

# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

## Edward Truelove.

On Tuesday afternoon a little band of men and women, some forty in number, assembled in Highgate Cemetery around the open grave of Edward Truelove. Many more would have been present had they known of the time and place of the funeral. Mr. Truelove's death occurred only on the previous Friday, and it had been impossible to make an announcement through the *Freethinker*. Mr. G. J. Holyoake had been invited to be present, but he was unable to come; however, he sent a written eulogy of the deceased, which was read by Mr. Foote, who then added some words of his own on behalf of the National Secular Society, of which Mr. Truelove had for many years been a vice-president. Professor Beesly, the well-known Positivist, followed with a tribute from his point of view, dwelling upon the courage of the deceased, his cheerfulness, his modesty, and his public spirit. That ended the ceremony, and the little band of what are technically called "mourners" dispersed. The cemetery men shovelled in the earth upon the coffin, not knowing that it held the remains of a very different man from the multitude planted around in expectancy of a glorious resurrection, after in most cases a far from glorious life and death.

"Tears, idle tears," would indeed have been a proper description of any drops shed over that grave. One thinks of Milton's words:

Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise or blame; nothing but well and fair.

Edward Truelove had lived long enough. He would not have wished to linger on the mere wreck and ruin of himself. He had far outlived the usual length even of old age. Born on October 29, 1809—the same year as Mr. Gladstone—he was nearly ninety. For the last few weeks his mind had been clouded, for he was dying of mere decay; but with that exception he had enjoyed happiness and conscious serenity. He was poor, but not exactly in want, and friends had subscribed to provide him with some comforts. His interest in human affairs was unabated until death attacked the citadel of the brain; he had lived long enough to witness the comparative triumph of the principles he had espoused; he saw that society had improved in many ways during the seventy years he had been actively upon the scene; and he must have felt that some measure of that improvement, however small, was due to his own exertions.

Mr. Holyoake, in the brief address which he wrote to be read at Edward Truelove's graveside, rightly emphasised the dead man's courage. It was not of the noisy order. It was not Donnybrook Fair valor. He never courted martyrdom, but when it visited him it found him quietly unflinching. Nor did he make the slightest parade of his sufferings; he bore them manfully and soberly, counting them honorable, and knowing that they were an investment, sure of a dividend, for the cause of liberty, which he valued above everything else on earth, except the humanity to which it ministers. Many times he was in peril, as the publisher of advanced movements; but it was not until he was nearly seventy that he fell into the clutches of bigotry, and tasted the refined cruelty of the plank-bed in a Christian gaol. His crime had been the publication of a Malthusian pamphlet, which had been sold openly and without molestation for forty years, and which was actually written by a publicist who had been a United States ambassador in London. They tried him for this crime in the Court

of Queen's Bench, where the jury would not agree to a verdict; then they took him to the Old Bailey, where they secured a verdict, and obtained a sentence upon him of four months' imprisonment like a common thief. When the brave old man came out of prison he was splendidly greeted by thousands at St. James's Hall, and the testimonial presented to him was doubtless very welcome to one whose whole life had been more or less a hard struggle. He returned to his shop and plodded along in the good old way, doing something unostentatiously every day for the world's freedom and progress.

Physical courage, especially in crowds, is common enough. Millions of men will fight and die for almost anything, or nothing. But moral courage is rare. Few men are able to stand against the mob, fewer still are able to stand if need be alone, with their feet upon the rock of principle, and their face towards a hostile world. Edward Truelove was one of the few. When he stood for what he saw to be truth, he was as stubborn as a hill, and nearly as quiet in his resistance. He asked no one but himself whether he was right. His own intelligence was his light, his own conscience was his guide. For seventy years of manhood he never wavered. And for this, if for nothing else, let him be honored. It might be his epitaph—"He was a brave man where so many were cowards."

But he had other titles to esteem. Professor Beesly well said that Edward Truelove was naturally an altruist. He was full of public spirit, and at the same time kind, and gentle, and considerate to all around him. The note of selfishness never rang from his nature. He saw his own good in the good of others. It was a pleasure to see him at meetings. A childlike happiness lighted up his features. Even towards the very end he would come out, when it was really dangerous for him to be from home, and make one at a meeting where liberty was being championed. "You ought not to be here," the present writer said to him at such a meeting not so very many months ago, and the brave old man's reply was unanswerable, "I felt I *must* come." "I think I'll go," he added, "after you've spoken." But he didn't go. He sat on and listened approvingly. The life of his life was devotion to his principles.

Edward Truelove lived so long that many persons fancied he was dead. To these the report of his death and burial will come as a surprise. The younger generation scarcely knew him at all. He belonged to the past—the past of storm and peril, when the soldiers of freedom arose almost every day to meet a fresh difficulty or a new danger. He lived right through the heroic age of English liberty. He had seen William Cobbett; he knew Robert Owen; he stood beside Watson, Southwell, Hetherington, and the rest, in their fight for a free press; he loved the un-subduable Richard Carlile; he had some intimacy with John Stuart Mill; he was a friend of George Jacob Holyoake in his fighting days; Karl Marx held meetings at his house; the Positivists were indebted to him for hospitality; and he was a staunch supporter of the great Charles Bradlaugh. He was one of the Old Guard—the Old Guard that never knew surrender. A few of them still remain amongst us, to shame our weakness and cowardice, to stimulate our strength and courage. One by one they disappear, leaving the world the poorer for their absence. Hats off to the veterans! And a last salute over the open grave of one of the truest that ever drew breath.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Sentiment and Religion.

IN all religious controversy the appeal to sentiment occupies a prominent, even a preponderating, place. Press the religious advocate hard, and, whether he be of the common or garden order that flourishes on Christian evidence platforms, or the more refined specimen of the same kind ventilating its opinions in expensive volumes, his final appeal will be to the "feelings" of his audience. The argument oftenest met with to encourage the belief in a future life is that man craves for it; just as the comfort yielded by Christianity to its followers is the card played by Christians with the greatest feeling of security. Experience has taught apologists that there exists a huge force of unreasoning sentiment that can be easily enlisted on the side of traditional beliefs, with the result that both policy and indolence combine in giving this factor a too prominent place in religious discussions.

Now, this appeal to sentiment in intellectual matters I hold to be wrong for two reasons. First, a man's feelings are not, as many seem to assume, independent of his ideas, but are that side of them which is expressed in relation to action. Consequently it follows that, unless a person's emotions are the normal and logical expression of his intellectual convictions, and unless these latter are as accurate as constant observation and correction can make them, confusion in action and injury to society are bound to result. It is the enlistment of sentiment on behalf of a teaching which has been independently established that is required, not the perpetuation of an emotion without regard to its relation to existing knowledge. Secondly, if the conditions of life were constant, then ideas and sentiments that had once become established might be put on one side as so much gain for all time. But this is not the case. The conditions of existence are never the same for two successive generations, and, therefore, if life is to reach its highest possible level, there must always go on a corresponding modification of emotional and intellectual qualities. Consequently a sentiment, so far as its object is concerned, usually has far more reference to the past than to the present, and tends to have still less value in the future. In brief, what has been said of conscience may be said with equal truth of sentiment in general. It is a force valuable only so long as it is subjected to a rigorous discipline, and carefully tested in the light of the knowledge and needs of contemporary life. Under any other conditions it becomes both disturbing and dangerous. The conduct of life is not to be settled by an appeal to what is pleasant, but by an appeal to what is true; and we must trust to time to bring about an identification between the two.

Nevertheless, it must always remain a regrettable fact that in discussing the merits of Atheism or Agnosticism, as contrasted with Christianity, much more stress is laid upon the joyless aspect of a life from which religious beliefs have been banished than upon the more fundamental question of the truthfulness of Christianity itself. Nor is this kind of advocacy confined to the lower class of Christian advocate. It is common to all. Thus Mr. W. H. Mallock, who is both a clever and accomplished writer, has argued that, if we could only picture what life would be like minus religion, there would be an end at once and for ever of all talk of its rejection. Once let the world realise the joylessness of life without religion, and "it will argue back from the practical conclusion to the theoretical premises; and if it rejects the former as repulsive, it will wisely and inevitably condemn the latter as false." That is to say, the world will only accept such teachings as are pleasant, without at all troubling if they are true; and when it finds that a certain teaching promises unpleasant consequences—unpleasant, that is, to our existing notions of what constitutes pleasantness—it will, without any regard to its truthfulness, "wisely and inevitably reject such a teaching as false." So that it is not, in Mr. Mallock's opinion, the accuracy of a statement which should command our support, but simply whether it agrees with our notion of what *ought* to be true.

If Mr. Mallock were alone in this position, great as his ability undoubtedly is, one might still feel inclined to pass it by with no further notice than a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders. But, as a matter of fact, it

forms such a large part of Christian arguments, and, when not actually expressed, so often forms the groundwork of a believer's position, that it is worth while spending some time over it. And in the use of such arguments even prominent Christians seem to turn their backs upon the most simple logical processes. Thus the Rev. E. A. Abbott, in the midst of a most acute criticism of Cardinal Newman, and while attacking the position that religious questions are independent of proof, declares that on "such questions as whether there is a God or not; whether He is just; whether He will ultimately confirm man to His image..... we should allow no facts to disprove these beliefs."\* And Dr. Abbott's reason for this astounding declaration appears to be the same as Mr. Mallock's: that, if these beliefs were disproved, unpleasant consequences would follow. After that, one need not be surprised at Newman's specific warning to "Avoid inquiry, for it will lead you where there is no light, no peace, no hope; it will lead you to the black pit where there is perpetual desolation." Newman was simply saying plainly and boldly what others say timidly and with much circumlocution.

It would be a simple and fair reply to make to those who argue that the unpleasantness of a teaching constitutes a "wise" ground for its rejection, that our primary quest should be for what is true, not for what is immediately agreeable. But a little consideration of Mr. Mallock's position will show that it involves far more than he removed by such a simple rejoinder. All such arguments seem to me to be due to neglect of the following simple considerations.

First, it is continually overlooked that the pleasantness or unpleasantness of a given teaching is almost entirely a matter of individual temperament. To call a doctrine unpleasant may mean that it is so because we believe that it will have an injurious effect on life; but, as a matter of fact, all that it usually means is that it does not agree with what we already believe. A devout Roman Catholic would spend a very unpleasant time listening to a demonstration of the evils of the Catholic Church; and yet a Protestant like Dr. Horton seems to derive considerable satisfaction from the exposition. Doubtless there are many who regard the relationship of man to the ape family as an exceedingly distasteful thing; but none of us who regard this as a demonstrated fact are ever troubled by that aspect of the matter. The plain truth is that a great deal of this feeling of unpleasantness is due to sheer mental indolence and unreasoning dislike to new ideas. A new view of life is so apt to produce a feeling of unrest, and necessitate a long and laborious process of readjustment, that there is little wonder, bearing in mind the mental laziness of the average man, that new ideas meet with such a cold reception. A doctrine is more often condemned as untrue because it is felt to be unpleasant, than condemned as unpleasant because it is found to be untrue. Yet, after all, one may say, as against Mr. Mallock, that in the long run people will accept a teaching because its premises admit of verification, not merely because its conclusions are agreeable, and that for the reason that only such teaching as is in conformity with facts can excite permanently pleasurable feelings.

