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The "C.I.V.'s" at St. Paul's.

NATURE has endowed all animals with the instinct of self-preservation—including priests. Consequently we are not surprised at the zealous way in which the men of God go to work to maintain their hold upon the people. It must be recollected that they have had thousands of years of experience in running their business. They know just exactly what to do in almost every conceivable circumstance. You never catch them napping when their profits and privileges are concerned. They have developed to perfection the art of gulling and exploiting the mob. One of their clever little tricks is this. They persuade the nation that they must have a finger in every pie, and that it would otherwise never cook properly, even if it did not turn rotten and stinking. The priest's blessing, or his drop of holy water, or his sacred viaticum, or his something else, is necessary at every turn of life from the cradle to the death-bed. He christens children, churches mothers, marries lovers, catechises and confirms males and females, prays over the sick, and books the dying to kingdom-come. He creeps into schools, crawls into colleges, turns up at all sorts of dedications, and tries to make the world believe that no public function could possibly succeed without his presence. He puts in an appearance even at the launching of a battleship, and blesses it in the name of the Prince of Peace.

It was therefore not astonishing that the City Imperial Volunteers, on returning home from the war in South Africa, should have to march through the crowded streets of London to St. Paul's Cathedral. They were hungry and footsore when they got there. They had also been pushed about by a vast, enthusiastic, ill-regulated, and disorderly mob. It would have been a treat to arrive at the waiting banquet, with its good victuals and champagne. But the poor, toilworn C.I.V.'s had to give the parsons a turn before they could reach their feeding-place. A whole gang of parsons, from the Bishop of Stepney downwards, stood ready to receive them on the steps of the great London joss-house. These reverend gentlemen were all in full fig. They had on all their best ecclesiastic finery—a striking contrast to the half-guinea suit that Jesus Christ doffed before his crucifixion. In the name of God—whom they know just as much about as the biggest fool who listens to them—they welcomed the fighting-men who had seen more hard work in a year than the clergy see in a lifetime. Then the service began in the Cathedral. Of course it had to be short. But the parsons did not mind that. What they wanted was a look in—and they got it.

Do not suppose, dear reader, that *we* were inside St. Paul's. We were not invited, and we are not in the habit of attending religious services. Still, we dare say the music was fine, and the sermon was short, and a seat was welcome to those who had been on their legs so long, and in such circumstances. But though we did not hear the music—which we regret, nor the sermon—for which we are thankful, we had read the special prayers beforehand. They were got ready in good time, and even published—perhaps in order that God Almighty might be able to study them carefully. These prayers were perfunctory and mechanical. Any clerical scribe, with the Prayer Book beside him, could easily turn out such stuff by the yard—or the mile. There was only one human touch in the lot. It was the reference to "our comrades smitten down

by sword or sickness, who have departed from us in faith and do now rest in the sleep of peace." Oh yes, they *do* rest in the sleep of peace. An *everlasting* peace. No pain, no sorrow, no hard marches, no harder fighting, no still harder wrestling with the grim enteric fiend. All is over. They lie in their last beds. Their dust is mingling with the soil of the far-off foreign land. But many a mother, many a maiden, carries about a heavy heart in consequence; and here and there a father breathes heavily for them in sleepless hours of night.

But what is to be thought of the following rigma-
role?

O Almighty God, who art a strong tower of defence unto thy servants against the face of their enemies: We yield thee praise and thanksgiving for our deliverance from those great and apparent dangers wherewith we were encompassed: We acknowledge thy goodness that we were not delivered over as a prey unto them: beseeching thee still to continue such thy mercies towards us, that all the world may know that thou art our Savior and mighty deliverer; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Was greater nonsense, or more ill-conditioned nonsense, ever penned? Is this the result of the combined genius of all the clergy who hang about the Chapter House in St. Paul's Churchyard? Why, a couple of penny-a-line journalists could have turned out something better, and done it for five shillings—exclusive of beer and baccy. What the deuce is meant by the word "prey"? One would think that the Boers were in the habit of eating their prisoners, or at least of killing them. Perhaps the clergy were thinking of the Chinese. Perhaps they were haunted by thoughts of the fate of certain missionaries amongst cannibals. And what is the meaning of "our deliverance" at the hands of God? If God delivered the C.I.V.'s who have come home, he failed to deliver those who remain (for ever) in South Africa. That is to say, he deliberately let them be killed. But is any man amongst the C.I.V.'s such a fool, or such a hypocrite, as to imagine that those who escaped death were any better worth saving than those who fell? It would puzzle the clergy themselves to explain God's partiality. Perhaps they would say it is all a mystery. Well, if it *is* a mystery, let them hold their silly and impudent tongues.

Is it not absurd to declare, at this time of day, that God is a strong tower of defence unto his servants? He may be so to the clergy, but the only enemy they fight is that invisible personage, the Devil, and few wounds are incurred in *that* warfare. He was no tower of defence, however, to the thousands of British soldiers—with chaplains to remind him of his duty—who have perished in South Africa. He has not even been any tower of defence to the still more pious Boers. At the outset of the war President Kruger assured his fighting burghers that God Almighty directed every bullet. He knew better, because he also congratulated them on their good shooting. Perhaps he really believed as much as our clergy do. They assured us that the Lord was on our side, and he assured his burghers that the Lord was on their side. But every man of sense knows that the Lord is on the winning side. The multitudinous British legions have been too many for the Free Staters and Transvaalers. The two Republics have been swamped and annexed, and President Kruger is flying to Europe. We have not heard if the Lord is on board that Dutch battleship with him. But we dare say the Lord is as much there as he is at St. Paul's Cathedral—or anywhere else.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion's Raw Material.

THERE is a somewhat old-fashioned controversy as to whether man is or is not, originally or by nature, religious. The advocates of the former view point to the indisputable fact that the vast majority of people are religious—more or less—and that often, when the form of religion has been destroyed, the type of mind still continues to manifest itself. On the contrary side, it is pointed out, religion has no existence apart from its special forms, and if these can be shown to be the product of education and experience, which is only education carried on over a longer period, then it is fair to assume that the religious beliefs of man are only the expression of his past experience, just as the servile instincts of a slave-class are the expression of their past social history.

Both points of view contain an element of truth, although, as ordinarily stated, neither contains the whole truth, and both have been merged into one by the all-conquering doctrine of evolution. The personal experience of any one individual carries us but a very little way in helping us to understand the stock of ideas and beliefs of which he is the centre. To understand these aright, one has to grasp the truth, put somewhat quaintly by Oliver Wendell Holmes, that man, instead of being twenty or forty or sixty years old, can, as a matter of fact, count his age by thousands of years. Each one of us is an antiquity; each of us finds our beginnings in the dim pre-historic past, as we shall find our continuation in the unborn future.

It is the past that contains the clue to the present, and it is the savage life of the past that contains the key to much of the civilised present. The origins of all fundamental religious ideas have to be sought amid conditions that are to be found to-day only in uncivilised communities, or in civilised ones only so far as they retrace the stages through which their ancestors have passed. But, paradoxical as it may sound, one need not go to the past for the past. It can be found here in the present, expressing itself not only in our institutions, but likewise in the development of each individual. Each child, in the earlier stages of its mental development, is a picture in miniature of what was once the normal condition of the adult man and woman. The fear of a child in face of the strange and unknown, the indistinct sense of causation in children, with the spontaneous ascription of life to inanimate objects and forces, to say nothing of the predominance of the lower and more selfish feelings, all brings us face to face with the mental condition from which religions spring, and to which religion still makes its most fervent appeals.*

One may say, therefore, with fair accuracy, that there is in children a tendency to religion—that is, they possess in their earlier years the fetishistic type of mind that was once characteristic of the race; and in this sense only can religion be looked upon as natural. It is an infantile disease, belonging to both periods of childhood, racial and individual. As natural as are other infantile disorders, the child would outgrow its early and inherited supernaturalism, as it becomes immune from scarlet fever or measles, if it were only allowed to pursue an unbroken and unhindered course of development. But this it is not allowed to do. In the hands of parents who entertain mistaken notions of their duty, and of a professional priesthood, who have a keen sense of self-interest, this mental phase is seized, and by artificial stimulation is strengthened and prolonged right through life. That which should be a passing phase only is thus converted into a permanent characteristic; and, having brought about this result, the minister of religion appeals to its existence in the adult as a justification of the procedure adopted.

One need not go much further than these simple considerations to find the grounds for the anxiety of the priesthood to force religion on the childhood. Childhood is the most favorable period—perhaps the only period—for the inculcation of religion. It is only when the sense of the mysterious is strong, and is enforced by a feeling of helplessness and a consciousness of ignorance, that religion grips its devotees strongly. At

other times it may appeal to one here and there as a plausible speculation, but it does not produce a strong sense of conviction. There is, therefore, every reason for the priest securing the child; and one preacher, at least, as reported in the current issue of the *Christian World Pulpit*, seems fully alive to its importance. His anxiety is not so much for teaching religious beliefs as it is for getting children into church, and thus unconsciously inducing a state of mind favorable to religion. "The influence which a church has upon a child," he ingenuously explains, "does not lie in what he hears or understands.....it is the silent influences of the place that tell upon him." And these "silent influences" are all calculated to encourage that feeling of weakness and mystification on which religion lives. "The large spaces, the peculiar furnishings, the silence and isolation from everything that is familiar to him.....will fill him with a sense of strangeness and difference.....the music of the organ, the voice of the minister, the singing of the choir and the congregation, all carry the impress of the strange and the unexplainable."

So far the candor of the description leaves little to be desired; and when, further, the reasons given for encouraging these feelings are that the child "is where the savage was," that all religion begins in a sense of the "vague and unaccountable," and that he gets "an ingrained, an instinctive respect for the church and the habit of going to it; he gets the feeling of reverence for something which he does not understand, but by which he feels constrained to respect, if not to awe"—when one gets the reasons for taking children to church so plainly put, one begins to feel that at last that *rava avis*, a straightforward cleric, is met with in the flesh. Unquestionably the advice given above is sound—from the standpoint of the priest. All it asserts is that religion, in civilised nations, is not a matter of intellectual instruction; it is a question of awakening certain sentiments, establishing particular prejudices in favor of specific customs, and then trusting to these prejudices will be strong enough to resist the influence of knowledge afterwards acquired. It is a policy that all the Churches have followed so long as circumstances permitted; and one is bound to admit that they were all wise in their generation in not trusting religious opinions to the educated reason of the adult.

