

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

LIVING PICTURES.

LONDON appears doomed to have an annual rumpus over the licensing of music-halls and other places of public entertainment; and the fanatics of "purity," and especially of *compulsory* purity, seize the occasion to air their virtues and advertise themselves.

It was to be expected that Mr. Coote, of the Vigilance Society, should protest against the Tableaux Vivants, or Living Pictures, which have lately become so fashionable. This gentleman has a perfect horror of "nudity" and "suggestiveness." It would not be surprising if he got up a petition to the Creator to bring us all into the world with an irremovable covering, which might expand with our growth, like the garments of the Jews in the wilderness. For the present, however, Mr. Coote devotes himself to what he doubtless regards as the practical side of human morality. Accordingly he went before the Licensing Committee of the London County Council, and implored it to stop the exhibition of female charms at the Palace. Some of the Living Pictures he allowed to be excellent—namely, those in which the figures were fully clothed in the ungainly raiment of the nineteenth century. But he protested that the figures in some of the pictures were just naked. They had on something, a kind of second skin; but it was a matter of inference rather than of knowledge. And the disposition of the limbs of Ariadne, for instance, was very "suggestive"—from which it is to be presumed there was a great disturbance of Mr. Coote's moral serenity; and, judging from his own feelings, he wished other people to be protected from a similar excitement.

Mrs. Ormiston Chant, who opposed the Empire licence, said that she saw nothing at all objectionable in the Living Pictures. Evidently, therefore, the "purity" party are not agreed amongst themselves. But the Licensing Committee takes them one at a time, and regards their objections as all valid, although they flatly contradict each other.

The nude in art is a very fertile theme of discussion. But the discussion has little effect upon artists, and just as little upon the bulk of the people. Painters and sculptors continue as ever to represent the loveliest object in the world—the human body in its highest development; and the public continue to appreciate their achievements in this direction.

The nude in itself is not indecent. It is not in itself suggestive. A woman's figure may be painted naked, and yet be as chaste as the driven snow, thrice winnowed by the northern blast. It may be painted in full dress, and yet radiate a very atmosphere of voluptuousness. A lifted skirt, the artful gleam of a mere inch of throat, the pose of the body, a glance of the eyes, may be infinitely suggestive.

The Venus of Milo—Our Lady of Beauty, as Heine called her—may be seen in the Louvre at Paris. She is stark naked, but we pity the man who could look at her with an impure thought. In a healthy mind that noble figure—the work of a splendid, unknown Greek artist—could only excite admiration and reverence.

But the pictures at the Palace are *living*. True, and we have seen them. Perhaps we are not so inflammable as the "purity" folk; at any rate, they produced no disastrous result in our constitution. The figures were still, and arranged in imitation of famous works of art; and they certainly "suggested" nothing more than the original pictures.

Of course there may be persons who cannot look even at the Venus of Milo without filthy fancies. But these are pathological cases, and we object to their weakness being made the ground of a rule for healthier natures. Titian's "Sleeping Venus" shall not be destroyed because a grinning ape leers at her loveliness.

It is to Mrs. Ormiston Chant's credit that she did not share Mr. Coote's "feelings" with regard to the Living Pictures. Her objection was to the promenade at the Empire, where immoral women were allowed to perambulate. She has entered upon a crusade against the "unfortunates" of her own sex. Her motives are no doubt admirable, but we doubt the wisdom of her policy.

Mrs. Chant raised a minor objection to the Empire ballet. She thought the girls were insufficiently dressed, and that there ought to be something to keep their skirts down. But here again there is some confusion. The most indecent dance we ever had the misfortune to witness was performed by a woman whose skirts reached to her feet. We might add that we have seen far more reprehensible nudity in the stalls than on the stage. Mrs. Chant should begin by reforming the part of the house which is not in the program.

We cannot say that Mrs. Chant was felicitous in her selection of witnesses. Her own evidence was not particularly happy. When she went to the Empire promenade "quietly dressed" no one noticed her; when she went "gaily attired" she was accosted. Moral—don't go gaily attired, as though you were looking for a cavalier. Miss Phillips, an elderly lady who had never been to a theatre before in her life, was hardly a competent witness. The Rev. Mr. Brooks, of St. Silas, Islington, said he had been accosted in the promenade, but all the lady said to him was "Why do you look so sad?" The poor man thought himself *incog.*, being dressed as a layman, but he could not disguise his face. The tabernacle look betrayed him.

What is it that Mrs. Ormiston Chant wants? She told a *Pall Mall Gazette* interviewer that she desired to make the music-hall a place where she could take her daughters. Well, that is a legitimate ambition. But what are her methods? She has a special objection to the "immoral women." "I am perfectly willing," she said, "that they should come to music-halls for amusement, but not to carry on their trade." The interviewer remarked that it was admitted that they did nothing in the way of their trade at the Empire beyond an elevation of the eyebrows or the use of an impudent look. "Certainly," said Mrs. Chant, "but even that should not be tolerated in a music-hall."

This is what the Yankees call a large order. Fancy turning a woman out of a music-hall for lifting her eyebrows! Was there ever a madder proposal? Fancy a committee of Mrs. Chant's inspecting the music-halls, and bringing a woman before the magistrates for wearing an impudent look—as a woman is apt to when another woman stares at her! What is an impudent look? Is it a thing that can be proved by testimony? Would the complainants have to draw it on a blackboard? Would the witnesses have to swear that the drawing was a faithful copy of the original? Mrs. Chant should go farther while she is on this track. Why not make every woman who visits a music-hall bring her husband and her marriage certificate, or the affidavit of two ratopayers that she is a respectable member of society?

"Our ultimate aim," said Mrs. Chant, "is the entire abolition of this terrible trade." But will she realise this

object by harrying the prostitutes? If they are driven from the Empire promenade, will they at once join the Salvation Army? Will they not carry on their "trade" in the streets, where people's "daughters" must see them? Will they not resort to the very churches, which travellers tell us are often used for assignations?

Christianity has been harrying prostitutes ever since the days of Constantine; that is, for a period of fifteen hundred years. Pandars had molten lead poured down their throats. Seducers were put to death, and the seduced shared their fate. Harlots were whipped and driven out of cities. They were compelled to wear a certain garb, and to live in certain places. They were damned in this world and damned in the next. And what was the result? Absolute failure. The rapid spread of syphilis when it was introduced into Europe testified to the universal corruption. Every oppression and cruelty was inflicted on these unfortunates. But their "trade" was never suppressed by it, nor even diminished. The evil was simply driven from the surface into the vitals of society.

What is a prostitute? A victim of lust. "Whilst creeds and civilisations spring up, pass away, and disappear," writes Lecky, "she remains eternal priestess of humanity, and blasted for the sins of the people." The most wanton woman on earth would never deliberately become a prostitute. Women drift into prostitution. Often they are driven into it. The first step is taken in a moment of weakness, perhaps in a moment of surrender to the beloved. Then comes disenchantment, then desertion, then the finger of scorn, then the difficulty of earning food, then the pressure of that fatal necessity of living, then the selling of the body for bread, then the feverish life of the gay woman, then the hell of the confirmed prostitute.

A woman does not take hated kisses on her lips of choice. She does not willingly submit herself to loathed embraces. She does not deliberately shut herself out from a happy home and the prattle of children. A woman is forced into prostitution by economical causes. This is what Mrs. Chant has to face. It is here that she must apply the remedy. Otherwise she may labor till doomsday, and all in vain.

G. W. FOOTE.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE.

FOR one brought up in the Church and educated for the ministry, the late James Anthony Froude was a remarkable Freethinker. It is, indeed, rather by the Freethought essays which he contributed to the *Westminster Review* and to *Fraser's Magazine* that he has influenced the minds of his generation than by his larger work, *The History of England, from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth*; and perhaps it is the *Short Studies of Great Subjects* that will be longest remembered.

Born April 23, 1818, at Dartington, Devon, near the historical town of Totnes, of which his father was archdeacon, he was educated for the Church, first at Westminster School, then at Oriel College, Oxford. There he took his M.A. degree with classical honors, won the Chancellor's prize for an essay on "The Influence of Political Economy on the Moral and Social Welfare of a Nation," and gained a Fellowship in Exeter College. He took deacon's orders in 1844, but went no further in the black business. Religious discussions were then rife in Oxford. Pusey, J. H. Newman, and Froude's elder brother, Richard Hurrell Froude, tended Romewards. James Anthony, though brought up in the High Church, with Arnold, Clough, Jowett, and the younger Newman, tended reasonwards—indeed, openly adopted Rationalism. How it came about he made evident in his *Nemesis of Faith*, 1848. This book excited great opprobrium. It was publicly burnt at Exeter College, and Froude had to resign his fellowship. In this book he said: "What Plato says of the mythology of the Greeks I say of that of the Hebrews": it is insulting to God and injurious to man. Here are a few detached thoughts from this now scarce work:—

"Why is it thought so very wicked to be an unbeliever? Rather, why is it assumed that no one can have difficulties unless he be wicked? Because an anathema upon unbelief has been appended as a guardian of the creed. When everything may be lost unless one holds a particular belief, and nothing except common love of truth can induce one to

question it, prudence points out the safe course; but really it is but vulgar evidence this of anathema."

"Genuine belief ended with persecution. As soon as it was felt that to punish a man for maintaining an independent opinion was shocking and unjust, so soon a doubt had entered whether the faith established was unquestionably true. The theory of persecution is complete. If it be necessary for the existence of society to put a man to death who has a monomania for murdering bodies, or to exile him for stealing what supports them, infinitely more necessary is it to put to death, or send into exile or to imprison, those whom we know to be destroying weak men's souls, or stealing from them the dearest of all treasures. It is because—whatever we choose to say—it is because *we do not know, we are not sure* they are doing all this mischief; and we shrink from the responsibility of acting upon a doubt."

Mr. Froude henceforward adopted literature as his profession. He became, by marriage, a brother-in-law of Charles Kingsley. In 1850, when the *Leader* was started by George Henry Lewes, Thornton Hunt, G. J. Holyoake, and others, as an organ of advanced opinion, Mr. Froude contributed to it an exposition of "The Philosophy of Catholicism," and other papers. He joined Dr. Chapman's staff on the *Westminster Review* with Harriet Martineau, "George Eliot," Bain, Lewes, Newman, Greg, Morley, and Call, and contributed some of his most noteworthy articles; for instance, those on the Book of Job, John Knox, Spinoza, etc. Afterwards he was offered, and accepted, the editorship of *Fraser's Magazine*, in which he wrote "A Plea for the Free Discussion of Theological Difficulties," "Criticism and the Gospel History," and published the Freethinking essays of Mr. Leslie Stephen. In the "Plea" he says:—

"The time is past for repression. Despotism has done its work; but the day of despotism is gone, and the only remedy is a full and fair investigation. Things will never right themselves if they are let alone. It is idle to say peace when there is no peace; and the concealed imposthume is more dangerous than an open wound. The Church authorities still refuse to look their difficulties in the face; they prescribe for mental troubles the established doses of Paley and Pearson; they refuse dangerous questions as sinful, and tread the round of commonplace in placid comfort. But it will not avail."

In his Essay on "Criticism and the Gospel History" he says: "Every thinking person who has been brought up a Christian and desires to remain a Christian, yet who knows anything of what is passing in the world, is looking to be told on what evidence the New Testament claims to be received. The state of opinion proves of itself that the arguments hitherto offered produce no conviction. Every other miraculous history is discredited as legend, however exalted the authority on which it seems to be rested. We crave to have good reason shown us for maintaining still the one great exception." He examines the evidence, finds the Synoptics do not represent independent authorities, and that all are of uncertain date and authorship. "There exist no ancient writings whatever of such vast moment to mankind of which so little can be authentically known." "Of the gospels, separately, the history is immediately lost in legend."

