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PRICE TWOPENCE.

The Palace of Peace.

THE other day I was reading two pathetic stories from South Africa. One was of an English soldier, who wrote a letter to his wife, and placed it in his bosom until he could post it; then he had to go into an engagement, and a bullet went through that letter and through his heart. The other was of an old Boer, who was wounded with his son, the latter fatally. All night long they lay under a waggon, the father holding his son's hand with one of his own, and with the other hand stroking the young fellow's face. Not a word was uttered, and the son died under his father's eyes. At daybreak the ambulance came round for the wounded. They took the dead son's hand out of the father's grasp, and the grey-bearded veteran gave a groan and turned his face to the ground. Such is war, and such it ever must be. It is one long tragedy beneath the shouting and the glory. Let us hope, therefore, that this South African struggle will soon be ended, and that a wise and just settlement, if such be possible, will bring a permanent peace to that distracted country.

It is pleasant to turn from South Africa to France. That country has been distracted too. It was torn by the Dreyfus agitation, which did not close ideally, although bringing relief to a supreme and innocent sufferer. It was pushed almost to the verge of civil war by the intrigues of priests and generals. But it has passed through the storm and peril into quiet and safe waters—at least for a time. The whole nation insists on a truce of parties during the period of the Exhibition. That mighty and amazing spectacle is to attract a multitude of visitors from all parts of the globe. Paris will be the great world's rendezvous during the last summer of the nineteenth century. People will come, not only from east, west, north, and south, but from all the other twenty-eight points of the compass. They will admire the Queen of the Cities, and they will probably go home again with a due appreciation of French brains, courtesy, and *bonhomie*. And this will all help forward the cause of peace, progress, and human brotherhood.

Yes, the Exhibition is a Palace of Peace. Longfellow, in his lines on Springfield Arsenal, imagined the sounds that would be heard if a great supernatural hand struck all the keys and strings of that demonic orchestra. And he added:—

Were half the power that fills the world with terror,
Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,
Given to redeem the human mind from error,
There were no need of arsenals or forts:
The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!
And every nation that should lift again
Its hand against a brother, on its forehead
Should wear for evermore the curse of Cain!

Everything about the Paris Exhibition, however, speaks of peace, of industrial development, of international commerce, of world-wide and manifold intercourse between different races, and of the growing

unification of mankind. The conquests of science, the achievements of art, and the general advance of civilisation, will all be splendidly illustrated. Above all, perhaps, there will be the tremendous gain of bringing so many myriads of people together from every continent, and from the far-off isles of the sea, to rub shoulders with each other, to become more or less mutually acquainted, and to learn how our common humanity transcends the separating lines of governments and nationalities, and even the graver divisions of speech, faith, and custom. This is the process which is slowly, but surely, preparing the way for the great future, when the world will (in one sense) be every man's country, and to do good will be every man's religion.

It is easy enough for cynics to sneer at this new Palace of Peace, and perhaps their sneers will serve as a corrective to a too facile optimism. The Exhibition will certainly not inaugurate the millennium. Men of sense, indeed, know very well that the millennium will never really exist except in our aspirations; for advance as we may, the horizon ever advances too, and hope will beckon us on to further discoveries and accomplishments. The moment men were satisfied, they would begin to retrograde; and if they are not driven forward by necessity, they must be lured onward by desire. Thinking people understand this well enough. They do not expect the immediate advent of political and social salvation. Nevertheless, they gain fresh reassurance from such efforts and reunions as this Paris Exhibition; and even now it may be doubted whether the peace of Europe will be broken again by a purely European quarrel, whatever may result from the collision of Powers in the distant settlements and partitions of the globe. This war in South Africa will probably tend in the long run to the maintenance of peace in Europe. It has already shown what a terribly costly thing war has become, both in lives and in money; what a tremendous power science has put into the hands of men fighting a defensive battle, and what terrible havoc may be wrought on bridges, railways, etc., by cheap modern explosives. This is all very shocking, of course; but the more shocking it is, the less likely are governments to place nations at the mercy of such monstrous terrors.

It is a sign of the times that the opening speech at the Paris Exhibition fell to the lot of a Socialist minister. M. Millerand sang the praises of Labor as the great emancipator and redeemer. The time is past for thinking labor a curse. Too much of it is so, for it is then slavery. But labor in itself is the most salutary thing in the world. Guided by science, it is the creator of civilisation. Yes, and a still loftier note was struck by President Loubet. Genius and Labor provide the material basis of civilisation, but they are still inferior to Justice and Kindness. This was remarked by the political and social head of the French nation. It is true, and some will even call it a truism. But there is something novel in its being emphasised on such an occasion. Yes, Galileo, the world does move, in more senses than one.

G. W. FOOTE.

Theories of Immortality.

RECENTLY I pointed out in these columns that the theory of immortality formed the foundation of Christianity. I also indicated the weakness of such a basis, showing that it lacked sufficient cohesion to properly support any reasonable faith. I now propose to further examine the nature of the Christian teaching in reference to a future life. We hear much from professed Christians as to the consolation they derive from their belief in immortality. Even supposing this is so, it does not prove the truth of that which they believe. If it did, upon the same principle the Secularist and the Atheist could prove the truth of their "isms." But to properly substantiate any view something more than emotional gratification is required. I can quite understand that those who really and sincerely believe in *an* immortality may experience comfort therefrom. I say "an" immortality because there are so many conflicting views entertained as to the nature of a future life that it depends entirely upon what that view is whether or not it can actually afford any legitimate consolation. To me it seems incredible that any sane person can really derive true happiness from the orthodox Christian's belief in man's ultimate state of existence. For be it remembered that, if the faith of the New Testament furnishes its believers with hopes of heaven to buoy them up, it also gives them the dread of hell to cast them down. In my opinion, the one is as certain as the other. As soon as a child begins to lisp at its mother's knee, its young mind is impressed with the notion that there is a "heaven to gain and a hell to avoid." As the child grows to maturity, this notion is strengthened by false education and religious discipline.

The study of the various beliefs professed by different races as to what will constitute their future home shows, to my mind, that such beliefs are simply the result of uncultivated imagination, and not the outcome of calm reasoning. Persons have invariably pictured their heaven in accordance with the creeds and customs amidst which they have been trained. Thus we find that the Indian thinks that his heaven will be an "everlasting hunting-ground." The African supposes a heaven to be a locality where he can have plenty of food, a comfortable home, and a happy circle of friends. The Asiatic entertains the pleasant idea that heaven is to be remarkable for the presence of young ladies. The Christian's heaven, we are told, is the abode of "the souls of those who had been slain." It is also a kind of receptacle for all sorts of characters, including criminals and oppressors, men who were considered too corrupt to live on earth, but were regarded as proper candidates for heaven. If the New Testament be true, the brave, the noble, and the patriotic are oftentimes excluded from the portals of the celestial city. The passports required for admission there are faith, submission, and contentment. Men who have resisted the tyrant, who have struggled for liberty against the powers that be, who have won freedom of thought, are not always deemed worthy of the crown of glory. A permanent sojourn in a place which rejects the purest and best of our race cannot be desired by any but moral invalids and intellectual mendicants. The secular teaching is that, if we are to have an immortality, it ought to be one in which we can mingle with the noblest of the earth, for the anticipation of it would fill our minds with delight, and would afford us the assurance that, in quitting this stage of life, it would only be an exchange for one purer and loftier. But, pleasing as this ideal may be, consolatory as it would undoubtedly prove, it is useless to forget that our present knowledge teaches us that such hopes are only poetical, such anticipations lie only in the imagination. We therefore sternly face the truth, and, as some of us cannot believe in a future life, we seek to realise the worth of the one we have by striving to correct its many errors. And, in so doing, we shall deserve the best of all rewards—the consciousness that while here on earth we are working with sincerity and fidelity to secure that heaven of humanity, the comfort, happiness, and welfare of the human family.

The general opinion prevailing in this country to-day amongst theologians appears to be that immortality begins as soon as death transpires. It is said that

people who die believing in the Christian faith have the immediate advantage of participating in bliss and recompense—bliss because in their new home "the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master"; and recompense because the sufferings and evils of this life will then be fully compensated for. Personally, I should prefer to experience the happiness and compensation upon this side of the grave. But, of course, God's ways are not always our ways, and it is fortunate for us that they are not. Sir John Herschel, in writing upon the question of a future life, argued that the testimony of reason must fall short of those truths which it is the object of revelation to make known, and that we should encourage, rather than repress, "everything that can offer a prospect of a hope beyond the present obscure and unsatisfactory state." But is not this "unsatisfactory state" the production of the Christian's God? If so, the question to be answered is, Why is it so? Further, why should it be necessary for us to die to secure that which ought to be at our command in life? Sir John, however, added a sentence that qualifies all he had previously said upon this subject. He wrote: "The character of the true philosopher is to hope all things not unreasonable." To this most sensible people will heartily subscribe. But the Christian notion of immortality is decidedly *unreasonable*, and, therefore, it is not reasonable to have any hope in the matter. Besides, it does not follow that because we hope for anything we shall obtain it, any more than, as I have already mentioned, to believe in a faith makes it true.

Sir Humphry Davy writes of the dull, heavy, and cold teachings of the Materialists and the Physiologists. To get rid of the impressions of the dissecting room, he tells us that he went out to the green fields, where, he says, "I saw in all the powers of matter the instruments of the Deity.... There, in my own mind, I felt connected with new sensations and indefinite hopes—a thirst for immortality; the great men of other ages and of distant nations appeared to me to be still living around me, and even in the fancied movements of the heroes I saw, as it were, the decrees of the indestructibility of mind. These feelings, although generally considered as practical, I think, offer a sound philosophical argument in favor of the immortality of the soul." Here is another instance that men who are eminent in one field of thought can be mere tyros when dealing with other subjects. Philosophy means an explanation of things. But where does Sir Humphry Day's "sound philosophical argument" give any explanation of immortality? The memory of the great men of the past may be pleasant to dwell upon, but how do such recollections prove that man is immortal? To recall the achievements of the great minds which have adorned the world affords us no other assurance than the immutability of genius (not of persons), and that has to be kept alive by succeeding generations. Granting to the full all that this "philosophical argument" is supposed to prove, it is no more than that the mighty dead exist only in the memory of the living.