Now, I am quite willing to admit that a policy of creating sentiments in favor of certain beliefs not wholly understood by the child is legitimate enough in its proper sphere. We do not wait until the child is old enough to appreciate the full bearings of all the virtues to give it some ethical instruction. We do seek to bring out certain latent tendencies for good, and suppress active ones of a disagreeable nature, and thus fashion the child's feelings in a required direction. But it is plain that this policy is only defensible so long as there exists a tolerably uniform agreement concerning the social benefits of the course pursued, or, at least, that its social benefit can be established against hostile criticism. We impress upon children the duty of honesty in action and speech, in spite of an oft-manifested tendency in a contrary direction. But this is not only not done to create a feeling of "strangeness and difference," or to excite "reverence for something which he does not understand," but it is taught distinctly to create a feeling of community of interest, while the child that can receive instruction in such matters can also be brought to understand the reason for the instruction, although perhaps not grasping it in its full measure.

But with religious instruction the case is altogether different. Here not only does the mystery continue in spite of the advance in years in understanding, but it is impossible for the parent to justify its being forced upon the child's mind as he can justify instruction in other matters. However confident people may feel concerning their religious opinions, the educated ones, at least, will admit that they are open to doubt. They may be right, but they may be wrong, and there is clearly a wide difference between training a child to regard as valuable actions or feelings the validity of which may be demonstrated at any time, and teaching it to regard as certain teachings which all admit cannot be demonstrated to be so. In the one case, we are training a child for its future welfare; in the other, we are forcing upon it our own speculations upon matters concerning which no

* Those who are inclined to follow this subject further will find much information in Sully's *Studies of Childhood*.

common agreement exists—surely an altogether unwarrantable exercise of parental power.

But the more serious objection to religious instruction is that it does not constitute a part of real education at all. To confuse the understanding is not to instruct, nor is mystification a good method of enlightenment. A good teacher seeks to make his pupil independent of him, a priest to keep him dependent upon him for guidance. Rational education seeks to convince, religion merely instructs. The former aims chiefly at training the reason and exciting a love of inquiry; the latter lulls reason to sleep and regards inquiry as always more or less reprehensible. The whole process of examination and criticism is hostile to the thoroughly religious mind, and is never entertained save under protest. As a French writer remarks:—

“Whoever endeavors to examine a dogma is close upon the point of contradicting it, and the priest who regards contradiction as a failure in faith is always obliged, in the nature of things, to avoid an examination of it, to interdict a certain number of questions, to take refuge in mystery. When a priest has filled a brain with faith, he seals it. Doubt and investigation, which are the life of philosophy, the priest regards as a mark of distrust and suspicion, as a sin, as an impiety; he lifts his eyes to heaven at the bare notion of anybody's thinking for himself.”

After all, the principal part of a sound education is not *what* a child learns, it is the temper of mind induced by his training, the habits formed, the custom of finding sound reasons for beliefs, of accepting no statement upon mere authority, and of cultivating the habits of criticising freely, and without prejudice, all with which he comes into contact. Given these habits of mind, and the future is assured; without them the child becomes the easy dupe of all who are acute enough to play upon his nature.

The child is the raw material out of which the churches and chapels manufacture their future patrons. He carries with him to these places developed habits, the seeds of which were sown in his impressionable childhood. Hence the struggle of the priests of all religions to get control first of the child. Having secured this as a start, the rest is tolerably easy. The tenacity of early impressions is notorious: the man dying in delirium babbles of his childhood's days; the criminal dying on the gallows has his mind carried back to the simple lessons received at his mother's knee; and, similarly, the religious lessons received during extreme youth seldom, perhaps never, entirely disappear. We may not always be conscious of their force, but they are there, like the scar of a wound long since received.

But the child is also the raw material out of which our future citizen is fashioned, and therefore the struggle between the religious instructor and the scientific teacher is more than a mere contest of opinion—it is a struggle for the direction of civilisation. The question at issue is a simple, but a profoundly important, one. It is whether the developing mind of the child is to be directed by agencies which, however imperfect, have raised man from barbarism to civilisation, and placed him a monarch where he once cringed as a slave, or by a priesthood whose sole consistency has been in striving by every means in its power to retard the development of all that is most dignified and lovable in human nature.

C. COHEN.

Jamrelites.

THE Jamrelites, let us say at once, are a religious sect. They have their origin in America—that fruitful birth-place of many religious crazes, and many staggering fictions, fads, and invaluable inventions. The output of the States in the way of religious cranks exceeds that of any other portion of the globe. Russia runs it close, but America takes the palm. Great Britain does its best, but our soil is sadly lacking in this kind of fertility. We seem to be too conservative, too unimaginative, too much afraid of ridicule, too dull, self-contained, proud, and reserved.

If a startling religious sensation is good enough to come our way, dropping, as it were, on our doorstep,

we fight shy of it. It might be a bombshell, judging by the wide berth we give it. We stick to the old order of things, the old institutions, even such a monumental anachronism as the Established Church. Our American cousins, on the other hand, are constantly being struck with some new sectarian idea. And it is not to their discredit that they seize upon it, and play it up for all it is worth. Why shouldn't they? Variety and novelty are the spice of life. New ideas, theories, contrivances, even new sects, are welcome if they seem to indicate advance, or, failing that, if they afford amusement.

With a spirit of fullest toleration, the Freethinker marks the advent of the various new religious communities. What widely-different versions there are of the revelation of God's will to man! Each addition to the long procession is at perfect liberty, so far as the Freethinker is concerned, to take its place and follow up, with its banners flying and its drums beating. He has taken his seat as a mere spectator, and, with more or less interest, he watches the sectarian battalions as they file past. Even in regard to the processionists, who are most outlandish and obviously insane, he is inclined to “forbid them not.” He understands, for so they tell him, that of such is the kingdom of heaven; and then he desires less than ever to go to the place whither they are bound.

The Jamrelites are one of the newest sects. Up till recently the sect called “The Holy Ghost and Us” occupied the field as the latest novelty in the way of religious mania. Its very name is an achievement of imbecility. But the Jamrelites beat that little crowd hollow. The Jamrelites have gone one better than any other set of pious cranks who have ever preceded them. It is a pity that more information about them is not immediately available. But we know that their prophets fix a near date for the end of the world, and that the sect are said to be arranging to migrate to Scotland. They believe that they are to ascend heavenwards from a Scotch mountain.

We have heard before of the pleasant little fancy that the end of the world is immediately at hand. Christ thought the end was near in his time, and so did his disciples, and so have hundreds of fanatics since their day, right down to the present generation. The cry of “Wolf” has been raised so often that the majority of people are indisposed to pay any attention to it. Of course, there might, some fine day, be a sudden put in some way or another to our planetary existence. Who knows? The Jamrelites say they know all about it—that not only is a speedy wind-up possible, but they have special information as to the time, or somewhere about the time, when it will occur.

Scientists do not perceive any ground for present apprehension. They give us—in a kindly way for which we cannot be too grateful—a few more millions of years in which to live. That period will serve. We may go on making our contracts, taking up our leases, marrying and giving in marriage, with some confidence that these time-arrangements will be carried out, and that our progeny will continue to find a foothold on Mother Earth as long as they want it. The Jamrelites will, if we are not mistaken, have time to increase their numbers, to build tabernacles, to pension and bury their prophets, and to put all their affairs straight before the Judgment trumpet sounds.

But what about this proposed invasion of Scotland? Do our “brither Scots” know that they are soon to entertain latter-day angels on their hospitable Hielans? Do they know that, of all the habitable portions of the globe, their “Land o' Cakes” has been selected for this exceptionally high distinction? It is well that they should have timely information of what is awaiting them, for more reasons than one. The Campbells—no, the Jamrelites are coming, and hotel tariffs had better at once be revised. The Jamrelites may be expected to bring some “siller” with them, and to spend it, for of what use will it be to them, pair bodies? In a very short time they will want it no more. They will go to the top of a Scotch mountain, and, according to their expectations, vanish in a Scotch mist.

The whole thing appears to be a trifle misty, but that is no reason why something should not be made out of these uninvited visitors. They are Yanks, and probably 'cute; but Scotland stands not where it did if they do

not encounter within its borders folks as canny as themselves. The main thing will be for the Scottish people, in the vicinity of whatever high mountain is selected, to keep their eye on the Jamrelites, and, after clearing their pockets, be prepared to hang on to their coat-tails when the critical hour arrives.

FRANCIS NEALE.

The Fallacies of Spiritualism.

(Concluded from page 676.)

THE most seductive fallacy associated with Spiritualism is what is termed the "evidential argument," or the "facts of testimony." It is urged that various persons who have seen certain supposed spiritual phenomena have given their testimony in favor of the reality of the manifestations they witnessed. The force of this allegation rests entirely upon what is meant by "spiritual phenomena." If they are the operation of a natural law, why call them spiritual? If they are something that is not natural, what are they? This point must be settled before the Spiritualistic claim can be fairly discussed. The important question is not only, Have certain phenomena occurred? but, What produced them?

The evidence given in favor of any theory should be supported either by consciousness, induction of reason, or personal testimony. Consciousness requires self-evident truths; but the alleged truths of Spiritualism are purely subjective, and are recognised only by the few, and then when their discerning faculties are in an abnormal state. Hence we find that the impressions made upon the minds of Spiritualists are contradictory, which would not be the case if the supposed facts of Spiritualism were self-evident. Neither can the induction of reason be of any evidential value to Spiritualists, inasmuch as reason has failed to discover the nature of the assumed spirit, or to differentiate between it and the material existence. Testimony, therefore, is the only evidence left to support the claims of Spiritualism. Now, the evidential value of testimony depends not only upon the honesty, but also upon the ability, of those who testify. Men like Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall, having seen any particular phenomenon, would be better able to form a sound judgment as to its nature and cause than, for instance, General Booth and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. These latter may be equally honest, but they do not possess the same ability to form an accurate opinion as to the cause or causes of the phenomenon they saw.

