

G. W. FOOTE.

VOX CLAMANTIUM.*

A SIGN of the times, and one which tells strongly of the advance made by Secularism, is the advent of the New Party, to use Mr. Andrew Reid's term, including Socialists, Christian and otherwise, and Radical reformers of all kinds united on one point—namely, that the condition of the masses of the people is the question to which all others shall be subordinated. A manifesto from such a party deserves consideration, and the volume of seventeen essays and poems by different writers, to which Mr. Reid has given the title of *Vox Clamantium*, may be taken as such a manifesto.

The title is hardly an appropriate one. A volume which links a contribution from Mr. Grant Allen next to one from the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, and combines a prayer written by Mr. Hall Caine with a poem by Walter Crane, and "A Lay Sermon to Preachers" by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, represents rather multitudinous voices than a voice. Moreover, though the tone is pitched in a very high key, it is, as its reception shows, by no means crying in a desert, unless we consider it as primarily addressed to the Churches. And this, in a certain sense, it is. The bulk of the writers are of the Christian Socialist class, naturally anxious to lead the Churches in their own direction. Four of the writers are clergymen, one of them a canon, and another a dean; so it is scarcely to be wondered at if their Christianity is even more in evidence than their Socialism.

The volume opens with a very finely-written prayer by a layman, the eminent novelist, Mr. Hall Caine. It is entitled, "How Long, O Lord, How Long?" I should like to hear that the prayer had been ordered by the Archbishop of Canterbury to be read in every church in the land. Few things could bring more home to the popular mind what a farce and a failure their Christianity is. My readers, I expect, are mainly of the non-praying class, but they will thank me for transcribing part of this opening address to Christ, which comes so evidently from the heart that it is rather an expostulation than a prayer:—

"Didst Thou not teach us to pray, 'Thy kingdom come?' Didst Thou not say that Thy kingdom was near, that some who stood with Thee should not taste of death till they had seen it come with power, that when it came the poor should be blessed, the hungry should be filled, the blind should see, the heavy laden should find rest, and the will of Thy Father should be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven? But nigh upon two thousand years have gone, O Lord, and Thy kingdom hath not come. Still receiveth the rich man his good things, and likewise Lazarus his evil things. . . . In Thy name, now, doth the Pharisee give alms in the street to the sound of a trumpet going before him. In Thy name, now, doth the Levite pass by on the other side when a man hath fallen among thieves. In Thy name, now, doth the lawyer lay on the poor burdens grievous to be borne. In Thy name, now, doth the priest buy and sell the glad tidings of the kingdom, giving for the gospel of God the commandments of men, living in rich men's houses, faring sumptuously every day, praying with his lips, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' but saying to his soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Is it this, Thy gospel, that yields that, Thy fruit?"

Mr. Hall Caine's prayer seems inspired by a very similar spirit to that of Swinburne's blasphemous poem, "Before a Crucifix":—

The nineteenth wave of the ages rolls
Now deathward since thy death and birth.
Hast thou fed full men's starved-out souls?
Hast thou brought freedom upon earth?
Or are there less oppressions done
In this wild world under the sun?

The first essay, on "The Christian Church and the Problem of Poverty," is by the Rev. Professor Shuttleworth. He holds that when Christ apologised for being anointed with ten pounds worth of perfumed spikenard by saying, "The poor ye have always with you," he meant that his disciples were to try and eradicate poverty as speedily as possible; and that when John said, "Be content with your wages," he was preaching the same gospel as that of Mr. Walter Besant when he says, "The first step towards social improvement is to make people discontented with things as

* *Vox Clamantium: The Gospel of the People.* By Writers, Preachers, and Workers. Brought together by Andrew Reid. (London: A. D. Innes & Co., Bedford-street.) 1894.

they are." Finally, he tells us that, "of the unsolved social problems which perplex us all, *the Church still holds the key*" (*sic*). This, I suppose, is the reason why the key remains unused.

The Rev. and Hon. J. Adderley tells us, in his essay on "The Social Aspect of the Gospel": "Unfortunately the Church, to a great extent, wants educating herself. Her own conscience is terribly unenlightened. The record of the social and industrial progress of this country is notable for one thing: the almost entire absence of any corporate assistance on the part of the Church to the nation. . . . Think of some great national reforms which have come to pass during the last hundred years: the abolition of the slave trade; the abolition of capital punishment for trivial offences; the reform of prisons; the repeal of the corn laws; the Factory Acts; the Trades Union movement; the co-operative movement. In all these grave moral questions were involved; but, so far as I know, the Church, as a body, remained practically silent and inactive while they were being affected."

Mr. Le Gallienne, being very young, and, he it said, a very able young man, outside the Church, undertakes to tell the Church what it should do. What it does is evident. It serves to pander to the rich and to oppress the poor. Mr. Le Gallienne's own words are, "The simple truth, of course, is, that the estate of the clergy is merely an ingeniously-concocted engine of the land-grabbing aristocracy. It preaches the gospel of the poor in order to safeguard the pockets of the rich." But, rotten as it is, Mr. Le Gallienne will tinker it up. All that is necessary is to get the right sort of preachers and teachers, and let them teach the religion of a literary man. Mr. Le Gallienne says they should have a free hand as to their message to the people. But instead of giving them one he tells them explicitly what they must not do. "Two doctrines they should emphatically cease preaching: the doctrine of the Atonement, and the doctrine of the Hereafter, with its sordid corollaries of rewards and punishments. These two dogmas have, I believe, injured humanity more than any delusions that have, from time to time, dominated the world." Mr. Le Gallienne would save the Church ship by scuttling its central planks, and preserve Christianity by converting it into Secularism. At least, this is a construction which will be put on the following significant passage:—

"The life hereafter may be a blessed reality, but as yet it is nought but an eager, perilous conjecture. Would it not be wiser, until we *know* it true of a certainty, not to place our reliance upon it, but rather to live this present life nobly, fully, as though sure we shall be given no other? What a heightened value is thus added to our mortal days: what a momentous significance to all our actions; what a poignant zest and responsibility to all our relations with our fellows! Then we should not wait for the hereafter to be kind to one another, or put off doing our best work from day to day; nor would we undervalue the solid blessedness of earth in dissatisfied dreaming of the shadowy joys of heaven."

Mr. Le Gallienne is welcome to call this "essential Christianity," "the religion of a literary man," or whatever he pleases. It is what I have known as Secularism for a longer period than Mr. Le Gallienne's whole life, and I rejoice that so talented a writer and so promising a poet should devote himself to its exposition.

The two most notable essays in the book are certainly by those holding aloof from the Churches even more pronouncedly than Mr. Le Gallienne—Mr. Grant Allen and Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. Mr. Allen takes as his theme "The Wrongfulness of Riches"; but, as a non-Christian, even when writing on a theme where gospel texts might seem peculiarly appropriate, he takes no other notice of religion than barely mentioning that "the Lord ordained it" becomes the argument of the hypocrite. Covertly, indeed, he seems to contrast the modern method with that of Christ. Thus he says: "We say to the rich man, not 'Give half thy goods unto the poor,' but 'Go, and sin no more.' Instead of saying, 'There must always be rich and poor,' we say, boldly, 'There need never be rich and poor.' Not the relief of poverty, but the abolition and prevention of poverty, is the end to be held in view."

In a lighter vein, but as well worth perusal, is "A Lay Sermon to Preachers," by the dramatist, Mr. H. A. Jones. Preaching, he says, is so seductive to Englishmen that "I do not doubt, when the present unintelligent and unintelligible gabble of our two hundred sects is at length silenced, or at least neutralised, by the bawling of mutual contradiction, the desire of being preached at will still be the

fiercest prompting in the average Englishman's breast"; and, perhaps, he says, in those not far distant future days, he will possibly ask the lights of science or the drama to edify him on Sunday evenings. Mr. Jones is a light of the drama, and he preaches to the preachers with a vengeance. He beseeches them to think on the absurdity, the waste of time, of money, resources, brain power, and the waste of opportunities of healthy enjoyment implied in the present organisation of religion in England. "Two hundred sects all mutually contradicting each other on notions that none of them can clearly explain." He asks them to reflect that most of them must be engaged in expounding and propagating useless and non-essential dogmas. Further he says:—

"Every believer of the accepted doctrinal theology must also believe that the Author of this universe, whose remote stars flash light that started on its voyage to our eyes hundreds of thousands, and, perhaps, millions of years ago; that the Author of this universe, at certain periods a few thousand years ago, so far departed from His apparently eternal method of governing the universe as to vouchsafe a miraculous dispensation to this planet, and to authenticate it in Person: that this extraordinary supernatural message which gave Him so much suffering and weariness to deliver was so loosely conveyed and so badly understood by those to whom it was confided that from the very beginning there have been all sorts of quarrels and quibbles about it."

"Oh," says the believer, "we agree in essentials." "Well," says Mr. Jones, "then do, pray, tell me what are essentials? Will the next Church Congress or the next Congregational Union affirm what are essentials? For instance, is hell an essential? Plainly and simply, is there a hell to which my friends Brown and Smith will go if they don't believe in it? Yes or No? And is it eternal? Yes or No? And is it physical or spiritual torture? Yes or No? Will the next Church Congress answer these questions; surely this is not asking too much?" We hope the Church Congress will invite Mr. Jones to attend its deliberations next October. If they will "sit under" him we guarantee he will sit over them.

A practical paper, which entirely avoids theology, is that by Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, on "Economic and Social Justice." It is mainly concerned with the land question, but to do more than commend it would take us out of our province. We must, however, in conclusion, briefly notice the succeeding paper by the Rev. C. L. Marson, on "The Social Teaching of the Fathers," for it displays so thoroughly the characteristics of the Christian school of Social Reformers. Mr. Marson selects from the writings attributed to Barnabas, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Augustine, and other Christian fathers, passages bearing against private property. He entirely overlooks that the basis of this teaching was monkish, and that an even more pronounced social teaching of the fathers was the inculcation of celibacy and asceticism. This essay, we say, displays the method of the Christian Socialist. It is easy enough to select passages from the fathers, or from Paul or Jesus, bearing in any particular direction you please, and recommend that as the real, genuine gospel. But here is the historical fact: the Christian Church did not take it as such. As it was not till geology showed the age of the world that the Church discovered that the days of Genesis were long periods, so it was not till the anti-Christian movement of last century culminated in the French Revolution that the Church woke up to the fact that it must do anything more for the masses besides promising them a reward hereafter for their sufferings here.

A perusal of *For Chamantium* has only strengthened our conviction that while the Church, to retain its power, must more and more seek to identify itself with the cause of the workers, its tendency will rather be to hinder and hamper than to help their cause. The emancipation of labor will be achieved, not by those who look back to the ideals of the past, but to those who are prepared to deal with the amelioration of the future in the light of the knowledge of to-day.

