

THE Freethinker

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A Job for Jesus.

A GOOD many Christians will regard this title as blasphemous. But is it not the fashion, in this age of sentimental piety, to talk of Jesus as a (nay, *the*) working man? And is not every working man familiar with the word *job*?—unless he belongs to the class who are always *looking* for work because they never want to *find* it. We do not scruple, therefore, to speak of a Job for Jesus. We also beg to say where he may find it. It is waiting for him in South Africa. Two rival races are slaughtering each other out there. They have been playing this bloody game for two years, and they may be playing it for another two years, as far as anyone can tell. It is a frightful tragedy. But you never get undiluted tragedy in this world. The clergy promise us that in the next. Comedy always gets mixed up with the tragedy. And the cream of the comedy of this South African tragedy is that both sides are Christians. Both accept the same Bible as the Word of God, both acknowledge the same alleged Deity, both worship the same Savior, and both pray to the same "gentle Jesus" before cutting each other's throats. Now if anybody in particular is concerned to stop this fatal farce it is surely Jesus Christ himself. His reputation is most intimately affected. The present generation of Britons and Boers will all die in time, and their responsibility will end with them. But *his* responsibility will continue. And it must be remembered that he has made vast pretensions. He called himself the light of the world. He claimed to be the true shepherd of mankind. He inspired others to call him the only Savior. He authorised them to say that when he was born it was announced by celestial heralds that a new era was inaugurated of peace and goodwill. We repeat, then, that his reputation is at stake. He is allowing his devotees to ruin his character. If he has any energy or self-respect left he will assert himself. We are told that he has the power; indeed, that with him all things are possible. We are entitled, therefore, to look for his self-vindication. A voice far more potent and commanding than that of generals and statesmen should be heard in South Africa. The Son of God (or God the Son, as you please) should dictate peace. He who commanded the winds and waves, and they obeyed him, should roll back the red tide of war; and, by his irresistible authority, restore prosperity and happiness to a desolate and miserable land.

There are some fifty thousand men of God in this country alone: priests, ministers, pastors, preachers—call them what you will. They are the great Black Army. Their professed business is to fight the world, the flesh, and the Devil. They pretend to be the custodians and disseminators of a higher morality than that of mere reason and experience. Surely it is their duty to supplicate their Savior to terminate a deadly outrage on civilisation. If he is forgetful, they should refresh his memory; if he is slothful, they should stimulate his activity; if he is asleep, they should rouse him from his slumbers. Perhaps they will tell us that this is shameful blasphemy. But we reply that similar "blasphemy" was piety in the mouth of Elijah, when he taunted the priests of Baal with the inattention, the supineness, and the somnolence of their god.

While the ministers of the religion of love, and their worthy deity, are seeing what they can do—if, indeed, they condescend to be anything *but* weary in well-doing—it would be well if other persons were to give this South African trouble their serious attention. We are not meddling with politics—certainly not with party politics. Indeed we have no great regard for politicians of any school, nor much admiration for their labors. A statesman, of course, is another matter. But real statesmen are few and far between. Was it not Ingersoll who defined the difference? A statesman (he said) wants to do something for the people, and a politician wants the people to do something for him. But one need not be either the one or the other to tremble at the thought of children dying by the thousand in concentration-camps, to feel nauseated at the perpetual record of death and wounds in warfare, or to sadden at the thought that so many brave men perish prematurely in a quarrel that common sense and humanity might easily have prevented.

There is a general movement amongst the sensible and humane people of this country. It is felt that, whether the war ought ever to have begun or not, it ought to have been ended long ago. It is recognised that the British Government made a great mistake when its troops occupied Pretoria, in not definitely stating its terms of peace. Unconditional surrender is no terms at all. It simply means, Lie down and let me stand over you—I will tell you the rest afterwards. Nor is it wisdom to boggle over the question of amnesty. There must be amnesty some time in South Africa, and it may just as well be now. What man with any sense of honor in his own breast could expect the Boers to abandon to our mercy the men who have faced death at their side? "Rebel" was always a term of legal pedantry. The man who risks his life in another man's quarrel, with no hope of gain to himself, deserves some other treatment than to be branded as a criminal and shot like a spy. Politicians may talk absurdities as long as they please, but every soldier respects courage even in an enemy. For this reason, amongst others, we would rather see the fate of South Africa in the hands of Lord Kitchener than in those of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. The old Romans, who possessed the genius of empire, would have had no hesitation on this point.