In the second place, all such arguments as the one I am dealing with proceed on the assumption that knowledge and sentiment are two distinct things, and may remain in permanent conflict. But this most decidedly is not the case. What is true is that knowledge and sentiment are two sides of the same thing, and that every modification of the former gradually produces a corresponding change in the latter. A Christian may say, with perfect honesty, that a belief in personal immortality is the one thing that renders life bearable. A Buddhist, with equal sincerity, will assert that the annihilation of individuality is the only belief that can reconcile him to the miseries of life. If we were to take two mothers, one of whom was an Atheist and the other a Christian, and both of whom had just lost a little child, we should find that their grief would be about equal. The Christian will grieve none the less because she feels sure that her child has gone straight to heaven; the Atheist will grieve none the more because she is without any such belief. In each case there will have been brought about a correspondence between sentiments and ideas.

\* *Philomythus*, p. 90.

Each will hope and fear, become elated or depressed, just as his or her knowledge of the world or their general education has led them to view the course of events.

The mistake of the Christian is, then, a simple one. He simply projects himself into the future divested of his present belief, but *still retaining the same sentiments*, and then cries out that life under such conditions would be unbearable.

But such a condition of things cannot occur, or, at least, cannot exist for any time. There may be, it is true, a conflict between our early sentiments and our later knowledge, and to some extent this occurs with all; but in the nature of things such discordance is transitory. Our hopes and fears are ultimately determined by our beliefs, and, as advancing knowledge modifies one, it cannot help modifying the other. One can appreciate a child saying that life would be terribly dull without dolls or hoops, without for a moment doubting that the time will come when it will enjoy life without either; and, in the same manner, one may reasonably anticipate men and women relinquishing beliefs which once seemed to contain all that made life tolerable, and yet find as great, or even greater, comfort in an entirely different direction.

And this would only be in line with all that we know of the course of human development. For it is not by the eradication of feelings that progress is forwarded, but by the discovery of their misapplication, and their redirection into more profitable channels. It is thus that we find the admiration once paid to brute force being now partly spent on moral and intellectual accomplishments. The energies that were once wasted in seeking the philosopher's stone, or the elixir of life, now goes towards building up the enduring structure of modern science. Astrology gives place to astronomy, alchemy to chemistry, and in the same manner one may rationally anticipate a time when the energies that are now applied to religious observances shall be devoted with equal satisfaction to the service of man.

C. COHEN.

### Cardinal Vaughan's Fallacies.

Of the many existing disturbers of the clearness of intellectual perception theology is one of the most prominent. It destroys the accuracy of the mental vision and allows uncontrolled imagination to take the place of reasonable deductions. This fact, so apparent in the history of theology, will explain to a large extent why so much confusion and so many errors obtain as to the condition of the human mind, and also as to the influence of religious teaching upon personal conduct. Take, for instance, the hollow pretensions urged on behalf of Christ, and the mistaken notions entertained as to the nature and real meaning of positive and negative work. Notwithstanding that two thousand years of the supposed influence of Christ have failed to regenerate society, he is still looked upon by his followers as the only redeemer of the human race, and all opposition to this fallacious idea is regarded by theologians as mere negative work destitute of all positive good.

These views are not only held by the rank and file of Christian believers, but many of the prominent leaders in the Church profess the same ideas. Last week, at the annual meeting of the "Catholic Truth Society," Cardinal Vaughan made a speech in which he fully justified what we have here stated as to the erroneous influence of theology even upon the minds of well-informed persons. In pleading for "the project of spending the last year of this century and the beginning of the first year of the next in a solemn international or world-wide Act of Homage to Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," the Cardinal said: "What they wished to do was to bring a deeper knowledge of Our Lord Jesus Christ in His nature, in His love, in His redemption, in His presence among us, in that which He was to each one of us, His mission in the world, our response to that mission; in a word, they wished to bring before the world a greater knowledge and a deeper love for Christ." Now, here we have words, but they convey no solid ideas based upon fact. What knowledge of Christ can be acquired beyond that which is furnished in the New

Testament? And that, such as it is, has long been at the command of those who desired it. There is nothing to be learnt of the nature, etc., of Christ that has not already been taught by the Church. The very request to know more of "Our Lord and Savior" is an admission that the present knowledge which some people imagine they have of him is but of little practical value in promoting the welfare of society. The Cardinal failed to state how "a greater knowledge and a deeper love for Christ" could be secured. The truth is, the mission of Christ has failed, and the Church knows it; hence the desire of its supporters to try and find some excuse for the non-success of their hero. Christ said of himself, "I am not of this world," which may account for his inability to aid in its improvement. The more that is known of Jesus, the less a sane person outside the realms of theology would be inclined either to follow his example or to obey his teachings.

The fallacy into which Cardinal Vaughan has fallen as to the nature of positive and negative work is very glaring. It shows that he shares the common error upon this subject of orthodox believers in general. He says: "They had something far better to do than the negative work of contradicting untruths; they had the positive work of spreading the truth." It is time Christians should be reminded that the more we negate error, the more positive do we become to its antithesis, the truth. In fact, negation involves the positive. Personally, we negate all the theories propounded in reference to the alleged supernatural, and in consequence we are the more positive in respect to the natural, for the reason that we know of nothing beyond nature. All that can be done, said, or thought is and must be natural in the widest sense of that term. Man's beginnings were in nature; his every act is natural, his thoughts are natural, and in the end the great universe will fold him in her embrace, close his eyes in death, and furnish in her own bosom his last and final resting-place. Beyond her he cannot go. She was his cradle, and will be his grave; while between the two she furnishes the stage on which he plays his every part. And more, she has made him the actor to play the part. Nature is one and indivisible. She had, in our opinion, no beginning, and can have no end. She is the all-in-all.

We negate the dogmas taught as to a life beyond the grave, and this leaves us more time to devote to the positive duties of our present existence. These we know, but if there should be requirements from us in a future world we can have no knowledge of them while we are on this side of the grave. Similar advantages of negation apply to the prayer of supplication. We are negationists to the teaching that there is a God who will answer prayer, and as the result of this we are positive as to the necessity and utility of self-reliance, which has ever proved an important element in human progress. Had not our modern scientists, moralists, educationists, and politicians been negationists to the errors once taught upon these various subjects, the civilisation of the world would not have been so far advanced as it is. All systems negate views that are opposed to their own. Christianity is no exception to this rule, for its believers are firm negationists to all faiths but their own, and yet they are positive about that which they deem to be true. Such mighty intellects as Lucretius, Spinoza, Goethe, Humboldt, Dr. Priestley, Newton, Voltaire, Paine, Robert Owen, Lyell, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and Harriet Martineau were negationists to the theological errors of their day; but who will deny that they did positive good for the elevation of mankind? Cardinal Vaughan speaks of "contradicting untruths" as mere negative work; but it is more than this: it is a positive preparation for the reception of the truth. While the mind is burdened with that which is false, truth will have but little or no chance of being received. The very attempt to clear the mind of what is erroneous is a positive method of securing a recognition of correct views.

Freethinkers have ever been the victims of either orthodox ignorance or wilful misrepresentation. Their disbelief of Christianity is generally spoken of as though it were a mere negation, whose only mission could be to doubt and destroy. The consequence of this misconception is that the Freethought party is denounced as being composed of members whose aim is to pull down without having any desire to reconstruct. The pious, orthodox believer looks upon the sceptic as a sort of modern Goth

or Vandal, dangerous to the well-being of society, and to be avoided by all who care for the public good. These are the wild, fanatical notions, born of the theological delusions, which are held in reference to unbelievers. Secularists are always positive about the true and good wherever it is found; it is only towards what their reason and experience tell them is false that they are negative. And in this particular they emulate the course pursued by Christ and St. Paul, who negated many of the teachings of Paganism and Judaism; also that of Luther and his co-workers, who were negative to the doctrines of Roman Catholicism. Let it be distinctly understood by those who are constantly misrepresenting the work of Freethinkers that we are only negationists so far as pulling down and clearing the ground may be necessary to prepare the way for the new building that is to be erected. Just as Luther disbelieved in Romanism and sought to destroy it, in order to make way for Protestantism, so Secularists to-day disbelieve in the errors of the Church, and are thereby inspired to work for the establishment of greater and grander truths than theology ever recognised or the Church possessed.

Even if negation simply meant attacking the Church, opposing its absurd creeds and dogmas, and resisting its aggressive policy, such negation would be necessary. The Church is the foe of liberty and the destroyer of personal rights. In the face of such despotism and unjust interference with the freedom of others, to remain quiet would be to share in the crime against individual and national liberty. At the present time the Church is active in condemning dramatic representations, in preventing the sale of Secular literature, and in closing the halls against Freethinkers. To oppose this bigoted and unfair conduct is our imperative duty, which we will perform with all our might. This may be called negation, but it is positive labor in defence of liberty and justice.

CHARLES WATTS.

### "Spoiling the Egyptians."

WE are told in the inspired narrative in the Book of Exodus that after the Israelites left Egypt they were led by the Lord to Sinai, where they encamped and remained for a considerable time, and that there Moses received instructions for the making of a grand tabernacle and various sacred articles to be placed within it. We are further told that, in order to carry out these divine instructions, all Israelites who were "of a willing heart" were invited to give "an offering unto the Lord" of gold, silver, brass, linen, oil, spices, precious stones, and everything else needed for the construction of the holy "tent of meeting" and its furniture (Exod. xxxv. 5-9). In answer to this appeal, if we believe the Biblical narrative, "they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and brought the Lord's offering, for the work of the tabernacle..... and they came both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought brooches, and ear-rings, and armlets, all jewels of gold" (xxxv. 21, 22). Other willing-hearted ones laid at the feet of Moses linen for curtains and vestments, acacia wood for boards and poles, and sufficient of every other kind of material for the construction of the Lord's new meeting-house.

Now, since the Israelites had come straight from the brickfields of Egypt, and had received nothing in the shape of wages for nearly a century, it would be in the highest degree improbable that they could be possessors of such articles as those mentioned. This fact was obvious even to the uncritical compiler of the sacred book, so to account for the possession of the gold and silver ornaments named he invented the story of "spoiling the Egyptians." This story we now proceed to examine.

When the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him directions concerning his dealings with Pharaoh and the departure of the Israelites, he is reported to have said:—

"And it shall come to pass that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians" (Exod. iii. 21, 22).

The word translated "ask" in this passage is rendered

"borrow" in the Authorized Version; but whichever word be used the meaning is the same, for the Israelites could not very well borrow without asking. And since they gave the Egyptians to understand that they were only going three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to their god Yahveh, the asking was practically an act of borrowing.

From the passage above quoted, it would seem that only the women were to do the "borrowing." They were to ask the loan of jewels and other articles of finery, including "raiment," from the Egyptian women who happened to be their neighbors, or who lived in the same house, it being, of course, understood that the ornaments and dresses were needed in order that the Israelitish ladies might appear in becoming attire at the festival about to be held in honor of Yahveh.

After the Lord had brought nine plagues upon Egypt, and had "hardened" Pharaoh's heart for the tenth time, he is stated to have given Moses fresh instructions concerning two matters—the "borrowing" from the Egyptians and the keeping of the first Passover. With regard to the first the Lord is reported to have said:—

"Speak now in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold" (Exod. xi. 2).

According to this passage, the men, as well as the women, were to "borrow" of their Egyptian neighbors—though what excuse the former could give for requiring jewels passes understanding. Had they asked for sheep or cattle for their pretended sacrifices, there might be some show of reason in their request; but for bondmen and brickmakers to ask for the loan of jewels is really too ridiculous for serious consideration.

