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PRICE TWOPENCE.

Curates.

WHY will the worldly-minded man smile when his eyes rest upon this heading, severely simple as it is? And why, if this were a religious journal, would the young lady readers begin to smirk and simper? And why, if I were a speaker at an Additional Curates' Aid Society meeting—instead of a "lost soul," writing in a paper once arraigned for dreadful impiety—should I have to commence with a grave visage and words of deep and solemn import calculated to check at the outset any tendency to tittering or other forms of levity excited by the nature of the subject? Why are curates, in spite of their "sacred calling," usually regarded by men—especially if they are "big brothers" of marriageable girls—with so much ill-concealed contempt; and by paterfamilias with so much dubious condescension, and by maters with such watchful eyes; and by lackeys with such broad grins, and by heavy dignitaries of the Church with such an eternally-searching gaze, which seems to say: "You may turn out all right, but at present I'm not at all sure about you"?

Why is the "pale young curate" the object of such a mingling of disdain and surmise, not to say ridicule and suspicion? It is not because humorists and the writers of farcical comedies (who may not always be classed as humorists) have made him the butt of a great deal of harmless satire. The public seem to appreciate that sort of thing—if the curates don't; otherwise they would not be treated to it. The supply has apparently arisen from a demand. Is it that the curates, or at any rate the bulk of them, lend themselves to caricature? No doubt they are god-sends to artists whose aim it is to amuse the community. Yet how dreadful! when all the time these poor young men are thinking of themselves, not as god-sends for comic papers or stage farces, but as God-sent to reclaim the world from its burden of sin and unbelief. Naturally they "don't like London," or rather they don't like a great deal of the fun which is made in the metropolis, as elsewhere, at their expense. And sometimes they are emboldened to resent it. But their defence is usually of the "Bath-bun and glass of milk" description, affording additional mirth to their heartless critics.

All the same, they are entitled to call themselves "Reverend," and write, it may be, "M.A." after their names, though that is becoming year by year a less frequent possibility. The old-time standard of academic attainment has been rapidly lowered of late years in order to take in the constantly-diminishing number of candidates for "holy orders." Not that the parsons ordained under an earlier régime are, in the bulk, any the better for their University distinctions. Whatever their Alma Mater may have done for them, they remain, as a class, singularly deficient in real knowledge, and especially in practical common sense. Still, in a social way, the Church is preparing for herself a serious knock-back by the admission of ill-bred, ill-educated novitiates, who may not be tolerated in many circles as their predecessors were with the observation, said or unsaid: "Well, if he is a fool, he is at any rate a gentleman."

Styling himself "Reverend," the young curate naturally has to play up to the prefix. He does so as best he may. Possibly he is a mere babe, without the semblance of a hair on his lip, or an original idea in his head, or two consecutive sentences in his mouth which are not weak platitudes or meaningless scraps of "Holy Writ." Still he is "Reverend," and would be

mightily offended if it were suggested that he should postpone the use of the title till time and experience lent some degree of fitness to its application. In the circumstances, is it any wonder that he finds his chief solace and a sustenance of his self-respect in the company of silly and sentimental members of the so-called "weaker sex"? From them he can, at any rate, command a certain amount of sympathetic attention, personal deference, perhaps adulation—not to speak of an unlimited supply of altar decorations worked in precious gold and silk, flowers for festal purposes, and a docile attendance at Early Week-day Communion when the sterner sex are growling at the necessity for commencing another day's struggle with the business of the world.

This is all in regard to curates of a young and impressionable age. Now it seems that the Church is confronted with the problem what to do with her middle-aged or elderly ordained, but unbeneficed, servants. They are beginning to cry out like the poor unemployed who held meetings in Hyde Park not long since with that wail, partly despairing and partly ironical, of "Too Old at Forty!" Evidently the curate at forty is beginning to find that he is hopelessly left—that he is more on the shelf as regards his ecclesiastical prospects in life than maiden ladies of that age are supposed to be in respect to matrimony. Church papers for some time past have been filled with elderly curates' complaints. It might seem mean to cast in these unfortunate men's teeth some of their own professional teachings. Otherwise one might warn them against longing for the loaves and fishes, or for the flesh pots of Egypt, or laboring for the meat which perisheth, etc. Undoubtedly they find it galling to see men of not superior ability, of not more burning zeal, of not greater piety or more irreproachable character or more administrative tact, holding high positions, enjoying large emoluments, and even living in palaces and legislating in the House of Peers; whilst they, their own poor selves, and perhaps their families too, are practically starving. At least, so they put it.

Let us try to console them. In the first place, they and their families are not starving in the sense that hundreds of thousands of households are starving at the present moment in this "merrie England" of ours. They do not have to sell their beds to pay the rent, or pawn their clothes to buy a meal. And if they did—what then? Is not the Gospel they preach intended to be the very apotheosis of poverty? Are they not constantly setting forth Christ and his apostles as exemplars to the world? Christ had not where to lay his head. His disciples were equally poor, and were commanded to remain so when they were sent out to convert the world—which is the same mission these complaining curates are engaged on. What do the preachers of Christ's gospel want with even the "mere necessities" demanded by unregenerate worldlings? Not for them is it to live comfortable lives free from want or care; to provide gold or silver for their purses, to lay up treasures on earth, to take thought for the morrow, or to love the world and the things of the world, or accumulate riches that are deceitful and ought to be distributed to the poor. We have their assurance that they are not envious of the archbishops and bishops and deans and other high dignitaries of the Church. How could we suspect such a thing? They do not covet the handsome stipends ranging from £15,000 to £1,000 a year. Perish the thought! They do not desire to live in princely palaces or bask on the bishops'

bench. Far from it. But they *do* cast loving eyes at some of the nice fat livings sprinkled about the land. And, therefore, we tremble lest they should forget the seal which the Almighty has set against covetousness and envy, and we are concerned, with a deep and consuming concern, that they should not endanger their eternal safety by base and mercenary desires.

To come to these complaints in the concrete, we learn from one writer, signing himself "A Curate of much Experience," that the fault rests with incumbents. He says:—

"There is a spirit of jealousy abroad, to a great extent, which should not be; if a curate is a better preacher than the rector, he has to leave. What is quite apparent now is that men who have served thirty or forty years as curates are passed over both by bishops and patrons, and never get any preferment, while young men with no experience whatever are placed in parishes they are not fit for.....Too many of the young incumbents are given to hunting, fishing, and shooting, and all kinds of amusements quite foreign to a minister of the Gospel.....Bishops as well as rectors are forgetful of what they once were themselves—curates—now raised to the bench of bishops and to good livings, and they look down upon curates who hold the same orders as themselves. Bishops make too often rash promises they never intend to fulfil."

On the other hand, we learn, from a letter of the secretary to the Association for Benefiting Aged and Indigent Curates, that the tyrants of the situation are not the incumbents, but the young lady members of the congregations. They will not tolerate the curate of forty-five, but will metaphorically go down on their knees and worship a young curate if he is good looking and has private means. There is a great deal of human nature in this, and it shows itself whether the "grave and reverend seigniors" of the Church, with their hard, dry theology and ecclesiastical polity, like it or not. We do not see the possibility of preventing curates from growing old, and so passing the point of fascination for young lady church-goers; but still we cannot help agreeing with a Nonconformist journal which says: "It speaks ill, terribly ill, for a religious institution when a large proportion of its teaching faculty find their position defined for them, not by their education, their character, or their general fitness, but by the sentimental preferences of a number of love-sick girls."

FRANCIS NEALE.

Grant Allen.—II.

GRANT ALLEN'S head, not his heart, went wrong over this marriage question. Laws would hardly be necessary if all were wise and virtuous, but such a state of society is, to say the least of it, very remote from the present. Men and women have to be protected, not only from each other, but from themselves; and liberty itself would soon disappear in a universal licence of passion and conduct. Considering the average development of human nature, Grant Allen's proposal was one rather of destruction than of improvement. It resembled a proposal to cut off the head to cure the toothache. Not only did it, as Mr. Clodd points out, overlook the enormous complexity of the problem; not only did it show an astonishing ignorance of human nature, and of the everlasting economical difference between fatherhood and motherhood; but it displayed an amazing absence of mind on the part of a convinced and accomplished evolutionist, who was perfectly aware of the small, slow, and prolonged changes by which Nature achieves the progress of a species. Instead of suggesting the next practical step on the path of reform, he proposed a total revolution; and one for which the *élite* of our race, to say nothing of the multitude, are by no means prepared. "The effectiveness of his scheme," Mr. Clodd says, "must always be limited to the narrow zone where lofty conceptions of sex relations and of mutual obligation prevail." Yes, where they *prevail*; not where they merely *obtain*. And it may be doubted whether they prevail among the talking and writing classes any more than they do among the rest of the community. Indulgence in fine sentiments, expressed in beautiful language, is easy enough to persons of a certain temperament; but the discipline of actual life is generally a more difficult matter. One thing, however,

should be noted in this connection. Some social philosophers, like John Stuart Mill, for instance, with a preponderance of intellect and a lack of animality, are occasionally betrayed into ludicrous futility in dealing with sexual questions. They understand affection, but they do not understand passion; in particular, they have no intimate idea of the explosive force of the sexual passion in commoner organisms. And where their knowledge is at fault, their criticisms and suggestions are of very little utility. Sometimes, indeed, they are of less than no utility; being positively harmful in the actual circumstances.

Yes, it was Grant Allen's head, not his heart, that went wrong. He loved his wife devotedly, and was under no temptation to vagrant attachments—which, by a prostitution of the French word for love, are usually called *amours*. He even dedicated the *Woman Who Did* to his wife, in memory of his "twenty happiest years." And thereby hangs a joke. An evening newspaper printed an interview with Grant Allen when his "Evangel" was being talked about, ending with the words, "He is happily married;" and the printers made it read, "He is, happily, married." The punctuation looks deliberate rather than accidental. Perhaps the compositor, or the reader, was a bit of a wag; and for once, at any rate, his wit was happy, and proved him to be something of a philosopher.

Grant Allen's character seems to have been a fine one, as far as it went. "You know," Mr. George Meredith wrote to Mr. Clodd, "how highly I prized Grant Allen's literary work, and the warmth of my feeling for him personally." This is the tribute of one who should be a consummate judge of character. Nevertheless, there appears to have been a certain lack of *weight* in Allen. This impression is corroborated to us by his portrait. Perhaps the deficiency was due to his want of physical stamina. Constitution and temperament explain so many things! Allen was an Agnostic—or rather, as Mr. Clodd suggests, a positive Atheist. Yet he declined to write for definitely heretical publications, or to take part in any deliberate propaganda. "Advanced thought," he said, "only loses by isolation." "Slow half-hints," he added, "in the acknowledged organs of thought do far more good in the end. I have never believed in fighting; I believe in permeation." No doubt he was honest in assigning these reasons. But was he not, after all, only voicing the law of his own idiosyncrasy? And is not Mr. Clodd only voicing the impulse of personal friendship when he backs up Allen by saying that he had learnt "the barrenness of controversy," and that "delusions and errors do not perish by debate," but "under the slow and steady operation of changes to which they are unable to adapt themselves"? There is truth in these propositions; but it is only a partial truth; and, such as it is, Allen himself forgot it in the *Woman Who Did*—that is to say, when he was intensely in earnest. Mr. Clodd, too, is soon impelled to advance qualifications and reservations. Only a couple of pages further on, he sneers at these "acknowledged organs of thought" as timid trucklers, affording the smallest of chances even to the least aggressive of advanced publicists. "As if," Mr. Clodd exclaims, "any reform was ever instituted, or abuse swept away, without wounding some ignorant or bigoted person's susceptibilities!"

