

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

Atheism and its Critics.—V.

THE arguments in favor of Theism, although assuming almost innumerable forms, may yet all be ranged under three or four heads. In what follows it will only be necessary, in order to carry out our original purpose of demonstrating the reasonableness of the Atheistic position, to deal with the principal forms of Theistic defence, and even that but briefly. If it were necessary, however, a not uninteresting table might be drawn up, compiled entirely from religious writings, and showing how every one of the arguments for the existence of God used by one set of believers has been dismissed by others as inconclusive or illogical. But this would mean a volume instead of an article, and might possibly prove a too severe tax upon the patience of readers.

The first argument that meets one is that drawn from the existence of the idea of God itself. The belief in Deity—or, more accurately, deities—is one of the largest facts in the general history of mankind. I do not agree with those who refer to it as the “supreme problem of human life,” for the reason that, unless artificially stimulated, the supreme problem of life, to a modern educated individual, would present itself more as that of reaching a definite understanding of the known or knowable universe, while the question of Deity would fall into the position of a more or less ingenious speculation. But the practical universality of the belief must be admitted; and to those who find comfort in a crowd there is doubtless much consolation in the fact. To others its strength, and even its relevancy, is far from palpable. If universality of belief is of value anywhere, it must be of value everywhere; and in that case we should have to accept the once universal belief in fairies or witches, a flat earth, or in many other delusions that the majority of educated people have now cast off. Or, even if we—paradoxically—admit degrees of universality, we should have to favor the lower forms of religion rather than the higher, since these can claim by far the larger number of adherents.

But the practical universality of the belief in Deity turns out, on a little closer examination, to be a striking confirmation of the anthropological root of all religion. Once grant a certain uniformity of human structure, and also a certain general likeness in the conditions and stages through which all sections of the human race have passed—two circumstances which do not admit of much doubt—and a certain family likeness in the mental products at particular stages of human evolution is inevitable. There exists, indeed, abundant evidence that in what we may call, with a certain laxity of language, the pre-scientific ages, man everywhere reads his own feelings and mental states into the phenomena around him. Nor can it well be otherwise. One can see substantially the same fetishistic instinct operating in the child; and even in adults there is an instinctive ascription of life to an unfamiliar force, although here it is soon checked and overruled by a very little reflection. The describing of natural forces in terms of our own feelings—such as the growl of the thunder, the howling of the wind, or the smile of the sunlight—even to-day shows how deeply embedded in mankind is this tendency, and how easily the primitive savage shows through our thin covering of civilised habits. All, then, that the universality of the God idea proves is that, as mankind is fundamentally alike in structure, in feelings, and in thought, the same conclusion has always been drawn in the face of substantially the same set of circumstances. A flat earth was, to our less

scientific ancestors, as inevitable a conclusion as the belief that nature was alive. The acquisition of knowledge destroyed the first belief, and one must be strangely blind not to see that the same process is destroying the second.

Next to the argument from the existence of the belief in God comes the argument from existence itself. Put in the baldest and plainest language, this argument asserts that, as something (*i.e.*, the universe) exists, there must be a cause of its existence somewhere. There is something peculiarly attractive to many in this *must*; but one is at a loss to see any justification for it. As usual with the Theist, at bottom the argument is based on a sheer confusion of language. This will be best brought out by dealing with Professor Flint's statement of the argument. After laying down the truism that “we have no right to assume that any existence has had a cause until we have found reason to regard it.....[as having] had an origin,” he says:—

“To prove that the universe must have had a cause we require to prove it to have been an event.....The entire argument for the divine existence.....can be no stronger than the strength of the proof which we can adduce of its having had a beginning, and the only valid proof of that which reason can hope to find must be derived from an examination of the universe itself. What, then, is the result of such an examination? An absolute certainty that all the things which are seen are temporal.....If we seek, then, after what is external, science tells us that it is not the earth nor anything which it contains, not the sea nor anything within it, not the moving air, not the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars.....There is no denying, then, that the universe is an effect.”*

Substantially the same statements might be quoted from other writers, but I prefer this one because it is quite plain, and the reader is left in no doubt as to the author's meaning. Yet I do not know if it would be possible to get a greater confusion of thought than is evidenced in this utterance. It reminds one irresistibly of the gentleman who declared that “on the untrodden paths of the past he could discern the footprints of an unseen hand.” At present I need only point out one error in which Professor Flint has fallen. He confuses a change of form with an annihilation of substance—an error which the merest tyro in philosophy might have avoided. Science, it is true, tells us that the universe is in a constant state of change, is not the same for two seconds of time, that every sun, every planet, every object, has had a beginning, and must, consequently, have an end. But science also tells us that matter and energy, or whatever other names we like to give to that which is the subject of change, are indestructible, and that, even though our system were to be “rolled up as a scroll” to-morrow and flung into the measureless depths of space, it would not diminish by the most infinitesimal atom the quantity of matter in the universe. Science not only teaches this, but declares itself to be “but as an idiot's tale” if this principle is not admitted.

It is simply absurd (or worse) to call in science to prove that, because the forms which matter assumes begin and cease to be, therefore there must be an end to existence itself. There is positively no analogy between existence itself and the forms which that existence assumes. We cannot think of something not existing, and we cannot think of something beginning to be. We can only think of it as existing; and we cannot get either behind or beyond it.

In truth, very much of the case for Theism will be found to rest upon a confusion of thought or language

* *Theism*, pp. 98, 101-3.

similar to those dealt with above. Such phrases as "An Unconditioned First Cause," "Infinite Intelligence," "Infinite Wisdom," "Infinite Power," etc., are at bottom due to a want of clear understanding as to the precise meaning of the terms used. Cause, Intelligence, Power, Wisdom, are words that have meaning only within the limits of the world of experience. To apply them to any other assumed world is to rob them of all meaning. A cause is only a cause in relation to an effect, and cannot exist apart from an effect. Power is only power in virtue of resistance offered; and intelligence is only known as the accompaniment—if not the actual result—of certain definite conditions. To speak of any of these qualities as being "infinite" is downright nonsense. Once abolish the conditions, and the qualities disappear. And if we are met with the defence that God's power and wisdom are different from ours, the complete reply is that, if they *are* different from ours, to call them by the same names is sheer dishonesty of speech, since saying that power, wisdom, and love in God are not what they are in human beings is only another way of saying that they are not power, wisdom, and love at all.

A kind of addendum to the argument derived from the mere existence of the universe is that drawn from the existence of a particular order in the cosmos. "Grant," says Professor Flint, "all the atoms of matter to be external, grant all the properties and forces which, with the smallest degree of plausibility, can be claimed for them to be eternal and immutable, and it is still beyond all expression improbable that these atoms, with these forces, if unarranged, uncombined, unutilised by a presiding mind, would give rise to anything entitled to be called a universe. It is millions to one that they would never produce the simplest of the regular arrangements which we comprehend under the designation of a course of nature."

Now, all that is necessary to make clear the weakness of such reasoning is to say that, unless the properties of matter *were* adequate to produce the results that we see, these results would never be produced at all. For example, oxygen and hydrogen we say, brought together under adequate conditions, form water, and this would certainly be called part of "the regular arrangement which we comprehend under the designation of a course of nature." Now, the belief in a God does not, and cannot, alter the simple fact that, unless the properties of oxygen and hydrogen could, when united, produce water, water could never result from the combination. The precise condition of the universe, at any given moment, is the result of all the forces operating at the preceding moment; and this is true whether there is or is not a God behind the process. True, this does not destroy the argument that there may be a combining mind behind the entire process of nature, but it does certainly demolish the plea that the actual result arrived at could not be the outcome of the operation of cosmic forces.

Besides, it is absurd to say that, if we grant atoms and their properties, we cannot explain the production of the present order. On the contrary, once given this much and the present constitution of the universe becomes a mathematical necessity. It would doubtless be "millions to one," to anyone unacquainted with ice or clouds, against a body of water settling into the form of so many crystals, or mounting into the atmosphere in the shape of minute globules; but, to the scientist, both are necessary consequences of material properties. All that such an expression can mean is that, so long as our knowledge of the possibilities of natural forces is imperfect, so long the consequences of any given combination will be a matter of uncertainty; and the odds against a particular combination resulting will increase in exact proportion to our ignorance. But to one whose knowledge of the possibilities of natural forces was perfect there would be doubt as to the inevitable result, and no odds against it happening. Possibility is always an expression of ignorance, just as scientific necessity is an expression of knowledge.

As usual, an analysis of the Theistic argument shows that it depends for its strength upon human ignorance, not upon knowledge. Plainly stated, it amounts to this: We cannot see how a given order results from the play of atoms and forces, therefore there must be an arranging and a combining intelligence at work. But this also involves the admission that, if we could explain the

development of the universe through the agency of natural forces, the case for Theism would break down. Thus, to put the argument in an arithmetical form, if 1 represents the beginning, and 100 the completion, of knowledge, the argument for the existence of God is strongest when knowledge is at 0, and weakens with every addition to the sum. It is a most unfortunate argument for a Theist to build on science; it is a fact that science is learning rapidly to deduce the most complex cosmical results from the simplest beginnings. So far as science can give an opinion, there is absolutely no necessity for any such hypothesis as that of an overruling intelligence. The "order" of nature is seen to be a direct and necessary result of the persistence of force and the primary qualities of matter. The Theistic method of accounting for natural order, always useless, has become in our days a glaring anomaly. Explaining nothing, giving no lesson for future guidance, and shedding no light on past events, it depends upon human impotence for its sole support. And our ignorance concerning the nature of much that occurs in the world of experience is surely but a poor authority for assertions concerning anything that is supposed to lie beyond.

C. COHEN.

The Absurdities of a Pious Editor.

THE Birmingham *Weekly Mercury*, in many respects a very valuable paper, reports each week, with comments, portions of one of the sermons delivered on Sunday in the local pulpits. It has also, on more than one occasion during the past few years, given fair accounts of Secular meetings. Its "open column," in which representatives of various opinions are allowed to express their views, is well appreciated. These are commendable features in any newspaper, but particularly in one that has to depend principally for its support upon professed Christian believers. The public press of this country, with few exceptions, has the great drawback of pandering to the theological notions of the day, and of misrepresenting and depreciating those who have the ability and the courage to speak against the many religious shams and absurdities by which we are surrounded. This is an injustice from which the Free-thought movement, from its inception, has had to suffer. No section of the community is more under the influence of Mrs. Grundy than the conductors of our newspapers. With most of them, in reference to theological subjects, it is not what is true, but rather what is fashionable. No doubt this unfair treatment of Freethinkers is due either to bigotry—the perpetual curse of the Churches—or to a lack of knowledge of what Secular principles really are; failings which appear to be very general among pious editors.