As regards the paschal lamb which was to be eaten on the night preceding the Israelites' departure from Egypt—viz., that on which all the firstborn of the Egyptians were to be slain—the Lord, amongst other things, commanded:—

"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the Lord's passover..... And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop..... and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin, and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning" (Exod. xii. 11-22).

These regulations are said to have been carried out to the letter. When, therefore, at midnight the Lord "smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt," a great "cry" arose, "for there was not a house where there was not one dead"; whereupon Pharaoh sent in haste for Moses and Aaron, "and said, Rise up, get you forth. The Egyptians, also, "were urgent upon the people, to send them out of the land in haste"; so the Israelites, who had finished eating their roast lamb, and were fully equipped for their journey, commenced their march out of Egypt as soon as it was daylight. And this was the time—just as they were about to leave the country—when the "borrowing" is said to have taken place.

"And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they asked of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they spoiled the Egyptians. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth..... and they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt.....because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry" (Exod. xii. 34-39).

Thus were the Israelites provided with a sufficient quantity of the precious metals to contribute voluntary offerings of gold and silver for the construction of the tabernacle, as well as to pay half a shekel per man for being numbered. Hence it would appear that the materials for the Lord's holy "tent of meeting" were obtained by artifice and under false pretences. It is said, indeed, by commentators and apologists, in extenuation of the "borrowing," that the Israelites were entitled to some compensation for their many years of unpaid labor, and that the value of the articles which they took away with them was but a small part of what was owing to them. If such were the case, they should have done all the "borrowing" from the king, who alone had benefited by

their labour, and not from the Egyptian people, who had derived no kind of profit from their enforced servitude. This story of the "borrowing" is, however, but another instance of the Lord's lopsided method of administering justice; as in the case of David, the people, who had no hand in any wrongdoing, are made to suffer for sins said to have been committed by their king.

This iniquitous method of dealing out punishment is further illustrated by the senseless act of slaying all the firstborn of the Egyptians, "from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon," and "the firstborn of the maidservant that was behind the mill; and all the first-born of cattle" (Exod. xi. 5; xii. 29). Only an unreasoning savage can be conceived as acting in such a flagrantly unjust manner. If "the Lord" did not do so, he has but to thank his servant, the pious Jew who wrote the narrative, for thus blackening his character. At any rate, it is a satisfaction to know that the Lord's ways are not our ways.

But if the Hebrew deity spared the firstborn of the Israelites, he took good care to make that people pay for it. After this unwonted act of forbearance he claimed the first-born of both man and beast as his own. The first-born of the men were to be "redeemed" by the tribe of Levi; but all the firstborn of the Israelites' cattle (that is, the males) were to be given to him in sacrifice, and not for one year only, but year after year in perpetuity (Exod. xiii. 2, 11-15, etc.). This was interest with a vengeance!

The foregoing remarks are, of course, made upon the assumption that the stories of the slaying of the first-born and of the "borrowing" are true. It rests with those who believe, or say they believe, that the Jewish God did all the inhuman acts attributed to him in the Old Testament to clear the name of that deity. To achieve this task there is but one way—namely, to frankly admit that the narratives in which such actions are recorded are Jewish fabrications. There may, it is true, be difficulties attending such an admission, as, for instance, where the line is to be drawn which divides the "word of God" from undoubted Biblical fictions; but these are unavoidable.

As regards "the spoiling the Egyptians," the Bible account itself proves the story to be fictitious; for, as will be seen, the Israelites had no time to go a-borrowing. They had received strict orders "not to go out of the doors of their houses until the morning," and when they did go out it was to collect their cattle and trudge to Rameses, whence the departure was to take place, and where, in fact, the exodus had already commenced. And here we find that "the Lord," in commanding that "every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house," was under a misapprehension as to the mode of the sojourning in Egypt. He appears to have thought that the Israelites and Egyptians lived together, scattered throughout the whole country, and that in many cases they even occupied the same houses; but, according to the sacred narrative, this was not the case. Thus we read:—

"And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast.....Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail" (ix. 25, 26). "And there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.....but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (x. 22, 23).

To obey the Lord's command, the poor, overworked Israelites—the men with their kneading-troughs "bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders"; the women carrying their babies and cooking utensils; the children following at their heels—would have to quit the land of Goshen, and wend their weary way on foot to the various towns and villages where the Egyptians dwelt, before they could commence "borrowing." We have also to take into account the large flocks and herds which they are stated to have possessed, and leave a margin for the sick and infirm. It cannot be supposed that the few leading Egyptians who, with Pharaoh, are said to have urged Moses and Aaron to hasten the departure of the whole adult population of Egypt, all carrying with them "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment" to lend to the Hebrew slaves for their three days' journey

into the wilderness. When, further, it is borne in mind that every man, woman, and child of the Israelites, besides their sheep and cattle and household furniture, are all stated to have gone out of Egypt on the day which followed the slaying of the firstborn and the eating of the Passover (xii. 51), the borrowing from their Egyptian "neighbors" is seen to have been a simple impossibility. There cannot, then, be the smallest doubt as to the character of the narrative. The story of the "Spoiling the Egyptians," like that of the ten plagues, is a clumsy, and a very silly, Jewish fabrication. ABRACADABRA.

### An Old-World Secularist.

THE conflict between Religion and Science through the centuries is a subject of perennial interest. To understand accurately the nature of the struggle, it is sometimes necessary to attempt a comparison between the ancient and the modern phases of the combat. When we are brought face to face with the ancient opponents, they seem so unlike their present-day representatives that we hardly class them together. If we, however, look a little longer, we shall see that they are the same; and then we shall also realise the unlikeness, just as we first see fully what the years have done for a friend's face, when we connect it with what it once was years before.

In the old days science and religion, armed with simple weapons, fought a boyish battle. To-day the combatants, armed with modern weapons of precision, are nearing the final struggle. Take the case of Lucretius, the Roman poet. His mission and his attitude are entirely analogous to those of our living Freethinkers. Across the gulf of twenty centuries we see him as the champion of science, claiming that by it, and by it alone, we are to understand man's life and to explain the universe. He makes this claim, just as it is made to-day, against all religion. He might have been an old-world Gladstone, or deriding the insolence of a prehistoric Wilberforce. Talk of prophecy! This old Roman, with the true poet's prerogative of vision, saw farther than any belauded prophet of a superstitious creed. Not with vague and misty language, like the oracles of religion, but with great exactness, he anticipated Darwin, the survival of the fittest, the atomic theory, and many other points of the present-day teaching of science.

Let us examine this old-world Secularist's writings, which show so clearly how far in twenty centuries men's minds have travelled. Of the life of Lucretius we know little. He was a Roman of probably noble family; he died in the prime of life, about half a century before the alleged birth of Christ. His opponents ascribed his death to the effects of a maddening love-philtre, which, so far as we can trace, is the earliest form of the death-bed lie, so dearly loved by priests of all creeds. His fame rests on his immortal poem, "An Essay on the Nature of Things." He designed it to be a complete scientific explanation of the universe. Moreover, he does not do this as we should expect a poet to do it. His chief aim is to explain facts, and to show conclusively that his arguments are real. We may perhaps gain some notion of the general literary effect of this poetical masterpiece, the greatest didactic poem in any language, by conceiving Tennyson to have devoted his talents to versifying Herbert Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy.

Lucretius claimed that science was entitled to the whole domain of cosmological theory. The same claim holds good to-day as it did two thousand years ago. The rude, fierce vigor of the imagination of Lucretius will not be content with hazy generalisations, but will have it dragged close before us naked—as when, in discussing whether the universe be infinite, he bids us picture its bound, if any bound there be to it, and scornfully asks what will happen if we hurl a javelin into the space beyond. He puts us in mind of another great poet, Dante, who was all imagination, and yet wrote like Euclid.

Lucretius hated the priests and poured on them and

their systems the whole vocabulary of a poet's abhorrence.

Him not the tales of all the gods in heaven,  
Nor the heavens' lightnings, nor the menacing roar  
Of thunder daunted.

The way to steel oneself against the terrors of the priests is to find knowledge. Grasp the principles of things; learn by what laws the stars and the sun move, how all things live and grow—so teaches Lucretius.

For fear takes hold upon the human breast,  
When we see many things by Nature done,  
Whereof the ways and means are known to none.

Lucretius is not always on the defensive. He carries the war into the enemy's camp. Who that has read it can forget his immortal picture of the sacrifice of Iphigenia? We can feel the heart of Lucretius still throb with indignation as we read:—

She died—  
That so the ships the wished-for-wind might gain,  
And air puff out their canvas. Learn thou, then,  
To what damned deeds religion urges men.

His contempt for priests and their dupes is almost Christlike:—

O peoples miserable! O fools and blind!  
What night you cast o'er all the days of man!  
And in that night before you and behind  
What perils prowl! But you nor will nor can  
See that the treasure of a tranquil mind  
Is all that Nature pleads for, for this span,  
So that between our birth and grave we gain  
Some quiet pleasures, and a pause from pain.

"Men fear death as children do the dark," says Bacon. This, in common with many another fine saying of the moderns, was anticipated by Lucretius when he said: "Life is a struggle in the dark; and in the dark men are as children."

Death, to Lucretius, is "dreamless rest." He might almost have written Whitman's "Come lovely and soothing death." He tells us in a very fine passage:—

Thou not again shalt see thy dear home's door,  
Nor thy dear wife and children come to throw  
Their arms round thee, and ask for kisses more,  
And through thy heart make quiet comfort go:  
Out of thy hands hath slipped the precious store  
Thou hoardest for thine own, men say, and lo,  
All thou desired is gone! But never say  
All the desire as well hath passed away.

Lucretius was no timid Agnostic. He was not afraid to express his opinions positively:—

If a man holds that nothing can be known,  
He knows not whether he can know this even,  
Since he admits the things he knows are none.  
He stands with head on earth, and feet in heaven,  
And I decline to talk with such an one.

And so say all of us!

MIMNERMUS.

### Providence.

ALMOST the most horrible doctrine ever enunciated by theologians is, in my opinion, the attribution of our misfortunes to Providence. An all-wise power, all-merciful and omnipresent, enthroned somewhere in omnipotence, having power over man and beast, over earth and sky, on sea and land, able (if usually unwilling) to suspend all natural laws, seated above the firmament of heaven, beholding both the evil and the good—discerning, we may suppose, the former without much difficulty, and the latter by the aid of some spectroscopic at present not revealed to men of science—sees two trains approaching on one line, and yet does nothing to avert the catastrophe or save the victims. Withal, nothing consoles humanity for their misfortunes like the presence of this unseen power, which might do so much good, but which serenely contemplates so many evils.

I have often thought that, after all, there is but one idea at the bottom of all faiths, and that, no matter if the divinity be called Jehovah, Allah, Moloch, Dagon, or the Neo-Pauline Providence of the North Britons, the worshippers seem to esteem their deity in proportion as he disregards their welfare.

Some have maintained that the one common ground of all the sects was in the offertory; but more recent reflection has convinced me that the impossibility of Providence provides a spiritual, if unconscious, nexus which unites in one common bond Jews, Christians (whether Coptic, Abyssinian, Greek, or Roman), Mohammedans, Buddhists, the Church of England, with that of Scotland, and the multitudinous sects of Nonconformists, who, scattered over two hemispheres, yet hate one another with enough intensity to enable mankind to perceive that they have comprehended to the full the doctrines of the New Testament.

—CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM, *The Ipané*, pp. 188, 189.