J. M. WHEELER.

Mr. Abijah Henpeque—"I wonder how Smith will get along with his four jealous wives in heaven." Mrs. Henpeque (reprovingly)—"Bijah, don't you know that in heaven there will be no marrying nor giving in marriage?" Bijah—"Of course, of course, my dear. I forgot what a splendid place heaven was."

WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

DURING the several public discussions in which I have recently been engaged frequent references were made by my opponents to human consciousness, which was regarded by them as a special faculty, and as a certain criterion of truth. This, in my opinion, is an error that is extensively believed in by orthodox exponents, and one which is exceedingly perplexing and misleading in dealing with questions of mental philosophy. Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, produces many valuable facts that prove, to my mind, the utter fallacy of such a supposition. He writes: "It is by no means certain that consciousness is a faculty; and some of the ablest thinkers have been of an opinion that it is merely a state or condition of the mind. Mr. James Mill (*Analysis of the Mind*) says that consciousness and belief are the same, and that great error has arisen from calling consciousness a feeling distinct from all other feelings. According to Locke (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*), consciousness is the perception of what passes in a man's own mind. Brown (*Philosophy of the Mind*) denies that consciousness is a faculty; and Sir W. Hamilton complains of 'Reid's degradation of consciousness into a special faculty.' Consciousness is infallible as to the fact of its testimony, but fallible as to the truth. That we are conscious of certain phenomena is a proof that those phenomena exist in the mind, or are presented to it; but to say that this demonstrates the truth of the phenomena is to go a step further, and not only offer a testimony, but also pass a judgment. The moment we do this we introduce the element of fallibility, because consciousness and judgment put together cannot be always right, inasmuch as judgment is often wrong." Lewes observes in his *History of Philosophy*: "Consciousness is no mirror of the world; it gives no faithful reflection of things as they are *per se*; it only gives a faithful report of its own modification as excited by external things." Thus consciousness is rightly, I think, described as being a mental state, depending for the character of its manifestation upon the conditions and environment of the person in whom it is found. In the words of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, it "is a varying quantity, being the sum of our remembered perceptions, and of our thinkings on such perceptions."

If it is admitted that there is a centre in the human brain common to all men—a sensorium, that which feels and perceives by means of the senses—the question of consciousness being free from error can mean only that it correctly perceives what is presented to it by the organs whose function it is, as it were, to report. If it is dependent upon the eye (or upon any other organ), the health and general condition of that organ must determine the kind of sensations that are conveyed. To the jaundiced eye most things will present a yellow appearance. Moreover, the senses being affected by external conditions, a person's consciousness must necessarily vary with the sense-perceptions, which need correction by repeated experiments and comparisons. "Yet," Buckle remarks, "it is impossible that all these products [contradictory convictions] of consciousness can be true, because many of them contradict each other. Unless, therefore, in different ages there are different standards of truth, it is clear that the testimony of a man's consciousness is no proof of an opinion being true." Those who trust to their senses may be mistaken, but those who affect to dispense with them can disclose to us no advantage, inasmuch as, apart from their senses, we fail to see how consciousness can exist at all. It is incredible that men should have used their senses so laboriously through all ages to acquire their knowledge of nature, if they found themselves possessed of a power to amass such knowledge without the use of their senses.

Undoubtedly, consciousness is affected by the state of the brain, and by the defects or disarrangement of any of the other organs directly connected with it, and also by the natural power and quality of the brain itself. There appears to be, not only the variations of education, social conditions, and the general health of the mental faculties, but also an absolute variation in capacity or power of apprehension. The brain of some men must be competent to present to consciousness the facts of astronomy or mathematics, as well as the ordinary facts of every-day life. Thus a person's consciousness of the universe, of its characteristics, and of its operations, will vary in accordance with that person's capacity to ascertain and generalise

the facts of existence. If it were not so, how can we account for such different conceptions as those possessed by the poet, the philosopher, the scientist, and the legislator? Consciousness, therefore, can only be a name given to a process differing in its degree according to the taste and intellectual calibre of the individual; and in no case can it be regarded as a faculty unerring and equal in all natures. There are things real and things imaginary, but how thoughts of them arise we cannot explain; the process is at present beyond our comprehension. We must be content with the fact that thoughts exist, leaving the *how* they arrived to be revealed, if at all, in the future revelations of the present mysteries of nature. There can be no doubt that we possess intellectual vision as well as sensible eyesight. Experiments show this to be so in mental calculations and in music. No doubt Shakespeare saw, in his "mind's eye," the "Tempest" before he wrote that grand play, as an architect sees the plan of a house before he draws it, or as a mechanical engineer mentally pictures his machine before he puts on paper the design from which the machine has to be constructed.

If we were to allow or to assume the position that consciousness is a faculty, we should be confronted with the fact that its universality involves the uniformity of capacity to observe and to understand, which is a thing utterly unknown in the history of the human mind. The principal and most striking facts in the study of intelligence in general, as we find it in the lowest and in the highest animals, are the varying degrees of intellectual power. The difficulty of tracing the phenomenon, consciousness, in the lowest of living creatures is admitted, more or less, by all naturalists. They confess, not only their ignorance of *how* consciousness arises, but also as to *where* it arises first in animated nature. Broadly speaking, if we confine our attention to man, who is the highest example of mental manifestation, it is easier to describe than to define what we mean. Practically, we appear to know, from examination of ourselves and of others, that the primary faculty, mind, is that which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates all it sees, and beyond that we cannot go with any degree of certitude. When certain persons say, "I think," "I feel," "I know," "I am," what does the statement really amount to? To me it only signifies what I understand by the sentence, "I am a being that thinks." The terms "self," "ego," and "person," only convey to me the idea that what is spoken of is something which is intelligent, as distinguished from something that is non-intelligent. The first I call a person, and the second I term simply a thing or a substance. When a doctor asks a patient how he feels, he does not mean by what process he feels, or that he feels that he feels. Yet some persons talk of being conscious that they are conscious, which they call self-consciousness. The terms thus used imply double consciousness; that is, that there is behind mind, which is the instrument of knowledge, an entity which takes note of what is going on, and that subsists as an indestructible phenomenon. In this practical age we have no use for such mystic musings. All such conceptions are beyond the comprehension of reason, and belong only to the province of faith.

Taine put the matter very clearly when he said: "Consciousness, our principal instrument, is not sufficient in its ordinary state; it is no more sufficient in psychological inquiries than is the eye in optical inquiries. For its range is not great; its illusions are many and invincible; it is necessary continually to test and correct its evidence, nearly always to assist it, to present objects to it in a brighter light, to magnify them, and to construct for its use a kind of microscope and telescope." It will thus be seen that the subjective method of investigating mental phenomena must be supplemented by the objective method if we wish to avoid the delusions of priestly conjurations. The old theological notion that we have within us an immaterial monitor, that is an infallible guide as to what is true, may serve the purpose of the Church, but it is not justified by the facts of experience. To me it is evident that the path to truth lies through a mental process, and our ability to perceive that which is correct, and to distinguish it from the incorrect, depends upon the nature of our material organisation, the conditions that surround its development, and the intellectual culture brought to bear upon its training. This may not accord with metaphysical dreams, but it seems to me to be in harmony with the known facts of existence.

CHARLES WATTS.

IS GOD KNOWABLE?

THAT the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge has exercised a powerful influence on the philosophy and the theology of to-day will not be denied by anyone who claims to have the least acquaintance with modern thought. Psychologists have examined the constitution of the human mind, and have discovered evidence of a most irresistible kind which proves, beyond all reasonable doubt, that "to think is to condition."

It is now admitted that objectivity can only be thought of in proportion as the elements of likeness, difference, and relation enter into its nature. We say that an object is known when we are able to classify it as like or unlike something of which we have experience. From the relativity of knowledge we learn two things: first, that the possibilities of existence cannot be measured by the human intellect; second, that the sphere of thought lies within the domain of phenomenal existence; and, if there be something beyond that, its existence should not concern us, because, being unknowable, its true relation to us can never be discovered. Recognising the limitations which form an essential part of our thinking apparatus, what answer can be given to the question, Is God knowable? It is necessary that two things should be known before this problem can be rationally solved. The nature of the answer will depend upon what is meant by the terms "God" and "knowledge."

By the word "God" is generally understood an infinite, intelligent being distinct from the material universe. The momentous query narrows itself down to this: Do the limitations of human thought render impossible the conception of an infinite, intelligent being? Sir William Hamilton and Herbert Spencer have demonstrated, beyond the possibility of refutation, that the "Infinite" is not an object of thought, but, as Mansel says, it is the "name for the absence of the conditions under which thought is possible." Thought implies the existence of two things—the object and the subject. This distinction is a necessary condition attending every conception.

In order to think of the infinite we must distinguish it from ourselves; but distinction is limitation; and, as the infinite is absolutely limitless, it necessarily follows that it can never be an object of thought. Every object must have a relation to its subject; for an object exists only because there is a subject to perceive it. The existence of the one implies that of the other. No object without a subject; no subject without an object. If the infinite be an object of thought, it is only because there exists a being other than itself to perceive it. This being is either finite or infinite. It cannot be infinite, for in that case the absurdity of two infinities would be involved. Neither can this being be thought of as finite, for, as the infinite includes everything, the co-existence of finite and infinite as separate existences is impossible. An attempt is made to evade this argument by speaking of the infinite as the "First Cause"; but this opinion increases instead of diminishing the difficulties. A cause cannot exist as such before its effect; therefore, an eternal cause is inconceivable. Causality, as an attribute or an aspect, cannot be infinite in duration, for a being becomes a cause only when its effect has an existence. If the proposition is true that there is no effect without a cause, so, also, is the statement that there is no cause without an effect. All effects, from their very nature, imply that there was a time when they began to be; and, as there is no cause without an effect, therefore there was a time when no cause or First Cause existed. Theologians have found it necessary, in dealing with these objections, to divide the characteristics of their deity into "necessary" and "accidental" attributes. Intelligence, they tell us, is an essential attribute of God, because he could not exist without it; while causality is an accidental characteristic of his being, because he *could* do without it. The infinite being, according to the orthodox, became the "First Cause" about six thousand years ago. This is the assertion of theology, an assertion which perplexes rather than convinces. There are only three positions thinkable in relation to this dogmatic statement.

Causality is either a perfection, an imperfection, or an absolutely indifferent form of being. If causality is a perfection, the deity or the "infinite" could not be all-perfect before he created the universe. If causality is an imperfection, God could not be all-wise in creating the

universe, for by that act he must have become more imperfect than he was before. The other position, that the act of creation was neither a good nor a bad one, is destructive of theology. What becomes of the atonement, the day of judgment, and other dogmas of orthodoxy, if God's creative act was an indifferent one? God is not knowable as an infinite being, because he cannot be an object of thought, the fundamental law of which is distinction. If there is a God, a knowledge of him can never be obtained, because the affirmation of infinite existence is the *negation* of finite being. If there is an infinite existence, its being must exclude that of any other; therefore, it is absurd to speak of the human mind being distinct from the infinite, and able to conceive of it as an object.

