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Atheism and Anarchism.

ATROCIOUS attempts have been recently made to associate Atheism with Anarchism. We cannot too speedily or too emphatically disavow this alleged connection. Atheism has nothing in common with Anarchism. They proceed on different lines altogether, and deal with different spheres.

Atheism concerns itself only with the alleged existence of God. Anarchism devotes itself to a war against humanly-constituted government, and to the "removal" of objectionable, or even inoffensive, heads of national government. The one is purely speculative in regard to a supposed Creator of the universe; the other is an active political propaganda, aiming at the overthrow of the temporary powers that be. There is obviously no connection between them, and the clerics and mendacious scribblers in the Press who have pretended that there is must be told at once that they are either fools or knavish liars.

As a sample of the slanderous utterances, we may take the sermon of the Rev. R. W. G. Pound, of Christ Church, Plymouth, who preached, the other Sunday, on the late President McKinley. It is reported that he dealt very forcibly with the tenets of Anarchy, and "lamented that spirit of Atheism and irreverence which was abroad in the world." Now, we ask—and, indeed, insist upon the Rev. Pound showing in what way he thinks Atheism had anything to do with the assassination of the late President, or any sort of spirit leading up to it. Does he think that any Atheist would have been guilty of a blunder—which is said to be worse than a crime—such as killing one President in order that another nowise better might immediately take his place, as Mr. Foote recently put it?

The confusion of ideas on the part of this cleric, and of others who have made similar allusions, is lamentable in the extreme. It makes one despair of the possibility of reason ever finding its way into the pulpit—not to speak of the "charity which thinketh no evil." And so, in a side kind of way, Atheists are to be held up to opprobrium for a dastardly crime which they, as individuals, are inclined to denounce, and have denounced, in the strongest possible terms which the English language affords. What is there in Atheism to require the assassination of the President of the United States or the Tsar of Russia? How would that assassination advance the freedom of men's minds from the Theistic delusion? The idea is absurd, worthy only of spiritually-besotted parsons.

According to the *Western Morning News*, "an eloquent Archdeacon alludes in a contemporary to the unquestionable fact that Atheism underlies Anarchism." Who is this eloquent Archdeacon? We have been unable to trace him. This is to be regretted, because one would like to have fixed him and demanded from him what he meant. The *Western Morning News* seems to accept his initial assertion, though it doubts the justice of "laying the blame of Atheism at the door of certain false theological ideas, which he alleges to be commonly current, and to have driven men into a total repudiation of God." The "cause"—meaning the origin—of Atheism is a question we can understand. That cause is the logical weakness of Theism—its hopeless inability to substantiate its propositions. As to the "blame of Atheism," we don't admit that there is any blame in the matter. Where is the "blame" in accepting the conclusions of a long and careful process of reasoning whereby conviction is forced upon the mind?

But it is scandalous nonsense to speak of "the unquestionable fact that Atheism underlies Anarchism." How and why does it? If it really does, it is a singular fact that the vast majority of Atheists are not only not Anarchists, but are strongly opposed to Anarchism. Will the "eloquent Archdeacon" or the Plymouth parson point to any leading exponent of Atheism who has ever given the slightest approval to Anarchism? Some Anarchists, of course, may be Atheists, just as they may be Vegetarians or anti-Vaccinationists or Teetotalers or anti-Tobacconists, but they are not Anarchists *because* they are Atheists. There is nothing prohibitive of Anarchism in Atheism, simply because it is a thing apart, of which Atheism does not, and cannot, take any cognisance. There is no sentiment or spirit of Atheism underlying Anarchism; otherwise we should find that the bulk of Atheists would be Anarchists, which is quite contrary to the fact.

The fact is, clerics of the baser sort have thought they saw an opportunity of heaping additional odium on Atheism by associating it with theories, if not with acts, which have aroused general reprobation. It is our business to make it clear that there is no such connection as they pretend, and that they are wilfully "bearing false witness against their neighbor." They *must* know better; otherwise they are not fit to ascend a pulpit or to write leaders in any reputable journal.

Anarchists may have something to say for their theories. It is quite clear that they have nothing to advance in defence of their aggressive acts. They would be the last to saddle Atheism with the responsibility of their overt action. That base and abominable injustice is left to the preachers of the Gospel of one who, by the way, was the greatest Anarchist and Insurrectionist of his time. FRANCIS NEALE.

Mr. Dooley on the Christian Evidence Society.

THE other morning Mr. Hennessey strolled into the saloon, called for his favorite beverage, and put down a five-dollar bill.

"O'ill trouble ye for change for that same, Misther Dooley," said he, "an' if Oi'd come out with liss money Oi wuddn't hev hed foive dollars to bring ye."

"How's that?" asked Mr. Dooley, critically surveying the dirty, crumpled bit of paper. "What are ye afther doin' with so much wilth? Were ye takin' up a block av shairrs in the Billion Dollarr Shteel Thrust?"

"O'ill tell ye," explained Mr. Hennessey. "If Oi'd hed a quarrterr, O'd hev hilped a riligious cause, but Oi'd nothin' but that same greenback."

"That's jist loike yer fatherr's son, Hinnissy," said Mr. Dooley. "Ye're the owpenhandidist man in Amirriky whin the praste asks for silverr."

"It wuz'nt his rivirince this toime," replied Mr. Hennessey. "But O'll till ye. Oi wuz shtandin' on the shtrate whin a man comes up to me, an' he says: 'Can Oi take yer sibscription for the Kirristyun Ividince Sassiety?'"

"Phwat did the omadhaun mane by comin' to the Unoited Shtates to collict for a British sassiety?" exclaimed Mr. Dooley. "Can't ye till the diffrence between thure riligion an' haythinism?"

"But he said it wuz a *Kirristyun* sassiety," persisted Mr. Hennessey. "Oi thought all the British were hiritics."

"Thru for ye," assented Mr. Dooley. "But, though they're hiritics, they label thimselves 'Kirristyuns' by favor av his Howliniss the Pope. His Howliness, he says: 'Yer forefathers were Kirristyuns wunst,' says he, 'an' Oi hev hopes av yer returnin' to grace,' says he; 'an' so Oi give ye lave to use the honurrd name av Kirristyun,' he says; 'but lit it remoid ye av phwat ye ought to be,' says he."

"But phwat is the Kirristyun Ividince Sassiety for, any way?" queried Mr. Hennessey.

"It's to enable the British to give their ividence in a Kirristyun way," replied Mr. Dooley, sententiously. "Ye see, it's jist loike this. There wuz a man in England called Misther Bradlaugh, an' he wuz dead agin all koind av swearin'. An' they ilited him to the British House av Riprisintatives, an' they wuddn't lit him in because he didn't swear. He said: 'Oi icxuse a man swearin' whin he's lost his thrain by half a minute, an' has to wait two hours for the next one. An' if a man falls down on his face an' rams his seegar down his own throat an' sits his whiskers afoire an' smashes his front teeth, Oi'll allow him to swear a throifle,' he said; 'it's only natural undher the circumstances,' said he. 'But Oi object to a man swearin' because he's been ilited to make laws for the binifit av his fillow-citizens,' said he; 'he ought to be proud av the honorr, an' not swear at it.' An' afther a lot av throuble they allowed Misther Bradlaugh to sit; an' the furrst thing he did wuz to pass a Bill to privint people bein' compelled to swear whin they didn't want to. But some av thim were woild at it, an' said it wuz takin' away one av the most chirished privileges av an Englishman; for ye moind, Hinnessy, it's considered a great accomplishment in England to be able to swear loike a throoper; an' the historrian tells us that the British throops swore turribly in Flandhers."

"Phwat did the throops swear at in Flandhers?" inquired Mr. Hennessey.

"Whoy, they swore at the Dutch," replied Mr. Dooley, "jist the same as they're doin' now in South Africa. Ye see, the British throops were hilpin' the Dutch to foight the Frinch; an', whiniver their unioited forces came in soight av the Frinch, the Dutch icxited their grand national manooover av runnin' away, an' lift the British to do all the foighting thimselves. An', begorra, if there hadn't been some foine Oirish bhoys among the British throops, the Frinch moight have won the warr. But, as Oi wuz a-tillin' av ye, Hinnessy, the owld British way av givin' ividence wuz that a man bigun by swearin', an' thin towld whativer loies he loiked. But Misther Bradlaugh got it enacted that a witness shud furrust make an affirmation, an' thin till the thruth. An' thin a lot av the hiritics mit together, an' said this wuzn't a Kirristyun way av givin' ividence; an' so they made a League, an' called it the Kirristyun Ividince Sassiety, all the mimbers av which bound thimselves niver to till the thruth. An' they amoose thimselves by goin' into parrks an' places an' blackguardin' Misther Bradlaugh an' his Sickillarists."

"But whoy do they only blackguard the Illarists whin they're sick?" inquired Mr. Hennessey. "Can't they say nothin' agin thim whin they're will?"

"Ye're the biggest fool in this Shtate," said Mr. Dooley, severely. "They call thimselves Sickillarists because they go in for phwat's sickillar, an' the rist av the hiritics run afther phwat's sacrid. But, as Oi wuz sayin', the Ividince Sassiety people shtand on the shtrates an' till ivirybody that Sickillarists are always sakin' their own plisure an' convaynience, an' enjyin' thimselves, an' not sibscroibin' to dogs' homes or lunatic asoylums, an' not gittin' thimselves admitted as patients; but pathronoisin' proize-foights an' varoiety theayters, an' beer an' skittles. An' ignorant people thry to jine the Sickillarists, so as to enjye the looxories discrioibed by the Ividince Sassiety; an' thin, whin they can't foind thim, they blackguard the Sickillarists too. Oi moind the Marrkiss av Queensborough —"

"Yis, Oi rimimber the Marrkiss av Queensborough," interrupted Mr. Hennessey. "He wuz a great sportsman, an' rigilated glove-foights; an' they always conduct thim under Queensborough Rools. An' he wuz a buzzum friend av King Gearge the Thurrud, that lit loose the bloodthirsty Rid Injuns to take the scalps av Amirikin citizens."

"That's the man," said Mr. Dooley, approvingly.

"Oi admoire the ackiracy av yer hystirical knowledge; An' Oi till ye, Hinnessy, if ye'd only lave off dhrinkin' so much whiskey, an' paid more attintion to yer noos-paper, ye'd be the foineest scholar in the Unioited Shtates av Amiriky. But, as Oi wuz a-going to say, the Marrkiss av Queensborough hurrud the discription av Sickillarism given by the Ividince Sassiety, an' he smacked his lips, an' said: 'This is the thing for me.' The Marrkiss, Oi must till ye, professed to be a Nagnostick."

"Yis, Oi've hurrud av Nagnosticks too," remarked Mr. Hennessey; "but Oi cud niver make out which ticket they voted for. Are they Ripublicans, or are they Dimmercrats, or are they indipindint?"

"If ye wuddn't kape intherruptin'," said Mr. Dooley, "ye'd lurrin in the coorse av me sthory. As Oi wuz goin' to say, Lorrud Tinnyson, he brought out a stage-play in London; an' he made the villin in it a Nagnostick. An' the Marrkiss av Queensborough, he jumped up in his box at the theayter, an' he says, says he: 'Oi object to seein' a Nagnostick riprisinted as a villin, because Oi'm one mysilf,' says he. 'An' if any av ye don't know phwat a Nagnostick is,' says he, 'if ye'll look in Johnson's Dictionary, ye'll see that a Nagnostick is a Haythinist in a top hat,' says he. 'An' to show that Oi'm one,' says he, 'here's moin,' says he, an' with that he showed thim his plug hat that he'd bought that mornin' at Lincoln an' Binnits. An' that raysonin' condimned Tinnyson's piece, an' it was niver acted no more. An' Lorrud Tinnyson died, an' as the powit says:—

We shall not look upon his plays again.