Chambers's *Cyclopædia* produces an argument from Bishop Butler, founded on natural history in favor of the immutability of the soul, which is described as "one of the most conclusive pieces of reasoning in the language." Here it is: "His argument for a future life, from the changes which the human body undergoes at birth and at different stages of maturity, and from the instances of the same law of nature, in the change of worms into butterflies, and birds and insects bursting the shell, and entering into a new world, furnished with new powers, is one of the most conclusive pieces of reasoning in the language." Now, what does this prove? Nothing, so far as the immortality of individuals is concerned. There is no analogy between the changes referred to and the theory of the continuity of life after death. All the changes that we know of in the organic kingdom have taken place upon the earth, whereas the condition which believers in a future life contend for is to be in some far-off land of shadows occupied by what are termed "disembodied spirits." The case of the caterpillar is frequently given as an illustration of changes from a lower to a higher state of existence. But the caterpillar becomes transformed into the

butterfly before our eyes; we can see it in both conditions, and can observe the process of change going on. The butterfly is an improvement upon the caterpillar in point of organisation, but in every other respect they are both similar. Both are material, and each is liable to destruction and decay. The soul, however, that is supposed to be evolved from the human form at death is said to be immaterial and immortal, and, therefore, totally unlike that material organisation from which it has escaped. The change is not observed. The body dies, and the elements of which it was composed pass into other forms—this is all that we see and all that we know. Beyond this everything is mere conjecture and vague speculation.

It may be desirable here to explain what, in my opinion, the terms "matter" and "spirit" (or soul) signify, and how far, and in what way, they have any relation to human conduct. When I affirm an existence I mean an entity—that is, something that can be cognised by the senses. Whatever I am incapable of cognising is to me non-existent. If attributes only are affirmed, they must belong to some entities, without which they are to me inconceivable; for, in the absence of entities, I can have no conception of attributes. It may be said that this position affirms that we cannot form a conception of anything apart from matter and force. It certainly does affirm this, which is precisely what is insisted upon, for, whatever the nature of the subject thought of may be, no proposition can be logically entertained unless the terms employed are capable of being defined and understood.

It is necessary to emphasise this particular point, because every conception of our minds implies not only a form of thought, but the idea of something thought of. When we formulate a thought, it may be said that we, at the same time, define it—that is, we lay down a boundary, for to think a thing is to limit it. If a man owns an estate, it must be separated in some manner from all other estates, or he would be unable to identify his own from those belonging to others. This consideration lies at the foundation of all clear reasoning, and, however elementary it may appear to superior minds, it cannot be dispensed with when we are forming a judgment concerning any proposition as to alleged existences in the universe. If "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy," they will never, in my opinion, be apprehended in any other way than by the one here indicated. The conclusion, therefore, at which I am compelled to arrive is, that of what is termed matter we have a certain amount of knowledge, but of what is called "soul" or "spirit" we have none. This life is to us self-evident; but, while a future existence may be possible, there is no evidence to justify us in positively asserting its reality.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Apocalypse.

A WORK by Dr. Benson, "sometime" Archbishop of Canterbury, has just been published. It is an *Introductory Study of the Revelation of St. John the Divine; being a Presentment of the Structure of the Book and the Fundamental Principles of its Interpretation*. Miss Benson has prepared the work for the press, and, though it is in a somewhat unfinished state, the late Archbishop being engaged on it close up to the time of his sudden death, it contains the major part of his matured speculations on the Apocalypse, and is as near completeness as probably it was ever likely to be.

The first thought that strikes one is, How on earth could anybody waste so much time and attention on an insane composition like St. John's Revelation? Truly there is no accounting for taste, and especially for religious literary predilections. The fact, however, is there—Dr. Benson found a peculiar fascination in the wonderful dreams of this John of Patmos, and prostituted a keen and cultured intellect in the daily effort to elucidate—or, rather, to work some intelligible meaning into—what is obviously unintelligible, and to make sense of what is little else than a nightmare or the phantasmagoria of a sick man's disordered brain. In this vain and unprofitable pursuit Dr. Benson followed many

other students of the Apocalypse, and will in turn be followed by many another who fancies he may fall into possession of the coveted key.

In the rhapsodically-described visions of this wind-up of the Bible there is supposed to be hidden a wealth of knowledge in regard to the future, temporal as well as spiritual. The theme is supposed to cover the whole history of the world, and the kingdom of God from the time of writing up to and beyond the day of judgment, with a glimpse of heaven and those "trinklements" described by Oliver Wendell Holmes as "the golden crowns which we do not expect or want to wear on our heads, and the golden harps which we do not want or expect to hold in our hands."

People with astounding perseverance set themselves to worm out the interpretation, and either evolve some marvellous prophecies, usually falsified by events if the fulfilment is injudiciously fixed too close at hand, or they qualify themselves for a madhouse or the editorship of some such paper as the *Christian Herald*. Very few seem able to come to any agreement as to what it all means. How should they, when it is nothing but a farrago of hopeless nonsense?

The common-sense description of the Apocalypse is, in the common parlance, "Rats!" writ large on every page. The composition is a fitting finale to a collection of writings full of absolute bosh. If anyone doubts this description of St. John's dreams, let him sit down and read that section of "God's Holy Word." It is a comparatively short piece of writing—not a tenth part so long as Dr. Benson's labored explanation of it. It is called "Revelation." But that is a palpable misnomer. So far from "revealing," it is admittedly the most obscure book in the whole scriptures. In the way of clearness, it is a long distance behind Zadkiel and Old Moore, though it is equally a fraud, and finds its admirers amongst the same class of people. Many a volume, pamphlet, and tract has been written in the attempt to unravel its mysteries. No student seems to succeed—or, if he does so to his own satisfaction, it is not to the satisfaction of other students, who view all attempts but their own with undisguised impatience and dissent. Exactly the same kind of competitive skill has been evoked by John of Patmos as that which led to the "missing word" craze. There is no money prize, but perhaps a stronger inducement in the desire, which all of us have more or less, to penetrate the future, to peer beyond that dark veil which mockingly baulks our vision.

"I, John, who also am your brother," begins his misnamed Revelation in a remarkably promising manner. He locates himself at Patmos, and says he was "in the spirit" on the Lord's Day. This sounds significant, but perhaps he intended us to regard him as being for the time a "God-intoxicated" man. He was evidently under the influence of something or somebody by the incoherences that follow. He heard behind him "a great voice as of a trumpet." Hearing, or supposing that one hears, mysterious voices is a frequent symptom of mental derangement. Then the writer drags us into the midst of seven candlesticks, and introduces us to some extraordinary personage "girt about the paps with a golden girdle." Immediately afterwards come pell-mell all the other wonderful things seen by John "in the spirit" which one really hasn't the patience to enumerate.

The door which "opened in heaven" discloses a beautiful scene of celestial bliss. After reading the description of the throne with the rainbow about it, and the personage seated thereon, and looking like a jasper and a sardine stone, and the four-and-twenty elders sitting about, one is tempted, by its sheer unattractiveness, to inquire for "the other place," which can hardly be worse. There, at any rate, they don't occupy themselves day and night singing "Holy! Holy! Holy!" Of course, it is all symbolical, mystical, parabolical, figurative, merely visionary, and so on; but saying that does not make it any the less ridiculous.

One always remembers John of Patmos by his four truly remarkable beasts, who are endowed with eyes within. The Rev. Robert Taylor, otherwise the "Devil's Chaplain," used to say that this was a marvellous providential arrangement, for, if the poor animals should have *cholera morbus*, they had only to cast their inside eyes on their tripes to see what was the matter with them! Then there is a great deal about the scarlet

whore of Babylon, which description, in these superfine days, is toned down in religious circles to the "scarlet woman," and is supposed to have prefigured the Church of Rome. "The horns," we are told, "shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and eat her flesh and burn her fire." A pretty sort of a picture, whatever it may mean.

John of Patmos had a good conceit of himself, or rather of his visions, whilst "in the spirit." He says:—

"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city.....Even so, Amen."

He had an objection to be sub-edited. His MS. was too precious to be expanded or cut down. Yet none but bibliolaters would feel the faintest desire to make any addition, and if a Rationalist essayed the task of reducing it to anything like sense he would probably find, in the end, that he had nearly whittled it all away. In this connection it is difficult to know which to admire more—the conceit of John the dreamer and scribbler, or the accommodating nature of God, who allows it to be said that he will visit the direst penalties on any Goth or Vandal that mauls about the prophetic manuscript of his friend. Nevertheless, with all his threats, John has not preserved himself from being mistranslated, as Dr. Benson shows.

John is very hard on unbelievers. He had it revealed to him that the "fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." We ought, of course, to tremble at this denunciation; but somehow we don't. Perhaps it is because we think that John "in the spirit" was a fool, and didn't know what he was writing about.

But is it really worth while saying anything more about the Revelation of St. John the Divine? One is only led on to the subject by regret that Dr. Benson should have wasted upon it so much of his time and attention which could easily have been better employed. Reviewing Dr. Benson's "study," one religious print says: "The sublimity of the Apocalypse is finely brought out. The amazing grandeur of the vision of the New Jerusalem has perhaps never been so clearly apprehended and so vividly portrayed."

Amazing grandeur, indeed! Amazing fiddlesticks!

FRANCIS NEALE.

Martineau's "Study of Religion."*

(Continued from page 229.)

III.—DESIGN IN NATURE.

HAVING justified, to his own satisfaction, the belief in God by an appeal to the constitution of the human mind, Dr. Martineau next turns to a consideration of the structure of the world, in order to see if "the world and its inhabitants look as if they were the production of will." "Anyone," says his expositor, Mr. Armstrong, "who is seeking to bring about some end selects his means with discriminate care; combines together simultaneously means that will help one another; and takes up in succession means that are steps (gradations) towards the end in view." All these three marks of intelligence Dr. Martineau claims to find on examining nature; it remains to be seen how the claim is made good.

While admitting the genuineness of the principle of natural selection—a term that might well have been eschewed in favor of the more accurate one, survival of the fittest—Dr. Martineau argues that it is inconceivable that a new variety of animal should be perpetuated as the result of the accumulation of minute differences

* A reader of my previous articles criticising Dr. Martineau has been kind enough to send me for perusal the *Study of Religion*. I am, therefore, able to deal with it direct, instead of through Mr. Armstrong's summary. The book does not improve on a second acquaintance, although it has made my *critique* longer than I had intended.

extending over many generations, unless there is some selective intelligence directing the whole process. The variations would be too minute at their origin to give their possessor any protection against the multitudes of animals of a normal type, unless some intelligence played the same part in nature that a breeder plays in the case of domesticated animals. The variations would occur, but would not be perpetuated.

The argument is not by any means a new one, and the reasoning is far from conclusive. It assumes (1) that all variations are of a most minute character, and (2) that all desirable variations are perpetuated. Neither of these things is so, as a matter of fact. Darwin himself has given numerous instances where the variations have been anything but microscopical. The single case of the merino ram lamb,* born with a larger head, longer neck, narrower chest, and long, smooth, straight, silky wool—characteristics that were transmitted to its descendants—is ample proof of the extent of the variations that occur spontaneously. And what takes place under domestication we may well assume to take place in a state of nature. If it is argued that nevertheless many variations are minute, and these will be swamped by the overwhelmingly larger number of normal animals, the answer is that no evolutionist ever contended that all variations were perpetuated, but that in the struggle for existence it was some variation that determined which should survive. And in this case it is to be noted that Dr. Martineau is placing a difficulty properly belonging to the Theist to the credit of the evolutionist. It is for him to explain why a favorable variation—a variation, that is, in the direction of a higher type of life—should ever be crushed out if there is a selective intelligence regulating the whole process.