Nothing is more fallacious than to accept the truth of any theory, even upon the testimony of men who are well informed upon general subjects. Persons of more than average ability have testified that witchcraft is true, that the earth is flat, and that a personal Devil exists. Yet such views are discarded to-day, and are looked upon as errors and delusions of an ignorant and credulous past. There is, moreover, the fact to be remembered that all men are liable to be deceived, and in connection with Spiritualism the deception has been extensive. Thousands were deceived by the clever tricks of the Fox family, the Davenport brothers, and such mediums as Slade and "Dr." Monk. Spiritualists were in ecstasy in 1847 at the marvellous manifestations of the two Fox girls, but ultimately, through the confession of one who had been in their confidence, the whole affair was proved to be a deception. Both of the Davenport brothers, after making a little fortune, renounced Spiritualism, and one of them admitted that their performance was "the result of trickery and dexterity." The exposure of Slade and "Dr." Monk was so complete that the former had to leave the country, and the latter, after his imprisonment, retired from public life.* Even the two scientists, Wallace and Crookes, were victims of deception. Frank Podmore, M.A., in his *Studies in Psychological Research* (p. 93), shows how Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace was deluded by so-called spirit photography. He believed in its genuineness until Mrs. Sedgwick proved that the affair was a fraud. On page 111 of the same work Podmore points out that the mediums, Miss Cook and Mrs. Fay,

* See the useful work, *The Supernatural*, written by Dr. Lionel A. Weatherly and J. M. Maskelyne.

with whom Mr. Crookes experimented, were detected in their trickery. It may be said that these instances of deception do not prove Spiritualism to be a fallacy, for the reason that dishonest people are found associated with all professions. Supposing this be so, that does not affect the object of my citing the above cases of delusion. That object is to indicate that even eminent men may be misled, and therefore their testimony is not sufficient to establish the truth of that to which they testify.

Spiritualists claim that the fact of one or two scientists accepting their theory is a proof of its truth. It does not, however, follow that, if a scientist be an authority in his special profession, therefore his opinion upon other questions is equally reliable. The real point at issue is this: Are scientific facts favorable or otherwise to the claims of Spiritualism? My contention is that they are not. Science is based upon demonstrated truths, discovered through the fullest examination of every subject within its province. As Spencer says:—

"Men of science subject the result of their inquiries to the most searching examination.....and conclusive testimony is to be found in the daily verification of scientific predictions."

This is the very opposite to the method adopted by Spiritualists. Their theory is based upon emotional speculation, and their inquiry is limited by protective conditions. Dr. Helen Densmore, a prominent Spiritualist, admits that scientific conditions retard and destroy spiritual phenomena (*Light*, June 25, 1898). The fact is, to ascribe any effect to aught else but the natural is so absurd that Sir W. Crookes, in his Presidential Address at the British Association of 1898, candidly confessed that he put a naturalistic explanation upon Spiritualistic phenomena.

If the Spiritualists have a desire for the testimony of scientists, the following may interest them. The late Mr. Proctor, in his journal, *Knowledge* (October 1, 1888), published the following:—

"Professor Lester F. Ward says that, 'So far as science can speak on the subject, consciousness persists as long as the organised brain, and no longer.' Professor E. S. Morse writes: 'I have never yet seen anything in the discoveries of science which would, in the slightest degree, support or strengthen a belief in immortality.' Professor Tyndall, in a lecture on 'Science and Man,' in the Town Hall, Birmingham, in 1877, said: 'But to return to the hypothesis of a human soul, offered as an explanation or simplification of a series of obscure phenomena. Adequate reflection shows that, instead of introducing light into our minds, it increases our darkness. You do not, in this case, explain the unknown in terms of the known, which is the method of science, but you explain the unknown in terms of the more unknown.'"

Professor Graham, in his *Creed of Science*, gives the following summary of modern scientific opinion as to a future life:—

"And now what is the scientific doctrine of the great theme of immortality? Is there any hope for man? In one word, No. For any such hope, if men must continue to indulge in it after hearing the scientific arguments, they must go elsewhere—to the theologian, the metaphysician, the mystic, the poet. These men, habitually dwelling in their several spheres of illusion and unreality, may find suggestions of the phantasy, which they persuade themselves are arguments in favor of a future life; the man of science, for his part, and the positive thinker, building on science, consider no proposition more certain than that the soul is mortal as well as the body which supported it, and of which it was merely the final flower and product.....Our modern physiologist has ascertained that thought is but a function of the brain and nerves. Why should it not perish with these?.....Why should it not collapse with the general break-up of the machinery? Why should it not cease when no longer supported by the various physical energies whose transformations within the bodily machine alone made its existence possible?.....But Science, for her part, finds no grounds for the beliefs of theology or metaphysics in a future life—beliefs, moreover, which she regards as little comforting at the best.....Science, we think, has made out the dependence of our mind and present consciousness on bodily conditions, so far as to justify the conclusion that the dissolution of the body carries with it the dissolution of our present consciousness and memory, which are reared on the bodily basis" (pp. 148-9, 154, and 179).

The sentimental fallacy that Spiritualism is a kind of precautionary belief as to a future existence needs but a few words. Our opinions do not affect the reality in

the slightest degree. If, when we are dead, we are to sleep for ever, we shall so sleep whatever our views thereon may be. Personally, I have no fear. To me death means the cessation of life and the anodyne of repose. In the beautiful language of Colonel Ingersoll: "Next to eternal joy, next to being for ever with those we love and those who have loved us—next to that, is to be wrapt in the dreamless drapery of eternal peace. Next to eternal life is eternal sleep. Upon the shadowy shore of death the sea of trouble casts no wave. Eyes that have been curtained by the everlasting dark will never know again the burning touch of tears. Lips touched by eternal silence will never speak again the broken words of grief. Hearts of dust do not break. The dead do not weep. Within the tomb no veiled and weeping sorrow sits, and in the rayless gloom is crouched no shuddering fear."

CHARLES WATTS.

Pioneers in Prison.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."—LOVELACE.

"You see how this world goes!" is one of poor, raving King Lear's incoherent and pregnant exclamations, in one of the greatest tragedies penned by the master-hand of Shakespeare. Gloster says he sees it feelingly. Lear tells him, in reply, a man may see how this world goes with no eyes, which is sightless Gloster's case.

"Look with thine ears: see how yon justice rails upon yon simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: Change places, and handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?"

Lear ever, in his ramblings, gives terse, pungent, mordant expression to thoughts extraordinary for acuteness and depth. But he seldom, among them all, surpasses this transformation scene, in respect to suggestive import and vivid presentment.

The anomaly is explained by the history of religion. Read the story of the "judicial" murder of heretics, Jews, and "witches." Read Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. See through how many ages independence of mind was killed off and servility fostered. For many centuries Europe was given up to the Church as a sheep to the shearers. With thumbscrew in hand, and calumny on the tongue's tip, the "Bride of Christ" did her damnable work. Thus it happens that some prison records are bright spots on the scroll of history. Thus there is an unfortunate affinity between pioneers and prisons. Many of the noblest men in history suffered long and cruel incarceration within the grim walls of prisons for their devotion to science or liberty. Prisons have thus not infrequently been glorified by the halo of the martyr. How many brave soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation have rotted in gaols! How many men of genius have solaced their weary, imprisoned hours with their pens, learning in suffering what they taught in literature!

The ancient priesthood commenced the accursed work of persecution. In far-off Athens Socrates solaced his solitary prison hours with philosophical pursuits before he drank the hemlock among his sorrowing disciples. The Christian priests frequently dispensed with the mockery of a trial, and, as in the case of the beautiful and unfortunate Hypatia, resorted to murder, pure and simple. Galileo, when he was old and poor, suffered in the Roman dungeon, and Roger Bacon was on two occasions imprisoned—once for a period of ten years—on the common charge of heresy and magic. Yet he, too, like Galileo, had the noble audacity to disturb the contented, pious ignorance of his contemporaries with ideas of discoveries that were to be realized after his death.

Nor can we forget that the hapless Giordano Bruno—perhaps the greatest martyr of all—suffered the horrors of a cruel imprisonment before his tragic end at the hands of the hired assassins of the great lying Catholic Church. Thomas Paine was another fine illustration in point. To relieve the tedium of the loneliness during his captivity in prison he composed part of the well-known *Age of Reason*, a work for which many brave

men afterwards suffered imprisonment. It was while in the Bastille that Voltaire sketched and composed the greater part of *The Henriade*, a tribute to Henry of Navarre. The priests were always anxious to arrest Voltaire; but, thanks to his influence and position, he always evaded their eager clutches. Richard Carlile, his family, and associates had more than their share in the pains and penalties of daring to plead for liberty of speech. Carlile himself suffered nine and a-half years' imprisonment for championing the liberty of the press. His family and shopmen divided amongst them about fifty years' confinement. Think of it! One small circle of acquaintances serving between them sixty years in prison. That genial poet and essayist, Leigh Hunt, calmly endured two years' captivity for his satirical libel upon the Prince Regent, afterwards George the Fourth, of so indifferent memory that to call him a beast is to use the language of flattery. Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, was no stranger to the interior of a gaol. His *Purgatory of Suicides* was another instance of mind triumphing over captivity. Ernest Jones also belongs to the illustrious roll of men who have, by the resources of genius, converted a prison into a palace.

One of the most noteworthy of prisoners was "honest John Bunyan." He was not a Freethinker, but he spent twelve years of his life in Bedford Gaol for non-conformity. He wrote part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* while there. When a Quaker came to visit Bunyan, and declared, in his snuffling way, that the Lord had ordered him to search for John in half the prisons of England, he replied: "If the Lord had sent you, you need not have taken so much trouble to find me; for the Lord knows that I have been a prisoner in Bedford Gaol for the last twelve years."

It is a singular coincidence that the authors of two of the most popular books ever written should have been, not only contemporaries and of the same nationality, but both imprisoned in the same country. Strictly speaking, Daniel Defoe did not write *Robinson Crusoe* while he was imprisoned, although other works of his prolific pen were undoubtedly born of his captivity. Cervantes, a greater writer than Bunyan or "Unabashed" Defoe, and one of the foremost writers of the world, was held captive by the Moors for five years. The record of his terrible hardships and sufferings displays the courage and magnanimity of Cervantes in an eminent degree. On his subsequent escape and return to Spain he was again imprisoned. During this confinement it was that he devised and commenced his immortal work, *Don Quixote*, a work which has permanently added to the gaiety of nations.

Among the host of noble names of those who have suffered imprisonment we can refer to a few only, such as Selden, Penn, Pepys, and Sidney, who were confined in the Tower of London. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, George Wither, and Lovelace, the Cavalier poet, composed some of their happiest songs in prison.