### Acid Drops.

THE clergy patronise everything in time—that is to say, when it is plainly successful. We now find them actually patronising Shakespeare. Dr. Stubbs, the Dean of Ely, says the Church of England ought to have a new Calendar, and Shakespeare should be in it. The worthy Dean even thinks—at least he told a *Daily News* interviewer so—that if Shakespeare were living now he would probably have "startling views of the true function of the Anglican curate. Good God! We beg pardon—Holy Moses! Fancy the gigantic, indeed incommensurable, genius of Shakespeare troubling itself about curates! It must be pretty much on the same ground that God Almighty is said to care for sparrows.

The *Daily News* interviewer assumed that Shakespeare was "a staunch Catholic." Catholics have tried to prove him so. On the other hand, a recent book seeks to demonstrate that he was a Puritan, or at least that his father was—which is somehow assumed to be pretty much the same thing. Dr. Stubbs doesn't want the mighty bard to be ticketed as a Catholic, anyhow. "Steady, my friend," he exclaimed, "steady! How are you going to prove that Shakespeare was a staunch Roman Catholic? Certainly not from his writings, from the utterances of this or that or the other of his dramatis personæ. By such a method you might as readily prove him an atheist." Yes, Dr. Stubbs, and far more readily. The really great critics have all been struck with the absence of all religion from Shakespeare's genius. His dramas roll on to their catastrophes without the slightest regard to anything but the great principle of universal causation.

It is a curious thing that when Tennyson was dying he called for "the book." Those about him knew what he meant. They did not give him a Bible, they gave him Shakespeare; and he died with his fingers between the pages of *Imogen*—a play and a character that he dearly loved, and who does not that is fit to understand it? Moreover, a copy of Shakespeare is buried with Tennyson in Westminster Abbey. It was placed beside him in his coffin.

Nonconformists are working the Cromwell tercentenary for it is worth. They talk as though Cromwell belonged to them, forgetting that the Puritans did not want to separate Church and State, but to use both for their own ends. Nonconformity came in much later. The Puritans of Cromwell's time, including Richard Baxter and even Hugh Peters, held it to be the business of the State to provide religion for the people on the principle of an Established Church. The only quarrel then was about which party should have control of the Church livings.

The agitation against the Sunday edition of the *Telegraph* and *Mail* shows little sign of abating. The latest suggestion comes from the Rev. Price Hughes, who suggests that, in addition to dropping the week-day issues of those newspapers, the faithful shall do their utmost to induce tradesmen to refrain from advertising in them. Evidently the blood of the men of God is fairly up. They feel they are fighting for all that is dearest—namely, their own Sunday business.

The *Daily Telegraph* hits out at the denouncers of its Sunday edition. It sneers at their "narrow policy," "spurious agitation," and the "grey dulness" of those who wish most of them want to maintain. It also emphasises the hollowness of the "Sunday labor" objection. The *Mail* day newspaper, not the Sunday one, is produced on the Lord's Day. As a matter of fact, the *Telegraph* says, its Sunday edition "is produced on Saturday evening, and no single member of the staff, from the highest to the humblest, works more than six days out of seven."

Every man of sense ought easily to understand the real motive of the warmest objectors to Sunday newspapers. We are at a loss, therefore, to know why men like Mr. John Burns and Mr. Sydney Webb have rallied to the side of Sabbatarianism on this occasion. Have they mistaken means for influence, and hubbub for power? For their own sake we hope they will take a thought and mend.

Ah! Ah! Ah! It is really too funny for anything. A few months ago the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society was turned out of the Bristol-street Board School, where it had been holding very successful meetings—too successful meetings—on Sundays. The first charge brought against the Branch was that it had issued an offensive placard, announcing a lecture on the question, "Did God Make Man, or Did Man Make God?" This question was declared to be a flagrant insult to the Christians of Birmingham, and a shocking outrage on common decency. Eventually the School Board took the same view of the matter, and the Secularists were decided to be unfit to occupy any School Board building for the next twelve months.

Well now, we have just been looking over some old papers, and we find that an eminent Christian anticipated the Birmingham Secularists in the title of that infamously blasphemous lecture. On Sunday, April 12, 1896, Colonel Ingersoll delivered a lecture in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, to the members and friends of the "Church Militant"—which lecture is reprinted in England under the title of *The Coming Civilisation*. Three thousand people heard that lecture, and three times as many were turned away from the doors. According to the *Chicago Times-Herald*, the audience included most of the conspicuous men in the city. The *New York Herald* said it was "composed of the best element in Chicago, men predominating, and these representative of the business, professional, and literary life of Chicago." Of course the lecture caused a great stir, particularly as the Women's Christian Temperance Union had refused to let it be delivered in their Temple, where the "Church Militant" had been holding its meetings; and many answers were forthcoming from leading Christians.

One of these answers was by Dr. J. P. D. John, President of De Pauw University. This gentleman held a public meeting, and crowded his platform with representative Christians. And this was the title of his lecture—"Did Man Make God, or Did God Make Man?" It was just the same title as the one which caused such a rumpus at Birmingham, with merely this exception, that the more "offensive" clause was put first.

Dr. John's title gave no offence to the Christians of Chicago, nor do we believe that it would give offence to Christians in any other part of the world—providing the discourse that followed it was of a Christian character. It was really the "infidel" lecture, and not the "blasphemous" title, which gave rise to the Birmingham trouble. And the moral of it all is that Christians are the greatest hypocrites on the face of this earth.

Baroness Hirsch has left the bulk of her fortune to various charities. About eighteen millions have gone in this direction. It is the biggest instance of philanthropy in human history. The donor is reputed to have been burdened with very little theology.

When subscriptions were invited for the Khartoum College, four of the five men who headed the list were Jews. The wicked people who crucified Christ display, on the whole, more benevolence than those who worship him as a God. They have to pay poor rates, like the Christians, in England, but they look after their own poor in addition.

Sacramental wine is generally poor stuff. It is a species of port, for the color must suggest the Blood of Christ, without which there is no salvation. Champagne wouldn't do, nor Hock, nor Moselle, nor any other pale wine. Once the parsons used good, honest port, but this is an economical age—in useless things—and a cheap article has crept into the market. Fancy drinking port at thirteen shillings a dozen! The man who would venture it must expect the Lord to work a miracle to save him from sudden death. No doubt this danger led to the introduction of a special sacramental wine, which is grown God knows where—or, if you please, made from God knows what.

Apparently there is a fresh danger even in sacramental wine. Down at Blackburn there is a Holy Trinity Church, and its vicar, the Rev. Dr. Mossat, has been in the habit of purchasing imitation Blood of Christ for his congregation at a local wineshop. It doesn't appear to have done any particular injury to anyone, but the ultra-Protestants on the church vestry have discovered that the wineshop-keeper, with whom their vicar deals, is a Roman Catholic, and they protest against his continuing to supply the salvation fluid. Perhaps they believe that his heresy gets into the bottles through the pores of the corks, or even through the sealing wax—for heresy is known to be very penetrating and diffusive. At any rate, they call upon the vicar to deal with another tradesman. Which prompts us to echo the old cry, "How these Christians love one another!"

Colonel Roosevelt, Governor of New York, has signed a Bill passed by the State Legislature, prohibiting the kissing of the New Testament in the courts, on the ground that it assists in the spread of bacterial disease. This is a step in the right direction. But when will civilised nations see that swearing at all assists in the spread of lying and perjury? It sets up two standards of truth, and more than one must involve falsehood.

Our meek and humble Bishops seem to have a taste for marrying into aristocratic families. The Archbishop of Canterbury's wife is a first cousin of the Duke of Devonshire; the Archbishop of York's wife is a daughter of Lord Barrington; the Bishop of Peterborough's wife is a daughter of the Duke of Argyll; the Bishop of Southwell's wife is a daughter of the late Earl of Selborne; and now we have the Bishop of Stepney about to marry Lady Ulrica Duncombe,

the youngest daughter of the Earl of Feversham. This last right reverend father-in-God is famous for his peculiar love of "infidels."

Under the heading of "The Mother of Atheism," the *Christian World* draws attention to certain leaflets issued by the Protestant Press Agency, in which it is stated that Romanism is incapable of adapting itself to the scientific spirit. This may be true enough, but it is so because Romanism is real Christianity, with all its puerile superstitions as illustrated in the Bible. Protestantism gets rid of some of these superstitions by quietly ignoring them; in other words, to that extent it ceases to be Christianity.

These Protestant Press tracts go on to say that, in consequence of this want of adaptability in Catholicism, the Roman Catholic countries are lapsing into sheer Atheism. We wish this were true, but it isn't. What happens is this: the masses remain superstitious, but those who break away from the Romish Church rarely become Protestants; they rather become out-and-out Freethinkers. That is all.

The proportion of homicides to the population, as given by Lombroso, is as follows:—Italy, 96 per 100,000; Spain, 53; Portugal, 25; Hungary, 75; Austria, 25; France and Belgium, 18; Sweden and Norway, 13; Germany and England, 5. The last figure "speaks eloquently for Protestantism," says the Protestant tract-writer. But what a shallow, partisan philosophy is this! Spain and Portugal are both Catholic, yet the one stands at 53 and the other at only 25. Clearly, then, it is not Protestantism, but something else, that makes the difference. The disproportion between Hungary and Austria is still greater. Englishmen are a notoriously cool race, for evil as well as good. They don't commit as many bloody deeds as the more passionate races; on the other hand, they do a lot of thieving, which is a more deliberate crime.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing; and figures are useless, or worse, without a head to work them with. The Protestant tract-writer overlooked this.

"Guard your Sundays," cries the Bishop of Durham. He forgets to tell us for whom we are to guard them. Of course he means for the clergy. "Guard your Sundays" is the clerical way of telling us to maintain the sort of Sunday that pleases the Black Army. When we propose to use the day for ourselves, they bawl out "Sacrilège."

The Bishop of Durham says he believes—and perhaps he does believe—that "England owes her stability and greatness to the general observance of the Day of Rest and the study of Holy Scripture." Nonsense, your lordship, nonsense! How about England's breed of strong men, the only ones that can live in such a climate? How about England's island position, which gives her such command of the sea, and at the same time defends her from foreign aggression? How about England's metal and mineral resources? How about England's fine start in the race of modern industrialism? Really, even Bishops should think a little before they speak.

In the Free East Church of Forfar, on Sunday last, an elder who had not been formally deposed insisted on his right to take part in the Communion. The police were summoned, but they declined to interfere. Perhaps they thought it was a matter for the New Jerusalem constables to deal with. Finally the elder gave way, and allowed the Communicants to consume the body and blood of Christ without his assistance. We hope it agreed with them.

"How I love Great Britain!" exclaimed the Pope the other day to Lord Brampton, who used to be Sir Henry Hawkins. No doubt the Pope spoke the truth. He loves England as a boa constrictor loves its prey, and his exclamation is a part of the licking process. It is probable, however, that the intended victim in this case will refuse to be swallowed.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman, the Social Democrat leader—or, perhaps, we should say, distinguished comrade—hopes to be the first Socialist to speak in Westminster Abbey. Mr. Hyndman evidently reckons on a great longevity. But he is naturally sanguine.

We are glad to hear Mr. Hyndman saying that, if it came to sacerdotalism versus free thought, Socialists would have to fight side by side with anyone against the priests. We should be better pleased, though, if Mr. Hyndman recognised that it is *always* a case of sacerdotalism against free thought. Now and then the quarrel becomes acute, but it is always chronic; and we have an impression that those who wait for a crisis before they help free thought are not of very much use to it even then.