An' afther that the Marrkiss wint off to jine the Sickillarists; an' he wint to their headquarters, which wuz in an Assimby Rooms in St. Luke's. Oi moind the place, Hinnessy, because St. Luke's is full av Oirish, an' Oi've been there in me youth. An' the Sickillarists mit in the Assimby Hall, because the British Governmint wuddn't lit thim build any Catheedhrals. An' the Marrkiss came, an' he says to himself: 'This doesn't look much loike looxoory.' An' he mit one av the laydhrs, an' he says to him, says he: 'Misther Foote, Oi've hurrud somethin' about yer principils, an' Oi've looked in to lurrin more about thim.' 'Oi'm deloighted to wilcome yer Lorrudship,' says Misther Foote. 'An' our principils is all printed an' known; an' if ye read this paper ye'll see that Sickillarism sakes to dispil sooparrstition, to sprid iddication, to raytionalise morality, to promote payce, to diggerfoyl labor, an' to realoise the silf-governmint av the people.' Thin the Marrkiss bigun to fidgit, an' he says, says he: 'But phwat plisures do ye offer the mimbers av the arristocracy, that are used to all the refoinmints av loife.' An' Misther Foote, he says, says he: 'Our plisures are purely intillectual. We saturate oursives with the beautiful thoughts av the great men av past ages; we enlarge our sympathies by the shtudy av the litirature av other lands; an' we sake to promote the happiness av mankoind by spriddin' a woider knowledge av the magnificint achievmints av soience an' arrt.' 'But Oi've hurrud diffrint,' says the Marrkiss, says he, 'Oi wuz towld by the Kirristyun Ividince Sassiety that ye gave proizes for divorce; that ye had classes for instruccion in burglary; an' that ye hild dibates on the bist methods av assassinin' prisidints.' 'Sorra a bit,' says Misther Foote, 'an' Oi wud remoid yer Lorrudship that all the mimbers av the Kirristyun Ividince Sassiety have bound thimselves by a sollim oath niver to till the thruth.' 'Thin, by me livin' sowl,' said the Marrkiss, 'it's mislid Oi've been. Yer principils are very foine ones,' says he, 'an' Oi'd assist ye in thim,' says he, 'only unfortunatly Oi've lift me chick-book at home,' says he. An' with that he gits into his carriage. An' he wuz hurrud to say that Sickillarism wuzn't up to spicification; an' that it had no looxories wurruth a damn. An' he wint an' jined the Salvation Army, an' gave thim thousands av dollars to carry on their schames; an' he pathronoisid all the little Frinch-women in Soho; an' inthrojuced his son to Oscar Woilde; an' bihaved himsilf loike a thru British arristocrat, until he passed away full av years an' honors. An' that'll discriobe to ye the worruk av the Kirristyun Ividince Sassiety, Hinnessy; an' Oi'll jine ye in another glass av whiskey, for its dhry labor to till ye all about the picooliarities av the hiritics in Britain.

An' whin ye're agin riquistid to sibscribe to a sassiety, foind out whither ye're hilpin' the thru religion bifore ye parrt with yer money."

C. E.

Methodism and Unbelief.

METHODISTS, as a rule, are not the most intelligent professors of Christianity. It is true that among them are to be found a few of superior mental power, but the great majority of the denomination appear to think that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God"; hence they prefer faith to reason, and reliance upon the "holy spirit" rather than dependence upon human effort. With them the "blood of the Lamb" is of greater importance than ethical culture, prayer of greater service than science, and worship of higher value than the study of philosophy. They pride themselves more upon their efforts to "save souls" than upon any endeavors to strengthen the body. As an antidote to Christian apathy and indifference one of their prominent ministers recently stated in his sermon: "Let them preach for ten years the exceeding sinfulness of sin, atonement by blood, and that without any apology; also the personality and work of the Holy Spirit—the everlasting 'He,' and not the 'It'—and they would hasten the millennium." In *theory* the Methodists regard Christ as "all in all," and this life but of small consideration compared with their imaginary future existence; and they endure the trials and drawbacks of earth with a kind of resignation, believing that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." We say the above is their teaching in *theory*, but, like all orthodox Christians, their actions do not correspond to their professions. Judging from what they do, their primary attention is directed to secular requirements, and they are ever ready to secure by material means the highest happiness on earth, regardless of what their condition may be in heaven. To be admitted into the Methodist fold education is not required, reason can be dispensed with, and self-reliance is not needed. It is only necessary for a man to proclaim his faith in "Christ and him crucified," that man is a miserable fallen sinner, and that he lacks the power of self-redemption, and then he will at once be accepted as "a brother in Christ."

Within the last few weeks these orthodox believers have been holding in London what they termed an Ecumenical Conference. The various meetings, however, do not appear to have been largely attended. The report in the *Christian World* states that the proceedings awakened "comparatively slight interest," and, but for American Methodists, "the attendance would have been sparse indeed." Some of the speeches were curious specimens of "spiritual influence." Bishop Wilson, we are told, "made a powerful appeal to first principles." He said: "Get rid of sins, and we get rid of wars." But have not Christians been the principal promoters of wars? History says yes; therefore they must have been the greatest sinners. Moreover, the alleged mission of Jesus was to "get rid of sin," and since his time his followers have been engaged in the same business. But the efforts of both Master and servants have been a failure, for sin is still with us, and the combined labors of all the Churches appear to be too impotent to abolish this sin. Perhaps this fact gave the members of the Conference some cause for rejoicing, inasmuch that, if Christ had "taken away the sins of the world," their occupation would be gone. Then possibly they would discover some of the "blessings" of poverty. They preach "Blessed be ye poor," but they strive persistently to secure as large a share as possible of riches, although their Master told them "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

What is described in the report as "the finest address" delivered was by Mr. T. G. Osborn, M.A. He said: "One of the deadliest foes of the coming generation was Materialism, which they would have to fight in the school-room as well as elsewhere." The speaker thought that Christian education was the best weapon to use in the encounter, apparently forgetting that the very Materialism which he deplored has grown to its present

dimensions in the midst of Christian instruction. It is quite true that the most formidable foe with which the Church will have to cope in the future is Materialism, by which term is meant the giving of paramount attention to the physical and intellectual needs of the human family. These are necessary to sustain life, and, as society is becoming more practical every decade, its members will direct their attention more and more to that which will promote the secular happiness and add to the comforts of their daily existence. Where is the Christian education that would encourage these material agencies? Not in the New Testament, for no scheme of education is to be found there. Not in the Churches, for their chief efforts have been directed to instruct people how to prepare for another world rather than to teach them how to make the best of this. It was really admitted at this very Methodist Conference that Christianity had failed in consequence of its defective educational force to inspire that devotion and earnestness which were thought desirable. Professor Shaw, of Canada, we are told, "drew a dark picture of the neglect of religious worship and the alienation of the working classes from Christianity. The tendency to irreverence was largely on the increase. The fact of sin was becoming more and more ignored. If this state of things was to be remedied, their ministry must have more honest scholarly thought, and must be characterised by intense earnestness of purpose. A half-educated ministry stood little chance in these days of securing a hearing."

The portion of the proceedings of the Conference which claims our special attention is where an attack was made upon unbelief in general, and upon Secularism in particular. Dr. Beet read an essay on "How to Combat Unbelief," in which he said:—

"The accuracy of modern methods of research, and the success gained by them in natural science, compared with the loose dogmatism of some Christian advocates, have greatly aided unbelief. And it has been strengthened by an intellectual idleness which has not taken the trouble needful to understand the Gospel. Loose Christian argument is a parent of unbelief. Modern science has revealed the universal reign of law. It has thus limited the domain of the supernatural."

There is some truth in what is here stated, but the Doctor is not clear as to how the unbelief, which is extending both in and out of the Churches, is to be fought. In the first place, the conflict will be a hopeless one, so far as Christianity is concerned, for the sufficient reason that unbelief is a natural condition of the human mind. Universal belief in any one theological theory is as impossible as it would be undesirable. Christianity itself is based upon unbelief, and the Methodists are disbelievers in all forms of Christianity but their own. If the combat is to be confined to those who believe and those who cannot believe the Christian faith, then, to begin with, the followers of Christ are outnumbered by millions upon millions. But we attach very little importance to numbers as a test of truth. If, however, Christians wish to combat all unbelief in their faith, they will have to reckon not only with Secularists and other Freethinkers, but also with the adherents of religions apart from their own. The only genuine way to successfully combat unbelief in Christianity is for its exponents to show that their faith is reasonable, and that its claims are supported by facts. Whatever is evidentially true cannot be disbelieved, and in that which accords with reason and natural law no Secularist will be an unbeliever.

Bishop Hamilton, D.D., deals with what he terms "the weak points of Secularism." But it is evident he does not understand what the term implies, for he commences by saying: "Secularism assumed that there is no God." Now, we assume nothing of the kind. Our philosophy rests upon demonstrated truths; and, as the existence of God has *not* been demonstrated, therefore we indulge in no assumption whatever upon the subject. Secular teachings have reference to man and this life, without denying any God or any future existence. The Doctor says: "Secularists are extreme dogmatists." This is the very opposite of the truth, for we refuse to dogmatise upon that of which nothing is known. It is the Methodists who dogmatise, in asserting that they know that about which they have no more information than we have—and that is none at all. It is quite

correct, as the Doctor asserts, that Secularism recognises "no governing Father, no supernatural presence, no spiritual nature in man." This, however, is no fault of ours, for the good reason that we cannot recognise that which, to us, is non-existent. Does Bishop Hamilton recognise these supposed entities? If so, let him tell us what they are. What is the supposed supernatural, and what is the "spiritual nature in man"? Moreover, is the "governing Father" the being described in the Bible? If so, where is the evidence of his government? Is it in his making man so imperfect that he yielded to the first temptation, and then in punishing him and his posterity for doing what the God-made conditions compelled them to do? Is the governing power seen in God sending his son to redeem the world, and yet keeping the vast majority of the human race ignorant of the son and his alleged mission? Is this power visible in making salvation to depend upon a belief that cannot be accepted only by a few? This may be Methodistic dogmatism, but it is not just, humane, nor reasonable. Neither does it accord with Secular ideas of good fatherly government.

CHARLES WATTS.

Nonconformist Humbug.

THERE is one passage in the *Wesleyan Methodist Pastoral* just issued—a brief notice of which appeared in a recent issue of this journal—that deserves some notice, from Freethinkers at least. The passage I refer to is the following one. It is worth while reproducing in full for many reasons:—

"Slowly yet surely the harvest of materialism is ripening, and good men are filled with dismay at the prospect. With the obscuration of the Heavenly vision, superstition takes the place of faith, priestcraft begins again to exercise its baneful influence, religion degenerates into ritual, and conscience is lulled to sleep. Upon the people a strange ethical lethargy has fallen. Men hesitate to face vital moral issues, and fear to grapple with grave moral problems. The one pursuit that in the eyes of the men of this generation justifies the effort is the quest of riches. Material wealth is sought after by all classes with eager and venturesome haste. The means by which it is obtained are considered of but secondary importance. The things most highly esteemed are such as money can secure—abundance, ease, self-gratification, fame, display. The life of a nation is held by many to consist in the abundance of the things it possesseth. Even education itself is gauged by its ability to further commercial interests. Energy not absorbed in making money is largely expended in the pursuit of pleasure. Devotion to sport is so excessive as to call forth the solemn warning of authorities of our public schools. Among the working classes the thirst for amusements, doubtless rendered more acute by the excessive monotony of their daily toil, amounts almost to a craving; while ominous preference is shown for such 'sports' as afford opportunity of indulging the appalling passion for gambling. The love of strong drink still sets at defiance all prudential motives and ties of affection, and brings thousands of its victims to despair and destruction. And, of most sinister significance of all, the hitherto inviolate sanctities of home life are threatened by an insidious but determined attempt to undermine the authority and charm of our choice domestic virtues."