Who can con over the names just mentioned without a feeling of pity and sympathy for their privations and sufferings, as well as respect for their high intellectual endowments? Among these men are to be found some of the chief benefactors of mankind. It is they who touch us to finer issues, give us better aims than the accumulation of money, and teach us to withstand the sovereignty of Unreason on the earth. Pity that from all their conquests, so rich in benefit to others, they should reap so little themselves.

From our plaudits greatly fled,
They with diviner silence dwell instead;
And, far beyond our vision and our hail,
Are heard for ever, and are seen no more.

MIMNERMUS.

The Brave.

Stand not aloof nor apart,
Plunge in the thick of the fight;
There in the street and the mart,
That is the place to do right.
Not in some cloister or cave,
Not in some kingdom above,
Here, on this side of the grave,
Here should we labor and love.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Acid Drops.

WINE, according to the Bible, cheereth God and man. Jehovah himself, therefore, as well as the French, ought to be happy over the extraordinary bountiful wine-crop in fair Gallia this year. Grapes were so plentiful that in some districts they only realised fifty shillings per ton, and the plethora of grape-juice that had to be stored caused an immense rise in the price of casks. It is to be regretted, in the interest of temperance, that French wines are not more accessible to Englishmen. The initial cost of wine is very little more than that of beer; it is the heavy duty, over and above the cost of maturing, that makes it so expensive in this country. The total consumption of wine in France is one thousand million gallons per annum; the total consumption in England is only sixteen million gallons. Less ardent spirits and more wine would be a great improvement. Even the teetotallers might rejoice at a decreased consumption of alcohol.

Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake, said Paul to Timothy. We dare say Timothy liked the prescription. But some of the thorough-going Bible Temperance people (so it is said) declare that Paul meant the wine for external application. It was to be rubbed in. Ordinary people, however, will be apt to think that it would operate more effectually inside.

Coventry Patmore, the poet, Roman Catholic as he was, had less objection to "infidels" than to some members of his own Church. He seems to have despised and detested the much-praised Cardinal Manning—a man whose face, by the way, was worthy of a Grand Inquisitor. This is how Patmore spoke of him in a letter to Woolner, the sculptor, and author of some delicate poetry: "Poor Manning! It is wonderful how he imposed on mankind by the third-century look of him, and his infinite muddle-headedness, which passed for mystery. I knew him very well, and am convinced that he was the very minutest soul that ever buzzed in so high a place. He was a good man according to his *capacity*, but he hated all men whom he suspected of being able to take his measure."

Mr. John Burns has earned the name on the London County Council of the "Sabbatarian Agnostic." It was created for him by Mr. Radford, on account of his attitude towards Sunday music and Sunday recreations. There was a proposal before the Council to spend £289 in forming a pond "for dog bathing and model yachting" on Tooting Common. Lord Ribblesdale wondered how the dogs and the yachts would get on together. Mr. Radford, still more sarcastically, supposed the dogs would not be permitted to bathe on Sundays. It was a hit, a palpable hit, after the discussion over Sunday football at Hackney Marsh. Mr. Burns, however, being ready at retort, exclaimed: "Oh, that's all right; the Tooting dogs are of High Church tendency." But the retort was not particularly felicitous. It was wanting in delicacy as well as dexterity.

Dr. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, was one of the speakers at the annual meeting of the Wolverhampton auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In the course of his address he referred to the picture of Queen Victoria presenting an African chief with a Bible as "The secret of England's greatness." He said that this picture made a great impression upon him in his youth. It would have been more to the purpose if he had told the meeting that the story which this picture illustrates is a fable, which was authoritatively contradicted many years ago. The Queen never presented an African chief with a Bible, and never told him it was the secret of England's greatness. It would not have mattered in the court of reason if she had, but these Bible people know that the Queen is a good card to play in the game of bamboozling the ignorant and unwary. So they stick to that apocryphal old "Chief and Bible" story as gospel, and work that apocryphal old picture for all it is worth.

The Rev. Dr. Kerr, of Glasgow, seems to be just a few generations behind his time, and, what is worse for him, does not appear to be aware of the fact. He writes, apparently in all innocence, to the Rev. Professor Dods, who has been lecturing on the Higher Criticism, and requests him to "indicate some of the passages of the Word of God where errors and discrepancies may be found." He says he has hitherto professed belief in the infallibility and divine authority of the Bible.

In reply, the Rev. Professor Dods expresses a natural surprise that he should be asked for information which can be found in at least a hundred easily accessible volumes. He refers his correspondent to Carpenter's *Synoptic Gospels*, Gilbert's *Life of Jesus*, Snell's *Gain or Loss*, any of Schwartzkopff's books, and, indeed, any critical work on the Scriptures. Dr. Kerr, however, is not satisfied with these references; he wants chapter and verse.

Professor Dods, in a further letter, says that he has indicated where all the information asked for can be found, and he declines to enter into a controversy with one who apparently is well acquainted with the subject and has already made up his mind. Someone should forward Dr. Kerr, of Queen-square, Glasgow, one or two of the works advertised in the Freethought Publishing Company's list. He would then find plenty of material to consider and reply to if he can.

"If Sunday trading is allowed to go on, then surely Scotland is doomed." That is the conclusion arrived at by Mr. J. McRae, who writes to the *Glasgow Herald*. We didn't know that Scotland was in any special danger from Sunday trading. If it is so, it is not for the want of numerous manifestations of Sabbatarian bigotry. Perhaps, after all, Scotland will survive, as we hope that Sunday trading will, where it meets legitimate and urgent needs, and is quite voluntary on the part of the traders.

Anybody who wants to get about in Edinburgh on Sunday, and does not want to walk all the way, has to hire a cab. Of course the well-to-do can afford this expense, but common folk are not so fortunate. They have to turn tramps on the blessed Sabbath. The cable cars are not allowed to run, and the leading men—particularly those who can float about in Disraeli's street-gondola—are nearly all for keeping up this restriction. One municipal candidate, in defending it, said he was "fond of the dear old Scottish Sunday." No doubt it is "dear" enough as well as "old." It is old enough to be dead and buried, and dear enough to be abolished by an economical people like the Scotch.

Rev. Mr. Delafield, according to the *Grays and Tilbury Gazette*, has accepted what we suppose is a clear call from the Lord. He goes from Grays, where the living is worth £160 a year, to Little Thurrock, where the living is worth £360 a year. The "platform of usefulness" is smaller at Little Thorrock, our contemporary says, and broadly hints that the man of God ought to have stopped where there were most souls to be saved. That is all very well, in its way; but, if men of God were to be judged by their professions, how many of them would stand such a test? Poverty is the first virtue of a Christian, according to the Sermon on the Mount, and something like destitution should be the first virtue of an apostle.

There is a living worth £300 a year which has gone begging. It is at Pelton, near Chester-le-Street. The place is one of the most forbidding in the kingdom. Everything about it is blackened with coal dust. Even the very sheep are in mourning. To crown all, the church is of the ugliest description. No man of God could be found to accept £300 a year in such conditions, and souls were going regularly to hell from that parish without an attempt being made to save them; until at last the patron, who is in holy orders, has been obliged to take the job on himself.

The Evesham Guardians, by nine votes to seven, have declined to allow the Salvation Army to send religious literature to the workhouse inmates. Parsonic influence, of course, is at the bottom of this petty prohibition. The chaplain does not want his pauper flock interfered with. They are his special preserve, and Salvationist poachers are warned off. The Evesham Guardians would have done well if they had disfavoured the clerical exclusiveness.

Why shouldn't Salvationist literature be sent to the inmates? Many of the aged recipients are probably unable to read it even with the aid of their "specs." That, or any other literature of the kind, is always useful for pipe-lights. There is no earthly reason why solicitous Boothites should not send their tracts to the poor caged-up creatures, who must be glad of anything that breaks the monotony of their dull existence. The paupers are not obliged to read the literature, and, if they do read it, it doesn't much matter. Ordinary illustrated newspapers would, of course, be more acceptable. Something of a pictorial kind seems to be especially preferred. Even a picture of the "Last Supper" or the "Babe in a Manger" is something for the poor folks to look at, and ponder over, if they please. Myths of that kind seem to suit childhood and senile decay.

Personal visits paid by sectarian fanatics are decidedly objectionable, and, for various reasons, should be discontinued. They are an intrusion which must often be an annoyance, and, with the weaker pauper "vessels," are calculated to encourage hypocrisy more than anything else.

Common-sense people would also object to literature of the "Prepare-to-meet-thy-God" type being showered on the beds of sick folks whose temperature is already many degrees too high. The sniffs of hell which are piously induced in hospitals and infirmaries are responsible for sending many a fever-stricken sufferer to his grave long before his time. Still, with the poor pauper folks who are not absolutely ill there is

I have not." "Go then, and do so instantly," continued the maniac, "for I have lost mine."

This story doesn't seem to be complete. The person accosted should have laid hold of the lunatic and dragged him aside, and asked: "Is it because you are mad that you recommend me to give thanks to God? If I am to thank God for my sanity, what am I am to say to him about your insanity? Thank him again or curse him? Which would you do?"

At Capradossa, the other day, Don Augusto Floridi, the priest of that village, died in consequence of a wound inflicted by a Mr. Nunziati, who, according to *L'Ordine* of Ancona, had thus avenged his sister's honor. The deceased priest, after having seduced Nunziati's sister, had procured a miscarriage, and the priest had buried the child in his cellar, where it was found by the police.

While reading a psalm at a service in the Zion Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Wrexham, one of the class leaders named John Jones suddenly dropped down dead.

One of the most renowned lenders of money to clergymen, Edward Shuckburg, of Bristol, has come to grief in the Bankruptcy Court. It does not appear whether his failure is due to over-confidence in the men of God; anyhow, his liabilities are £1,500.

Studies by the Way is the title of a new volume of Essays by the Right Honorable Sir Edward Fry, one of her Majesty's judges. In one of them he writes as follows:—"The Old Testament is full of doctrine which is positively opposed to our moral conceptions. The Almighty God is represented as tempting men to acts which he afterwards disowns or punishes; deceit is praised rather than truthfulness; barbarous acts of cruelty are narrated without a pang; and the whole Gentile world is regarded as outside the care of its loving Father. How from such stones as these are we to extract any bread for our spiritual life?"

Sir Edward Fry is evidently a Freethinker to a certain extent. We are surprised, however, that he does not go further. In one great respect the New Testament is worse than the Old Testament. Its doctrine of everlasting hell is the consummation of brutality. God's cruelty to his own children is prolonged through all eternity. Not satisfied with torturing them here, as in the Old Testament, he tortures them for ever and ever in an establishment created for the purpose before they were born. It is astonishing that an acute mind, like Sir Edward Fry's, does not perceive this. But it is often the case, that the obvious is the most overlooked.