And why, on the hypothesis of theism, should there be selection at all? Selection we can understand and appreciate on the part of a human being. He has to do the best he can in the world in which he finds himself, and manipulate natural forces to the best of his ability. But surely such conditions do not, and cannot, apply to the creator of the universe. Dr. Martineau would not argue seriously that God deliberately created a number of forces—some good, some bad—in order to show his wisdom by blending them into a perfect pattern in the end. If "perfection" was God's aim, as Dr. Martineau believes, why not produce perfection at once? It cannot be thought that animal forms are better because the existing types have been slowly elaborated, instead of being created as they are from the first. The horse gains nothing in value because it is descended from a small four-toed animal the size of a fox. And man gains nothing from the fact that his existing structure and habits represent the results of gradual growth from animal beginnings. Let any Theist who believes in evolution set himself to seriously face the problem, "What purpose has been served by making a perfect or semi-perfect animal as the result of countless generations of conflict that could not have been as well served by making it perfect at once?" and he will find there is a question his theism utterly fails to answer. The issue is plain. If God aimed at perfection, why not have produced it right off? If he could only produce it as the result of slowly operating natural forces, the believer pictures God as endowing natural forces with the ability to produce a result he was powerless to produce himself.

Dr. Martineau's next argument against a purely mechanical view of the world—and it is to be noted that his arguments are mainly concerned with the weaknesses of other positions rather than with the strength of his own—is that the chances are almost infinity to one against our present universe resulting from natural forces undirected by divine intelligence. His lengthy argument on this head is best summarised by a corresponding argument by Professor Flint. "Grant," says Flint, "all the atoms of matter to be eternal, grant all the properties and forces which, with the smallest degree of plausibility, can be claimed for them to be eternal and immutable, and it is still beyond all expression improbable that these atoms, with these forces, if unarranged, uncombined, unutilised by a presiding mind, would give rise to anything entitled to

* Given in *Animals, Plants under Domestication*, i., 100.

be called a universe. It is millions to one that they would never produce the simplest of the regular arrangements which we comprehend under the designation of course of nature."*

But if we once grant the existence of atoms and their properties, the present constitution of the universe becomes a mathematical necessity. It is undeniable that, if it were possible to calculate the exact nature and extent of all the forces in the world to-day, the condition of the world at any subsequent period would be as much a matter of mathematical calculation as the position of any of the heavenly bodies a century hence. Further, the expression that "the odds are millions to one" against the present arrangements resulting from the play of atoms can only mean that it would appear millions to one to an onlooker unacquainted with the properties of the atoms and unable to follow their evolution in time. To a savage the odds would appear equally great against a cloud of fire-mist becoming a solid globe with its numerous kinds of inorganic material. To an educated mind the result is a necessary product of the potential properties of the nebulae.

Moreover, if the odds are millions to one against the present arrangement resulting, the odds are equally great against any conceivable arrangement; and, as the odds are as great against any, there is no special force in using it against any one in particular. And there is this much further to be said against those who marvel at this "fair and orderly universe" being produced as the result of purely unconscious forces. Our ideas of beauty and order are not independent of the universe; they are its products, the result of our relation to our surroundings. Granted a different world, with man subject to proportionate modifications, and our ideas of the beautiful would be vastly different. In a world where the laws of light were different, and curves were non-existent, straight lines would be the only figures conceivable. Given a different structure of the eye, and certain pleasing colors would be either offensive or non-existent. Already it is found that certain colors that have an irritant effect on people of unsound mind have an opposite different influence on minds of a normal type. The whole structure of man, mental and physical, is the expression of existing cosmical arrangements, and to argue that because the universe is "fair and orderly" to us, therefore there is intelligence regulating it, is palpably absurd. Man's sense of beauty and of order is created by the universe, and, whatever cosmical structure existed, the result would be practically the same.†

Dr. Martineau's proofs of intelligence in nature from the presence of "combination" and "gradation" are instructive illustrations of a thoroughly unscientific method. From the fact that a variation in one part of the animal organism is often accompanied by variations in other parts—the correlation of growth—Dr. Martineau draws the conclusion that here again we have proof of a directive intelligence inducing a desirable variation in the first instance, and afterwards modifying various parts of the organism to get from the new variation the greatest amount of good. Now, the answer to such a position as this is at least threefold. First, any change in any part of the organism—merely because it is an organism—is bound to affect other parts to some extent. Stronger jaws in an animal are bound to effect some modification in the portion of the skull into which they fit, in the muscles that move them, in the portion of the vertebrae that support the head, and in the muscles that move the head from side to side. The same reasoning will apply to any portion of the body selected. Secondly, Dr. Martineau's argument implies that all correlated variations are useful. This is far from being the case. Darwin notes that blue eyes and deafness usually run together in cats, and hairless dogs usually have imperfect teeth. It will hardly be contended that deafness in a cat or bad teeth in a dog are unmistakable evidences of a combining intelligence. And, finally, a great many variations occur and die out

* *Theism*, pp. 107-8.

† I have not thought it worth while to discuss Dr. Martineau's specific instances of selective intelligence in nature; they are all on the same level as the clergyman's proof of God's wisdom being shown by death coming at the end of life instead of in the middle of it.

simply because they are not correlated with the corresponding variations necessary to render them thoroughly efficient. This last fact alone puts Dr. Martineau's theory out of court.

But the combination, we are told, does not stop with an arrangement of organs in one animal; there is the same plan in the general arrangement of the animal world. The whole reason for the existence of plants is to subserve animal life.* And in the animal world "the law is undeniable that.....it is the inferior life that supports the superior."† Thus, at last, we reach the familiar theistic conclusion that, because man eats the sheep, therefore the sheep was made for man's sustenance—a wise provision from the man's point of view; not quite such an attractive one from that of the sheep. Would not a tiger be justified in assuming in the same manner that man's *raison d'être* was to be eaten? The logic on one side is as good as that on the other. One aspect of the matter is more pleasing than another to Dr. Martineau, because he is a man; if he were a tiger, his verdict would be different.

"It is the inferior life that supports the superior." What, then, of the host of parasites that prey upon man? What of the parasites that prey upon animals generally? Is that a case of inferior life supporting the superior or the reverse? One must needs be a Theist of an optimistic temper to so blindly run counter to facts. Dr. Martineau laughs at the French cleric who said that God made fleas with a fondness for disporting themselves on white linen so that they might the more easily be killed. Is his own theory of the reason why the animal world exists any different to that of the one he ridicules? He asks, too, of those that point to the blemishes in nature, by what right we judge the world from "a purely humanistic point of view"?‡ Well, what else is he doing right through his two volumes? Is not the theory that plant life is subservient to animal life, and animal life subservient to human life, judging the world from "a purely humanistic point of view"? It is, as usual, the Theist who commences extolling the wisdom of God because the world was made for the benefit of man, and then, when someone suggests that there are many difficulties in the way of such a theory, loftily cries out that we have no right to judge the world from the point of view of our convenience. Let us, then, by all means, cease to do so—and, at the same time, banish the argumentative portion of *A Study of Religion* as useless or misleading. C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Misplaced Faith.

The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* says the following is a new story about Colonel Ingersoll, and as genuine as the usual run of them —

When Ingersoll was a young man he went into a short order restaurant in Peoria and called for an egg.

"You are an Agnostic, I think?" said the waiter, who was a college student in the winter, and had just associated himself with the restaurant business.

"Your habit of thinking has not betrayed you this time; I am," replied Ingersoll.

"Then you do not have faith in the integrity of this egg?" quoth the waiter.

"I have no faith in its int-egg-riety," replied Bob. "I have no faith in anything. I believe only in what I see or in what is proved to me."

"I have faith in the egg," said the student, and he regarded the Colonel with sad eyes. "My faith tells me that it contains a yolk."

"My doubt admits nothing of the kind," said the Agnostic. So the student broke the egg, and lo! it contained a chicken.

But the fact is the Agnostic took an unfair advantage of the student.

He had eaten at that restaurant before.

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

* *Study of Religion*, i., p. 297.

† *Study*, i., p. 297.

‡ *Study*, i., p. 332.

Acid Drops.

DR. WASHINGTON SULLIVAN, the Ethical Religionist, has been discoursing on *Hamlet*. According to the *Daily News* report, he does not seem to have thrown any new light upon the play. He took the hackneyed view of a man of irresolute nature having a burden of action laid upon him which he could not bear. But is there not, after all, a great deal of truth in Mr. Swinburne's remark that, if *Hamlet* was a long time making up his mind, he had more mind than most men to make up? In the same way, when Dr. Sullivan points out (not originally) the irony of a man doubting whether there is a future life after an interview with a being from the undiscovered land, does he not overlook the perfectly sane intellectual scrupulousness of *Hamlet*, who sees the possibility of his father's apparition being produced by the Devil to "damn" him—that is, to lure him on to an act of unjustifiable homicide; in other words, murder? Shakespeare does not represent *Hamlet* as irresolute, but as noble-natured and subtle-minded; one who must have *proofs* before proceeding to commit an irrevocable act of punishment upon a suspected murderer. Where his course is clear, where the intellect opposes no further scruples, *Hamlet* is swift and decisive enough; in fact, it almost looks as though Shakespeare had interposed the ship episode with a view to illustrating this very aspect of *Hamlet's* character.

Dr. Sullivan talks, too, about "the eternal moral law," as though it were taught in *Hamlet*. Well, we fail to follow him. Certainly the murderer gets his deserts at the finish, but it takes a tremendous reach of circumstances, including the interposition of the dead, to bring about that result; and the guilty king, in going to his doom, drags down five other persons with him; namely, the Queen, Ophelia, Polonius, Laertes, and *Hamlet*. No doubt this is true enough to the course of nature, but it is not a "moral law," and the word "eternal" does not alter that fact.

"Without Christian principle," the Bishop of London says, "a man is but an opportunist." Everybody knows, of course, that there is nothing of the opportunist about the Bishop of London. His ten thousand a year has not been won in that way. His lordship never crooked the pregnant hinges of his knees where thrift might follow fawning. Quite another reason than this led him to preach a sermon at the Chapel Royal on the attempted assassination of the Prince of Wales. Yes, his lordship's character is one of the loftiest. But we are unable to pay the same compliment to his understanding. "Let us thank God," he said, "that while he had permitted the attempt to be made, he had saved the innocent person from the bullet of the assassin." Surely, if a man acted like the Bishop's deity, we should call his performance a farce or a pantomime.

Even the *Daily News* refers to the Prince of Wales as escaping "by the mercy of Providence." Then it goes on to say that the assassin's revolver was a cheap one, and two of the cartridges missed fire. Would Providence have been as merciful if Sipido had used a first-class revolver?