The sane philosophy in this matter is to let every soldier of progress do what he can, following the law of his own temperament, and recognising the same right and duty on the part of others. It is folly for one temperament to quarrel with another for being different. The bolder are somewhat apt to despise the less bold as cowardly, but that is usually a mistake. On the other hand, the less bold are still more apt to sneer at the bolder as vulgar and froward, which is usually a greater mistake.

Let us now turn to Grant Allen's latest important work—in a sense, the work of his lifetime. For twenty years he gathered material for his intended *magnus opus*—an "Inquiry into the Origins of Religions." For ten years he was engaged in writing the first instalment of this work, which he published in 1897 under the title of *The Evolution of the Idea of God*. This title was suggested to him by Mr. Herbert Spencer. Allen had meant to call it "The Evolution of God." But he was dissuaded from doing so by his philosophical Master.

"It will be a fatal step," Mr. Spencer wrote to him. "The expression is sufficient to shock not only the orthodox, but no end of people who are extremely liberal in their theology, and you would tend by using it still further to diminish your public." Mr. Spencer also pointed out that Allen's title was illogical. "You do not believe in God's reality," he said, "and, therefore, propose to trace the evolution of a thing which, according to you, does not exist." Of course, there is a great deal of force in this objection, but one is tempted to ask whether it would have been urged against a book on (say) "The Evolution of Witchcraft," in which Allen no more believed than he did in God.

Seven hundred and fifty copies of Allen's big book were sold in a few weeks; and, as the price was twenty shillings net, the result was fairly good business. "I congratulate you," Mr. Spencer wrote to him, "on its achievement. I had no idea you had been devoting such an immensity of labor and research to the subject. The bringing together of the evidence in a coherent form and showing its bearing on the current creed can scarcely fail to have a great effect." The book did not, however, as Mr. Clodd says, evoke the discussion which Allen expected. This may have been partly due to the cause which Mr. Clodd assigns; namely, public indifference to the discussion of serious subjects. But as the book had an excellent sale a supplementary reason must be looked for. We venture to suggest that the book would have excited greater interest if it had been published ten years earlier. When it was published it was no longer anything like a bombshell.

Grant Allen's masterpiece was reviewed in the *Freethinker* at the time of its publication by the late J. M. Wheeler, and some correspondence passed subsequently between the author and the reviewer, both sides of which are probably lost. Allen thanked his critic for some useful suggestions, which he said he intended to make use of in the next edition of his book.

There is a very interesting letter in this Memoir from Mr. J. G. Frazer, the author of that remarkable and extremely able work entitled *The Golden Bough*—with whom also, by the way, Mr. Wheeler had some correspondence. Mr. Frazer admitted that ancestor worship, or the fear of ghosts, had been "on the whole the most important factor in the evolution of religious belief." But he attached more importance than Allen did to Animism—the subject of Dr. Tylor's magnificent treatise. "Primitive man, it seems to me," he wrote, "instinctively attributes conscious life to all or most inanimate objects, quite apart from any idea that the ghosts of his ancestors are about, and may be in those objects." The same view was held by Darwin, and harmonises with what we know of the mental condition of very young children, and even that of some of the lower animals. A dog barking at an object moved by the wind, or at clouds passing over the moon, shows a state of mind that the primitive man must have advanced through to the subtler conception of ghosts. Besides, it seems clear that man must have formed the idea of a soul within himself before he could have conceived the idea of disembodied souls in his surroundings.

Allen himself did not believe in the soul or a future life. He was once drowned, in the sense that he had lost consciousness, and would have known no more if he had not been rescued. There was "a fierce wild struggle" and "a horrible choking sensation," and then "all was over." It was not so bad as breaking your arm or having your tooth drawn. The actual dying was "quite painless—as painless as falling asleep." For this reason, if for no other, he had no fear of death, which he said should have "absolutely no terrors for a sensible person." Mr. Clodd holds that Allen's "absence of belief in a future life" was "the logical outcome, not so much of denial, as of what would seem congenital incapacity to conceive that there could be such a thing as the supernatural." But does not this theory betray some confusion? There are Spiritualists, for instance, who do not believe in God, and repudiate all forms of supernaturalism; yet they believe in the soul and in a future life, on what they regard as grounds of natural evidence, which many of them think amounts to a positive demonstration.

"I am not, and never was, an Agnostic," Allen once wrote to the *London Echo*. He was not an Agnostic because he was more than an Agnostic. The Agnostic

says, "I don't know." Allen, on the contrary, said "There is nothing to be known." Such is the testimony of his most intimate friend, and he may therefore be classed with the positive Atheists.

Mr. Clodd will pardon us for reminding him, at this point, that the "taunt" that "the best excuse for God is that he does not exist," was not uttered in view of the world's gross and often revolting conceptions of deity. The author of that "taunt" was Henry Beyle (De Stendhal), and he said it in view of the facts of nature, life, and history; his meaning being that, as this world goes, its alleged moral governor is simply inexcusable. We do not suppose for a moment that Mr. Clodd is anxious not to ruffle the feelings of "pure Theists," as they are sometimes called; just as though the constant cruelties of nature were not far worse than the spasmodic cruelties of men! On the very same page Mr. Clodd rebukes Mr. Andrew Lang for saying that, in a certain crisis, Allen "acted like a Christian." This is one of those impertinences which Christians mistake for flattery. "All noble acts," Mr. Clodd observes, "lie outside the creeds; and the assumption that the impulse to these acts is a monopoly of Christianity has no warrant either in past or present history."

If space permitted, we could make some interesting gleanings from this little volume. A few must suffice. There is a characteristic letter from Huxley, in which Jack Falstaff is truly and honestly called "a great philosopher." There is a monumental letter from a reader who had noticed Allen's statement in a novel that "Browning was splendid for the nerves," and wanted to know the address where he could obtain "the thing." There is a rather ridiculous reference to Comte, showing that Allen did not appreciate the real greatness of that thinker. Lastly, there is a letter from Mr. Herbert Spencer, written in a pessimistic mood, declaring that "we are in course of rebarbarisation," and asserting that "there is no prospect but that of military despotisms, which we are rapidly approaching." Much as we admire and respect Mr. Spencer, we hope he is a false prophet on this occasion. We trust that Mr. Spencer himself has not lived and taught in vain, and that the bright, strenuous existence of Grant Allen has not been wasted upon the modern world. After all, it is possible for the wisest men to be mistaken; and prophecy is always the riskiest of intellectual exercise. G. W. FOOTE.

Christ and our Social System.

THE social condition of the people who exist in what is termed "Christian England" is still engaging the attention, not only of the secular reformer, but also of the religious thinker. The evils which for ages have dominated society are recognised in all their terrible magnitude, and various are the remedies which are constantly being put forward for the purpose of removing the wrongs that have so long retarded the attainment of individual happiness and national progress. The social unrest that was indicated in the Republic of Plato, the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, and the Phalanstère of Fourier, is becoming more and more manifest in our midst. Francis Bacon was not far wrong when he wrote that "the great multiplication of virtues upon human nature resteth upon societies well ordained and disciplined." Such ordaining and disciplining cannot possibly be more effectually secured than by carefully considering, with a view to their correction, the evils of the past and the shortcomings of the present, so that fair prospects may reasonably be entertained of a better and happier future.

It is too true that many of our institutions, having emanated from laws based upon ignorance of the real requirements of human nature, have been the means of keeping people imbecile in mind and wretchedly poor in body. These institutions and laws still keep many persons in idleness and compel them to be dead-weight upon industry, and also to perpetuate pauperism, foster bad habits, and encourage crime. The great ethical science is ignored, and, while the primary causes of physical diseases are lost sight of or neglected, millions of money and much valuable time are wasted

in every generation in futile endeavors to effect a partial cure of the diseases thus engendered. The present state of society is something worse than artificial; it is opposed to the welfare of mankind, it causes degradation, injustice, and cruelty. That a change for the better will take place is the hope of every well-wisher to his kind. The question of the hour is: What can be done to radically reform our social system? Its deplorable condition is generally admitted, but the problem remains: What is the remedy?

Amongst the many attempts to answer this question is one made by the editor of the *Church Gazette*, in its issue of June 30, in a leading article, headed "Christianity and the Social System." Like most proposed remedies emanating from Christian sources, the editor's effort is marred by an unjustifiable, slavish adherence to a professed belief in Christ as the fountain of all genuine social reforms. It is, in my opinion, this absurd adoration of Jesus that has tended in a large degree to perpetuate the very evils that every social reformer should desire to remove. The editor justly says:—

"What these evils consist of is already known to everyone sufficiently well to require mere indication. There is the contrast between accumulating wealth and corresponding luxury, and increased poverty and sweating. There is the dull monotony of the conditions of labor, and the rapidly-growing curse of overcrowding. Along with all this there are the attendant evils of drink and immorality, which are more often the effects than the causes of the conditions which induce and often almost compel them; and there is the outlook which has to be faced on behalf of the rising generation, which is being brought up amidst these ghastly surroundings. But along with all this it is no less a fact that the concomitant evils just pointed to—those of poverty, preventable suffering, vice, and class separation—these are not on the decrease, but on the increase, and that they prevail at this moment probably much more widely in this country than has ever before been the case."

The question, however, arises: Why do the evils here named still exist? The answer is: Because the remedies that have hitherto been applied have been found inadequate to successfully grapple with the evils that crowd our social system. The great mistake has been made in relying too much upon Christ to do what evidently he was incapable of accomplishing. In no sense was he a real social reformer; and, according to the New Testament, he never propounded any principles by which the evils we deplore could be either prevented or removed. Even the Rev. Lyman Abbott, who is an enthusiastic admirer of Jesus, admits, in his *Christianity and Social Problems*, that—

"Christ made almost no attempt to change the social order or the social organism. The system of taxation which prevailed in the Roman Empire was abominably unjust. Christ said never a word about taxation. Labor was not only underpaid and ill-paid, but, for the most part, worked with its hands in manacles; but Christ said never a word about slavery. If drinking and drunkenness were not as bad in their forms then as they are now, by reason of the modern use of distilled liquors, then comparatively unknown, drinking habits and animalism, in all its forms, were worse in Greece than they have ever been in America; but Christ never levelled his shafts against the liquor trade or the making of wine" (p. 130).

The fact is, Christ not only abstained from denouncing many of the prominent evils and vices of his time, but many of his alleged teachings would, if they were acted upon, tend to augment them. If this be doubted, the reader is advised to carefully study the following passages in the New Testament:—Matthew v. 5, 39, 40, 41, 42; vi. 19, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34; xix. 21; Luke vi. 20, 24; John vi. 27. Now, it would be very interesting to note any attempt to practically apply the teachings contained in the above passages to our present social conditions. If such an attempt were made, Peter's words would be applicable to the victims of such Christian fanaticism when he said: "The latter end is worse with them than the beginning." Many of the sayings attributed to Christ may suit ideal conditions, but they are useless for real ones. No doubt they served their purpose in days of ignorance, non-self-reliance, and asceticism; but in this age, when knowledge, personal effort, and co-operative enterprise predominate, such sayings have no practical value.

The editor of the *Church Gazette* appears to be quite alive to our present imperfect social conditions, but the

remedy which he suggests would be, in my estimation, as bad, if not worse, than the disease. Hence, in reply to the question, What remains to be done? the editor says:—

"To our thinking, the answer is that he [man] must follow the footsteps of his Master. He accepted the Roman yoke, though who can doubt that He saw all the iniquities of Cæsarism? Yet he submitted to the survival of these iniquities, while all the while He laid down a set of principles which, in the fulness of time, were destined to supplant Cæsarism."