The terms "infinite" and "cause" cannot be joined together in thought; therefore, we cannot know God as the "Infinite First Cause." When God is spoken of by Theistic apologists as an "Infinite Intelligent Being," it never seems to dawn upon them that they are using words which stand for conceptions which are utterly opposed to each other. In relation to the question whether matter or intelligence is the cause of the variegated forms of life, I do not admit what the Theistic advocate asserts—that the choice lies between "dead matter" and intelligence. No, the choice (if the human mind can make one) is not between intelligence and something lower, but between intelligence and something higher. The Theist, the Atheist, and the Agnostic, though differing widely from each other, agree in asserting that there is an infinite existence. The Theist ascribes intelligence to that existence, but the Atheist and the Agnostic refuse to do so, because physiological science has proved, by a gigantic mass of evidence, that intelligence is dependent on physical conditions. Keeping this fact clearly before our minds, how can we say that intelligence is the cause of matter and life? We know of matter existing without mind, but there is not a single instance of mind existing without matter.

Some Christians accept the opinion expressed by Hodge in his *Systematic Theology*, that there is an essential difference between divine and human intelligence. This is an evasion, and not an explanation. The only intelligence of which we know is that which depends on material conditions and learns by experience. If God's intelligence is essentially different from this, why do Theists employ the same word to denote two things which are entirely unlike each other? If there is no point of resemblance between divine and human intelligence, God, as an intelligent being, cannot be an object of knowledge, because his mode of existence defies our powers of conception.

The doctrine of the relativity of knowledge shows us the little value that is to be placed on metaphysical speculation, and the history of philosophy confirms this conclusion. In searching for truth, a method is indispensable; and if the metaphysical one were right, surely such intellectual Titans as Plato and Aristotle would have left the world a richer legacy than they have done. When metaphysics were employed, all knowledge, except that of theories, was comparatively non-existent. During the Dark Ages metaphysics held the human mind in subjection; and, as a consequence, scientific investigation was looked upon with horror; the progress of civilisation was impeded; the altars of priests and the thrones of kings were erected upon the ruins of European liberty. P. SHAUGHNESSY.

ACID DROPS.

Ston College was on Monday evening the scene of a "representative" meeting of Churchmen and Nonconformists who are anxious to maintain the "compromise" of 1871 in regard to religious education in the London Board Schools. Dr. S. Lunn, the gentleman who organises cheap clerical excursions in the name of Christian Unity, appears to have acted as secretary. The chair was taken by Archdeacon Sinclair, who, at any rate, uttered one sensible observation in the course of his speech. "He found," says the *Daily News* report, "the members of the National Club—a body of men with strong evangelical opinions—were deeply impressed with the view that if these dissensions were to continue (and there seemed no prospect of their ending), then would come the opportunity of the Secularists, who would stir up the opinion of the men of the world, and especially politicians, to the tune of 'A plague o' both your houses.'"

This opportunity has already come to the Secularists. We have felt all along that the quarrel among the Christians on the School Board was playing the game of the "secular" educationalists. For this reason we declined to take any part in the public protest against the Church party's tactics. Only let Church and Dissent fight each other fiercely and bitterly enough, and the general public is bound to cast a more and more favorable eye on the "secular" program. Goodness knows they *have* been fighting each other rarely, and, as Archdeacon Sinclair says, there is no prospect of an end to the struggle; unless an end is put to it by outsiders, as is very probable.

Archdeacon Farrar, in speaking against the Diggle-Riley-Coxhead party, said it was "wholly against the spirit of the times for the people to submit to religious tests." This is true enough. But how about the Thirty-Nine Articles, which every candidate has to sign before he can become a clergyman of the Church of England? Archdeacon Farrar, to be logical, should lead an agitation against clerical subscription. It is just as wrong to have "tests" in the Church as in the Schools. Both are supported by public money. But the fact is, you cannot have religion *without* tests. The only solution of the problem is the disestablishment of religion altogether, and the leaving it to individual opinion and voluntary effort.

The worthy, illogical Archdeacon was greatly concerned about the attitude of the teachers, which he regarded as "ominous." It actually led to circulars being sent to them setting before them "views of a freethinking character." Then again, the Trade Union representatives had declared that they would not have all kinds of new principles introduced, and if the "compromise" was abrogated they would "rather sweep away the whole system of religious instruction and go in for secular education." In that case, the name of God would within twenty years be erased from the statute book. And with this awful prediction the Archdeacon sat down amidst applause, in which we are prepared to participate.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes delivered what would be called a "fighting" speech. He was afraid that, if these quarrels over religious education were not ended, the working classes would "end the whole business." But he and his co-religionists—not including the "Atheist Shoemaker"—were "most fiercely opposed to solely secular education." They would even "prefer a purely denominational system to one which excluded the Bible from the basis of education in this country."

We are very much obliged to Mr. Hughes for letting the cat out of the bag in this charming manner. It shows what the Nonconformists are really fighting for. The "compromise" is *their* method of religious instruction, as against the Church method. It is Tweedledum against Tweedledee. Only Tweedledum makes a silly pretence of friendship to "civil and religious liberty."

Dr. R. F. Horton was greeted with loud cries of dissent when he expressed a belief that Mr. Riley and Mr. Coxhead had "the same end in view as themselves." This speaker got out of favor with the meeting, but he put himself right at the finish by allowing that the Church party would rouse up the irreligious antagonism of the working classes. Altogether the meeting was simply an agency for advertising the "Compromise Brand" as the only guarantee of sound quality. Which is all very well. But what if the people at large get sick of *all* brands of this particular article? And they are getting sick fast.

It is not often that preachers base their discourse on an acknowledged forgery. This appears to have been done by the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, in lecturing before the Norwich Corporation at St. Mary's Chapel. He took as his text the miracle at Bethesda, and is reported to have said: "The legend that an angel came down and troubled the waters was the superstitious explanation of an interesting scientific fact. We must often have felt how incredible the story was, since there are not, and never have been, any continuous and standing miracles." The fourth verse is the insertion of a copyist, and the revisers have omitted it. Bethesda was one of those pools which, by purely natural causes, are intermittently disturbed by the influx of medicinal waters. The potency remained only a little while, and even at its highest point could have done nothing for so advanced a case of paralysis." If this good gospel story is to be thus explained away, how many others ought to go along with it?

The Rev. Mr. Shakespeare's "spiritual" explanation of the miracle was as lame as the cripple of the legend. Said he: "The impotent body was the symbol of an impotent soul. Thirty-eight years before there had been some act of sin or course of sin which had borne this heavy and bitter fruit." He frankly admitted that all disease was not the result of personal sin; but then it is God's way, when the fathers eat

sour grapes, to set their children's teeth on edge. We wonder divines do not pause before attributing to their deity a course of conduct they would deem atrociously unjust if predicated of a human legislator.

The Dean of Norwich, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, made the statement that "five millions of men baptised at the church fonts never crossed the threshold of her churches." What a pity the Church can no longer compel them to come in!

Talmage makes the statement that an immersion which he performed led to the conversion of an infidel. Why does he not give the name and full particulars? We have heard of infidels being struck by the power of God and the power of argument; but the case of one converted by a bath is probably unique, and ought to be fully recorded.

The London *Electrical Review* (June 15) says that "one of the American electrical journals makes some very strong remarks regarding the recent, and third, demolition of Dr. Talmage's edifices by fire. The long and short of those comments is, that the cause of the fire was not electricity at all, but incendiarism. Recently the church was not in a very brilliant condition financially, and the popular American preacher announced that he must resign his pastorate, though later on he changed his mind. A few weeks after that the fire occurred, and now we learn from despatches in the newspapers that the Doctor has gone on a tour round the world. We do not say decidedly that these facts have any particular bearing upon the matter, but they may have."

Our contemporary continues: "One of the officials of the church ascribes the conflagration to the merciful intervention of Providence in delivering the church from its financial embarrassments. If such is the case, why blame electricity for the mysterious workings of the Almighty? Would the fire insurance companies consider this a reasonable cause? We think not. We hardly imagine Providence would extract from the funds of a useful insurance company a large sum of money to keep in existence a church which is asserted to be nothing more than a scandal in its neighborhood. *Electricity* recommends the insurance companies to do their duty in the matter, and thoroughly investigate the whole affair, for certainly as things now stand they look most unsatisfactory. There appears to be a tendency to clutch at the mystery surrounding electricity, and assign to it fires which it has never caused in any way. We shall feel relieved to see the matter thoroughly sifted."

A West-end church, according to the *Christian World*, refuses to take coppers in the collection. Our contemporary asks how the preacher would deal with the story of the widow's mite. Probably he *wouldn't* deal with it. Widow's mites were valuable to the Church when that little story was worked into the gospel, but they are not worth looking after now-a-days. The noble salaries of our modern apostles cannot be paid by such paltry contributions.

The *Christian World*, by the way, is honest enough to admit that the Secularist's objection to religion being taught in Board schools at the public expense is "curiously like what used to be urged against Church rates." Of course it is. But the average Nonconformist will not see it. He will even get into a fever over the Conscience Clause in the case of Church schools, and denounce it as a hollow mockery; but in the case of Board schools he says it is a first-rate protection to "infidels."

The Camberwell Salvationists who were turned out of the Army because they refused to send the band collections to headquarters say that they have been working gratuitously, yet are in debt. They sometimes made ten collections on a Sunday, and out of two thousand pounds collected, over eight hundred was sent to headquarters.

A "Disgusted Ex-Officer" of the S. A. asks, in the columns of the *St. James's Gazette* (June 18), what Booth has done with the money raised by the Army at his Welcome Meetings which it was promised should be devoted to setting up a Home in the Isle of Wight for invalid officers. Instead of doing this, he says, "the Home that then existed in the island has been given up, and the promised one has not yet arrived, nor can I find any trace of the accounts for those meetings in the balance-sheet for that year, but only that the cost of demonstrations was to the regular funds over £2,000."

"Yes, preachers now-a-days get too easy a time of it," said a pulpit thumper. "Why, in my young days, I have often rocked the cradle with one foot, and wrote a sermon with the other."

"We pay Archbishops £15,000 a year for holding out

prospects of perdition to workers on fifteen shillings a week." These are the words of the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*. Of course they do not appear in the *Chronicle*, but in the high-priced volume of essays, entitled *Vox Clamantium*, which is noticed in another column.

Mr. John Heather, one of the writers in *Vox Clamantium*, says of the gospel of the Main Chance: "It has priests, churches, sacraments, salvations; but, in truth, it is more atheistic than any Voltaire." When Mr. Heather learns that Voltaire was not atheistic at all, perhaps he may proceed to ask himself why he uses that term as the synonym of all that is evil.