Zuleika Cavalier, otherwise "Madame Zuleika," of 113 New Bond-street, has been fined £25 and £10 costs for fortune-telling. An account book found on the premises showed that the net profit of her business for 1898 was £399, and for 1899 £947 19s. Some people and their money are soon parted.

Before the Duke of Norfolk went out to the war in South Africa he took his sword to Cardinal Vaughan, who solemnly blessed it in front of the altar. If this blessing is supposed to have any effect on the sword or its wearer, it seems to us that Cardinal Vaughan is in the same business as Madame Zuleika.

Mr. Richard Burbidge, presiding at the annual festival of the General Porters' Benevolent Association, said that he had been a porter himself, for when he was apprenticed he had nothing but portering to do for the first year, and in the second year he was promoted to driving a van. In those days his governor used to advertise for porters, who received 18s. a week, with an annual rise of 6d. to 20s., and he always asked applicants if they feared God and could carry two hundredweight.

"Perfect truth in God and thorough contempt for the Englishman." This is how the late Colonel de Villebois-Mareuil described the Boer state of mind. Those who have perfect trust in God generally have thorough contempt for somebody else.

The Rev. Dr. Beattie, an army chaplain, writes: "As to the religious life of soldiers, generally, there are usually twenty or thirty decidedly religious men in every battalion; there are about the same number of reckless men. The great mass, however, are men who make no special profession, but lead, as a rule, respectable and moral lives."

This estimate, which seems fairly correct, would equally apply to civilian populations. It is a noteworthy estimate, too, for inferentially it admits that a great mass of men may lead respectable and moral lives without any special religious profession.

Says the *Rock*: "Since this sad war commenced, a weekly prayer meeting has been held at the Manchester Y.M.C.A., to offer opportunity for united prayer for peace, and for the sufferers by the war. This is in addition to the usual daily prayer meeting." Now we shan't be long. The war will soon be over if these good young men will only pray hard enough. They might, however, first ascertain whether there is anybody to listen to them, or able and willing to interfere when he has heard them.

Apparently British exhibitors want to "boss" the Paris Exhibition, and are feeling a little chagrined because they are not allowed to do so. That wonderful body called the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association has been egging them on to resist one by no means unimportant regulation. Clause nineteen requires exhibits to be displayed on Sunday the same as week days. That is natural enough, for our French neighbors have no ridiculous notions about the so-called sanctity of the seventh-day. The visitors who pay their francs for admission will expect all the Exhibition to be open to view. Sunday, too, is the day on which most business may be done.

Our British representatives, however, have set their backs up against any Sunday display in their section. They knew of the regulation, and, with that knowledge, undertook to exhibit. Now they wish to override the regulation, and shut up shop on Sunday—the day on which all the other sections will not only be open, but looking their brightest.

The obvious comment is: If they go to Paris, they must do as Paris does. If they really attach any importance to what the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association is kind enough to say for them, they should withdraw from the Exhibition altogether. It is absurd to attempt to thrust their silly Sabbatarian scruples down the throats of Continental folks who don't care a cent. for the Fourth Commandment.

Comical John Kensit got into the papers again on Monday morning. He went to St. Ethelburga's Church, Bishopsgate, and took his wife with him "to communicate." Dr. Cobb, the officiating clergyman, offered him the Body of Christ in the form of a wafer; but he declined this bit of Popish stickjaw, and demanded plain Protestant household bread. Dr. Cobb, however, explained that he only kept the Body of Christ in the wafer form; whereupon Comical John Kensit and his wife went away sorrowing, for, although they had secured a good advertisement, they had broken the Sabbath in doing it.

Evidently they will have to print a special edition of the New Testament for this great-little or little-great Protestant reformer. The old text about asking for bread and getting a stone, for instance, will have to be altered to suit Comical John Kensit seeking for an orthodox bit of the Body of Christ. He asks for bread, and they give him a wafer.

St. Columba's Church, Kingsland-road, London, is notoriously "high." On Good Friday it sent out a procession through the neighboring streets, and one of the objects that were carried was a figure of J. C. upon a cross. This thing excited the ire of a bold Protestant shoemaker, named William Charles Pussey, who laid profane hands upon it and broke it across his knee. For which valiant deed the magistrate fined him £1, and ordered him to pay another £1 for the damage he had done to the wooden god belonging to the Columbia Joss-House.

Dr. Fairbairn, the celebrated Nonconformist preacher, preaching in London last Sunday, ended by saying that men fled from knowledge of themselves and each other, but all the saints in all the ages had had one great passion, one great cry, "Show me thy glory, reveal unto me thyself." Dr. Fairbairn might have added that, however many saints had uttered this cry, only one of them ever had a direct answer. This was Holy Moses. "Show me thy glory," he asked of Jehovah. "Well," said Jehovah, "I can't show you my face, for it would kill you, but you can see the other end." And Moses saw it. But it isn't recorded that he ever begged for a second sight.

In a current music-hall scene a learned counsel, addressing a clerical witness in a breach of promise case, says: "Tell the court the truth, sir, the whole truth, sir, and nothing but the truth, sir—if you can. Don't tell lies here, sir. Remember, sir, that you are not in the pulpit now." Whereupon the audience all laugh most heartily, and seem to think it a hit, a palpable hit.

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recent meeting of the Free Presbytery at Arbroath has had reason to regret his imitation of Christ in that respect. He called another minister "a cheeky brat." For these words, uttered in his haste, he had at once to apologise.

The Lord has allowed the destruction by fire of another of his temples—the Wesleyan Church, described as a fine building, in Norman-road, St. Leonards. The marriage register alone was saved.

Some time ago the Rev. William Earle, B.D., curate of St. Clement's Danes, Strand, was summoned in respect of some insanitary dwelling-house property of which he was owner. He has once more come under the observation of the law in respect of other insanitary property—this time in Lisson-grove. The evidence given as to overcrowding and sanitary deficiencies is stated to have created a "sensation" at the public inquiry which has been undertaken by the London County Council at the instance of the Medical Officer of Health. The Commissioner will make a report on the matter to the Home Secretary.

Rev. Edward George Sellman, rector of Great Casterton, near Stamford, has committed suicide by shooting himself whilst under the influence of morphia. The daughter of the rector of Higham, in South Leicestershire, put an end to her life by hanging herself from a beam in her bedroom. Another lady, Mrs. Logie, of Buckie, Bannishire, who took an energetic part in church affairs, committed suicide the other day by hanging herself in a drying loft.

A new form of idolatry seems to have been evolved in the fertile brain of a Hindoo servant attached to the 10th Hussars. During the siege of Ladysmith, every time a shell from "Long Tom" came in his direction, he promptly fell down and worshipped it.

Most people are getting a little tired of hearing about Sheldon and his "What would Jesus do?" and "What would Jesus not do?" The *British Weekly*, however, has an article on Sheldon and his ideal paper, from which some caustic passages may be extracted. In the first place, the *B. W.* says: "There is something to our minds almost blasphemous in the idea of any man claiming to know what our Lord would have done in a profession which he never undertook."

The *B. W.* goes on to say that Sheldon has evidently no journalistic training and no journalistic gift. "He cannot write effectively; he cannot make up his paper attractively. He has no turn for presenting news in a readable form. If his name had not been advertised, if his experiment had not been trumpeted, if he had gone quietly into an editor's chair and done his work, he would, we venture to say, have killed any paper in America or England within six months, and that by sheer incapacity. We have pointed out before this the absolute worthlessness of an experiment under his conditions. A week settles nothing." If he had gone on for the year, the *B. W.* doubts whether a hundred copies would have been purchased.

No one can accuse the *Church Times* of failing to do its level best to drive all sensible people from Anglicanism. In its latest issue it has an editorial note on the marriage of divorced persons. It commences in fine style, as thus: "For the preservation of the Church's conception of marriage as a contract that nothing but death can terminate," etc. So the decrees of the Divorce Court are null and void—a man must still be tied to his adulterous wife, or a wife to her adulterous husband, until death intervenes, notwithstanding the legal dissolution of the contract by President Jeune. That may be the doctrine of the Church, but it is not the decree of common sense.

And if a divorcee, whether the "innocent party" or not desires to marry again, the church is to be closed against the solemnization of the union. The parson is to be deprived of his fee, and the vergor or sexton or pew-opener is to hold up his or her hands in holy horror on the appearance of the parties, instead of twisting them into a scoop at the back for the reception of the customary tips. Well, the only thing that can be said is that couples who are under this religious ban deserve any indignity that may be visited upon them for being so silly as to go to church at all. The secular registry office is always open to them.

In such circumstances, the bridegroom is an ass to seek the services of a "churlish priest."

A little note expressing discomfort appears in the *British Weekly*. The subject of discontent is that a series of lectures in the city should be hampered with hymns in which the audience—elderly city men, many of them with no voices to speak of—are unable or unwilling to join. Max O'Rell, relating his lecturing experiences in America, says: "Some Nonconformist societies will engage a light or humorous lecturer, put him in their chapel, and open his mouth with

prayer. A truly trying experience it was of mine on one occasion to be accompanied to the platform by the minister who, motioning me to sit down, advanced to the front, lowered his head, and in solemn accents said, 'Let us pray.' Another experience was still worse, for the prayer was supplemented by the singing of a hymn of ten or twelve verses!"

"I was once lecturing," Max O'Rell goes on to say, "to the students of a religious college in America. Before I began a professor stepped forward and offered a prayer in which he asked the Lord to allow the audience to see my points. I can do no less than give the reader the petition just as it fell on my astonished ears: 'Lord, thou knowest that we work hard for thee, and that recreation is necessary in order that we may work with renewed vigor. We have to-night with us a gentleman from France whose criticisms are witty and refined, but *subtle*, and we pray thee to so prepare our minds that we may thoroughly understand and enjoy them.'"

That clerical showman, the Rev. W. Carlile, rector of St. Mary-at-Hill Church, Monument, City, has introduced a large gramophone into his church, whereby the congregation in the daily lunch hour may hear addresses by leading dignitaries of the Church.

The *Church Gazette* thus comments on this latest piece of clerical up-to-dateness: "We are among the very last who would think of finding fault with anyone who is trying to do good in his own way, even if it is not our way. But yet we cannot help feeling that there is something ludicrous about going to listen to mechanical voices grinding out their little addresses one after another; and we can hardly believe that anyone will attend to what these dignitaries have to say, so much as to how they say it. We cannot think that these are among the legitimate attractions of an earnest gospel of any kind. However, tastes differ."

Here are two items that may well be placed side by side. An East-end firm of clothiers pay 6d. each for making boys' reefer jackets, and 5½d. each for making boys' suits. "Working fourteen hours a day, and sometimes all night long, two poor souls (Mrs. Esland and her daughter) could only earn about 2s. 9d. a day, or 16s. 6d. a week. The rent of their room was 4s. 3d. a week, and in addition they had to pay 1s. 6d. for the hire of one machine, 8d. for soap for pressing, 6d. for sewing cotton, 6d. for oil for lamp, and 2s. for coal. Thus, with expenses of 9s. 5d., they had only 7s. a week to live on."