We may take the whole passage for granted, for the time being, although it is, like most religious productions, ill-balanced and exaggerated. And the exaggerations are obvious. It is not true, for instance, that riches is the *one* pursuit that is followed; and, if it were, it would be a justifiable retort that the religious world follows that sport as keenly as any. Bearing in mind, too, the many columns of newspaper space that have been used during the past twelve months in booming million-guinea funds, etc., it is rather cool for the Methodists to complain that people are hankering after money. There are many men and women in the country—and these not in the Churches either—who are striving after many other things, and much better things, than mere riches. It is true that they are not striving to build up the Churches, and one suspects that it is their dilatoriness in this direction, rather than their industry in any other, that has roused the indignation of preachers.

The opening sentence of the quotation is worth noting for the light it sheds on Christian methods of controversy. Is it not typical of Christian intellectual ethics

to quietly identify opposing doctrines with all that is reprehensible, and thus saddle it with the full responsibility for all current evils? "The harvest of Materialism," forsooth! What has Materialism, either scientific or philosophic, to do with any of the ills concerning which complaint is made? In any rational sense Materialism is the attempt to explain the cosmic process in terms of matter or motion; or, putting the matter negatively, without calling in the aid of the so-called spiritual. To this work men like Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer gave their lives; is it meant that their teachings have brought about the results complained of by the *Wesleyan Pastoral*? Of course the Wesleyan Methodists will make no such statement—which, however mistaken it might be, would at least be honest. They much prefer misrepresentation, or evasive and dishonest language, and, by constantly using "Materialism" as a synonym for all that is vile, hope to cast discredit upon the philosophical doctrines of their opponents. It is a very old policy in religious controversy, but it is one that all honest people will view with increasing disgust.

Hypocrisy and cant seem almost inseparable from religion, but there is something peculiarly nauseating about such a sentence as "The harvest of Materialism is ripening, and good men and women are filled with dismay at the prospect." One would imagine that Materialism, as a philosophy, had been in power, and the results were such as cause alarm. But the evils around are not the products of centuries of Materialism, but of Spiritualism. It is the Christian Churches that have hitherto taken control of the world, and what we are seeing is the result of their mismanagement, bungling, or downright criminality. Would it not be historically accurate to rewrite the above quotation something as follows?—

"Slowly yet surely the harvest of Christianity is ripening, and good men are filled with dismay at the prospect. For fifteen centuries at least the Western world has been governed by organised Christianity. It has enjoyed immense powers and boundless opportunities. It has been supported by enormous wealth, and backed by the prestige of fashion. For many centuries none dared raise a voice in hostile criticism in safety, and the few who ventured paid a heavy price for the privilege. It has taken control of the individual from the cradle to the grave, and has largely determined not merely what he should say, but also what he should think. And as the result of this long and powerful reign what do we find? The lowest forms of superstition are rife. Conscience is lulled to sleep. Upon the people a strange ethical lethargy has fallen. Men hesitate to face vital moral issues, and fear to grapple with grave moral problems. The one pursuit that rouses enthusiasm is that of the quest for wealth. Quacks flourish and geniuses starve. Education is either neglected or valued solely for its monetary worth. There is a too fanatical devotion to sport, and a too great neglect of higher forms of recreation. The expenditure on war is steadily rising, and the most warlike of nations are loudest in their professions of religion. Gambling is on the increase, and crime does not diminish. The conditions under which thousands of people are compelled to live are demoralising in the extreme, and it may be questioned whether the pictures of misery and destitution that are seen in a modern Christian city will not more than rival anything of the kind that the world has ever witnessed. And all this after so many centuries of Christian rule! There is no need to say that Christianity is directly responsible for this state of things, although a very plausible case might be made out in support of that statement; it is enough to say Christianity has not prevented it. We are therefore justified in asserting that present conditions are at least an emphatic record of Christianity's failure; and, seeing that the world is as it is after the long reign of the Christian religion, we may be pardoned if we say that it is time that we looked elsewhere than to creeds and churches for the means of bettering the condition of the people and forwarding the work of civilisation."

Would not this be a far more honest method of stating the issue than impudently saddling the responsibility upon a philosophy that has had to fight hard for its very existence? One might, indeed, say that, had it not been for the forces of unbelief, which have succeeded in checking somewhat the operation of religious influences, the world would be in a still worse position than it is at present. We see the world as it is after a religious training that should have converted it into a perfect paradise, had that species of education been of any value; and the existence of the ills mentioned

is only, when taken seriously, part of the general indictment of Christianity's failure.

The *Pastoral* complains of the ethical indifference of the mass of the people. But what have the Churches ever done to excite interest in the profounder problems of life? So far as ethics pure and simple are concerned, every inquiry in this direction has been greeted by the religious world with abuse. Every examination of accepted moral notions has been declared to be an attempt to destroy morality altogether; and it is really of profound significance that, while the Churches have been laying down the emptiest of moral platitudes and confusing the public mind by branding as criminal actions which were not criminal, and as virtuous actions that were not virtuous, every real contribution that has helped to form a science of ethics has come from unorthodox quarters. "The strange ethical lethargy"—which, however, does *not* exist to the extent the *Pastoral* would have us believe—is, again, but another instance of reaping the harvest sown by Christian stupidity.

What have the Churches contributed, what has Christianity contributed, towards the growth of a sound social structure? Positively nothing. It is all very well complaining of the evils of drinking, or of gambling; these are evils that force themselves upon the notice of the most superficial; but it requires something more for their removal than pious wishes for reform, or prayers for improvement. After all, drinking and gambling are far more symptoms than the cause of disease; and I fancy that, if the matter were only scientifically studied, it would be found that unhealthy conditions of labor, and unhealthy homes, which create the desire—nay, more than the desire, the *necessity*—for some form of stimulant, are at bottom responsible for these evils. Let the Churches unite in directing attention to the necessity of a scientific study of social evolution, and they will at least show some justification for their existence, even though they may fail of their object.

Have the Churches ever done this? Look back at the names of those whose writings have marked epochs in the history of social evolution, and see if it is possible to find a genuine Christian among the lot. Will the Churches *ever* do this? Not if their past and present performances are a safe indication of their future behavior. For the plain truth is that the historic function of the Churches has been to stand as the champions of conservatism and privilege against progress and reform. This is true of all, even though the precise form of the championship may have varied. And the Churches have, on the whole, served their masters well. Who can say what might have happened had the energy that has been dissipated in praying, preaching, Sunday-school and Bible-class teaching, and street-corner religious oratory been diverted into purely social channels? The Churches understood their work, however, and did it well. If people *would* study, they gave them theology; if they *would* talk, they provided them with opportunities for preaching. It was a profitable policy—to a class. The man who wrings his money, or owes his position, to the degradation or ignorance of others is never injured by young men studying the lives of the ancient Jews, or the conditions of existence in the New Jerusalem. His chief fear is lest they should know the lives of the people around them, and the conditions of existence in London, Glasgow, Manchester, or Liverpool. And the game has gone merrily on generation after generation. People have been bribed and degraded with charity on the one side, and their attention drawn off the real issues of life on the other. It is no wonder that social reforms have never commenced with the Churches. That would have scandalised their patrons and cut off the financial supply at once. Not a single social revolution ever has been inaugurated by the Christian Churches, and one can safely assume that one never will be initiated by a religion that has always taken whatever state of society it found existing and given it its blessing.

The attempt, then, to attribute existing evils to the "harvest of Materialism" is but another piece of that Christian hypocrisy which preaches the blessings of poverty to the poor while fawning at the feet of the rich, and babbles of the evils of life even while perpetuating them by its practice. The evils of the world are, I repeat, largely the products of Christian mismanagement,

Christian cupidity, or Christian criminality. The clergy may still talk of these evils as the product of Materialism. Thoughtful men and women will, however, see in them the inevitable consequences of the reign of a religion which is not only lacking in all that was necessary to meet the legitimate requirements of a progressive civilisation, but which has always greeted with abuse or punishment those who strove to make good its deficiencies.

C. COHEN.

Rich and Poor.

A PLUMP old gentleman in spectacles and slippers, sitting before a bright grate-fire reading his evening paper after a good dinner, possessing a pleasant home, broad acres, plenty of bonds, stocks, and mortgages, is about as complacent a sight as one can often behold. He usually has a calm, obsequious way of talking, walking, patting the dog, poking the grate, and welcoming each newcomer. He always enlarges upon his plans and projects, and the secrets of his past successes; tells us how carefully he watched and guarded the nest-egg of his fortunes—how the first thousand dollars was put on interest, and, after that, how everything he touched turned to gold. Balancing the future with the past, he has settled assurance that his children, to the third and fourth generation, must be safe against every danger.

Ignorant of the science of political economy and the difference in character and chance conditions, he takes it for granted that he is specially gifted and favored of heaven, and that his thrift, cunning, and selfishness will go down to his heirs with his fortune. He congratulates himself, as he sits smoking, that his children are all in comfortable homes of their own, as he has settled 1,000,000 dollars in cash on them the day of their marriage, and will give them as much more when he dies. To this end he has worked early and late, denied himself the comforts in his youth and acts of charity in later years, has concentrated all his powers on self-aggrandisement and the material prosperity of his own family.

When he hears of the failures and defalcations of his neighbors, he thanks the Lord that his sons are wary and wise. When he sees pale, sad-looking girls going from slop-shops with their arms full of work, he is glad his daughters are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. When ragged boys and girls beg of him for bread in the streets, he is comforted with the thought that his grandchildren will escape such humiliation. Going down to Wall-street, he soliloquises thus with himself: "What a nuisance these beggars are! If everybody had worked as hard as I have, there would be no poverty in the world; but the working-classes are proverbially idle, dissipated, improvident, and they deserve to suffer."

His equanimity, after parting with a few pennies, being restored, with pious resignation he philosophises still farther: "Perhaps, after all, it is God's will that there should be rich and poor, that the sweet virtues of benevolence on one side, and gratitude on the other, might find abundant exercise."

Stop there, good sir! In all nature's laws we find order, harmony, equality. The air is free, the sun shines on the just and the unjust, the rain and dews fall alike on all. Man's laws first ushered in inequality. We shall take the first step towards the reform of present abuses when the people understand that poverty, disease, misery, and vice are the result of human ignorance and selfishness, and not divine "ordination," and are to be remedied only by a knowledge of social science and obedience to its laws. There are two classes of people who always refer everything to God: lazy people who will not work with head or hand, or take any kind of responsibility; and conceited, aristocratic people, who imagine that they are not governed by the same universal laws as the masses, but that there is some special legislation going on in heaven all the time for their benefit.

A wise selfishness would teach the old gentleman in spectacles that his children cannot be permanently happy and prosperous until the whole human family are so.

The best interests of the nation, the family, the individual, are all jeopardised, while nine-tenths of the race are ground to powder that the one may shine in gilded luxury. So long as one class of men have more than their share of the wealth of the world, the rest must suffer; so long as some do no work, some must be overworked. But the wheel of fortune is forever turning, lifting up some and crushing out others, and in these scrambles cunning sharpers will, perchance, outwit the old gentleman's sons and daughters, and the estates he has so carefully gathered will in turn be scattered to the winds by the same system of legalised frauds by which he himself acquired them in the beginning. A man by fair dealing and industry alone never yet laid up a million dollars. Such fortunes are accumulated by a false system of morals, of finance, land monopoly, tariffs, taxes, etc., the cornerstones of oppression in the world of work.