Socialists don't see, or they affect not to see, that sacerdotalism always goes one better than they do in the matter of legislation. While the Socialists go on prophesying the millennium to adults, the priests get hold of the young, and nip the Socialist little game in the bud. While they get

additional grants of £600,000 a year for their schools they can afford to smile at Mr. Hyndman's prophecies. And the wonder is that he doesn't see it.

The Baptists are not going to be behind the Wesleyans, at least in the matter of cash. They have just passed the following resolution:—"That a special fund be formed, to be called the Baptist Union Twentieth Century Fund, to raise at least a quarter of a million pounds from half a million Baptists!" This is explicit enough anyhow. The Baptist rank and file know precisely what they have to do.

Official statistics show that the plague has already carried off a quarter of a million people in India, and it shows no signs of abating. Good old "Providence"!

Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, the late Robert Louis Stevenson's step-son, declares in *Truth* that England and America are "cruelly and brutally in the wrong" in Samoa. He says that the essential cause of the present quarrel is religion. The London Missionary Society (Protestant) cannot tolerate the thought of a Catholic King. Mataafa has the people overwhelmingly behind him, although they are mostly Protestants; but he himself is of the wrong color, and Tanu is actually, though not nominally, the missionary candidate for the throne.

The Tory Government grant of another £600,000 a year to the so-called Voluntary schools has led to what every person of common sense expected. The voluntary subscriptions in aid of these schools, which was already but a small part of their annual cost, have considerably fallen off. Sir John Gorst told the House of Commons the other night that in the one year ending August, 1898, the diminution was no less than £77,927—being £46,961 in Church of England schools, £21,174 in Roman Catholic schools, £2,607 in Wesleyan schools, and £7,185 in British and other schools.

Why on earth should the friends of these Voluntary schools—that is to say, Denominational schools, mostly Church of England schools; why on earth, we ask, should they pay money out of their own pockets when the nation is so ready to settle the whole bill of costs? They keep control of the schools just the same, and that is all they care about.

The Rector's Rate is still levied upon the long-suffering inhabitants of Falmouth. Mr. Napier Henry, the artist, was summoned for £4 16s. due under what he called "this unjust, despotic, and oppressive" law. He was too ill to attend the court, but he sent a stinging letter to the Mayor, with a cheque for the amount and "four-and-six for your officials." Mr. Henry says it is a disgrace that the town should have to pay "an enormous salary" to a person who renders no service whatever in return except to the members of his own sect.

What on earth is the matter with Christian America, a land that vies with Christian England in running Missionary Societies for the conversion of the heathen? Quite recently a horrible tale of nigger lynching came from Georgia; a black man, accused but not tried, being soaked with kerosene and burnt alive, after unspeakable mutilations. From Virginia comes the report of the public whipping of a white girl at Manassas, stripped to the waist, and gazed at by a big crowd, for the crime of theft. Again, we ask, what is the matter with Christian America?

The *Daily News* refers to the "old gibe of the £40,000 spent in converting 'one Mohammedan girl of weak intellect,'" *apropos* of Mr. Carlton Dawe's new novel, *The Mandarin*, where a benevolent old missionary is introduced, who, after years of toil, confesses to "some dozen doubtful converts."

The Rev. T. G. Selby, the Wesleyan minister who a year or two ago created such indignation by his statement that the majority of congregations were not intellectual, has published a volume of sermons with the striking title, *The Unheeding God*. As Mr. Selby is a Christian, this is not blasphemy.

The Bishop of Salisbury is a wise man. He advises his clergy not to reply to letters in the Press, because (1) they never know where such correspondence may lead them; (2) they lose their freedom if they feel it necessary to reply to attacks on a cause which they hold dear; (3) if they leave a thing alone, it will soon be forgotten.

The Devil has escaped from the new Free Church Catechism, but has turned up in that wonderful work, *What would Jesus Do?* To the Rev. Archibald J. Brown belongs the honor of his discovery. Says Pastor Brown: "Directly I read the book I detected Satan disguised as an angel of light." The Rev. Brown characterises the book as "poison." This is because its teaching is not about "the bleeding Lamb."

A Mr. Grigsby wrote to the Watford Urban Council urging them to put into force an old Act to stop the sale of news-

papers on Sundays, including the *War Cry*. The Council instructed the Clerk to acknowledge the letter.

The Rev. Mr. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, as a correspondent informs us, lectured on Sunday evening in reply to our Peculiar People pamphlet. His meeting was held in a little "Bethel" in the Peckham-road, and thirty-nine persons were present, including our correspondent. Only one person offered opposition; he was a "Peculiar," and was howled down by the Holy Hooligans. Then came the collection, then a speaker was turned on to rail at the National Secular Society, and then came the usual hymn and prayer.

Dr. James Spurgeon, brother of the famous Charles, drew up his address as President of the Baptist Union, but the Lord apparently didn't approve it; at any rate, he didn't let the reverend gentleman deliver it, but called him "home" before the annual meeting.

William Simpson, in the *Conssett Chronicle*, claims that the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's story of the Converted Cobbler has been "verified." Mr. Hughes knows better. He has withdrawn the story from circulation, although it was designed to save immortal souls.

*Justice* prints a letter from G. Whittingham, of Hanley, on the West Ham question. He says he was sorry to see that Alderman Fulcher's motion was lost, and "surprised that the name of our comrade W. Thorne appeared as voting against it." While not wishing to harass "our comrade," he asks for some statement in regard to "our comrade's action." We don't suppose Mr. Will Thorne will reply. He knows very well that he cannot defend his vote on any ground of principle. Perhaps it will win him some Catholic and Protestant votes; but, on the other hand, why should Freethinkers vote for a man who is ready to deny them the elementary rights of citizenship whenever the Christians bark loud enough against them?

That eminent minister of religion, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who, we have been told, is entitled to be believed upon his word, even when he is contradicted, is travelling about the country as Wesleyan President for this year and scattering far and wide the rays of his sublime intellect. Preaching at Liverpool, before the Lord Mayor and a large congregation, according to the *Daily Post*, he said that most criminals drifted into prison through disobeying their parents. "Therefore, he said, 'if parents who desired one thing allowed their children to do another, they had much better cut their children's throats, and have done with them.'"

Let us hope Mr. Hughes was misreported. If he really said this, we can only wonder whether he has any children of his own, and how their mother appreciates his carving-knife-and-razor discipline.

### Prayer.

WHEN Christians on a hand-made idol gaze,  
They grieve that unto *it* the heathen prays.  
They long to wean him from his foolish ways,  
And teach him theirs.

Yet their own God heeds not or does not hear  
His myriad suppliants' voices ringing clear,  
Speaking the fatuous flattery born of fear  
They call their prayers.

One says beside the dead: "Thy will be done,  
Thou in Thy love hast called my precious one,  
Thou who for man didst slay Thine only Son—  
So all is well."

Another prays: "Lord, hear thy servant's cry;  
Throughout my life be Thy dear Presence nigh,  
And cast me not for all eternity  
In fires of hell."

In flattering this phantom of the mind,  
What joy, what peace of heart, do Christians find?  
Man's common sense says: "Leave this 'God' behind—  
The Bible, too."

Thousands to-day, from superstition freed,  
See that a murderer God they do not need;  
No heaven of His they crave—their heaven each deed  
Of good they do.

J. Young.

In one of the rural districts of Maine a conscientious Christian woman keeps a little store in her house. Happening in one Sunday, a neighbor asked the good lady if it were against her principles to sell him a stick of candy on that day. She replied: "I can't do it, but my husband will."—*Boston Globe*.

### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 30, Spinners' Hall, St. George's-road, Bolton: 11, "The Bible Up to Date"; 3, "What Would Jesus Do?" 6.30, "The Meaning of Death."

May 7 and 14, Athenæum Hall, London; 21, N.S.S. Conference, Birmingham.

### To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—We meant no reflection on your judgment. We think you acted quite rightly, and that what you did was likely to be beneficial. Our reference was rather to the un-wisdom of noticing the reverend gentleman's nonsense in the *Freethinker*. You see it was such insufferably dull nonsense. Your letter in the *Watford Observer* is well-written, and must do good.

JONAH.—See paragraph.

GORDELPHUS.—It is amusing to notice that Harmsworth Bros., who run the *Sunday Mail*, which the Christians condemn, also publish goody-goody things such as the *Sunday Companion* and *Sunday Stories*.

QUERIST.—The *Freethinker* and other Secular publications can be obtained at Mr. Rennolls', newsagent, 8 Compton-street, Plymouth.

C. E. BRAMMER.—We published the verses as a *Freethinker* tract several years ago. They are always coming back to us.

We have received the following for the Miss Emma Bradlaugh Fund:—S. H. Munns, £1 1s.; J. Umpleby, 5s.; A. Simson, 5s.; Bethnal Green Branch (collection at Mr. Cohen's lecture in Victoria Park), £1 5s.; Richard Green, 10s.; J. Hughes, £1 1s.

MISS EMMA BRADLAUGH FUND.—R. Forder acknowledges:—R. H. Side, 10s.; J. Martin, 5s.; W. H. Morrish, 10s.; H. Barron, 5s.; J. F. Hampson, 5s.; J. B. Jenkins, 2s. 6d.; G. Kemp, 2s.; W. Tayman and Wife, £1; R. G., 2s. 6d.; S. Soper, 5s.; A. G. Lye, 1s.; T. Murray, £1; C. Mascall, 5s.; W. Gilbert, 2s. 6d.; J. 1s. 6d.; W. Bell, 10s.; C. Mascall, 5s.; W. Gilbert, 2s. 6d.; J. Brodie, 2s. 6d.; W. P. Murray, 2s. 6d.; T. Wilmot, 2s.; J. Bawden, 2s.; H. J. Strong, 2s.; Collection at Bethnal Green Branch, £1 4s.; John Sumner, 10s. 6d.

JOHN YOUNG.—Received. Our old Comic Bible pictures are not now on sale. The blocks were destroyed or injured by fire years ago.

G. I. MACKENZIE.—Always pleased to hear from you.

RICHARD GREEN.—Very thoughtful of you. That is a matter which almost everybody overlooks—perhaps because it is so obvious.

ADMIRER OF THE "FREETHINKER."—We have read the paragraph you send us marked in the *Spectator*. It is useless for the friends of Vivisection to seek shelter behind a note of interrogation. Let them specify the scientific discovery which is owing to Vivisection. That they are bound to do first of all, in common honesty. Even then the question would remain whether it is justifiable to torture animals for such an advantage. Doing evil that good may come is not yet an accepted maxim in common morality.

J. UMPLERY.—Mr. Watts is writing you. Eighty-five is a great age. You are one of the handful of veterans left to our party.

JAMES NEATE.—See acknowledgment elsewhere. We hope your good wishes for the Miss Emma Bradlaugh Fund will be fully realised.

A. J. HOOPER.—See paragraph. Edward Truelove had sympathies with Positivism, and it is pleasant to see that Positivists do not forget him. We noticed Dr. Kaines, as well as Professor Beesly, at the funeral.

W. MUMBY.—Thanks. Allotted as desired. Receipts from both sides in due course.

E. S.—We know nothing of "spirit," and cannot therefore tell you anything.

HAROLD ELLIOT.—The sun was never darkened in a "mysterious" way, either in 1870, or at any other time.

The conclusion of Mr. Foote's criticism of Robert Buchanan's novel stands over till next week, in consequence of the pressure of other matter.