Party spirit in politics is capable of anything. Personally, we do not believe that British officers, at the instigation of the British Government, have deliberately killed Boer women and children by means of starvation and disease. The thing is incredible. The horror of the concentration camps, like the burning of Boer homesteads, was the necessary sequel of the policy (which was *no* policy) of unconditional surrender. We should have stated our terms and arranged for their discussion; and if no way of peace could have been accepted by both sides, the rules of civilised warfare should have been strictly observed in the subsequent fighting, and the Boers left (like all belligerents) to look after their own women and children.

By all means let the concentration camps be shifted, and no reasonable expense be spared to make them healthy. But even then the death rate will be high because the conditions of life are so abnormal. The great thing to do is to bring the war itself to an end. This will not be done by blackguarding the British nation, but by a persistent demand that our Government shall be reasonable. That is the right word. *Reasonable*. When men are reasonable there will be no more fighting.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Suicides' Parlor.

A PARAGRAPH recently appeared in an American journal stating that a Chicago specialist has asked permission to establish a "suicides' parlor." In this apartment those wishing to die may kill themselves comfortably on payment of a fee!

There is something in this idea, especially in the word "comfortably." It may be a grim joke, and obviously the project could hardly be carried out without police interference. But it suggests possibilities to future generations.

There is always this fact confronting us: We are born into the world without our will, and if we don't like the world—if it is unkind to us, if it flouts or starves us, there is no reason why—apart from any special and private domestic reasons—a person with the right of individual action, thereby meaning an absence of responsibility in regard to others, should remain in the world longer than he chooses. So much may be asserted without the possibility of successful dispute.

The outlook on suffering suggested to Seneca nothing better as a solatium than the liberty of suicide. "He who denies that we may forcibly end our life does not see that he is closing the path of liberty. The eternal law has done nothing better than that it has given us one entrance to life, but many exits."

The English law which makes it an indictable offence to commit or attempt to commit suicide is pure nonsense. It can only punish a person if he is stupid enough to be unsuccessful in the means which he adopts to "shuffle off this mortal coil." If he has had sense enough to take effective measures, the law cannot touch him. The worst that could happen would be a verdict of *felo de se* by a thick-headed jury, which would not affect him—nor any of his relatives who had any sense.

But without offering any arguments in defence of suicide—which act more often than not is a cowardly escape from obligation or the result of silly sentimental hysteria—it is worth while considering this American project of a lethal chamber. If established, it would have to be conducted on strictly systematic lines. Once started, its operations would be a thousand times more interesting than any of the stupid popular sensational novels with which it is our misfortune to be afflicted.

Some kind of register would have to be kept, and keen official oversight preserved. A staff of assistants would have to be engaged—if only to take away the defunct.

We can imagine what would occur.

LOVE-SICK YOUTH (*entering timidly, and approaching the counter*): If you please, miss, I wish to commit suicide.

MISS (*behind the counter*): Certainly. Your name, sir? And address.

L. S. YOUTH: There's my card.

MISS: Now, how would you like it? We could give you prussic acid—which we guarantee to touch the spot. Our electrocution arrangements are not quite fixed up. Ah, you would like that! I know you would. But, of course, if you are going to be poisoned or hanged or shot in the head or stabbed in the heart, you wouldn't afterwards be able to take on our patent electrocution apparatus. Sorry it isn't ready.

L. S. YOUTH (*sadly*): So am I. But I have some religious scruples, and I—

MISS: Oh, religious. We have religious attendants on the place, of course. Roman Catholic or Protestant?

[*Proceeding to touch electric bell.*]

L. S. YOUTH: I rather think I won't have anybody. I have a Prayer-book in my pocket. It was given to me by *her*.

MISS: *Her!* So it's a love affair. Well, really—how shall I express it?—we hardly like to take in love affairs, don't you know. They are so very silly, and cause trouble.

L. S. YOUTH: Do you think so?

MISS: Yes, our directorate are very much averse to them. These love suicides get into the papers, and the publicity does us no end of harm. Now, if you had religious mania we'd strangle you at once, and with pleasure. You could go into that room over there

(*pointing*), and in five minutes you'd be dead. Shall I show you in?

L. S. YOUTH (*shrinking*): I think not. I wish to write a few letters first.

MISS: Oh, we have provision for that. But—excuse me, you haven't said how you would prefer to die. Laudanum or opium is a long thing. What do you say to a stiff dose of strychnine? You could have a priest by the side of you all the time, and we have a harmonicum, which will play lovely hymns till you are dead; and we have a nice, sweet verse, which we place type-written on each coffin:—

How happy every child of grace
Who knows his sins forgiven!
This earth, he cries, is not my place;
I seek my place in heaven!
A country far from mortal sight;
Yet O! by faith I see
The land of rest, the saints' delight,
The heaven prepared for me.