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON.

—*Commonwealth Magazine.*

Acid Drops.

THE *Daily Mail* as an organ of spirituality is comic or tragic, according as the spectator is most inclined to laughter or tears. "How Shall we Cure Anarchism?" it asks, and it ventures to answer the question. As it is an "unquestionable fact that Atheism underlies Anarchism," the remedy for this disease is "more religion." Well, now, we fancy we have heard of that prescription before. Moreover, we have a notion that it has been applied both *ad libitum* and *ad nauseam*. Altogether, the *Daily Mail* reminds us of Hood's poem, "A Black Job." A society was got up for turning niggers into white men. Much money was collected and expended, but the obstinate blacks wouldn't bleach. The secretary admitted, at the annual meeting (was it in Exeter Hall?), that no impression had yet been made upon them; nevertheless, it would be impious to doubt that good would be done in the course of time; and in the meanwhile his watchword was "More Soap!"

We have yet to learn that the assassin of President McKinley was an Atheist. Certainly the assassin of President Lincoln was *not* an Atheist, while Guiteau, who shot President Garfield, was an ostentatious Christian. At his execution he tried to read a long rambling paper, larded with religious expressions, and the hangman jerked him out of existence with the name of Jesus crushed in his throat.

The "unquestionable fact"—like a good many other *Daily Mail* facts—is no fact at all. There is no more connection between Atheism and Anarchism than there is between the phases of the moon and the market price of cheese. The fact is, the *Daily Mail* doesn't understand Atheism or Anarchism. Plenty of Anarchists are not Atheists, and plenty of Atheists are not Anarchists. We advise our contemporary to gain a little elementary knowledge before writing on this subject again.

Bishop Hartzell has been communicating to a *British Weekly* representative some reminiscences of the late Mr. McKinley. During a conversation, the Bishop reminded the late President that, amidst the troubles of war, his (McKinley's) name had been every day on the lips of multitudes of people at their morning and evening worship. "I know," the late President said, "and I am convinced that I never could have gone through what I have done without the sustaining power of Divine Providence." This was rather rough on the Spaniards, unless it may be supposed that Providence "sustained" the leaders on both sides in order to see a good fight.

Continuing, the late President said: "I believe firmly in the Divine leading, and I put that faith into my messages and despatches. Some of the gentlemen round me smile, but one thing is true," and here he brought down his hand emphatically on the table, "no man has ever come to this place (White House) who sneers at Providence." This, of course, is qualified by the word "sneers," otherwise one might point to President Lincoln. But, after all, "the sustaining power of Divine Providence" does not seem to have afforded this firm believer much protection from a crazy assassin. Where's the use of Providence if he behaves in this careless or erratic manner?

The *Witness*, a Presbyterian organ, is rather illogical. While deploring the death of President McKinley, it assures its readers that the "mysterious dispensation" of Providence is all right, and that "good, great good, not only to America, but to the whole world, will yet accrue" from this tragedy. In that case, it is foolish rebellion against God to worry and

hang the assassin, who was only God's chosen instrument in this act of "mysterious" beneficence.

The Bishop of Armagh issued a special prayer for the recovery of President McKinley. He now issues another on behalf of Mrs. McKinley. But he doesn't say why the Lord is likely to answer the second prayer any more than the first.

Mr. Gladstone was of course a sincere Christian, but he did not defend Christianity for nothing. It is now admitted by the editor that the Grand Old Man got a hundred guineas per article for his "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture" in *Good Words*. It was an honest contract—we suppose the editor saw to that, but a few contracts of the same sort, financially, might have kept Charles Bradlaugh alive until now, with happiness to himself and benefit to this nation.

Mr. Stead's *Review of Reviews* has a "Character Sketch" of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, with some excellent illustrations. It is genially, if superficially, written, and is clearly meant to be laudatory. Was it necessary, however, to praise Mr. Holyoake at the expense of the late Charles Bradlaugh? It seems to us that the paragraph dealing with this point is in execrable ill-taste, especially in view of the flatteries that Mr. Stead once found it convenient to heap upon Mr. Bradlaugh in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Reference is made to "the good relations that ought to have existed between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Holyoake." But what does Mr. Stead know about this matter? He was never behind the scenes, and he can only repeat more or less one-sided and interested hearsay. The real truth was that two men cannot ride side by side on the same horse, and Mr. Bradlaugh was not built to ride behind. Neither was Mr. Holyoake ambitious of the secondary position.

"Mr. Bradlaugh," we are told by Mr. Stead, "was a man of great ability, but of supreme egotism." Now we cannot bring ourselves to believe that Mr. Holyoake inspired this statement. We take it to be Mr. Stead's own utterance. And as such it is certainly amusing, for there are some pretty stories floating about illustrating Mr. Stead's possession of the characteristic which he ascribes to Mr. Bradlaugh.

It is a pity that Mr. Stead did not let Mr. Holyoake revise the proofs of the "Character Sketch," at least as regards mere matters of fact. This would have saved Mr. Stead from the ridiculous statement that Mr. Holyoake, by going to gaol sixty years ago, "effectively barred the prison gate against all similar offenders for the rest of his lifetime." No less than four persons have been imprisoned for "Blasphemy" in England since then, and one would think that the case of the editor of the *Freethinker* was sufficiently notorious.

Mr. Holyoake was not "clapped into gaol for Atheism." Atheism is not a crime known to the law of England. Mr. Holyoake was indicted, tried, and sentenced under the Common Law of Blasphemy, just like previous and subsequent "offenders." Nor is it true that "in those days first-class misdemeanants did not exist." William Cobbett hired his own apartment and paid for his own food and drink in Newgate. That was for a political press offence. Richard Carlile and Robert Taylor wore their own clothes in prison, boarded themselves at their own expense, spent their time pretty much as they pleased, and carried on their literary labors practically without interference. They were imprisoned as "blasphemers."

Mr. Holyoake's sufferings in Gloucester Gaol were real and severe enough. We are very far from wishing to suggest that they were not. But there is no need for inaccuracy and misrepresentation.

Mr. Stead asserts that Mr. Holyoake's Agnosticism "is not inconsistent with a passionate longing for, and an honest hope of, immortality, and a deep reverence and grateful recognition of the Word of God that finds expression in the Bible." Well, we have simply to say that we don't believe a word of it. Mr. Stead's authority for Mr. Holyoake's opinions is not good enough. The matter, however, is of considerable importance to a large number of Freethinkers, who, we believe, will look for some contradiction or confirmation on Mr. Holyoake's part. Meanwhile they would do well to reflect that Mr. Stead is not to be relied on in everything he says; indeed, he has more than once made his own wishes the measure of what he has called "facts."

A correspondent of the *New York Truthseeker*, now in the Orient, writes: "The Chinese are most tolerant about religions. The Christian missionaries, as soon as they made converts, began to quarrel among themselves, and to attack the institutions of the country. The Chinese were greatly offended and displeased with them. Liberty of thought and of press is recognised in this empire. Missionaries openly preach against Confucius and the customs of the country. They distribute freely religious tracts and the Bible. Some years ago a mandarin published a book against Christianity. One of the great Powers, at the

instigation of the missionaries, compelled the Pekin Government to dismiss and degrade the mandarin. If the Chinese were well informed about Europe, they would order translations of the works of Dean Stanley, of Bishop Colenso, of Coquerel, of Reville, of Strauss, of Harnack, and of other eminent theologians who criticised freely the Bible and Christianity. The great Powers could not make any objection to it.

Apropos of the Bishop of London's assertion that "it is a popular delusion that bishops are rich men," *Reynolds's* quotes from the *Sun* the following examples of how not to "lay up for yourselves treasures on earth": "Dr. Fraser, Bishop of Manchester, left £85,000 behind him; Bishop Wordsworth, of Lincoln, also left £85,000; Bishop Jackson, of London, £72,000; Bishop Jacobson, of Chester, £65,000; Bishop Baring, of Durham, £120,000; Bishop Sumner, of Winchester, £80,000; Bishop Wilberforce, of Oxford, £60,000; Bishop Auckland, of Bath and Wells, £120,000; Bishop Philpott, of Exeter, £60,000; Bishop Lonsdale, of Lichfield, £90,000; Bishop Davys, of Peterborough, £80,000; Bishop Maltby, of Durham, £120,000; Bishop Monk, of Gloucester and Bristol, £140,000; Bishop How, of Wakefield, £72,000; Bishop Turnell, of Brisbane, £66,000; Archbishop Thomson, of York, £55,000; Archbishop Benson, of Canterbury, £35,000; Archbishop Tait, of Canterbury, £35,000; and Bishop Stubbs, of Oxford, £50,000. 'These are but samples of the estates—in many cases independently of freehold property—left by disciples of Christ during recent years. As a matter of fact,' says the writer in the *Sun*, 'I have before me a list comprising 130 ecclesiastics whose total estates at death aggregated nearly twenty millions sterling.'

As a popular edition of *The Fatal Opulence of the Bishops* is about to be issued, its author, the Rev. Hubert Handley, M.A., has been interviewed. He argues that episcopal stipends of from £4,000 to £10,000 a year militate against the work of the Church. Certainly they seem to be incongruous with the Gospel of "Blessed are the poor," preached by the lowly carpenter of Nazareth and the fishermen and others of low estate who constituted his following.

Mr. Handley says his Church caters mainly for the well-to-do, and he attributes this to the social status of the Bishops, "who are grandees rather than ministers of Christ." He suggests the abolition of palaces and the title of lordship, and the reduction of episcopal incomes to £2,000 a year, and Mr. Handley has reason to think that his views have received a considerable amount of public support. That may be so, but the point is, How many bishops have accorded them any kind of assent? We are waiting for some bishop to renounce a third of his stipend, take up his residence in a little villa, and drop the title of Lord. Then we shall think that the Rev. Handley has achieved some measure of success.

John J. Lynch, a young Irishman, went to the United States two years ago, and entered a Catholic seminary to study for the priesthood. The other Sunday he entered the Bellevue hospital for the insane.

During a religious service at the camp-meeting in Laurel, Del., Samuel Baker fell dead while shouting glory to God.

Bad sanitation in the Catholic convent in Oldenburg, Ind., has resulted in about forty cases of typhoid fever among the inmates. The local health officer is investigating.

The *Pacific Unitarian*, in an editorial note, is reminded of a "devout but honest minister who, in his prayer, said: 'We dedicate this church to thee, O Lord, subject to a four-thousand dollar mortgage.'"

Three European Buddhists are now in Burmah with the avowed object of turning the Christian converts back to Buddhism, and two American women from Chicago are on their way there for a similar purpose.

Pawning a "praying shawl" is an odd illustration of pious impecuniosity. A Hebrew appealed to the magistrate at the Thames Police-court for assistance in recovering his "talith." He had pawned the "talith" after the Jewish holidays last year, and when he went to redeem it the pawnbroker said he had not got it. This is sad, in the sense that his ceremonial appeals to Jehovah are stopped. Why doesn't the Lord providentially interfere, so that communication may be restored?

Says a writer in the *Rock*: "From what I have seen of the Jesuit party in the Church of England, we are fighting against a great body of men who will stoop to anything so long as they gain power and control of mind, body, and estate. Their object is plunder!" We are not concerned to dispute this estimate. It is simply another example of the way in which these Christians love each other, and tell the truth about each other.

There is still some agitation on the question of the proposed

Irish University. Touching that subject, the *Rock* publishes an extract from what it calls "a Romish publication on higher education." It would have been better if the *Rock* had given the name of that publication, so that the extract and its context might have been verified. However, there is no reason to doubt that the quotation exists somewhere or other, and it is very remarkable indeed. In the face of it, one can hardly see how Romanists can clamor for the University.