W. FOWLER.—Ingersoll's new lecture on *The Devil* should, as you say, have a very large circulation. Freethinkers should try to get it into the hands of their orthodox friends.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Times—Torch of Reason—Science Work—Boston Investigator—Public Opinion—Ethical World—Daily News—New Century—Animals' Friend—Two Worlds—Bath Herald—New York Truthseeker—Free Society—Isle of Man Times—West Ham Herald—Conssett Chronicle—Spectator—Progressive Thinker—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Blue Grass Blade—Justice—Pullen's Kent Argus.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

### Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE delivers three lectures to-day (April 30) in the Spinners' Hall, Bolton. It is a long time since he lectured there before. His subjects are up-to-date, and will doubtless attract good audiences.

We are always pleased to receive the *Boston Investigator*, which is the oldest, and one of the best, Freethought organs in America. One item in its April 8 issue, however, reads very funnily. It is headed, "Mr. Watts to Our Readers," and begins with the words, "I am here to lecture and debate." Mr. Watts sailed from New York on April 5, and most of the American Freethought papers will probably learn the fact from our columns. America is up to date in most things, but not in all.

We congratulate *Secular Thought* (Toronto). It is excluded from the Canadian mails. This is not profitable, but it is very complimentary. Persecution is generally a good testimonial.

The *Freethinker* question came up at the meeting which adopted Mr. Will Thorne as Parliamentary candidate for South West Ham. More than one delegate wished he would explain his (rattling) vote on that question. Another delegate said that "if a man sank principle on a small matter he was likely to do the same in other matters." All this and more appears in the *West Ham Herald*, though not a word of it is allowed to creep into the Metropolitan press.

Mr. Thomas Robertson, secretary of the Glasgow Branch, says he cannot speak too highly of Mr. Joseph McCabe's lectures. "Matters," he adds, "are flourishing in Glasgow. Our attendance at special lectures during the last three months has beaten the record. Three times we have had to turn people away from the doors on account of the hall being full."

Mr. Joseph McCabe pays his first lecturing visit to Tyne-side to-day, April 30, by lecturing in the Gateshead Co-operative Hall on behalf of the Newcastle Branch. Friends in that district are requested to note that refreshments may be had at the Park Restaurant, only about five minutes' walk from the Hall. We hope the local friends will rally in good numbers and give Mr. McCabe a hearty welcome.

The *People's Newspaper*, Rockhampton, Queensland—one of our exchanges, and a valued one—usually contains a literary article by "Cynicus." The last number to hand prints a long notice by this writer of Ingersoll's lecture on Shakespeare—a writer whom "Cynicus" thinks is likely to be read for some time to come, in spite of Mr. Bernard Shaw. "One of the world's greatest orators," the reviewer says, "becomes the worthy interpreter of the world's greatest poet." In conclusion, he notes that the lecture is published in England by Robert Forder, 28, Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., that it is "admirably printed on splendid paper," and that "all lovers of Shakespeare should at once write for a copy."

Dr. James Martineau, who is commonly called a Unitarian, but who is really a Theist, has reached a very advanced age. His ninety-fourth birthday was celebrated on April 21. By a curious printer's blunder the *Daily News*, in its leading article that day, called him "the greatest reader of religious thought in England." Of course it meant "leader," although the description will hardly be welcomed by the great bulk of Church and Nonconformist clergy. Dr. Martineau has been a liberalising influence, and has continued to be so in spite of Time, which makes most men conservative. His sister, the late Harriet Martineau, to whom he seems to us to have been something less than just, was an out-and-out Atheist.

"Edward Truelove, Publisher," was the headline of the following obituary in the *Daily News* of Saturday, April 23:—A somewhat stormy political and public life has just

come to a close. Edward Truelove, bookseller and publisher of "Freethought Works in Politics and Religion," died yesterday, in his ninetieth year, up to very near the close of which he was actively engaged in the vigorous dissemination of his principles. In early life, as a disciple of Robert Owen, the Socialist, he had a personal experience of the only attempt that was ever seriously made in England to put in practice the views of that prophet. This was at "Harmony Hall," in Hampshire. As the secretary of the old John-street Institution during the period of the Chartist movement, of which it was the headquarters, he had a wide experience of advanced movements—an experience which was continued up to the days of the agitations against the taxes on knowledge and the Reform League. Subsequently he threw in his lot with the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, with whose various public actions he was closely associated. Unlike him, however, he was not able to escape imprisonment for the publication of Malthusian pamphlets, and this he endured bravely and without a murmur. He had previously borne the brunt of a prosecution for the publication of a pamphlet directed against the political action of the Emperor Napoleon III.; but this, fortunately, was abortive. Mr. Edward Truelove may be said to have been a sturdy fighter in the ranks in the battles of lost causes and forlorn hopes, but his courage and endurance and absolute disinterestedness and self-sacrifice will always be remembered with appreciation by Englishmen of all shades of opinion.

An anti-clerical meeting of 3,000 persons was held at Corunna on Monday, and Reuter's telegram says that "violent discourses against the clergy were delivered." The speakers attributed the evils of Spain to the Jesuits and the monks. The meeting decided to found a League to oppose the machinations of the clergy against liberty.

Another anti-clerical meeting was held on Monday in a circus at Barcelona, under the presidency of Madame Angela Lopez. Reuter's telegram says there were more "violent speeches"; but we all know what that means. The representatives of the Prefect expostulated with several speakers, but were only jeered at for their pains. One orator bitterly attacked the Jesuits, and said the Philippines had been lost to Spain by the monks.

At the Church of Humanity, Lambs Conduit-street, on Sunday morning last, Dr. R. Congreve paid a fine tribute of respect and admiration to the life of the late Mr. Truelove, and mentioned how, many years ago, he used to assist the Positivists in getting rooms to meet in, even to lending his own room and helping them in many ways, although not himself a Positivist, as he thought Mr. Bradlaugh's method the most effective for progress.

The eighth Annual Meeting of the Humanitarian League was held at St. Martin's Town Hall on Tuesday afternoon (April 18th), and was followed in the evening by a largely attended conversazione of members and friends. The Report for 1898 shows a continued increase in the strength and activity of the League, which, in addition to its Central Committee, has now four special Departments dealing with the questions of Criminal Law and Prison Reform, Sports, Hamane Diet and Dress, and Lectures to Children. Copies of the Report, with other information, can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, 53 Chancery Lane, W.C.

### Sir Wilfrid Lawson's Latest.

WHEN Julius Cæsar landed here,  
He conquered men bemused with beer;  
When Norman William from his junk  
In triumph stepped—they still were drunk.  
For though we Britons "rule the waves,"  
To drink we ever have been slaves.  
Eight hundred years have passed away,  
And things are much the same to-day.  
By those who rightly understand,  
It's known that drink still rules the land.  
Heathen and Saxons, long ago,  
Were crushed before the mighty foe,  
Before King Drink now Christians fall;  
And "Bung" is easy lord of all!

### How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

## Richard Carlile.

(Continued from page 268.)

IN theological matters Carlile professed various shades of belief. Indeed, he graduated from Deism to Atheism insensibly. In his first controversy with Cobbett he avowed himself a believer in a great controlling power in nature; but not long afterwards he observed: "I may have said that changes observed in phenomena argue the existence of an active power in the universe, but I have again and again renounced the notion of that power being intelligent or designing." By that time he had reached the stage of thought of our great modern philosopher, Herbert Spencer, who declares that "the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable." After his imprisonment he boldly avowed himself an Atheist. He reached the climax of his Atheism, as Mr. Holyoake remarks, on the title-page to his tenth volume of the *Republican*, where he declared "There is no such God in existence as any man has preached; nor any kind of God"; and this declaration was so far carried out in detail as to exclude from the *Republican* the terms *God, nature, mind, soul, and spirit*, as words without prototypes.

Later in life Carlile degenerated into a kind of Swedenborgian mysticism. Not, indeed, that he discarded his Atheism; he was virtually an Atheist to the last; but he chose to veil it under a delusive nomenclature, and to employ to express his own Naturalism the very supernatural terms he had previously discarded. He professed to have discovered "that the names of the Old Testament, either apparently of persons or places, are not such names as the religious mistakes have constructed, but names of states of mind manifested in the human race, and that, in this sense, the Bible may be scientifically read as a treatise on spirit, soul, or mind, and not as a history of time, people, and place." In editing the *Christian Warrior* he professed himself a Christian, defining the appellation as "a man purged from error." His conduct scandalised his friends, who deplored his seeming departure from the old clear ways, and when he proceeded so far as to take out his diploma as a preacher their indignation and sorrow knew no bounds. Carlile, however, was not to be deterred from pursuing his own independent course; the same sturdy spirit which impelled him to resist the minions of power in former days induced him now to disregard the adverse representations and reproaches of his friends. And beneath his mystical phraseology there were undoubtedly concealed truths of vast importance. The following passage, for instance, is pregnant with meaning: "Science, thrown into the Church as a substitute for superstition in the education of the people, begins at once to regenerate the people, the institutions, and the throne. It is the substitution of the known for the unknown, the real for the unreal, the certain for the uncertain. Religion is the erroneous mind's chief direction. It must be corrected by and through the medium which it most respects. It rejects all other opposing conditions, and increases its tenacity for its errors. To reform religion by science is to regenerate fallen man, and to save a sinking country." In this passage he seems to be straining after some positive conception as substitutes for the old negative notions of Free-thought, and dimly to perceive that every system claiming human adherence and aiming at extensive permanent success must satisfy the natural emotions of the human heart, and direct them to some ultimate purpose capable of being apprehended and aspired to.

It is a mistake to suppose that Carlile ever really departed from the Atheism of his maturity. Thirteen days before his death he penned these words: "The enemy with whom I have to grapple is one with whom no peace can be made. Idolatry will not parley; superstition will not treat on covenant. They must be uprooted for public and individual safety." Neither is there any truth in the story of his recantation. He lost his power of speaking long before the near approach of death. The story is simply incredible, and could only have proceeded from the inventive charity of some over-zealous religionist.

"Carlile's habits," writes Mr. Holyoake, who can best speak with authority, "were marked by great abstemiousness. Seldom taking animal food, he refused wine when

offered a dozen at Dorchester Gaol, preferring good milk. He was morally as well as physically particular. In the rules of the Deistical Society he provided that only persons of good character should be eligible. 'It is important to you Republicans,' wrote he from Dorchester Gaol, 'that, however humble the advocates of your principles may be, they should exhibit a clear, moral character to the world.' He never sold a copy of any work which he would hesitate to read to his children. He expressed a hope, when friars were popular, that friars would be put down all over the country. He was one of the first thus to oppose what the pious then approved." His large charity also was conspicuous. He would assist even a struggling and unfortunate foe, and stand by his friends to the last. When George Jacob Holyoake was tried at Gloucester, Carlile sat by his side for fourteen hours, and handed him notes for his guidance. After Mr. Holyoake's conviction, Carlile brought him the first provisions with his own hand. As a speaker, he was direct and perspicuous. Generally he was not eloquent, but occasionally he was as eloquent as the best speakers. Bold as a lion in fight, he quailed before a public audience, and only after long practice was he able to conquer his diffidence. At first his friends believed he never would make a speaker, but by dint of patient cultivation he contrived to falsify their unfavorable predictions.