L. S. YOUTH (*wisfully*): That seems rather nice. Will you be there when—when I'm dying?

MISS: I come in after the patients are dead and strew flowers upon them.

L. S. YOUTH: Couldn't you come before?

MISS: Well, we are rather busy just now. There's a defaulting bank director waiting for a dose, and a deacon wants to die comfortably. And you wouldn't believe that they change their minds so quickly! We've had respectable gentlemen—highly respectable gentlemen—come in and say: "I want to commit suicide. What would you recommend—the least painful way? And let it be quick." Well, I have said an overdose of morphia is a good thing, because, usually, your insurance money can be drawn afterwards. But what about having your brains blown out—comfortably, of course? We have several people on the premises who would do it with pleasure, and a dead certainty.

L. S. YOUTH: It's just occurred to me that I must see some friends before I take any of your prescriptions. I belong to the Apocalyptic Christians. Ever heard of them?

MISS: We had a religious chap come here. He thought he'd like to have his throat cut with a razor. One of our assistants did it. I should recommend it to you. Will you have it? Say the word, and I'll touch the bell. We have plenty of flowers to place on you afterwards, and a beautiful purple pall with a gold-embroidered cross to throw across your coffin. By the way, I will take your fee. And I must ask you to leave the names of the people who are to remove you. If you have time before you die *do*, just to oblige me, dictate a testimonial that you departed comfortably, and we'll publish it, with a portrait, as an advertisement.

L. S. YOUTH: Don't you think this is rather a cold-blooded, hideous kind of thing?

MISS: Yes, it may be so. But I have three very troublesome persons on my books—one is very anxious to have his head bashed in. When I have attended to him—I mean handed him over to some of our attendants—I shall be free for the night.

L. S. YOUTH: Very well, I think I'll wait for you *outside!*

FRANCIS NEALE.

The Theory of Immortality.

THE principal attraction of Christianity is, no doubt, its teachings in reference to a future life; yet it is a subject with which are associated errors of the most glaring kind. The belief in the Christian doctrine of immortality is based solely upon emotion, not upon reason. Now, nothing can be more fallacious than to take for granted that a belief is true because it affords emotional gratification. As Haeckel observes in his *Riddle of the Universe*:—

"Emotion has nothing whatever to do with the attainment of truth. That which we prize under the name of 'emotional' is an elaborate activity of the brain, which consists of feelings of like and dislike, motions of assent and dissent, impulses of desire and aversion. It may be influenced by the most diverse activities of the organism, by the cravings of the senses and the muscles, the stomach, the sexual organs, etc. The interests of truth are far from promoted by these conditions and vacillations of emotion; on the contrary, such circumstances often disturb that reason, which alone is adapted to the

pursuits of truth, and frequently mar its perceptive power. No cosmic problem is solved, or even advanced, by the cerebral function we call emotion" (p. 18).

In these words of Haeckel we have an explanation, not only of many of the delusions which exist as to the continuity of life "beyond the grave," but also of the fallacies pertaining to what are termed the religious aspirations.

The reasonable course to adopt in dealing with the question of man's alleged immortality is, that those who affirm its reality should give their reasons for such an affirmation, and endeavor to answer the objections urged against their contentions. It is also the duty of those who are unable to believe in immortality to state the grounds of their disbelief, and to indicate the inconclusive nature of the arguments put forward by their opponents. It being a subject upon which absolute certainty, so far as our knowledge is concerned, is impossible, dogmatism should be avoided. Those who desire to arrive at a rational conclusion upon the question should remember that to believe a thing to be true does not make it so. If it did, not only would Christians have to admit that Secularism was true, but they would have to grant that the lowest forms of theological superstitions were facts. This would, of course, destroy the supposed veracity of Christian claims. It is also necessary to understand that there is a marked distinction to be observed between belief and knowledge. We may, and do, have faith in that of which we have no real or actual knowledge, for we are compelled to exercise such faith in every-day life upon numerous topics. The point to be remembered is that, if we are judicial or rational, we shall be careful that our belief is not opposed to knowledge; but if we are wise, we shall always be on our guard against taking for granted that which is highly improbable, to say nothing of being impossible.