His *History* has been variously judged. The period of the Reformation, the characters of Henry VIII., Sir Thomas More, Thomas Cromwell, Mary Queen of Scots, and Elizabeth, are likely to prove themes of controversy, radiating more heat than light, for years to come. But no one can deny the literary merits of the work. The realistic description of Mary's execution, and the vivid narration of the defeat of the Armada, show Mr. Froude as one of the most powerful writers of his day. Throughout the work there are many severe cuts at the intolerance and strife engendered by religion, and in one passage he says it had, indeed, brought what it pretended to bring—not peace, but a sword, setting father against son, and mother against daughter. Another passage on the phases of Faith as credence and creed I transcribe at length, as it is eminently characteristic of the man and his attitude:—

"Every great truth seeks some body, some outward form in which to exhibit its powers. It appears in the world, and men lay hold of it and represent it to themselves in histories, in forms of words, in sacramental symbols; and these things, which in their proper nature are but illustrations, stiffen into essential fact, and become part of the reality. So arises in era after era an outward and mortal expression of the inward, immortal life; and at once the old struggle begins to repeat itself between the flesh and the

spirit, the form and the reality. For a while the lower tendencies are held in check. The meaning of the symbolism is remembered and fresh. It is a living language, pregnant and suggestive. By-and-by, as the mind passes into other phases, the meaning is forgotten. The language becomes a dead language, and the living robe of life becomes a winding-sheet of corruption. The form is represented as everything, the spirit as nothing. Obedience is dispensed with. Sin and religion arrange a compromise; and outward observances, or technical inward emotions, are converted into jugglers' tricks, by which men are enabled to enjoy their pleasures and escape the penalties of wrong. Then such religion becomes no religion, but a falsehood; and honorable men turn away from it, and fall back in haste upon the naked elemental life."

Mr. Froude was long on terms of the closest intimacy with Thomas Carlyle, and was appointed to edit the remains and write the life of that great writer. None of his works provoked more interest and controversy. He distinctly states that Carlyle gave up historical Christianity; "the special miraculous occurrences of sacred history were not credible to him."

From Carlyle he imbibed a regard for Calvinism. He saw clearly it was a case of Calvin's God or none. If there be such a being, we are in his hands but as clay in the hands of a potter. For Calvinism, with its stern God and eternal hell, he held educed strength. In his monograph on Bunyan he says: "Such a belief, if it does not drive a man to madness, will at least cure him of trifling." With Carlyle, too, he preached moral elevation rather than material progress, forgetting, as it seems to me, how largely the former is dependent on the latter. Here is a characteristic passage from the paper on "The Book of Job," in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*:—

"In two things there are progress—progress in knowledge of the outer world, and progress in material wealth. This last, for the present, creates perhaps more evils than it relieves; but suppose this difficulty solved—suppose the wealth distributed, and every peasant living like a peer—what then? If this is all, one noble soul outweighs the whole of it. Let us follow knowledge to the outer circle of the universe—the eye will not be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. Let us build our streets of gold, and they will hide as many aching hearts as hovels of straw. The well-being of mankind is not advanced a single step. Knowledge is power, and wealth is power; harnessed, as in Plato's fable, to the chariot of the soul, and guided by wisdom, they may bear it through the circle of the stars; but, left to their own guidance, or reined by a fool's hand, the wild horses may bring the poor fool to Phaeton's end, and set a world on fire."

Like Carlyle, he wants to know what words stand for. "Progress!" he exclaims; "but progress whither? Liberty! but what use is to be made of it? What aim are we to set before ourselves? It is exactly by these undefined commonplaces that the wearied man, to whom life is an earnest thing, who believes that he has been placed in this world, not to exercise his rights, but to learn his duty and to do it, is thrown back upon a system which at least knows what it is about. Men cannot live on bottled moonshine, or feed on fractions whose denominator is nothing." This, he pointed out, was the stronghold of Catholicism, which otherwise represented all that he detested. "No Protestant community has ever succeeded in laying down a chart of human life with any definite sailing directions." We have something yet to learn from the Church. But, he says, "Romanism, as a theological creed, cannot again command the serious belief of the intelligent part of mankind. A gulfianic 'grammar of assent' may make the dead limbs seem to move; but the movement is artificial. The heart does not beat, the blood does not run in the veins. The life, once gone, does not come back again." In his essay on "The Condition and Prospects of Protestantism" he sees that system is falling to pieces, and he throws out the following warning:—

"Catholicism has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. It is tolerant now because its strength is broken. It has been fighting for bare existence, and its demands at present are satisfied with fair play. But let it once have a numerical majority behind it, and it will reclaim its old authority. It will again insist on controlling all departments of knowledge. The principles on which it persecuted it still professes, and persecution will grow on again as naturally and necessarily as a seed in congenial soil." . . . "We have no hope from theologians, to whatever school they may belong. They, and all belonging to them, are given over to their own dreams, and they cling to them with a passion proportionate to the weakness of their arguments."

He shared the views of Lecky and Tyndall in regard to Ireland, and his writings on the distressful country, in which he indicated his view that a new Cromwell was required, are thought to exhibit national prejudice. Yet he wrote in his Irish novel, *Two Chiefs of Dunboy*—a novel without a suggestion of "love": "Each people in this world likes its own way, and little is the good that comes from forcing them." His book on Cæsar is a solid performance, and so is his clearing that great Freethinker from the scandals thrown at his name. "Gossip," he remarks, "is not evidence, nor does it become evidence because it has been repeated through many generations." Very noteworthy is his conclusion of that volume. He says:—

"Strange and startling resemblance between the Founder of the kingdom of this world and the Founder of the kingdom not of this world, for which the first was a preparation. Each was denounced for making himself a king. Each was maligned as the friend of publicans and sinners. Each was betrayed by those he had loved and cared for. Each was put to death, and Cæsar also was believed to have risen again and ascended into heaven and become a divine being."

Notable, too, are his articles on "Lucian" and "A Cagliostro of the Second Century." His fine translation of the satire of the Pagan Freethinker on the gods is done with too much verve to doubt of his sharing in its sentiments.

Writing of Lucian he said: "Had he found himself invited to believe that the child of a Galilean artisan had one hundred years before been born of a virgin, had worked miracles, had been put to death, had gone down to Hades, and had returned again to life, he would have answered that he could match the story by a hundred parallels from his own contemporary experience. Each generation produced its own swarm of pretenders to supernatural powers."

Mr. Froude's last work is his newly-published *Life and Letters of Erasmus*. This I have just seen, and find he has dealt with one of the most interesting figures of history, in a manner worthy of his subject and his own reputation. Many will learn with regret that it was in the preparation of this work that the illness was brought on which has deprived England of one of her foremost men of letters.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE NECESSITY OF SECULAR EDUCATION.

SECULARISTS, and all friends of true and unsectarian education, have, at the present time, an important duty to perform, the right doing of which will not only benefit the generation of to-day, but will also confer a permanent good upon future ages. That duty is to endeavor to thoroughly understand the correct training that should be given to the young, and then to see that its usefulness is not impaired by incorporating with our national system of education any injurious or retarding elements. The present majority upon the London School Board have, during the last three years, marred the true principle of education and obstructed its progress by seeking to enforce upon the children, at the public expense, such theological views as are not only valueless, but positively detrimental to the training of youth in the duties and requirements of citizenship. I hope, and believe, that at the election, which will take place next month, of members of the new School Board these theological bigots will be deprived of their pernicious power. An earnest appeal is therefore here made to all Secularists, and also to those who are not Secularists, but who desire to rescue the education of the young from the domination of ecclesiastical monopoly, to do their best, both in London and throughout the provinces, to support those candidates at the coming election who are in favor of Secular education pure and simple. With a view of furnishing reasons why this course should be pursued, it is my intention to publish in these columns a series of articles upon the advantages of Secular education, the action of the present London School Board, and the true policy that future Boards should adopt. For my views as to the difference between true and false education the reader is referred to my pamphlet bearing that title.

In advocating Secular education in our Board schools it should be understood that the term "secular" is used as denoting a course of instruction the opposite of theological. It must not be confounded with Secular philosophy, which is

opposed to the dogmatic claims of the Supernaturalists. In the education of the young at our public schools I should object to even the principles of the National Secular Society being taught. The school is not the place to debate the relative merits of Secularism and Christianity. The youthful mind is quite incapable of fairly determining the truth of the one or the other. It is only the trained, developed, and enlightened intellect that can do this. As a matter of fact, even under the existing system of teaching religion the child is not allowed to decide, even if it could, upon which side the truth lies; but it is only required, parrot-like, to repeat a certain formula, and to give to it an unqualified assent. As a rule, children do not take kindly to the study of theological questions. Considering the mysterious and transcendental character of most of such subjects, it is not to be wondered at that the young should dislike to be bothered with such matters. It is as unjust and injurious as it would be to pervert and weaken their youthful energies by compelling them to undergo the torture of a course of metaphysics. That they are curious and inquisitive, we all know; but this curiosity is really the spur and incentive to the acquisition of knowledge which leads them to profit by the monitions of experience. Manifestly, there is, as the adage says, "no royal road to learning"; and when we impose upon an inquiring child the cosmogony of the first chapters of Genesis we do no other than imprint upon its mind a series of ideas of a prejudicial nature, which, if once clearly fastened on that mind, it may evermore be almost impossible even to modify, although science and criticism unite, as we think they do, in affirming that the Mosaic cosmogony has no foundation in reason, or any just claim upon the intellect of the age.

Besides, the fact must not be overlooked that the most general and powerful cause of party divisions and disunions is the existence of multitudinous theological sects. The acerbity and dislike of persons occasioned by these sectarian divergences are well known to have been most painfully and terribly manifest in the past. That they are less evident in this age is attributable to the growth of another spirit than the theological, and to the determined manner in which modern legislators have compelled all classes of the community to obey the laws of the land which guarantee the security and liberty of every individual. Nevertheless, even now we have every reason for believing that, in minds fashioned on the lines of theologism, the old fanaticism, hatred, and bigotry still burn like smouldering fires, which a spark may kindle into conflagration. To quench these altogether, or, failing this, at least to render them innocuous, we believe it to be only necessary to leave speculative doctrines out of the curriculum of youthful studies. If theology in any form is subsequently assented to by the adult, the probability is that it will be held with moderation and defended with calmness; while, on the present system, even from childhood, the mind is bent and warped in one direction, so that the ultimate condition is one of bigoted attachment and fanatical, unreasoning prejudice. Thus we invariably find that the party or parties opposed to any extension of popular liberty, and whose apparent *raison d'être* is to impose a drag upon all measures of reform, are more or less closely identified with some form of theological orthodoxy. It is so in our own land; the progress of Liberalism on the continent is also furiously combatted by the rightly-designated Clerical Party; and everywhere throughout the civilised world both Progressionists and Retrogressionists have made the public elementary schools the central point of the great struggle now being waged between darkness and light, knowledge and ignorance. In England we find it insisted upon that the Bible must be read in schools, while the theologians are trying to enforce the inculcation of certain of the most complex orthodox doctrines. It was only after great exertion that some children were protected from this great injustice by the adoption of what is known as the "conscience clause." The reason for this policy on the part of the theologians and their followers is, of course, easily discerned—indeed, many of them have acknowledged that they apprehend that a purely secular system of instruction would finally produce a state of society in which the "claims of religion" would altogether be forgotten and lost sight of.

The very fact of society being divided into two classes upon this matter of youthful instruction renders it incumbent on every citizen to endeavor, by careful study, so to envisage the point at issue as to be able to arrive at a

definite conclusion with respect to his duty, and as to which side he owes allegiance and loyal service.