Here we have a fair specimen of the fanaticism of fetish worship which at the present time is so prevalent amongst those who are termed "advanced Christians." In their own minds they form an ideal character, which they ascribe to the founder of Christianity; while they entirely ignore his real character as set forth in the Four Gospels. Why is this? Is it because they cannot any longer defend the real Jesus of the New Testament, and yet lack courage to say so? In religious circles it is fashionable to bow to the name of Jesus, while the very persons who do so dare not attempt to either emulate his conduct or obey his teachings. The truth is, the Church is honeycombed with hypocrisy. The writer of this article experienced recently a striking illustration of this. After a lecture he gave at West Ham, the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale offered some opposition, and extolled to the highest the character and teachings of Christ. No doubt what he said would pass current in his pulpit or in a Sunday school, but in a debate it proves "sound and fury, signifying nothing." I told the rev. gentleman as much, and offered to publicly discuss with him the character and teachings of Christ. Up to the present time he has not accepted my offer, and I do not expect he ever will. Mr. Woffendale is not backward in saying what he can do, but he is exceedingly reticent in trying to do it. Two of his misled followers have written asking me why I do not meet their champion in discussion. My answer is, because he is not willing to debate. If he is, I am ready to affirm "that the character and teachings of Christ are defective and impracticable." Now let the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale accept my invitation, or for ever hold his peace.

To return to the remedy the editor of the *Church Gazette* gives for social evils. He says man must follow the footsteps of Jesus. But this is just what no man can do; and no one but a lunatic or a criminal would try. Let the editor attempt to practise the injunctions set forth in the passages from the New Testament referred to above. He says Christ accepted the Roman yoke and submitted to the iniquities of Cæsarism. This, however, is what he should not have done. As a social reformer, he should have endeavored to break the yoke and to destroy the iniquities. To remain inactive in the midst of oppression and wrong is to evince either cowardice or inability—two failings which would deprive the possessor of the right to be regarded as a social reformer. The editor says Christ "laid down a set of principles which, in the fulness of time, were destined to supplant Cæsarism." Where are those principles? Let them be produced, and I will endeavor to deal with them. But why delay the application of good principles? If they are capable of improving society, the sooner they are applied the better for one and all. Besides, to propound principles is not enough for regenerating purposes. What is required is the knowledge how to properly apply them to societarian conditions, and this knowledge Christ has not supplied; therefore the amelioration of our social status must come from other sources than Christ or his teachings.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Clergy and Debate.

FOR nearly three months a discussion, initiated by the energetic secretary of the Newcastle Branch of the N. S. S., has been running through the columns of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* on the subject of "Why won't parsons debate?" The Secular side has been ably championed by a number of the members of the Newcastle Society, although it has been more than they could do to get a straightforward answer to their simple query. Both parties have expressed much surprise—one

that the clergy should not be more ready to discuss the claims of their religion, the other that these gentlemen should be expected to stand on the same platform with those whose avowed object is the destruction of their faith.

It may be granted, at the outset, that there is considerable justification for the surprise of both parties. From the Secular side it would seem that the best men to champion the claims of Christianity are those who are professionally trained as its exponents, and who, for the most part, profess to be "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost" to the work. The layman who tackles a Secular lecturer generally labors under certain strong disadvantages. He has probably never made the subject a special study, he is usually unaccustomed to the public platform, and the conditions of warfare are never, as a result, quite equal. All these disadvantages are obviated in the case of the clergy. They have had the training, and, presumably, the study; and, in seeking to draw the clergy into a discussion of the value of Christianity, the Secularist is seeking to abolish all removable inequalities, and to place the opponents on an equal footing.

On the other hand, the Christian asks the Secularist the counter query: Why should the parson debate? And this, again, is a question that need surprise no one who knows the history and tendencies of the clergy. The parson is in possession, his interests are protected by law, his teachings are sanctified by custom, and thus lifted beyond the level of ordinary criticism. In any discussion he stands to lose all and gain nothing. The utmost he can hope to do is to remain as he was and keep the number of his followers intact. Experience has taught him, however, that in matters of debate even this much is seldom accomplished. The number of those who have had their faith shaken as the result of listening to discussions between Christians and Freethinkers might be counted by hundreds. In every discussion the Secularist is doing more than merely breaking down the arguments of the disputant on the other side of the table; he is at the same time breaking down the religious convictions of many of his hearers and introducing heretical ideas for the first time to many others. Let us be fair, even to the clergy, and let us admit that the principal reason for the clergy declining discussion is that they lose in position, in influence, in the number of their adherents, by nearly every debate in which they engage. The sensible ones are beginning to see this; and, as a result, the clerical opponents one meets are roughly divisible into two classes—one seeking self-aggrandisement as the result of their platform advertising, the other too stupid to see the strength of the enemy's position or to realise the weakness of their own. There is only one cause that *might* be expected to induce the clergy to engage in discussion, and that is the love of truth; but it would be shutting our eyes to all that is known of the history of clericalism to expect that to rank as a very powerful motive. The clergy have never regarded it as part of their function to assist in the discovery of truth or in the enlargement of knowledge. Every priesthood on the face of the earth has been substantially the same in this respect—animated by the same motives, striving for the same ends, and seeking to realise them by the same means. They have always regarded themselves as the repositories and defenders of old ideas rather than the discoverers and elaborators of new ones. Their advice to the young men and women committed to their care is never, Read, search, study all that comes in your way; but always, Don't read this, don't study that, don't search there—it will disturb your faith and shatter your beliefs. As though a belief that needed to be sheltered from every breath of criticism was one worthy of any serious right-minded man or woman.

The successive revision and modification of ideas in the light of new knowledge is alien to the clerical mind, and absolutely fatal to its pretensions. Advanced opinions have probably less influence over the clergy than over any class of the community. If ever the parson is found in the ranks of reformers, it is not usually that he is attracted there by any love of reform, but simply because the competition of sects has forced him into a momentary alliance with the enemies of his order. Generally, however, he believes, with Lamb, that "Next to making a child an infidel is the

letting him know that there are infidels at all," and hopes, by pursuing an ostrich-like policy and treating the world as though unbelief formed no appreciable portion of its intellectual furniture, to keep his flock firm to the faith of their fathers.

In shirking discussion, the clergy are only demonstrating that the experience of the past thirty or forty years has not been quite wasted. Forty years since the clergy were ready enough to debate. Aggressive Atheism was then a comparatively new thing so far as the mass of the people were concerned, and it was imagined that its unsoundness might be easily demonstrated. And so they came, they fought, and went away resolved never to fight again. The duller began to recognise that beliefs which were listened to with the utmost gravity when propounded from a pulpit sent an audience into fits of laughter when preached from an open platform. Wild, random, and misleading statements that might be made with the utmost impunity in church or chapel, where no talking back is allowed, became a much more serious matter when there stood, a few feet away, someone ready and able to expose the true nature of such assertions. In what debate would a man like the Rev. Mr. Horton have ventured to tell a deliberate falsehood concerning the religious opinions of Mill, Dr. Clifford, or Dean Farrar to give four references, for a statement concerning the character of Roman women, three of which had absolutely no existence outside his own heated imagination? There can be no question that the clergyman who understands his own position thoroughly learns to distrust open discussion, and with reason.

For the profession of a clergyman does not, for the most part, represent a belief that has been adopted as the result of mature conviction, and which is to be defended with all the energy in one's possession. It is simply a trade, generally selected by a man's parents, and often because their son is not sharp enough or intelligent enough for anything else. It is a trade adopted much as a man adopts the law, medicine, commerce, or literature, only with greater promise for mediocrity that is held out by any of these other branches. Under these conditions, one can hardly expect a band of commercial travellers—and the clergy are this to a considerable extent—to indulge in any course of conduct that would tend to fix their customer's attention on the unserviceable quality of the goods in which they deal.

And then, finally, a very powerful cause of the present attitude of the clergy towards discussion is the fact that intellectual forces appeal to them in a constantly decreasing ratio. At a much earlier period of our national history the Church did, in virtue of its wealth and national prestige, succeed in enlisting in its service some of the best intellect of the day. Christianity did not then present the glaring social and intellectual anomaly it has since become. Men of real intellectual power might enlist themselves in its service, and the inherent absurdity of the faith was obscured to the eyes of the world by the wit and wisdom of those who stood forward as its champions. But with each step of national development the Church found its intellectual grip of the people slipping away. Not only were fresh difficulties in the way of accepting Christianity created by the different lines of development in science, literature, and political life, but fresh channels of employment were opened, and the Churches found successful competitors in the growing intellectual life of the nation. True, the Churches could, and do now for the matter of that, still *purchase* champions, but these were necessarily of a decreasing order of intelligence. It is now a common complaint at each of our universities that young men of promise will not take divinity studies. They prefer the wider and more intellectually honest career opened by science or literature, and the outside world shows its approval of their decision by the decreasing respect shown to the clerical profession.

No, when all things are considered, it is not surprising that the clergy shun discussion. A willingness to debate must at least argue one of two things. In its higher aspect it assumes the possession of beliefs that will stand the most careful and rigorous examination, and that people can be convinced of their truth; on lower grounds, it assumes a capability of so imposing

upon an audience that it will mistake declamation for argument and assertion for proof. That fundamental Christian beliefs will *not* stand careful examination is becoming more evident with each generation. And the democratisation of knowledge renders the last course increasingly risky. The old appeals to passion, to ignorance, to interest, are still made, but with questionable success. Unbelief is no longer a *rara avis*; it is broadcast, it is present among high and low, educated and uneducated. The clergy, in spite of their silence, know this, and wisely prefer silence to speech, hoping by a policy of silence to defer the fate that sooner or later overtakes all shams.

C. COHEN.

That Pippin.

CHRISTIANITY is based upon the story of the Fall. In Adam all sinned, as in Christ all must be saved. To this doctrine St. Paul gives his sanction, and they may be disregarded who, without any claim to inspiration, endeavor to explain the narrative as an allegory. If Adam did not really fall, he could not have been cursed for falling, and his posterity could neither have partaken in a sin which was never committed nor in a malediction which was never pronounced. Original sin is a false doctrine if our first parents did not transmit the germs of iniquity. If Adam did not fall, there was no need for Christ to save us; if he did not set God and man at variance, there was no necessity for an atonement; and so the Christian scheme would be a *fiasco* from beginning to end. This will never do. No Garden of Eden, no Gethsemane! No Fall, no Redemption! No Adam, no Christ!

Mother Eve's curiosity was the cause of the first sin. The whole human race was made liable to damnation through her partiality for fruit. Millions of souls now writhe in hell because she took a bite of an apple.

This forbidden apple, which "brought death into the world and all our woe," grew on the Tree of Knowledge, which God planted in the midst of the Garden of Eden, sternly ordering Adam and Eve not to eat of it on pain of death. They might eat of the fruit of every other tree but this one. "See," said Jehovah, "what lovely pippins! Scarlet and dark gold on the sunny side, and on the shady side as soft and mellow as the amber tints of an autumn sunset. But don't touch them. They are my special preserve. If I find a single one missing, you'll wish you were never born."

Now the Lord must have been very simple to protect his pippins in this way. It was the height of absurdity to tell a woman she might do everything but one, without expecting her to do it. Naturally she thought of nothing else. Had the Lord said nothing about the apples, or told her she *must* eat them, they might have been hanging on the tree to this very day.

But not only did the Lord allow Eve's curiosity to prompt her to "sin," he permitted the serpent "more subtil than any beast of the field" to egg her on. This wily creature is supposed to have been animated, on this occasion, by the Devil, although the text does not allude to such a circumstance. If it *was* the Devil, masquerading as a snake, what chance had the poor woman against his seductive wiles?