A missionary, named Smythe, says that the Buddhist *Life of Issa*, said to have been discovered in Pali by M. Norovitch, while staying at a monastery at Ladak, is either a hoax or a fraud. Pali is not understood in that district.

Canon Body and some others have put out a document giving their views on Inspiration. According to them, "By Inspiration is meant a special act of the Holy Ghost varying in character and in degree of intensity." We suppose that when the Bible says, No man hath seen God at any time, the Holy Ghost was drawing it mild; but when he recorded that God was seen by seventy elders, he was putting full steam on.

The question whether women may, despite St. Paul, be allowed to speak in the churches is now agitating the American Presbyterians. The majority are emphatic against giving the blessed apostle the cold shoulder, and yet the women's party is sufficiently strong to make the question a lively one.

The *Daily News* devotes a leader to Pierronne, a girl of Brittany, who is said to have stood up for Joan of Arc when all the world deserted her. She declared that the Deity also appeared to herself, and for this assertion she was burned to death. Yet the Church which burned her is now trying to utilise the memory of Joan of Arc in its own service.

Prince Bismarck and Count Caprivi have queer notions of Providence. Telegraphing to Signor Crispi on hearing of his escape from the assassin's bullet, Prince Bismarck said, "We congratulate you sincerely on the protection extended to you by Providence." Count Caprivi said, "I rejoice to hear that Divine Providence preserved your life." For our part, we fail to see where Providence comes in. Signor Crispi grappled with the assassin himself, and disarmed him after his first shot had missed its mark. Of course it may be said that Providence deflected the bullet; but, in that case, Providence might have interfered earlier and turned the heart of the assassin from his wicked enterprise. It seems to us that if Signor Crispi hadn't been nimbler than Providence, there might have been a funeral.

Providence is certainly not looking after the weather; in fact, the meteorological department is in a vile state of disorder. Such cold, wet weather as this in June is enough to make us all pessimists and to swell the statistics of suicide. Roumania has been visited with terrible hailstorms, which have killed many persons and destroyed thousands of acres of vineyards.

Two thousand deaths from plague in China tell of our Heavenly Father's constant messages of mercy to his children.

Folly and panic follow on the heels of plague. The lower orders of Chinese appear to rely rather on the parade of Joss, the beating of tom-toms, and the letting off of crackers to frighten away evil spirits, than to attempt the removal of their filthy and insanitary conditions. As with the Moslem pilgrims to Mecca, religion stands in the way of sanitary science.

The *Mid Sussex Times* reports a distressing accident to a lady who was attending the early morning celebration of communion at St. Wilfrid's Church. After partaking of the precious blood, she missed her footing on a step near the organ, and fell, breaking her leg. The unfortunate lady was removed to the vestry while a surgeon was sent for, and, having been put in splints, she was taken home in a cab.

The *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, alluding to a Convention which has been held in the Free Assembly Hall of the Modern Athens, to press on a busy world the restoration of the Jews to the Promised Land and indulge in predictions of the Second Advent, laments the waste of money and energy on such dubious matters. It observes that the chairman announced that he was in a position to state, without any doubt whatever, that "God was coming down personally to reign in Jerusalem, in the midst of the Promised Land," and a Dufftown minister added the information that all this was to be accomplished very

speedily. Prophecy in these latter days, if we are to form an estimate from the interest taken in the meetings, is very much at a discount.

Mr. Moses Lazarus and Mrs. Moses Lazarus were separated, and they had a scuffle in the West London Synagogue over a child that each of them wanted to possess. Result—twenty-five shillings and costs for Mrs. L., and forty shillings and costs for Mr. L. Evidently the child problem is not settled. It will take another Solomon to do that.

E. V. Hoare, wearing the clerical garb, and described as a Clerk in Holy Orders, was charged at the Lambeth Police Court with indecent behavior to Mrs. A. Fould, of Coldharborne, Brixton. The plea was that the prisoner was drunk, but the magistrate said he had no right to get into such a filthy condition. However, in consideration of his cloth we suppose, the "filthy" fellow was discharged.

The genius who invented pills to cure earthquakes has found a worthy successor. A new remedy for gambling has been discovered. A distinguished Churchman avers that, if the anti-Gambling League would only insist on a catechism being taught in Board schools, children would grow up morally strong and able to resist the temptation to bet on horse-racing.

"Anglo-Canadian," in the *Stockkeeper*, gives an account of the death and burial of a terrier dog. It was the favorite of two maiden ladies in a leading city on Lake Ontario. Doctors tended it in vain, and it died; but it was laid in a silk-lined oak coffin, and buried in the principal cemetery, the maiden ladies following as chief mourners, while the bell tolled solemnly. The scene is said to have been "affecting." Very likely. All we want to know is whether the terrier was buried in a sure and certain hope, etc., and whose dog it will be at the resurrection.

Theological morality has just received another beautiful illustration. Once more the Bill to legitimate marriage with a Deceased Wife's sister has been thrown out by the House of Lords; but even the peers are slowly impressed by argument and the force of public opinion, and this time the adverse majority was only nine—129 to 120. Had the Bishops been equally divided, the Bill would not have been lost. But the right reverend fathers-in-God were all of one bad and foolish mind. The Archbishop of Canterbury talked about "Leviticus," as though the English people, at this time of day, care a straw about that ancient "authority." Both archbishops and nineteen bishops voted against the Bill. They did so on religious grounds, and they will do so as long as we let them. Not that these episcopal legislators are very anxious to obey the Bible themselves. Everyone of them fingers all the wealth he can, in spite of the texts, "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich." They will see Jesus Christ to the devil before they will lose a penny by him. All the same, however, they will insist on other people obeying Moses and the rest of the Hebrew Old-Clo' men. On the whole, the Bishops of the Church of England are as obstinate a set of avaricious hypocrites as the world has ever produced.

Some time ago Mr. G. R. Sims and some others undertook to let the world know *How the Poor Live*. For the companion picture of how the rich live we have to turn to the society papers, and here we are informed that the garden parties of the Bishop of London and of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Fulham Palace and Lambeth Palace, are considered the most select parties of the season. We wonder what chance Jesus Christ and his apostles would have of obtaining entrance.

Dr. Dallinger has been preaching on "The Theology of Music." Man, he said, had carried music to its highest development, but he had not made it; he had only discovered it in Nature, where God put it. Well, we won't dispute this. We will just accept it for the sake of argument. God is the great original musician, and Mozart and Beethoven are only his imitators. But doesn't Dr. Dallinger think that the great original musician is sometimes out of tune? His famous musical box, the jackass, is a case in point. How came he to fit up such a discordant instrument? We invite Dr. Dallinger to clear up this mystery.

According to some Italian papers mentioned by the *Church Times*, the Pope is said to be preparing an Encyclical to the prelates of the Church of England, exhorting them to acknowledge his jurisdiction and authority. If such a document is prepared, it will doubtless be withheld from publication until disestablishment or some other event affords a fitting opportunity. The Papacy does not play its cards as rashly as the *Church Times* imagines.

A missionary tract mentions that in the last hundred years the heathen and Mohammedan population has increased by 200,000,000, while Christianity has only gained

among them 3,000,000, and of these only 750,000 are Church members. What a fine result of a century of efforts by a divine religion backed up by omnipotence.

There has been a long discussion in the *Chicago Sunday Herald* on the question why people don't go to church. The answers have not been of the namby-panby description, so common in discussions at home on the same topic. The majority of them show plainly that they disbelieve the dogmas taught in Christian churches. Some plainly declare that "God and Satan are myths," and that the Christian scheme of redemption is monstrous. Otto Wettstein says plainly, "Because there is no God," and claims that, since an infinite deity does not exist here, he exists nowhere.

Some of the correspondents say they don't go to church because they find more instruction in Sunday papers; others that they can't waste their time over fish stories. "Christianity cannot stand the search-light of modern science," writes one. "Preachers are enemies of liberty," says another. "Modern religion is a farce," "Hell is a lie," "The Church is the enemy of progress," "I know as much on these matters as they can tell me," "I don't think one out of fifty of these same ministers and priests themselves believe the doctrines they teach," "Bob Ingersoll is good enough for me," are among the answers. A Mrs. Summers writes: "I believe that 'theology' and 'religion' are only the smooth, fashionable names for the superstition that is still in vogue." Another writes: "Because there is absolutely no efficacy in prayer." And yet another: "Because I believe that money is the real god of the churches." Altogether, the ministers of Chicago must regret the raising of the question. Infidelity has not had such bold advertisement in Porkopolis since the International Conference of Freethinkers of last year.

A newspaper man, writing in the *Chicago Herald*, says he doesn't go to church because he has no time, but recommends that phonographs of the services and sermons shall be put on the public streets, labelled according to the doctrine taught, so that busy people can put a nickel in the slot and draw out just as much religion as they require. This might enable the Churches to be utilised for other purposes.

Another writer in the *Chicago Sunday Herald*, says he stopped going to church "because, if the creeds of the orthodox churches in relation to 'original sin' and infant baptism be true I have two little innocent sons who are suffering the torments of the damned in the lake of fire and brimstone through my neglect in not having them baptised, and I want to go to hell and suffer with them." Ingersoll would say, "God can't afford to damn that man."

Perhaps the best reason assigned for going to church is by a correspondent who says he likes social position, and is fond of music, decorations, and millinery display.

Says the *Boston Investigator*: "If a man were paid for praying according to the answers to his prayers, he would not get enough in ten years to buy a pint of peanuts."

A printer named Grey broke into St. Matthew's Church, Ealing-common. After collecting about ten pounds' worth of property he addressed himself to a bottle of sacramental wine, and fell asleep in Jesus; or, as it would perhaps be more accurate to say, he fell asleep with Jesus inside him. In this condition he was found by a policeman. Next time he breaks into a church Mr. Grey will probably give a wide berth to communion port, which is usually cheap stuff—a sort of sleepy hogswash. No wonder the Christians who patronise it are a sleepy lot. We mean in relation to their faith. In other respects they are often very wide awake. Some of them could do half-a-dozen Jews before eating a sausage breakfast.

All Saints' Church Schools, Haulgh, Bolton, is going to have a "field day," and the secretary advertises for a band for this august occasion, but he warns "bands that play for dancing on Good Friday" that they "need not apply." Why on earth does the gentleman advertise at all? Why doesn't he engage a Salvation Army band? The music might not be perfection, but all the players would be "saved."

One of the foreign speakers at the recent Jubilee of the Young Men's Christian Association, Professor Edouard Barde, said that when Darwinism was introduced it was too great an abomination to be discussed at their meetings; but now, God be praised, there were many followers of Darwin who were also devout Christians; and let us, he added, open to them the doors of our halls. Professor Barde's hearers, however, did not all agree with him; in fact, he "gave great offence to some of the English delegates," who no doubt feel instinctively that Christianity and Darwinism are really incompatible.