Judging from a leading article which appeared in the Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* of June 9, under the heading of "Religion and the Artizans," the editor seems to be sadly deficient in knowledge upon the subject on which he writes, and the erroneous conclusions at which he arrives are indicative that he does not possess a very logical mind. In order that the reader may know precisely what this pious editor said, and that our reply may be fairly judged, his own words are here given:—

"We know how often it has been said that the English artizan has lost touch with religion, that he has become a Freethinker, and no longer cares for the doctrines or the doings of the Churches. This view seems to be pretty effectually demolished by evidences of religious enthusiasm which are provided by gatherings such as that which took place at the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday last..... We are quite willing to admit that the artizan now thinks for himself more than he did in times past, and he perhaps does not tamely accept the religious teaching of the sect in which he happened to be born. He grows dissatisfied with some particular tenet of his own sect's creed, and, looking around, he sees other Churches whose beliefs and observances are more in accordance with the needs of his nature. To one of these Churches he therefore transfers his allegiance; and to this extent he may be called a Freethinker. But to say that the artizan is, as a rule, a Freethinker in the objectionable sense (as meaning a virtual Atheist) would certainly be incorrect. Indeed, we ourselves have always held that, amongst Englishmen of any intelligence, the Atheist pure and simple (and very 'simple' he

certainly would be) does not exist.....We have been frequently amused at witnessing the discomfiture of one of these dogmatic arguers, who perhaps delights in calling himself an Atheist. The line of attack has been something like this: 'According to your knowledge of science, everything that exists, and everything that happens, must have a cause?' 'Undoubtedly! that is the teaching of science.' 'Very well; and do you, professing to be an Atheist, mean to tell me that the vast universe itself flies in the face of this universal law of science, and exists entirely without a Cause?' 'Oh, well, of course, if you put it that way —.' And the self-styled, iconoclastic Atheist is forced to admit that, according to the teaching of science, the universe must have a Cause—an admission which proves him to be no Atheist at all."

In spite of what the editor says to the contrary, it is the generally-expressed regret among the clergy that artizans do not attend church or chapel on Sunday. Not long since we read a report of how the working men in Birmingham spent their Sabbath, and it stated that ninety per cent. of them were not found in any place of worship. Ample evidence is available to justify the statement that the creeds and dogmas taught in the Churches find but comparatively few supporters among the working classes. Their "religion" consists in striving to obtain social reforms and political justice—a work in which the Church has never fairly shared. It is the height of absurdity to talk of the Christian religion favoring the interests of the toiling millions. What did it do for them during its centuries of power? Practically nothing. And during the last half century nearly every measure which had for its object the amelioration of the general masses was opposed by the supporters of the Church. The editor says that a large gathering at the Town Hall, principally comprised of church and chapel-goers, "pretty effectually demolished" the assertion that the English artizan had lost touch with religion. He may see the fallacy of such a conclusion when he is informed that the present writer was lectured in the Birmingham Town Hall when it was crowded by members and friends of the National Secular Society, most of them belonging to the working classes. Did that prove that the artizans had become Secularists? The editor admits "that the artizan now thinks for himself more than he did in times past." That is true, and therein lies his salvation and the explanation of his absence from church. But who prevented him from thinking for himself in the past? Why the supporters of the Christian religion, who discouraged all thought which was opposed to the Church and its teachings. It was the real Freethinkers and Atheists, so grossly misrepresented by this pious editor, who fought for, and secured, at the cost of their personal liberty, the right of mental freedom.

We certainly claim for Freethought a higher function than that assigned to it by the editor of the *Mercury*. He considers that a man who "transfers his allegiance" from one Church to another "may be called a Freethinker." Yes, he may be called so, but he is not a Freethinker in the proper sense of that term. No one can be in a condition to think freely whose mental powers are fettered by creeds and dogmas. The fact of a person growing dissatisfied with one sect and joining another does not rid his mind of all theological restrictions, for not one orthodox Church exists that allows liberty of thought in the sense in which those words are understood by Freethinkers. We decidedly object to the editor's statement that, because artizans are not all Atheists, therefore they are not Freethinkers. While it is true that no consistent believer in orthodox creeds can be a Freethinker, it does not follow that to reject the errors and absurdities of Christianity means the acceptance of Atheism. Voltaire and Thomas Paine were Freethinkers, but they were not Atheists. The editor's knowledge must be exceedingly limited if, as he states, a genuine Atheist "does not exist." True, it is added, "of any intelligence." But the opinion on Atheism of a person who asserts that he has never met an intelligent Atheist is not worth much, for his experience must be very limited. If the editor is desirous of acquiring a little knowledge upon this point, we will send him the names and addresses of a few intelligent Atheists who reside in Birmingham; or, if he thinks that such a discovery near his home would be too great a shock to him, we will, when he visits the metropolis, introduce him to some London Atheists, and leave him

to judge as to their intelligence. In return for this proffered kindness, perhaps the editor will inform us who are the Atheists whose "discomfiture" in argument "frequently amused" him. When and where did these alleged amusing incidents happen? The editor's wit is on a par with his qualification as a reasoner. His play upon the word "simple" is a very far-fetched joke, and that at the expense of the obvious meaning of the phrase "pure and simple." An ordinary schoolboy could tell this pious editor that the conjunction of the two words "pure" and "simple" precludes the use of the latter word as being synonymous with a person being "very simple."

When the editor approaches the teachings of Atheism he shows his utter inability to deal with the subject. His lack of knowledge is only equalled by the dogmatic spirit which he manifests. For instance, he says that, according to Atheism, "everything that exists has a cause." What Atheist ever said this? Even the editor, as a Theist, does not believe it; for, if it were true, his God must have been caused. Neither is it correct to allege that the Atheist holds that, "according to the teaching of science, the universe must have a cause." Atheists believe that the universe always existed in some form. Can the editor conceive of a time when there was no time, and a place where there was no place? Will he tell us, if a God of whom nothing is known always existed, why could not the universe, of which much is known, have the same claim? The belief in a self-existing universe is quite as logical a conclusion from the indestructibility of matter as the belief in an uncaused, self-existing God external thereto. According to Atheism, cause and effect are relative terms, expressive of the interminable changes in phenomena; and, in reference to the universe, no limit in time or extent is fixed by science, which does not use the term "cause" as signifying the ultimate source of all existence.

CHARLES WATTS.

Wordsworth.

"He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears;
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool, flowery lap of earth."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"Amid littleness and detail he detected the genius of life, the old cunning Proteus, nestling close beside us."—EMERSON.

Of the poets of the nineteenth century Wordsworth stands in the very front rank, but the qualities which give him that position are not such as ordinary lovers of poetry are likely to appreciate. Wordsworth has not the picturesqueness which distinguishes Keats; he has not the passion of Byron or Swinburne; he has not the haunting music of Coleridge or Shelley. Sometimes, too, he is terribly prosaic, and his want of humor leads him to mistake childishness for simplicity. There are lines in Wordsworth as bald and weak as any verses in the language, and the writer was totally unconscious of their poverty. His imagination does not create new worlds, but it enables him to give a new life and meaning to the world in which we live. As Swinburne has well said of him: "Meditation and sympathy, not action and passion, were the main strings of his serene and stormless lyre." Indeed, Wordsworth himself plainly tells us:—

The moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready art;
'Tis my delight alone in summer shade
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

He is at once the humblest student of nature and the profoundest. Yet for Wordsworth external nature has no deep significance apart from humanity, and its "still, sad music," to quote his own words, is heard throughout his verse. Wordsworth was not a poet-painter first of all. His peculiar power was of another and a rarer kind. He loved with an immortal love the woods, the lakes, the mountains, and the starry heavens, but not alone for their external beauty. It was the mysterious life of things that woke his inmost passion, as it did that of Lucretius, the greatest of the Roman poets.

His heart was haunted by the sounding cataract, his mind was in still communion with—

The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

It would be well-nigh impossible to find in all his works a picture in pure color, such as are to be found in multitudes in the works of Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson. He had no love of color for itself, and this in so profound a lover of nature is very curious. Yellow, indeed, he uses frequently, but his love of this color is probably owing to its brightness. Never has there been so great a poet of twilight; and, consequently, in scenes of twilight he finds his favorite effect. He sees, at one time, half a village shining, arrayed in golden light, while the other half is veiled in shadow; and, from the darkened roofs, the tall spire seems to mount like fire. At another time he sees the ranging herds, clear in the liquid light, stand out along the mountain side:—

And glittering antlers are descried,
And gilded flocks appear.

His chosen flowers were yellow, and not "the golden host of daffodils" alone. When he is leaving home it is on two yellow flowers that his last glance lingers:—

Thou, like the morning in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan and marsh-marigold, farewell!

And again, in the same poem:—

Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's breast
Glittered at evening like a starry sky.

If we look to Wordsworth's poetry, we find that no work proclaims more clearly the sanity of genius. There is no weak murmuring about any secret grief that set him apart from his fellows. The sole complaint of his proud and austere nature, wrung from him by love of his country, was uttered in such deep and solemn words as these:—

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour;
England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness.

For one possessed of a heart so tender, yet so proud, an imagination so impressionable and profound, there was in those days no escape from the burden of an occasional melancholy.

We notice, too, his deep and passionate love of his art, and his enthusiastic account of its mission:—

"To console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier, to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and to feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous."

Again, we find expression of enthusiastic admiration and reverence for the genius of the great poets who preceded him:—

In our halls is hung
Armory of the invincible knights of old;
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.

Many of his beautiful lines and phrases are already firmly embedded in the English language. For example:—

The child is father of the man.
The harvest of a quiet eye.
The still sad music of humanity.
The mighty stream of tendency.
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
The light that never was on sea or land.
True knowledge leads to love.
Nobler loves and nobler cares.
Honor misplaced and dignity astray.
Old unhappy far-off things
And battles long ago.
Of joy in widest commonalty spread.
Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone.
There is
One great society alone on earth,
The noble Living and the noble Dead.

Wordsworth's high poetical excellence is beyond the reach of cavil. It is true that his best work has never been, and probably never will be, popular. Contemplative views of nature and man can never excite such universal sympathy as representations of the actions

and passions of individuals. He does not rank among the great creative poets who have enriched the world with ideal creations as precious as the exactest record of real men—of which class Homer, the Greek Tragedians, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe are the highest types.

Wordsworth is, however, one of the foremost of those who reveal, interpret, and celebrate the actual beauty of this world and of human life. His poetic power lies in his openness to all impressions of joy, pathos, melancholy, wonder, sublimity, and majesty; in his power of vision, and with the gift of lofty musical utterance. As a poet, by the majesty of his style, by the sense of sublimity ever present to him, his austerity and "plain living and high thinking," he reminds us of some of the characteristics of Milton. As a man, he manifests self-dependence, fortitude, and truest tenderness, love of truth, and an earnest sympathy with whatever is genuine in the joys and sorrows of humanity. We cannot help applying to Wordsworth himself those beautiful lines of his own which adorn the statue of the poet in Westminster Abbey:—

Blessings be with them, and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares,
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays.

MIMNERMUS.

Rationalism.—III.

REASON THE SUPREME GUIDE TO TRUTH AND THE ONLY INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY IN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.

(Continued from page 453.)