A few words will be necessary respecting Carlile's domestic relations, and the publication of his *Every Woman's Book*. A tract issued by the Bible Institute charges him with having "exhibited his harlot on the public platform, during the lifetime of his wife," and with "having made proposals concerning the thinning of the population, the most beastly that ever polluted paper." These charges, preferred before a public ignorant of Carlile's life and character, are calculated to mislead, as probably the malignant libeller who penned the tract well knew; but they are entirely groundless, and fall away before an impartial examination. Already we have alluded to the disparity of temper between Carlile and his wife. "Their difference in education, in age, in intellectual aspiration, and their opponency in disposition, early converted their union into an intimacy tolerated rather than prized." In 1819 their separation was arranged, but it did not actually take place till 1832, because until then an independent provision for Mrs. Carlile could not be made. They parted in 1832 with mutual consent, and, besides the separate maintenance for the wife, she took with her all the household furniture and £100 worth of books. Afterwards Carlile allied himself with a lady by whom he had two children, and doubtless would readily have married her if the holy laws of England had permitted him to do so by granting a divorce from his first wife. But the law refused, and still refuses, to grant a divorce on any ground except adultery; and Carlile very properly observed his own counsel without a legal sanction. He was not the man to desert his wife, but when they mutually desired separation he was just the man to burst through the cobwebs of ecclesiastico-political restraint, and even to defy worldly conventionalities. Herein he has the approval of one of the sternest moralists of any age or country—John Milton; who in his tractate on divorce censures the legislators who impose marriage bonds upon mutually rebellious souls, and pronounces the union unholy and desecrate when unsanctified by love. The legislation of England is not yet level with this teaching, which is two centuries old. The reader will now be in a position to estimate aright the accusation urged against Carlile by Christian scribes who are everlastingly maligning our sacred dead in order to bolster up their own creed.

The other charge concerning "beastly proposals" is equally groundless. It refers to Carlile's *Every Woman's Book*, which is a plain statement of his opinions on "the all-important question of population." He believed in Malthus's law of population, which, as Professor Huxley observes, has never been and never will be disproved; and he was anxious to induce his fellow men to adopt means to prevent the bringing of redundant children into life, so as to obviate the slaughter of them afterwards by nature's positive checks on numerical increase. Possessing the courage of his convictions, he set forth his views in print, and described preventive human checks on the growth of families. His intent was

humane and pure, and, even if he were erroneous, he could not deserve to be stigmatised as immoral or beastly. He had as much moral right to publish his book as Dr. Acton has to publish a work on Prostitution, or Dr. Bull his Hints to Mothers. Dr. Acton and Dr. Bull are justified by the fact of their being physical physicians; and Richard Carlile was justified by being a moral physician. He had earned the right, by his courage on behalf of righteous causes, to address the public on any question he chose.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## Genius and Christianity.

THE *New Ireland Review*, published in Dublin, is one of the very few magazines now printed in Ireland with any pretence to serious or critical writing. It is more or less religious and Catholic, most of its contributors are of that faith, many of them are priests, and it seems to aim at being the organ of literary or "learned" Catholicism. Its articles, it must be said, are very often written with considerable ability, and display a wide, if somewhat antiquated, reading.

It is, then, an interesting sign of the times that in recent numbers of the *New Ireland Review* there have appeared various articles criticising and attacking the Rationalist position generally. And in one of these—under the heading "From the Study Chair"—the argument as to the connection between "genius" and Christianity is raised in a very interesting and a very naive way; and, perhaps, a word of comment may not be out of place on this phase of the question.

Incidentally the article, which is editorial and consists of a review of some recent book on Pascal and Kant by a Father Morris, contains what one might call slipshod writing—and something worse. For instance, the writer refers to "the materialistic school" [meaning evidently thereby the evolutionary school, since the authors he names almost all repudiate "materialism" so-called] "represented by Mr. Herbert Spencer, the Tyndalls, the Huxleys, the Maudsleys.....to whom Darwinism was a gospel, and John Stuart Mill a prophet of light," and adds: "The day of this school has been brief, and it is now near its close." Now this statement is manifestly more than careless; it is not true. Evolution, so far from being discredited, has simply been one of the most remarkable philosophic triumphs of the century. The writer vaguely says that no philosopher of repute now accepts it. Who was the philosopher, then, who demolished it? Can it be Lord Salisbury—or perchance the Duke of Argyll? The facts, of course, are that it would be difficult to mention a scientist of repute who now wholly rejects evolution. Even Catholic scientists like Professor Mivart, who only the other day wrote a eulogy of Huxley, accept it with some reservations. Of scientists less afflicted with inherited prejudices it is, at this time of day, unnecessary to speak. Not, however, with scientists only is evolution accepted. Every up-to-date Anglican or Nonconformist minister now adopts the evolutionary view, and professes, or is understood to profess, to reconcile this adoption with his theological creed. Quite recently it was reported that the Italian Roman Catholic Bishop of Cremona, Monsignor Bonomelli, had published a book entitled *Let us Follow Reason*, advocating that Church dogma should be "harmonised" with the Darwinian explanation.\* I merely mention these as current phenomena, which anyone who watches the progress of modern thought can multiply for himself.

One is entitled, of course, to disagree with, or to deplore, all this. One may regret the spread of the belief in evolution, or the spread of anything else; one is not entitled to state untruths. And the facts I have instanced are so much matters of common observation that the writer who denies them can only rely on the gross ignorance of his readers to credit his denial. And, in passing, one may point to this as a sample of the ethical status of some of the aggressions on Rationalism.

\* See the Rome correspondent of the *London Daily Chronicle*, July 2, 1898.

## I.

Now, however, for the main point which I wish to criticise. The writer in the *New Ireland Review* contrasts—after the book he is reviewing—Pascal with Kant, by way of showing that Pascal was mentally “superior to the German in power of genius”—whatever exactly that may mean. And he goes on, after outlining Father Morris’s case, to sum up as follows, and the conclusion is interesting:—

“The argument is an old one, but not the less effective for that. Genius, as represented in Pascal, or as it was in Dante, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Newton, Leibnitz, Johnson, or Burke, is on the side of Christianity: plodding thought, laboriously feeling its way through the intricacies of abstractions and analysis, is sometimes on the side of Rationalism.”\*

Really, this is so rich, and so humorous, that it seems questionable whether it might not be left to merely stand alone. But, in order to draw out its full humor, let us set humor aside, and examine the passage in all seriousness. At the first blush it must be remarked that the whole thing seems perilously like a roundabout and unconscious way of saying that people who jump at conclusions are on the side of Christianity, whilst those who slowly and laboriously analyse what they are asked to believe are on the side of Rationalism. In the second place, it is necessary to say in strict truth that the orthodoxy of some of the personages cited is open to very serious challenge. Shakespeare’s orthodoxy is more than questionable, whilst Leibnitz’s name is mentioned by Father O’Riordan in a later number of the *New Ireland Review* itself in a fashion which implies that Leibnitz was on the downgrade of heterodoxy too.† Let all this pass, however; let us grant, for the purpose of the argument, that all the names cited were those of Christians. And if the argument is then complete, the formula for constructing it is equally plain. You take a number of eminent men on your side, you enumerate them, declare them to be all geniuses off-hand, and then contrast them with your opponents *en masse*. Thus, say, in politics I am a Unionist; then the argument runs:—Genius in history and statesmanship as represented in Mr. Lecky, John Bright, Balfour, Chamberlain, and Lord Salisbury is on the side of the Union; mere chronic discontent and “professional agitation” (be vague and “lump” the opposition) is sometimes on the side of Home Rule. If, of course, you are a Home Ruler, you simply alter the names and the phrases. The geniuses will take care of themselves.

## II.

Of course no Rationalist, or man of sense of any kind, would deny greatness to the men named by the *New Ireland Review*; their work is an honored inheritance of the whole human race. But, in truth, are there no great men who in theological matters held views at variance with theirs? If Milton, say, was a genius, had Shelley and Swinburne—and let us throw in Morris and Whitman—not a spark between them all? And on what grounds other than those of mere question-begging partisanship is Newton classed as a genius, and Darwin not? In history the two greatest historians in English, I suppose—Hume and Gibbon—were both sceptics; how much of orthodoxy is there in Mr. Lecky, or was there in Froude? In the highest fiction George Eliot was not a Christian, George Meredith is not a Christian, and I doubt if Thomas Hardy would claim the title.

But enough of names—and I have not gone outside writers in English. Surely it is mere trickery to pick out, arbitrarily, individuals who happen to be on your side and call them geniuses, whilst denying the title to equally eminent people who are against you. Only Christian apologists argue in that scrupulous fashion.

## III.

The fact is, that the more truthful and correct way of putting the statement would run something like this:—Shelley, Voltaire, Hume, Swinburne, Diderot, John Morley, Mill, Matthew Arnold, Spencer, Bain, Bruno, Huxley, and Comte (I name at random, even as the *New Ireland Review*)—minds which abandoned old beliefs when they could not be maintained in the face

of new evidence—are on the side of Rationalism; mere conservative types of mind, taking what they find around them without question, are on the side of Christianity.

And, after all, I think that is dangerously like the truth. For what do the names cited on the side of Christianity generally prove? These people were “born” Christians (as the phrase goes); they found Christianity all about them; many of them—most of them—never questioned or investigated its credentials, and they died Christians. Such people, had they been born in Turkey, would be—nay, *when* they are born in Turkey *are*—Mohammedans. Probably you would find an even larger percentage of eminent Turks to be Mohammedan, than a similar number, say, of eminent Frenchmen to be Christian. There is really nothing astonishing in the fact to the ordinary reflecting mind. It is only the “genius” of supernaturalism that finds an inexplicable confirmation in facts which are open to the most natural explanation. For it is not to everyone that questions of theology present the same interest—

which, indeed, is *something* to be grateful for. Many, even of the highest types of mind in some fields of energy and thought, never find themselves troubled at all with theological issues. If their families and surroundings are Methodist, they go down to their graves uncomplaining Methodists; if they are Catholic, they go down to their graves Catholics.

The names I have cited on the other hand, almost without exception, were “born” Christians, were some of them devout Christians, and spent, very many of them, years of their lives in conscientious examination and reflection, and finally rejected Christianity, and in many cases suffered (Bruno was murdered for his rejection of it) for their opinion. And surely—I put it as a matter of common sense—if we are going to bandy names and men, then the evidence of one man who examined and rejected outweighs the merely negative evidence of a dozen men who never examined it at all.

## IV.

But the main thought that rises to my mind on reading such an article as that I have criticised—and nearly all the similar articles that appear in such magazines—is one of the extent to which the Christian case has declined. And that is the chief consideration I should like to drive home. Here is a doctrine declared to be of divine origin, alleged to be absolutely essential to the eternal happiness of mankind, a doctrine beside which the weightiest earthly considerations that can be entertained are but petty trifles, a doctrine compared with which the overthrow of empires or of nations is as nothing, a doctrine which is said to be the Living Word of the Omnipotent Creator of the Universe—and it is recommended to our attention on the ground that Milton thought it was true! Verily one is led to ask: Does the ordinary Christian apologist ever, for a moment, realise what he is supposed to be defending? Surely if he did, the inherent absurdity of the very necessity for defence at all would overwhelm him.

Why, if this doctrine were what it professes to be—the teaching of the Author of the Universe absolutely essential to the everlasting welfare of men—it ought to be sun-clear, noon-clear; it ought to be such that every living human being should perceive its inherent truth; it ought to be such that only imbeciles could possibly fail to realise it—nay, even imbeciles ought to be able to somehow feel its importance—if its importance be as great as is claimed. And yet a professed adherent of this doctrine is not apparently conscious of any absurdity or incongruity in advocating it on the ground, amongst others, that many eminent men reared from childhood in the belief that it was true *did not in manhood reject it!*

For that is all the names practically prove. They are not the names of men reared as non-Christians who accepted Christianity after examination, but merely names of men who, trained from childhood as Christians, did not afterwards give it up.