The other item is an appeal for £130,000 to establish a new diocese and Bishopric for Southwark. The new Bishop is to have £4,000 a year. Of course, he'll draw it, and probably keep it. His sympathy for the "sweated" human beings within the scope of his episcopal responsibility will probably be confined to some weak and maudlin platitudes which will have no practical result whatever.

Suppose, now, this £130,000 which is to be raised, and no doubt will be raised, were devoted to the tangible purpose of opening an establishment at which work should be given out at a reasonable wage, and families should be kept from starvation and the workhouse. Would not this be infinitely more serviceable than the appointment of another bishop at £4,000 a year? What is this bishop going to do? The clerical dignitaries already in South London, many of them with handsome stipends, cannot half fill their churches. What is another bishop wanted for? He won't improve the attendance, or, if he did, it wouldn't be any advantage to the community. We don't want any more bishops; we want men with brains who will solve the labor question, and enable industrious people to live.

The *World* had some "In Memoriam" verses on Dr. St. George Mivart, who, as stated last week, was buried at Kensal Green Cemetery without any ceremony, after a dispute between the Roman Catholic authorities and the relatives. The following is the concluding stanza:—

Yet though the holy rite denied,
With dirge unsung, and requiem dumb,
Rest he in peace, who fearless died,
With Truth for his viaticum.

The *Christian World* has a paragraph headed "Voltaire as a Christian Teacher." This, to start with, is a bit of religious "cheek." After defaming a man for over a century—heaping the vilest abuse on his memory, inventing lying stories about him, and holding him up as a "bogey" to frighten orthodox sucking babes—it is really a little too much to turn round and claim him as a Christian teacher, an exponent of the very superstition on which he poured out the vials of his indignation and contempt.

Some unknown person named Aked, it seems, has been preaching in a chapel at Liverpool on "The Service of Voltaire to Religion and Humanity." Well, we know of

Voltaire's service to humanity, but we know that it was never his intention, and we know that it was never the effect of his teaching, to render any service to "religion"—that is, the bundle of creeds and dogmas in support of which his name is now invoked.

The preacher urged that Voltaire was not an Atheist, which is true, though a great number of orthodox believers do not seem to be aware even of that fact. It is nothing in Voltaire's favor. The probability is that, if he had lived in our own times, he would have divested himself even of that shred of superstition. "Reverently," said this preacher, "it was possible to claim him as a worshipper of Christ." Yes, it is possible to claim him; and the next thing we expect to hear of is Thomas Paine claimed as a devout believer in the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures.

A good story is going the round of the papers of an elder in a Scotch parish church who is puzzling himself about the conduct of a member of the church who passed the offertory on Sunday. This member asked the elder, as he was going in, if he could give him two ha'pence for a penny. The elder took two ha'pence out of his own pocket, and handed them over to the other man, who calmly, and obviously without any intention of joking, put the penny in the plate and the halfpence in his own pocket, and then walked into his seat. The elder, not being strong in mathematics, is unable to compute with precision who was the loser by this transaction.

Princes and princesses of the royal houses of England and Germany are, we understand, baptised in Jordan water, brought in bottles from the famous little old river in Palestine. We now read that palms are brought from Palestine for use in High Church gospel-shops on Palm Sunday. It is but a step from this sort of thing to the adoration of relics like the finger-nail of the Holy Ghost or the prepuce of Jesus Christ.

Dr. Talmage, who seems to be in possession of many Divine secrets, tells us that "God is a Being of infinite leisure. He takes sometimes twenty-five hundred years to do one thing." Whether he does or not, it seems pretty certain that he is in no hurry to answer the prayers of those who are just now appealing for an early termination of the war and the proclamation of peace. Some little show of briskness in this rather important matter might not be at all amiss.

The magistrates of Ayr advise the councillors that the only law which can be invoked against the sacrilegious who sell Sunday newspapers is the one dated 1661. The Ayr folk who want their war news on Sunday will, therefore, probably get it as usual.

A young lady in a ballroom in Mexico declined a request for a dance, saying she was a Baptist and did not dance. The mayor of the city inquired who these Baptists were who did not dance, and, having gained the information, he contributed to their funds 250,000 dollars (£50,000). The curious might inquire how this very scrupulous young lady, who would not dance, came to be in the ballroom at all; and whether, after all, there is anything specially pious in refraining from an exhilarating exercise and pastime which seems, according to the Old Testament, to have been pretty freely indulged in by the "holy men" and women of old.

In the middle of the sermon at Bishopsgate-street Chapel, E.C., the other Sunday, an elderly lady fell backwards in her seat, and shortly afterwards expired. Providence has spoiled a splendid sensational "par." by locating this event in a chapel instead of at a Freethought lecture.

While a priest was administering the Sacrament to a sick person near Corunna, the floor of the room collapsed. The invalid and four other persons were killed, while fourteen were injured.

Churches and chapels may be turned to some practical use, after all. The Rev. Mr. Donaldson, of Leith, advises young women to make the church a trysting place. It should, he holds, be made fashionable for young men and young women to meet in a church, where they would get good, and where sanctifying influences would be brought to bear upon them. They should be attracted by religion, he says; but religion does not attract men, and if people cannot be induced to attend in one way it must be done in another.

One is inclined to remark, with reference to this proposal, that already churches and chapels are fairly well utilised as trysting places. If it weren't for the facilities afforded for flirtation and the exhibition of finery, there would be still more complaints about the general emptiness of the houses of God.

A new sect of a curious nature has sprung up in Eastern Siberia. The main point in which the new creed differs from others is, that it reveres Judas Iscariot as the first real

disciple of Christ, for he repented of his sins and hanged himself. Converts tired of life it recommends to take the same course. All officials of the State and of the Church are regarded as representatives of the Devil, and obedience to them is forbidden. A peasant named Likhacheff, the leader of the sect, has been arrested.

Along the Volga at the present time remnants of sects which flourished in the fifties and sixties still exist, whose principal tenet is self-destruction, in order "that the power of Antichrist may not prevail against them." Some of these fanatics are known as "Coffin people," others as "Red Pilgrims," others, again, as "Nothingists." The "Coffin people" have been known to place themselves in coffins and starve themselves to death; the "Red Pilgrims," on the day of their death, clothe themselves in a red shirt, and are suffocated by their co-religionists; and the "Nothingists" have been guilty of blood-curdling deeds.

Dr. Harnack, the German critic, believes that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by a woman. The authorship of this book, popularly credited to St. Paul, has long been in doubt, most authorities of late years attributing it to Apollos. Dr. Harnack, who is perhaps the greatest living authority on the history of the New Testament, asserts that the Epistle is the work of Priscilla, wife of Aquila, who is mentioned several times in the Acts. There is, it must be admitted, a good deal of inconsequential tittle-tattle in the Epistle which seems rather to support this theory.

Piety and barefaced imposition are beautifully mixed up in an account given by a tourist in Spain, who was thus addressed by the landlord of the hotel he was just leaving at Seville: "If the senor and God pleases, I made a mistake in his bill yesterday." "How?" I inquired. "I forgot to make a charge for his candles to light him to bed!" "But it was moonlight, and I had no candles." "Then, senor, with the help of God, I forgot to charge you with the moonlight." I accused him of being a robber, and offered him a penny to settle the bill. He worked up a beautiful smile, and held out his hand. "I will take it with thanks, senor," he said, "and God will bless you for an honest man!"

The Race Course Christian Mission is rejoicing in a notable convert. The Mission has been the means of converting a poacher. This is how he himself tells the story: "Ten years ago, whilst I was on a poaching expedition, and whilst hiding from the keepers, I heard a member of the Race Course Mission preaching in the distance. I was converted through the text given out at the service, and bear my testimony here that Christ can save a poacher; and, if so, He can save anyone in this crowd."

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Munich is a stern censor of the morals of the Bavarian clergy, says the *Christian World*. Some very disgraceful scandals have recently come to light regarding the home life of some of the country Catholic pastors, and the Archbishop is anxious to put a stop to it. He has issued instructions to his clergy that they are not to think of engaging women as their housekeepers who are under forty-five years of age, and that in all cases the housekeeper is to be a woman above reproach. The Archbishop is further scandalised at a tendency among his clergy to ride bicycles. Under certain circumstances, in country districts and with the consent of the Bishop, the clergy may ride a bicycle on urgent pastoral business; but in the towns never. Nor are they to be seen at the theatre. The theatre, according to the Archbishop, is a place where one can see life caricatured or burlesqued. In Munich there are, as is well known, some world-famous picture galleries. The Archbishop does not think that his clergy have any business among these pictures, many of which represent heathen subjects of a gross carnal nature.

Upwards of 400 sermons on "Sunday Observance" are promised for to-day (Sunday, the 22nd inst.) in response to a request said to have been issued by the society calling itself the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association. What are the prospects of a single sentence of common sense finding its way into any one of these 400 sermons?

The magistrates at the South London Sessions have confirmed the refusal of a seven days' license for the sale of intoxicating drink at the Crystal Palace. But they have offered a six days' license, so that people may have a glass of beer during the week. To drink one on the Sunday would be a mortal offence to the Lord of all. How thankful he must be to find the Penge magistrates and the South London judicial authorities so careful of his feelings.

The Wesleyans cannot be accused of stinginess in the support of their faith. Two-thirds of the entire amount of their Twentieth Century fund have now been promised, and there is every prospect of reaching 75,000 guineas by the Annual Assembly. What changes might be effected if Freethought organisation were supported like this!

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 22, Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell-road, S.E.; at 7.30, "The Lord of Hosts and the Prince of Peace."

April 29, Liverpool.

May 20, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—April 22, New Brompton; 29, The Athenæum Hall, London. May 6, Athenæum Hall, London; 27, Bradford.—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.

E. A. CHARLTON.—Contents-sheet of the Freethinker shall be sent weekly to the address you mention, as requested. Perhaps it would be well to defer your offer of copies of this journal for distribution. Most of the N. S. S. Branches are closing their indoor work very shortly, and the outdoor needs in this direction will be pretty well provided for. Accept our thanks for your kind letter.

G. CALCUTT.—Pleased to have your letter. The paper has not arrived.

J. PARRY.—The right date of Mr. Cohen's visit to Cardiff is given in this week's "Sugar Plums." Glad to hear your Branch has made a good start. Mr. Foote will be very happy to visit South Wales in the autumn. Perhaps you will write to him again later on.