THE essential conception of reason is the conception of causality—that is, the conception of power or efficiency in the antecedent fact or facts to produce, and inevitably produce, the sequence or sequences, the consequence or consequences, whether these be physical, chemical, biological, psychological, or sociological; though it is only in physical phenomena that the causal nexus can be most plainly traced, because here all the facts are visible, and can be reached. For instance, it is very easy to get at all the parts of a weaving-loom. When we do so we see that its parts are of such a nature, and so related, that it can, and must, weave cloth; or, to use a popular and pregnant phrase, a loom weaves cloth because "it is built that way." In the same way, if we examine the parts of a watch, we will see that they are so related that it must measure time, or it measures time "because it is built that way." In those instances the causation can be clearly traced, because all the factors are known. But it is different in the more esoteric classes and causes of phenomena—in biology, for instance. Here we cannot tell why an acorn, in given conditions, produces an oak, because the vital properties of the acorn are unknown to us; but, if we had as complete a knowledge of the acorn as we have of the watch, or the loom, we would then see that the nature of the acorn was such that it must produce the oak. We would then be able to trace the causal nexus, or connection, between the acorn and the oak; we would find that the acorn produced the oak "because it was built that way." But where, as in this case, the causal connection, or nexus, cannot be discovered, we generalise on the matter, and say every effect has a cause, because all effects we have been able to explain have had causes, and if this one has no cause it would be an exception to the rule; and not only so, but it would be in violent contradiction to the nature and constitution of reason, which teaches us that every effect must have a cause, and that the law of causality is universal. The fact, also, that there can be no oak without an acorn, and that where an acorn is placed in certain conditions there must always grow up an oak, proves a causal connection, though we cannot trace it out. If the immunity from small-pox followed as regularly after proper vaccination as the oak follows after the proper setting of the acorn, we would believe that vaccination was a preventive of small-pox, even though we could not trace its causal nexus, or how it did it. But we know it is not so; vaccination does

not invariably prevent small-pox; therefore we cannot be sure that it prevents it at all. Therefore a belief in vaccination as a preventive of small-pox, whatever other support it may have, is not, as yet, supported by the nature and function of reason. "Observation may tell us that one event happened with, or after, another, but only by the aid of reason can we decide whether one was the cause of the other; and, if we reason hastily, we are likely to reason wrong." The history of vaccination seems to be a very good illustration of this. Its promoters reasoned hastily, and reasoned wrong. Where we can trace out a casual connection between one event and another, we may prove directly that the first event is the cause of the other. But where we cannot do this we must wait until we have observed the relation of the events to be unexceptional—that is, we must prove that event number two always followed in the wake of event number one, but never followed in its absence. Thus, to prove vaccination to be a cause preventive of small-pox, we would require to show that small-pox never followed vaccination, and that small-pox, when it did occur, always followed in the absence of vaccination, otherwise it might be just a case of *post hoc*, and not *propter hoc*—that is, the freedom from small-pox after vaccination might be just the event, freedom from small-pox, following after the event, vaccination, and not because of it; or the event, small-pox, may just have followed after the event, absence of vaccination, and not because of its absence. *Post hoc* is not always *propter hoc*—that is, sequence is not always consequence.

We hope that by these illustrations and reflections we have conveyed some correct idea to your minds as to the nature and function of reason, and its capacity to separate truth from error and good from evil. Now, we have to ask ourselves the question: What is the place and authority of reason? Those of you who have followed us thus far with anything like a fair degree of appreciation will not find it hard to answer this question for yourselves. You will agree with us that the place of reason is everywhere, and that its authority is paramount.

We do not mean by this that there is no room in the world for anything but reason, or that reason is everything, or that intellect is everything—far from it. But reasoning intellect has a place which nothing else can fill. There are comparisons which ought never to be made, and which certainly are odious—though all comparisons are not. One of the most odious of comparisons is to compare reason with love, or the head with the heart. You cannot really compare things which are constitutionally and functionally different. You can contrast them, but you cannot compare them. You can compare a man with a man, and see how near they come to the idea of manhood or the type, and you can compare a woman with a woman in the same way; but you cannot compare a woman and a man, because they differ essentially in their structure and functions. Each has a place which cannot be filled by the other, and both are needed to make the existence of either of any use. In the same way, you cannot compare love and reason, but you can contrast them; while to compare them is odious and foolish, as each has a function which cannot be performed by the other, and both are needed to give practical effect to the existence and function of either. So, for our part, we do not sing the praises of the one and forget the virtues of the other. According to the opinion of some of the ancient philosophers—an opinion greatly approved of by Sir William Hamilton—"there was nothing great in the world but man, and nothing great in man but mind." Well, it seems to us there are other things great in the world as well as man, though nothing greater than he; and there are other things great in man besides mind, but nothing greater than that subtle phenomenon. This saying of the philosopher is an exaggeration, and exaggeration is something a philosopher should not indulge in; he should just tell the exact truth. But with the poet we are not so strict; we allow him the poet's licence. And so, when he tells us that

The night has a thousand eyes, and the day but one,
Yet the light of the bright world dies with the dying sun;
The mind has a thousand eyes, and the heart but one,
Yet the life of the whole world dies when love is done,

we can make due allowance for what seems to be a

one-sided statement of the truth, and see that the poet means to emphasize the importance of the heart, though it is not so clever as the head. The late Colonel Ingersoll put a similar emphasis on love. He says: "Lover, Wife, Mother, Father, Husband, Child, Home—these words shed light; they are the germs of human speech. Without love all glory fades; the noble falls from life, art dies, music loses its meaning and becomes mere motions of the air, and virtue ceases to exist." But it can also be truly said that, without reason, the catastrophe to human life would be just as great, and this every one practically admits. Even those who have but a modicum of reason wish to preserve it, for they realise that without reason life would be even less worth living than it appears to be; and it can be said with equal truth, in the present economic state of the world, that to be without money "all glory fades, the noble falls from life, art dies, music loses its meaning and becomes mere motions of the air, and virtue ceases to exist."

J. MACDOUGALL.

(To be continued.)

At the Trial.

*Jehovah's ready; the trumpet's blown;
There's a mighty crowd near the Great White Throne.*

"It gives me great pleasure," Jehovah did say,
"To see you assembled, my creatures, to-day.
You're not all respectable, some are quite bad;
Still, I won't condemn those who believed in my lad—
But every creature who did not must go
To the larger establishment just down below.
Now, march along! Steady there! Gaze in my face!
Each 'worm' I'll consign to a suitable place.

"You to the gold streets—you to the flames.
Who's this? Smithson! Hang these names!
Has every Smith a son?
If so, I'd better run.
Whew!
Glad when it's over!"
Thus spake Jehovah.

"You worked like a nigger, and all for my sake?
Then naught for yourself, I suppose, did you make!—
One thousand per annum? A trifle like that?
A 'living' that wasn't uncommonly 'fat'!
Dear, dear, I am sorry; but, still, I can't see
That you've any claim, Mr. Pastor, on me.
Come, surely you've read in my world-famous book
That the rich have no chance of a heavenly nook.

"You to the left hand, you to the right;
Dump him in darkness, clothe her in white.
Bring *this* a golden crown—
P'liceman, trot that one down.
Whew!
Glad when it's over!"
Thus spake Jehovah.

"Now, come; let me see every criminal who
Believes in my laddie (for, doubtless, some do!).
Alas! and alack! what a pitiful tale:
Nine-tenths of my 'children' have lodged in a jail!
But there, let it pass; they'll look decent with wings
When playing my music divine (on ten strings).
The 'pick' of the crowd I could scarcely expect,
For belief on the rock of Sound Sense has been wrecked.

"Give her a mansion—Jasper-square—
That one to Hades—roast him with care;
This was an infidel—
Truss him and brown him well.
Whew!
Glad when it's over!"
Thus spake Jehovah.

*Jehovah's tired, Jehovah's "blown";
There's a mighty crowd near the Great White Throne.*

JOHN YOUNG.

Accommodating.

"Let every one who wants to go to heaven stand up," said the preacher. Nearly all rose.

"Now let everybody who wants to go to hell stand up," continued the preacher. No one rose.

A minute or more passed, the minister remaining on his feet. A gentleman slowly rose in a back seat and said: "I don't desire especially to go to hell, but I am willing to stand up rather than let the preacher go alone."

Missionaries.

(Opinions of the famous Chief, "Red Jacket," "Last of the Seneca Indians.")

In a private conversation between "Red Jacket," Colonel Chapin, and myself (the author), in 1824, I asked him why he was so much opposed to the establishment of missionaries among his people. The question seemed to awaken in the sage old Chief feelings of surprise; and, after a moment's reflection, he replied, with a sarcastic smile, and an emphasis peculiar to himself: "Because they do us no good. If they are not useful to the white people, why do they send them among the Indians? If they are useful to the white people, and do them good, why do they not keep them at home? They are surely bad enough to need the labor of every one who can make them better. These men know we do not understand their religion. We cannot read their book; they tell us different stories about what it contains, and we believe they make the book talk to suit themselves. If we had no money, no land, and no country to be cheated out of, these black-coats would not trouble themselves about our good hereafter. The Great Spirit will not punish for what we do not know. He will do justice to his red children. These black-coats talk to the Great Spirit, and ask for light that we may see as they do, when they are blind themselves, and quarrel about the light which guides them. These things we do not understand, and the light they give us makes the straight and plain path trod by our fathers dark and dreary. The black-coats tell us to work and raise corn; they do nothing themselves, and would starve to death if somebody did not feed them. All they do is to pray to the Great Spirit; but that will not make corn or potatoes grow; if it will, why do they beg from us and from the white people? The red men knew nothing of trouble until it came from the white man. As soon as they crossed the great waters they wanted our country; and, in return, have always been ready to learn us how to quarrel about their religion. 'Red Jacket' can never be the friend of such men. The Indians can never be civilised; they are not like white men. If they were raised among the white people, and learned to work and to read as they do, it would only make their situation worse. They would be treated no better than negroes. We are few and weak, but may, for a long time, be happy if we hold fast to our country and the religion of our fathers."

"Red Jacket," in council, in reply to the proposal to establish a mission among his people, said, with inimitable severity and shrewdness: "Your talk is fair and good. But I propose this. Go, try your hand in the town of Buffalo for one year. They need missionaries if you can do what you say. If, in that time, you shall have done them any good, and made them any better, then we will let you come among our people."—*McKenney's "History of the Indian Tribes."*

Amasa the Good.

THE chill winds of winter were whistling without, and the murmur of the surf on the rocks had a melancholy sound that Sunday.

The subject of Sabbath desecration was under discussion, and as each hardy mariner kept the soles of his oil-soaked boots applied to the rim of the stove, an aroma arose which none but those who have in their summer wanderings by the sounding sea encountered the rich, fertile atmosphere around a "gurry tub" could fully appreciate.

"There's nawthin' tew be gained be workin' onto the Sabbath," remarked Amasa, as he combed a forgotten crumb left from dinner out of his beard with his weather-bronzed fingers.

Amasa was thin and tall, and he prided himself on his powers as a "leader" at the "Union meetin' house."

"On'y last week, naow, we was tryin' to make the lan' on the Sabbath, when a fog come up thet thick thet we hed t' part it with our han's to move about the deck. The skipper hed his smellin' out o' kilter from the grip, so he couldn't tell where we was by the scent o' the kelp, and he told me to heave the lead. I gets out the lead, and bein' as it wasn't used much fer heavin', there was a hook on the line where someone hed been usin' it fer fishin'. Well, when I pulled that lead out'n the water I drawed up a big cod what hed taken the hook. I jest pulls him off an' flopt him right overboard agin, an' says I: 'Ther' ain't a-goin' to be no fishin' onto the Sabbath on this vessel if I kin help it.'"

Amasa rose and sighed, and went out into the bleak air. While those who remained marvelled that so good a man should lie so smoothly, he went out in his dory and "pulled" all their lobster pots. Then, when Monday dawned, Amasa's lobster cars were filled, and his neighbors but ill provided; whereat Amasa was not proud nor puffed up with vanity, but meekly said: "The Lard is good to his chosen people."

—*Montreal Star.*

Exemplary Pagans.