## V.

As for the humor of the passage, it consists in this: The *New Ireland Review*, as I have mentioned, is a Catholic review. And yet of the nine names cited by it as Christian geniuses, only two were Catholics. Actually out of eight or nine names of representative Christians

\* *New Ireland Review*, July, 1898, p. 310.

† *Ibid*, August, 1898, p. 322.

which spring to the mind of a presumably Catholic writer, reviewing a Catholic book in a Catholic magazine, the great majority "rejected" Catholicism as much as it is insinuated they rejected Rationalism. Certainly, if the writer has demonstrated that "genius" is on the side of Christianity, he has equally demonstrated that it is not on the side of Catholicism. One begins to suspect that the logic of the writer was tainted with genius.

That logic would now seem to be accurately paraphrased thus: "Here is a belief without which you cannot be saved, the Word, as I tell you, of Eternal Truth [let us have capitals], per custom, the Law, as given by the Almighty Ruler of Heaven and Earth—and I suggest to you that you should accept it, amongst other reasons, on the ground, not exactly that some eminent men thought it true, but on the ground that they held a garbled form of it, acceptance of which I must tell you candidly is, in my view, hardly better, if any, than rejection altogether!"

Such is the contradictory and inconsequential nonsense which passes for Christian dialectic after nineteen centuries of Christianity. FREDERICK RYAN.

### Book Chat.

How many readers know the author of the following oft-quoted lines?—

We live in deeds, not words; in thoughts, not breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart-throbs; he most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.

The author of those lines is Philip James Bailey, whose *Festus*, in which they occur, caused a good deal of sensation during the years immediately following its publication in 1839. Tennyson praised it highly, not as a whole, but for its fine passages. Mr. Bailey has just entered upon his eighty-fourth year, and is the oldest of our living poets. He resides at Nottingham.

The keynote of *Festus* was its Universalism. It taught that every soul, however degraded or polluted, would ultimately be gathered home to God. In other words, that Good would eventually triumph in its war against Evil, and not retire from a drawn battle, as the popular theology teaches.

According to the *Daily News*, Mr. Bailey has lived ever since 1839, and revised and revised *Festus* without writing another single poem of note. This is a verdict from which we dissent. There are good things in Mr. Bailey's smaller volumes, notably *The Age: A Satire*. We printed some striking lines from it in the *Freethinker* a few months ago. They were reproduced in other Freethought journals, whose editors had probably never seen the book, for it has been out of print for a great many years, and is remarkably scarce.

Mrs. Braddon's forthcoming novel will bear the title of *The Infidel*. We hope that the veteran novelist will not emulate that other well-known fictionist, the author of *The Atheist Shoemaker*.

We hear that Mr. S. H. Sime, the well-known artist, is about to republish in book form the very clever series of "supernatural" cartoons he contributed to *Pick-me-Up*, the *Idler*, and the *Butterfly*. We shall be pleased to see these delightful pictorial blasphemies in their new dress.

Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, Bedford-street, Strand, now publish a complete unexpurgated edition of Walt Whitman's *Poems* at 2s. nett.

### Correspondence.

#### MR. WALDRON'S DEFENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR.—In your issue of the *Freethinker* for February 26 you state that Mr. Waldron had been answering "Mr. Foote's lecture on the Bible at New Brompton. Mr. Waldron did not hear the lecture, so his task was easy." Now, sir, I claim the same freedom claimed by yourself in a reply to a correspondent in the issue of the *Freethinker* for April 2, where you state: "We relied, as we were entitled to, upon the report in the *West Ham Herald*—which report we were not aware that Mr. Triggs had corrected." I reply, I relied on a report in the *Chatham News*, etc.

In last week's issue your correspondent, Mr. Thompson, states that I am scurrilous, which statement you seemingly heartily endorse. Now, may I be allowed to state in what my scurrility consisted—viz., in answering a very lengthy report of your lecture in the *Chatham News* of March 25, in which you are reported to have said, on the same platform, that the attitude of "Christians to Freethinkers was, that they were reckless scoundrels and blackguards." "He would not trust a single one of them, as Christians, to Freethinkers." "His advice was to always disbelieve a Christian when he talked of a Freethinker." My scurrility consisted in proving, on the same platform, from Freethought writings that not only did Christians speak against Freethinkers, but that the Freethinkers were divided one against the other, and that some of the hardest things ever said against some of the leaders of the Movement, and also the strongest language of denunciation of certain Freethought organs, had been used by eminent Freethinkers. Are these liars also?

Your correspondent states I did not deal with principles. This is absolutely false, as I can prove from my notes, and also by the testimony of competent witnesses. What Mr. Thompson should have said, if he wished to be fair, was that I asked them to deal with my criticism of Freethought philosophy, etc., but in vain. I had, at least, the courage to tell them in their own hall that, having the opportunity to reply, they wasted the time in dealing only with one small part of the lecture, which part was devoted to a reply to your statement that "Freethought had introduced monogamy," which statement I think I disproved both by appeal to history and to Freethought writings. The lecture was not on the Secular Society, but on "The Ignorance of Freethought Teaching," asked for by request; and if my sermon was a bad one, blame the text.

Mr. Thompson says he will absent himself from my lectures. This is not new, but will be consistent with his line of conduct for the past eighteen months. I have found the people who call loudest for discussion conspicuous by their absence from the open platform. A. J. WALDRON.

[Mr. Waldron's letter might almost be left without a word of comment, so plainly does it exhibit his gentlemanly notions of controversy. We may observe, however, that relying on a brief newspaper report for the name of a speaker, and relying upon it as an absolutely accurate account of all he said, are two very different things. We may also observe that Mr. Waldron only furnishes another demonstration of the truth of Mr. Foote's statement that, while Christians may be very good to each other, they can never, or hardly ever, be trusted in regard to "infidels." Mr. Foote did not say it of all Christians, but of the majority of them, that their attitude towards Freethinkers was blackguardly. Mr. Waldron appears to have long ago qualified for a front place amongst the majority. One might even think that he aimed at filling the vacancy caused by the retirement of Walton Powell.—EDITOR.]

### SOCIALISM AND SACERDOTALISM.

A Lecture by Mr. Hyndman.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR.—Mr. Hyndman delivered a masterly address on the above subject at Holborn Town Hall on Sunday last, but his powerful oration was a strong condemnation of the folly and injustice of the Socialists towards the Secularist party for some years past, although, when the question to that effect was put, Mr. Hyndman would not admit it, and made a lame excuse for the position taken up in the matter. At bottom, the S. D. F. people are republican and anti-theological; but they have carefully kept these sentiments in the background to avoid giving offence to an infinitesimal number of the clergy who pretend to Socialism, while the great bulk of the black band are acting against them. Mr. Hyndman's whole lecture was entirely a reproduction of the arguments of the Secular Party, that if you would improve material conditions you must first, and above all things, emancipate the mind. I congratulate Mr. Hyndman's tardy advocacy of common sense. I cannot but think, however, that the position he has taken up will cause him some difficulties with his own followers, although every Secularist has long seen that Socialists and all lovers of liberty would be driven into the position taken up by Mr. Hyndman.

I trust that not merely in this matter, but in many others, it marks a new departure in the Socialist camp, by which, of course, I mean the S. D. F. camp (for Fabianism is a hollow sham, and the dwindling Fabian society counts for nothing), and that good sense will be the order of the day in future.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

If you wish to reflect credit upon your parents, accomplish more than they did, solve problems that they could not understand, and build better than they knew. To sacrifice your manhood upon the grave of your father is an honor to neither. Why should a son, who has examined a subject, throw away his reason and adopt the views of his mother? Is not such a course dishonorable to both?—R. G. INGERSOLL.

## 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.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "A Freethinker's View of the Church Crisis."  
 BATTERSEA BRANCH: Members' meeting on May 1, at 8, at 12 Randall-street, Bridge-road, Battersea.  
 BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Dowsett and Wilmer's Comedy-Drama Co. in "Runaway Wives."  
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 16 New Church-road): Every Saturday, at 7, Debating Class. Sunday, at 7.30, An Evening with Mr. B. Hyatt.  
 EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, W. Sanders, "John Ruskin as Social Reformer."  
 SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "Mr. Kipling as a Poet."  
 WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Leslie Stephen, "The Vitality of Superstition."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mr. Ramsey.  
 BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15, W. Heaford, "The Unrealities of Religion."  
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Is Christianity the Safe Side?"  
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones.  
 FINSBURY PARK (near Bandstand): 3.15, A lecture.  
 HAMPSTEAD HEATH (Jack Straw's Castle): 3.15, W. Ramsey.  
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, S. E. Easton; 3.30, Mr. Pepperno, "Did Joshua Write the Book Attributed to Him?" May 2, at 8, R. P. Edwards, "What would Jesus Do?" May 5, at 8, R. P. Edwards, "The Logic of Secularism."  
 KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, W. Heaford.  
 WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): April 11, at 9, General Members' Meeting.  
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen.  
 THE TRIANGLE (Salmon Lane, Limehouse): 11.30, S. Jones.  
 STRATFORD (The Grove): 11.30, A lecture.  
 S. L. E. S. (Peckham Rye): Mr. Spiller, "God and the Ethical Movement."  
 VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.  
 WESTMINSTER (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Logic of Secularism."

### COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): H. Percy Ward—3, "Is Man a Rising Animal or a Fallen Angel?" 7, "The Sins of Jesus."  
 BOLTON (Spinner's Hall, St. George's-road): G. W. Foote—11, "The Bible Up to Date"; 3, "What would Jesus Do"; 6.30, "The Meaning of Death."  
 GATESHEAD (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road): J. McCabe—11, "The High Church Movement"; 3, "The Failure of Religious Philosophy"; 7, "From Rome to Rationalism."  
 GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, A. G. Nostik, "A Defence of Imperialism."  
 GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row). Thursdays, at 8.30, Elocution Class. Sunday, at 7, Mr. Sterry, "Men After God's Own Heart."  
 HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, No. 2 Room): 7, C. Hilditch, "Zolaism."  
 LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, A lecture.  
 LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): For lecture see *Liverpool Daily Post* of Saturday next.  
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, L. Small, "The Resurrection."  
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Vaccination, a Danger and a Crime."  
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, "The Chemistry of Foods."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—April 30, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum. May 3, Mile End Waste; 7 and 14, Manchester; 21, Birmingham Conference.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—May 7, m., Clerkenwell, a., Victoria Park; 14, a. and e., Brockwell Park; 21, m., Mile End; e., Victoria Park; e., Stratford. 28, a., Hampstead Heath. June 4, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammer-smith; 18, a. and e., Brockwell Park; 25, m., Battersea.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—May 7, Birmingham.

R. P. EDWARDS, 52 Bramley-road, Notting-hill.—April 30, m., Pimlico. May 7, m., Hyde Park; a., Hampstead Heath; e., Hammersmith; 14, m., Ridley-road; a. and e., Peckham Rye; 21, m., Limehouse; e., Mile End; 28, m., Pimlico; e., Edmonton.

E. PACK, 10 Henstridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood.—April 30, m., Limehouse; a., Regent's Park. May 7, m., Mile End; e., Edmonton; 14, m., Hyde Park; a., Hampstead Heath; e., Kilburn; 21, m., Station-road, Camberwell; a., Brockwell Park; e., Peckham Rye; 28, m., Battersea Park; a., Regent's Park.

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