These are the words: "We are far from meaning that ignorance is the Catholic youth's best preservative against intellectual danger, but it is a very powerful one nevertheless, and those who deny this are but inventing a theory in the very teeth of manifest facts. A Catholic destitute of intellectual tastes, whether in a higher or a lower rank, may, probably enough, be tempted to idleness, frivolity, sensuality, gambling; but in none but the very rarest cases will he be tempted to that which (in the Catholic view) is an immeasurably greater calamity than any of these, or all put together—viz., deliberate doubt on the truth of his religion."

So that, according to the Romish view, to doubt the truth of the Catholic religion is "immeasurably" worse than idleness, frivolity, sensuality, and gambling. This is reducing ethics to a rather low level. But it will be observed that it is the Catholic "destitute of intellectual tastes" who is safest from doubt.

As an example of the idiotic rubbish with which the *Sunday Companion* fills its columns, take the following: "At the conclusion of an address by the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, in a small market town, a man tottered from the public-house opposite the preacher's stand, and commenced to 'preach' in his own besotted way. He addressed himself specially to the minister, and fired at him a string of questions. 'What do you think of Bradlaugh, Voltaire, and other noted infidels?' were amongst the questions he asked. 'My good friend,' said Mr. Horne, 'the question is not what I think of those men—the question is, "What think ye of Christ?"' At the name of the Savior of mankind the drunken man paused, hung down his head, and, as thoughts of a former and better life flashed through and sobered his mind, he muttered: 'Yes—yes—I allus takes off my hat to that gentleman.' And, uncovering his head, the man walked quietly away—an illustration of the power of the Name which is above every name."

As Jesus is said to have walked on the shores of Galilee and preached, so the Rev. John Woods, an anti-Ritualistic lecturer, has walked and orated on the promenade at Llandudno. Visitors who were desirous of some peace and quietude have complained. Legal action has been taken, and recently the Rev. Woods was forcibly removed. This method being unsuccessful, the rev. gentleman has been fined for obstruction. He refused to pay the fine, and was removed to gaol for a month's imprisonment. He knew, of course, that his friends would pay the fine, which, we understand, they have done.

Albert Edward Keet, clerk in holy orders, has been remanded at Waterloo, near Liverpool, on the charge of stealing blankets, sheets, bed-quilts, and tea and deserts—worth to the value of over £4. He was further charged with feloniously receiving two post-office orders for 10s.

The Rev. Walter Pughe, who was recently fined at Bow-street for drunkenness, was brought up again charged with a similar offence. This time it was outside the National Gallery. He waved his hat, shouted, and stopped to address the mob; and very likely, as far as his utterances were concerned, was quite as rational as when in the pulpit. When, however, he reeled up against the railings, it was thought time to take him into custody. At the station he said his name was Thomas Jones. He was fined 20s.

The British Guiana Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society have decided, says *Reynolds's*, to engage a Hindoo colporteur to come from India to work among the East Indians in that Colony. They should make certain that the new Christian worker is thoroughly sound in the manner in which he expounds the Scriptures. That this is necessary is evident from the following version of a famous parable which was told to a congregation of Hindoos by a native evangelist: "There was a man going along a road; he was attacked by robbers, looted, ill-used, and thrown to the side of the road half dead. A Mullah came by, but paid no attention to him; similarly a Pundit; but a Christian followed. He helped him. Being a Christian he had liquor with him (!!), and restored him to consciousness."

A storm in a tea-cup has occurred in connection with Carshalton Parish Church. Several persons were summoned for laughing during service. It was admitted that the officiating cleric made several mistakes in reading out the Commandments. Eventually the Bench, apparently sick of the business, dismissed the summonses.

Apropos of the presence in London this week of several black bishops, the following amusing story is told: A certain gentleman invited several negro bishops to dine with him, but when the time came for dinner none of the guests appeared. After waiting several minutes, he questioned his butler as to the missing guests, mentioning that they were black clergymen. "I wish, sir," said the butler, "you had told me that before. Why, I've been turning them away as negro minstrels!"

Some of the religious papers have now found out what was drawn attention to last week in our columns—namely, the humorous and satiric character of the official guide to the forthcoming Church Congress at Brighton. The compiler is now said to "reveal the weaknesses of clerical and lay humanity with the innocent outspokenness of a 'terrible infant.'" It is further suggested that an appendix on "How a Church Congress is Got Up" had "better be kept from bishops and deans for fear of consequences." The comment of another religious weekly is that the guide "combines something from the cruet of cynicism with its solid fare of facts. Pepper and salt and vinegar are enough to make one choke and sneeze in mild astonishment." Surely there never was such an official guide to the Congress issued before.

What a falling-off was there! The Birmingham School Board, with all its traditions of national Secular education, has issued a hymn-book for use in the Board-schools of the city. Fancy the torrent of indignation that would have been raised on the Board twenty years ago if there had been a proposal to print for the schools a hymn-book containing such hymns as "Our Blest Redeemer, ere He Breathed"; "Savior, Blessed Savior"; "When, His Salvation Bringing," etc. Surely Birmingham has fallen on degenerate days.

Truth, as we know, is not at all necessary to missionary reports. The idea is not to state facts, but to paint a fanciful picture which will draw in the shekels. The London City Mission has just issued a report. Amongst other equally truthful statements, it says that, though the circulation of infidel literature is still considerable, "in many of the London districts infidelity is less widespread and less intelligently held by many who profess it than in days gone by."

This is news indeed, and, in view of the facts, shows that the wish is father to the thought. What the mission calls "infidelity" was never so widely spread in the metropolis as at the present time. As to whether it is as "intelligently held," we cannot allow the City missionaries to constitute themselves judges. It could never be so unintelligently held as Christianity by the so-called Christians the Mission believes itself to have roped into the fold in return for alms and doles.

The iron has entered the soul of Dr. Parker in regard to the teachings of "infidels." He can't let them alone, though, with his usual modesty, he expresses a lofty contempt for them. In a recent discourse in the City Temple, he said he refused to abandon his faith because some infidel had written "a ha'penny pamphlet" against it—which pamphlet, Dr. Parker added, he took care not to lend to anybody, believing that a man should be as kind to his neighbor at least as he is to himself. His "taking care" not to lend such a pamphlet to anybody suggests that he would be afraid of its effects. It doesn't seem very kind to a neighbor to act towards him as if he were a fool, not to be trusted to read a controversial treatise lest he should be led astray.

Miss Dolton, at a recent Sunday-school Conference in the Oxford district, "pleaded for humor" in the teaching of the young in the Sunday-schools, and protested against its depreciation as an unseemly instrument in spiritual work. There is something in this. The Bible contains plenty of unconscious humor, which could be used for the edification of the Sunday-school classes. Let the teachers procure Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* or *Bible Heroes* as a guide and text-book.

We doubt if there is a sillier paper in the world than Prophet Baxter's *Christian Herald*. Not that he is a fool. Oh dear no! He knows the fathomless imbecility of the ruck of orthodox Christians, and devotes himself to the profitable task of exploiting it. We understand that his weekly budget of pious folly has an immense circulation, running into hundreds of thousands. And what with this, and what with the end-of-the-world business, old Baxter must be doing remarkably well. Indeed, we guess he often rubs his hands, and chuckles to himself, over Carlyle's famous aphorism about the number and the mental acumen of the inhabitants of Great Britain.

Prophet Baxter's organ recently contained a smudgy picture of a Baptism in the river at Stockbridge, in Hampshire. The banks are lined with people watching a performance in the middle of the stream. A couple of bare-headed elderly gentlemen seem to be wrestling with each other, and the top-weight has nearly succeeded in getting his opponent

under water. According to the letterpress, this performance is a religious one; otherwise we should have taken it to be an item from the program of the local regatta.

It appears that this baptismal service was performed only last June by the Rev. H. A. Tree, of Broughton; who, we suppose, is the top-weight in the picture. Those who were ducked in the name of the Lord felt it was "like a taste of heaven below." But the profane spectators "laughed." Most of them remain alive unto this day, but one of them has gone to the Devil. He was "a swearing blasphemer, and given to drink"—of course! And with that as a good starting-point, the rest shall be told in the *Christian Herald's* own words, which are too good to be spoiled by a paraphrase: "A few days before the service, he made use of impious words regarding the ceremony, wishing those who were to take part in it were dead. Not many days passed when, as he was on the way to a public-house, he suddenly fell dead on the road."

There you are now! That is the stuff which hundreds of thousands of Christians read with gusto! It was for this that Jesus Christ took the trouble to come from heaven, get born without a father, and die almost without a friend. Was the game really worth the candle?

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." These words of Jesus Christ an old woman in New York interpreted recently as an invitation to suicide; so she plunged into the river at the foot of East Twenty-eighth-street, and was drowned.

"Glasgow Slum Evangelist" is the heading of a tract issued by John Forbes, 121 Drygate-street, Glasgow, who solicits subscriptions towards its free distribution. It is all about "instant relief and satisfaction from Jesus," but what the Glasgow slum-dwellers want is instant relief from the wretchedness of their earthly surroundings. A religious tract is about as medicinal for their malady as a bit of quack ointment would be on a cancer.

At the top of this precious leaflet we read, "See Roman Catholic Testament, published by James Duffy & Co." Evidently the slum-dwellers must avoid the Protestant New Testament if they want to find the right Jesus.

Canon M'Cormick is capable of talking great nonsense when he applies his mind, or what passes for such, to religious questions. Speaking at the Annual Convention of the Church of Ireland's Young Men's Society, he remarked that the late Charles Bradlaugh was once placed on the horns of a dilemma. He was asked "Are you a responsible being?" If he said Yes, he would imply a higher power to whom he was responsible; and if he said No, he would be in a very curious position. Thus the "famous Agnostic" was "completely silenced." Now it is not true that Charles Bradlaugh was an Agnostic. He repudiated the designation, and called himself an Atheist. As for the dilemma, it is the merest moonshine. A man can be responsible without being responsible to God. When a Christian—as sometimes happens—stands in a witness-box and commits perjury, and it is proved upon him, he finds out that his responsibility begins a long way short of heaven. If he has any doubt about it, a couple of years' imprisonment is apt to carry conviction.

A young couple applied to the rector of Rattlesden, Bury St. Edmunds, to marry them. He discovered, however, that their parents had cheated the Church by not having them baptised. Accordingly, he refused to tie them up unless they first went through the neglected ceremony; so they went off and got married at a less particular Baptist gospel-shop.

Belief.

I SAY there's no belief.

Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And sees it grow, and therefore trusts in God,
Is but a clod.

Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky,
"I trust in the Most High," from the Most High
Gets no reply.

Whoever honest is, and 'neath the snows
The future harvest sees, of God, he knows,
This nothing shows.

Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
And says, content, "I know that God will keep,"
Had better sleep.

—Boston Investigator.

C. C. J.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 29, Secular Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow: 11.30, "Anarchism and Assassination"; 2.30, "Mr. Hall Caine, the Pope, and Christian Democracy"; 6.30, "Good without God, and Happiness without Heaven."

October 6, Birmingham.

October 13, Hull.

October 20 and 27, Athenæum Hall.

November 10, Camberwell.

November 24, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 6, Athenæum Hall, London; 13, Camberwell; 17 (Thursday), Wood Green. November 10, Athenæum Hall, London; 24, Birmingham. December 8, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 15, Glasgow. 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.

W. YOUNG, sending cheque to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, says: "I regret that Mr. Foote should have had the indignity thrust upon him of appearing in the Bankruptcy Court. Both my wife and self receive a deal of pleasure and instruction through reading the *Freethinker*, and wish Mr. Foote and the cause he represents every success."

W. P. MURRAY.—Thanks for further subscription, also for the cutting from the *Daily Mail*. Our readers do us a considerable service by sending us such things. It is impossible, of course, that we can read every newspaper ourselves.