In the Neligherry Hills of India dwell tribes of which Colonel Ouchterlong writes: "Drunkenness and violence are unknown among them." Campbell says of the Lepchas: "They have seldom any quarrels, and such as arise are settled by their chiefs without violence or malice." He also says: "They are singularly forgiving of injuries, making mutual amends and concessions." Colonel Hunter says of the Santals: "Crime and criminal officers are unknown." Of the Jakuns we read: "They never steal anything, not even the most insignificant trifle." Another author writes: "No part of the world is freer from crime than the district of Malacca—a few petty cases of assault or of disputes about property are all that ever occur." Of the Arafuvas, Rolff writes: "They have an ambition to gain the name of rich men by paying the debts of the poorer. In an election of chief the disappointed candidate was much grieved; but he finally said: 'Whether chief or not, I still have the power to be of use to my fellow villagers.' The old men said that was so, and it comforted him." Miss Bird, a recent traveller of note in Japan, says she found the Ainos, a tribe far inland, to be truthful, gentle, and considerate. She adds, with a bit of romance: "I hope I shall never forget the music of their low, sweet voices—the soft light of their mild brown eyes, and the wonderful sweetness of their smiles." Of the Dhimals we are told: "They treat their wives and daughters with confidence and kindness, while polygamy, concubinage, and adultery are not tolerated." Some of you have read Tacitus, and no doubt recall his account of the chastity of the northern tribes of Europe before they were conquered by the Romans or converted to Christianity. Such accounts come from all ages and from many lands—truth, honesty, chastity, gentleness, tenderness—such as are by no means universal in lands under the influence of Jesus.—*Herbert Spencer.*

Acid Drops.

THE case of Earl Russell is one that should set every intelligent person thinking about the marriage laws of this country. Technically, he committed the crime of bigamy; although, as his second marriage in America seems to have been invalid—that is to say, no marriage at all—it is a wonder to some people where the bigamy really came in. Substantially, however, it does not appear that anyone was injured by his action. The lady he married in America knew all the circumstances, and took him with her eyes wide open. There was no deception, and apparently no injury. Lord Russell is therefore sent to prison for three months, either for an error of judgment, or for treating English law without due reverence in the United States of America.

Lord Russell's first wife—his English wife—has not been living with him for years. She made it impossible that he should ever live with her again. There are faults for which a woman may be forgiven, and faults for which she may not be forgiven. No man with a grain of self-respect could play the forgiving husband to a wife who had deliberately and persistently accused him of filthy vices, which cannot be so much as plainly indicated in a decent newspaper. Morally speaking, this man and woman were divorced, and could never come together again. But they were not legally divorced. The law of England gave them no hope of effectual separation. Not unless Lady Russell chose to commit adultery in a way that could be proved, or Lord Russell chose to commit adultery in the same fashion, and also to treat his "wife" with cruelty. The law, in short, would give them no relief while they kept clean. It only offered relief on condition that they dragged themselves through the mire.

Well, the natural result has happened. Not being a priest or a eunuch, Lord Russell has gravitated towards union with another lady. Who she is, or what she is, is nothing to the point. That is a matter entirely between themselves. It does not in the slightest degree affect the ethical question at issue before the public. That question is this: Should a man and a woman, who cannot possibly live together except in hatred and degradation, be fastened up for life to the empty titles of man and wife? Should society punish them through the whole course of their natural lives for having made a mistake? Would it not be better to cut the legal bonds when they correspond to no moral bonds—especially when the case is not complicated by the presence of children?

The law in England is a Christian law. "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." That is what the clergy say. But we have only their word for it. God is never demonstrably present at any marriage. The person who officiates in the church or chapel is a priest, a parson, or a minister. It is these gentlemen who tie couples up, and take the fee for doing it. And those who are tied up by these gentlemen have got to keep so, even if they are like a couple

of cats fastened by wicked boys over a garden railing. But in our opinion it would be juster, wiser, and more humane to separate them and let them go free, when their continued association is the worst form of bondage.

We do not want to see marriage destroyed. We want to see it rationalised. Marriages which are no marriages should be abolished in the interest of marriages which are true marriages. It is for the sake of preserving and multiplying the good that we seek to remove and extinguish the bad.

Lord Russell's "crime" was bigamy. That was the finding of the House of Lords—for he had to be tried by his peers. It was admitted, however, that there were extenuating circumstances. His first marriage had been unfortunate, and he had suffered much in consequence. Perhaps it had nearly driven him to distraction. For this reason their lordships made his sentence a light one. They gave him three months, not as a common prisoner, but as a first-class misdemeanant. Up at Holloway Gaol he wears his own clothes; lives in a large, airy, well-lighted room; consumes food and drink purchased outside; reads, writes, and does whatever else he likes all day; receives and answers letters, and sees his wife—the bigamous one—and his friends almost as readily as he could in his own house.

This is imprisonment made easy. It was a very different sort of imprisonment that Mr. Foote suffered for "blasphemy." Moreover, he had twelve months, instead of three. Allowing for the difference in the length of the imprisonment, and multiplying it (as it were) by the difference in the intensity, it is very evident that "blasphemy" is many times a worse crime than "bigamy." That is to say, it is less dangerous to do Christians a real injury than to laugh at the absurdities of their religion.

About two years ago there was established what was called a Guild of Church Journalists. Its birth was signalled by a loud fanfare of trumpets and much episcopal patronage. Where is that Guild now? Nowhere; because it died in infancy. The idea was absurd. There are probably a number of journalists who are nominally of the Church of England; but the vast majority are far from tying themselves to any Church—Established or Dissenting. They see and know too much. Even the professed ecclesiastical reporters are anything but supporters of the Church out of which they make their "copy" and a great deal of conversational fun.

There is a good sketch in William le Queux's *Scribes and Pharisees* of an ecclesiastical reporter whose identity he thinly disguises under the name of Mr. Crook. The author does not say so, but he was a sub-editor of the *Globe* when "Mr. Crook" brought his contributions in, usually accompanied by a volley of good-humored curses—some from himself and others from the sub-editors. They—the contributions, not the curses—were simply accounts of Convocation or the Confirmation of a new Bishop or an Episcopal Charge to the Clergy. Nobody cared about the "copy" or the events intrinsically. Mr. Crook, who wrote it, cared only for the guineas to be credited to him. The "subs." didn't want "the stuff" at all, having heaps of sporting news and City quotations for which it was necessary to find space. Still the influence of old traditions prevailed. The sub-editors inserted the accounts often in a diminished form, and Mr. Crook would walk away and excuse any violence of language by observing: "I am a good Churchman, but a damned bad Christian."

It is suggested in all seriousness, according to the *Church Times*, that there should be a Guild for Anglers, Boating and Swimming Men, Cricketers, etc., its object being "to bring all men and youths interested in these sports into closer communion with the Church!" Why not have a Guild for Motor-car Men, or, still more, for Betting Men?

No one seems to have offered any assistance to the disturbed "Lay Preacher" who, as we mentioned last week, wrote to the *Church Times* asking: Is gambling a sin, and, if so, what is there in the Scriptures to condemn it? The only reply is from "A Sporting Parson." He sees no sin in it, and certainly does not attempt to offer any texts which might be supposed to be condemnatory. He writes a column letter, in which he does not hesitate to admit many personal bets on horseflesh and stakes at card-playing, mostly whist. The "Lay Preacher," so far at any rate, has not received the reply he desired.

Perhaps some very special genius of the Christian faith may arise later on with the discovery of a Scriptural injunction against the evil of gambling and betting; though we think the Lords' Committee on Betting, of which the Bishop of Hereford is a member, is hardly likely to take as evidence anything which might be raked up from Holy Writ. Some of the members of the Lords' Committee may not unreason-

ably chaff Dr. Percival on this curious omission in the Scriptures, which are commonly supposed to cover everything.

The notions even in pious families as to the Bible's contents are very amusing. Take the following incident: "We have recently engaged a new servant. On leaving her late home her mistress gave her a handsome Bible; on the fly-leaf she wrote the following words: 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and thou shalt find it after many days.'" That is more than can be said of the text.

We hear a great deal of the circulation of the Bible. Figures are presented in such a way as to suggest that there is a tremendous demand for that Holy Book. But nothing is usually said of the hundreds of thousands of copies that are absolutely given away. And there are no statistics of the number that are actually read. The Bible Society spends £10,000 a year in grants of Scriptures to different religious and philanthropic agencies at home. Last year the Society received £221,535, and spent £236,541.

The *Sunday Companion* gives a photo-view of Boulter's Lock on the Thames on a summer Sunday afternoon. The river at this point is gay with boats full of smartly-dressed people, who look bright and happy with the cool sparkling river flowing beneath them, and an abundance of trees on either side. But listen! "Here it is that the fashionable Sabbath-breakers assemble every Sunday to indulge in their favorite pastime on the Lord's Day. Some of the most eminent bishops of the Church of England and leading preachers of the Nonconformist Churches have inveighed against the practice, for it is as unnecessary as it is harmful."

Is it, indeed! Harmful to whom? Not to the people who engage in it, for they look innocently-happy enough. Not to the Lord, because one would fain imagine him to be superior to the narrow Sabbatarian views set up in his name. To the sky-pilots? Yes; they are a jealous lot, expecting everyone to bow the knee to them and the self-created sanctity with which they invest themselves and this particular day.

"Not a single site has been reserved for any place of worship" is the complaint against the Tottenham Housing Scheme. A writer in the *Daily Chronicle* observes that the adults may take care of themselves. He is solicitous about the children. He says he can "vouch for the fact that children love to gather together to worship God when there is absolutely no reward, treat, or anything of the sort to induce them to do so." How the pious are given to lying! What sort of a notion can children have of this God, except that he is an old man with a big white beard, who sits somewhere in the clouds? How can they, by any stretch of language, be said to love or worship him? Is not this Sunday-school talk very much of the nature of twaddle?

A quaint performance has been given at the Charterhouse by the Elizabethan Stage Society. The *Globe* says: "A temptation was felt to smile at the naive presentations of the Deity as an old man with a flowing and curling grey beard." The Evangelical *News* is very indignant. After speaking of the grossness of Miracle Plays in the Dark Ages, it says: "We could scarcely have believed it possible that, in this age of boastful progress, 'a distinguished and representative audience' could have been gathered in the metropolis to make God ridiculous."

Did the mimic Almighty show his "back parts" to the "distinguished and representative audience" as the real original is represented to have done to Moses (Exodus xxxiii. 20-23)? If not, then the Elizabethan Stage Society failed to make the Almighty half as ridiculous as the Old Testament does.

A street preacher, who had been addressing an audience in Hawick market-place, invited anxious inquirers to state their religious difficulties, and he would answer them. There appeared to be only one perplexed mind among the listeners, a man of well-known sporting proclivities, who wished the preacher to explain "by what means Samson caught the three hundred foxes he set adrift among the Philistines' corn, when it took the Duke of Buccleuch's hounds a whole day to catch one."

Polemics at Liverpool seem to have been carried to an extreme in a recent instance. Anne Rachael Turner had a quarrel over religion with a coal-heaver named Gream. She enforced a syllogism on his attention by striking him behind the ear with a hatchet. He died in a few hours, probably still unconvinced.

In spite of bigoted opposition, the Brighton Corporation have decided to have a Sunday service on the tramways now in course of construction.