One day Adam went fishing or something, and Eve went off to look at the pippins. At the foot of the tree, or somewhere handy, she saw "the old serpent," who saluted her with great civility. "Good day, ma'am," said he; and, instead of running away from the talking snake, the lady joined in the conversation, and business began. Old Nick observed that the pippins looked lovely. She assented, but said she was afraid to touch them. "If I do," she said, "I shall die." "Who told you so?" asked Satan. "Why HE," replied Mrs. Eve. "What HE?" "Oh, the gentleman who made us." "Die!" laughed Old Nick; "tut, tut, ma'am, look at me; I've eaten bushels." Thereupon he plucked off one with his tail, for want of hands, and held it out to her. The temptation was irresistible. Poor Eve took it, put her front teeth into it, found it nice, went off to find Adam, and they sat down together to apple luncheon.

Immediately she took the fruit, according to Milton, who is a kind of supplementary Bible to English Protestants—

Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.

What a rumpus about a trifle! It reminds us of the Jew who had a sneaking love for pork. One day he went into a restaurant and ordered sausages. As he was taking the first mouthful there was a loud clap of thunder. This was followed by another clap as he tried again, and that by a third. At last he threw down the knife and fork and made for the door, exclaiming, "What a frightful fuss about a bit of pork."

—From "Bible Romances" (*Eve and the Apple*), by
G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

ABOUT two years ago the Missionary and Bible Societies of England and America presented the Empress of China with a magnificently printed and decorated copy of "Holy Scripture." It was accepted very blandly, and the astute old lady promised to give it her best attention. We suppose the massacre of the Christian missionaries is the result.

A writer in the *Church Gazette* asks: "Is it not time that we began to seriously consider whether it is worth while to send missions to India and China?" He speaks from experience he has had in India, where he says the missionaries "expound Christianity in such a crude manner that the natives, who are very subtle of argument, at once perceive the utter childishness of it all."

The *People*, in its last issue, publishes some outspoken notes on Christian missions. The writer—one of its regular contributors—says that, if he had his way, he would not readily permit missionaries either in China or India. Assuredly he would not allow women to accompany them. "Where nations have a religion of their own that was ancient when we were savages, they might be left to practise it without interference except when it indulges in *suttee* and other barbarities. Ancient peoples, such as the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindoo, and the Mohammedan, might well be left to their own ethical resources. If you read between the lines of the recent speech by Lord Salisbury, you will be inclined to think that this opinion is his also."

"The worst of it is," continues the *People* contributor, "the Christianised Mongolian and woman, and their children, whenever there is a rising against the missionaries, become victims of the rebel. In the first place, the missionary loses his life, his women are brutally martyred, then their converts are massacred, and presently, when the Great Powers appear upon the scene, a holocaust is made of the fanatics who have killed the Christians: so that too often the result of the missioning is a vast deal of misery and murder.... To practically neglect the heathen at home, the poor and wretched of our own race, the children of the gutter, and the aged pauper, while we pour our wealth into the lap of China, sowing, as we think, good seed only to reap tares, must strike calm, sensible people as a very questionable good, not to say a grave neglect of our own people."

We send out Christian missions which involve us in all sorts of foreign embroilments. But the poor at home may die in blessed ignorance of the Gospel unless parsons can get paid for preaching it. Here are the inmates of the Bangor Workhouse in a state of "spiritual destitution" from this cause. The Vicar of Bangor, who did conduct some voluntary services for a time, declines to continue them. All the other clergymen in the Union have been invited, but refuse to take the work on. They want a stipend. Meanwhile it is not at all certain that the inmates require their services. One would really like to take a vote amongst them, male and female, whether they would have the parson or a special allowance of tobacco and tea.

It isn't safe to leave much to Providence. There's no knowing what he may or may not do. An old minister, who was visiting his hearers, accosted a humble farmer who had been slow with his crops in the harvest season. "I hear, Jamie," said the minister, "that ye are behind with your harvest?" "Oh, sir," was the reply, "I hae got it all in except three wee stacks, and I leave them to the mercy of Providence!"

Talking about "Providence," a funny thing happened the other day at a Private Bill Committee of the House of Commons. The proceedings were interrupted by a crashing peal of thunder, and the Chairman cried: "Order, order. There was no repetition of the disturbance."

Pierre Loti, the famous French writer, contributes to the *Paris Figaro* a long account of how the famine shows itself at Jeypore. "They are parched up and fleshless," he says of a huddled crowd, "the merest skin and bone. They must be mummies. But no, they have life. Their eyelids move, and, seeing strangers, they look at them and try to rise. There are even two or three who stand up on long bands that can hardly be called legs." Here is another frightful picture: "A young woman with a child on her parched breast goes up to a merchant who is eating, and asks for a mouthful. He refuses, and she howls like a famished she-wolf."

And what is the cause of all this awful misery? "Two rainy seasons have passed," Pierre Loti says, "without bringing a cloud. The meadows are without a sign of herbage, the trees without a leaf. Whole territories look like the desert." Good old "Providence."

Rev. Albert James Gunner, curate of Holy Trinity, Woodford, got drunk, perhaps in order to "remember his misery

no more," according to Bible directions. He also went to Liverpool-street Station and tried to kiss Miss Dudley Mumford, who resented his pious and inebriate attentions. The reverend reveler was subsequently fined £5 and costs by a callous magistrate, who was unable to make proper allowance for the motions of the spirit.

Spurgeon's Tabernacle is to be opened after rebuilding free of debt. The sum of £3,500 was acquired to complete the payment of the big bill, and Pastor Thomas Spurgeon—a true chip of the old block in some things—set apart a day on which he sat personally at the receipt at custom. The faithful brought in their offerings, ranging from £250 down to 3½d., the last sum being contributed by a tiny child in farthings. A poor working woman who had just lost her husband gave sixpence. Pastor Thomas Spurgeon took it.

Henry Mew, confectioner, 74 Abbotsford-street, Nottingham, according to his own statement, is maker of "the noted home-made butterscotch." He is also pious. One of his paper-shop-bags lies before us, and there is printed on it a set of "Rules for Daily Life." The first is "Never neglect your prayers." The twelfth and last is "Ask God to help you, for Christ's sake." We suggest a thirteenth, to make up the baker's dozen: "Eat our butterscotch." But perhaps that would be too satirical right on the heels of the twelfth.

The Christian Endeavorers, lots of whom have come over from America, are booming their monster gathering at Alexandra Park in the best Trans-Atlantic style. They draw attention to the fact that "the Palace itself cost £350,000 to build," that "the central transept will accommodate a meeting of upwards of 10,000 persons," that one of the American tents will seat 9,000 persons, and that "the Palace caterer will have on the spot a plant worth about £10,000." Evidently there is to be nothing miraculous in the victualling department. No multiplication of loaves and fishes, no changing of water into wine. Meat and drink are to be provided as though it were a vulgar beanfeast. "Give us this day our daily bread" will be uttered with the consciousness that the caterer has seen to it beforehand.

The word "Melchizedek" excels in force "every damn that ever was made." So says Silas Dowson, a converted old rogue, in one of Mr. Orme Angus's new volumes of stories entitled *Jan Oxber*. This bears out our statement that the Bible may be regarded as the swearer's manual.

M. Lasies, the French deputy who ran amuck in the Chamber the other day, would not gain a prize in a beauty show. The Paris correspondent of the *Daily News* describes him as "a small, dark-haired, wiry, fiery Frenchman belonging to the class of priest-ridden, credulous, and fanatical Frenchmen, as ignorant of the foreign world as a Chinese boy, and as full of national importance."

H. Franklin Bouillon, writing from Paris to the *Morning Leader*, gives an account of "Clericalism in France." He points out that the Clerical party, in seeking to overthrow the Republic, turned their attention to the public schools, and especially to the schools in which the children of the middle classes are educated. By this means they have captured the "classes," if not the "masses." Their pupils, in the army, the navy, and elsewhere, hate the Republican *regime*. France is divided into two distinct nations, one serving Republican ideas, and the other serving clerical reaction. "The Republicans," this writer says, "seem to have realised at last that the continuance of this state of things would spell the doom of the Republic." They will have to enter upon a new anti-clerical campaign if the Republic is to be saved.

We drew attention last week to the latest dodge of the Chapel party at Birmingham to prevent the Church party from getting control of the Board schools. Instead of allowing the old plan to continue of religious instruction being given on the voluntary system, they propose that it shall be given by the teachers; and, according to the *Daily Argus*, the "authorised religious curriculum would be of such a nature as to reconcile the views at any rate of all types of Protestant belief, from High Anglicanism to Unitarianism." But what about non-Protestants? What about Freethinkers, Secularists, Atheists, and Agnostics? What about Jews? What about Roman Catholics? Is the Board school system, which is supported by all ratepayers, to be run on the Protestant family-party basis? And if the attempt be made, is it really possible to "reconcile" the views of the various Protestant denominations? Reconciliation, in this case, can only mean elimination. Everything must be cut away except what all Protestants agree about. And what do they agree about? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Why, the Unitarians, who are mentioned by the *Argus*, deny the deity of Jesus Christ, and many of them reject the Bible never will, for the points eliminated are just the very points on which sects divide, and which they always regard as of transcendent importance.

Dr. George C. Lorimer, of Boston, U.S.A., has been discouraging at Leytonstone on "The Human in the Divine." Evidently he put the cart before the horse, for what he meant was the Divine in the Human. He was endeavoring to explain the human element in the Bible, as if indeed there was anything else. He said: "God used men through whom to make known His will, and they expressed what was revealed in their own way." So that, if there was any revelation at all, it was to them and not to us, and we are to take it as they choose to give it us "in their own way." May we not, under the circumstances, prefer to be excused?

"When the doors were opened there was a dense throng. Then commenced the usual fight to get in. Ladies were lifted off their feet and badly used, and men were seen tearing and struggling as if they were in a football scrimmage." And for what? Why, to hear Sheldon. Isn't the world full of fools?

As we expected, the article in the *Christian World* on "The Mission of Illusion" has created some consternation in the religious camp. A correspondent writes to the *C. W.* that portions of it are "likely to unsettle the belief and impair the earnestness of young Christians." Poor dears, what a shame to shock 'em, and in a Christian journal too. "What does the writer mean?" asks the indignant correspondent, and he quotes a passage on which he remarks: "This sounds very like infidelity, and many other passages in his letter leave a similar impression." Suppose they do; the point is not whether they sound like "infidelity," but whether they are true. The editor adds a note in which he works out some fine gush about the "claims and power of Christ's religion," but fails to improve the situation.

The Gospel of St. John winds up, as Paine says, with a "thumping good lie." The said lie is as follows: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books" (John xxi. 25). In the fatuous fashion of his class, the Rev. Dr. George Matheson selected this verse as his text the other day, and a religious journal has published his sermon upon it. He does not seem to perceive the absurdity of the text. He takes it as Gospel truth. He does not tell us why we are left in ignorance of all these things. He does not deal with the very natural supposition that, if the records we have are so precious, the extraordinary mass of incident and no doubt of sayings which we have not might have comprised matter of the highest importance. Perhaps, after all, it is as well that we are not favored with the whole lot, for if John isn't a liar there would have been no room for any other books in the world, and we wouldn't like to be deprived of some that we possess even for an extended history of Jesus.

Speaking of the dearth of candidates for "holy orders," the Archbishop of Canterbury admits that "religious doubts still remain as an obstacle, and operate a good deal, certainly in public schools and universities."

Christians in Khaki is the title of a book just published. The author displays a lordly indifference to facts. For instance, he says: "One aspect of this war will never be forgotten, and that is the reverent recognition of God in the despatches of our Generals." There was, it is true, a pious allusion by Roberts, but one swallow does not make a summer. The *Rock* rightly describes the statement as one which, with a few exceptions, is not borne out by the facts. And it exclaims "Alas!" But why "alas"? Formal despatches are not the proper vehicles wherein to air one's piety.