Now, the Freethinker regards immortality of conscious beings as a subject that, by its very nature, and by the very nature of our mentality, it is impossible to give a definite opinion upon either *pro* or *con*. Still, he considers that, from a reasonable and scientific standpoint, there is no evidence to justify the dogmatic assertion that there is "a life beyond the grave." Before we can accept as true the allegation that we shall continue to live after passing through the ordeal termed death, we must have some knowledge of the conditions of that supposed existence, and whether or not they are suitable to mankind. But, up to the present, we have not met anyone who possesses the required knowledge, and, therefore, no information is forthcoming as to the nature of a future life. If there is presumptive evidence in favor of a future life, the most that can be reasonably argued is that there *may be* such a life. Of course, we do not contend that a visit to the planet Mars would be necessary before we could believe that life existed there, but we do assert that some kind of communication with the inhabitants would be necessary before we could positively allege that human life was there. It is not unreasonable to demand at least reliable testimony in matters beyond our experience. It is one thing to have a mind open to conviction, and quite another to be convinced. When similar evidence is presented in favor of a future existence to that which obtains for the operation of natural law throughout the universe, and when such evidence can be tested by the ordinary rules of observation and experiment, the question of a life beyond the grave will deserve serious consideration.

Many centuries ago an Oriental sage is said to have asked: "If a man die, shall he live again?" Although numerous generations have passed away since the supposed query was submitted, no definite or satisfactory answer has been given. It is a problem to the solution of which the philosopher has devoted his wisdom, the poet has dedicated his poetry, and the scientist has directed his attention, and yet it remains unsolved. Secularists, therefore, agree with Thomas Carlyle when he said: "What went before and what will follow me I regard as two impenetrable curtains which hang down at the two extremities of human life, and which no man has drawn aside." An able American preacher and writer, Mr. Hugh O. Pentecost, puts the case thus:—

"The Freethinker looks at death just as it is, so far as we know anything about it—the end of life. He does not hope nor expect to live after death. He admits that he

may, just as there may be a planet in which water runs up-hill. He therefore maps out his life with absolutely no reference to alleged heavens or hells, or to any kind of spirit-world. He goes through this world seeking his own welfare, and knowing, from the open book of history and his own experience, that he can promote his own welfare only by promoting the welfare of every other man, woman, and child in the world, knowing that he cannot be as happy as he might while anyone else is miserable. He knows that death is as natural as birth. He knows that, as we were unconscious of our birth, we will be unconscious of our death. He knows that, if death puts a final end to him as a person, as science seems to prove, it cannot be an evil. He suffered nothing before he was; he will suffer nothing if he ceases to be. He will not even know that he is dead."

This is the Secular position. With us realities are of more importance than fanciful speculations, and truth of greater value than wild conjectures. We are aware that theologians assert that there are two kinds of truth—one within the reach of reason, and the other above it; but we cannot believe this theory, as no sufficient reason has been given to justify us in accepting such an assertion. In reference to such posterous claims, we ask the following pertinent question:—If there is a truth above or beyond the reason of man to comprehend, how can it become known? Of course our inability to understand such a truth does not prove its non-existence, but it disposes of our relation to it, and consequently it is no truth to us.

The popular theory of man's immortality involves the belief of conscious existence after death; or, as some put it, the continuity of consciousness. Now, it has not yet been shown how consciousness can continue in the absence of those conditions that we know are necessary to its manifestations. We have evidence that life is indispensable to consciousness, and that organisation is necessary to life. It would be interesting, therefore, to learn how these two effects—life and consciousness—could be manifested when the causes of such manifestations are gone. Immortality in man implies more than continuity of life upon the globe; it means the continuation of life in the same individual, a condition of which we know nothing. Death is a state the very opposite to that of life; both, therefore, cannot be conceived as being one. A living-dead man is a contradiction, for it is a self-evident fact that if man always lived he would never die. Death probably occurs every moment, but we have no instance of the perpetual continuation of one living individual. A body in action must be present somewhere, but when it has disappeared in the grave, and gone to ashes, it is no longer an organised body. It cannot act where it is, in the grave, for there its functions have ceased; it cannot act elsewhere, because it is not there to act. This appears as self-evident as that the whole is greater than the part. The allegation, therefore, that consciousness continues after death, is purely arbitrary.

While we do not deny a future state of existence, for the reason that it is unphilosophical and presumptuous to deny that of which we know nothing, we *do* deny the validity of the evidence and the conclusiveness of the reasons given in support of the theory of immortality. In future articles we shall give ample evidence to justify this denial.