Joseph Hatton tells a story of a medium's revenge that may not be a chestnut to many readers. There was a certain widow who, for some reason or other, the medium bitterly disliked. She was famous, however, in a large circle of

believers among whom he was a favorite operator. Madame, the widow, it was known, had not led her husband a very happy life, and people thought this was the reason why she did not appear to seek after his spiritual welfare. At an unusually numerous assembly of the elect, when the spirits were more accessible than usual, the medium rapped out a message from the widow's husband. She could not refuse to welcome it. They began to ask after each other's welfare. And then came the opportunity of the revengeful medium. "And are you happy, dear John, in your new sphere of existence?" asked the widow. "Very," replied the spiritual husband; "I never was so happy on earth." "And where are you, John?" "In hell!" was the prompt reply.

A would-be curate has been committed for trial at Worcester Assizes on a charge of seeking an appointment under the Rev. Claude D. Kingdon, vicar of Prickwillow, by falsely describing himself as a B. A. of Trinity College, Dublin, and by presenting a forged ordination certificate and forged letters of recommendation. He was proposing to commence the service of God with a fair amount of lying and fraud. It seems that, but for the inquiries of the Bishop of Ely, he would have succeeded.

As a reply to those who endeavor to injure Board schools by asserting that they are "godless institutions," a member of the Liverpool School Board recently referred to the fact that, out of twenty prizes given for an examination in Scripture, nineteen were won by children connected with the Board schools. But, of course, priestly opposition to Board schools is quite superior to mere facts.

Those who attended a recent evening service at Rochester Cathedral might have thought that there was about to be a repetition of the Noachic flood. Water burst from the hydraulic engine attached to the organ and flooded the nave. Fortunately no Ark was required. By the way, is there not at least one Canon of Rochester who would hardly regard that ancient Bible story as historical?

The employees of the *Christian Herald* have had their "beanfeast"—or rather "wayzgoose," for that term is more appropriate to the paper—at Tunbridge Wells. They went to inspect the famous High Rocks, one of which bears the following complimentary and cheerful inscription:—

Infidel! who, with thy finite mind, wouldst grasp things infinite,
And dost become a scoffer of God's holiest mysteries:
Behold this rock; then tremble and rejoice;
Tremble—for He who formed the mighty mass
Could, in His justice, crush thee where thou art;
Rejoice—that still His mercy spares thee.

We need not make any observations on this elegant effusion.

The kind of questions which are floating in the minds of Divinity students is shown by the following query addressed to Professor J. H. Thayer, the eminent New Testament scholar, on his retirement from Harvard Divinity School: "Does the trend of modern scholarship permit confidence in the substantial accuracy of the teaching of Jesus as reported in the Four Gospels?" Dr. Thayer answered "Yes," but it will be noticed he is only asked as to the "substantial accuracy." His reply to another question, "Is the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel still a tenable theory?" is more guarded. He answered: "It is the more tenable theory."

A recent attempt by the *Christian Age* to imitate up-to-date journalism ended rather ridiculously. It published a sermon by Dr. N. Dwight Hillis, the successor of Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, and a portrait of the preacher with the words, "Now in London." But he was not then in England; for, after the *Christian Age* had appeared, nothing had been seen of Dr. Hillis, and on the previous Sunday Dr. Clifford had to apologise for his non-arrival to a congregation at Westbourne Park Church, and preach in his stead.

The Rev. Professor Estlin Carpenter, in a recent address, observed that the view of Christ taken by Dr. Bruce in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* was "a frankly humanitarian one. Throughout the article there was a recognition in Christ of all the elements which belonged to his age, and free admissions that legendary elements of a supernatural kind had found their way into the story of his life."

The Army Chaplain who is relating his experiences in the *Church Times* seems, in his latest contribution, to be mostly concerned in attacking his fellow clerics at home. He charges them with neglecting their parishes, and has already provoked one rather hot reply. He asserts that the "ignorance of the saving truths of Christianity" on the part of men at the front, who had put themselves down as of the Church of England, was "simply appalling." He adds that "it is not pleasant to feel obliged, apparently, to chide one's brethren."

In the *North American Review* appears an article by the late Sir Walter Besant on "The Burden of the Twentieth Century." Amongst other obstructions to human welfare at the beginning of last century he mentions false views of religion. He says: "I can myself recall the solemn voice of the preacher who warned us almost every Sunday—remember that he firmly believed what he said—that but very few of his congregation had the least chance of being saved; that from eternity, and before the world was made, nearly all of us were predestined to everlasting torture. Well, we have silenced these speculations."

He expresses an opinion that the time will come when, in this country as in America, it will be conceded that religion does not want a national creed. "Things," he says, "are nearly, if not quite, ready for the great measure of Disestablishment which is part of the burden of the twentieth century."

"B. W." writes in a contemporary: "The following extract from a 'Report, which the Head of the Deaconesses' Institution has just presented to the Bishop of the Diocese,' appears in the *Rochester Diocesan Chronicle* for May: 'A deaconess is, then, a woman who, after a period of preparation and training, is solemnly set apart by the Bishop, in the midst of the Church, by the laying on of hands.....Her life and all that she has is dedicated to God's service.' Can you tell me whether 'the laying on of hands' applies to 'all that she has'?"

At the Greenwich Ruri-decanal Conference, Mr. T. A. Brocklebank read a paper in which he said that in 1900 seventy-four Church livings changed hands for gold. In sixteen cases clergymen bought them either for themselves or their sons. Eighteen ladies, of whom six were wives of clergymen, bought others. In advertisements of livings for sale social advantages are mainly, if not entirely, dwelt on.

Dr. Parker seems, in a recent interview, to have been exceptionally frank. He said: "Some of the Churches are rotten—eaten up with hypocrisy. The clergy and ministers are timid because they are thinking constantly of their position. They are afraid that they may compromise themselves. We need to bring the Churches into line with the great life of the nation."

Similar views are expressed by the *Examiner*, which says that the "call of a church"—meaning a Congregational church—"is often made a matter of engineering and wire pulling of the most undignified and unedifying kind." It adds: "Many a man sees in the ministry an opportunity of social rise as well as the cure of souls, and cannot be acquitted of mixed motives in his choice."

Canon MacColl, in the quarterly statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund, returns to the question of the site of Golgotha and the "Holy Sepulchre" which he discussed with Mr. Price Hughes in the *Westminster Gazette* till the editor closed his columns to the disputants owing to the personalities introduced. The Canon alleges that Mr. Price Hughes's "careful article" in the *Methodist Times* is nothing more than an epitome of Mr. Haskett Smith's article in Mr. Murray's handbook.

A Presbyterian organ, the *New York Observer*, prints some egregious nonsense about Zola. It says that he is "convinced that he has made a mistake" in promulgating the Positivist philosophy; that he has seen great numbers of the French people fall away from religion and sink into animalism; and that "he is convinced that the only hope for the regeneration of France is a revival of Christianity." Of course this is a Presbyterian invention; in other words, an absolute falsehood. Zola is still a firm and scornful disbeliever in Christianity, and still an ardent apostle of the Positivist philosophy. Science, justice, and humanity are the Trinity of his faith. He has no room in it for Father, Son, or Holy Ghost.

"Ye Fools and Blind."

(RONDEAU.)

Ye fools and blind, whom fears betray,
All ye like sheep have gone astray,
Led by the nose by those who pose
As friends, yet are but freedom's foes,
And prey upon ye while ye pray!

Heaven is your home, not here, they say;
But these take care on earth to stay,
While wealth and power their charms disclose
Ye fools and blind!

Not by the Cross, not while ye play
Into their hands who "point the way,"
Shall ye redemption find. God knows,

If God there be, life has its woes;
But do the priests make glad your day,
Ye fools and blind? J. A. B.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September, Athenæum Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., 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.

THE editor of the *Two Worlds*, Mr. Will Phillips, sends subscriptions from himself and some Spiritualist friends at Manchester, with a letter in which he says: "I am greatly distressed to note the present difficulty in which you find yourself, and, recognising the splendid fight you have made for the cause of freedom of speech and thought, I feel that to withhold sympathy at this time would be little less than a crime."

CORRECTION.—A subscription of £3 to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, acknowledged in last week's *Freethinker* as from E. Rhodes, should have been from Edward Brooks.

J. A. B. writes: "I was very pleased to see the ready response to your call, and I sincerely hope that next week will see more than the realisation of your expectations. It would be more than a disappointment to me if things did not come to a successful issue in your case. By the way, cannot you manage to get away to the seaside for three or four weeks with your family? I would gladly contribute my humble offering to this object." Well, a holiday is now more than a luxury, it is a necessity, and we mean to take it, but we do not propose to start another fund.

G. BRAIMBRIDGE is "very sorry that Mr. Foote should be assailed in this way," and hopes that friends will rally round him to "remove all cause of anxiety (as far as this affair can cause it) for ever."

DAVID TAYLOR, writing (with cheque) to Mrs. Foote, says: "I feel very sorry, as I know that your husband has suffered for the truth, and I look upon him as a brave man."

THREE ABERDEEN ADMIRERS (poor men) cry "Bravo Foote!"

HUGH HOTSON says that his subscription to the Fund for Mrs. Foote "will not even pay for a fraction of the pleasure I have derived from reading Mr. Foote's wholesome articles in the *Freethinker*."

J. T. W. writes: "You no doubt acted with honest intention in paying Mr. Anderson the £100, but it has turned out to your disadvantage, as it so frequently happens. You are not the first man who has been trapped through preferring honesty to policy. I would advise an appeal to Mr. A. himself by the N. S. S. to give you a full discharge on payment (say) of £10, in consideration of the debt having been an irrecoverable debt until you put him in a position to recover by doing a most honorable act on your part and paying him the large sum of £100." Unfortunately, it is impossible for Mr. Anderson to undo what he has done. He and Mr. Foote together could not undo it.

J. UMPLEBY, the Blackburn veteran, and the oldest of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, writes: "In this matter I am quite confused and cannot account for the action of Mr. Anderson; a rich man, and acting as he is doing! It is most strange, and damaging to the cause of progress. I regret it very much. I enclose a cheque for £5, and hope some of our wealthy friends will do much better. Give my respects to Mrs. Foote, and may her home-life be free from the danger threatened; and may she live long and be happy all the time. I am now eighty-seven, so excuse me."

R. DANIEL and A. YOUNGER write: "We sincerely hope you will soon be out of this difficulty with Mr. Anderson, and if we had plenty of money I am sure you would be, but being only miners we beg you to accept our mite as a token of our good wishes and our appreciation of your noble stand for Freethought. Mr. Anderson has shown very decided littleness in his action towards you. We hope you will receive enough to save your home and books (at the very least) from the wreck that Mr. Anderson seems to wish to make."

N. S. S. CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Major John C. Harris, R.E., £1 1s. By the way, Miss Vance will be pleased to forward Collecting Cards for this Fund to any member of the Society who is willing to help in this way towards giving the little ones a pleasant day in the country.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—W. McLean, 6s.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

D. FRANCKEL.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope the East London Branch's platform will be properly supported.

PIGOTT.—We cannot deal with the Brockwell Park matter you refer to without official information from the Camberwell Branch. We do not know what happened, and your letter does not enlighten us, as you seem to assume that we know all about it.

W. H. DEAKEN wonders if Mr. Anderson is really a Freethinker or only masquerading as one, and says he could not have done the cause more harm had he been a bigoted Papist. "Our duty," this correspondent adds, "is plain. We must rally round the President and help him to the best of our ability; for it would be a deep disgrace if we allowed him to suffer alone through fighting the battle of Freethought for us all."