The Rev. D. MacRae, of St. James's, Wood Green, appears not to be troubled with stringent restrictions in regard to the ethical ideal when "men after God's own heart" are concerned. Preaching the other Sunday to young men and women, he presented the life of Saul to them as a "warning beacon" against the rocks on which they might split. Saul, he said, "did not sin as David did—it would have been better for him if he had—and had been penitent as David was. But to the last he was impenitent." Apparently, according to this preacher, the main thing is not to sin, but, having sinned, to repent of it, which is certainly a novel proposition in ethics.

At the Hospital Sunday Demonstration in Walsall, last week, one of the speakers was the Rev. W. Felton. He said it was a "problem that there should be so much suffering in the world," and he seemed somewhat perplexed by it. Well, it is a problem that has troubled many philosophers who lived long before the Rev. W. Felton's time. But they and he were Theists believing in an omnipotent and benevolent God. That is where the difficulty comes in. The existence of evil presents no such difficulties to the Atheist. The Rev. Felton urges that suffering comes from sin; but that is only pushing the question a step backward, because we still require to know why there should be sin in a world created by Infinite Benevolence.

Bishop Wilson, who seems to be running the Melanesian Mission, told an audience last week whom he was addressing on behalf of missionary enterprise that a little time ago he bought a small island for £12. Now he wants a steamer to run in connection with that and other islands which he or his Church has probably acquired on equally cheap terms. The steamer is to run at the rate of ten knots, and will only cost somewhere about £12,000. The missionaries, he says, are not going to give up their islands; they simply want people at home to subscribe to the preservation and improvement of their property.

Even-handed justice is dealt out strangely to Jews and Christians in Holy Russia. An Odessa correspondent of the

Daily News gives some remarkable illustrations. A poor orphan Jewess, who could not even remember her parents, was arrested for mendicancy, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment, to be followed by life-long banishment to one of the remote settlements of Eastern Siberia. During the month of her condemnation four murder cases were tried in the same district. They were all flagrant, brutal, and premeditated, but the sentences varied from fifteen months' to five years' hard labor. The murderers were Christians.

Mr. Frank Bullen, lecturing at Camberwell on "Whales and Whale Fishing," a subject on which he is an authority, remarked that there was nothing improbable about the story of Jonah—a subject on which he is *not* an authority. It was only the Greenland whale, he said, that could only swallow a herring. The great sperm whale could have swallowed the whole ship's crew. Well, we rather doubt this, in spite of Mr. Bullen. But, in any case, the great sperm whale does not (we believe) haunt the east Mediterranean, or the Black Sea, or wherever it was that Jonah was taken in out of the wet. Even if Jonah had been swallowed, clothes and all probably, by a convenient whale, the "story" would still be one for the marines. Mr. Bullen should kindly explain how Jonah could have lived for three days in what Robert Taylor called fishguts—though we know the whale is not a true fish. How did he breathe? How did he escape being digested? We lay no stress on his being vomited up at the finish, for if he was alive the poor whale must have been thoroughly sick of him. Still, it must have been a recorn vomit to throw him up on "dry land" from the deep water which whales must swim in.

"In Honour of the Holy Face and Five Wounds of Jesus," the Rev. B. Murray, of Wellingborough, with the blessed approval of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Northampton, is begging people by autograph circular letter to help him "build a sanctuary for the salvation of souls at Rushden," and half promises that a timely subscription from a sinner will make it easier for him in kingdom-come. These begging letters seem to be sent about lavishly and indiscriminately, and there must be a heavy commission on the collection. We don't know much about the holy face of Jesus, but we think the Rev. B. Murray has a lot of *face* "on his own," though it is not exactly *holy*.

"The real educational problem which confronts our statesmen," says Mr. Bernard Shaw in *Fabianism and the Empire*, "is not the struggle of the Church with the Nonconformists for the souls of our elementary scholars, but the establishment of quite new subjects and methods, having for their object the technical training of the public servants who will constitute the executive of the Empire, and the education in citizenship of those upon whose votes their authority will be based." We agree with Mr. Shaw on this matter. But why is it that so many Fabians support the Nonconformist section of soul-savers by standing up for the "Compromise"—that is to say, for the religious education which suits the Chapel party in opposition to the Church party? It is certainly a curious thing to find professed Socialists, who are also reputed to be Agnostics, if not Atheists, doing their utmost to prevent the triumph of Secular Education. Mr. Graham Wallas, one of the ablest Fabians, fought harder than the Rev. Dr. Clifford himself to keep Secular Education off the "Progressive" platform. Yet from all we have heard it seems that Mr. Wallas has just as much belief in religion as we have ourselves.

Br'er Johnson's Experience.

W'en Br'er Johnson got religion he hollered out so loud,
He shuck de shingles on de roof en tarrified de crowd!
'Peared lak it wuz a yearthquake en de steeple gwine ter fall;
De preacher in de pulpit couldn't keep his feet at all.

Den de preacher quit de 'sputtin' en de 'spoundin' er his views;
De pulpit tumbled over en played leapfrog wid de pews,
En fum de Amen co'ner we hearn de brotherin' call:
"Have mussy on Br'er Johnson, en have mussy on us all!"

You never see sich capers! De preacher lead de way,
En hollered ez he hit de groun': "I gwine home ter-day!"
Dey warn't no benediction; he had no time fer dat,
Likewise, ter git his walkin'-stick en shiny beaver-hat.

De congregation follered—a-ryshin' out dey come,
Whilst Br'er Johnson's voice riz louder dan a rigimint bass
drum!

En ez dat voice went rollin' en reachin' fer on high,
'Peared lak it shuck de winders er de mansions in de sky!

He des broke up de meetin'—des laid it on de she'f;
In less dan I kin tell it had de whole house ter hisse'f.
A reg'lar ol' -time Jonah ter de women en de men;
He got religion sartin, but he's simmered down sence den!

—Atlanta Constitution.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 4, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road ;
7.30, "New Testament Superstitions."

To Correspondents.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—November 4, Liverpool.
—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. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- A. C. TURNER.—You can hardly do better than read Büchner's
Force and Matter, which can be obtained from our publishing
office at the "remainder" price of 3s. 6d.—by post (free) 3s. 9d.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—
Victoria Park Collection, 5s.
- C. HEATON writes : "I should like to see a more generous response
to your appeal on behalf of the Freethought Twentieth Century
Fund. There must be hundreds of Freethought working men
like myself able to give something. Surely we who have benefi-
ted so much from the writings of Rationalists who have helped
us to mental freedom ought to do something in return. Many
spend a few shillings a week on drink and other things, which
they could do without for one week, and give the money to help
this Fund. I hope my fellow working men will make an effort
to render this Fund a thorough success."
- A. T. HALL.—Much obliged, but we knew the facts. You will
understand when we say that we are not disposed to advertise
the persons concerned.
- YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Pleased to hear from you.
- A. F. BULLOCK.—We regret the oversight. The matter is now
attended to.
- TEN-SHARE TOM.—We have no such cases for the *Freethinker*,
and we fear there would be very little useful demand for them
if we had. Much obliged for your individual offer all the same.
Glad to hear you "like the *Freethinker* more as the years roll
by." Also that you enjoyed Minnermus's article on Gibbon.
The handbills you refer to will be ready shortly.
- BAYNARDS.—It is difficult to advise you further. Sympathy is all
we can extend now.
- W. A. JACKSON.—Mr. Foote received a card of invitation to the
Democratic Convention on the morning of the day it was held.
He had to leave London for Leicester in the afternoon.
- C. F.—Our compliments to the family. See acknowledgments in
list.
- J. RALSTON.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Watts delighted a good
audience at Motherwell. Mr. Foote will be happy to lecture
there when he next visits Glasgow.
- W. H. NASH.—Your letter arrives as we are preparing to go to
press. We hope to have time to deal with it in our next issue.
Meanwhile, we may observe that your manners bespeak you a
Christian.
- E. R. WOODWARD.—*La Bible Amusante*, of which we have a
copy, was dealt with many years ago in the *Freethinker*. We
also reproduced some of its illustrations. Thanks all the same.
- E. J. VOISEY.—Thanks for your promised guinea to the Twentieth
Century Fund. We shall be printing a full list again when
Shilling Week (or Month) is cleared out of the way. Miss
Vance is sending you the large photograph of Mr. Foote. He
will be honored by your placing it "beside the late Charles
Bradlaugh," as you say you intend.
- A. J. H.—We are obliged for the reference, but we cannot deal
with the matter further at present.
- JAMES MARSH.—Mr. Foote is quite well, thank you.
- TWO CLIFTON ADMIRERS, subscribing to the Twentieth Century
Fund Shilling Week, say : "We would like to take this oppor-
tunity of thanking you most sincerely for the great pleasure we
experience each week when reading your most clever and fear-
less articles. It is difficult sometimes to express in words our
deepest feelings, but we feel we should like you to know that
amongst all your numerous readers there are none who
appreciate your paper more heartily than we do." These
correspondents remain anonymous, but their subscription is a
"guarantee of good faith."
- G. F. FINN (Mannington).—We hope we have your name rightly.
If not, please advise us. See Shilling Week list for acknow-
ledgment.
- "A SCOTCH FRIEND," who promised £25 towards the Free-
thought Twentieth Century Fund, sends it personally by Mr.
Charles Watts.
- J. G. BARTRAM.—The delay has been unavoidable. It is a ques-
tion of adjusting dates. See paragraph.
- S. BURGON.—Your repeated subscriptions, considering your
means, ought to shame some male Freethinkers.
- FREETHOUGHT TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND.—William J. Morley,
10s.; Horace W. Parsons, £10 10s.; Mrs. H. W. Parsons, 10s.
- W. P. ADANSON.—See paragraph.
- G. PARSONS.—We cannot possibly bear individual Lecture Notices
in mind. When they are not inserted it may be taken that they
have not been received. All go straight to the printers.
- J. GOMPERTZ.—You say we have "certainly worked well for the
cause." We have worked hard, anyhow.

HORACE W. PARSONS, with his cheque for ten guineas, sends
"best wishes for the success of the Freethought Twentieth
Century Fund." His wishes are evidently sincere. They are
also practical. This might serve as a hint to other potential
subscribers, and transform them into actual ones.

H. DAWSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. E. WILLIS.—Thanks for cuttings.

RECEIVED.—Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette—Glasgow Herald
—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Lyttleton Times—Walsall
Observer—Wood Green Sentinel—Two Worlds—Liberator—
Freidenker—Islamic World—Truthseeker—Blue Grass Blade.

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.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE'S lecture at Leicester on Sunday morning drew
a very good audience for that part of the day. The subject
was "China and the Christian Powers." Mr. Sydney A.
Gimson, one of the strongest pillars of the Leicester Secular
Society, took the chair and introduced the lecturer with a few
words of warm welcome. To all appearance, Mr. Foote's
address was highly appreciated. Before the time for the
evening lecture on "Does Death End Us?" the rain fell
heavily, and somewhat spoiled what promised to be a bump-
ing audience. As it was, the body of the hall was full, but
the gallery did not look as it usually does at Mr. Foote's
Leicester meetings. In the adverse conditions, however, the
gathering was flatteringly numerous. Mr. Wilder occupied
the chair, and Mr. F. J. Gould was also seated on the
platform, taking copious notes of the lecture. Outside it
was wet and cheerless, but inside everything was bright and
cheerful, and even enthusiastic. At the close of the pro-
ceedings Mr. Foote spoke briefly on the subject of Mr.
Gould's candidature for a seat on the new School Board ;
and, judging from the vociferous applause, those present
mean to give the "Secular Education" candidate their most
vigorous and effective support.

Mr. Gould has received further letters of approval from the
Rev. J. Page Hopps and Mr. J. Allanson Picton. The latter
was once member of parliament for Leicester, and a very
popular one too. His communication is therefore of special
value. Amongst the subscribers to Mr. Gould's election
fund is the Secular Society, Limited, which contributes three
guineas.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-
court-road, London, this evening (Nov. 4), at 7.30. He will
take for his subject "New Testament Superstitions." This
lecture should be something of an eye-opener to the orthodox,
and Freethinkers should try to bring their Christian friends
along to the meeting.

Mr. Charles Watts's five lectures in Scotland last week
were much appreciated by intelligent audiences, one of the
main features of which was the presence of a goodly number
of young men. The interest they took in the lectures was
manifested by their asking several pertinent questions.

Mr. Watts had very fair audiences in Glasgow on Sunday.
The Branch secretary also informs us that the evening lecture
was highly appreciated, and that the friends were glad to
see that the lecturer had returned to his usual good health.
To-day (Sunday, November 4) Mr. Watts lectures three times
in Liverpool.

Mr. Cohen had a pretty good audience at the Athenæum
Hall on Sunday evening, in spite of the heavy rain. Of course
it would have been much larger had the weather been propi-
tious. It was a great pity that the wet evening should have
fallen to the lot of Mr. Cohen, who lectures so seldom in that
part of London.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch has arranged to have four debates between Mr. Boyce, of the Christian Evidence Society, and some of its younger members, in the Westminster Hall, New Bridge-street. The first takes place this evening (November 4), when "Iconoclast" enters the lists on behalf of the Branch, and promises to "make things lively." The subject for debate is, "Does the Bible Harmonise with Modern Science?" An entertaining subject at this time of day!

The Camberwell branch holds its annual meeting to-day (Nov. 4), at 11 a.m. The attendance of all members is particularly requested.

Mr. J. W. Cox lectures for the West London Branch in Hyde Park to-day (Nov. 4) at 3 in the afternoon and 7 in the evening. Mr. Cox has been addressing large audiences from an independent platform, but we understand that he prefers now to lecture from the platform of the N. S. S. Branch.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1901 is on the stocks, and will be launched shortly. The Calendar has been overhauled, and other information brought up to date. Special articles are included by G. W. Foote, C. Watts, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, Chilperic, and others. This publication ought to be purchased by most Freethinkers. All profit realised by the sale accrues to the National Secular Society, and helps in carrying on Freethought propaganda. We expect to make a definite announcement in our next issue with regard to this publication.

Dr. W. Henry Menmuir asks us to announce the formation of an Edinburgh Rationalist Society, of which he is secretary *pro tem*. Its meetings are held at 14 Picardy-place on Sundays. The Society holds to the "supremacy of reason in human judgment," and aims at a "free platform for the discussion" of subjects affecting human welfare. The secretary's address is 47 Comely Bank-road, Edinburgh.

Mrs. Elder is presenting Govan with £50,000 for a public library. One condition of the gift is that the library shall be open on Sundays. A generous lady, and a sensible one too; though we daresay the local clergy are of a different opinion.

We regret that we did not receive a notice of Mr. G. J. Warren's candidature for a seat on the new Stepney Borough Council in time for a paragraph in last week's *Freethinker*. Mr. Warren was standing as one of the three "Progressive" candidates in the South-East Ward of Mile End. A long and appreciative article on his past services as a Vestryman appeared in the *East End News* of October 19. Mr. Warren is a vice-president of the National Secular Society, and his genial presence is always welcome at Executive meetings.

Once again we venture to ask our friends in various parts of the country to obtain and send us the addresses of newsagents who will display a weekly contents-sheet of the *Freethinker*. This is a sure method of promoting our circulation. The contents-sheet is always one to arrest attention and arouse curiosity.

Some friends who have sent us such newsagents' addresses write as though we had failed to forward the contents-sheet. We are much obliged to them for their kind attention, but the fault must lie elsewhere. Miss Vance carefully looks to this matter herself, and every wrapper is checked by the book of such addresses before posting. Perhaps the newsagents have failed to keep their promise. It would be well if friends would keep an eye upon them, and let us know the actual result, as we don't want to waste time, labor, printing, and postage stamps.

The Freethought Twentieth Century Fund.

SHILLING WEEK.

(Fifth List.)

TO TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30.

C. H. Cattell, 1s.; R. C. N., 5s.; J. Carrington, 2s.; H. Barnett, 5s.; C. Quinton, 5s.; W. Elcoat, 5s.; T. Vine, 2s.; E. B., 2s. 4d.; C. and T. Heaton (second subscription), 5s.; Old Atheist, 2s. 6d.; G. Howlett, 1s.; C. D. M. and Friends, 3s.; E. Cole, 1s. 6d.; J. R., 2s.; W. W., 2s.; R. M., 1s.; Mrs. F., 1s.; Mr. F., 3s.; W. F., 1s.; H. F., 1s.; Mrs. McMillan, 5s.; Mr. Wright, 1s.; James Marsh, 2s.; H. Yonge, 1s.; H. Lyon, 1s.; M. Bywater, 1s.; Two Clifton Admirers, 10s.; G. F. Finn, £1; J. K., 2s.; S. Burgon, 2s. 6d.; Collection at Mr. C. Watts's Glasgow Lecture, 13s. 1d.; J. Kelser, 1s.; J. Hockin, 1s.; J. Gompertz, 2s.; A. Rowley, 3s.

What, then, do our Christian Friends Believe?

LAST Sunday morning I sat patiently listening to the fervid eloquence of an earnest Methodist minister.

After a lengthy exposition of most undeniable orthodoxy, the reverend gentleman wound up with the customary final appeal, reminding us that Christ came into the world to save sinners, but that only those who accepted him could be saved. Did my clerical friend really believe his own doctrine, I wonder? If so, did he realise all the horror of his belief?

What proportion of the world's population is now, or ever has been, genuinely Christian?

Is it, indeed, a fact that the unconverted, dying daily, are dropping by their thousands into hell? If so, what a terrible satire to call Christianity "glad tidings." To the mass of mankind it brings simply tidings of damnation.

Surely no man believing the orthodox teaching can sit quietly in his pew, knowing the while that his fellows are crowding into hell.

The Christian, going in and out amongst us, should be "of all men most miserable," for he looks around upon vast masses of unconverted humanity. He knows that most men do not really understand Christianity at all; it does not practically touch their lives. This may or may not be their own fault; but there stands the fact—and over all this multitude hangs the doom of eternal torment. Does he believe this? I venture to think that he does not, or he would surely go mad with the realisation of its awful consequences. This belief, nevertheless, lies at the very root of Christ's teaching.

We are told that, through Adam's sin, we are all condemned to eternal death; but, through Christ's sacrifice, those who believe in him, *and they alone*, will be saved from this death.

Is not this a fair statement of the Christian position as preached in hundreds of pulpits every Sunday? "Blood and Fire" is very truly the motto of the Christianity of Christ.

But do our Christian friends believe in it? If not, what, then, do our Christian friends believe?

If a man may reach heaven without belief in Christ, the main object of Christianity—"conversion," or "second birth"—becomes quite superfluous. If a man must believe or trust in Christ in order to reach heaven, what becomes of the countless toiling millions who either know not or care not what lies beyond the grave?

Surely a man cannot force himself, either at the command of God or from an instinct of self-preservation, to believe or to love without very sufficient reason. One cannot conjure up heart-yearnings to order.

It seems evident that Christianity is based upon a dogma repugnant to every principle both of humanity and of common sense. By its tremendous and unreasonable demands upon us it exhibits its own inherent weakness.

A YOUNG FREETHINKER.

The National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive Meeting, held at the Society's offices on Thursday, October 25; Mr. G. W. Foote in the chair. There were present also: Messrs. E. Bater, C. Cohen, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, S. Hartmann, W. Leat, B. Munton, C. Quinton, T. Shore, H. Stace, T. Thurlow, and the Secretary.

Apologies for non-attendance were read from Messrs. Warren, Roger, Moss, and Neate. Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed. The cash statement was received and adopted.

This meeting falling, as it did, in the middle of the Borough elections, in which so many absent members of the Council were interested, only routine business was transacted.

The President gave a report of the recent Demonstration at Birmingham, which had been a signal success.

The Annual Dinner was also reported as being arranged for Monday, January 14.

Other minor matters were dealt with, and the meeting adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, Secretary.

N.B.—Branch Secretaries are reminded that particulars for the *Secular Almanack* cannot be inserted after November 5.

The Late Professor Shuttleworth.

THE late Professor Shuttleworth, whose death occurred quite recently, was a High Churchman, a brave worker for social reform as he understood it, and an old friend of the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, whom he supported in the Church and Stage Guild days. As a Christian clergyman, his ways were far apart from ours. But he had at least one thing in common with us—a conviction that all faiths, including his own, were disgraced by resorting to persecution. He spoke in favor of the absolute repeal of the Blasphemy Laws at the great St. James's Hall demonstration shortly after our release from Holloway Prison in 1884. This was a courageous act, and we have always honored him for it. We feel that we ought to add this little tribute to his memory.