Father Adam never had a father himself, nor yet a mother; in fact, he was an orphan from birth; if we may speak thus of a gentleman who was not even born. Of course there were no Board schools then, and the puzzle is, How did he learn to talk? We don't ask that question about Mother Eve. Being a woman, she took to it naturally. But we do ask it about Father Adam, and fortunately it is answered by our pious contemporary, the *Christian Commonwealth*. It appears that "the Creator" taught him, speaking the words, which Adam repeated. How interesting, to be sure! One would have liked to see Adam taking his lessons, and Jehovah imparting them. But the opportunity is for ever gone. All that is now possible is for Jehovah to teach the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* the same sounds that he taught Adam. We should then know how near the grand old gardener's speech was to the language of gorillas.

A foreigner was asked to pray at a Young Women's Christian Association, and, not exactly understanding the niceties of English, he begged God to give all the meeting "sweet hearts." There was a loud and general "Amen!"

There was a fine consumption of victuals by the delegates to the Young Men's Christian Association Jubilee. These hungry followers of the Nazarene put away 12,500 pounds of meat, 30,000 rolls, 450 pounds of butter, and 1,400 meat pies. This is a great deal better than dining with Jesus on bread and bloater, even with a miracle to eke out the supply.

A Christian journal says it is "a cheering sign" that Dr. Berry, of Wolverhampton, declares the redemption of man to be impossible without Christianity; but as Dr. Berry is a professional Christian, who is paid about £700 a year to preach this very doctrine, the Christian journal we allude to is very easily "cheered."

Here is the sort of advertisement which indicates how largely the county Board schools are used to subserve the purposes of the Church: "TWINING SCHOOL BOARD.—Wanted, at once, for this Board's School (mixed), a certificated Master, with wife to teach needlework; salary £65 per annum, with one-fourth Government grant, and house and garden. Candidates must be able to play the harmonium, and will be expected to do so in the Parish Church."

A Christian contemporary prints a portrait of the Rev. J. Ossian Davies—a thick-lipped, large-chinned, well-fed looking man, with no very remarkable brain development. A sermon is also reported by this preacher on "Pessimism," the text being from Ecclesiastes, so that the thing against which he inveighs is to be found in his own "blessed book." In the course of his diatribe he remarks that "a poet without faith is deprived of his power of wing," and two of his illustrations of this pious "truth" are Shelley and Wordsworth. The latter, then, had "power of wing" and the former none; which we suspect will be news to the students of English poetry.

Mr. John M. Bonham, an American, has published through Putnam's Sons a book on *Secularism, its Progress and its Morals*. Copies appear to have been sent for review to all sorts of journals except the *Freethinker*—which is, to say the least of it, singular. But the singularity lessens on discovering that Mr. Bonham writes a good deal in the clouds. There is not a word in his book about any Secular Society in England or America, nor a reference to any of its most distinguished advocates. Mr. Bonham seems capable of writing a history of Christianity without reference to Jesus Christ, Paul, and the apostles.

We noticed a review of Mr. Bonham's book in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which is not very pleasant reading. Mr. Bonham has impressed the critic with the notion that "the Secularist creed is that idealism is not only irrational, but of fatal effect in undermining morals." Put nakedly in this way, the statement is positively ludicrous. How on earth can "idealism," in the ordinary sense of the word, be denied to men who have fought so bravely against great odds, and made so many sacrifices for their convictions? If "idealism" is only a synonym for "supernaturalism," then, of course, Secularism is unideal; but we venture to say that this is not the meaning which is commonly attached to the term.

Fruits of Faith.

Bossuet exulted at the dragonnades;
Geneva shouted when Servetus bled;
Spain butchered in a new world's virgin glades;
Albion a pall of woven horrors spread,
And, in the cold and measured lust of gain,
Smote Asia, Afric, as a mightier Cain.

T. HARRIS.

SPECIAL.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Friday, June 22, Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, W.C.: at 8, "A Secularist's View of Social Progress." Under the auspices of the Fabian Society. Admission free.

Monday, June 25, Northampton: unveiling of the Bradlaugh statue.

July and August, London Hall of Science every Sunday evening.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—June 24, Hall of Science, London. July 1, Liverpool; 8, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

C. WRIGHT.—According to *Whitaker's Almanack* for this year, there are among English-speaking people five millions of Freethinkers, and sixteen millions of no particular religion. The two combined outnumber the Methodists, the Catholics, and the Presbyterians, and are second only in number to the Episcopalians.

J. A. PILLING.—Mr. Foote will not lecture in the provinces till after August. He will try to visit Bolton in September.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for your obliging reply.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: W. Mann, 5s.

N.S.S. GENERAL FUND.—Mrs. Hampson, £1; J. F. Hampson, £1; J. Primrose, 4s.; G. Smith, 6s.; J. Holstead, 5s.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) The Jewish traditions regarding their own origin and history are no more trustworthy than other traditions. Tacitus, the first person who brought science to bear on history, utterly rejected them. (2) Assuredly the Koran is not, as you say, "a make up from our Bible." Read it for yourself and see. Colonel Ingersoll means that Christians do not credit that Mohammed was assisted by God. (3) The translation and interpretation of Job xix. 25, 26, are both very doubtful, as you may see by a reference to the Revised Version. Possibly the meaning is only, "I know that my vindicator liveth and will turn up at last, and though I am now afflicted, I shall yet face God with a clean skin"—in which case there is no word of resurrection after death.

W. FRITH.—Mr. W. Stewart Ross is not a Secularist. He has publicly repudiated the designation.

H. TODD.—See "Sugar Plums."

S. SYKES.—See announcement in "Sugar Plums." There is no cheap volume that we know of on the date, etc., of the four gospels. As soon as we can find time we mean to issue a little book on the subject, in popular language and at a popular price, giving the conclusions of all the leading continental and British critics. We shall probably do it in collaboration with our colleague, Mr. J. M. Wheeler.

V. ROGER.—See paragraph. Thanks for your kind words. Mr. Foote is getting himself again.

PERCY FORD.—The poem has merit, but you need more practice in versification.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—It was printed in the *Freethinker* many years ago. Glad to hear you like this journal so much, and Mr. Mackenzie's verses in particular.

J. C. LEWIS.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings or good jokes.

GEORGE WARD, secretary to the Foote Testimonial, desires to say that the "George Meredith" acknowledged in this week's list is the famous poet and novelist. Mr. Meredith was informed that subscriptions were being publicly acknowledged, in order that he might not be taken unawares. His reply to Mr. Ward shows the ground of his action. "I hold commonly," he writes, "that donations and subscriptions should be anonymous. But in the case of testimony to a man's high and constant courage the name is rightly an accompaniment." This testimony is one that Mr. Foote values supremely.

J. H. WATERS (India).—Very pleased to hear from you. Your letter is really interesting.

A. SAUNDERS.—You will see by the announcement in "Sugar Plums" that the Bradlaugh statue is to be unveiled on Monday. Mr. Foote will be present, in accordance with the wish of the N.S.S. Conference. We hope there will be a strong contingent of Secularists from London, although, of course, the statue is meant to commemorate Charles Bradlaugh as a political and social reformer rather than as a Freethought propagandist.

C. DOEG.—Pleased to have your good opinion of last week's *Freethinker*.

W. JACKSON.—You should consult Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity*, which contains a mass of information such as you desire.

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

INQUIRER.—John Stuart Mill had a clear mind and a perspicuous style. But we should not call him an original thinker. We should rank him far below Auguste Comte.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Liberator—Western Figaro—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—La Verité—Dageraad—Watts's Literary Guide—Open Court—Brighton Guardian—Chicago Sunday Herald—Progressive Thinker—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Liver—Crescent—Crusader—London Welshman—Twentieth Century—Pioneer—Accrington Observer and Times—Isle of Man Times—Leek Times—Hull Daily News—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Irish Times—Mid Sussex Times—Echo—Scottish Guardian—Progress—Newcastle Daily Leader—Dublin Times.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Bradlaugh statue is to be unveiled at Northampton on Monday next (June 25). The procession leaves Market-square at 2.30. Mr. Labouchere will perform the ceremony of unveiling at Abingdon-square at 3. A tea is to take place in the Corn Exchange at 5 prompt, and at 6.30 a public meeting, at which Mr. Labouchere will preside. Among the speakers are Sir Philip Manfield, M.P., F. A. Channing, M.P., Dr. Hunter, M.P., D. Naoroji, M.P., Sir W. Wedderburn, M.P., C. E. Shaw, M.P., Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Mr. J. M. Robertson, and Mr. G. W. Foote, who officially represents the National Secular Society.

No doubt a good many of Charles Bradlaugh's old admirers will be glad to go down from London and "assist" at the unveiling of his statue. Messrs. R. Forder and James Anderson have been arranging for cheap return tickets by the London and North-Western. The price per ticket is 5s. 6d., to be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street or at the Hall of Science. The train leaves Euston at 9.30, and the tickets are available for return by any train during the day.

The Northampton Secularists will arrange for a dinner at the Gold-street Café at one o'clock, at eightpence per head, and the London friends should assemble there, so as to leave together in time for the public procession.

Mr. Foote has resolved to throw himself into the work of the London Hall of Science during July and August. He will occupy the platform every Sunday evening, and his lectures will be upon topics that are likely to attract the liberal-minded public. Mr. Watts stands aside for the time like the other lecturers, so that the continuity of the President's effort may be unbroken. Mr. Foote will visit the provinces in September, beginning with Dundee, where he has promised to open the lecture season for the N.S.S. Branch. Our readers will be glad to hear that his health is much improved, though he intends to take care of himself, and to recruit his physical strength as much as possible, throughout the summer.

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience last Sunday evening at the Hall of Science, London, despite the bad weather and the absence of many friends who had joined the excursion of the West-End Branch of the N.S.S. His lecture upon "Why People do not Attend Church" was enthusiastically received, and at the close Mr. Watts received quite an ovation. Mr. Guest made a capital chairman.

This evening, Sunday (June 24), Mr. Watts again lectures at the Hall of Science, his subject being "The New Tactics of Christians." As this will be the last appearance of our colleague at the Hall until September next, no doubt his friends will rally in good force.

We hope the local "saints" will support the Lambeth Branch at its open-air lecture station in Kennington-road on Sunday evenings. Some disturbance has been caused there, and more is threatened; but it can easily be checked by a few stalwarts around the platform. The principal

disturber is a Christian who is very strong on the immorality of Secularism, although his own experience in a court of justice, and afterwards in a prison, ought to lessen his self-confidence.

On Saturday, June 23, some members of the Liverpool Branch propose going on a rambling excursion to Bidston-hill. Meet at the Central Station (low level) at 2.30, and take tickets to Dock Station, Mersey Railway. Return fare, 6d.; tea will be provided at 1s. each. Those who find 2.30 too early may join the party, proceeding by a later train.