A. POWELL.—We appreciate your letter and sympathy. Your suggestion *re* addressing a lady in the chair at a meeting is, we think, hardly adequate. It would be all right as you put it in French, but "President" is an un-English way of addressing a temporary occupant of the chair. We are too busy just now to think the matter right out. Perhaps some of our readers will set their wits to work on the problem. "Mr. Chairman" sounds all right, but "Mrs. Chairwoman" sounds like two "bob" a day and your victuals. The question is what appellation should be used.

A. J. WHITE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops," which we are pleased to hear you find "humorous and fascinating."

A. G. SCOPES (Ipswich), having been away from home for some time, finds a pile of *Freethinkers* to read on his return, and after carefully going through our "Personals" he says the matter is so one-sided that he wishes he could send pounds instead of shillings to the Fund for Mrs. Foote.

J. R. EVANS and W. MORRIS.—Thanks for your good wishes. The storm isn't brewed yet that can sink us.

JAMES NEATE.—See acknowledgment in list. Thanks.

J. and E. WILSON.—It will always be a pleasure to recollect that we had so many friends in the hour of necessity.

M. ROGERS.—Thanks for copy of the *Review of Reviews*, although we had already seen it and written some paragraphs on the "Character Sketch" of Mr. G. J. Holyoake. We cannot think that Mr. Holyoake will allow the article to pass without a word of explanation.

G. NEWMAN wishes he could perform the water-and-wine trick and turn his shillings into pounds towards the Fund for Mrs. Foote.

H. GILL.—Please convey our thanks to your mother. We are always delighted to hear of Freethinking women.

D. KERR.—We are obliged for the cuttings.

VERITAS.—Glad to hear you were pleased with Mr. Watts's lectures at Sheffield.

W. NELSON.—See "Sugar Plums." We do not insert "reports" of lectures, but are always glad to devote a paragraph to special occasions.

A. B. MOSS.—Yes, the temporary indisposition is over, and Mr. Foote is quite himself again. Thanks for your good wishes.

J. ELLIS.—See paragraph. Mr. Foote is answering your query as to lectures by post.

JOHN HUME.—We regret the oversight. See this week's acknowledgments.

H. WALLER.—Matter for the *Freethinker* must not be sent to Miss Vance—who, by the way, has quite enough duties to attend to—but direct to the editor. We are pleased to hear that Mr. Moss had such a successful meeting at Ridley-road.

E. REDWOOD.—Glad to have the sympathy of Plymouth friends. We hope to see them all face to face before very long.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Letter *re* subjects received. We shall expect a copy of the bill in due course.

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

ADA SLACK.—We have read your letter with pleasure.

E. H. SEPPINGS and C. BURGESS (Rangoon).—We regret that we cannot decipher the third name on your letter. Miss Vance has handed over your remittance to the Fund for Mrs. Foote. "Mr. Anderson," you say, "may have done much secretly for Freethought, of which we are not aware, but we know Mr. Foote has done much more publicly, and our sympathy is, of course, enlisted on his side. We can only judge by results."

E. WEBB.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." We do not think that Léo Taxil rattled back again to Freethought, after rattling back to Christianity. The French Freethinkers would hardly have accepted him.

"SANSFOY," who is a medical man, writing to Mrs. Foote (with enclosure), says: "I send this as a small token of my admiration for your gallant husband. We out of the way Rationalists look up to him and admire his bravery and self-sacrifice in battling with the demon of bigotry, while such as I dare not avow our unbelief for fear of ruin and social ostracism. Such men as he are truly the salt of the earth." Mrs. Foote is not unnaturally pleased to read this, but Mr. Foote will be glad when the occasion for such compliments is a thing of the past.

E. and M. SIMPSON.—Thanks for your pleasant letter. We are glad to hear that you so enjoy reading the *Freethinker*, and that you are circulating copies of the *Age of Reason*. Mr. Foote hopes to be able to visit Huddersfield again during the winter.

D. P. SWEETLAND.—No doubt worry makes more grey hairs than work does; still, we are not of a worrying disposition. Thanks for the cutting.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Two Worlds—Western Morning News—Daily Mail—Torch of Reason—Discontent—Crescent—Lucifer (Chicago)—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought (Toronto)—Freethought Magazine—The Truthseeker (New York)—Accrington Advertiser—Public Opinion (New York).

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.

Personal.

It was announced in last week's *Freethinker* that Mr. George Anderson's solicitors had at length sent a reply to the communication forwarded to him, a considerable time ago, by the Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited; and it was promised that this reply, together with my comments, should be published in the present week's issue.

In order that the readers of this journal in general, and the members of the Company in particular, may thoroughly understand the matter, I have decided to reproduce the Board's communication. It ran as follows:—

The Board of Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, hereby resolves to place the following statement on its records, and to publish the same, if necessary, for the information of all concerned.

1. This Company was formed with Mr. George Anderson as one of its founders and one of its first Directors.

2. Mr. George Anderson was publicly announced, by Mr. Foote, the vendor and promoter, as having promised to subscribe 500 Shares in the undertaking; and that announcement, repeated week by week for months, undoubtedly influenced other persons who gave promises of support.

3. Mr. Anderson did not repudiate his announced promise at the time, but allowed the Company to be registered, and a large number of persons to apply legally for Shares, on the understanding that he intended to perform the said promise, and that the amount of £500, or some approximate sum, would be his contribution to the working capital of the Company.

4. Mr. Anderson only applied for 25 Shares in all, and he now appears to repudiate the promise made by Mr. Foote on his behalf and ostensibly with his authorisation.

5. Such a large amount of capital as £500 is of very great importance in so small an undertaking, and it is felt that the Shareholders of the Company have a serious interest in the matter. They have been deceived by someone, and it is necessary to decide by whom.

6. The Board, having investigated the subject, has come to the conclusion that Mr. Foote's announcement of Mr. Anderson's intention to take the aforesaid Shares in the Company was not only made in good faith, but was made with Mr. Anderson's authorisation; that authorisation being not merely verbal, but formal, in Mr. Anderson's own handwriting.

7. The Board, therefore, representing all the Shareholders, calls upon Mr. Anderson to redeem his pledge, and to contribute his honest share to the working capital of the Company. Should he not do so—which the Board can scarcely believe,

when he realises all the facts of the case—it will be the duty of the Board to convene a special meeting of the Shareholders, with a view to eliciting a general resolution on the question of Mr. Anderson's relations to the Company.

(Signed) CHARLES WATTS }
C. COHEN } Directors.
JAMES NEATE }
G. W. FOOTE (Chairman).
E. M. VANCE (Secretary).

After a careful perusal of this carefully-worded communication, the reader will be able to appreciate the following carefully-worded reply:—

23 Surrey Street,
Victoria Embankment,
London, W.C.
September 16th, 1901.

The Secretary,

The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited.

MADAM,—

Mr. Anderson forwarded us your letter of 27th August. We regret the delay which has taken place. You will perhaps accept our assurance that it is attributable to no intentional want of courtesy. The gentleman who advises Mr. Anderson has been away from London, and before leaving had so much on his hands that he found it impossible to investigate the questions in issue between Mr. Anderson and the Company. Mr. Anderson is now compulsorily detained in the Isle of Wight.

So far as our investigations have at present gone, we cannot advise Mr. Anderson that he is under obligation to increase his holding in the Company. If, however, the Directors take the contrary view, we think that the matter should at once be referred to the Court. It will be Mr. Anderson's wish to assist in obtaining a decision with as little delay and expense as may be reasonably possible, and we will accept service of process on his behalf.

If Mr. Anderson is under the obligation now suggested, it is unfortunate that action in the matter should have been delayed until Mr. Foote's default in his private obligations to Mr. Anderson compelled the latter to take steps the necessity for which he sincerely regretted, and the justification of which can be questioned by no impartial person acquainted with the facts. We say unfortunate, because it is difficult to resist the inference that Mr. Foote has used his influence to raise an issue between Mr. Anderson and the Company to prejudice the former in what is a private matter between him and Mr. Foote.

We are
Yours obediently,
BURTON, YEATES, AND HART.

Now I wish a few dates to be borne in mind, together with a few facts, before the reader proceeds to follow my comments.

The communication to Mr. Anderson, which he handed over to his solicitors, without saying a single word on his own account, was decided upon at the Board meeting held on July 17, and it was forwarded the next day. It was acknowledged by his solicitors, who promised a reply in "a few days." Meanwhile they applied for certain information. This they were told they could obtain by making an appointment with the Secretary (Miss Vance) at the Company's office. An appointment was made, and they were supplied with what they requested. They were shown the Company's first Prospectus, with Mr. Anderson's name upon it as one of the original Directors; also the allotments of Shares up to the date when Mr. Anderson applied for 25 Shares—all that he has ever taken of the 500 Shares which he authorised me to announce that he *would* take. What their object was I do not know, unless it was to gain time. What I do know is that the reply "in a few days" did not arrive. Accordingly, the Directors, at a meeting held on August 26, instructed the Secretary to send Mr. Anderson a final request for an answer to their communication. Mr. Anderson himself acknowledged this letter on a postcard, dated August 29. "I called on my solicitor to-day," he said, "leaving your note about an answer, but found him out of town for a few days, but no doubt he 'will with reason answer you'—Shakespeare." Allowing, therefore, the legitimacy of his solicitors' excuse, in their letter of September 16, the following facts are still perfectly clear—namely (1) that Mr. Anderson never troubled himself to see the documents I discovered, proving that he did promise to take the Shares, for saying that he had promised to take which he had called me a liar and even worse names; (2) that neither did his solicitors trouble themselves to make a closer inspection of these documents, which had been

shown to them by my solicitor on the rehearing of the Receiving Order against me; (3) that the reply promised "in a few days" did not arrive at the end of six weeks; (4) that the final request for a reply was not answered definitely until after the lapse of another three weeks—that is to say, until after my public examination, and the report of it in the newspapers.

What a contrast between the hurry with which I was forced into the Bankruptcy Court and the dilatoriness with which Mr. Anderson's obligation to fulfil his own public pledge was considered and attended to!

And now for the reply itself of Mr. Anderson's solicitors. They are constituted the guardians of his conscience as well as his business. I should scorn to place my conscience in the hands of my solicitor, although I have a perfect belief in his integrity. No man has a right to do anything of the kind. But that is what Mr. Anderson chose to do, and I believe it will not be considered creditable, even in view of his advanced age, and his "compulsory" detention in the Isle of Wight—whatever that may mean. However, his solicitors reply for him, and we must take what they have to say for what it is worth. Certainly it is no real reply to the Board's communication. They blandly waive all the details, and simply say that they cannot advise Mr. Anderson that he is under any obligation to increase his holding in the Company. Well, I never thought that they *would* do so. It was hardly to be expected of them. They assign no reason for their advice to their client, and this, of course, is legal prudence, but it is nothing more. Nor do they state whether they mean "moral" obligation or "legal" obligation—two things which are not always coincident. Their reply is "clever" enough from a merely legal point of view; on any other ground, it is the veriest shuffling.

Mr. Anderson's solicitors invite the Directors to appeal to "the Court"—that is, to commence an action against him. But an action will only decide his *legal* responsibility, not his *moral* responsibility; and it was his sense of honor to which the Directors appealed. Any other appeal would have been made through their solicitor. Whether such other appeal will be made now depends upon circumstances, and the Board does not intend to be rushed. An action against a man with a very long purse is only to be entered upon after the maturest deliberation.