It has been truly said, "Knowledge is power"; but, in order that power may be useful, it is necessary that it should be wisely directed by rational education. The progress and general prosperity of individuals and of nations depend largely upon their mental development, which cannot properly go on unless care is observed as to the nature of the instruction that is imparted to children in the morning of their lives. Prior to the year 1870 what was called education was under the control of the teachers of theology. In the year named such control was, to a large extent, transferred from the Church to the nation, with the result that a national system of education was inaugurated, having for its object the proper training of the rising generation in the secular duties and obligations of daily life. The advantages that have arisen from this change are beyond dispute. At the present time, however, a large section of theologians are making desperate efforts to once more hamper and retard educational progress with their theological speculations. This must not be allowed, and, in the interest of the children who cannot protect themselves, it is the duty of the electors to return such members to the School Board as are determined to save the young from the machinations of the priesthood. By all means let the children be taught religion if it is their wish, and the desire of their parents that such instruction should be given. But the public school, supported alike by believers and non-believers, is not the place to give such teaching. This should be done, if required, at home and at the various churches, a plentiful supply of which is to be found on every hand.

It should never be forgotten that the clergy have persistently discouraged all studies, save those that were supposed to bear some relation to divinity, which they strove to exalt above all other branches of learning by terming it the "queen of sciences." Provided the ecclesiastical establishment were maintained in all its wealth, splendor, and magnificence, neither art, science, liberty, morality, nor benevolence was for centuries sought to be promoted and strengthened. Under such a system the mind could not emancipate itself from superstition. Contradictions, mysteries, and absurdities were transmitted from generation to generation, and no man ever sought or asked for a rational explanation of the dogmas instilled into his brain from childhood by the oracles of priestcraft. Hence we have seen and lamented that the "most effectual means," in an educational sense, have been woefully misapplied and perverted during a long series of years and throughout vast periods of time. Bearing in mind that, as Francis Bacon observes, "custom is the principal magistrate of man's life," we can readily understand why it was that the Dark Ages were so called after the revival of learning—the Renaissance, as it is termed. Their darkness was due to the ignorance which then existed of almost all that it is essential man should know. Science—that is, physical science—was then almost unheard of, or known only to be persecuted and derided; while the careful study of human nature itself was altogether rejected under the influence of the theological fallacy that revelation had made all that was possible known concerning man, his nature, his necessities and duties. As before stated, "knowledge is power," and the *status* of a community depends entirely upon the character, customs, and training of all the units composing it.

The evils of theological training are manifold. Foremost, however, among its most dangerous principles and elements are: (1) The inculcation of a merely hypothetical system as though it were a demonstrated certitude; (2) the consequent exaggeration of doctrinal theory and depression of practical truth; and (3) the withdrawal of much of man's solicitude for his temporal welfare out of a regard to his supposed eternal beatitude, together with the weakening of the faculty of self-reliance and a strengthening of some of the worst and most degrading feelings of our nature. Through enforcing such teachings as these upon the young and sensitive mind, the child's nature becomes altered, and loses much of its proper egoity, self-hood, and self-reliance. How much better it would be, as Sir John Lubbock remarks, "to educate our children so that the discoveries of science may be a living interest; that our national history and poetry may be sources of legitimate pride and rational enjoyment. In short, our schools, if they are to be worthy of the name—if they are to fulfil

their high function—must be something more than mere places of dry study; they must train the children educated in them so that they may be able to appreciate and enjoy those intellectual gifts which might be, and ought to be, a source of interest and happiness, alike to the high and to the low, to the rich and to the poor. A wise system of education will at least teach us how little man yet knows, how much he has yet to learn; it will enable us to realise that those who complain of the tiresome monotony of life have only themselves to blame, and that knowledge is pleasure as well as power. It will lead us all to try with Milton 'to behold the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of study,' and to feel with Bacon that 'no pleasure is comparable to standing upon the vantage-ground of truth.'

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CASE FOR THE CHILDREN.

IT must never be lost sight of that the battle we are fighting for Secular education in the public schools is primarily, and before all else, a battle for justice—plain, simple justice. That plain justice is that public moneys, subscribed by all, shall not be used to teach and propagate private creeds, which large numbers of the subscribers do not hold. Such is the case for Secular education in a nutshell. But while taking our stand on this ground of justice to the ratepayers, it may not be amiss to look at the matter also from the children's point of view. And we think anyone who fairly considers the question will recognise that the fight for Secular education is also a fight for the mental rights of the child.

Every child has an inalienable right to mental liberty. It is the duty of those to whom the protection of the child is given to see that that liberty is not infringed. The child cannot protect itself. Therefore, if those around it abuse their position by loading its mind with their own theories, dogmas, and speculations, they are doing the child an injury which may seriously mar its future. And we take this position without reference to any particular creed or philosophy. Profoundly convinced as we are of the truth of the Secular philosophy, we yet hold that it would be wrong, and a trespass on a child's rights, to dogmatically force that philosophy upon it. Let the child, when it comes to the age of reason, have the same right to choose as we claim for ourselves. Let it have the opportunity of weighing, testing, judging all religions and philosophies, and choosing that which commends itself as reasonable and true. And in taking this position we claim that the Secularist demonstrates his confidence in the philosophy he professes. Secularism can have nothing to gain by being crammed down the throats of unintelligent, or at least uncritical, children. And it is interesting to note in all this struggle that it is the religionist who protests that, if he loses his hold on the child, the man is lost. It is religion which plainly, through the mouth of its champions, admits that it cannot hope to win over those in manhood who were reared and trained without the necessity of its support. The admission is a humiliating one. It now stands plain that religion appeals to the child, Secularism appeals to the man; religion hopes to live by the unquestioning trust of little children, and Secularism hopes to live by an appeal to the sanity and intelligence of grown-up men.

If there is one doctrine which may be said to be typical of Christianity in its worst aspects, it is, assuredly, the doctrine of salvation by faith—the doctrine which gave the Church its grip over the minds of men by appealing to their fears. In one sense this doctrine is the very cornerstone of religion. But it may fairly be asked of the intelligent London ratepayer to-day, Is *this* what he wishes taught in the schools which he controls? Does he desire that the hell-teaching, which is an outrage on humanity, shall be the teaching which, with his authority and by his vote, the children of the future shall receive? Is he prepared, in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, to go back to the barbarism of the Dark Ages, and sanction in the Board schools of the world's capital the degraded teaching of a degraded priesthood? This is the question which the people of London will have to decide next November. We have little doubt, however, as to what the answer would be to the questions put as we have put them. Taking the

issue thus, the overwhelming majority would promptly decide against the odious teaching of salvation by "faith."

Yet there are many who would thus decide whose fundamental humane instincts declare against such teaching, but who still vaguely think that it is well to have some "religious" teaching in the schools. These people have given up the hell-belief; they would probably regard the imputation of such a belief as an insult, yet they hesitate to give in their adherence to the secular program. We would ask of these people, On what does their objection to secular education rest? If they think that morality can only be preserved by a religious training, we would point out that such an opinion is at variance with observed fact. Many criminals have had a strictly religious up-bringing, whilst some almost ideal men—John Stuart Mill was one—have been educated without any theological dogmas being forced on them in childhood. And for the rest it may well be put to those people who have given up hell, and who must see that morality is not dependent on religious influence, Are they, then, really so sure of the absolute truth of their own belief as to dogmatically teach it to their children? Is it really necessary? And will the advantage—whatever it may be—of cramming the child with their own belief outweigh the disadvantage of sending him through life prejudiced from infancy? New facts may come to light in the child's life of which the parent was ignorant; new views may present themselves. Why, then, not leave the child's mind to develop its own philosophy naturally?

It would be infinitely better, therefore, if, instead of cramming little brains with "mysteries" which are incomprehensible, and dogmas which are absurd, the child were inspired with a love and a trust in truth, with an enthusiasm for what is good and noble and great. Far better than teaching him aright the details of the "Trinity puzzle" would it be to teach him that no harm can ever come from truth, and no good can ever come from falsehood. If a child be taught thus, he will require no obscurantist theology to make him a good and worthy citizen.

We have thus presented the reasons which, it appears to us, support a system of education for children from which all dogmatism would be excluded. But, of course, that is a matter for each individual himself to consider. If parents consider it to be their duty to teach their children their own religious creed, they have the legal right to do so; and it is not to be expected that, for a long time at least, the law will protect children from the mental tyranny as it now, to some extent, protects them from the physical tyranny of their guardians. But what can be done is to prevent public moneys and public buildings being put to an unjust use; and if the law is powerless to protect the child at home, it can, at least, guard the child's freedom while it is under the care of a State department.

Therefore, whilst not losing sight of the real basis of our policy, which is justice and equity all round, it is well to remember that there are other weighty considerations for the abolition of religious teaching from the public schools. It is well to enforce that, alike in the children's interest as in the interest of the ratepayers, it is necessary that we should have purely secular—that is, useful—education given to the Board-school children. These children, most of them, have little time enough in which to equip themselves for the duties of life. Many of them will have to leave school while yet children to earn that "daily bread" of which "the Lord" is so very sparing. Surely, then, it is in the children's interest that that time should not be wasted in acquiring the details of dogmas which, if they live, they must outgrow. Hence, all who value the just rights of the people, all who recognise the principle that the furtherance of particular objects by public moneys is unjust, all who take thought of the mental liberty of the child, and desire that that liberty should not be violated—to all these we appeal for support in the fight to free the nation's schools from the grasp of an intolerant dogmatism, and the nation itself from the stain of a gross injustice.

FREDERICK RYAN.

Out of the teaching of, perhaps, the most sternly anti-sacerdotal prophet who ever inaugurated a new religion has been built up about the most pretentious and oppressive priesthood that ever weighed down the enterprise and energy of the human mind.—W. R. Greg, "Creed of Christendom."

ACID DROPS.

MRS. ORMISTON CHANT, the lady who is crusading against the London music-halls in general, and the "Empire" in particular, evidently thinks she has God Almighty on her side. It doesn't occur to her that if God Almighty wanted to shut the "Empire" he would probably do it himself. At any rate, the omnipotent can hardly need her assistance.

Among the crowds that Mrs. Chant has attracted to the "Empire" the *Star* notices "clergymen of all denominations." Of course! What do you think?

The author of "The Atheist Shoemaker" is still seeking health—not in prayer, but in a good holiday. But his enterprising friend, Dr. Lunn—who got into trouble over the Indian Missionary business, and now runs religious picnics to the continent—is still amongst us in London. On Sunday last he held forth in St. James's Hall, where the purity party—that is, the party that are zealous for *other people's* purity—delight to congregate. Under the genial inspiration of the Christ-like Dr. Lunn they passed a resolution, calling on the County Council to stand firm and shut up all places of amusement that harbor naughtiness. What a funny thing it is that these "spiritual" reformers are always the first to cry "Police!"

Mr. Joseph R. Diggle, the astute chairman of the London School Board, has signed an address to the electors of Marylebone. It is a very clever document; far more so than the joint manifesto of the "Progressives." With respect to the famous Circular, Mr. Diggle adopts an "Of course, don't you know" attitude. The Bible is to be kept in the schools, and the existing rules maintained in their integrity; only the word "Christian" has been put before "religion" to make it precise.

It is difficult to see how the "Progressives" can answer this without raising doubts as to their soundness as "Christians." And when we remember that the Catholics are bidden to support the Diggleites we have a strong notion that the "Progressives" will be beaten. The duty of Secularists is to fight for their own cause, and to let Church and Dissent settle their own quarrel.