Over fifty members and friends of the West London Branch journeyed by brakes, on Sunday last, to Chertsey, the weather being delightfully fine. Boating was indulged in by many on the Thames, while others formed picnic parties upon St. Ann's Hills. An excellent tea was provided at the Swan Hotel, and a pleasant drive home concluded a most enjoyable outing. A large number of *Freethinkers* were distributed *en route*, the church-goers receiving special attention.

"Race Sunday," June 24, is to be a busy day for our Newcastle friends, and members in that district are requested to note that out-door propaganda is to be commenced on the Quay-side at 11 a.m. At 3 p.m. the Annual Meeting will be held in the ante-room above the Good Templar Hall, when the election of officers, etc., for the ensuing year will take place; also at 7 there will be (weather permitting) a meeting on the Town Moor, near the Military Sports stand, when addresses will be given by Messrs. Stansell (of Sunderland), Mitchell, and Aarstad. It is to be hoped there will be a good muster of members.

The New York *Truthseeker* for June 9 contains a long and interesting account of the Decoration Day services at New Rochelle near the house once occupied by Thomas Paine. There was a great and representative gathering of American Freethinkers; almost everybody, in fact, who is anything. Many speeches were delivered, including one by Colonel Ingersoll. Our contemporary prints a photogravure of the Colonel addressing the crowd in the open air. He is standing in an easy attitude, his right hand in his trouser pocket, and the left resting lightly on the platform railing. His head is thrown back, and, judging by the expression on the faces of some of his hearers, "Bob" has just flung out a brilliant sentence.

We shall give a verbatim report of Ingersoll's speech in our next issue. Meanwhile let it suffice to say that he opened with an unexpected tribute to this "effete old island," as some Yankees call it. Remembering all that is bad as well as all that is glorious in our history, Ingersoll remarked, "I say here to-day that better blood than the English blood never coursed in human veins." Thanks, Colonel. And when are you coming over to see us—and to let us see you?

Those who remember the activity of Mr. Thomas Slater in the past will regret to learn of the continued long illness of this veteran advocate of Secularism. Mr. Slater is now nearly seventy-four, yet much the junior of Mr. E. Truelove and Mr. E. T. Craig, both of whom, we are glad to say, are still active.

Sir Lepel Griffin, K.C.S.I., writing in the *Liver* (June 16) on "Woman's Influence in the East," says: "The seclusion of women as enjoined by the Prophet Mahommed, and the rules which he prescribed for the treatment of the sex, are ignorantly supposed to be degrading and obnoxious to high civilisation; but if we consider the state of society at the time of Mahommed and the savage barbarism of the tribes of Arabia amongst whom he preached, it will be found that, although he was unable to abolish polygamy, and probably had no wish to do so, yet he did everything in his power to ameliorate the condition of women, both slave and free, that he gave the wife a higher status than she had ever before held."

Sir L. Griffin continues: "It may be fairly asserted that the position of a married Mahomedan woman to-day is socially and legally more secure and protected against arbitrary violence, either to person or property, than that of an Englishwoman, whose disabilities until the last few years were a reproach to our civilisation."

The *Accrington Observer and Times* gives insertion to a capital letter from Milton Haworth on the subject of true and false education. Mr. Haworth says: "As to the existence of the supernatural, one man knows precisely as much and exactly as little as another. Upon this question chimpanzees and cardinals, apes and popes, are upon exact equality."

The quarterly tea of the Battersea Branch takes place to-day (Sunday, June 24) at 5.30. Tickets are only sixpence

each, and the committee will be pleased to welcome any London Freethinker. An entertainment and dancing will follow the tea. The Branch quarterly meeting will be held on the following Sunday at 6.30, when every member should be present.

The *Newcastle Daily Leader* devotes an editorial to the Sunday Lecture Question anent the Leeds prosecution. It says that the Lord's Day Observance Society will discover that it is making a mistake. By its bigotry it is not popularising its own teaching; it is only popularising the Sunday lectures.

The *Boston Investigator*, now in its sixty-fourth volume, reprints Mr. Foote's article on "The Dead Jew."

Progress, of Trinidad, is now a yearling, having completed its twelfth monthly number. It will in future be published every fortnight, on the first and fifteenth of every month. We congratulate our West Indian contemporary on this sign of prosperity, and hope it will long continue to float the Freethought flag in that part of the globe.

The Council of the French Federation of Freethinkers have sent a petition to the Chamber of Deputies, asking for the abolition of the religious formula of oaths, the suppression of public prayers in the navy, and of the observance of Good Friday in the Army, and the suppression of the *budget des cultes*, and complete separation of Church and State.

The *Daily News* has the following in its obituary of Lord Coleridge: "His fairness and humanity were most conspicuous when he tried Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote, of the *Freethinker*, on charges of blasphemy. Mr. Bradlaugh was acquitted, and in the case of Mr. Foote, who was already in prison on another charge, the jury failed to agree. Lord Coleridge's summing-up in the latter instance was adversely criticised by the late Mr. Justice Stephen as too favorable to the defendant, but the spirit which dictated it was generally approved, and the more so from its dissimilarity to the prejudice and partiality of Mr. Justice North. This was the more remarkable because, when a junior counsel on circuit, Mr. Coleridge had prosecuted before his father an undefended prisoner named Pooley for scrawling some silly, blasphemous words on a gate. Pooley was convicted, and received a very severe sentence, part of which was remitted by the Home Secretary. This was in 1857, and no more prosecutions for blasphemy took place in England till 1883, when Mr. Foote, with others, was indicted."

"Though Lord Coleridge's tastes," said the *Daily Graphic*, "were always theological, his mind was eminently judicial. Nor did he allow his religious bias to warp his views of matters which have to be decided not on religious but on legal principles, as witness his famous and lucid summing-up in the case which ended in the imprisonment of Mr. G. W. Foote for blasphemous libel." There is a slight error in this statement, as Mr. Foote pointed out in a letter to the *Daily Graphic*. It was not *this* case which ended in his imprisonment, but the previous one tried before Judge North.

The *Daily Chronicle* made no reference to the *Freethinker* case in Lord Coleridge's career, but the following sentence is from its leading article: "Lovers of religious freedom will have lasting reason to be grateful to him for his consistent attitude of hostility to the Blasphemy Laws."

WHY I RENOUNCED CHRISTIANITY.

My parents were, and still are, orthodox Christians of the sect called Congregationalists. Victoria-street Church, Derby, was our family church. Of course I inherited my parents' religious views, and, like the majority of young people, I never questioned the Bible as "God's Book," or the doctrines and ceremonies connected therewith in these days. I only heard of "infidels" as very wicked men who died in awful mental agony because they were too hardened to repent.

When I was twenty-one years old a "revival" was held in connection with the Sunday-school of which I was a teacher, and my "conversion" took place, although I was not honest enough to acknowledge the fact publicly. I may here say that I have often read about, but never come across, one case of "real conversion" to Christianity of a heathen, British or foreign. So-called converts always returned to inherited tendencies, and many times have they been heard to say it was in answer to a mother's, or other guardian's, prayers that they were "saved." In my case it was awakened and honest interest in what before

had been fashionably and indifferently assumed, and this interest, carried to its ultimate issue, resulted in renunciation.

I am always glad to hear of special missions, etc., in Christian churches, as they are certain to have results similar to my case. I adopted an independent attitude, and went in for being an out-and-out Christian. To this end the Old Testament was laid aside as being "old," and I took as my guide the words of Jesus to his disciples in what is called "The Sermon on the Mount." I became indignant at what I openly condemned as the "infidelity" of orthodoxy, in acting directly opposite to the behests of Him it professed to follow; especially that embodiment of hypocrisy called the Christian English Law. About this time several copies of the *Freethinker* were handed to me, and helped much in my convictions. I wrote for several of the books, etc., advertised therein, and eagerly devoured their contents. I was delighted with their candor in contrast to theological works. One, especially, is borne in mind—*The Impossible Creed*—an open letter to the then Bishop of Peterborough (Magee), who was honest enough to avow that it was impossible to carry out the teachings of Jesus, yet did not deem it only decent to resign his profession of discipleship. I inwardly vowed: "God helping me, it shall be seen to be possible in my life."

My well-meaning but bigoted parents burned the cherished literature, but could not destroy the spirit of independence and inquiry which burned within me. The very nature of things involved considerable discussion and expostulation with the pastor and officials of the church where I was still a Sunday-school teacher. As is common in such places, they objected to suggestions of improvement—revision of creed and renewed zeal in doing good. I was awakened to the damning fact that the Christian Church looks to the law to maintain order, rather than do her duty in saving the people; and a series of discussions with my pastor, some private, some public, culminated in my public protest, after the sermon in church, of his cowardly evasion and inconsistency. Overcome with indignation, I avowed "that if he, as a Christian, adhered to all he had spoken as pastor, either God or he was a fool." Legal proceedings were threatened if I repeated such conduct; so, sick at heart with the utter variance to the spirit of the seeking and saving Jesus manifest in the place, I sent in my resignation, at the same time making an offer to the pastor to share my crust if he would resign also, as I considered he had mistaken his vocation.

At this time I was fairly in the thick of what I thought Christian duty. I rented a house in which to shelter destitute people, and between £60 and £70 in a savings bank soon went in carrying out the precepts, "Give to those who ask of you," etc. I labored on in faith that God would eventually endow me with more and more Christian authority. My divine ambition would not be satisfied until the world beheld a nineteenth-century Jesus Christ raising the dead, healing all manner of diseases and deformities, feeding the hungry, etc. It mattered not who did it so long as I shared the work. I was enthralled with what I thought were the grand possibilities of Christianity for this life, and was prepared to make the last sacrifice in doing my part. To insure better superintendence of my shelter I left home and lived there, sleeping with one of my foundlings. All my relatives thought me mad, and a medical man interviewed me at their request; with what satisfaction to them I do not know.