S. HOLMAN.—Sorry to hear that a hall could not be secured for Mr. Cohen's lectures at Pontypridd.

H. PERCY WARD.—Your list arrived too late for insertion in our last issue. For the rest, see paragraphs. Many thanks.

B.—You are quite right. Paine's "belief" in a future life was no more than a hope. He appears to have accepted the natural mortality of man, but to have thought it likely that picked specimens of the race would be given another career by God after their decease in this world. Of course he never really thought the question out, as he had to think out the questions under debate in the Age of Reason.

G. BROWN.—Your suggestion shall be borne in mind.

G. ANDERSON.—Thanks; a capital joke; but it has appeared in our columns already. Our old numbers are a perfect cemetery of wit and humor. Perhaps we ought to dig out some of the best "subjects."

AGNOSTIC.—We have no time to waste on ex-convicts with all sorts of aliases, or inclination to advertise those behind them.

S. THORNTON.—All reputable "advanced" literature will be sold at No. 1 Stationers' Hall Court, as well as the books, pamphlets, and periodicals issued by the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your welcome cuttings.

AMERICAN and other exchanges are requested to note our new address—No. 1 Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C. Papers and letters should be mailed there, and no longer to 28 Stone-cutter-street.

S. J. PARKER.—If you call at the Freethought Publishing Company's shop, you will find a counter for private customers as well as one for "the trade." There is also a room where such customers can sit at a table and examine the books, etc., they wish to satisfy themselves about before purchasing.

F. J. GOULD sends us a reply to Mr. Ryan's criticism of his use of the word "religion." Owing to the holidays, this letter has to stand over till next week.

T. DUNBAR.—Of course Shakespeare wrote, and we wrote, "when thou liest howling," not "where." Printers often seem inspired by the Devil to make malignant mistakes—just where and when you don't expect one.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Isle of Man Times—Brann's Iconoclast—Freethought Magazine—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Edinburgh Evening Telegraph—Blue Grass Blade—Weekly Times—De Vrije Gedachte—The Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker (New York)—Crescent—Public Opinion—Liberator—Progressive Thinker.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

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.

LETTERS for the Editor of the Freethinker should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

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.

Special.

THERE is only space and time for a brief "Special" this week. We are getting domiciled at 1 Stationers' Hall Court. The shop is being well fitted up, and we shall soon be in complete working order. In settling down to do our own business, we learn the full extent of the ruinous mischiefs we have suffered during the past six months. It will take some time, and a good deal of hard work, to make up lost ground; but we are starting very hopefully, amidst abundant indications that our new enterprise is hailed with satisfaction by "the trade" as well as by the Freethought party.

Practically we have to begin almost de novo in the matter of the Freethinker weekly contents-sheet. We are anxious to get it displayed as it used to be in former times. Will our friends, therefore, in all parts of the country, forward us the names and addresses of news-agents who are willing to display a contents-sheets if it is posted to them, as it will be every Wednesday?

The Board of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, has decided to call up the remaining 10s. per Share of unpaid capital, in two instalments of 5s. each, the first payable on June 1 and the second on August 1. Due legal notice of this call will be posted to Shareholders. Meanwhile they have this informal intimation. A fresh Prospectus is also being prepared, and we hope it will bring the Company a large accession of supporters. The preliminary stage is now ended, and business is beginning in real earnest.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE lectures in the Secular Hall, Camberwell (New Church-road), this evening (April 22) at 7.30. His subject will be "The Lord of Hosts and the Prince of Peace." It is several months since Mr. Foote lectured in South London.

There was a crowded audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening; indeed, a good many persons were unable to gain admission. Among those present were Mr. S. Hartmann, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. W. Heaford, and Mr. Harry Snell. Mr. Victor Roger acted as chairman. Mr. Foote, who was suffering from a cold and was rather hoarse, spoke for half-an-hour on "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," going along very rapidly and dealing with the principal features and aspects of the story. The Rev. J. J. B. Coles then took the platform for half-an-hour, replying to Mr. Foote; and each speaker subsequently addressed the meeting twice—for fifteen and ten minutes. How the discussion itself went may be left to the judgment of the audience; but it may be said here that the utmost good humor prevailed on both sides, the reverend gentleman even joining in the laughter now and then at Mr. Foote's jokes. Mr. Coles looks a pleasant gentleman, bears himself like one, and speaks like one. In his closing speech he suggested another friendly exchange of views on the question of the Inspiration of the Bible.

Mr. W. Heaford occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (April 22), taking for his subject "Religion and Revenge." We hope he will have a good meeting.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this Sunday evening, April 22, at New Brompton, Kent, taking for his subject "Can a Scientist be a Christian?"

The last number of the Weekly Times and Echo gave a long and interesting account of James Tyson, the Australian millionaire, who seems to have been a big man every way. He never married, but he carried with him to the end the memory of a good, kind, beautiful poor girl that he met in his youth and would have married if he could. He opened up the country, so to speak, for future millions; that was his fight in life, and he felt he had won it. "Religion," he said, "ain't my business. I do what I think right, and I stand to take my chance." The Weekly Times writer adds: "Tyson was an atheist. Though he never entered a church, he once gave the money to build one. Then he was asked to insure it against fire. 'That I will not,' he said. 'I have given a church to Almighty God, and if he cannot take care of it himself he does not deserve to have it.'"

There is a fair sprinkling of Freethinkers at Kimberley, and we shall be hearing from some of them again as affairs settle down after the siege. A Salvationist officer, who was there during the siege, is reported in the *Daily News* as saying that "The big gun of the Boers knocked all the infidelity out of Kimberley." Poor innocent! He expects to "win hundreds of souls to Christ," but he won't win them amongst the Kimberley Freethinkers.

Mr. Cohen will be lecturing at Cardiff next Sunday (April 29), in the Swiss Hall, Queen-street, morning, afternoon, and evening. Unfortunately, there has been a hitch at Pontypridd, and the lectures announced for that town are "off" for the present.

The Birmingham N. S. S. Branch is getting up a petition which reads as follows: "We, the undersigned residents of Birmingham and District, respectfully request you to have placed on the Reading Tables of the Birmingham Free Libraries a copy of each weekly issue of the *Freethinker*." This is addressed to the Free Libraries Committee. Mr. H. Percy Ward, of 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall-heath, is superintending this effort.

We are pleased to see that Mr. H. Percy Ward is doing, and is going to do, some open-air lecturing in the famous Bull Ring, Birmingham. He is to speak there every Wednesday and Friday evening at 8 during May, June, July, and August.

Manchester friends will please note that the Secular Hall, in Rusholme-road, closes for three months with the last Sunday in May. Mr. Foote delivers the last lectures there for the present season on Sunday, May 20. His subjects will be announced in due course.

"Truthseeker" contributes an able letter on "Sunday Bands" to the *Edinburgh Evening Telegraph*. The concluding sentences are drawn from one of Mr. Foote's old articles.

The N. S. S. Executive, on the President's suggestion, has decided to open a "Conference Fund." Subscriptions to this Fund should be sent in as early as possible; either to Miss Vance, secretary, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C., or to Mr. S. Hartmann, treasurer, or to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, at the same address. This Fund is intended to promote the success of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference, which will be held in London on Whit-Sunday. The provincial Branches have always treated London delegates and visitors with fine hospitality; it is now meant to return the compliment, and to do the thing handsomely. Provincial delegates and visitors should be entertained to dinner on the Sunday, and provided with an entertainment—such as viewing some of the sights of London by means of brakes—on the Monday. Of course the expense should be borne principally, at least, by London Freethinkers; and we hope they will subscribe liberally.

The Deacon's Dream.

"May you take this lesson home with you to-night, dear friends," concluded the preacher at the end of a very long and wearisome sermon. "And may its spiritual truths sink deep into your hearts and lives to the end that your souls may experience salvation. We will now bow our heads in prayer. Deacon White, will you lead?" There was no response. "Deacon White," this time in a louder voice. "Deacon White, will you lead?" Still no response. It was evident that the deacon was slumbering. The preacher made a third appeal, and raised his voice to a pitch that succeeded in waking the drowsy man. "Deacon White, will you please lead?" The deacon rubbed his eyes and opened them wondering. "Is it my lead? No—I just death."—*Detroit Free Press*.

Modern civilisation rests upon physical science; take away her gifts to our country, and our position among the leading nations of the world is gone to-morrow; for it is physical science that makes intelligence and moral energy stronger than brute force. The whole of moral thought is steeped in science. It has made its way into the works of our best poets, and even the mere man of letters, who affects to ignore and despise science, is unconsciously impregnated with her spirit and indebted for his best products to her methods. She is teaching the world that the ultimate court of appeal is observation and experience, not authority. She is creating a firm and living faith in the existence of immutable moral and physical laws, perfect obedience to which is the highest possible aim of an intelligent being.—*Huxley*.

"Kynde Kit Marlowe."

"Pardon, gentles all,
The flat, unrais'd spirit that has dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object."

—SHAKESPEARE (*King Henry V.*; *chorus*.)

THE greatest of Shakespeare's immediate predecessors was Christopher Marlowe, familiarly known as "Kit." The son of a shoemaker, and born at Canterbury in 1564, his unmistakable genius seems to have gained him friends, who looked after his early education, and sent him, at the age of seventeen, to the University of Cambridge. He was intended for the Church, but the Church had, as may readily be imagined, no attractions for such a mind. The study of theology only succeeded in making him a determined enemy of religion in general, and the Christian superstition in particular. Marlowe's statue is fittingly erected *outside* the gates of Canterbury Cathedral. There was no element in Marlowe's untamable nature favorable to the growth of religiosity. He was, indeed, one of the proudest and fiercest of intellectual aristocrats. Scepticism in him naturally took the form of contempt rather than of mere negation. From the statements of Richard Bame, the informer, we may assume that he occasionally gave vent to Rabelaisian pleasantries on the subject of the Christian dogmas.

Before the age of twenty-three we find Kit Marlowe in London, an actor and a playwright, and the author of "the great sensation work" of his time—the tragedy of *Tamburlaine*—in which Greene perceived Marlowe's attempt at "daring of God out of heaven." This portentous melodrama, a strange compound of inspiration and desperation, has the hall-mark of real genius equally on its absurdities and its sublimities. In the first play, written in blank verse for the popular stage, the versification has an elasticity, freedom, and variety of movement which makes it as much the product of Marlowe's extraordinary mind as the thoughts and passions it so finely conveys.

It had no precedent in the verse of preceding writers. It is constructed, not on merely mechanical rules, but on vital principles. It is the effort of real genius disdainful to creep along well-trodden paths, and boldly opening a new road for itself. Intellectual daring is the source of Marlowe's wonderful originality. Throughout *Tamburlaine* strange gleams of the purest splendors of poetry more than redeem the bombast into which it occasionally drops. Now and again we meet with glorious strokes of impassioned imagination, as in the celebrated scene in which *Tamburlaine* is represented in a chariot drawn by captive kings, and rating them for their slowness:—

Hallo! ye pampered jades of Asia!
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?