The Rev. J. Page Hopps adds his voice to Dr. Parker's in favor of Secular Education. In a letter to Monday's *Star* he says that the "Progressives" have made "a great, and it may be a fatal, mistake." They are reaffirming the desirability of religious education, and thus perpetuating the evil. While religion is kept in the schools they are sure to suffer. Men like Mr. Riley are only logical and business-like, Mr. Hopps remarks, when they say: "If we order religion to be taught, we ought to say what we mean by 'religion,' and we ought to see that what we order is done."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* described the deity of Christ as "a craggy doctrine to the understanding of children." Mr. Bernard Reynolds, an inspector, begs to differ. He says the children "have no difficulty in understanding it in Church schools"—which we venture to doubt. Still, we agree with Mr. Reynolds that the great difficulty is in *believing* it. Ay, there's the rub.

When you say that little children understand a theological doctrine, you may only mean that they understand it as well as their elders; that is, they learn to use a certain formula. But if you take the trouble to probe their young minds a little you will find some striking curiosities. A little fellow whom we know well, and who has had no religious instruction beyond what he has picked up from acquaintances, used the word "God" one day, and when we asked him who that was he replied "Why, God." "There isn't such a gentleman, is there?" we asked, just to test him. "Oh, yes," he answered, "there is; he burns you up." That is how he "understood" it, and really he had got to the bottom of the business by a happy intuition or by a lucky accident.

Walking hand in hand with that little fellow one day, we spied a sky-pilot, and our companion spied him too. When the man of God had gone by, the little fellow (he is only five) looked round and said, "He's a Jesus man." Omniscience only knows how he got hold of the expression. Anyhow it is a good one. "A Jesus man" is a capital description of the Black Army. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," etc.

The clericals have won a victory in the Belgian elections. The new Chamber will have a large Catholic majority, and we may look forward to a Black Terror. It seems that the Socialists were in too much of a hurry, and they have thrown the country into the arms of the reactionaries. Let us hope that wiser counsels will prevail in future. Clericalism is

the great enemy to be fought and crushed *first of all*. After that, other things are possible; before it, none.

Priests in Belgium are accorded three votes, and there are fully ten thousand persons in holy orders throughout the country. The elections will show the Freethinkers that they must now turn their attention to proselytising the provincial parts. We should not be surprised if one result of the elections is an attempt to suppress their propaganda; but we know our Belgian friends too well to suppose this will be an easy task.

The past clerical Government in Belgium, during its term of office, "dissolved" no fewer than 2,184 public schools, 877 of which were elementary schools, and 1,079 continuation schools. They reduced, moreover, the pay of 3,316 teachers. 1,047 have been put on "temporary pay," and 1,500 have been totally deprived of office and pay. The triumph of clericalism always means the setting back of education.

Father Ivan, of Cronstadt, who is described as "the miracle worker," and is held in wonderful veneration by the Russian people, is reported to have been summoned to Livadia, where he is required to offer up prayers for the Czar. This looks like the beginning of the end. When medical skill no longer avails, and the man of prayer has to be called in, it is about time to prepare for the funeral.

Father Ivan is said to have secured his reputation as a faith-curer by a kind of hypnotic suggestion. He lays his hands upon the patient and keeps repeating, in a monotonous tone, the words of James: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," etc. This has an impressive effect on the minds of simple peasants.

Zion's Herald, the organ of the American missionaries in the East, thinks the war between China and Japan an excellent thing, as it will prepare the way for Christian civilisation. In the good old days Christians went to war themselves on behalf of religion. Now they only rejoice when others are set by the ears, and they see a chance that the troubles of the heathen may redound *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.

Ras Telang, a Hindu gentleman, writing in the *Forum* on affairs in India, ascribes the stagnation in that part of the world to the fact that religion is supreme and allowed to regulate everything in life. He observes, slyly and profoundly, that Christianity would have been just as fatal to Western nations if they had taken it seriously and made it a rule of life. The Philistines and hypocrites will not relish the implications of this remark of an impertinent stranger who sees too well and speaks right out. Visitors are expected to flatter and sing our praises.

The *Record* says that, the other day, "No cross, no crown," the final words of an eloquent passage in a sermon, were set up by the compositor as "No cows, no cream." The intelligent "comp." was trying to make some sense of it.

Sabbatarianism rules at Warrington, where two barbers were fined for shaving on the Lord's Day. They pleaded that theirs was a work of necessity; but the magistrate, who does not shave, and the clerk, who only shaves Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, would not allow the plea.

Mr. J. Richards, of the Ryhope Branch of the National Secular Society, having to appear as a witness in the Sunderland police-court, desired to affirm, as he had no religious belief. He was allowed to do so, but Colonel Briggs, the presiding magistrate, remarked: "I have been nearly twenty-three years in this Court, and I have never before heard a man say that he had no religious belief. It is shocking." This belated colonel only meant that it shocked *him*. In one of his lucid intervals he might reflect that most scoundrels *have* religious belief, and sometimes plenty of it. Jabez Balfour has a very large quantity, enough for home consumption and foreign export.

The Rev. W. F. Fraser, rector of Offham, Maidstone, has been committed for trial on a charge of perjury.

The Rev. H. G. Le Moine, who is well known in Sunderland and Mexborough, has been charged at Leicester with obtaining money under false pretences. The case stands adjourned.

The Rev. Arthur W. Jephson writes to the *Times* that a canvasser for the clerical party spoke to him of the godless Board schools, and showed him "a horrible, blasphemous publication" dealing with the subject. These canvassers seem to be very kindly helping to advertise Secular opinions.

The separate Communion cup is becoming an established institution in the American churches where wealthy sinners congregate. Even the Baptist Church in Brooklyn has

adopted it. The cups are of silver lined with gold, and each holds just a drachm.

In the *British Weekly*, a religious organ, they have been discussing the question, "Should wives promise to obey their husbands?" Most of the correspondents affirm, on the authority of Paul and Peter, that they should; but a few ladies hint that the promise is little better than perjury, and possibly, in view of some rejection of the authority of Peter and Paul, the *British Weekly* has hastily closed the discussion.

Judge Bryce, in Georgia, has tried to emulate Solomon. A dispute recently before him turned upon the maternity of a certain child, who was brought into court as a kind of legal "exhibit"; and the two women, each of whom claimed the infant as her own, were also present. A happy thought came to the judge. He took a bowie-knife from his boot, and, brandishing it in the air, stated his intention of immediately severing the unfortunate child's body, and giving half to each of its reputed mothers. The result was hardly in accordance with his expectations. No sooner did the women see the knife raised to bisect the youngster than both women screamed out in unison, "Don't do that! You can keep it yourself." The judge now thinks the wisdom of Solomon was much over-rated.

The Adventists in Switzerland believe in the Sabbath as instituted by Jehovah. They abstain from all work on Saturday, but some of them have been fined for working on Sunday. They appealed against the decision to the Supreme Federal Court, which has given judgment against them. They are now seeking an alteration of the law, which should be effected if Switzerland is to retain her reputation for toleration.

The *Quarterly Review* gives prominence to an article on the New Women, which it entitles "The Strike of a Sex." Referring to the ladies who are dissatisfied with a masculine deity, it says: "To Mr. Arnold, the deity worshipped by Philistines was a magnified non-natural man. If we may presume to criticise the image set up by Mrs. Grand on the Plain of Dura, we seem to discern therein the outlines of a magnified non-natural woman. At any rate, the collective voice of humanity, we are assured, has, in these latter days, 'seriously threatened the great masculine idea.'" The *Quarterly Review* warns the New Woman of the bad character of the old goddesses, and adds: "The feminine of anthropomorphism is a detestable superstition, which the world, if unhappily these goddesses come out of their winding-sheets again, will discover to be a grand name for hysteria, convulsions, and an hypnotic Aphrodite."

It is a striking fact that all the latest heresies—Jezreelites, Koreshians, Harrisites, etc.—go in for a maternal deity. The fact, however, does not indicate any inclination to the old goddesses so much as dissatisfaction with the masculine ideal.

The Hoang-Ho, the Yellow River of China, so frequently changes its course and destroys the dense population on its banks that it is familiarly known as "The Demon" and "The Sorrow of Han." The number of people it has drowned in its changes of course is almost incredible. The Chinese say that at a single change it has claimed as many as four or five millions. Nor is this all the disaster. Farms are destroyed by the floods, and famine follows, adding countless new victims to the list.

Voltaire said the tiger of intolerance was chained, but had it a chance it would still bite. Mr. Quilliam, the head of the English Moslem Community, evidently agrees. He writes in the *Crescent*: "When the history of the early propaganda of Islam in England comes hereafter to be written, the world will be astonished at the pitiless cruelty which professedly civilised and religious persons exhibited towards the early converts to Islam in this country."

An instance of the domineering spirit of the Irish priests is given in the *Dublin Evening Herald* and the *Irish Daily Independent*. It appears that Father J. Manning, parish priest of Roundwood, Co. Wicklow, roundly denounced from the pulpit the members of the local band, who were Parnellites. The *Independent* sent a representative to inquire into the affair, and he attended early morning mass at Roundwood. When he returned to his hotel he was visited by his reverence, who demanded if he had taken notes of his sermon. He replied, "No," and the man of God told him he ought to be thankful that he had his head left on his shoulders, and to go back to Dublin to tell the heads of the *Independent* that he would not be interfered with, and never dare show his nose in his parish again. What do the aspirations of the Irish for freedom amount to while they remain cowed under such creatures as Father Manning?

A person, giving the name of Frederick Celestine Edwards, was charged before the Cornwall Quarter Sessions with falsely representing himself as a clergyman of the Church of England, thereby cheating people and living upon them. In defence, the prisoner pleaded that he was a clergyman of the Church of Rome, and was entitled to the name and garb. Sir Charles Sawle said it was one of the grossest frauds brought before the court for some time, and sentenced him to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labor.

A firm in Palestine is engaged in supplying water from the River Jordan to Christian Churches, both Catholic and Protestant. It is put up in bottles and sold by the case. It is used by the churches for the baptism or "christening" of infants, provided always that the parents of such children pay for the privilege. What further folly will Christian parsons be guilty of next?—*Crescent*.

Father Hyacinthe did not do much towards the Protestantism of France, but he has found a successor in a Mgr. Boulard, a converted Catholic prelate, who declares that the great reform of the twentieth century will be the work of the converted priests, who, with the assistance of the Protestants, will lead the Roman Catholic people out of error and darkness into the light of the true gospel. The twentieth century evidently has its work cut out, but it will hardly drift back to the sixteenth.

The late Oliver Wendell Holmes said of sky-pilots: "They used to lead the intelligence of their parishes; now they do pretty well if they keep up with it, and they are very apt to lag behind it."

Here is another of his sayings which has an important bearing on the education question: "We are all tattooed in our cradles with the beliefs of our tribe; the record may seem superficial, but it is indelible. You cannot educate a man wholly out of the superstitious fears which were early implanted in his imagination, no matter how utterly his reason may reject them."

Mrs. Beecher Stowe tells how she taught her child that anger was sinful, whereupon he asked, "Then why, mamma, does the Bible say so often that God was angry?" She replied (mother-like): "You will understand it when you are older." The boy pondered seriously for awhile, and then burst out: "O, mamma, I have found it out. God is angry because God is not a *Christian*!"

"God, Junior!" was the reply of a religious crank, of about fifty years of age, arrested lately at Alexandria, Illinois, when questioned as to his name. His mission, he said, was to kill President Cleveland, and then to cross the sea and kill the Pope. "God, Junior" belongs to a family that needs putting under restraint.

The Jews in London who trade in conversion to Christianity will be glad to know that big meetings on their behalf—with a collection at each—are to be held at the Victoria Hall, Ealing, on November 2. The affair is called "A Prophetic Conference," and as the list of subjects closes with "The Great Tribulation" and "The Day of the Lord," there will be plenty of entertainment for the local cynics. The admission is free, but there is a charge of sixpence for a side show, containing a model of "The Temple (in the time of our Lord)"—which is probably as accurate as the model of Noah's Ark.