Evidential Amenities.

A STORY told of a conversation between a Christian Evidence grinder and one of his deep-chested applauders admirably illustrates the rascality bred by religion and the indiscipline which is the bane of Freethought. The man of God was sallying forth as the substitute for a brother "infidel-slayer" who had been announced for an *al fresco* oration on "The Existence of Deity." The faithful henchman, in the innocence of his soul, ventured to assume that the subject advertised would be duly dealt with, but the vulpine follower of the Lamb of God opined otherwise. He was not going to discourse metaphysics, said he; he intended, rather, to worry the Freethinkers, and work their indignation up to boiling heat by emptying upon them the lava of his abuse. A sapient policy, indeed; one which, while it lays bare the nakedness of Christian evidences and the unashamedness of the itinerant vendors of the same, also evokes cyclones of undisciplined protest from the unwary enthusiasm of certain hyper-sensitive Secularists who resent being abused instead of edified. It is an old and familiar dodge; one of the traditional tricks of the Christian evidence trade. It will continue to be played off upon the unbounded gullibility of Christians and the superfluous indignation of Secularists so long as the ingenious retain their power over the ingenuous.

Controversially speaking, Christian evidences proper don't pay. Defenders of the faith, like Paley or Butler of old, or Dr. A. J. Harrison of to-day—men, that is to say, who make appeal solely to the intellectual and moral side of their sceptical readers or audiences—have ever been, and are, viewed askance by full-blooded religionists as so many pamperers with Infidelity or mealy-mouthed utterers of soft things. The weapon most suitable to the Christian evidence taste is not the kid glove of kindness, but the bludgeon of brutality, and the lecturer who most ingeniously scalps the Secularists, murders their reputations, befouls their women with his base insinuations, or smirches the honor of his antagonists, is precisely the man most honored and applauded by the yelping yahoos who gather round the forum of religious eloquence set up by the C. E. S.

To tell the sober but brutal truth, Secularists have themselves to blame very largely both for the yelping and the yahooping. They herd around the slanderer of their principles, instead of rallying under their own flag. The vomiting of pious abuse into the mouths of incautious Freethinkers who frequent Christian Evidence Society meetings has always been a settled policy with the outdoor advocate of the fine old religion of love. For more than a quarter of a century have I known the tribe of valiant slanderers who gird on the sword of the Lord and of Engström, and during that time the leopard has never once changed his spots. Theirs is a policy deliberately pursued; that policy being to trail the red herring of personality across the path of sober discussion, on the principle that, as there is no hell, we must make one, boiling hot and strong as death, for the naughty unbelievers. As a matter of fact, the chief reputations recently made on the Christian Evidence platform were bubble reputations blown into being by the perfervid indignation of Secularists, evoked by the extravagance of vituperation indulged in by the Christian advocates. When the torrent of abuse was intermittent or moderate, the counteracting wave of indignation was too weak to bear the slanderer high upon the shoulders of fame; but when the limits of human endurance had been carefully calculated, so as to evolve the requisite vigor of righteous indignation, then scoundrelism was glorified *in excelsis*, and perched on a throne of power and pay, erected and appointed by the hands that vainly sought to demolish, but actually builded instead.

Let our friends remember the advice of wily old Talleyrand: Above all things, not too much zeal. If we ask with the Psalmist, "Why do the Christians so furiously rage?" the clear answer is, Because they have lost their case, and can only now indulge in Billingsgate. If controversial Christians, instead of vindicating Moses, abuse Darwin; if, instead of whitewashing their God, they vilify the Secularist lecturer and call him a thief; if, instead of showing the reasonableness of their triple-

headed God-theory, they prove that the lecturer's grandmother sold tripe and smoked a meerchaum—all these irrelevancies and puerilities, self-evidently, are but the muddle-headed attempts of charlatans to confuse the issue, to hide the true points of discussion from people's eyes, and to prolong the reign of superstition by stirring up passion and strife. Secularists can only expect to gather sour grapes from the evidential thorn. If they touch the apologetic pitch or approach its pious platform, they will only be defiled or reviled. They would be more prudent to let the gentle shepherds alone, and leave them to build up the massive wall of filth around the sheepfold of faith. We can afford to let them vent their fury and wrath in unfructuous words, and can enjoy the luxury of a smile as the evidential windbags explode with loud blasts of rage. The wholeheartedness with which the meek and lowly ones lay themselves out to vilify and annoy the men whom they dare not reason with on the plane of sound science, the wholesale shelving which for years past Christian Evidences proper have received at the hands of the C. E. S., in order to find room for personalities and puerilities, are signs clear as noonday that Christianity has dropped exhausted out of the arena of discussion, and is swaggering ingloriously in the gutter of mere hooliganism, along the path that leads inevitably to contempt and oblivion.

WM. HEAFORD.

Death of Professor Max Müller.

THERE is no particular cause for lamentation at the death of Professor Max Müller. He had attained to a good old age, and had practically done all the work he had to do. He was a famous philologist and a learned Orientalist. He performed a valuable service in making English readers acquainted with the thought of Asia in general, and of India in particular. His editorship of the voluminous "Sacred Books of the East" was distinctly to his credit. Incidentally he drew attention to the fact that the Bible, in spite of its prominence in Western lands, is one of these Eastern collections of sacred literature. For our part, we were never able to rate his contributions to the discussion of religion and philosophy at a high value. He was really a pre-Darwinian. And that says all to the sufficiently educated and intelligent reader. His ideas were fixed before the evolutionary conception swept like a wave over the true mind of the civilised world. Nevertheless, he was a liberalising influence in his way. Some listened to him who would not have listened to a more advanced teacher. He set his face against miracles—Christian as well as non-Christian—as an integral part of religion. This was not historically or essentially accurate, but it doubtless fortified the mild heresy of many persons who still profess and call themselves Christians. On the whole, while he was not one of the leaders of modern thought, he did a useful work of its kind, and is entitled to our respectful consideration.

Sultan Solomon.

SOLOMON was the Jewish sultan. His Hebrew name, Shelô-môh, is very stately, and means "The Peaceful." The Lord called him Jedidiah, which means "Beloved of Jah." According to Chronicles, he was the *fifth* son of David by the frail and beautiful Bathsheba, though the earlier account in Samuel makes him the second. The eldest died to wipe out the memorial of David's adultery. The three others were Shimea, Shoab, and Nathan, the last of whom became the ancestor of Christ according to Luke, though Matthew traces the Savior's descent through Solomon and Rehoboam.

Adonijah was the hereditary heir to David's throne after the death of Absalom. But Bathsheba, with the assistance of the prophet Nathan, took advantage of the old king's dotage to cheat Adonijah of the succession in favor of her own dearly beloved son. The pretty little comedy enacted by this pair of conspirators is narrated with charming *naïveté*. Bathsheba reminded David of his promise that Solomon should succeed him. While they were conversing, Nathan called accidentally on the very same business, and between them they extorted an oath in the young fellow's interest. Like a Cæsar under the Roman empire, Solomon was

immediately invested with the purple. Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anointed him with holy hair-oil, and seated upon David's best mule he received the popular acclamations of "Long live king Solomon." Poor Adonijah was "done brown," and even his life was in danger. Fearing Solomon, as a true chip of the old block, he fled to the sanctuary of the altar, and refused to leave it without an oath that his life should be spared.

Soon afterwards David died, and Solomon ascended the throne. His age, according to Josephus, was fourteen. Most modern writers, including Milman, say he was twenty. He reigned forty years, and at his death Rehoboam was forty-one, so that he must have married early as well as often.

David had left his successor a legacy of bloodshed, and Solomon was not the man to neglect such a duty, especially when it coincided with his interest. But before killing Joab and Shimei he tried his "prentice hand" on his brother Adonijah. This unfortunate fellow requested Bathsheba to plead that he might marry Abishag the Shunamite, the pretty damsel who had acted as David's bed-warmer. Now, in oriental countries the new king takes the old king's harem, and this infatuated request savored of pretension to the throne. Solomon appears to have regarded it in this light, though many critics have believed that he himself loved Abishag, and that his rage was a passion of jealousy. Be that as it may, Solomon ordered the immediate execution of Adonijah. This summary vengeance staggered even the orthodox mind of Adam Clarke. "I cannot help thinking," he says, "that the reign of Solomon began rather inauspiciously; even a brother's blood must be shed to cause him to sit securely on his throne."

Solomon's next victim was "Abiathar the priest," who had been guilty of consorting with Adonijah when he was heir presumptive to the throne. Abiathar had probably anointed David at Hebron, he had faithfully followed David while he was a hunted outlaw, he had been forty years David's priest and counsellor. But all his loyal services were forgotten. Solomon did not venture to take his life, but he "thrust him out" from his priesthood, and banished him to his private estate at Anathoth, with a significant warning that his life hung upon a thread. "I will not at this time put thee to death," said Solomon. It was a dreadful punishment, little short of death, and "it is probable that he did not long survive so terrible a disgrace."

Joab now saw what he might expect, for he also had favored Adonijah. Fleeing to the sanctuary of the Tabernacle, he "caught hold on the horns of the altar." Adam Clarke says that "the altars were so sacred among all the people that in general even the vilest wretch found safety if he once reached the altar." Solomon, however, commanded Benaiah, his new general and chief-executioner, to go and kill Joab. But Benaiah did not dare to violate the sanctity of the altar, so he invited Joab to "come forth." "Nay," said Joab, "but I will die here." Benaiah returned to Solomon, who laconically said, "Fall upon him and bury him." The order was obeyed, and Joab's white hairs were befouled with his own blood.

Dr. Farrar urges that the Mosaic law, which was unknown in Solomon's time, justified this bloodshed in the Tabernacle, and cites the text in Exodus (xxi. 14) which declares that a malicious murderer might be dragged from the very altar. But in what sense was Joab "a murderer"? He had killed Abner and Amasa many years before, and David had reaped the fruit of both those "crimes." Abner had slain Joab's brother. He killed him unwillingly, it is true; yet, according to the code of that age, Joab was bound to be his brother's *Goel* or "blood-avenger." Amasa was killed in an emergency. David had appointed him over Joab's head, although he was an Ishmaelite and had recently been a rebel. Dr. Farrar admits that this was "obvious injustice and feeble impolicy." Amasa dallied and proved his incompetence, and Joab was dispatched to suppress Sheba's rebellion, which he did with his usual promptitude, vigor, and success. He slew Amasa, but he saved David. Had he committed a murder, in the ordinary sense of the word, he should have been punished at the time. It was the grossest hypocrisy to treat him as a common murderer many years afterwards, when he was old, feeble, and friendless. Bishop Patrick had the honesty to allow that "Joab was not killed for the murder of Abner, but for the attempt to beg Abishag for Adonijah." Dr. Farrar calls it a "just retribution," but he evidently sees that unsophisticated human nature will regard it in another light, and therefore he begs us to judge Solomon "neither by our customs nor by our moral standards."