It goes without saying, I was robbed on all hands, and sometimes struck by the people with whom I associated; but, of course, I bore it all in a proper spirit. And so two years passed away. But as time went on I was imperceptibly losing faith. God did not honor me with supernatural aid, and I had made unwarranted assertions as to his power. My limited income as clerk on the Midland Railway Company made it necessary to draw in my horns, and I moved to a smaller house, bringing no small spite upon my head from the people I was obliged to turn out. I did my best with the traditional faith. Before leaving the Congregationalists I had formed the acquaintance of some Salvationists in the lodging-houses, and after a few months joined the Salvation Army, only to resign soon after, disgusted with the avarice of the officers (there was one exception, strange to say a Scotsman) and the inconsistency of the "Army" in general, by prosecuting its enemies. But not finding any other suitable body, and not seeing my way clear to be independent

of sectarianism, I rejoined under protest, as practically the Derby lot embodied, to a great extent, my idea of Socialism. But my heterodoxy gained for me the cold shoulder of most of my comrades, and I learned at last that I was only tolerated for my contributions to the finance. As my circumstances became more and more destitute (still having to maintain a respectable appearance as clerk), and my contributions diminished, so did the disfavor grow; and when, soon after my marriage, I was temporarily suspended on the ground of a scandalous report which had been circulated about my wife and me, I permanently resigned. I still tacitly adhered to the Christian profession, but when in November, 1893, I heard Mr. Foote's lecture, "Why I Cannot be a Christian," it opened my eyes to my illogical and ridiculous position. I had proved it impossible to be a Christian. I could honestly say that in all my life not the slightest proof of divine aid or presence had been received by me, and yet I subscribed my name to the Christian roll. I would do so no longer, and renounced Christianity henceforth.

My friends are greatly troubled, and those who will not see any morality apart from religion thought I should soon "go wrong." They pray for my return to the Lord. But I tell them only one thing can convince me, and that is a personal interview with the Lord himself, or with the three members of divinity, if they like. If there is a God, why this puzzling silence—this astounding non-intervention—this apparent sublime indifference to his creation—this lack of vindication of his son's testament, and of his reputed word?

After my experience, I am surprised at the allegiance of otherwise intelligent men to this phantom faith; amazed at those who, having once rejected, re-embrace this religion which does not justify its pretensions; and disgusted with those who send missionaries of it to the so-called heathen.

JOSEPH G. BRIGGS.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR AGAIN.

IN Westminster Abbey, a few Sundays ago, Archdeacon Farrar delivered a sermon on the subject of the Bible. The sermon, it must be said, is of somewhat secondary importance; it throws no new light on any old point, nor does it open up any new point. But it contains several interesting illustrations of the kind of verbiage by which religion supports itself to-day.

Dr. Farrar, we may note, referred to the Bible as "that great book which is the basis of all Christian teaching." The statement, though commonplace, is important. At the present time there are a number of gentlemen who claim to be Christians, and yet throw out the idea that Christianity is not a "book-religion," that it exists apart from, and independently of, its books, and that the "higher criticism," which reveals the historical untrustworthiness of many of the old books, yet leaves the "essentials" of Christianity untouched. These neo-Christians even go the length of sometimes claiming that, if the Bible were lost or destroyed altogether, Christianity would still have a basis on which to rest. To these people Dr. Farrar's pronouncement will be interesting. And, of course, it is perfectly true. Whatever the new school may urge to the contrary, Christianity—and by the term we mean the beliefs which have been so labelled by the majority of people—Christianity is, and always must be, a book-religion. For Christianity is no theory or philosophy of the universe which any man might naturally reason himself into; it involves a belief in the reality of certain alleged historical events, in the actual personality of an alleged individual who lived at a certain definite period, in a certain definite place, and performed certain definite acts. Christianity involves a belief in all these, and, manifestly, such a belief or such knowledge could only be obtained from alleged historical records. Let these records be destroyed, let their authenticity be disputed, and the very foundations of Christianity are gone. In short, the Bible—that heterogeneous collection of books and pamphlets of various ages and of various merit—is the keystone of the reigning superstition; and, therefore, any criticism which strikes at the Bible strikes necessarily a fatal blow at the superstructure which has been built upon it.

It will be seen, then, that a serious—nay, a vital—point

is the position which the Bible holds. Is the Bible inspired? Is it a supernatural "revelation" differing in essence from all other books? On these points the Archdeacon is strangely silent. Much of the rhetoric he employs might be used—and used even with much greater propriety—of many literatures besides the Hebrew. Edmund Burke said of the Bible that it was "a literature, an infinite variety of the most varied and venerable literature"; and Dr. Farrar substantially says the same. But the English is a "varied and venerable literature," the French is a literature of wonderful variety, the German is a great literature. And each of these literatures is incomparably above the literature of one petty nation and one particular age. Why, then, doesn't Dr. Farrar spin yards of eloquence over these other literatures? The fact is that the interest of his profession forbids; the Bible is the charter of priestcraft. It must be "boomed," and the priests "boom" it.

The Bible, however, must elect to be judged by one of two tests: it may base its claim on its alleged "inspiration," or it may stand on its merit as ordinary literature. Now, it has always in the past elected to be judged by the first test; it has claimed to be "the word of God," and, therefore, literature here or literature there, it demanded submission to its teaching. Now-a-days, however, the "inspiration" business is pretty well played out, and an attempt is made—as it is made in the case of Jesus—to shift the ground of the claim. Jesus was set up as a god until the doctrine became ludicrous to even the sensible within the fold; and then—Jesus being no longer possible as God—we had Jesus, the "elder brother," and the "ideal man." But in both cases, in that of Jesus as in that of the Bible, the fact of the previous claim having been made is fatal to the success of the latter. Bither Jesus is God or nothing; either the Bible is the inspired "word of God," or it is practically valueless, for its value arose from its alleged authority. Let us take a familiar illustration from every-day life of what we are contending. Suppose we were in the midst of a European crisis, and the question of war and peace hung in the balance. Suppose, then, we were brought a report of a speech, say, by Lord Rosebery, on Foreign Affairs which indicated the policy which England would pursue. And suppose, after reading that speech, someone came and told us it was a forgery; that Lord Rosebery never delivered such a speech, and that it was a hoax of a country journalist; would we not, in such case, throw away the report as worthless? Its whole value consisted in its authorship; if it was not the opinion of the head of the Cabinet, it was practically worthless. In such a case, what would the editor of a great daily newspaper, who had, when he learned that the report was a forgery, thrown it in the waste-paper basket, think of a man who would fetch it out and say: "Well, you know, it's splendid *as literature*?"

In one of his characteristic flights of extravagance, Dr. Farrar says: "Can you have a more priceless treasure? What problems do these books leave unexamined, what depths unfathomed, what height unscathed, what conscience unreproved, what heart untouched?" What, really, can one think of the intelligence or the honesty of the man who can talk in that fashion? What problems does the Bible leave unexamined? Well, here. It "leaves unexamined" the problems, say, of mathematics, of astronomy, of geology, of chemistry. It tells us nothing of the science of evolution. In so far as it touches at all the problems of astronomy or geology, it is false. It teaches next to nothing of the science of medicine; its "examination" of the "problems" of philology is positively puerile. Its solution of the "problems" of economics seems to be simply indiscriminate alms-giving. In short, it leaves unexamined thousands of problems—the problems of Science and of Art, of Ethics and of Social life—which men have to solve to-day for themselves. And when one finds Archdeacon Farrar using language such as we have quoted, one must, to be charitable, simply set it down to an intellectual incapacity to recognise the most patent facts.

Dr. Farrar interlards his sermon with a few anecdotes which are hardly fresh. He repeats a story of Faraday, on which we commented before in these columns. It would seem to be, therefore, a stock-piece at Westminster. Sir Henry Lathom once found Faraday, as he thought, ill. "No," said Faraday with a sob, "it is not that; but why will people go astray when they have this blessed book to guide them?" Now, really, in all humility, we would appeal to Dr. Farrar—for the common sake of Faraday's

memory—to drop the repetition of this ludicrous story—even admitting the story to be true, it presents Faraday—whom others honor besides Dr. Farrar—in such an abjectly foolish light that an admirer might sacrifice whatever advantage the story might bring his creed, to his respect for a great man.

We take, as a final specimen of the style of thing which the modern pulpit purveys, this brief passage: "And yet ignorant men, in their puny arrogance, try to scoff at the Bible! Scoff at the Bible! They might as well scoff at the starry heavens. Let no young man here think it is in him a mark of superiority or cleverness to scoff at the Bible. I will tell you what it is. It is a mark of superficiality, and a mark of ignorance."

All this depends on what is meant by "scoffing." If to protest against the monstrous extravagance of the Bibliolater's language; if to sanely declare that the Bible is a mass of literature of more or less worth, with no more claim on our regard or reverence than any other ancient literature; if to expose the foolishnesses and absurdities with which it is packed; if to laugh at Jonah and smile at Joshua; and if to negate the nonsensical claim that it is a "supernatural" revelation; if all this be "scoffing," then, assuredly, we scoff at the Bible. But, then, "scoffing" of that kind can have no greater justification than sermons such as Dr. Farrar's. As long as the pulpit holds language of such outrageous exaggeration of the Bible's value, the "Bible-smasher," whom "superior" people sometimes affect to despise, has a legitimate and necessary work to perform.

As a matter-of-fact, the Bible—like all books, like all men—despite the artificial estimate of the pulpit, must ultimately stand for what it is worth in the free market-place of the world's literature; and it is rapidly finding its true place. No interested "puffing" can for ever blind men to the real value of any article. As representing the literary remains of one people, the Bible will always have a certain value; portions of it may have a value of their own. It is not our purpose now to critically appraise it. But the world can never be summed up in any one man, in any one book, in any one literature—and that a dead literature. The world is greater than Israel, greater than Greece, greater than Rome, for the only true and adequate measure of Humanity is Humanity itself.

FREDERICK RYAN.

TIC, TAC, TOC.

(Concluded from page 378.)

INVESTIGATING further into the nature of his clock-residence, the death-watch Tic discovered that the motion depended on weight, which gave him no high opinion of the organisation of the being he studied. He sought to see if it had sensibility, but biting the wheels only severely hurt his own self. He was sensible enough not to continue his experiment, and murmured, "'Tis but a useless machine."

Tic went to recount his adventures to his friend Tac, who resided on the right side of the pediment. Now Tac was a philosopher of a different stamp. He, too, had pondered the mysteries of their abode and the phenomena of the cuckoo. "Why are you disappointed?" he asked. "Because I see nothing but matter, force, and mechanism, and all without purpose, without utility." "There you are assuredly deceived," said Tac, gravely. "Have you not noticed the constant monotonous ticking of our residence? Have you not remarked how like it is to our own?" "Certainly; but what would you suggest?" "I conclude, my dear Tic, that our dwelling is itself a gigantic wood-piercing death watch, and that its destiny is to produce ticks like ours." "But," protested Tic, "it has far more than this capacity for ticking. It has bells and other sounds we cannot imitate. Why should you conclude that the tickings alone are the final end of the machine?" "Nothing easier. First, there exists an evident relation between all the mechanism and the organ which produces the ticks. Secondly, the only thing the machine does constantly, and without cessation, is to tick. All the other phenomena are intermittent and subordinate to this. Therefore, it is a being similar to ourselves upon which we are a kind of parasite." "But it does not live. It has no

head or other organ similar to ours." "How do you know? The vital manifestation of this great beetle may be unlike our own." "You invoke analogy for the tickings which favor your system, but desert it when I speak of the absence of the organs of life manifestations. Is this logic?" "No matter; I derive great consolation from believing that this is a great beetle like myself, destined to produce ticks like unto mine own, and I would rather resign my head than my ennobling and consoling faith." And these two insects got into a long and embittered argument as to whether cuckoos were designed on purpose to produce tickings or not.