The *New York World* chose twelve gentlemen, chiefly lawyers and bankers, to give a verdict on the question, "Is Suicide a Sin?" Nine replied in the affirmative, three in the negative. But the verdicts are conditional. For instance, Cyrus Edson, the only physician on the jury, says: "Suicide is a sin, but, like most rules, it has exceptions." Under another arrangement, the *World* gives the verdict as Guilty. Seven, Not Guilty, on the ground of insanity.

An evangelist posted outside his door a bill, "What shall I do to be saved?" A wag posted beneath, "Try Bleacham's Pills." The evangelist put beneath, "Prepare to meet thy God." To which the wag responded with, "Good morning; have you used Pear's Soap?"

The reviewer of Lord Wolsley's *Marlborough*, in the current *Quarterly Review*, gives his opinion that the persecution of the Dragonnades at the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes made a greater sensation in England than the stories of the Inquisition. He says: "At least the iniquities of the Inquisition represented a genuine and even popular belief, that no tortures of the present could be other than charitable inflictions if they saved the victims from endless pangs of the hereafter. Cruelties as great had been inflicted by Protestants in Holland and in Scotland. But the actions of the priests of France in directing the soldiery of the Grande Monarque in the households of the most cultivated, the most intelligent, the most sober, the

most industrious, the most godly families of the kingdom, admit of no such excuses."

The reviewer says: "It was no uncommon incident for a baby to be taken from its mother's breast and secured just out of her reach till she abjured her faith or listened to the dying cries of her starving little one." Possibly, however, even this inhumanity was sanctified by the belief that they were subserving the interests of religion.

The writer continues: "The edict which permitted all the children of recalcitrant Protestants to be taken from them and educated in convents and nunneries was, by a specious interpretation, made to apply to young women of marriageable age, who, being skilled embroideresses, would be useful slaves in a nunnery, even if they could not be made to accept the creed of their mistresses. In one instance, at least, it is recorded that the pious nuns, having failed by every cruelty they could inflict in shaking the faiths of their pupils, invited the officers of a neighboring garrison town to come over to see young ladies of the society in which they moved stripped and savagely whipped by these patterns of modesty and purity." Such was the treatment of Christians by Christians, after near seventeen centuries of the one divine religion.

When Christianity was a living faith, they went to war for a period of three centuries, in order to rescue Christ's tomb from the Moslems. They now set up another and totally distinct tomb, but have a difficulty in raising the shekels to purchase the property from the Sultan.

The late Mr. Froude says in his *History* (vol. ix., p. 303): "When His name and His words had been preached for fifteen centuries, there were none found who could tolerate difference of opinion on the operation of baptism, or on the nature of His presence in the Eucharist; none, or at least none but the hard-hearted children of the world. The more religious any man was, the more eager was he to put away by fire and sword all those whose convictions differed from his own."

"Toleration," says Mr. Froude, in another part of his work (vol. iii., p. 66), "was neither understood nor desired. The Protestants clamored against persecution, not because it was persecution, but because truth was persecuted by falsehood; and, however furiously the hostile factions exclaimed each that the truth was with them and the falsehood with their enemies, neither the one nor the other disputed the obligation of the ruling powers to support the truth in itself."

Mr. W. Iveson Taylor, of Hull, has had some correspondence with the Archbishop of York with respect to the "false teaching" of the vicar of St. Silas's Church. Mr. Taylor wishes to see the laity (poor creatures!) "protected," and regards the Archbishop as lax in enforcing discipline. If the St. Silas parishioners would only think for themselves, it wouldn't matter a straw what the vicar taught in the church.

God's Glorious Creation is the title of a book published by Ward, Lock, & Co. In advertising it they give a reduced copy of one of its illustrations, representing Mount Vesuvius in a violent state of eruption, and threatening the town at its base. This is "glorious" indeed, especially for the people below.

Miss Georgina M. Campbell treated the recent Congregational Union Conference to a paper on Scepticism among the girls of the period. She declared emphatically that young girls were strongly moved by the spirit of scepticism; one met with it in everyday intercourse. All accepted beliefs were being tested. Agnostic novels had a good deal to do with this state of things. There was also the bad example of many professed Christians. But there is nothing new in that.

Dr. Dongan Clark, Professor in the Theological school at the Friends' College, Earlham, Indiana, has made a sensation among the Quakers by being baptised together with ten other Quakers. They have done this owing to the constant charge of the orthodox that non-baptised persons are not Christians. But, on the other hand, if Quakers adopt the sacraments, the last reason for their separate existence will have passed. The early Quakers placed the Spirit above all sacraments, and even above the Scriptures; but the body has been fading away into orthodoxy for some time past.

The chair of Old Testament studies at Berlin became vacant by the death of Professor Dillmann. The foremost Prussian scholar is now acknowledged to be Professor Stade, who is a disciple of Wellhausen, and goes a little further, holding that the Jews were never in Egypt. His claims were passed over for those of a more "moderate" man, Professor Baudissin, who cannot, however, be classed with the orthodox.

The *Christian Advocate*, of New York, says that, having

commended the patriotic services of Thomas Paine, a preacher undertook to explain that "the person to whom we referred was not Paine, the infidel, but another person of the same name!"

Dr. James Legge, the missionary translator of the Chinese classics, says: "You might read all the Confucian books from beginning to end in the presence of the most delicate lady without needing to omit a word." He could not say as much for his Bible.

The *Church Times* starts a fund to fight the London School Board elections with £100, which Mr. Athelstan Riley follows with £50. It calls on all the clergy and good Churchmen to follow suit. The appeal is headed, "For God and the Children," the real meaning of which is for the spread of sacerdotalism.

The *Church Times* is shocked at some proceedings at the parish of Kirkby Stephen, at which it appears the Holy Communion was administered at a harvest festival after a public tea and "an ample spread." "The case," says the *Church Times*, "should afford a strong argument for the necessity of 'fasting communion.'" The idea of mixing up the blessed Savior with tea, shrimps, and watercresses is, indeed, horrifying. The *Church Times* might console itself by learning from Mr. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* that all the sacraments were originally common meals.

Cardinal Vaughan's attack on the validity of Anglican orders has drawn attention to the Catholic doctrine of "Intention." Cardinal Bellarmine lays it down: "None can be certain that he receives a true sacrament, since the sacrament cannot be celebrated without the minister's intention, and no one can see the intention of another" (*De Justif*, lib iii., c. 8, col. 846, tom. iv.; Paris, 1608).

It will thus be seen that the believer cannot be quite sure if, when he takes the precious body and blood, he has really got it, any more than he can know whether, despite all his faith, grace, and works, his Almighty Creator may not have thought fit in his wisdom to predestinate him to eternal damnation. It is such a certain and consoling thing is religion.

The *Burton Chronicle* publishes a letter from a Derby correspondent, in which it is stated that Mr. W. T. Lee, a Christian Evidence lecturer, has settled Freethought in Plymouth, so that only a few Secularists are left in the town. Well, it all depends on what is meant by "a few." Mr. Foote met some scores, if not hundreds, of them at his recent lectures in Plymouth. Secularism has been under a cloud there for some time; but this is not due to the heroic labors of Mr. Lee; it is due to the difficulty in obtaining a hall for Freethought meetings. Even when the Co-operative Hall was secured for Mr. Foote's lectures it was proposed that the Committee should be petitioned against letting it to the "infidel."

The thanksgiving service at St. Swithin's, Sproatley, included a special sermon by an Archdeacon and Gaul's sacred cantata, "Ruth." The title is very appropriate. Providence ought to show a little *ruth* after playing the devil with the harvest.

The *Liverpool Mercury* appears to be short of copy. Why else should it publish the ridiculous statement that a stupid Christian of that city has sent a copy of "a certain Secularist journal" for October 7 to the "authorities" in Liverpool and London with a view to its prosecution for blasphemy? Our contemporary gravely adds that "the matter is now under consideration." Very likely; and very likely it will remain so. The editor of the *Freethinker* is used to orthodox threatenings.

THE FINSBURY ELECTION.

ON Monday, November 5, at 8 p.m., Mr. Watts will address the Electors of Finsbury in the Banner-street Hall, St. Luke's, E.C. Friends in the neighborhood are earnestly requested to induce electors to attend this meeting.

On November 9 Mr. Watts, supported by Messrs. G. W. Foote, R. Forder, G. Standing, A. B. Moss, T. Shore, and others, will address another meeting in the Buckingham-street Board Schools, Caledonian-road, at 8.15 p.m.

More help is needed for distributing literature, which can be obtained from me at the address below.

EDITH M. VANCE

(Election Secretary for Mr. Watts).

28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 28, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester : 11, "Is Immortality a Blessing?" ; 6.30, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?"

Monday, October 29, Athenæum Room, Derby : 8, "Why I am an Atheist."

November 4, Manchester ; 11, Birmingham ; 25, Ipswich.

December 2, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—October 28, Hall of Science, London. November 4 and 11, Hall of Science ; 18, Liverpool. Dec. 2, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sunday Society) ; 3, West Auckland ; 4, York ; 9, Manchester ; 10, Derby.—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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

W. J. PAUL.—Thanks. Enclosure handed to Miss Vance.

N. TIFFIN.—We have read your letter with great interest. It is good to know there are such men in the Freethought movement.

H. THOMAS.—It cannot be helped. The lawyers in the case were Charles Bradlaugh's lawyers, which is a sufficient guarantee.

W. TIPPER.—(1) Yes, there are Freemason members of the N.S.S. (2) The illustration you refer to will be printed, with others, in a separate form.

J. K.—Initials only as desired. Pleased to see there are some good friends of our cause in priest-ridden Ireland.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—More highly valued for the circumstances.

D. KAY.—The appeal is being well responded to. One subscription is enough from one man. Let another give the second. Thanks.

H. G. BAXTER.—The lines occur in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays—

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.

W. H. MORRISH.—Pleased to have your warm approval. Hope to see you early in the new year.

C. WRIGHT.—Most of the critics trace at least four different documents in the composition of the Pentateuch, known respectively as the story of the Jahvist, that of the Elohist, the code of Deuteronomy, and the Priest's Code, designated as the J, E, D, and P. Probably, however, there are other documents underlying these.

C. HEATON.—It ought not to be difficult to guess.

A. S. LEVETT.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

S. R. T.—George Henry Lewes made no concealment of his opinions. He was a Positivist. See particularly his *History of Philosophy*—the Introduction and the chapter on Comte. (2) We cannot refer you to any one book for the history of Protestant persecution of Catholics ; but a chapter will be devoted to the subject in the next volume of Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity*.

T. WISE.—We quite agree with your letter. All of us must do our best to secure Mr. Watts's return for Finsbury.

A. TRIPP.—Thanks for cheque and good wishes.

CHARLES WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.—G. Ward, Treasurer, 91 Mildmay-park, N., acknowledges : W. H., 2s. ; G. P., 10s. ; G. Wenbourn, £1 ; W. Stuart, 5s. ; W. Tipper, 1s. ; T. Bullock, 2s. 6d. ; W. R. Munton, 10s. ; T. Peters, 1s. ; W. W., 1s. ; A. T., 2s. 6d. ; C. C. Cattell, 2s. 6d. ; C. H. Cattell, 2s. 6d.

H. O. SCHOFFELD.—Your friend asks what Secularism is doing for the masses. He will discover if he takes the trouble to learn how many Secularists are to the front in all advanced movements. Does it reform drunkards? Well, it prefers to keep men from becoming drunkards by giving them an intelligent interest in the welfare of humanity. It is a curious thing that Christian nations are the most drunken on this planet.

P. BRAHAM.—No doubt the Church and the Catholic parties are uniting for a common attack on Freethought and popular progress. Very likely there will be plenty of fighting in the near future, and Freethinkers should be united for the struggle.