G. W. SUTHERLAND.—No one is called upon to give more than he can afford. If you have done that—as we quite believe—you have done what a great many neglect to do.

MR. and MRS. RAMSDEN.—We like acknowledging subscriptions in that way. It is pleasant to see husband and wife joining together to help good causes. Women keep, and are kept, too much in the background.

J. W. DE CAUX (Yarmouth) writes: "Mr. S. Leeson, of Leicester, a Freethinker of the right stamp, has just called upon me and asked me to forward £2 to Mrs. Foote, which I now do. Mr. L. feels very strongly on the matter, and will do all he can to aid you in your struggle against injustice."

J. PARTRIDGE.—No, the fear is not *all* over yet, but *largely* over. We have still to appeal to our friends everywhere on behalf of the Fund for Mrs. Foote.

T. M. M.—Thanks. One half-a-crown is not much in itself, but a thousand of them amount to something considerable. Those who are sometimes called "the rank and file of the party" do not sufficiently realise the strength of numbers and combination. They could easily turn the financial scale by acting together. Many of them, we fear, while willing to give a trifle, are too indolent to purchase a postal order, write a short letter, and address an envelope.

H. PERCY WARD.—Thanks for your sympathetic letter. We shall be glad to give publicity to your schemes and work at Bradford, if you send us details; and by-and-bye we hope to welcome you in London.

E. PARKER.—There does not seem material for a fresh paragraph this week. We will have a talk with the West Ham Branch delegate at the Executive meeting. We fancy the police will not be so foolish as to issue summonses while the ownership of the ground is disputed.

TOM PACEY (Birkenhead) writes: "I trust all N. S. S. members will rally round you in the present crisis, and not forget the splendid work you have done in the past and are capable of doing in the future."

R. CHAPMAN.—South Shields has done splendidly in sending up £11 os. 6d. towards the Fund for Mrs. Foote. Please convey our thanks to the several subscribers. We hope other Branches will do as well; Manchester and Glasgow, for instance, from which we have not heard yet, though of course we shall. No doubt it is difficult to get at the members when the halls are closed in the summer.

W. ROWLAND sends "a further donation of £1 for Mrs. Foote's use during your present trouble," and wishes us "every success" if we have decided not to appeal. He will see from what we have written elsewhere that we are *not* appealing. But this does not necessarily mean that there is no means of getting at Mr. Anderson legally. The line may be one of attack instead of one of defence.

T. W. KINGHAM.—Your letter has been in type for some time. We hope to find room for it next week.

C. MASCALL.—We don't like to print it, but we think you have put the whole case in two words.

DR. R. T. NICHOLS.—You will find all the particulars in the numbers of the *Freethinker* published during your absence from home, which Miss Vance has sent you. Thanks.

F. JONES.—Many, like you, wish their shillings were pounds. Even the wish gives us pleasure and encouragement.

R. GIBBON.—In reply to your last question, we are afraid not.

A. POPE is very glad we found those papers in Mr. Anderson's handwriting. Whatever their legal value, they justify us morally, and condemn our adversary.

J. O. BATES.—We talked the matter thoroughly over with our solicitor before deciding not to appeal. There is an element of the calculation which we can hardly write about at present, though we shall do so as soon as possible, for we mean to have everything out. Mr. Anderson began the publicity, and we shall complete it.

THE Rev. A. J. Alcock's letter and other items have to stand over till next week.

WE have to ask the indulgence of correspondents while we are so busy and so troubled. It has been impossible to keep up with our correspondence through the post during the past few weeks. We shall plough through arrears as soon as possible.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Torch of Reason—Sydney Bulletin—Birmingham Mercury—Mexboro' and Swinton Times—Railway Review—Crescent—Neues Leben—Huddersfield Examiner—Public Opinion (New York)—Stratford Express—South Essex Mail.

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.

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

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

Still Personal.

SOME of my readers will be glad, and some may be sorry, to hear that I have *not* appealed against the receiving order granted by Mr. Registrar Hope against me on the application of Mr. George Anderson. I have resolved to drink the full draught at once. Bitter it may be—indeed, it must be—but it will not kill me, nor do I think I shall forfeit through it the respect of anyone whose esteem I value. To the opinion of the outer world—the hasty world, the scandal-loving world, the ill-judging world—I have always professed my indifference, and I profess (and feel) it still. Besides, there is a higher court—the court of my own conscience; and the sense of being right there fortifies one against the frowns and sneers of ignorant and irresponsible censors.

The worst that can happen is my bankruptcy. I admit that the word has an ill sound. Yet one has to think of things rather than mere words. I was once in prison, but that did not make me a criminal; and I may be made a bankrupt, without any real disgrace.

In this case I have fought against what has been forced upon me. I exhausted every device to bring my pursuer to a sense of honor and consideration. It was not my fault that he chose to remain deaf and blind. When I discovered the documents, in his own handwriting, which proved that I was entirely right with regard to his promise to take those Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company—a promise which he denied, and called me a liar for asserting—I felt bound to give him an opportunity of retrieving his mistake. With that view I applied for a rehearing of the application for a receiving order, and both showed his solicitors the original documents and supplied them with complete copies—of course at my own cost. Mr. Anderson, however, elected to disregard my important discovery. Perhaps he did not realise how it would damn him in the eyes of the Freethought party. But that was his business, not mine; and I was not bound to give him another opportunity by appealing. It was simply a question of policy. And the question of policy was largely a question of cost. When I had to decide on the last day open to me (Friday, July 19), I had to face the fact that there was only about £150 in the Fund for Mrs. Foote, and I did not feel justified in hazarding, or asking her to hazard, a half of what we were sure of on the chance of defeating Mr. Anderson on appeal. Law is law, and often a strange thing; my chance, however good, was still but a chance; and if I lost there would be £60 or £70 less to apply to the salvation of my home.

Now I confess that *this* was the most important thing in my judgment. I never cared very greatly about myself. I have always felt what I told the jury when I was tried for "blasphemy" before Lord Coleridge, that I was a soldier of Freethought, taking pay and rations when there were any, and going without when there were none, and fighting on all the same. A soldier expects hardship and wounds, and perhaps death; and if he has the heart of a soldier he meets them with a gay and careless courage. But it is a different thing when the war is waged against the beings whom you love, and who, from the very nature of the case, are defenceless. Mr. Anderson has condescended to this species of attack, and I mean to foil him if I can. By the legal tricks of summary jurisdiction, his solicitors have prevented the case from coming into open court. Everything has been transacted in "Chambers," where legal timidity and pedantry prevail, and equity has a very slender chance of attention. The driving has been fast and furious towards bankruptcy, and that meant—as Mr. Anderson *knew* it meant—the selling-up of my home. Well, I cannot prevent him from doing that, nor can he prevent himself from doing it *now*; the matter having passed out of his hands and mine, into the hands of other persons who could not release it if they would. But I can prevent him, with the aid of my friends, from gloating over the finished picture which I daresay he has already enjoyed as a preliminary sketch. My wife and children should stay where they are, with their old home about them; and my books, which are necessary to my work, and therefore to my living, should be pre-

served for my use. *That* is what I am bent on now, and I trust I shall succeed. So much, at least, I think I may reasonably claim from the party to which I have given my life.

I once told Mr. Anderson that I was myself the largest subscriber to the Freethought movement. My out-of-pocket expenses were quite £30 a year, and I did not know another subscriber who gave so much regularly. Nor was that all. I gave to the Freethought movement (I said) all the difference between what I earned in its service and what I might have earned in another direction. Not that I regret the loss, for I love fighting for my convictions. But sometimes, and especially when I hear a fresh budget of scandal, I ask myself whether I have been altogether just to my wife and children. They would probably have had a more advantageous position in life if I had pursued a different career. Not again, that *they* complain. I am only stating a fact and my own occasional feeling. Now and then, indeed, I half shudder when I think of what my death might mean to them. For we are all mortal, and while there is but one gate into life there are a thousand gates out of it.

By the way, the word "scandal" suggests one good accidental result of my persecution by this rich man. When I first made the case public, to a certain extent, before the N. S. S. Executive, I was promptly informed that it had not been as private as I imagined. My indebtedness to Mr. Anderson seems to have been industriously bruited abroad, and it was understood to amount to a colossal figure. "Thousands" had been mentioned. Members of the Executive were prepared to hear that I owed Mr. Anderson two or three thousand pounds at least. And when they heard that the sum-total, excluding the Shylock claim for £167 interest, was only £200, they were half amused and half disgusted. It was amazing and shocking that a wealthy Freethinker, who had extensively advertised that he could spare £15,000, should pursue the President of the National Secular Society into the Bankruptcy Court for such a ridiculously paltry "debt." It was felt that if he had contributed £20 a year to the "ill-paid President" for ten years, it would not have been a very extravagant display of generosity.

My indebtedness to other people has been magnified in the same way. I owed Mr. Anderson "thousands," and I owed other people "thousands" too. Such was the voice of rumor—as I partly heard, and now accurately learn. Well did Shakespeare call rumor "the common liar." I no more owe other people "thousands" than I owed Mr. Anderson that amount. It was charitably assumed that I never paid anybody, but I can show that I have paid back nearly £1,400 to Freethinkers who invested money in my business between 1886 and 1890. And when Mr. Anderson attends the first meeting of my creditors he will probably find only one other creditor to keep him company.

But to recur to the one point of primary importance just at present—the saving of my home and books. The donations already received to the Fund for Mrs. Foote are not sufficient. My home is not the luxurious one that envy and malice have depicted it, but it is a fairly comfortable one. And then there are my books, which I have been collecting for thirty years. Some of them could not be bought again in a hurry. Money alone is not enough. They have to be purchased as the opportunity offers. A millionaire could not place an order on the market for the books in my study and have it executed immediately. He would have to wait, and in some cases for years.

Of course I do not expect all my friends to subscribe during the first week or so. Some are away from home at this time of the year, some may be waiting to see what they can afford to do, and others may be waiting to see what it is necessary to do. Still, I hope they will all make an effort to come along with their help as soon as possible. Whatever they send will, of course, be *expressly for Mrs. Foote*.

And now I have a word to say in conclusion about Mr. Anderson. He does not mean, apparently, to indulge in any more letter-writing. A long communication was sent to him by the Board of Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company on Wednesday in last week (July 17). It will probably be printed in next week's *Freethinker*, with whatever resolutions may be

passed by the N. S. S. Executive at its monthly meeting. Meanwhile, it must suffice to say that the Board concluded by calling upon Mr. Anderson to take the Shares he had undoubtedly promised to take in the Company. The Board's communication was not a lawyer's letter, but an appeal to Mr. Anderson's sense of honor. It appears, however, that his conscience is left in the hands of his solicitors. At any rate, they reply on his behalf. They ask for further information—which, by the way, they were already in possession of in the course of their action against me. Perhaps the Board will hear from them further. But, whether it does or not, the matter will see the light of publicity next week. There shall be no half-measures now. I may add that the call upon Mr. Anderson to take those Shares, on the ground that he did promise to take them, and that it was not Mr. Foote who misled the Shareholders, was signed by *all* the Directors—Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. C. Cohen, and Mr. James Neate—as well as officially by myself as Chairman and Miss Vance as Secretary.