The horses that guide the golden eye of heaven,
And blow the morning from their nostrils,
Making their fiery gait above the clouds,
Are not so honored in their governor
As you, ye slaves, in mighty *Tamburlaine*.

Blank verse was not only brought into existence by Marlowe, but was also carried to some degree of perfection by him. He could temper his blank verse to different moods and passions. Listen to the speech in *Edward II.*, in which the indignant King first gives way to anger and then to misery:—

Mortimer! who talks of Mortimer,
Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,
That bloody man? Good father, on thy lap
Lay I this head with mickle care;
O, might I never ope these eyes again,
Never again lift up this drooping head,
O never more lift up this dying heart.

What didactic dignity we find in the following lines:—

Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every warding planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.

Here is another example of his full-voiced harmony. Faustus exclaims:—

Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Ænon's death?

And hath not he, who built the walls of Troy,
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp
Made music with my Mephistopheles?

We feel at once that this is the work of a rare genius. In fact, the soliloquy in which the doomed Faustus watches his last moments ebb away might be quoted as a perfect instance of variety and sustained effect in a situation which could only be redeemed from a wearisome monotony by consummate art.

One scene, which contains the memorable address to Helena, seems to have influenced Shakespeare and other poets. It contains that wonderful passage commencing,

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships,
And burnt the topmost towers of Ilium?

and concluding with

All is dross that is not Helena.

It is simply aflame with impassioned loveliness.

Marlowe could introduce the lilt of indefinable melody with the most unpromising material. Take the descriptive lines from *The Jew of Malta*:—

Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And sold seen costly stones of so great price,
As one of them, indifferently rated,
May serve, in peril of calamity,
To ransom great kings from captivity.

Marlowe's *Faustus* perhaps best reflects his whole genius. The subject seems to have taken hold of his nature, as it afterwards did that of the argus-eyed Goethe. The characters of Faustus and Mephistopheles are both conceived with great depth and strength of imagination, and the last scene dangerously approaches perfection.

Marlowe's life, though short and reckless, was fertile in work. Besides, his plays, his translations from Ovid, and his poem of *Hero and Leander* would alone give him a position among the poets of his period. He was killed in a tavern brawl, in the year 1593, at the early age of twenty-nine.

Marlowe was always outspoken and fearless. His freethought opinions attracted attention from the time when he wrote of that Atheist, Tamburlan. Only a few days before his death, Richard Bame, an informer, sent in a note to the authorities concerning Marlowe's "damnable opinions and judgment of religion and scorn of God's worde." Only the poet's death prevented a trial for blasphemy.

As it was, Puritan pamphleteers, overflowing with Christian love, which thinks evil of all men, did not scruple to see in Marlowe's death an awful example of God's judgment. But the snarling of Christian hyenas, disappointed of their prey, did not prevent Marlowe's friends from testifying to his genius and defending his character.

Rare Ben Jonson celebrated his "mighty line"; Drayton described his raptures as "all fire and air"; and Chapman, with a yet clearer perception of Marlowe's self-committal to the Muse, said that—

He stood
Up to the chin in the Pierian flood.

An anonymous critic refers to him as "Kynde Kit Marlowe." A still higher tribute to his eminence comes from Shakespeare himself, who, in *As You Like It*, quotes with approval a line from Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*—the only instance in which Shakespeare has publicly recognised the genius of an Elizabethan writer.

Marlowe was killed in a tavern quarrel at Deptford, near London. The dead poet was buried in an unknown spot. Thus ended the life of this stormy, irregular genius, strange compound of Alsatian adventurer and Arcadian singer.

His sudden death, in the height of his glory and his pride, seemed to threaten the Elizabethan drama with irreparable loss. But he was to be succeeded by the greatest Englishman, the greatest author that ever made literature his medium of communication with the world. Greater than Homer, more imaginative than Dante, the full blaze of the sun of his glory was heralded by the morning-star of Kit Marlowe.

MIMNERMUS.

He is happy who, seeing his duty, can do it.—*Seneca.*

Ludicrous Aspects of Immortality.

CHRISTIANS allege that we are immortal. It is well to examine the consequences of such immortality to see whether they are reasonable, desirable, and possible. If by assuming a falsehood to be true we can reduce the whole supposition to an absurdity, as Euclid often does in the strictest mathematics, we at least help to demolish a fiction and to establish truth. The Christian who begs we will look only at one aspect of a question is out of court when truth is concerned. His bribe of a heaven and his threat of a hell ought to influence us neither way.

If we are immortal, at what age does the immortality commence? When does the infant receive an immortal soul? Does it come by miracle, or by natural growth? Does the child receive or develop its soul before birth, and is the Roman Catholic ceremony of baptism for unborn children justified by assuring the salvation of infants who are thus made members of Christ and heirs of heaven at a time when it is feared that they may never see the light of day? Does the soul enter with the first breath? Is soul identical with breath, as most of the earlier believers in a soul apparently imagined?

What is the use of immortality to an infant? It has no memories, no knowledge, no affections, no moral or intellectual faculties. What can it do with immortality when carried off to heaven? Will it only cry and suck and sleep and be nursed for all eternity, knowing no one, and destitute of all faculties but those of the most elementary nature common to the young of all animals? If the human baby is immortal, why not the baby of the monkey? The monkey's infant cannot display less mental or moral capacity than the human babe. Will the human mother when she goes to heaven meet and nurse for ever her immortal infant? Talmage assures Christian mothers they shall have glorious chariots to ride in. Will they also have glorious perambulators for their everlasting infants made immortal at an early age? And will there be golden feeding-bottles and celestial cows, or asses, to supply the milk? This is no unreasonable question to ask, seeing that Milton plainly represents the angels as enjoying food and drink in heaven; while the Bible itself speaks of "angels' food," and Jesus promised his apostles that they should "eat and drink" in heaven. If full-grown angels take food, so, too, should infant angels. And these latter will require nurses, at least till the mothers arrive and devote all eternity to their maternal tasks. Some mothers have lost several babes when young. Will each mother find all her little cherubs awaiting her care in the celestial nursery, where meanwhile they "continually do cry"? And how will she nurse them all at once and for ever? And will such a heaven be a pleasant one even for the most devoted mother who sees no chance of ever rearing unintelligent babes into rational, affectionate, speaking men and women?

This leads us to the consideration of the growth of the soul—which evidently takes place on earth, if soul means moral and rational faculty. Will souls go on growing in heaven? Will wordless and thoughtless infants grow into manly and womanly angels? Will they develop wings and ways and thoughts and feelings of their own? If so, how will the Christian mother recognise her babies robed and winged and whiskered according to the latest celestial fashions? What will she do when her six-foot babe is at last popped into her arms? The little innocent over which she wept, whom she has dreamed all her life of clasping again to her breast, has disappeared without the gradual development of its cherished personality into the totally different personality of a perfected being—without the gradual change which day by day and year by year satisfies and rewards the mother's feelings and the mother's care.

If the principle of growth prevails, does it cease to act when a kind of middle-age or prime of life is attained? Will the aged grow younger and the young grow older, till they meet in one throng of middle-aged angels? This would produce great sameness and great loss of individuality. But if we reason from earthly considerations that the infant soul grows on through childhood to middle age, why does it not also proceed through the stages of senility and decay to death?

Will the showman's exhibition of Washington's skulls when a boy and when a man be paralleled in heaven? Will the celestial boy-child still young meet the mother who departed young, while a fully-grown edition of the same being meets the wife, the children, the grand-children, of later life?

Christian pictures would lead us to believe that only the heads and shoulders of babies are preserved furnished with wings, but not with tails to guide themselves, these chubby curiosities flit about among the clouds of heaven. Will the mothers, also furnished with wings, flit about after these comical baby-boys like sparrows after their newly-fledged young?

Will these bodiless cherubims, too, fly races occasionally, and will the elder angels also arrange flying matches with each other? Talmage, we know, thinks they will thus compete with each other. So the dying coal-heaver who offered to fly the parson for a sovereign may have been very sound in the doctrine, after all, perhaps.

One thing is certain. These juvenile cherubims cannot be among the number of Christians who, as Christ says, "sit down" in the kingdom of heaven; nor will the glorified mothers of the little darlings ever be able to administer chastisement for their little peccadilloes in the approved fashion.

The mother fondly imagines that her babe goes straight to heaven, and the priests teach her to think so, although, according to Christian doctrine, the division into sheep and goats does not take place till the judgment day. Millions of mothers are thus led to believe that their children and their husbands are now in heaven on the faith of a book which distinctly contradicts this belief. The souls of the departed still await their resurrection, and may do so for thousands of years yet. Where do the baby souls and the adult souls stay meanwhile? Who nurses the juniors? Are they all in a state of suspended animation? What will become of their memories, which constitute one half the mind? Surely a delay of many centuries will produce forgetfulness? How, then, will people recognise each other, especially if we also so change in character as to lose our faults and peculiarities?

Some men and women have been married several times. Will not this prove rather awkward for such Christians when they reach heaven? Will they rush with rapture into the arms of several partners at once? Will there be no jealousies, no dissatisfaction at losing a beloved spouse who has to share his or her time and presence among several wives or several husbands, as the case may be? How will Deacon Brown, of the Tabernacle, conduct himself towards the several Mrs. Browns who faithfully await his embraces? Surely the situation will be an embarrassing one. How can he treat them all equally well, and hide his preferences? If he greets the beloved Jane first, or directs his after-remarks or attention especially to the equally-beloved Susan, how will he pacify dear Henrietta and darling Clara, whom he thus treats as only occupying inferior positions in his heart? And how will Parson Smith feel, seeing that he married two widows who had had several husbands, some of them being also widowers who had married other widows besides. Will all these numerous husbands and wives thus widely connected by the marital bond unite as one happy family in the New Jerusalem? The wisest of men clasping his thousand wives to his breast will be an interesting sight. Abraham, with Hagar on one arm and Sarah on the other and Keturah in the rear, may find it difficult to compose the feminine jealousies of his spouses, except by the summary process of ejecting Hagar into the wilderness again. Jacob will meet with similar troubles to mar his otherwise perfect felicity. David and Uriah, both claiming Bathshebah, may easily produce a "scene." Christ's solution of the problem is that there is no marrying in heaven. This is a damper to popular hopes of reunion in heaven. The great consolation, the only consolation worth anything to most people, in the doctrine of immortality, is that they will again meet and love and be loved by their dear ones. For cold, heartless religious happiness that tramples on human affections, they care nothing. Hence this explanation of Christ's is judiciously kept in the background except when wanted to meet objections.

W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded.)

God, Where Art Thou?

(Concluded from page 230.)