At last the Peculiar People are disposed of—in an argumentative way. The *Church Times* has come down on them with a crusher. It says: "In their ignorance, they do not recognise that their prayers may be answered by the material means of the human agents employed by God." But there is no "may" about it. The promise is definitely "will." And the material means are specially excluded. In order to answer the Peculiar, the *Church Times* is obliged to go right away from the Scriptural injunctions on which they rely. Take James v. 14, 15: "Is there any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Now where do doctors, medicines, any kind of human agency, apart from the elders and the oil, come in? If there is "ignorance" on the part of the Peculiar, there is either imbecility or dishonesty on the part of such organs as the *Church Times* in attempting to dismiss the matter by deliberately ignoring the sole basis of discussion.

The kinoscope people missed a good thing by not having their machine for taking pictures in the Evangelical church of Penn Runn, Indiana county, Pa., at the last business meeting of that body. The mix-up was between the pastor and the deacons, and is thus detailed: Deacons Cameron and Mentch became involved in a controversy, Mentch finally

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attacking Cameron. The Rev. Mr. Strayer attempted to separate the combatants, and Mentch was thrown between two pews with the minister on top. Disliking the under-dog situation, Deacon Mentch punched his pastor in the face, whereupon Deacon Cameron whacked his colleague on the head with a poker. Mentch, still full of fight, threw the poker at Cameron, and alleges that at this juncture the Rev. Mr. Strayer jumped on his head. Informations charging and counter-charging assault and battery have been made as a result, and all the participants in the row are now under bail.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The editor of the New York *Sun*, being asked to explain his sentence, "Take away the creed and there is no Christ," replies that belief in the deity of Jesus Christ is the essence of Christianity. "If a man," he says, "does not start with this belief, there is no Christ for him—only Jesus as a human teacher of doctrines that may be accepted or rejected like all other human productions—like the teachings of Confucius, for instance—on their bare merits. But that is not religious belief; that is not believing in Christ as divine, and in Christianity as a religion. It is the agnostic or infidel view." We quite agree with this substantially, and have often said so.

The Sabbatarians are not to have it all their own way at Bournemouth, after all. Consequent upon the recent decision of the Town Council to grant in future only six days' licences, a meeting of the shareholders of one of the local omnibus companies has been held. Of 2,916 votes represented at the gathering, 2,766 were cast in favor of continuing the Sunday traffic, and only 150 against.

At Colwyn Bay the pious are making an effort to put down Sunday golf, boating, and coaching. "I wonder," says a writer in the *Sunday Chronicle*, "the parsons do not have the birds shot for singing on Sundays, and the flowers stamped out for daring to grow on that day. In fact, if they were consistent, they would denounce themselves for daring to speak on Sunday. It cannot be regarded as a labor of necessity or profit. Will the pious people of Colwyn Bay, desiring to put down unnecessary labor on the first day, inquire how many servants work in lodging-houses quite unnecessarily in superfluous attendance on people who ought to look after themselves?"

John Hollingshead, in his weekly letter to the *Umpire*, is specially moved to scorn at the attempt of the Colwyn pietists to stop the Sunday concerts, at which, he says, his old friend, M. Riviere, is giving the best of music, executed by a perfect orchestra. He protests against the "Gospel of Gloom."

At Inverness the Free Church Presbytery have discussed the "gross indecency" of a detachment of Cameron Highlanders being marched on a Sunday from their depot to the railway station, "preceded by the regimental band playing secular music." The Rev. Dr. Black said that such a thing had never been seen or heard of in Inverness before. Another member said that the local volunteers were similarly played to church. The Presbytery were horrified, but eventually came to the conclusion that it was no use remonstrating with a department like the War Office, who apparently are equal to any enormity. The subject was, therefore, despairingly dropped.

The West Croydon Congregational Church has lost one of its wealthiest supporters. He committed suicide by hanging himself. The vicar of Wellingborough has lost an "invaluable church officer." He has been sent to gaol for twelve months for embezzlement.

The Rev. W. Douglas, of St. John's Vicarage, Walthamstow, has been summoned as the leaseholder of insanitary house property at Barrows Place, Lee. The dwellings were described as "kennels unfit for human habitation." The Rev. Douglas was fined £1 in respect of each house from No. 6 to 16.

Some sensation has been caused in Hope, Flintshire, by the refusal of the rector, the Rev. T. E. Jones, to bury the body of a Mr. Collins when asked by the deceased man's daughter to officiate at the graveside. He said he was unable to accede to the request, as the man was "a pronounced unbeliever." Clergymen were not allowed to bury such, nor might the bell be tolled. Miss Collins says her father was a Unitarian. Possibly that makes him still worse in the eyes of the sky-pilot.

Robert Hichens favors the readers of the *Londoner* with a sketch, more or less humorous, of "The Serious Young Man." That interesting person, he says, "is, as a rule, an Atheist, and is very happy in his Atheism." Well, the admission that he can be happy in his Atheism is something. It does not agree with the caricatures by Dr. Talmage and his imitators, who cannot imagine an Atheist as anything but

a gloomy, scowling monster, ever on the verge of suicide, if not of murder. Speaking of the Atheists' children, Mr. Hichens says: "No debauchery of rocking-horses, spades, buckets, and hoops is allowed to defile the early lives of these tiny Atheists." But what is there in Atheism to suggest that deprivation? If the "tiny Atheists" have no prospects of angels' wings, golden crowns, and tin trumpets hereafter, is not that a good reason why they should have rocking-horses, hoops, spades, etc., now? And play with them, moreover, on Sundays? That's really where the little Atheists get the pull.

In accordance with an old custom, the clergy and others assembled on the jetty at Folkestone on Sunday to invoke the Divine blessing on the fish harvest of the current year. Fish ought to be plentiful and cheap now—at any rate, near Folkestone. Common sense, however, seems to be scarce.

The Rev. Mr. Haweis was ill the other Sunday. His "curate took his place, and two of the congregation solemnly avowed that they could see the figure of Mr. Haweis standing by the side of the preacher." Those two gentlemen will do well to go straight home in future when they draw their wages on Saturday afternoon.—*Topical Times*.

"Sell all that ye have and give alms" is a saying attributed to Jesus. Nobody pays the least attention to it. Not even the paid preachers of his Gospel. Their reading is: "Get all you can, and give as little as possible." What care they about Christ's denunciations of the rich and his glorification of the poor? They rope in the shekels and take the risk. Here is a preacher of "the Word"—the Rev. Charles Greenway, of Darwen—who dies worth £106,089. He doesn't even trouble at death to distribute amongst the poor the treasures he has laid up during life, which treasures include his stipend for preaching the Gospel of Jesus. It seems to have occurred to him, in making his will, that he should do something "religious." So he affects humility, and asks his wife and daughter not to go into mourning for him. He is pretty certain that the poor wouldn't. However, he has gone to Jesus, and there is an eternity before him and the Nazarene in which they can discuss the whole question leisurely, and, we hope, without too much bickering.

Poor *Church Review*! After making itself ridiculous for years in the interests of the Ritualistic party, it is now discarded. It seems to have gone wrong on transubstantiation—a pretty long word to die on. A member of the Council of the English Church Union writes that "the *Church Review* has for some time done the Church cause no good." That, of course, might be said with equal truth of a number of other Church papers. Anyhow, another journal has been appointed as the official organ of the E. C. U., and the *Church Review* is now left to weep in isolation.

There are, at any rate in the Methodist New Connection, people who can see the real bearing of science on "revelation." A ministers' meeting at Leeds has been discussing "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought." They seem to have been specially knocked over "the Fall." Naturally enough, they found it impossible to reconcile that grey-headed fable with scientific fact. Still, they stuck to the old story. The doctrine of the Fall was propounded at the Methodist Conference in 1744. It was made perfectly clear then. Nobody doubted it in 1744, and why should the Connection be led away by Darwin, Wallace, Huxley, Spencer, or anybody else now?

The ministers criticised attempted reconciliations, and declared them "unsatisfactory." The bearing of evolution on redemption and regeneration was shown. One member said he was content to preach the doctrine of Paul and never mind the evolutionists. The Rev. J. S. Banks held that it was necessary to the doctrine of the Fall that man should have been complete in all his faculties, while evolution declared that he was not complete. "We could not agree," said another speaker, "to set aside key passages of Scriptures such as we met with in Paul's writings in favor of a hypothesis which needed much more proof or modification before it could be accepted with loyalty to Scripture." There is an honest, and to a certain extent a sensible, ring about this. The "key passages" of scriptures are dead against evolution, but the bulk of believers haven't the honesty to admit it.

The mission of Socrates, described by Sir Joshua Fitch in his recently-issued addresses on *Educational Aims and Methods*, is very much the same as that of the Freethinker of to-day: "The difficulties with which Socrates was confronted exist more or less in all ages of the world. He saw around him men who had never harbored doubts simply because they had never examined, who held convictions all the more angrily because those convictions had never been verified.....He chose for the objects of his attack opinions without knowledge, acquiescence without insight, words without meaning, and dogmas without proof."

N.B.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 15, at 11, Clerkenwell Green; at 7, Regent's Park: Freethought Demonstrations.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—July 15, at 11, Clerkenwell Green; at 7, Regent's Park: Freethought Demonstrations.—All communications for Mr. 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.

W. COX.—Mr. Foote will post you an answer about September 9. In any case, he will be happy to give another Saturday evening lecture, before the Sunday meetings, in the large Rotunda Lecture Hall. The previous experiment there was very successful, as you remind us. See "Sugar Plums."

R. CHAPMAN.—See paragraph. Always glad to be of any service that way. We hope the South Shields friends will have fine weather and a "good time" on the 29th.

ELIZABETH.—We shall print your letter in our next issue, unless you advise us to the contrary. We wish women did take a greater interest in Freethought, but they seem to love their enslavers. Perhaps it is, as you say, the result of early education and deeply instilled prejudice.

"CHILPERIC" writes: "Mr. Porter has taken my article on 'Rothschild and the Saints' too seriously. I do not see that I am called upon to reply to his letter. As he says, the Baron bought his objects of art upon their merits; the gods and saints were accidents. The saints manifested the religious feeling of the age; the gods the higher culture of that period. Both were no doubt used as badges of guilds and political parties."

E. R. W.—Not finished, as you will see. We keep your letter over.

H. PERCY WARD.—We noticed in our last issue the new move of the Birmingham "Liberal Education Eight." The paragraph seems to have escaped your attention. We should imagine that you will find a good opportunity there to present the case for Secular Education. Of course it might conceivably be advisable to vote for God rather than the Devil, or for the Devil rather than God; but it is best to steer clear of both—as we have no doubt the Birmingham Secularists will realise.

E. VATTERLEIN.—See "Sugar Plums."

A. B. MOSS.—Received.

W. MANLEY.—A paragraph was already in type, based upon the secretary's letter. We hope the West Ham party to University College will be a good one. Such visits to places of educational interest should be cultivated, and we are glad to see your Branch moving in this direction.

H. B. AMOS.—Thanks for your letter. See paragraph. Mr. Foote will try to pay the establishment a visit when he is in the neighborhood.

E. G. JAMES.—Thanks for the cutting. It is a bit strong for the paper you took it from, but Freethought is spreading in all directions.

OLD SECULARIST.—We have said all we want to say on the matter. Repetition will not stop misrepresentation. The President of the N. S. S. must expect these pin-pricks. Bradlaugh had to bear plenty of them from the same journal. We have ridiculed Lord Robert's talk about God, and Sir George White's talk about God, and why should we not ridicule the ostentatious piety of President Kruger and his friends? Apart altogether from politics, the follies of religionists are a fair game for us. We laugh at such follies when displayed in England, and are unable to see why they should not be laughed at when displayed in other parts of the world. We do not believe in holy lands or chosen peoples.

J. M. HEADLEY.—We wish you had a better opponent. Father Scott is a true priest—in manners and information. It is fortunate for you that you are not at his mercy. We believe he would settle your heretical hash in the good old Catholic style with the greatest relish, and cheerfully hand over your cinders to a cycle track.