Joab had been the mainstay of David's throne; his valor and generalship had suppressed more than one dangerous rebellion, and he stood loyally by David in that darkest hour of adversity when he fled on foot from his capital to escape death from the hand of his own rebellious son. Surely the devotion which shone steadily in that supreme trial should have been his safeguard for ever; and if he had been guilty of indiscretions, the hand that signed the death-warrant of Uriah was not entitled to cast the first stone, nor was a son of Bathsheba entitled to cast the second. Joab had struck terror into the enemies of Israel, yet he perished like a common felon by the order of a king whose throne his valor had established. How justly might he have exclaimed, like Strafford, "Put not your trust in princes!"

Joab being disposed of, Solomon turned his attention to Shimei. This old man lived in Jerusalem, under penalty of death if he crossed "the brook Kedron." But two of his servants ran away to Gath, and he imprudently followed them, and brought them back. Perhaps, as he had not crossed the Kedron, he imagined that he had not disobeyed. "It is astonishing," as Adam Clarke remarks, "that, with his eyes wide open, he would thus run into the jaws of death." Solomon mercilessly stood by the strictest interpretation of his order, and poor old Shimei's hoar head, as David had enjoined, was "brought down to the grave with blood."

Milman calls Shimei "a dangerous character," but nothing could be more absurd. With the exception of a harmless descendant of Jonathan, Shimei was the sole representative of the ruined house of Saul, and Solomon took the first opportunity of putting him out of the way. No wonder Dr. Farrar again pleads that "we must not judge of Solomon's conduct by modern rules."

Solomon now felt secure, and reigned "in all his glory." The rest of his history is semi-fabulous. Dr. Farrar admits that the Books of Kings "were not composed as a whole till nearly five centuries after the earlier events which they record," and Dr. Robertson Smith refers to the "many floating and fragmentary notes of various dates" that have found a place in the account of Solomon's reign. His dominion is preposterously exaggerated. Even the building of Tadmor is ascribed to him. Gold was so plentiful that silver was "nothing accounted of." Judah and Israel ate, drank, and were merry, and were like "the sand which is by the sea in multitude." An impossible population of over nine millions is put into the Holy Land. Solomon had "forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots," a number which Chronicles reduces to four thousand. He was "wiser than all men," even than four gentlemen whose names were never heard of outside the Bible; and "all kings of the earth" sent messengers to his court. Yet the fame of this wonderful sultan would have been utterly lost if the Jews had not preserved it themselves.

The Queen of Sheba is the only one of Solomon's royal visitors whose name survives. Jesus Christ calls her "the queen of the south," which is delightfully vague. Josephus calls her the "queen of Egypt and Ethiopia." Whiston, his translator, corrects this romantic blunder, and says she was the queen of Sabæa, "a country near the sea in the south of Arabia Felix." The Arabs call her Balkis, and tell many legends of her visit to Solomon. Like the queen of the Amazons, who had a child by Alexander to keep up the breed, the queen of Sheba went away pregnant, and the kings of Abyssinia are supposed to have descended from her bantling. According to another story, Solomon was told she had hairy legs, and he resolved to satisfy himself on this point. Water was poured on a pavement of crystal, and Balkis, thinking it was deep, lifted her petticoats high enough to disprove the libel.

Scripture says she "came to prove him with hard questions." The Septuagint says "with enigmas." Playing at conundrums was a common pastime. Josephus tells us that Solomon and Hiram, the king of Tyre, exchanged "riddles," and paid forfeits to each other when they failed to solve them. Solomon had no failures with Balkis. He "told her all her questions." He found the cat, told her how many beans made five, said where Moses was when the light went out, and made a most miraculous display of wisdom. Balkis said his sagacity exceeded his fame, and presented him with nearly a million pounds in cash, besides spices and precious stones. Solving riddles was a paying business in those days.

Solomon's glory grew still more wonderful. Josephus gives him a mounted retinue of young men, the flower of the nation, clad in Tyrian purple, with long hair sprinkled with gold dust which sparkled in the sun. Scripture says his ships traded to Tarshish, and brought back gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. His throne was of ivory inlaid with gold. Two lions in effigy stood beside him, and twelve others on the six steps of the throne. Tradition says that none but Solomon could sit on this structure, and when Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and tried to ascend it, those carved lions broke his legs. Probably this is as true as the rest of the story.

"So king Solomon," says Scripture, "exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom." Canon Rawlinson echoes this nonsense, and regards the kingdom of Solomon as "one of the great Oriental Empires on a par with Chaldæa and Assyria." Archdeacon Farrar, however, protests against such exaggeration.

—From "Bible Heroes," by G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

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

The Religion of the Future.

THE world is full of unrest; the old ideals have lost their influence, and from all quarters comes the cry for a new religion. And a new religion is prophesied and promised.

Attempts are even now being made to formulate modern ideas into systems which each of the several founders endeavor to hope may develop into the "Religion of the Future."

A discussion of these various schemes is not here in place; for the present subject the only point of interest is the fact of the already widespread and rapidly-increasing conviction that Christianity has had its day, and that its sun is setting, to rise no more, forever. There are many who would fain turn back the shadow upon this dial of the world's progress. Even with the evidence plain before their eyes of the impotency of the religion of the Cross, they prognosticate the reign of anarchy as soon as the restraints of religion are removed. But the shadow cannot be turned back, and the (as yet) comparatively small number of individuals who have freed themselves entirely from spiritual tyranny, and are living (in Christian parlance) "without God and without hope in the world," are in reality among the most useful members of society, and are by no means the unhappiest of their species.

Why should they be unhappy if their intentions are honest and their time is usefully spent? They are alive, and it is good to be alive. As for a prospect after death, they know that nothing which has once existed is annihilated; it must endure in some form forever—and so they trust themselves to Nature, which placed them here without their knowledge or desire, and will continue its work in conformity with laws which they did not make and cannot alter.

The entire helplessness of man in view of death is his best preservative against fear.

In the meantime there is enough to do. The evils which superstition has brought upon the race must be counteracted and removed; this world, until now so full of the habitations of cruelty, must become a happy home for all mankind alike; of knowledge, untrammelled by prejudice, must be increased and spread abroad; universal peace must guarantee universal progress, and unselfish love must be the ground-tone of the prevailing harmony.

This end has never been, and never can be, attained by means of religion, but it is possible of attainment through the cultivation, by natural processes, of the best natural impulses.

All the poets have dreamed of perfected humanity; all philosophers and sages and reformers have uttered wise maxims for the conduct of life; but superstition has always added thereto the rewards and punishments of eternity, so that the hopes and fears thus excited have chilled and blighted the labors and the fruits of time.

Every sentient being must desire immortality; every one of us hopes for endless reunion with kindred spirits beloved on earth, for opportunity to correct mistakes, to explain misunderstandings, to finish interrupted work, to acquire unlimited knowledge, to solve perplexing mysteries—in a word, to love and learn and enjoy forever and ever.

Whether all this is to be our privilege we do not, and cannot, know; only this is certain, that our help is needed in this world at present, while, as regards the future, good work here is the best preparation for complete fruition hereafter.

So long as human beings live and suffer and enjoy in this, the only world open to our present knowledge, the BROTHERHOOD OF MAN will be the highest possible ideal, and the effort to realise that ideal will be the noblest and most satisfactory occupation of every individual intelligence. The end can be attained only by learning and obeying the eternal laws of nature, as these are demonstrated through the discoveries of science.

—ELIZABETH E. EVANS, "The Christ Myth."

It seems to me not only possible, but probable, that in a higher, and, above all, a happier condition of human life, not annihilation, but immortality, may be the burdensome idea; and that human nature, though pleased with the present, and by no means impatient to quit it, would find comfort, and not sadness, in the thought that it is not chained through eternity to a conscious existence, which it cannot be assured that it will always wish to preserve.—*J. S. Mill.*

By damning a soul—that is to say, by turning it away for ever from his presence, or, in less mysterious words, by shutting it out for ever from the truth—God would turn himself away from his soul, would limit his own power, and would, so to say, damn himself also to a certain extent. The pain of damnation recoils on him who inflicts it. Instead of damning those who have gone wrong, God should everlastingly call them back to him.—*Guyau.*

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- 1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.
- 2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.
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 - (a) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.
 - (b) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.
 - (c) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.
 - (d) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.
 - (e) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.
 - (f) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.
 - (g) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.
 - (h) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.
 - (i) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.
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 - (n) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.
 - (o) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

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The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to Paradise.—*Emerson.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "New Testament Superstitions."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11, Annual Members' Meeting; 7, Conversazione.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, A lecture.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Masonic Hall, Camberwell-road: 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Christ and Capitalism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, J. W. Cox; 7.15, W. J. Cox.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall, 69 York-street): Councillor Bowman, "Demos and his Needs."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): For particulars see Saturday's *Birmingham Daily Mail*.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "Revenge."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen—11.30, "A Chapter in the History of Freethought"; 2.30, "Man: Whence and Whither?" 6.30, "Foreign Missions: What they do, and how they do it."

HULL (2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion-street): 7, Mr. Leviticus, "Is There a God in Existence?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, J. McCabe, "The Problem of the Jew."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Charles Watts—11, "Is Spiritualism a Delusion?"; 3, "The Defeat of the Cross"; 7, "A Secularist's Challenge to the Clergy."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. Percy Ward—11, "A Christian Ghost Story"; 3, "Religion in Board Schools"; 6.30, "The Delusion of Spiritualism." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Stanley Jones—3, "Law and Civilisation"; 7, "Christianity's Relation to Buddhism." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, "Party Politics."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—November 4, Glasgow. 11, Aberdeen.

H. PERCY WARD, 2 Leamington-place, George-street, Balsall-Heath, Birmingham.—November 4, Manchester. 18, Birmingham. 25, Sheffield. 25 and 27, Debate at Sheffield. December 9, Glasgow.

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