With regard to the "delay" of the Board's action, which can only mean the delay of its communication to Mr. Anderson, I must say that his solicitors' complaint is disingenuous. Obviously, the Board was helpless until I discovered those documents in Mr. Anderson's own handwriting. Prior to that event it was only my word against his. How could the Board tell which of us was speaking the truth? There was, indeed, *some* corroboration of my word, for I had *published* Mr. Anderson's promise week after week in a journal to which he was a subscriber. But that was not decisive. It was the discovery of those documents that removed every doubt, and the Board came to a resolution at its very next meeting.

Mr. Anderson's solicitors are good enough to say (on his behalf) that I have used my "influence" to raise this issue between him and the Company in order to prejudice him in a private matter. But is not this the greatest nonsense? They know very well that it has been my contention, all along, that the £100 I paid Mr. Anderson after the formation of the Company was paid him on the condition that he would use it towards taking the promised 500 Shares. Moreover, *my* honor is at stake in this matter of the Shares, whether Mr. Anderson considers that his honor is at stake or not. I am under a moral obligation to the Shareholders, and I should be dishonorable indeed if I did not use my "influence" to secure for the Company the working capital which I led them to believe would be forthcoming.

Mr. Anderson told the readers of the *Freethinker*, when he was making me a bankrupt, that he was sorry for me. His solicitors follow his cue. They say that he "sincerely regretted" the step he took, but it was necessary, and this cannot be questioned by any "impartial person." Indeed! And who are the *impartial persons* that say so? They are Mr. Anderson's solicitors, who do his business for the usual consideration.

I need say no more. Everyone will appreciate *their* impartiality.

The only "justification" of Mr. Anderson's action would have been his intention and ability to prove that I was a scoundrel, or something so near it as to be utterly unworthy of the confidence of the Freethought party. That he has not done, that he cannot do. He had his opportunity at my public examination.

Considering that Mr. Anderson is a rich man, who is able to spare £15,000, according to his own advertisement, the Freethought party has had no difficulty in forming a judgment as to his action against me; and the statement that he was "sorry" for me only appeared like hypocrisy on the back of vindictiveness.

With regard to Mr. Anderson's final refusal (for such I must consider it) to take his promised Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company, unless he is compelled to do so by the law, I have no hesitation in saying that it is of a piece with his Shylock proceedings throughout this dispute. I said I would not mince my words at the finish, and I now declare that it was not I, but he, who deceived the Freethought party. He allowed, he authorised, a promise to be made in his name. He knew it would influence other and poorer men in deciding whether they would invest their money in the undertaking of which he was ostensibly a principal supporter. When they had invested their money, he did not fulfil his promise; and when he was reminded of it, he repudiated it with an air of indignation. I do not know if he hoped that *their* money, thus obtained, would pay what he considered I owed *him*. But of this I am certain—that, if such conduct is honorable, the vocabulary of ethics should be revolutionised and remodelled.

Wealth is bowed down to in the present age, but I make bold to tell a wealthy man that it can never be a virtue to deceive and betray.

This man appears to have imagined that his wealth gave him an assured predominance. He was mistaken. There are greater things in the world. He vowed to ruin me if I did not yield to his demands. He has not ruined me; nor has he disgraced me. He counted on my discomfiture before the bar of public opinion. I retire from it undishonored, and I leave *him* there to bear the opprobrium.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Fund for Mrs. Foote.

W. Young, £2; W. P. Murray, 3s.; A. Powell, 5s.; A. G. Scopes, 5s.; J. R. Evans, 2s. 6d.; W. Morris, 2s.; Albert Simson, 10s.; A. Addy and T. Wombwell, 3s. 6d.; A. Ball, 1s.; P. Rowland, 5s.; James and Agnes Wilson, 5s.; Mrs. Gill, 2s. 6d.; Dr. J. Laing, £2; Manchester Branch (collection), £6; G. Newman, 5s.; W. Longstaffs, 5s.; Indian Friends, per C. Burgess, 12s.; T. Williams, 2s.; J. H. Maden, 10s.; A Workman, 3s.; Sansfoy, 10s.; Ada Slack, 2s.; Stamps, 1s. Plymouth Branch: E. Redwood, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Pinkey, 5s.; Mr. Shepherd, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Harton, 6d.; Mr. Luccock, 6d.; Mr. Channing, 1s.; Miss Pinkey, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Rider, 1s.; A. C. Brown, 2s. 6d.; E. and M. Simpson, 2s.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE had good meetings and an enthusiastic reception at Manchester on Sunday. The evening meeting was a particularly "live" one, and the applause and laughter were worth hearing. The Committee had determined to give the local Freethinkers (who had not done so) an opportunity of subscribing on the spot to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, and the sum of £6 was collected. Mr. Foote was asked by Mr. Pegg, the evening chairman, to say a few words on the subject of his recent troubles. When he said that he did not consider himself dishonored, and that he meant to go on working as before for the Freethought cause, and if possible with fresh energy, the cheers were loud and prolonged. There was no mistaking the sentiments of the Manchester Freethinkers.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow, to-day (Sept. 29). No doubt there will be good meetings. As far as we can learn, his recent troubles have not lost him the support of the Glasgow friends, but rather the contrary. Before the evening lecture there will be some instrumental music, and a poetical reading, probably a Shakspearean one, by Mr. Foote.

On the following Sunday (Oct. 6) Mr. Foote delivers two lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Birmingham Town Hall. It takes a lot of people to fill that vast building, and we hope the local Freethinkers will do their utmost to advertise the meetings amongst their friends and acquaintances. The admission is free, with a collection towards defraying the expenses.

Mr. C. Cohen had a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. He occupies the same platform again this evening (Sept. 29), his subject being "The Problem of Criminals." We hope there will be another good gathering on this occasion.

Mr. F. Nelson informs us that Mr. Watts had good audiences on Sunday at Sheffield, that he was in his best vein, and that he was much applauded.

We are glad to hear that the new Liverpool Public Halls Company, Limited, is now a going concern with every prospect of success. The shareholders are not all N. S. S. people, but they are all Progressives. Some belong to the Independent Labor Party, some to the Fabian Society, and one is a Quaker. The N. S. S. Branch is a tenant under the Company. It opens its winter session on Sunday evening, October 6, with a social gathering. Mr. Cohen lectures on October 27, and Mr. Foote is trying to spare an early Sunday in December.

The Glasgow Branch sends us a copy of its Annual Report for 1900-1901. It is a healthy document. The year has been one of strenuous and fruitful enterprise. No less than sixteen courses of Special Lectures were included. Audiences were generally large, and in some instances overflowing. Freethought literature, including five hundred copies of the *Age of Reason*, has been extensively circulated. Open-air work has been started successfully on the Green, and it is noted that the public meeting in connection with the N. S. S. Conference was "attended by fully two thousand people." It is gratifying also to learn that the Branch is in a sound financial condition.

Mr. J. O. Bates, of Gloucester, has a good letter in the *Citizen* in reply to the Rev. J. H. Owen, who uttered a number of libels on Freethinkers, charging them, amongst other things, with advocating "Anarchical doctrines." Mr. Bates requests him to prove his statements. We believe he has also invited the reverend gentleman to come out on a neutral platform and meet some representative Freethinker in a public discussion. But we don't suppose Mr. Owen will be "having any." Mr. Bates's letter, in any case, is sure to do good.

Mr. Arthur B. Moss, who has delivered nearly forty outdoor lectures this season, had a very busy day on Sunday. He lectured to a large audience at Ridley-road, and answered two opponents, in the morning; in the afternoon he was busy in Finsbury Park lecturing and answering a courteous opponent, and in the evening he wound up by a vigorous address at Edmonton.

The *Boston Investigator* reproduces Mr. Foote's article on "Measuring Ingersoll." Mr. E. R. Woodward's article on "Christian Infamies" is reprinted in the *Toronto Secular Thought*.

One more new thing must be set down among Chicago novelties—the Church of Man. Condition of membership, we learn from an American exchange, is disbelief in the existence of a supernatural Being, or in anything which hitherto has passed for Christianity. Officers, however, are to be known by some of the old names, and ethical sermons are to be preached and the statements of the preachers discussed in open meeting. Any officer who has faith in the truth of the Scriptures, or in the existence of God, will be asked to retire from the body. The promoter of this new movement wants to call attention to *manology* rather than to theology, which, as he thinks, has been prominent altogether too long.

A society has been formed at Chatenay, in France, for the institution and maintenance of a yearly festival in honor of Voltaire. The members call themselves "La Société des Artistes." They intend, during the present autumn, to call a meeting of "the friends of liberty of conscience and of intellect to discuss the best means (1) for doing honor to the name and work of Voltaire; (2) for the wider extension of his ideas and principles; and (3) for fixing the day which shall be observed in future as the 'Voltaire Festival.'"

La Raison announces that the French Freethinkers are organising a popular festival in honor of Reason. It will take place November 10, and the co-operation of art, literature, and recreation will be called in.

Some interesting correspondence appears in the *Accrington Advertiser* arising out of a recent discourse by Dr. Downes

on Atheism. One of the writers who signs himself "An Accrington Atheist" challenges Dr. Downes to an oral or written debate, and, in the meantime, deals very effectively with some of Dr. Downes's statements. An exceptionally well-written and trenchant letter is contributed to the controversy by Mrs. Ada Slack, who adopts the pen-name of "Hypatia."

The Manchester "saints" should go to the Secular Hall in strong force this evening (Sept. 29), when a lecture is to be delivered by Dr. Martin, Medical Officer of Health for Gorton, on "Nature, Man, and God." It is a bold thing for a professional man in such a position to stand upon such a platform, and his courage should meet with cordial recognition.

How Can a Fellow be Saved if he's Born to be Damned?

THE names of the saved and the lost from the first were engraved

In a Book that is small, and a big 'un that's awfully crammed.

Said Christ: "If a fellow believes, he is bound to be saved." But how can a fellow be saved if he's born to be damned?

Joe Huggins, a "juggins," believed in the crucified Jew; He swallowed each word of the yarns that the Scriptures relate.

He died, and his soul left his body and heavenward flew, Where Peter is stationed on guard at the beautiful gate.

For Pete isn't down in the Book that is awfully crammed, Though Christ he denied, and he otherwise badly behaved; And, if anyone ought to, the "fisherman" ought to be damned. But how can a fellow be damned if he's born to be saved?

Joe Huggins's spirit impatiently pulled at the bell; Some moments elapsed, for the "keeper" was having a snooze;

He'd fallen asleep on the floor, and he lay where he fell, Overcome by the heavenly job or the heavenly "booze."

The sound of the bell woke the slumbering keeper at last; And, rubbing his eyes as he lazily rose on his feet, The "fisherman" shouted: "What ho, there, you lubber, avast!"

And various Scriptural words which I will not repeat.

"You seem in a deuce of a hurry, you son of a cook; Confound your infernal impertinence, what do you want?" "I want you to open the gate," muttered Huggins's "spook"; "I've washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and I'm straight from the font."

"Your name?" said the keeper. "Joe Huggins," said Huggins's "sprite."

"What ho, there, Recorder!" said Peter, "I want you to look

And see if he's down in the Black Book or down in the White, The heir to a corner in hell or a heavenly nook."

The volumes were fetched; the Recorder turned over each leaf

Till he came to the end of the Book that is awfully large. "Here's Huggins's name," he exclaimed, "but I find, to my grief,

He's a fellow that's doomed to be damned; you must give him in charge."

"Good God!" shouted Huggins, "consigned to the bottomless lake?

A Bible believer am I, and I ought to be saved. To Christ I'll appeal, for there surely must be a mistake."

And he wept, and he gnashed all his teeth, and he stormed, and he raved.

"Don't swear," shouted Peter, "you'd better be better behaved!

We go by the Book that is big and is awfully crammed. According to Christ, you're a fellow that ought to be saved; But how can a fellow be saved if he's born to be damned?"

ESS JAY BEE.