ACOLYTE.—Thanks for your interesting and encouraging letter. You will see that we have noticed it in "Sugar Plums." Your suggestion as to books to read shall be remembered. We have often advised correspondents who have applied to us on this matter.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—English Mechanic—Crescent—Two Worlds—Ethical World—Varmouth Mercury—Manchester Daily Dispatch—The People—Lucifer—Truthseeker (New York)—Labor Chronicle—Liberator—Boston Investigator—Humanity—Sunday Reader.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your useful batch of cuttings.

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

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.

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

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Sugar Plums.

The first of the new series of Sunday Freethought Demonstrations was held on Sunday afternoon in Finsbury Park. Mr. Schaller acted as chairman, and Mr. A. B. Moss was the first speaker, being followed by Mr. Charles Watts, who in turn was followed by Mr. Foote. The audience, which was a good one at the start, went on increasing in size, and was a splendid assembly before Mr. Foote concluded his address. Miss Vance and others took up a collection on behalf of the N. S. S. Mr. Wilson, as usual, kindly provided the brake and pair of horses.

The second of these Demonstrations will be held this morning (July 15) at Clerkenwell Green. The proceedings will commence at 11 o'clock. Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, and Mr. Cohen will be amongst the speakers. The third Demonstration will take place in the evening at 7 o'clock in Regent's Park, opposite Gloucester Gate, and near the Park entrance to the Zoological Gardens. The speakers will be the same as those at the morning meeting.

Some of the baser sort of Christian Evidencers are openly threatening deliberate disorder on Clerkenwell Green—a fact which will doubtless secure a strong rally of Secular "saints" around the Freethought platform. For their own sakes, we hope these fanatical followers of the meek and lowly Jesus will keep away or lie low. The London hospitals are pretty full already.

A letter reaches us from a correspondent in Surrey, who was a devout Christian until about four years ago, when he accidentally got hold of a copy of Robert Taylor's *Devil's Pulpit*. That broke the ice of his orthodoxy, and soon afterwards he became a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, thanks to which he is now a saved soul—saved, that is, from the curse of superstition. This gentleman had never been present at a Freethought meeting, but he travelled up to London last Sunday to see what such gatherings were like, and especially to see what the speakers were like, for awful pictures of them were presented to his former orthodox imagination. He went to Finsbury Park and "assisted," as the French say, at the Freethought Demonstration in the afternoon. He was delighted with the speeches, and much struck by the "refined and intelligent audience." In the morning he had been to hear Mr. Cohen at Ridley-road, and was very much pleased with him, though not with the audience. He says that Mr. Cohen's opponent was a rank fool, and that the "personal abuse" he heard from Christians was "disgusting."

Mr. Cohen had two fine meetings in Victoria Park on Sunday. The evening meeting was to have heard a debate, but there was none, although there were two speakers. Mr. Cohen's concluding speech was loudly applauded.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) devotes more than two columns to a report of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. Our contemporary says that the President "showed considerable skill in handling" the matter of the resolution about the war in South Africa.

The *Labor Chronicle* (Liverpool) laughs at the notion of "Providence." "If the 'Divine Power' rather than the genius of Roberts and the gallantry and endurance of our troops," it says, "was responsible for the relief of Mafeking, the same power was responsible for not relieving it earlier and at a less terrible cost to our troops. It was also responsible for the disasters of Magersfontein and Spion Kop. The fact is, a British bullet will not kill a Boer unless it is shot straight, though all the churches in the country petitioned for victory." Our contemporary also notes that going to church and chapel has no appreciable influence in shortening the hours of labor or bettering the wages of the workers.

In spite of the efforts of the clergy, the number of School Boards in this country increases. Twelve new Boards were formed in England and Wales during the first half of the present year, and nearly all of them in rural districts, where the parsons look upon them as branch establishments of Sheol.

The Sheffield "saints" have more than once visited Tuxford Hall, Tuxford, the seat of R. S. Wilson, Esq., who generously allows the public to view his house, grounds, and garden, and often acts as *chaperon* himself. There are many reasons why Freethinkers should pay the place a visit. It contains a lot of rare and valuable articles; such as fine tapestry and china, Lord Byron's dining table and bedstead, King John's chairs from Newark Castle, and glorious pictures by Rembrandt, Murillo, Teniers, and other masters. Mr. Wilson is described by a Freethinker, Mr. H. B. Amos, as "a striking personality" and a "delightfully humorous guide."

Liverpool Freethinkers should note that the local N. S. S. Branch has its annual picnic next Sunday (July 22). Brakes will leave the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, for Aughton, *via* Ince Wood, at 2 p.m. prompt. The tickets for the drive and tea are 3s. 6d. each, cyclists 2s. Friends intending to join the party should send in their names by July 15 to Mr. Hammond, 26 Sandheys-street, Kirkdale, or to Mr. Cox, 1 Dove-road, Orrell-park, Walton, in order that the catering arrangements may be carried out satisfactorily.

The South Shields Branch holds its annual picnic on Sunday, July 29, Holywell Dene being the appointed destination. It will be necessary to make accommodation for friends and visitors, and all who intend to join the picnic should communicate as early as possible with the secretary, Mr. R. Chapman, 30 Madras-street.

Mr. H. Percy Ward visits Northampton to-day (July 15). He is billed to hold a public debate in the Market-square with Mr. H. Quelch, editor of *Justice*, on the question, "Can Socialism Benefit the People?" The encounter is to open at 11 in the morning, and to be resumed (both disputants surviving) at 6.30 in the evening.

A West Ham Branch party is going to visit University College, Gower-street, on Saturday afternoon (July 14) to view the "Antiquities from Excavations at Abydos." Friends joining the party will meet at Stratford Main Station at 2 o'clock sharp.

The Betrayal of Burton.

"What a man was while he could stand, speak, and write, is matter of interest and importance to those who care to know anything about him: when he cannot, it may be assumed that he can no longer think for himself."—A. C. SWINBURNE.

"Those vulgar heads that look askint on the face of Truth."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE (*Religio Medici*).

PRIESTS seldom appear so disgusting as when acting the part of holy hyænas over the dead bodies of their opponents. Prince Jerome Napoleon, for instance, a well-known Freethinker, was smuggled into the great lying Catholic Church at the last moment, when he was unconscious. It may be pleaded in excuse that his relations were anxious for the welfare of his "soul"; but the spectacle of a Christian hyæna administering the sacrament to the dead body of a man who had fought against the Christian religion in the full strength of his manhood is none the less odious.

The most low varlets of the Most High God did the same thing with Sir Richard Burton. It was nothing to these creatures that their grim farce would, if taken seriously, give the lie to the dead man's whole life. All they cared for was that the world should understand that this terrible infidel had submitted to Holy Mother Church at the last. While Richard Burton was sound and strong, his contemptuous disgust of their insane creed was wont to exhaust the whole vocabulary of his scorn. But when the living man was replaced by the helpless corpse, nothing hindered these Christian body-snatchers at their ghastly death-bed revels.

Burton had travelled too widely, and mixed with too many men of all creeds and no creed, to regard any religion as the sole depository of truth. Christianity dwindled in his mind to its true proportions. It was not the only religion, but one amongst very many. He did not even believe in the idea of immortality.

He thought all notions of another existence were simply idealised copies of the present:—

Then, if Nirwana round our life with nothingness, 'tis haply best;
Thy toil and troubles, want and woe, at length have won their guerdon—Rest.

Burton was indeed a Secularist in the highest and noblest sense of the term. His advice was always practical. Uproot ignorance, avoid self-torment, do good for its own sake, and "Abjure the Why and seek the How."

From these convictions, arrived at in the prime of his intellect, and after profound study, Richard Burton never swerved. He was perfectly frank and absolutely fearless. His fine poem, the *Kasidah*, his "Terminal Essay" in his magnificent edition of the *Arabian Nights*, almost his latest work, will satisfy any fair-minded reader of his innate scepticism. Burton was a complete Freethinker. His views were not merely anti-Christian, but were opposed to the invertebrate eclecticism of the day. He looked with cynical eyes on all religions, but towards the great lying Catholic Church he had a most positive aversion; and, as subsequent sad events proved, not without reason. It was over the dead body of this man that the awful farce of a pretended conversion was acted. Burton died suddenly at 7 a.m., October 20, 1890. No sooner did Lady Isabel Burton, who was a bigoted Catholic, perceive her husband's life was in danger than she sent for a priest. When he arrived, the great Freethinker was far beyond the reach of human folly and superstition. This is perfectly certain. The doctor who attended the deceased, and Lady Burton's maid, both agree in declaring that Sir Richard had expired before the priest's arrival. This did not daunt Isabel Burton, whose love for Christ was greater than her affection for her husband. Hardly had the priest crossed the threshold than she flung herself at his feet and implored him to administer extreme unction. The Father at first demurred. There had been no profession of faith, he urged. There could be none now, for Burton was dead. But Lady Burton would take no refusal. She remained weeping and wailing on the floor. To terminate a scene, and to advance the interests of the Church, the rite was performed. The Great Lying Church of Rome took formal possession of Sir Richard Burton's corpse, and pretended, moreover, with sacred and insufferable insolence, to take under her august protection his "soul." Burton's funeral took place in the largest church in Trieste, and was made the excuse for an ecclesiastical triumph of a faith the great man had always loathed. Even the disgraceful demonstration at Trieste was not sufficient. The fraudulent funeral ceremonies were repeated in England. Again, at Mortlake, the shaven priests intoned the Mass, again the acolyte bearing the hated crucifix preceded the helpless corpse to the grave. Once more was Truth trampled under foot in a vain endeavor to exalt a Church over a formidable enemy. It was, indeed, a painful sequel to a noble death. The pity of it is too deep for tears.

Sir Richard Burton was one of the most romantic figures of our time. He was one of those men who helped to make the greatness of England, and who spread the fame of our country over many lands and seas. A great traveller, an unrivalled linguist, a splendid scholar, his life and works remain as a precious legacy to us. If he should ever be forgotten, it will be because his country has degenerated. His magnificent personality was woven of the soundest fibres that are in the breed of one of the noblest races that ever peopled this earth. As Swinburne has so finely said:—

While England sees not her old praise dim,
While still her stars through the world's night swim,
A fame outshining her Raleigh's fame,
A light that lightens her loud sea's rim,
Shall shine and sound as her sons proclaim
The pride that kindles at Burton's name,
And joy shall exalt their pride to be
The same in birth if in soul the same.

MIMNERMUS.

"What do you know about Cain and Abel?" asked Sister of a very new boy who, though fifteen years old, could neither read nor write. "O, I knows about them, Sister; Abel, you know, he gave the Lord a lamb, but Cain gave only the groceries!"

God and Evolution.

EVOLUTION is an attractive subject, and just now a variety of writers and speakers are choosing it as a theme upon which to display their wisdom, or lack of it, in various branches of science, philosophy, religion, or sociology. Of course, Dr. Talmage must have his say on the subject, and, under the title of "Divine Evolution," he settles Darwin's great doctrine at one stroke by calling it "a heathenism more than a thousand years old." Some of the learned clergy of the Church of England have dealt with evolution in relation to the teachings of the Bible, and others have viewed it in regard to Christianity; and at last a leading Wesleyan minister has made bold to deal with the subject in three lectures. The name of this Wesleyan minister is the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., M.L.S.B., warden of Bermondsey Settlement, and a man who bids fair to become president of the Wesleyan movement in the near future. The utterances of such a man, therefore, are worthy of consideration, even when we do not agree with him. The Rev. Scott Lidgett entitled his first lecture "God and Evolution," his second "Man and Evolution," and his third "Religion and Evolution"; and it must be admitted that his treatment of the subject was extremely able, and displayed an argumentative power far above that of the ordinary Christian controversialist. It is undoubtedly an evidence of the progressive spirit of the age to find a Wesleyan minister who is a pronounced evolutionist, for not only would no Christian minister have dared to announce himself on the side of Darwin or evolution twenty years ago, but the illustrious Darwin himself was then regarded as the worst of heretics, and his teaching treated with ridicule and contempt by every section of the Christian community. Indeed, although the remains of Charles Darwin were buried in Westminster Abbey, it was commonly considered by Christians that his soul would be consigned to hell. Science, however, has triumphed, and now the once maligned Darwin is glorified, and statues to his memory are erected not only at his birthplace at Shrewsbury and at Oxford University, but also in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington. Most assuredly Darwin has triumphed over his enemies, for now he is glorified and they are (intellectually) tormented.