W. MORTIMER.—Thanks. Will inquire about the other matter. We shall give a report of the Hall of Science libel case when it is tried, which should be about the end of November. Mr. Foote is in good health at present, and working very hard.

T. EVANS.—Good sentiment, but much practice will be necessary before you write verses suitable for publication.

E. H.—You have hit the point. Life is not an entity, but a condition. Professor Stokes's *Gifford Lectures* are, in our judgment, very poor. Leading journals, like the *Athenæum*, disputed his qualifications for the lectureship.

F. GENTRY.—We note your view of the matter.

W. D. ROLLEY.—(1) There is no such book. Mr. Foote intends to write one himself very shortly. (2) Josephus was living at the time when Jesus is said to have been crucified. (3) How can we tell who forged the Josephus passage on Christ? That should be done by the Christian scholars who allow it to be a forgery.

D. F. GLOAK.—Very pleased to hear of continued success at Dundee. Keep pegging away, as Lincoln said.

A. G. LEVETT.—It is a piece of impudence for the Salvationists to drop their begging letters into other people's letter-boxes.

A. WESLEYAN.—Your note is a fine specimen of Christian manners. Not for your sake, but for the truth's sake, Mr. Watts will give the particulars about his father in our next issue. He has been away from home for nearly a month.

P. J. WHELAN.—Hope to find room.

J. RICHARDS.—See paragraph. You did well.

R. WILLS.—We do not know of any weekly paper such as the *Dispatch* was in the old days. All we can advise you to do is to try the lot for a week or two and make your choice.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Mr. Foote will visit Newcastle early in the new year if you can obtain a suitable hall.

J. W. GOTT.—Pleased to see the *Observer's* report of Mr. Watts's lecture at Bradford on "Cromwell and the Commonwealth." It seems to have been a very able discourse ; but our own view of Cromwell, based upon a most minute study of the period, is different from our colleagues'. Cromwell was one of the greatest men in all history ; and really the practical question was not "Cromwell or the Republic," but "Cromwell or Chaos."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Times of India—Christian Advocate—Two Worlds—Independent—Burton Chronicle—Dublin Weekly Independent—Liverpool Mercury—Crescent—New York Sun—New York World—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Der Lichtfreund—Manchester Guardian—Cornishman—Echo—Twentieth Century—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Liverpool Courier—Devon Weekly Times—Irish Daily Independent—Freidenker—Fur Unserer Jugend—Blackpool Gazette—Huddersfield Examiner—Cape Times—Liberator.

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

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

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

FOR A CERTAIN OBJECT.

THERE has been an excellent response to my appeal to the Freethought party. But the £100 is not quite made up yet, so I continue the appeal, and repeat that the money is wanted *immediately*. When the opportune moment comes I shall make a statement as to the disposition of this fund. Meanwhile, without any definite statement on my part, it ought not to be very difficult to conjecture for what object the money is required. G. W. FOOTE.

Subscriptions Received—Second List.

J. Fulton, £1 1s. ; Mrs. Mensbier, £2 ; W. J. Paul, 10s. ; Horace Seal, £1 ; H. Thomas, 2s. 6d. ; W. Johnson, 5s. ; G. Brady, 5s. ; D. Mumby, 10s. ; A. G. Scopes, 2s. 6d. ; J. K., 10s. ; R. J. Gill, 5s. ; H. A. Cumber, 2s. 6d. ; Sydney A. Gimson, £3 ; A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d. ; D. K., 5s. ; W. H. Morrish, £1 1s. ; J. P. Browne, 5s. ; C. Heaton, 2s. 6d. ; W. Berry & Son, £1 1s. ; W. Bailey, £1 ; R. Axleby, 1s. ; W. Bowman, £1 ; E. C. Rae, 5s. ; G. Scarrrot, 5s. ; J. Cronshaw, £1 ; Mrs. Poulton, 5s. ; C. Shepherd, 2s. ; collection at Mr. Foote's lecture, Oct. 21, £3 ; A. Tripp, £2 ; M. Christopher, 5s. ; John Vick, 1s. ; C. Thomas, 5s. ; C. J. Pottage, £1 1s. ; W. H., 10s. ; A. Lewis, 5s. ; G. Wenbourn, £1 ; T. Bullock, 5s. ; J. T. E., 5s. ; Special, 2s. 6d. ; Dr. Mortimer (Turriff), 10s. ; J. Routh, 1s. ; A. Anderson, 10s. 6d. ; John Nowell, £2 ; per W. H. S., £4 ; A. Bullock, 1s. ; J. G. Bartram, 1s. ; Peter Weston, 2s. ; T. Foreman, 2s. ; G. Richardson, 1s. ; G. Hutchinson, 1s. ; Friend, 1s. ; J. Richards, 1s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's lecture on "Christian Methods of Suppressing Vice" drew a crowded audience to the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. A large number of ladies were present, and several members of the theatrical profession. For an hour and a half the lecture was followed with the closest attention, and profusely punctuated with laughter and applause. A tremendous burst of cheering greeted the statement that if some Bible Pictures were given on the music-hall stage the worst prostitutes would cry "Shame!"

Mr. Foote delivers two of his new lectures to-day (Oct. 28) at Leicester, where he hopes to meet many of his friends from the surrounding districts.

Last Sunday afternoon Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Temperance Hall, Bradford, for the Sunday Society, upon "Cromwell and the Commonwealth." Mr. W. P. Byles, M.P., presided. The hall was filled in every part. The *Bradford Observer* gave a long and excellent report of the lecture. In the evening Mr. Watts lectured for the local Branch of the N.S.S.

Mr. Watts remained in Bradford on Monday to speak in the evening on behalf of Mr. Grange's candidature for the School Board. Mr. Grange is the Secular candidate, and we are pleased to hear that his prospects of being returned are very good.

This Sunday evening, October 28, Mr. Watts will lecture at the Hall of Science, London, taking for his subject, "Theology at the Bar of History." This is an interesting subject, which has a direct bearing upon the coming School Board elections.

November 28 (Wednesday) is fixed for the Freethinkers' Annual Ball. Dancing will commence in the large hall at 8.30, and continue till 3 p.m. Miss Vance is arranging a concert in the minor hall for the amusement of non-dancers. Tickets 1s., now on sale at the Hall of Science, and from all Branch secretaries, or from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Progress for Oct. 1 reaches us from Trinidad. We hope it finds its new fortnightly issue satisfactory. The number before us reprints two articles by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler from the *Freethinker*, as well as the "Immediate Practical Objects" of the National Secular Society. *Progress* contains some spirited paragraphs on the model of our own "Acid Drops."

In *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, by Mr. L. Hearn, he says the occidentalised Japanese are Agnostics, if not uncompromising Materialists. They care nothing for religious speculation. The native Agnostic, primed with European science, is in his glory in the Treaty Ports, and, most of all, in the capital, Tokyo. But in the country places, where Mr. Hearn lived, the old religion is a living force. One of the favorite deities of un-Europeanised Japan is Kwannon, "who yielded up her right to the eternal peace that she might save the souls of men, and renounced Nirvana (everlasting rest) to suffer with humanity for other myriad million ages, Kwannon, the goddess of pity and mercy."

Mr. Hearn, supporting the opinion of Kaempfer, written in the middle of last century, says that "Japan has nothing whatever to gain by conversion to Christianity, either morally or otherwise, but very much to lose." Here is another pill for our mission-mongers.

Dr. Voelkel issues from Berlin, 131 Brunnenstrasse, a series of *brochures* against the teaching of religion in the schools. The part before us, "Heft 2," deals with Bible Blunders, *Falschungen in der Bibel*, for which chapter and text are fully given.

Mr. Forder has issued a pony pamphlet entitled "Is the Sermon on the Mount Impracticable?" being an open letter to the Rev. W. C. Leeper, of Winthorpe, Notts, by a Deist. Mr. Leeper had a letter in the *Newark Herald* on the subject, but the Deist's reply was refused insertion because of its "blasphemous" character. It appears to us to be very temperately written indeed, and to put the case against the practicability of the teachings of Jesus with much moderation.

Mr. C. Cohen lectured for the first time at Newcastle on Sunday. Owing to the arrangements not allowing time for an announcement in the *Freethinker*, his audiences were not so large as they should have been, but those who heard him were highly delighted. Mr. Cohen lectures there again to-day (October 28), and we hope the local Freethinkers will do

their best to give him a good audience. They should try to bring their Christian friends.

The West London Branch will commence their indoor lectures on Thursday, November 1, at the Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway, W. Mr. Touzeau Parris will open the course, his subject being, "Religious Uses of Ignorance—A Reply to Lord Salisbury." Among others who will lecture during November are Mr. G. Standing, Mr. S. E. Easton, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, and Mr. F. Haslam. The admission is free, and the lectures will commence at 8.30 p.m.

The Agnostic Annual for 1895 (Watts & Co.) is a most excellent sixpennyworth. Its principal feature is a symposium on the question, "Why Live a Moral Life?" A number of representative men take part in it, and we intend to devote a special article to their utterances. Mr. Charles Watts writes on "What Agnosticism Seeks to Destroy." From what he says we gather that Agnosticism is a new-fangled word for Secularism. Of course, the article is replete with lucid good sense. Mr. Samuel Laing contributes a searching article on the "Gospel of Peter," his conclusion being that it does not bring us to any "solid bed-rock of historical fact." Miss Constance Plumtre has a bright article on "The Higher Secularism." Other articles, and verses by W. S. Ross and W. B. McTaggart, make up a very interesting number.

Next month will bring the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Voltaire. By way of commemorating the event Mr. J. M. Wheeler has written a popular account of the great heretic's career, which is to be accompanied by telling (translated) extracts from his writings. Mr. Foote has had a minor hand in the work, which will be published at the price of one shilling. We commend it to the attention of our readers, who will find in it what no other single volume in the English language affords. It will probably include a good portrait of Voltaire.

INGERSOLL'S VIEWS ON RELIGION.

(Interview in the New York "Herald.")

(Concluded from page 669.)

"ARE the doctrines of Agnosticism gaining ground; and what, in your opinion, will be the future of the Church?"

"The Agnostic is intellectually honest. He knows the limitations of his mind. He is convinced that the questions of origin and destiny cannot be answered by man. He knows that he cannot answer these questions, and he is candid enough to say so. The Agnostic has good mental manners. He does not call belief, or hope, or wish a demonstration. He knows the difference between hope and belief—between belief and knowledge; and he keeps these distinctions in his mind. He does not say that a certain theory is true because he wishes it to be true. He tries to go according to evidence, in harmony with facts, without regard to his own desires or the wish of the public. He has the courage of his convictions and the modesty of his ignorance. The theologian is his opposite. He is certain and sure of the existence of things and beings and worlds of which there is, and can be, no evidence. He relies on assertion, and in all debate attacks the motive of his opponent instead of answering his arguments. All savages know the origin and destiny of man. About other things they know but little. The theologian is much the same. The Agnostic has given up the hope of ascertaining the nature of the 'First Cause,' the hope of ascertaining whether or not there was a 'First Cause.' He admits that he does not know whether or not there is an infinite being. He admits that these questions cannot be answered, and so he refuses to answer. He refuses also to pretend. He knows that the theologian does not know, and he has the courage to say so.

"He knows that the religious creeds rest on assumption, supposition, assertion—on myth and legend, on ignorance and superstition, and that there is no evidence of their truth. The Agnostic bends his energies in the opposite direction. He occupies himself with this world, with things that can be ascertained and understood. He turns his attention to the sciences, to the solution of questions that touch the well-being of man. He wishes to prevent and to cure diseases, to lengthen life, to provide homes and raiment and food for man, to supply the wants of the body.