Tic, poor pessimist materialist, finding he could make no impression on Tac, the optimist spiritualist, proposed that they should consult upon the subject the learned old Toe, a wood-beetle of high repute for science and sagacity, who dwelt on the top of the clock pediment, completing thus the triangle of philosophers. Each being anxious to have Toe's reputation on his side, they agreed. Paying him a visit, each stated his case with becoming deference. Toe, having listened to both of them with great attention, assumed a grave look and remarked: "It is probable—I don't say it is certain, but it is probable—that, in speaking positively upon such a matter as the strange residence in which we find ourselves, you are both in error." "So," exclaimed Tac, bitterly, "are you then alone infallible?" "Not at all," said Toe, "but you ask my opinion—I give it you; that is all." "And what opinion do you hold yourself?" asked Tac, with an air of defiance. "My opinion," said Toe, smiling, "is that we should make the best of our abode, without troubling ourselves about its final purpose, which is far beyond the faculties of us beetles. The only thing we can be sure of is the nature and action of the machinery, and we'd better take care it doesn't make mincemeat of us." Saying which he retired to his hole, leaving Tic and Tac dumbfounded.

The cuckoo clock continued its tickings as before.

(Adapted from the French of Paul Combes by J. M. W.)

THE SALVATIONIST'S PRAYER.

O God our Heav'nly Father!
O Father of our Lord who died for us!
We'll trust in thee—yes, rather!—
Through Jesus who was worse than fried for us.

Why, bless me! I remember
That nothing bad I e'er refused to do
Till, first of last November,
I chucked the bloomin' things I used to do.

The day thou didst renew me
I met a pal, whose words were *blankified*:
"God's truth! I hardly knew ye!
What's up?" says he. Says I: "I'm sanctified!"
Hallelujah!

You'd stared if you'd seen him,
I'd bet, O Lord! if 'tweren't forbidden me;
He grinned—I mustn't screen him—
And said: "Go' blime! Bill, you're kiddin' me!"

O, save his soul, dear Savior!
Particularly Sal—my gal, you know—
And Jim the boss-eyed pavior:
They're rare good "bad uns." Jim's my pal, you know.

Roll up thy sleeves, Jehovah!
And smite the "swells" who all disparage us;
The "nobs" that live in "clovah,"
And drive to church and hell in carriages.

We'll stick to thee for ever!
If thou art with us, who can wallop us?
Not one! so help me never!
Not one in all this great "metropolus"!

Well, God—no more at present;
But praying passes time so pleasantly—
In fact, there's nought so pleasant;
So, I'll again be with you presently.

God bless you! Hallelujah!
God bless the Jews that slew ye!
I'm mixed, O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!
But this I know: I'll never slowly roast
Like those that never knew ye;
But sing with all the heav'nly holy host,
Amen! and Hallelujah!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

THE TESTIMONIAL TO MR. FOOTE.

I DESIRE to warmly support the suggestion of Mr. George Anderson, that the readers of the *Freethinker*, and more particularly the various Branches of the National Secular Society, should earnestly set to work to make the testimonial to Mr. Foote a worthy recognition of his valuable services to the Secular cause. Although it must be apparent to those who read this journal that the President throws enormous energy into his advocacy, it is known only to a few how much he has had to sacrifice to meet the increasing demands upon him as leader of the Freethought movement in this country. For several years Mr. Foote cheerfully risked pecuniary embarrassment in the hope that he might be able to establish a penny Freethought paper; and in connection with the N.S.S. he has always been willing to do the lion's share of the work. From my own experience in similar circumstances I can testify to the imperative necessity of relieving Mr. Foote of all monetary troubles; and I trust that it may be regarded by the many friends throughout the country as a pleasurable duty to keep Mr. Anderson well employed during the next fortnight in acknowledging the receipt of subscriptions. Let the Branches communicate directly with their members; and those who may not belong to any Branch should make it a point to remit direct to the Treasurer—and, I would add, promptly and generously.

CHARLES WATTS.

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The Committee will meet at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening next at 9, to which all the members are earnestly invited to attend.

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Growing Gods.

Sir John Lubbock, in his *Origin of Civilisation and Primitive Condition of Man*, shows that the early deities were all ugly devils, and that they slowly improve as their worshippers improve; so that, as Ingersoll says, "an honest God is the noblest work of man." Lubbock says: "The Australians dimly imagine a being—spiteful, malevolent, but weak and dangerous only in the dark. The negro's deity is more powerful, but not less hateful; invisible, indeed, but subject to pain, mortal like himself, and liable to be made the slave of man by enchantment. The deities of the South Sea Islanders are, some good, some evil; but, on the whole, more is to be feared from the latter than to be hoped from the former. They fashioned the land, but are not truly creators, for earth and water existed before them. They do not punish the evil, nor reward the good. They watch over the affairs of men; but if, on the one hand, witchcraft has no power over them, neither, on the other, can prayer influence them; they require to share the crops or their booty of the worshippers. . . . It appears, then, that every increase in science—that is, in positive and ascertained knowledge—brings with it an elevation of religion. Nor is this progress confined to the lower races. Even within the last century science has purified the religion of Western Europe by rooting out the dark belief in witchcraft, which led to thousands of executions, and hung like a black pall over the Christianity of the Middle Ages."

His Call.

The story is told of a colored preacher, who had not shown special aptitude for the work, that in a denominational gathering he narrated his experiences, including his alleged call to the ministry. He said that he had a vision and saw on the sky the golden letters, "G. P. C.," which he interpreted to mean, "Go preach Christ." After he had finished his remarks, another brother arose and said that he had no doubt that his brother had the vision that he described, but there might be a question about the interpretation of those letters. "I believe," said he, "that 'G. P. C.' meant, 'Go pick cotton.'"

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.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Tactics of Christians." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dancing (6d.). Tuesday, at 8, dancing class and social. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Bruno and Spinoza."

WALTHAMSTOW (Workmen's Hall, High-street): Wednesday, half-yearly meeting; important business; friends invited.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.15, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?" CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Shadows of Superstition."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."

FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11, W. J. Ramsey will lecture; 3, J. Rowney, "Christ's Teaching Defective."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, William Heaford will lecture. Corner of the Grove: Thursday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3, W. Heaford will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, J. Rowney, "Bible Parables."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Recklessness."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, C. James, "Heresy."

LAMBETH (Kennington-green, near Vestry Hall): 6.30, C. James, "Lying for Jesus."

LEYTON (High-road, near Vicarage-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Religion and Morality."

MILE-END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Voltaire."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Bible Parables"; 3.30, F. Haslam will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 11.15, C. Johnson will lecture; 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WALTHAMSTOW (Markhouse-road): 6.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Life."

WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, H. Snell, "The Bible in Board Schools"; 6.30, J. Rowney, "Prophecy." Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "What the Universe Teaches."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, Nelson-road, New Brompton): 2.15, Sunday-school: 7, St. John, "Free Will and Necessity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Ann-street): 7, John Roberts, "Robert Owen."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Lucretius Keen, "Is there a God?"; 6.30, "A Defence of my Heresy."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Ante-room above Good Templar Hall): 3, members' annual meeting.

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 11, C. Cohen, "Humanity's Outlook"; 7, "The Dream of Immortality." Wednesday, at 8, dancing class for members and friends.

SHEFFIELD (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 2.30, members and friends meet near tram terminus, bottom of Snig Hill, to go by car for Hillsbro, and thence walk to Little Matlock.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King-street): 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, a meeting.

SCARBOROUGH (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, William Cook, "Voltaire."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of New Brompton-road, High-street): 11, St. John, "Has Man a Soul?"

MANCHESTER (Stephenson-square): 3, Lucretius Keen, "What has Christianity Done?"

NEWCASTLE (Quayside): 11, Mr. Mitchell, "The Gospel Miracles." On the Town Moor: 7, Messrs. Stansell, Mitchell, and Aarstad will speak.

PORTSMOUTH (Southsea Common; in hall if wet): 3, C. Cohen, "Secularism."

SCARBOROUGH (near the Miners' Hall, Silkworth): 11, William Cook, "Morality from a Freethought Standpoint."

PASCAL AND THE MIRACLE OF THE HOLY THORN.

The "miracle" of the Holy Thorn was briefly this. Marguerite Perier (Pascal's niece, a child of ten) suffered with an ulcerated eye. Sister Flavie Passart, the nun under whose exclusive care she was, recommended her to apply to the eye a holy thorn, revered as a relic of J. C.'s crown. She did this, and a surgeon who came to examine the eye a few days afterwards found it was quite well. Pascal was overwhelmingly impressed. Here was the supernatural interference which removed all doubt. He took henceforward as his cognizance an eye encircled with a crown of thorns, and the motto *Scio cui credidi*. Flavie Passart afterwards became a known and marked deceiver in getting up ingenious feigned miracles; illnesses were brought on simply as an opportunity for a new miracle. As she had entire charge of the child, she might have imposed by irritative applications both on the child, who only knew that she suffered and was relieved, and also on the surgeon.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 24 and 25, Portsmouth; 28, Wood Green. July 1, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 5, Wood Green; 8, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Walthamstow; 12, Wood Green.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—June 24 m. Pimlico Pier, e. Edmonton.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—June 24, m. Leyton, a. Victoria Park, e. Walthamstow. July 1, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Tottenham; 8, m. Kingsland, e. Wimbledon; 11, Hyde Park; 15, m. Leyton, e. Walthamstow; 22, m. a. and e., Hyde Park; 26, e. Hammersmith; 29, m. Finsbury Park, e. Lambeth. August 5, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Regent's Park; 12, m. Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—June 24, m. and e. Camberwell. July 1, m. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 8, Chatham; 15, m. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 22, m. Clerkenwell; 29, m. and e. Camberwell. August 12, Failsforth.

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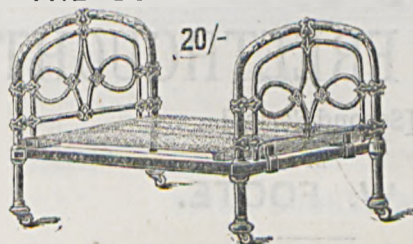
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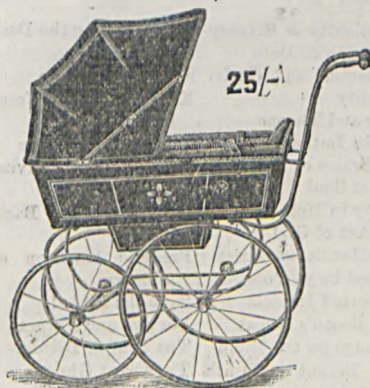
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