Mr. Anderson thought he had me at his mercy. He was right in one sense and wrong in another. He overlooked the fact that he was challenging me to a duel. Perhaps he was fond enough to think that the Freethought party would cry "Shame!" when it learnt that I owed a rich man a little money. Well, the party does cry "Shame!" but in the opposite direction. Meanwhile the duel is progressing, and we are not near the end yet. I have never sought quarrels. I have avoided them as far as possible. But when I am forced into one I try to show that I have "something in me that may prove dangerous." G. W. FOOTE.

The Fund for Mrs. Foote.

J. UMPLEBY, £5; Major John C. Harris, R.E., £5; J. A. B., 2s. 6d.; A Glasgow Friend, 10s.; A. Rowley, 5s.; No Name, 5s.; J. R. Webley, 2s. 6d.; Editor of *Two Worlds* and a few Spiritualist Friends, 15s.; J. Shipp, 5s.; R. Daniel and A. Younger, 10s.; R. Lancaster, £1; C. E. Hall, £1; Mary Lovell, 10s.; F. D., £1 1s.; F. A., 6s.; Lohengrin, £1 1s.; Wilhelm, £1; Veteran, £1; Robertus, 10s.; Hugh Hotson, £1; Three Aberdeen Admirers, 3s.; David Taylor, £2; G. Brainbridge, 2s. 6d.; W. H. S., £1; Ed. Jones, £2; Twenty-five Years' Admirer, 5s.; Athos, 10s.; J. E. Banks, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. W. Turnbull, 10s.; A Friend, 2s.; C. A. Widelake, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Tryman, 2s.; Members of Bethnal Green Branch, 8s. 2d.; G. J. Warren, £1 1s.; E. M. Vance, 10s.; J. Williams, 10s.; J. O. Bates, 10s.; J. Stevens, 5s.; J. Warner, 2s. 6d.; A. Pope, 3s.; J. Halliwell and Friend, 3s. 6d.; D., £1; J., 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Jones, 10s.; Mr. and Mrs. Cross, 5s.; W. Beaumont, 1s. 6d.; Dr. R. T. Nichols, £2 2s.; C. Mascall, 10s.; J. Griffiths, £1; J. Beale, 5s.; A. Sumner, £1 1s.; C. W. Newlands, £5; W. C. Middleton, £2; S. M. Peacock, 10s.; J. Smith, 5s.; T. Wigham, 10s.; Chapman Brothers, 10s.; J. Hanmon, 4s.; J. Sanderson, 2s. 6d.; J. Charlton, 2s.; G. White, 10s.; J. Fothergill, 10s.; W. R. Bow, 5s.; F. Smith, 5s.; P. Fitzpatrick, 2s. 6d.; J. Henri, 2s. 6d.; T. Horsman, 2s.; T. M. M., 2s. 6d.; Tom Pacey, 5s.; W. H. Deakin, £2; G. W. Sutherland, 2s.; G. W. Holloway, 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Ramsden, 5s.; S. Leson, £2; S. Phillips, 2s. 6d.; W. Phillips, 2s. 6d.; W. Rowland (second donation), £1; N. Mewitt, 2s.—Total this week, £54 11s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The sixth Freethought Demonstration of the present season took place on Sunday evening in Victoria Park. Mr. W. Heaford, who would have lectured there in the ordinary course of things, acted as chairman, and opened the ball with a spirited little speech. Mr. Cohen followed, and his greeting showed how much he is a favorite in that quarter of London—thus disproving the old adage that a prophet is never without honor save in his own district. Mr. Watts also met with a very gratifying reception. Mr. Foote's rising to speak was the signal for a great outburst of applause. There was something special about those cheers. They were evidently meant to tell the President of the N. S. S. that the big crowd—for it was a big crowd—sympathised with him in the present crisis of his affairs. The applause was renewed again and again, and the speaker had to hold up his hand for quiet and ask the people to let him "get on with the business."

The Christian Evidence people had what they chose to call

a demonstration on the right of the Freethought gathering. Obviously they had an organised *claque*, which set the cheers and hand-claps going every time the sound of applause came from the *real* Demonstration. It was a monotonous performance, and the Freethinkers, instead of being angry, only laughed.

Miss Vance superintended the collection, which was an excellent one, and Mr. Neate was busy selling the *Freethinker* and the new *Age of Reason*, with other literature. From every point of view the Demonstration was a great success. And it will be the last for the present. One or two more may be held late in August or early in September.

Mr. H. Percy Ward is leaving Birmingham. We understand that for the present he is going to work in Bradford. Were it not for our own present trouble we should have tried to have him invited to London. We feel sure he will have to come there in the end, and we could "do with" his services in the metropolitan lecture-field. Mr. Ward delivers his farewell lectures to his Birmingham friends to-day (July 28). No doubt the local "saints" will rally round him in full strength on this occasion. Financial reasons prevent their keeping him amongst them any longer, but they will be sorry to lose him, and always glad to see him again.

Mr. Frankel, the chairman of the meetings on the Mile End Waste, informs us that lately the Christian Evidence Brigade from Limehouse have renewed their old tactics of pitching their platform within a few yards of ours, and attempting to drown the voices of our speakers. Of course they have not succeeded yet, but Mr. Frankel has determined to make a decisive effort on Sunday morning (July 28) to stop any further encroachments, and asks all Freethinkers to turn out in force on the Mile End Waste before 11.30 a.m., when the necessary arrangements will be made.

The Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* devotes over three columns to a post-card competition on "Is Darwinism Progressing or Receding in Public Estimation?" Some of the contributions are thoughtfully written—some are not. The prize is awarded to an excellent little essay by Mr. Hugh Wharton, of Westbury-street, Attercliffe, Sheffield. The view he takes may be inferred from the lines with which he heads his contribution:—

"The times are changed, old systems fall,
And new life o'er the ruins dawns."

Mr. G. Calcutt writes effectively in the *Railway Review* on the subject of Religion and Labor, which is discussed in "Forum" columns of that journal of the 12th inst.

Recently the Sabbatarians prosecuted Mr. John Smith, of Bridge-street, Swinton, under the absurd Lord's Day Observance Act of Charles II. His offence was selling tobacco, cigars, etc., on Sunday. Mr. Smith fought the case manfully, and in the end the summons was dismissed. Now he inserts in the *Mexboro' and Swinton Times* an advertisement which must be gall and wormwood to the unsuccessful police superintendent, and more especially to the miserable religious bigots who were primarily responsible for the prosecution.

The *Boston Investigator*, the oldest Freethought paper in America, reaches us this week in a new form. Instead of eight unwieldy pages it has now sixteen pages of handier dimensions; a little broader than the *Freethinker*, but not quite so long. We are also glad to see that the editor, Mr. L. K. Washburn, acknowledges a donation of 500 dollars (£100) from a lady in memory of her late husband, who was anxious to see the Freethought press of America on a safe financial basis. We can quite understand that this donation was very welcome. "It reached us," the editor says, "when we were sorely in need of funds."

Almost as we are going to press we receive a Prospectus of the Liverpool Public Halls Company, Limited, with a letter from the secretary of the local N. S. S. Branch. Unfortunately we are not able to do the subject justice this week. We shall have more to say about it in our next issue. Meanwhile we beg to direct our readers' attention to the advertisement of this new Company on another page, and to ask them—especially those residing in the Liverpool district—to give the undertaking their prompt and generous support. The Directors and the Secretary are all sound and trustworthy; good Secularists, connected with the N. S. S., and true to its principles and objects. They want to secure the Alexandra Hall and the attached premises, and this can be done for £400—which is all the Share Capital of the Company. We earnestly hope they will succeed. Certainly they ought to succeed. It will be almost a disgrace if they don't. And if they get the Alexandra Hall under their control they will be able to smile at the police, who have been interfering with the Sunday meetings in Liverpool for some years. The police may terrorise a commercial lessee, but they won't terrorise Freethinkers. That is one reason why the Freethinkers wish to get hold of the place themselves.

Supernatural Sanctions for Morality.

LIKE snakes in Ireland, there are none! The data upon which such were founded have all been not only discredited by those, many of them, whose interest lay in defending and maintaining them, but have been absolutely proven, directly by critical methods and historical research, and indirectly by the evolution of science, to be false or mythical. In particular, the kernel idea, that of personal Deity, is now admitted by the foremost theologians to be purely imaginary, only persisting now by grace of the "will to believe"; and, in regard of cosmic force or energy, it is a spurious assumption, and utterly irreconcilable with the notion we are considering.

But, apart from this, history, all history—viz., that of the individual, of the epoch, of nations, of peoples, of Churches, of communes or municipalities—tells one story only—to wit, that the idea of the supernatural has never contributed to persistent morality in any way, but has been the source and inspiration of the most dreadful immorality in the world. And this is true both of savage, semi-civilised, and entirely civilised peoples. Indeed, were one to aver that the idea of the supernatural is that round which all immorality centres, it would be much nearer the truth than the opposite averment. Neither averment, of course, can be true, for the simple reason that the supernatural has nothing whatever to do with the matter, except, and only its rôle, in respect of being, more or less, an obsessory idea, and exercising, *pro tanto*, the usual effects of such upon differently constituted normal and abnormal minds. It is certainly true that the dogmatic injunction, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved," and its converse have been the mainspring of immense immorality, and that necessarily, by reason of the constitution of the human mind, a constitution of which the assumed original framer of the idea was totally ignorant. Upon a spiritual or spiritist mind such an injunction might conceivably act beneficently. We cannot tell; for no mind ever was, or is, spiritual in the sense of being energised by a metaphysical personal entity. That may be taken to be an ultimate absolutely demonstrated and demonstrable fact. Upon the assumption, again, of spiritism—that is, to wit, that all personality and all nature is the individuation of one only metaphysical reality, one all-pervading mind or will, then it remains to be proven; and, when proven, *ipso facto*, the question of morality disappears, for, there being only one real person, there can be no relativity of persons; and all morality is grounded in that relativity. The king can do no wrong, theoretically, because there is only one.

Apart from this theoretical, but strictly logical, induction, the idea of the supernatural which has been set up for worship by varied religious cults has been an abominably immoral one, and of none is this averment more true than of that of the Jew and the Christian. It is beside the object of the present essay to prove that. The proof abounds and is admitted, but the evidence of the so-called "revelation" is the best proof.

But, in these days, it is not necessary for us to deal in theories or speculations, or to consult historians or higher critics. All the intelligent and unbiassed person has to do is to look around him and observe the facts of human nature as they are open to his view all over the world; and, furthermore, to observe the facts of social life among so-called lower animals. To begin with these latter, we all know that every community has rules and regulations, though not formulated, which they observe systematically, and all which have for aim and end the maintenance of a perfect species, from our point of view. It may be taken for certain, however, that no individual of the species has any idea of species at all. The social acts are simply instinctive and necessary, and, therefore, intelligent; the intelligence being inborn and inseparable not only from the animate substance of the species, but from any substance whatever. There are only comparative potentialities in this or that particular direction.

So we observe amongst human societies rules and regulations of comparative wisdom and adequacy which are formulated for regulation of conduct; but these are none of them due to, or dependent upon, supernatural sanction, except those only having reference to, or being in the interest of, the administrators of a cult, having

for its object the anti-social one of dominating the free thought and action of the individuals for their own ends. This itself is an immoral act of the very most condemnable kind; and, as it has no sanction of any kind except that which can be foisted upon the imagination of the simple and credulous, therefore an idle army has to be maintained to promulgate the original imaginings, and to proliferate further imaginings, to satisfy the growing intelligence of individual sceptics.