"He also cultivates the arts. He believes in painting and sculpture, in music and the drama—the needs of the soul. The Agnostic believes in developing the brain, in cultivating the affections, the tastes, the conscience, the judgment, to the end that man may be happy in this world. He seeks to find the relations of things, the condition of happiness. He wishes to enslave the forces of nature to the end that they may perform the work of the world. Back of all progress are the real thinkers, the finders of facts, those who turn their attention to the world in which we live. The theologian has never been a help, always a hindrance. He has always kept his back to the sunrise. With him all wisdom was in the past. He appealed to the dead. He was, and is, the enemy of reason, of investigation, of thought and progress. The Church has never given 'sanctuary' to a persecuted truth.

"There can be no doubt that the ideas of the Agnostic are gaining ground. The scientific spirit has taken possession of the intellectual world. Theological methods are unpopular to-day, even in theological schools. The attention of men everywhere is being directed to the affairs of this world, this life. The gods are growing indistinct, and, like the shapes of clouds, they are changing as they fade. The idea of special providence has been substantially abandoned. People are losing, and intelligent people have lost, confidence in prayer. To-day no intelligent person believes in miracles—in a violation of the facts in nature. They may believe that there used to be miracles a good while ago, but not now. The 'supernatural' is losing its power, its influence, and the Church is growing weaker every day.

"The Church is supported by the people, and in order to gain the support of the people it must reflect their ideas, their hopes and fears. As the people advance the creeds will be changed, either by changing the words or by giving new meanings to the old words. The Church, in order to live, must agree substantially with those who support it, and, consequently, it will change to any extent that may be necessary. If the Church remains true to the old standards, then it will lose the support of progressive people; and if the people generally advance, the Church will die. But my opinion is that it will slowly change, that the minister will preach what the members want to hear, and that the creed will be controlled by the contribution-box. One of these days the preachers may become teachers, and when that happens the Church will be of some use."

"What do you regard as the greatest of all themes in poetry and song?"

"Love and death. The same is true of the greatest music. In 'Tristan and Isolde' is the greatest music of love and death. In Shakespeare the greatest themes are love and death. In all real poetry, in all real music, the dominant, the triumphant tone is love; and the minor, the sad refrain, the shadow, the background, the mystery is death."

"What would be your advice to an intelligent young man just starting out in life?"

"I would say to him: 'Be true to your ideal. Cultivate your heart and brain. Follow the light of your reason. Get all the happiness out of life that you possibly can. Do not care for power, but strive to be useful. First of all, support yourself, so that you may not be a burden to others. If you are successful, if you gain a surplus, use it for the gain of others. Own yourself, and live and die a free man. Make your home a heaven, love your wife, and govern your children by kindness. Be good-natured, cheerful, forgiving, and generous. Find out the conditions of happiness, and then be wise enough to live in accordance with them. Cultivate intellectual hospitality, express your honest thoughts, love your friends, and be just to your enemies.'"

In his waning years Colonel Ingersoll, the silver-haired and silver-tongued, is nothing if not satirical, and his coming lecture on "The Bible," which he expects to deliver in all sections of the Union, and perhaps in Europe, will be the most pungent and radical of all his assaults on the works of the Old and New Testaments.

MULTIPLYING CHRIST.

A NEW medium for the diffusion of intellectual darkness has just appeared in Aberdeen, under the name of the *Catholic Herald*. The first number summarises a sermon by the Rev. J. S. Vaughan on some of the mysteries of the Blessed Sacrament, chief among these being the doctrines of Transubstantiation and the "multiplication of the presence of Christ." Here are some examples of the reverend gentleman's luminous reasoning powers: "The mere fact that the multiplication of the presence of Christ is a mystery," he says, "should not prevent people from believing it, since we are surrounded by mysteries, such as life and death." The fallacy of this argument is surely transparent enough, even to the preacher himself, if his attention is called to it. Life and death may be mysteries, but they are phenomena whose *existence* cannot be disputed by anyone, although any single *explanation* of their existence may be. In other words, the mysteriousness of a phenomenon is no reason for believing any cock-and-bull story about it, but rather an additional reason for being on our guard.

Had the subject of dispute been the actual existence of the elements alleged to be transubstantiated into the multiplied presence of Christ, the Rev. Mr. Vaughan's analogy would have been excellent. But no one denies the *reality* of the bread and wine used in the Blessed Sacrament, any more than the reality of life and death. We merely doubt the priest's veracity when he alleges that they are anything more than the common bread and wine obtainable from a baker or a licensed victualler. Similarly, when the priest pretends to tell us all about the origin and destiny of human life, we cheerfully admit with him that the whole thing is a mystery; but, at the same time, we claim that that very element of mystery makes the problem as incomprehensible to him as it is to us. If mystery does not prevent the acceptance of one doctrine, neither should it deter us from giving credence to another. But this would justify belief in any religious doctrines under the sun, save those of Secularism, which abandons mystical speculations as to the origin of life, and contents itself with tracing the laws of its development and decay. This would be too much for the Rev. Mr. Vaughan, who only means that mystery should not prevent us from believing Catholic doctrines. The fact is, mystery justifies neither belief nor unbelief, but it necessitates investigation.

The Rev. Mr. Vaughan is more ingenious in his attempt to prove that a thing can be in two places at one and the same time, and that those who argue against this suffer from "a limited power of conception." Well, perhaps they do; but an unbridled power of conception is not an unmixed evil. "They knew that every man had a soul," said Mr. Vaughan; "that it was a spirit, not composed of parts with a right or left, or top and bottom; and, according to philosophers, it existed wholly and entirely in every sensitive part of the body—in the hands, the heart, the eyes, the brain, and other portions of the human frame." That is what passes for logic among Roman Catholics. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the soul does exist, and that it pervades every part of the human body, does not Mr. Vaughan see that, in the loose language he employs, the same thing, exactly, might be postulated of blood? But to say that blood is found everywhere in the human body is a very different thing from saying that the same corpuscle, the same *drop* of blood, can be in the head and the feet at one and the same time. That is absurdity number one. But an equally ridiculous fallacy is contained in the assumption that a thing can be circumscribed within the limits of another thing possessing parts, and yet have no parts itself. Can a river be confined within a channel, and yet have neither right nor left side, top nor bottom? Can a portion of the atmosphere be bottled up without having its dimensions fixed by those of the vessel that contains it? Can the red river of blood flow through the human body without having its extent limited by the width and length of the veins that conduct it? Can even an attenuated essence like the soul, supposing it exists, be circumscribed within a finite body possessing all the properties of matter, and yet have "neither right nor left, top nor bottom"? The mere statement of such questions shows their utter absurdity. If soul penetrates every part of the human framework, it must be because it is composed of as many parts as the shell that contains it. If it could

Whoever has need of a religious motive in order to do well has advanced no further than to the vestibule of morality.—*David Frederic Strauss.*

pervade the body in the sense that Mr. Vaughan means, there would be nothing to prevent it from pervading all space; but in that case a single soul would occupy all creation, to the exclusion of every one else. From whatever point we view this dogma, the most glaring absurdities and contradictions confront us on every side.

C.

THE CREATOR'S RECREATION.

THE Deity, tired of eternal passivity,
Awoke to the fact that existence was tame,
Unless it was spiced with the pleasing activity
Of terrified creatures bepraising his name.

He, then, out of nothing created the universe;
Created it all out of nothing, 'tis said;
I'm told by the Muse of my truthful though puny verse:
"Twas all out of *nothing*—all "out of his *head*."

Said God: "As my principal reason for making it
Is merely amusement, I'll make it to spin;
With creatures all squirming, like lime when they're
slaking it;
Amusingly, spitefully seething in sin.

"A perfect creation would simply mean weariness;
Amusement's my end, I will, therefore, create
A world of malignity, slaughter, and cheeriness;
Of pious dissensions, religion, and hate!

"To start it imperfect would damage my dignity,
And hinder my creatures from praising my name;
I'll, therefore—to hide what they'd call my malignity—
Cause devils to spoil it, and bear all the blame.

"The dodge will succeed, through its silly simplicity,
For few of my creatures I'll burden with brains;
And those of the few who'll detect my duplicity
Will simply be roasted in hell for their pains!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

CHRISTIANITY AND FREETHOUGHT.

CHRISTIANITY is opposed to freedom, and consequently freedom is opposed to Christianity. A Christian cannot be a Freethinker, and a Freethinker cannot be a Christian. When a man is required to believe certain doctrines, he is not free to think. A creed is to keep the mind from inquiry. Questions lead to doubt, and doubt is the death of faith.

The Church condemns Freethought, because Freethought cannot be bound by its chains of dogma. There is no place in the Christian Church for the exercise of liberty. If the mind finds a new truth that contradicts the old dogma, the truth must be strangled that the dogma may hold its power over the thoughts and deeds of men.

To be a Christian is to surrender to the priest or minister in the name of Christ. It is to be a monkey on the end of an ecclesiastical string, to get pennies for his master. It is to crawl at the feet of a superstition.

To be a Freethinker is to search for truth without fear. Where there is love of freedom there is no reverence for authority. There is no faith in God as sacred as love of man.—*Boston Investigator*.

The Decay of Faith.

But as the intelligence in any race of people is increased, their religious fervor has grown more timid and parsimonious. Prayer and genuflexions have gradually replaced the burdensome peace-offerings and the bloody sacrifices. Sometimes, as in China, offerings are made only in effigy; paper images are substituted for the real objects, and are burned in their place. The primitive man, urged by some need or by some emotion, prays coarsely but sincerely. "Come and pray," a missionary said to an islander in Madagascar. "Pray for what? I am not in want of anything now," was the answer. After a while prayer becomes a formula read mechanically at stated times; rites and ceremonies are performed without warmth, without earnestness—simply from habit. This change seems to indicate that the age of faith will give way to the age of examination, that the age of ignorance will have to yield to the age of knowledge.—*Dr. Charles Letourneau*.

GEMS FROM SCHOPENHAUER.

(Selected and Translated from his Works by F. Mulibrant.)

MODERN Materialism is the manure for fertilising the soil of philosophy.

Religions are like glow-worms: they require darkness to shine in.

He who loves Truth hates the gods, in the singular as well as in the plural.

It is to be regretted that the inspiration of the inspired authors of the New Testament did not also extend to language and style.

The world is precisely hell—in it men are partly the tormented souls, partly the devils.

If I have truth on my side, it does not make me envious even if my opponents have the Church as well as the Old and New Testaments on theirs.

What a bad conscience religion must have can be drawn from the fact that it is forbidden, under heavy penalties, to cast ridicule upon it.

Pseudo-philosophers I call all those who, pretending to search for truth, were designedly at the perpetuity of old occidental errors.

The time will come when the theory of a God-Creator will be regarded in metaphysics in the same way as the epicycles are now regarded in astronomy.

Scarcely have the Governments set the clergy again on their feet than once more they are flying at each other's throats.

An impersonal God is a *contradictio in adjecto*, and a personal one an individual.

If a God had created this world, I should not like to be that God; its misery would rend my heart.

"Deists" means uncircumcised Jews.

When the world has grown honest enough not to teach children under fifteen years any religion, then something may be expected from it.

Every Deist should be asked the perplexing question, "Is your God an individual or not?" If he says No, then he is no God. If he says Yes, strange things follow.

Deists must acknowledge one of these three theories:— (1) God has created the world out of nothing. This is opposed to the positive truth that out of nothing comes nothing. (2) He has created it out of himself. Then he has either remained in it—Pantheism; or that part of himself which became the world separated itself from him—Emanation. (3) He has formed the matter which he found; then the matter is, like him, eternal, and he is simply a *δημιουργος* (builder).

CONVERSATION IN THE YEAR 33.

A.—"Have you heard the latest news?"