THINK of God's ordinances, the sacraments. What are these ordinances of God? They are not the rising and the setting of the sun; nor the coming in the night of a constellation of stars; nor the approach of spring with the smell of sweet earth, nor the wooing of the south wind. Those are not God's ordinances. It is not human love, where spirit meets with the spirit and blends in the unspeakable mystery of loving and being loved; that is not one of God's ordinances. But what are they? Take out the floor of the tabernacle, line the space below with zinc, and fill it with water; go down into it and come up out of it—that is an ordinance; or take bread and break it, and wine, and pass them around; that is an ordinance of God. Think of it. Oh, how little, how poor, how wanting in magnitude is religion in its conception of God. Is it thinkable that the maker of the seven stars and the solar year is any more in the baptismal pool than he is in the mother loving her child? Is he any more in the bread that is broken by the hands of the priests, and the wine that is poured, than he is in the honest handclasp of mutual friends? Is he any more in one place than he is in another, or in one thing than he is in another, simply because the priests have said he is?

I resent the littleness of these conceptions because they are unjust to man and degrading to God. We may respect the priest in his functions, the honest preacher in his attempts to reach the secret of things and make men better by holding up the ideal; but why call the man with his priestly robes God's anointed—any more than you would call the man with blacksmith's apron God's anointed?

If God is partial to the men that pray on the streets and take up collections everywhere, and not to the man and woman that work and toil, then we want a new God. Let us defend the honor of the infinite.

God never told us the secret of himself, and we infer he never wanted us to know. Living, then, just as it there were no God, what would be wanting as sanctions for the right, the just, and the true? What would be lacking as an inspiration or support of the moral ideal? Under that conception truth would be what we find out, not revelation, not something to be believed, but something to be discovered. After all, it may be that the great value of truth is not in knowing it; it is in seeking to know it; it is not so much in possession of truth as it is in the pursuit of it. The world has always been able to find out enough for immediate use.

Can a man serve God? What does the language mean? We have heard it all our lives; thousands of ministers this minute are imploring people to serve God. What does it mean? Can we benefit him, or injure him? Can we bring anything to him that he has not already? Can we take anything away from him and diminish his stores? If we take the words "serve God," and seek the meaning, what is there in them? I know it is worked into song and hymn and ritual and literature and orations and rhetoric, and is part of our common intellectual life—the idea of serving God; but what do we mean by that? Loving him; what do we mean by it? It is more important to love one's wife and children than to love God. It is more important to serve one's neighbor and friend than to serve God; and maybe that is what loving God and serving God really means after all.

As to morals. If we are to live as if there were no God, nothing is taken away from the sanction of right doing, because the moral standard of the world is one that is filled up out of experience. The world never had any conception of morals until it reached it by experience—by experiment—by trying. The thing that was a virtue in one age becomes a vice in another; and what was once considered a vice comes to be regarded as a virtue. The world never needed other revelation than

There is a natural morality, and there is an unnatural morality. The unnatural morality is the kind that comes to us by revelation, and is useless in the world. A man may conform to all the prescribed ordinances of the Church and not be any better, being worse because he has made the pretension of being better; and

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man who seeks to do the right thing, the fair thing, the square thing, needs any other morality, and can perform no higher service to man and to God.

It is my belief that religion diminishes the moral force of the world. Suppose the millions of people that are satisfied with the Church morality, and the Church service and its requirements, and hope to win heaven and shun hell that way, should have taken away from them this morality, and be thrown back upon their own resources, and should be told that they had to work out their own salvation; that there was not any atonement, any faith that could save them from hell; they had to save themselves. Suppose that was the condition, then what would men do? They would say: "If that is the case, the thing for us to see to is that we order our lives in such a way that everybody else may be given an equal chance, and be made as happy as possible, and not be entrapped or burdened by anything we do."

I think mankind could save this world in a little while, if mankind only wanted to; but mankind has been under the guidance of the Church, looking to the sky for help. Is it possible that when God left us in ignorance of himself without a revelation, without a church, without anything we could honestly call particularly divine, is it possible that he meant us to make of the whole world a temple, and of all life a divine service? This is a great world; think of the powers that toil for it; think of the marvel of the morning and the evening; think of the glory of the morning and evening star, of the floods of soft light when the moon rises; of the mystery, of the miracle; the glory to be revealed in a few more weeks by spring, and the succession that links all to-morrows with to-day; of the great human heart, the human brain; the ministering of love, the light of intelligence, the ambition of the human mind; think of it all; it is a wondrous, gracious, divine old world; and then think in one hundred years not one of us will be here in the present form; a good many years less than that the most of us will be gone. We have not been here long, and we are more than half-way across. In that brief passage from the dusk to the twilight, in that little journey from the mystery to the mystery, what have we done? What ideal is before us; what must we have accomplished to be able to say, when the sceptre of life slips from our grasp, "We wielded it well"? We must have tried to help human life, to increase the happiness of the world, to take off the burdens that lie upon our fellow men; that is the only thing worth doing—the only thing.

Do you know what I think? I think that right here in this world, as it is, with the present folks, there is enough power and enough justice to make everybody happy that deserves to be, and those that don't we need not pity, or even think about. But we have not got at it yet; we do not know how it is to be done, and we never will get at it, and will never know how it is to be done, until we stop serving an unknown, and exerting our forces along lines that lead into mystery; until we stop planning our lives in accordance with a map drawn and stereotyped by the priests, and arrange our lives with reference to the human needs that lie about us.

As to salvation. How are we going to be saved, living as if there were no God? Saved from what? Saved from a God? If we live as if there were no God, then we do not have to be saved from him. That doctrine of salvation is a bugbear devised for priests' profits; they first conceive of an angry God, and then conceive of a salvation which they have for sale. The honest soul does not need to think of salvation; he can afford to pass it by. Salvation, that is not the concern of an honest soul. The concern of an honest soul is how not to damn anybody here, or mingle any bitterness or fear of hell in any heart or life by anything one does. As to the future, I will say, if it comes it will be time to attend to it then.

J. E. ROBERTS.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"Friend," said the sanctimonious clergyman, "are you not ashamed to make your living playing poker?" "Huh! you and I are very much alike," replied the unregenerate man. "When we hold a good hand we don't care to accept a call unless there is a raise with it."—*Troy Times*.

The Poor Man's Prayer.

PROTECT me, Lord, from these thy saints, the sanctimonious few;
Oh! save me from their clutches when my mortgages come due.
Oh! put me not into the hands of these, the men of woe,
Who call this earth a "vale of tears," and strive to make it so.
Oh! guard me from the blue-nosed good who lend at ten per cent.
And take a thousand-dollar lien for ninety dollars lent.
Make me, instead, the debtor of some man with human taints;
At any rate, protect me, Lord, from these thy modern saints.
Their thoughts are far from mortal life, they never, never sin;
They strive to bring to righteousness the very men they skin;
They never go a step astray; they never deign to smile;
They sin not, and they only aim to castigate the vile.
But, oh! why should they count it best with cold and holy arts
To rivet sheet-iron shields around their hard and stony hearts?
Their ears are deaf enough, God wot, to pleadings and complaints,
And so I pray protect me, Lord, from these thy modern saints.
Oh! save me from the sanctified, the too uncommon good,
Who tell us what we shouldn't do and preach us what we should;
Those saints who squeeze a dollar twice and wear cheap aureoles
Will take our children's bread, and then attempt to save our souls!
Give me, instead, a worldly man with some few healthy stains
That shows he has the common blood of manhood in his veins
And heart that swells enough sometimes to overthrow constraints;
But in my need protect me, Lord, from self-appointed saints!
—*Judge*.

Church-Schoolism.

The publication of the remarkable figures as to the decrease of voluntary contributions for Church schools has evidently upset the equanimity of the Church Educational Authorities. Mr. Lionel Thompson, the Secretary of the Church Schools Aid Association, for the Norwich diocese, telegraphed off in hot haste on Wednesday to Sir John Gorst, and drew from the Vice-President a reply within the hour that voluntary contributions to Church schools for 1899 had risen to £600,286. Whereupon he (Mr. Thompson) has triumphantly announced to his diocese that the predictions that the aid grant would go to save the pockets of voluntary subscribers have been absolutely falsified, and that this increase in subscriptions proves that the money has been "expended to the last penny" in increasing efficiency. It becomes necessary for us to extend the figures we gave the other day, so as to include these figures for last year, now given by Sir John Gorst. This time we confine the figures to Church schools only. The voluntary contributions previously recorded were: "1896, £643,386; 1897, £632,906; 1898, £585,945." Now we have to add: "1899, £600,286."

This, it will be seen, is a slight increase on 1898; but it leaves the total still more than £43,000 below what was received in 1896, the year before the dole. But there is another factor to be taken into account. The number of children in average attendance at Church schools is not stationary. It increases as the population of Church school districts increases. During 1898 it went up 11,490, at a cost of £2 2s. 4d. per child; making an increased expenditure of over £24,000. So that the increase of subscriptions during 1899 not only does not make up for the fall which followed the dole, but is not even a normal increase sufficient to keep pace with the increase of population. Even allowing for grants earned by these additional children (of which the average for Voluntary schools is 19s. 8d. per head), this nominal increase in subscriptions vanishes by comparison with increased expenditure. We are afraid that Mr. Thompson must revise his statement as to the "last penny" in the light of this continued deficit of £43,100, as compared with 1896. To that amount the dole is still going, as every impartial person knew it would go, to save the pockets of the voluntary subscribers.

—*Daily News*.

"What is life?" asked the professor of the class in moral ethics. "The absence of death," replied a youthful philosopher. And the professor let it go at that.—*Chicago Daily News*.

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, W. Heaford, "Religion and Revenge."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Lord of Hosts and the Prince of Peace."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, J. McCabe, "The Bible in the Board Schools."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, R. P. Edwards.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, E. Pack.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30. A lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "What Do Christians Believe?"

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, A. B. Moss, "The Claims of Freethought."

WEST HAM BRANCH (Stratford Grove): 7.30, A. B. Moss.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): H. Thompson—11, "Insect Mimicry" (illustrated with actual specimens); 7, "A Candle: Its Wonderful Story" (illustrated by experiments).

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday School; 7, Charles Watts, "Can a Scientist be a Christian?"

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): J. M. Robertson—11.30, "The Problem of the Gospel Jesus"; 2.30, "The Morality of Empire"; 6.30, "God in Politics."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Labouchere, "The Jew as a Trader."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Ernest Evans—3, "The Social Life of Animals"; 7, "A Visit to Holland, and What I Saw There." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, A reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—April 22, Pontypridd. 24, Cardiff.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—April 22, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Stratford. May 6, m., Camberwell; a., Brockwell Park. 13, a., Peckham Rye; c., Brockwell Park. June 17, e., Stratford. 24, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—April 22, Northampton. 29, Birmingham. May 20, Birmingham. 27, Northampton. June 10, Birmingham. 17, Northampton. July 1, Birmingham. 15, Northampton. 22, Birmingham.

F. A. DAVIES, 65 Lion-street, S.E.—April 29, m., Camberwell; a., Brockwell Park. May 6, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park. 13, m., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 20, a., Peckham Rye; e., Brockwell Park. 27, m., Westminster.

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