In fact, and in experience, the real sanction of all morality lies in physiological and psychological law; but this has been deliberately obscured and hidden by the vested interests which are obliged to maintain the idea of supernatural sanction. The fact has not always escaped observation and record, albeit. Penguins, in full knowledge that, if they permitted their young prematurely to venture into the sea, they would lose them, and, losing them, all their paternal and maternal solicitude would go for naught, therefore appoint certain delegates of their community to guard over them, and prevent the adventurous from proceeding to sea, whilst the great bulk of the community proceed to sea themselves to find food for themselves and their young. Wherein is there a supernatural sanction visible in such admirable and loving conduct? There is none, but there is a distinctly physiological sanction.

The Areopagus put an infant to death for having put out the eyes of a bird. So far as I know, they claimed no supernatural sanction for doing so; and, anyhow, in these days of cruel and often wanton slaughter of birds and other animals, such an act, such a judicial execution, would be reckoned a barbarism. But there was a physiological and psychological sanction. The assembly knew the necessity, as we moderns do not yet realise it in practice, of combating instinctive perversions from their origin. To-day we feel ourselves so invaded by perversions that radical remedies are regarded with despair, and the supernatural sanction is paralysed. As Livy wrote: "*Nec vitia nostra nec remedia patimus.*"

Under the ægis of assumed supernatural sanctions is to be observed more and more addiction to libertinage and crime. Those who fill our hospitals, asylums, or prisons know little, and have thought less, about physiological or psychological sanctions. They are those who "will to believe" in order to be "saved," or, without "willing" or "believing" much, being too indifferent, expect to "get there" somehow. So, as Charles Féré writes*: "Instead of witnessing the re-enforcement of motives of resistance to morbid impulses, one observes more and more addiction to passionate crimes. I have already expressed the opinion that impulsives ought to be brought up in the conviction that, if they escape the necessity of reparation, it is only by a badly-justified toleration of a law based on metaphysical considerations and exposed to an indispensable reform."

The supernatural sanction, when it held full sway, was the parent of the most cruel, most ignorant, and blind procedures for the cure and repression of lunacy and criminality. The whole conduct of individuals, councils, and legislatures now proceeds in the teeth of, or regardless of, supernatural sanctions, but in harmony with the ascertained facts of physiology and psychology. Sentiments of humanity are substituted for cruelty; consideration for insult; discipline for punishment.

What regard, what manner of provision, did ever any supernatural sanction exhibit for the conduct of man in regard of his hygiene and environment? If such can be shown, they have all had to be superseded, and their supersession was only achieved after a prolonged struggle. How could it be otherwise? The spiritualistic hypothesis underlay the supernatural sanction, and vitiated every proceeding, every act, under it. It is impossible to believe, even to "will to believe," that environment and heredity can affect a "spirit." But the influence of both upon conduct—upon morality—is now undisputed, for the reason that nobody now believes in "spirits," otherwise than in a Pickwickian sense.

Under the supernatural sanction it was imagined that "marriages were made in heaven." We now know differently. We know that they are a purely mundane affair, and that we must soon reconsider our marriage laws, and our ethics of marriage, altogether. Here, if

* *La Pathologie des Emotions*. Translation, University Press, Limited.

anywhere, evidence abounds that this boasted sanction has promoted immorality far more than morality. The true sanctions upon which moral marriage must proceed are to be found in physiology and psychology.

Where, in the ethics of labor, does the sanction we are considering come in? It sanctioned slavery, an admittedly immoral act. Slavery was abolished in spite of it. But there are recondite forms of slavery, such as that exposed recently by Keir Hardie, M.P., which still prevail under its ægis.* And this notwithstanding that even supernaturalists, like the late Channing and Lord Bramwell and others, have recognised the baneful moral effect of over-fatigues. The former wrote: "Man worn by pain, and deprived by his condition of relief-pleasures, is forced to seek, in sensual excesses, a deceitful solace. Excessive labor renders man incapable of resisting temptation." The latter recognised that the menace of the law (founded on the supernatural sanction, of course) did not suffice always to turn man aside from crime. Well, if it does not, what's the good of it? It has lost its *raison d'être*, the very thing for which it was primarily imagined, and is maintained by the vested interests.

The fact is that communities always have ordained, and always increasingly with knowledge will ordain, the rules and regulations whereby the conduct of individuals in their various relations must be ordered for the mutual benefit, and what principles must guide conduct in those relations which are free or unprovided for. And these ordinances, if they are to be acceptable and enforceable, must have for their basis the facts of physiology and psychology. Otherwise they will be mere *bruta fulmina*, and avail nothing for the object in view.

All the laws which have ever been made under the ægis of the supernatural sanction have been more or less arbitrary, and are, therefore, *ipso facto*, more or less imperfect and futile, many, though not abrogated, being entirely in abeyance. Such are laws relating, *e.g.*, to blasphemy and the keeping of Sabbath and the going to church, many also relating to property and the control of the person.

ROBERT PARK, M.D.

Death of Professor Fiske.

We see by an American exchange that John Fiske, the historian and evolutionist, died at Gloucester, Mass., on July 4. He was only fifty-nine. Most people, we believe, imagined he was much older. But he appears to have begun his intellectual life at a very early age. His most important work was his *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy*. It was highly praised by the great Charles Darwin. The present writer remembers reading it carefully in Halloway Gaol in 1883. The most striking part of it, according to his recollection, was the working-out of the sociological and ethical results of the prolonged infancy of the human race. This was a distinct and valuable contribution to the philosophy of evolution. In later years Professor Fiske rather went back upon the Agnosticism of his masterpiece. We had occasion to criticise severely his little book on *The Idea of God*. Perhaps the explanation of his somewhat retrogressive attitude in that essay, as in one or two others, is to be found in that very philosophy of evolution of which he was an exponent. It was probably a case of inherited instincts triumphing over the progressive tendency—a thing by no means uncommon as age advances. Nevertheless it must be admitted that Professor Fiske did good work for progress in his earlier days, and for that we may be grateful.

Conservative.

It doesn't matter what they preach,
Of high or low degree;
The old hell of the Bible
Is hell enough for me.

I don't know its location—
Can't say just where 'twill be;
But the old hell of the Bible
Is hell enough for me.

'Twas preached by Paul and Peter—
They spread it wide an' free;

'Twas hell for old John Bunyan
And it's hell enough for me.

—Atlanta Constitution.

* Vide current Reformer.

Correspondence.

THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION: A VIEW AND A SUGGESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The "Personal" of Mr. Foote in recent numbers of this journal will have come as a great surprise to many people. Those who have been ignorant as to the extent of the difficulties under which organised Freethought propaganda is conducted, and of the responsibilities that are necessarily thrown upon the shoulders of those who assume leadership, will have been pained by the disclosures forced from the President of the N.S.S. And those who have lent a ready ear to the stories of the huge sums borrowed by Mr. Foote must also feel some surprise, as I have felt, at the comparative smallness of the amount of the indebtedness, as well as the conditions under which the debts were incurred.

One good purpose has certainly been served—although unwittingly—by Mr. Anderson's action. It has cleared the air of a great many idle rumors. It has shown clearly enough that the man who gives his life to Freethought may expect plenty of ill-usage from his enemies, plenty of misunderstandings on the part of his friends, and, while possessing abilities which, if applied in other walks of life, would mean comparative affluence, must always remain on a too-intimate companionship with poverty. For the misunderstandings I am not sure that Mr. Foote is altogether free from responsibility. People here and there have heard that he was in debt; they did not, and could not, know under what conditions the debts were contracted, their extent, or how long they had been standing. Mr. Foote has been content, wisely or unwisely, to incur these responsibilities in silence, and to allow rumors to float about without contradiction; and it was inevitable, under such conditions, that misunderstandings should arise. But, now that the Freethought party are in possession of the situation, ignorance can no longer be urged as the reason for an evasion of responsibilities; and it is upon this point that I wish to say a few words.

Had not Mr. Foote been proceeded against at law for the money owing to Mr. Anderson, the public would still be in the dark. The fact of the indebtedness has, therefore, been forced from him. But Mr. Anderson, although the largest of Mr. Foote's creditors, is not, I believe, the only one. Whether I am right or not in this surmise will be seen in the publication of this letter, since if there are no others the suggestion I have to make is useless. But, if there are other creditors, then I think that we may fairly assume that the debts are party obligations, although Mr. Foote has made himself technically and legally responsible for their discharge.

The present situation seems to me to be this. The Freethought party, through Mr. Foote, has contracted certain financial liabilities. Of these I do not know either the number or the extent. I might, perhaps, have learned something of this had I approached Mr. Foote; but I prefer the first word on the subject from me to be addressed to others. At present the party is engaged in raising money to protect Mr. Foote's family from the action of one creditor? But why stop there? Is it not time that some serious effort were made for the clearance of whatever other debts there may be—debts which, as I have said, were contracted, not for personal gratification, but to meet the exigencies of a difficult popular propaganda?

What I would suggest is this. Let Mr. Foote place before the Executive of the N.S.S.—which is the recognised mouth-piece of the Secular party in Great Britain—a statement of the extent and nature of his remaining liabilities, if any; and upon this information the Executive may, if it thinks right to do so, make a serious attempt to discharge responsibilities which, while not incurred at their actual authorisation, were yet incurred in their interest, and in the interest of the cause of Freethought.

After Mr. Bradlaugh's death a gallant and commendable effort was made by the party to discharge the liabilities that he had contracted in fighting its battles and adding fresh laurels to its history. But it is surely better to lift the load from the shoulders of the living than wait for death to spur us to fresh efforts. Within the last week or two the columns of the *Freethinker* have borne evidence that the Freethinkers of Great Britain are not inclined to run away from their responsibilities once they are acquainted with them; and the present seems a fitting occasion to grapple with the whole question.

One word in conclusion. Should the Executive appoint a committee for the consideration of this matter, I should prefer to remain outside it. My own relations with Mr. Foote are fairly intimate, and my joining such a body would be open to misunderstanding. But, while I should prefer not to sit on it, I am willing to co-operate in any manner in forming and assisting it. And I shall be only too pleased to receive the views of my fellow Freethinkers on the subject.

241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.

C. COHEN.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): Closed for the summer.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11, G. E. O'Dell, "Labor and Life."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("The Victory," Newnham-street, Edgware-road): August 1, at 8.30, Monthly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Prayer and Praise."

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, A lecture; 6.30, A lecture.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Bible as a Book of Humor."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Wandering Jews."

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Jesus and his Apostles."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, W. Heaford, "Faith."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "The Myth of Jesus"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "War, Religion, and Human Nature"; 7, E. White, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?"

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Christ and Other Teachers"; 7.15, R. P. Edwards, "A New Religion." July 31, at 8.15, C. Cohen.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, R. P. Edwards.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "The Gospel of Atheism."

VICTORIA PARK: 3.15, F. A. Davies, "Creed and Conduct"; 6.15, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and War."

KINGSLAND (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Secularism."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: H. P. Ward—11, in the Bull Ring; 3, near Ship Hotel, Camp Hill; 7, in the Prince of Wales' Assembly Rooms, Broad-street, "Secularism a Better System than Christianity." Wednesday, at 8, in the Bull Ring; Friday, at 8, at Nechell's Green—Debate.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Children's Meeting and Welcoming Ceremony.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. A. Lill, "A Trip to Scotland and the Glasgow Exhibition."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, Special Business Meeting.

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