B.—"No; what has happened?"

A.—"The world is delivered."

B.—"You don't say so?"

A.—"Yes; God took the shape of man, and let himself be executed in Jerusalem. By this means the world has been delivered and the Devil cheated."

B.—"Oh, it's quite delightful!"

Religion has muzzled Reason for 1800 years. The task of the professors of philosophy is to smuggle Jewish mythology as philosophy.

There is nothing where so careful a distinction between kernel and shell has to be made as in Christianity. Just because I love the kernel I sometimes break the shell.

Those who believe that science can go on making progress, and spreading itself more and more without impeding the life and vigor of religion, are making a great mistake. Physics and metaphysics are the natural enemies of religion, and therefore she is the enemy of those sciences, always trying to suppress them, as they are ever trying to undermine her. It is ridiculous to talk of peace and concord between them; it is a *bellum ad internecionem*. Religions are children of ignorance, and do not long survive their mother.

Think of the fanaticism, of the endless persecutions! First of all think of the religious wars, this atrocious madness, of which the ancients had no conception; then of the Crusades, which were an utterly unjustifiable massacre with the war-cry, "God wills it," in order to gain possession of the grave of him who preached love and tolerance. Think of the cruel expulsion and extermination of the Moors and Jews from Spain. Think of the massacres, the slaughters, and inquisitions; think of the great and blood-shedding conquests of the Mahomedans in three continents; think of the Christians in America, where they exterminated the natives to a great extent—in Cuba, where they exterminated them altogether, and where, according to Las Casas, they murdered within forty years twelve million men—all, of course, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, and for the sake of spreading the Gospel, and also because all those who were not Christians were not regarded as human beings.

BOOK CHAT.

M. CHARLES LETOURNEAU, who has already done such good work in his investigation of the evolution of the family, of property, politics, law, and religion, has now published a work on literary evolution among the various races.

The new volume of the "International Scientific Series," which has been appearing slowly of late, is by M. André Lefevre, and is entitled *Race and Language*. The name of the author is a guarantee of erudition and scientific precision. M. Lefevre is a translator of Lucretius, and is, with Letourneau, one of the gallant band who sustained Freethought in *La Pensée Nouvelle* in the priest-ridden days of the Second Empire.

A Spanish Freethought work on *The Origins of Christianity*, by Don M. Navarro y Murillo, has been published. He is also the author of a brochure on *Genesis according to Geology and Palaeontology*.

Messrs. T. & T. Clark, of Edinburgh, announce a new Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy, by Professor S. R. Driver.

Messrs. Luzac & Co. publish the translation, by Mr. B. W. Bacon, of a work on *The Origin of the Canon of the Old Testament*, from the German of Professor G. Wildeboer.

Mr. W. H. Quilliam's work on *The Faith of Islam* has been translated into French. The English Moslem removes many prejudices against his adopted faith, and we are pleased to find his work having an extensive circulation.

Professor W. H. Bennett has put out a work on *The Books of Chronicles*, in which he makes some noteworthy admissions. Thus he says: "The narratives of Chronicles, like much Church history in all ages, is largely controlled by the controversial interests of the school from which it emanated. In the hands of the chronicler the story of the Kings of Judah is told in such a way that it becomes a polemic against the Book of Job. The tragic and disgraceful death of good kings presented a crucial difficulty to the chronicler's theology. Hence the chronicler's anxiety to record any lapses of good kings in their later days." In other words, the concocter of this portion of the word of God was ready to modify facts to fit his theory.

Mrs. T. R. Green, in her *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, a work written in fulfilment of a promise to her late husband the historian, mentions that "the church was their common hall, where the commonalty met for all kinds of business—to audit the town accounts, to divide the common lands, to make grants of property, to hire soldiers, or to elect a mayor. There the Council met on Sundays or festivals, as might best suit their convenience; so that we even hear of a payment made by the priest to the Corporation to induce them not to hold their assemblies in the chancel while High Mass was being performed. It was the natural place for justices to sit and hear cases of assault and theft; or it might serve as a hall where difficult legal questions could be argued out by lawyers." That the churches were originally considered public property is a fact deserving to be remembered.

Cassandra Cobbe, in *A Faithless World* (T. F. Unwin), draws a terrible picture of the triumph of Secularism, with the Sunday a day of gladness instead of gloom, scientific lectures instead of preaching and prayer, the Bible ranked as an historical curiosity instead of the infallible word of God, and the service of humanity substituted for the service of bogey. What shall we do without bogey? Cassandra Cobbe says: "Everything which casts a glory over life will be gone." The picture she conjures up of men of God having to turn to work for their living is so horrible that we feel that Cassandra must be allowed to retain her bogey, at least till she outgrows it, which does not seem likely in her present incarnation.

Among Messrs. Macmillan & Co.'s announcements for the season are two likely to be of interest to Freethinkers. The one is a volume of *Selections from Thoreau*, edited by Mr. H. S. S., whose *Life of Thoreau* is an able account of a most interesting and original Freethinker. The other is a republication of Frederic Harrison's lecture on the *Meaning of History*, which, we believe, was his first published work, and which is now to be issued with other historical pieces, making a considerable volume.

A book, which we hope shortly to notice in these columns, is Mr. E. S. Hartland's study of Tradition and Myth: and its Customs, Story, and Belief, entitled *The Legends of Perseus*. Mr. Hartland follows Mr. Frazer in hinting that the chief Christian dogmas are founded on ancient Pagan superstitions.

CORRESPONDENCE.

OBADIAH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

"CHILPERIC" always writes with learning and moderation, and I am free to admit that he makes a very plausible case for the book of Obadiah having been written after the destruction of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes. The only question with me is whether it is not still later. The Rev. A. H. Sayce has too often shown himself a man of God first, and a man of learning afterwards, for me to follow him other than cautiously in identifying Sepharad with Bithynia and Galatia; and I remember that Mr. Rassam also claims to have discovered the site of Sepharad in Southern Babylonia. Why dismiss so cavalierly the modern Jews who say that Sepharad is Spain? Surely they are the best authorities. Rabbi Joseph Cohen, I am told, even identifies Zarephath, of verse 20, with France. Does it not seem that an altogether fictitious antiquity has been assigned to these not easily dateable documents? Then "Chilperic" does not notice the interpretation of Edom as Rome. This is confirmed by the reference to "the eagle" of verse 4. Evidently, when Obadiah was written, Jerusalem had been destroyed and the house of Jacob dispersed. Why should Jews in Phrygia, Spain, or elsewhere, denounce Edom, unless by Edom they meant the Roman power which finally dispersed them, as I am assured they do in Talmudic writings?

LUCIANUS.

A SUGGESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

I notice that our friends, the enemy, labor under a great paucity of subjects. *The Elements of Social Science* and the horrible character of Infidels constitute their main stock-in-trade. I would suggest that, as the real fight centres round the Bible, they should defend the old book point by point. Here are a few subjects which would be bound to draw: (1) The meekness of Moses and the tender mercies of David. (2) God's chosen people, and why he chose them. (3) The suitability of Solomon's Song for girls' schools. (4) Lot, his wife and daughters. (5) The devils in the pigs. (6) Jesus on the pinnacle of the Temple. Such subjects as these might infuse life even into the Christian Evidence cause.

CRITIC.

Greater than the Irish.

We credit the Irish with the paternity of "bulls," but they have never equalled holy writ:—

"Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand; and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isaiah xxxvii. 36). The same in 2 Kings xix. 35.

It is apparent these Assyrians were so accustomed to rising in the morning that they could not leave off the habit after they were killed.

Fruits of Religion.

Human sacrifices to propitiate the Deity. Tortures and massacres that enforce avowals of belief contrary to conviction. Slaughter of whole nations, men, women, and children, represented as hateful to the Deity. Enforcement of a life of idleness and self-mortification under the plea of devotion. Immunity for the most atrocious acts of persons held to be religious. Enjoining and encouraging wars of aggression against nations called infidel, whose goods were to be plundered, lands laid waste, and women and children led into captivity. The seeking for truth and the courageous abandonment of beliefs, when discovered to be erroneous, denounced as sins. Where the infliction of torture and imprisonment upon those of different faiths has been discontinued, terms of reproach, marks of contempt, and the withholding of civil rights have taken their place.—*"Studies of Man," by a Japanese, p. 27.*

Obituary.

DIED at his residence, Glyn-road, Clapton, on Saturday, October 13, Mr. John Palmer, at the advanced age of eighty-two years. Mr. Palmer was for many years a well-known figure at all Freethought meetings in North London, and read the *Freethinker* to the very last. He was an honest, straightforward man, respected even by those who differed from his opinions.

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 post-card.]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, A. J. Marriott (Fabian), "Social Democrats and Neo-Malthusianism." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Theology at the Bar of History." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture. (Free.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, musical and dramatic entertainment. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, dancing Thursday, at 8, meeting of Social Reform Wing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, W. Heaford, "Christianity and Slavery." Thursday, free science classes. HAMMERSMITH CLUB (1 The Grove, Broadway): Thursday, at 8.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Religious Uses of Ignorance—A Reply to Lord Salisbury."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture. CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Religion Inimical to Humanity."

DEPTFORD (Broadway): 6.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed." HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, J. Rowney, "Bible Parables."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Prayer"; 3.30, "Some Bible Celebrities."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, T. Thurlow, "The Unpardonable Sin."

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, B. Dent, "The Atonement."

WESTMINSTER (Old Pimlico Pier): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Secular Progress in 1894."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Progress"; 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Fairy Tales"—part ii.

COUNTRY.

ABERDEEN (Queen's Rooms, 120 Union-street): 6.30, H. H. Duncan, "Social Tendencies of our Time." Special meeting after lecture.

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue): 3.30, J. Murphy, "Labor and Socialism."

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

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 3, H. Verney, "Electric Light."

DERBY (Athenæum Room): Monday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "Why I am an Atheist."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11, adjourned debate, "The Improbability of Revelation"—opener, Mr. Dewar; 2.30, D. Gloak, "The Bible and Women"; 6.30, select entertainment and dancing.

FAIRFORTH (Pole-lane): Saturday, Oct. 27, at 6.45, "East Lynne."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, S. Downie, "The Use and Abuse of Money"; 6.30, Zosimus, "Great French Freethinkers—Pierre Bayle."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Gustav Smith, "The Influence of our Surroundings."

IPSWICH (Co-operative Room, Cox-lane): 7, members' meeting.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 11, G. W. Foote, "Is Immortality a Blessing?"; 6.30, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?"

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, Philosophy Class—Ernest Newman, "Spinoza"; 7, John Walter, B.A., "Darwin Up to Date."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Eleanor Marx Aveling, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific"; 3, "The International Working Class Movement"; 6.30, "Socialism, Anarchism, and Christianity."

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 3, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery." (Free; reserved seats, 3d.) 7, Hall Nicholson, "Has Man a Soul?" (Free.) 8.15, monthly meeting of members—important business.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, Stanley Jones, "Special Creation and Evolution"; 3, "Christianity and Social Life"; 7, "The Church and Science."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Disendowment of the Church"; 7, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, W. R. Stansell, "Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, Hall Nicholson, "Heaven and Hell."

ROCHDALE: Saturday, Oct. 27, pilgrimage to Owen's College by 1.52 train. Sunday (Town Hall-square): 11, Sam Standing, "More Schoolmasters, Fewer Parsons"; 3, "The Theatre: its Use and Abuse"; 6.30, "Ancient Egyptians"; 8, business meeting at Toad-lane. SOUTH SHIELDS (Market-place): Thursday, 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Oct. 28, Sheffield. November 4, Failsforth; 5, 6, 7, Rochdale; 11, Hull; 18, Leicester. December 16, Chatham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 4, New Brompton; 18, Bolton.

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