Chinese Criticisms of Christ.

Christ said: "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." This seems to me to be weakness with a vengeance. I think that it is highly unlikely that such meekness is for the good of society. Whosoever smites a man's cheek is a dangerous person, and needs no invitation to smite the left. A man who takes another's coat is a thief and a robber, and would take the cloak, if he could, without being asked. These are persons not fit to be permitted at large.—*Wu Ting-fang, Chinese Minister to the United States.*

Peter Bell and Primroses.

A CUE FROM WORDSWORTH.

"Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort all her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection."—EMERSON.

To Wordsworth, the meanest flower that blows could give thoughts which did often lie "too deep for tears." To Wordsworth's Peter Bell a yellow primrose was a yellow primrose, and it was nothing more. What more *would* you have? the potter would have said. Sure never man like him had roamed! For all his trudgings over Cheviot Hills and through Yorkshire dales, not by the value of a hair was heart or head the better. The pleasures of nature become more vivid as our internal store of association becomes richer, and we gain in sympathy and experience. A man does not get much out of a sunset, or a landscape, except what he carries with him. We draw not upon the outer, but the inner world, and the outer world only supplies an occasion or key to internal emotion.

The very young, as a rule, have no experience of the pleasure in question. The reason of which is not that Nature is less beautiful when the young look at her, but that they approach nature empty-handed, and, bringing little to her, get but little in return. We receive but what we give, as Coleridge wisely has it. To a shop-keeper, Ludgate Hill is more lovely than the eternal majesty of Mont Blanc.

Peter Bell has a large family, vulgar minds without refinement, whose perceptions are of that stunted nature that they would see nothing in the Pass of Thermophylæ but a gap for cattle; in the Forum, but a cowshed; in Stratford-on-Avon, but a small country town; and for whom St. Helena would be but a barren rock.

Take the example of a summer shower. To "smart" people showers are not beautiful. Their fine feathers are draggled in the rain, and that depresses their fine feelings. To them any kind of weather which does not suit their garden party, their picnic, their lawn-tennis, is, in their limited vocabulary, "a bore."

These creatures do not know the extreme beauty and fragrant delight of a summer shower. The fringe of some beautiful cloud, the nursling of summer winds, comes and slakes the great dusty, thirsty earth, and silences for a little the song birds which come hopping out to sing on its skirts with refreshed notes. To the eye that can really see nature, and is not, like Methodism, always turned upon self, there is a beauty in all sorts of weather.

Storm has grandeur and ruggedness; frost is in league with eternal silence; snow makes a marble cast of the familiar features of earth. But all these have some undercurrent of discomfort or fear to accompany them in the mind. The storm which shakes the window-panes, and which turns every corner into a Pan's pipe to whistle on, and every forest into a great organ to play Terror on, will not let you be forgetful of the winds' hunting-ground, the sea, and their shuddering quarry, the scudding ships.

The frost and snow, too, are hard masters to the poor. But the shower that comes athwart the sunshine, and may go away looped in a rainbow, is all-beautiful, and has no suggestion of pain or trouble. The flowers are all waiting for it. The grasses hold up their heads. The dust-cloud, which went before the air along the whole of the white roads like a wood-shaving before a plane, is laid. The hedgerows are washed green again, and the sun comes out, and shines with double splendor. The greyness has passed, and every drop the shower has left on leaf or stem or flower is lighted up, and burns a little fairy lamp.

The very air is better for the shower; it is new-washed air. The pestering insects which made it hum an hour ago have been driven away. There is a clean, fresh feeling in every breath you draw. All is done by the shower which glistened down to earth in drops or streaks. But the air is full of a delicious fragrance, either of the earth itself or of the flowers that grow in it. The skyscape is more beautiful on a day of showers than on a day relentlessly blue, when every outline cuts the air with the precision of a photograph. There are great white clouds about—

Wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind.

One can hear a gladder murmur in the streams, which were almost dry, and which lap the few drops of the shower and carry them away singing. Do not be content to look at the shower through the streaks on a window-pane, but go out into it. It scarcely wets, though it seems so heavy, but it is sweet and refreshing. To hear all nature sigh at the relief it brings, and to hear it whispering comfort to all the parched bushes and trees and flowers, is wholesome music for the mind.

We may say of the love of nature what Shakespeare says of another love, that it

Adds a precious seeing to the eye.

And we may say also, upon the like principle, that it adds a precious hearing to the ear. This and imagination, which ever follows upon it, rescue us from the deafening babel of common cares, and enable us to hear the many voices of earth and sky. The starry orbs sing to us: the brooks talk to us: the birds carol to us. To quote Milton:—

The gentle gales,
Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
Those balmy spoils,

Between the primrose of a Peter Bell and the primrose of a Wordsworth, what a difference in point of productiveness! Between the plodding of a sexton through a churchyard and the walk of a Thomas Gray, what a gulf! What a distance between the Bermudas of a shipbroker and the "Bermoothes" of Shakespeare! The wondrous isle—

Full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not—

the isle of Caliban, of Ariel, of Ferdinand and Miranda. Such are the discoveries which the poets make for us; worlds which rival that of Columbus:—

Magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

MIMNERMUS.

Reply of a Secularist to a Member of the Labor Church who had Written Asking Him to Join the Church.

[The Labor Church aspires to become the Universal Church of Humanity; but its first principle is "God is in the Labor Movement," and it asserts that the Labor Church Movement is an essentially religious one.]

MY DEAR SIR,—Thanks very much for your kind letter, with its generous invitation to an awful heretic to join your band of reformers. I am sincerely in sympathy with every movement that stands for progress and reform, and especially with those whose chief concern is social and humanitarian effort. The ideal of a "Universal Church of Humanity" is captivating to the imagination. The daring and catholicity of the idea are grand, and the very expression is an inspiration. But it is clear that the Labor Church, "as at present constituted," will never be that Church. Some swimmers never venture without a rope round them. They will go a long way—but the rope is there. If only they would cut the rope! The Labor Church goes a long way towards the grand ideal; but if it is to "get there" it will have to cut the rope. Eliminate the theologic element, relegate Socialism to an equal place with other great human problems, do away with the "class" distinction at present suggested by the very name of the Church, by calling it "The Church of Humanity," and the road towards the goal will be clear.

Gladly would I join such a Church—a Church whose whole work would be summed up in the words of Thomas Paine: "The world is my country; to do good is my religion." But I could not conscientiously join the existing Labor Church, because such action would necessarily signify that I accepted its "basal principles," the very first (viz., "God is in the Labor Movement") of which is a "dogmatic theologic statement" to which I could not subscribe, because I am agnostic to Theism. And if the Church is, as you say, a "mixed community," such Theistic declaration ought not to stand in its Constitution. The Theistic element in the Church, and its mild form of Christianity, is not sufficient to attract or satisfy the ordinary religious folk. To them the "religious" element in the services is a very tame affair, and a poor substitute for the more ornate devotions to which they are accustomed. But it is sufficient to debar honest non-Christians from coming into full fellowship with the Church. Therefore, what good is it? By all means let the individual members of a Church of Humanity be and think what they personally like; but the Church that is to unite Humanity should itself be uncommitted one way or the other. Again, if the Church is Theistic, not to say Christian, why is prayer ignored in the services?

That is not logical. The Church seems to "want to get away" from the religious atmosphere, yet dare not go altogether. The rope again.

A "new name," an "open membership," a really human and secular hymn book, equal prominence to "other great world teachers" as now given to Christ, an equal study of all human problems and matters of human interest, instead of a predominance of Socialism as at present, and I am with you heart and soul. Until I find that Church, I will help yours from the outside as being the nearest to my ideal.—With all good wishes, very faithfully yours,

A. E. E.

Correspondence.

POLITICAL ASSASSINATION AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The lamentable death of President McKinley has once more emphasized the lesson that no ruler can afford to neglect to guard himself against the murderous attack of the notoriety-hunter, the lunatic, and the fanatic. The hysterical Press is, of course, calling down *anathema maranatha* upon "Anarchism," just as it used to howl about Nihilism, and as it formerly howled against Jacobinism. The clergy, as usual, seek to improve the occasion, and obscure the real issues, by ascribing the crime to "unbelief." Both parties carefully avoid indicating the source of political assassination; for that source is the Bible. In the Old Testament Ehud, the son of Gera, figures as the prototype of the political assassin. Ehud gained access to his victim by professing to bear a secret message of importance—a plan which has been followed by other murderers, although Czolgosz preferred to take Judas Iscariot as his pattern. As Ehud was the male assassin, so Jael was the female—"Blessed shall she be among women." If we turn to the Apocrypha, we find the whole Book of Judith written to celebrate a political assassination of the most atrocious character. Therefore, with Ehud, Jael, and Judith as praiseworthy ideals, political assassination must follow, and has followed. The age which was most concerned with religious questions saw the rapid murders of William the Silent, Henry III. of France, and Henry of Navarre, not to speak of minor assassinations. The Bible is the only religious book which approves of political assassinations. The Koran has no such approval, nor has the Buddhist Tripitaka, nor the writings of Confucius. Therefore upon the Bible must rest the ultimate guilt of having prompted the Belgian pro-Boer who attempted the life of the then Prince of Wales or the Bohemian Anarchist who has destroyed the American President. Sipido and Czolgosz drew their inspiration from the same fount.

CHILPERIC.

The Potter and the Pot.

(From "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.")

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramadan away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.
Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood upon the floor and by the wall;
And some loquacious Vessels were; and some
Listened, perhaps, but never talk'd at all.
Said one among them: "Surely not in vain
My substance of the common Earth was ta'en
And to this Figure molded, to be broke,
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."
Then said a Second: "Ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."
After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make:
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry;
What! did the hand, then, of the Potter shake?"
Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot—
I think a Sufi pipkin—waxing hot:
"All this of Pot and Potter. Tell me, then,
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"
"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots he marr'd in making. Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."

Old Merchant—"Where is your reference?" Tommy Tucker (who wants a job as office-boy)—"Here's one from my Sunday-school teacher, sir." Old Merchant—"We don't want you to work on Sundays. Give me a reference from somebody who knows you on weekdays."—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Problem of the Criminal."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("The Victory," Newnham-street, Edgware-road): October 3, at 8.30, Monthly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christian Charity."

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, G. Green.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, G. Green.

PECKHAM RYE: No lecture.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Women."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, W. Heaford, "Old Idols and New Ideals."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, R. P. Edwards, "Atheism and Morality."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): R. P. Edwards—11.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?" 3.30, "The Unknown God."

REGENT'S PARK (near the Fountain): 6, S. E. Easton, "Jesus Christ."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Faith, Hope, and Charity"; 7.15, A lecture.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Fruits of Christianity."

VICTORIA PARK: 3.15, C. Cohen, "Our Father."

KINGSLAND (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Slavery."

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 17 Little Horton-lane): 3, S. H. Pollard, "The Philosophy of Selfishness"; 7, H. Percy Ward, "The Delusion of Spiritualism."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote—11.30, "Anarchism and Assassination"; 2.20, "Mr. Hall Caine, the Pope, and Christian Democracy"; 6.30, "Good without God, and Happiness without Heaven."

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Dr. Martin (Medical Officer of Health, Gorton, Manchester), "Nature, Man, and God."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday evening—Musical and other recitals.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C COHEN, 241 High-road, Leyton.—September 29, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum Hall. October 6, Glasgow; 13, Leicester; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne. November 3, Birmingham; 17, Athenæum Hall.

H. PERCY WARD, 1 Victoria-chambers, 17 Little Horton-lane, Bradford.—September 29, Bradford. October 6, Bradford; 13, Birmingham. November 3, Sheffield; 10, Huddersfield. December 15th, Failsforth; 22, Birmingham.

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