But let us examine some of the arguments used in the Rev. Scott Lidgett's first lecture on "Evolution and God." The rev. gentleman states the doctrine of evolution in a perfectly fair and straightforward fashion, and frankly confesses that he gives it his intellectual adherence; but when he proceeds to say that his idea of God is in no way interfered with by the acceptance of this doctrine, we find ourselves compelled to join issue. In the first place, we have to observe that he does not define what he means by God. But it is quite clear that he believes in a universe that is practically infinite, and also in a God that either permeates the universe, and cannot be differentiated from it (in which case he is a Pantheist), or in an infinite God who exists plus the universe—which is manifestly a contradiction in terms.

"If," as the Rev. Scott Lidgett says, "the universe in all its parts is now conceived to be the result of a gradual, orderly, self-continuing, and natural evolution or development," at what point in the development of the universe does God come in? Did God exist before the universe, and, if so, where? By most evolutionists the universe is conceived to be eternal; indeed, it is impossible in thought to conceive of the universe beginning to be, and the word "creation," in the sense of origination of substance, has no meaning to the minds of scientific men. The universe is conceived to be "the sum of all phenomena," to use John Stuart Mill's words, "together with the causes which produce them, including not only all that happens, but all that is capable of happening—the unused capabilities of matter being as much a part of the idea of nature as those which take effect" (*Essay on Nature*). Man, in short, knows nothing but phenomena, and these phenomena are not only effects, but effects and causes in a limitless chain; and in an infinite regression there can be no first cause.

The Rev. Scott Lidgett, however, gives a new reading in the light of evolution in reply to three general arguments of the Rationalist—viz., (1) The argument from design in nature; (2) that the higher nature of man, being a natural and gradual evolution, ceases to bear witness to a supernatural source; (3) that the universe is the natural unfolding of phenomenal existence from an unknown and unknowable source.

Now, in reference to the first argument, he admits that a change has taken place in recent years in the mental point of view of the Theist. But he contends that there is still evidence of design, only we must take the latest phenomena as a whole, and not phenomena in the various stages of their development, as far as we can go backwards. We, however, submit that we have no option but to deal with "alleged design" in detail, since man has no knowledge of the universe as a whole. And if we take design as we find it, it manifests such ugly results in parts that it either impeaches the wisdom or goodness or infinite power of its alleged author. The doctrine of evolution accounts, for instance, for such hideous growths as cancers and tumors in human beings on purely natural grounds; it accounts also for tape-worms, infectious diseases, earthquakes, famines, in a similar manner; but, on the assumption of their design by an intelligent and good God, they are hard to explain away. "The elimination of the unfit" by the hard and cruel law of "the survival of the fittest" is easily explained on the ground of natural law; but on the hypothesis of a beneficent and powerful Deity, who is watching over and protecting the weak, it is altogether inexplicable. Mr. Scott Lidgett says that those who substitute evolution for God merely personify an abstraction. But is he not doing the same thing himself when he puts God behind phenomena, and calls God the cause? After all, to the philosopher and scientist, is not God equivalent to the algebraic x ? Mirabaud or D'Holbach was not far wrong when he said that a god who was not a person was no god at all. Mr. Lidgett argues that God is the mind or reason behind phenomena—back of all evolution. But what does man know of mind apart from matter? Mind apart from matter is a pure abstraction. In fact, we only know mind as a quality, or combination of qualities, of organised beings. Is, then, Mr. Lidgett's God an organised being? Has he a brain? Does he perceive objects external to himself? Does he judge between two or more perceptions? If he does, he must be continually gaining knowledge; in other words, he is not omniscient—that is, he is not all-wise from the beginning; that is, he is not God.

In respect to the second argument Mr. Lidgett says: "Reason is no less wonderful, and its testimony none the less conclusive as to its source, if it has been naturally evolved." No Rationalist doubts that reason is a wonderful result; but he certainly does dispute that man knows anything about a spiritual source, however ardently some profess to believe in it. The reason of the dog, the elephant, or the ape is just as wonderful as the reason of man, notwithstanding the vast difference in the degree of development; yet we never hear of anyone claiming a "spiritual source" for their intelligence; indeed, it is only since men of science have dealt with the question of mind in animals that we have come to see that there is no break in the development of the reasoning faculties in animals and man, from the lowest to the highest.

With regard to the third argument, Mr. Lidgett does not agree with the Agnostic who says that "both the nature of things and the nature of our minds preclude us from passing beyond." It is quite obvious, however, that the finite mind can only grasp the finite. The patriarch Job acknowledged that man could not by searching find out God. But what other rational method could man adopt for finding him? The theologian practically says: "Admit his existence, and then all else follows." Exactly. But that is precisely the admission that no Atheist or Agnostic is prepared to make; for these know something about the evolution of the God idea—from its primitive stages up to the highest and best idea of the most cultivated Theist of to-day. Therefore, when the Theist argues that "God is a power that lives and works in and through the universe," we see in this a return to the nature worship of our early ancestors. We know also that the next stage brought about "fetish worship," and that, ultimately

projecting himself behind phenomena, man pictured in his mind the anthropomorphic God of the Bible—Yahveh. The Rev. Scott Lidgett does not believe in any of these conceptions of Deity, and yet, if our early ancestors were wrong in the conceptions of God, what better evidence has he that he is right? All conceptions of God are purely subjective—that is, they exist only in the mind; and we can never know absolutely whether there is anything in nature or outside nature—if there is an outside—to correspond to our ideas. Curé Meslier, in his *Bon Sens*, makes the clever remark that "God is an idea without an archetype"; and, after all discussion, we find that theologians, in depicting their gods, are describing mere "figments of the imagination"—ideas, in fact, which have nothing in nature to correspond to them.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Correspondence.

"OBJECTIONABLE RELIGION."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As to the charge that I continue to talk in a "Pickwickian" style, I may point out that if the secular use of religious words were merely "metaphorical," as sundry remarks of "Chilperic" imply, this alone would lift them far above a Pickwickian sense (which, as readers of the commencement of *Pickwick* can see for themselves, is mere self-stultification); for metaphor is a perfectly sincere, legitimate, and often highly expressive form or figure of speech—which can by no means be said of a "Pickwickian sense" that empties words of all ascertainable meaning.

Concerning the various points at issue, it seems to me that "Chilperic" has often preferred to meet the less important portions of my statements and arguments, while leaving the more essential or crucial points untouched—as, for instance, in the way in which he whittles down my charge of unfairness to the mere difference between "unfairness" and being "not quite fair." The tedious and complicated task of establishing all such cases in detail would, however, consume far more time than such controversy is worth. I will therefore endeavor to limit my reply to such observations as may help to elucidate the fundamental question in dispute—namely, whether the use of the word "religion" is permissible in a non-theological as well as in a theological or superstitious sense.

For this purpose we need in the first place a definition of the word in question. But "Chilperic" protests that "When 'religion' is defined as a system of faith and worship it should be obvious that *religious* faith is referred to." To find out what "religion" means we have to ask what "religious" means. We find that it means "pertaining to religion." So that religion is only such faith and worship as pertain to religion; and as to what religion actually is we are still left in the dark, so far as "Chilperic's" amended definition is concerned. Now a definition of a word has to define it—that is, to distinguish it from all other words. A definition which is incomplete without the introduction of the word to be defined is a mockery or sham, because it leaves the meaning still undetermined. Each disputant will still give his own meaning to the word thus left undefined.

"Chilperic's" distinction between "actual worship" and "metaphorical worship" similarly begs the question at issue; for it assumes that "worship" applies only to deity, whereas the word is secular in origin and fundamental meaning. A reference to dictionaries will at once show that "Chilperic" has no right to limit the use of the word "worship" to superstitious purposes. It is, I maintain, used with perfect propriety and fitness in Carlyle's work on Hero-worship, however Pickwickian a sense may be attributed to the term by critics who fail to perceive that it has become an established portion of the English language. Another objection is that in cases like that of worship (which consists of feelings and their manifestations) the distinction between metaphor and literal reality is usually of no very material importance. One easily perceives a very great difference between the literal fire of the blacksmith's forge and the metaphorical "fire" of poetic genius; but there is no such important difference between "actual" (literal) respect and a "metaphorical" respect, which is so like actual respect that we call it respect as the most suitable image or similitude. Similarly there is little, if any, difference between "actual" literal compliments and "metaphorical" compliments, or between actual reverence and "metaphorical" reverence, or between actual praise and "metaphorical" praise, or between actual veneration or worship or faith and "metaphorical" veneration or worship or faith. If, however, "Chilperic" is satisfied with the validity of his own distinctions, I can suggest an excellent *modus vivendi* for the two schools of Secular thought represented by himself and Mr. Gould. Let "Chilperic" admit the otherwise objectionably religious expressions as merely

metaphorical—that is, as similes or images which most conveniently represent the reality intended—just as we readily accept Chilperic's "metaphorical" application of the theological term "canonised" to Freethinkers, whom he thus treats as saints of the new religion of humanity which he finds so objectionable, and just as others of his school freely allow themselves to use such convenient expressions as the "Gospel of Freethought," etc., though they would raise a protest against Mr. Gould's doing so. The "religion of doing good" seems to be at least as allowable a metaphor as the canonization of an Atheist by another Atheist. One of the widely-accepted definitions of the word "religion" is "a system of faith and worship." Very well. The Positivists can claim that they have "a system of faith" (in moral laws, virtues, etc.) "and of worship" (of humanity in its highest examples and ideals). Then, according to the definition given, the Comtist's "Religion of Humanity" is a religion. Even if we insert the word "religious," as "Chilperic" would insist, the Positivist would of course say that his faith and worship are religious, and that his religion therefore answered to the amended definition. But "Chilperic" may say that belief in Deity must be introduced. If so, pure Buddhism, though atheistic, will be excluded from the world's religions, though Buddhism is almost universally admitted to be a religion and to count a larger number of adherents than any other religion. And we might also have to exclude such primitive religions as do not rise above Shamanism (belief in omens, occult influences, incantations or magical rites, etc.), or various forms or stages of fetishism, nature-worship, ancestor-worship, etc.

Chambers's Encyclopædia reminds us that "The difficulty of framing a correct definition of religion is very great." The "great diversity of views," it continues, after mentioning Kant's and Matthew Arnold's definitions among others, "indicates what investigation is found to confirm—viz., that religion is a vast and complex thing, an inexhaustible field for psychological study. Almost all the views referred to have some truth in them."

The subjective nature of religion has been pointed out by "Chilperic." Speaking of the word "religion," the *Globe Encyclopædia* says: "Subjectively it expresses a state of mind, but of what that state of mind consists there have been as many explanations as there have been writers on the subject." As to what is the essence of religion, answers by some of the "greatest thinkers" are then given. Some of these answers do not necessarily include belief in Deity. Thus Schleiermacher considers that the essence of religion is the feeling of absolute dependence; Fichte, faith in the moral order of the universe; Hegel, morality become conscious of the free universality of its concrete essence; Comte, the worship of humanity; to which we might add Matthew Arnold's and John Stuart Mill's views of religion as emotionalised morality. Evidently there is conflict of opinion, and thinkers need not be in a hurry to hurl boulders at the glass houses of other thinkers.

Entick's Latin Dictionary gives the English equivalents of the Latin word *religio* thus: "Religion, piety, devotion, godliness, the worship of God, superstition, veneration, sacredness, dread, doubt, or scruple, sign or prognostic, sincerity, faithfulness, oath." It also notes that "*religio* est" meant "I scruple, I am afraid." The actual origin of the word is uncertain, but it is usually traced to a word meaning "to bind," just as our words "justice," "jury," "judge," etc., have been evolved from the primitive Aryan root *yn*, to bind or join. The ordinarily-accepted derivation from *lig*, to bind (the root of our words "obligation," "ligament," etc.), and the intensifying prefix *re*, may be correct, though rejected by various discordant authorities; and the word may well have had the primary meaning of *restraint* or *binding*, obligation, as is commonly suggested. In dealing with its most probable origin, Richardson's Dictionary speaks of the reciprocal "religion" as "seeming emphatically to express the reciprocal bond or obligation of man to man, and also the obligation or duty of man to the gods in heathen times, and to God among Christians." Other suggested derivations from *religens*, the opposite of *negligens* or negligent, or from the same root as our "reck," to regard (seen in our "reckless"), and the Greek *alegein*, to have a care, heed, reckon, would give the word "religion" the primary meaning of seriousness, carefulness, dutiful diligence—a meaning not very dissimilar from that of restraint or obligation. There is not the slightest sign or hint from any quarter that the word "religion" can be traced back to any word meaning God or gods, and the use of the prefix *re* seems to be against any such supposition. Therefore the original (though probably prehistoric and unrecorded) meaning of the word may well have been secular and moral, to which superstitious terrors and occult influences may sooner or later have been added as enforcing agencies. It seems quite possible that the non-theological religionists may not merely be employing the word "religion" in the best sense which it has yet evolved, but may be rescuing the word from the superstitious corruption and bondage superimposed upon the original meaning in varying degrees.

Ample evidence can be collected, if necessary, to show that, in Emerson's words, "The progress of religion is steadily to its identity with morals." This evolution is natural, and not arbitrary. The very growth of the ethical element of the

moral religions necessarily means the weakening and ultimate abandonment of the superstitious element. And the moral and social emotion which inspires the really valuable portion of the moral religions has, at least, a fairly reasonable or arguable claim to the name under which it has worked for ages past, and which, from the effects of custom and old association, best expresses an emotionalised frame of mind, for which the word "morality," signifying mere outward good conduct, is felt to be too weak and inadequate an expression.

One practical point ought to be tolerably clear—namely, that pelting "valued" friends and fellow Secularists with hard words—as in falsely (as they hold) accusing them of a Pickwickianism (or comical meaninglessness) which they feel to be the very opposite of a truthful description of their frame of mind, likening them to that disreputable personage, the prodigal son, feeding on the husks the swine did eat, and making them, as far as possible, the victims of "sardonic mirth," by means which appear to them to savor of flippancy or unfairness—is not the best way of converting the recipients of such compliments to a school of thought and feeling which employs such methods, nor the best way of promoting good feeling and harmonious co-operation among fellow-workers in the great Secular Movement which we should all have at heart as far more important than the task of provoking or aggravating differences between two sections of the party by ridiculing or denouncing the secular use of a word whose origin and legitimate meanings and uses are disputed, and whose use, in a purely secular sense, is warmly advocated by so good an Atheist as John Stuart Mill, as well as by many other writers of various shades of opinion. I notice that, while "Chilperic" is indignant that men who "reject every real belief in a personal deity and revelation" do not openly accept their proper designation of Atheist, he, nevertheless (in utter defiance of the teachings which he so vigorously urges upon us), allows himself to call precisely such an Atheist "a very pious religionist." If "Chilperic" would only be as charitable towards other Secularists as he is to himself, our dispute would be at an end.

"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity," is an admirable saying, which all Freethinkers would do well to adopt, in spite of its ecclesiastical associations and origin.

To the Secularists whom "Chilperic" lightly styles "Objectionables," religion, faith, hero-worship, etc., are not mere "husks" (except so far as all words are mere husks or symbols), but are invaluable kernels and pearls of great price. That such words are solely theological in their bearing, and that they are emptied of all their meaning when theological associations are abandoned, is mere arbitrary assumption. The smartest and most vigorous of observations, based on such assumption, merely beg the question at issue.

As to the case against a purely secular use of such theological words as "God" and "Christian," "Chilperic" is, of course, well aware that Mr. Gould and I do not oppose him on such extreme points. But there are many words on the borderland, such as "religion," "piety," "devotion," "worship," "holy," "sacred," etc., which have already been used in secular or ethical as well as in theological senses; and in such cases, I think, an attitude of tolerance is far wiser and more becoming than one of implacable war or cynical and sardonic mirth. I believe that Bacon was quite right when he spoke of the "natural piety" of Atheists; that Carlyle's "hero-worship" is as legitimate and unmetaphorical a term as ancestor-worship; that Bradlaugh was very far from being a weakling or a timid time-server when he spoke of his "faith"; that Ingersoll and many other Freethinkers were justified in using various religious words which "Chilperic" would stigmatise as objectionable; that Cicero and Comte and Robert Owen and Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill ought not to be regarded as mere Pickwickian food for laughter when they advocated an emotional or philosophical "religion" independent of supernaturalism, but that their arguments, and still more their lofty motives and feelings in the matter, deserve respectful consideration rather than the "sardonic mirth" of the mocking "cynic." If "Chilperic" puts forward extreme instances in support of "sardonic mirth" directed against fellow Secularists who do not advocate such extremes, I may far more fairly retaliate by bringing to the front various words at the other end of the scale which have actually been objected to by Secularists for sardonic mirth—or, seeing that I prefer that our mirth, especially over the inconsistencies or weaknesses of valued friends and fellow-workers, should be neither cynical nor sardonic (we can love men even while we laugh at them), let us say that even the most amiable of philosophers must find something amusingly (or perhaps pathetically) ridiculous in the spectacle of honest men who earnestly insist that we shall write them down as faithless beings utterly destitute of conscience (see last year's controversy in the *Freethinker*), and as enemies of righteousness, to whom nothing is sacred, not even the memory or the grave of the most loved or honored of their kind. If "mirth" is to decide the matter, I do not think the balance of the fun will be on "Chilperic's" side. Mr. Baker's allegorical dream has shown us how we can depict the fanatical anti-fanatic as rejecting the offer of Christian buildings, and as urging us to demolish all sacred edifices on

the plea that the form of the churches is that of the Cross, that the spires point heavenward, and that the most beautiful of cathedrals, and the most convenient of Christian chapels and meeting-houses, are so polluted with the dangerous infection of the pious associations of the past that they are frightful plague-spots, which can only be cleansed by wholesale conflagration; and we might similarly caricature the over-zealous anti-religionist as scrupulously rejecting, on behalf of the nation, the broad lands and funds and other endowments of the fading superstition. If we are so wickedly inclined, we can also satirise the anti-theological Quixote as "religiously" starting a crusade of denunciation and protest against other people's use (or even against his own use as well) of such religion-saturated expressions as "adieu" (= to God), "good-bye" (= God be with ye), "Christmas" (which must be doubly objectionable as including both "Christ" and the religious ceremony of the "mass"), and the names of the week, which all savor of idolatry.

Will it not be better to bury the hatchet and smoke the pipe of peace, and study how to unite the forces of Secularism, rather than to disintegrate them? W. P. BALL.

THE WORD "RELIGION."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have followed this correspondence with great interest, especially as the question involved has occupied my attention for twenty years, recognising, as I did then, that the constructive side of Freethought lacked motivity and a *nom de guerre*. I only intervene now because it appears to me that the main issue is forgotten in the latter letters, owing to side issues absorbing attention. I take it that Mr. Gould himself must surely now recognise the futility of Freethinkers trying to retain the word "religion" in its present form to signify that constructive ethical system which is about to supersede the effete creed of Christendom and Mohammedanism, and all the other isms bred of a preposterous spiritism and personification of idea. One of the latest apologetic definitions of religion is that given by Sheldon in one of his rhodomontades. He says "it is no string of dogmas, but just His calling us by name"! So! This is throwing Jonah overboard with a vengeance, and without even a whale to catch him! It is just upon such flimsy legerdemot that Christian propaganda now rests. It must be evident that such a term, so elastic in signification, is repellent to the accurate thinker. By adopting it baldly we would make the same mistake as the theologians themselves have made, who have swallowed the theory of evolution, and are now striving to make it appear that the tribal and dogmatic Yahveh or Elohim, whom they worship as God, is identical with the "immanent presence" in nature, but without adducing a single thread of proof in support of their contention, and so incurring the ridicule of most thoughtful and intellectually honest men.

Some years ago, in a pamphlet *On Faith as an Intellectual Function*, I proposed the term Eufidelity, being mainly concerned to supplant the term Infidelity, which, by the malevolence of "believers" so-called, had obtained an accretion of odium. It did not "catch on," however, and so now I would submit "eucredism," or the old word with the prefix eu—viz., eureligion. These may not be the best, but their suggestion may lead to the evolution of the best—that is, the fittest.

ROBERT PARK, M.D.

No Bikes Admitted.

From early morn till dewy eve,
Scarce stopping for a meal,
Through lanes and roads the maiden sped,
Perched high upon her wheel.
At last she flew to realms above,
But there—Oh! sad, sad fate!—
She found a sign, "No bikes allowed,"
A-hanging on the gate.
"Oh! let me in, kind saint!" she cried;
But Peter said: "No, no;
You've brought your bike; if you must ride,
There's a cinder path below."

The two following items are taken from the *Puritan*: "A Mill Hill school boy, in a recent examination, gave the following explanation of 'the rent was made worse.' 'In those days coats were very gorgeous, so a man didn't have one of his own, but some other man made a lot and let them out; so then, of course, if he headed one with a new bit, he raised the price, and the rent was made worse.'" "Another Mill Hill boy being required to write a life of St. Luke, did it thus: 'St. Luke was an Apostol, but not an Evangel; he wrote a gopsal which bares his name and the book of Genekies.'"

The most charming metempsychosis is that in which we see ourselves live again in others.—Goethe.

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.): Closed during the summer.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

REGENT'S PARK (opposite Gloucester Gate): 7, Freethought Demonstration.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, A. B. Moss.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, A. B. Moss; 6.30, C. Cohen.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, E. Pack.

FINSBURY PARK: 3.30, A lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, R. P. Edwards.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. A. Davies.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11, Freethought Demonstration.

KINGSLAND (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford; 7.15, S. E. Easton. July 18, at 8.15, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Stratford Grove): 7.30, F. A. Davies.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (in the Bull Ring): 11, H. Griffin, "Social Evolution."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): Closed during the months of July and August.

LIVERPOOL: Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, closed until September 2. Outdoor lectures at the Monument, bottom of London-road, on August 12, 19, and 26, at 7 p.m.; and on September 2, at 3 p.m.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' Quarterly Meeting; 5, Tea; 7, Musical and other Recitals, etc.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—July 15, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Demonstration at Regent's Park. 18, e., Mile End Waste. 22, a., Victoria Park; e., Hyde Park Demonstration. 29, m., Station-road, Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., West Ham Demonstration.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 15, m., Camberwell; a., Brockwell Park. 22, Northampton. 29, m., Mile End; e., Stratford. August 26, m., Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.—July 15, Debate at Northampton. 22, Birmingham. 29, Manchester. August 19, Northampton.

F. A. DAVIES, 65 Lion-street, S.E.—July 15, m., Battersea; a., Stratford. 29, m., Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

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