CHARLES WATTS.

The Pathology of Religion.—III.

THE part played by morbid nervous states in the development of religion is seen still more clearly by a brief glance at the lives of prominent religious leaders. So far as the Old Testament affords any biographical data, there is unmistakable evidence of mental unsoundness with most of its "inspired" characters. Such behavior as that of Ezekiel, who sketched the city of Jerusalem on a tile, and lay for three days on his right side and three days on his left side besieging it, eating meanwhile barley-cakes baked with cows' dung; or of Hosea, who believed himself commanded by God to take a prostitute for a wife; or of Isaiah, who, on the same authority, walked naked about the streets of Jerusalem, is open to but one rational interpretation. No wonder that many of the people around regarded these prophets as mad. It is

only fresh evidence of the narcotising influence of religious beliefs that modern men and women can read of such things and not come to a similar conclusion.

In the New Testament the evidence is quite as conclusive. I have already referred to Paul, whose conversion was as clearly due to a nervous affection as it could possibly be. The large part played by demoniacs in the Gospels is also worthy of notice. There is not to-day the least doubt as to the real nature of these cases of demoniacal possession. Epilepsy or insanity will cover all the instances named, and there is no need to drag in a supernatural explanation when a natural one lies so near at hand. Mary Magdalene, the first one who brought tidings of the resurrection, and who also saw and conversed with two angels within the tomb, had been delivered of seven devils—that is, was an insane subject; and it is at least permissible to speculate upon how much of her "vision" was due to the workings of an unsound brain. In the case of Jesus, Dr. Jules Soury has gone so far as to indicate the precise mental disease with which he was afflicted, and is of opinion that, had he not been put to death, his malady would have developed to perfectly unmistakable dimensions.*

Enough has already been said concerning the practices of the early Christians to show how clearly their visions and feelings of inspiration were due to self-inflicted penances and tortures. But there is one other feature of the religious or monastic life that needs pointing out at this juncture. A very prominent characteristic of all great religious teachers has been their encouragement of habits of seclusion, and the emphasis laid on the value of a solitary life. Even when the completely ascetic life has not been commended, there has been the advice to retire into solitude in order to commune with God, or meditate upon his existence. The religious feelings thrive least where social habits are strong, and, conversely, religion or mysticism of some form is a strong feature of nearly all who cut themselves adrift from their fellows. And in this connection it is surely instructive to observe that a lack of sociability is an invariable characteristic of the insane. Rarely are the inmates of lunatic asylums seen in couples. Each patient pursues his way in solitude, and it is only during the period of convalescence that any inclination is shown towards sociability. I do not mean, by placing these two instances together, that lunacy and religiosity are synonymous. But, as solitary habits are often an indication of the presence of morbid mental conditions, it is instructive to bear in mind how this practice has been encouraged by religious leaders. Religious teachers, as Galton points out, "by enforcing celibacy, fasting, and solitude, have done their best towards making men mad, and they have always largely succeeded in inducing morbid mental conditions among their followers."†

The lesson is the same if we take more modern instances of typical Christian leaders, or of non-Christian religious leaders, so far as there is any reliable biographical data to go upon. It is satisfactorily established, for example, that the founder of Mohammedanism was an epileptic. Quite a number of traditions unite in details that admit of no explanation. He saw bright lights, heard strange voices, fell down in swoons, and submitted frequently to cupping in order to relieve excessive pains in the head. Swedenborg is another tolerably clear case in the same direction.‡ Martin Luther's visions and inspirations are plainly traceable to a like origin. At a very early age he complained of toothache, earache, singing in the ears, and other nervous affections. "Toothache and earache," he says, "I am always suffering from. When I was at Coburg, in 1530, I was tormented with a noise and buzzing in my ear, just as though there was some wind tearing through my head. The Devil had something to do with it." To a man who complained of the itch, he retorts that directly he writes "buzz, buzz, the noise begins again, and often I am near falling off my chair with the pain. The itch,

that's nothing; nay, it is rather a beneficial complaint." And again: "When I try to work, my head becomes filled with all sorts of whizzing, thundering, buzzing noises; and, if I did not leave off on the instant, I should faint away." He frequently heard devils around him seeking to distract his attention from the work of translation; sometimes they drove him from his bed in the middle of the night, and on one occasion appeared visibly before him.* Luther threw an ink-pot at them, and guides still show the mark of the ink on the wall as a proof of the visitation—a proof that defies scepticism, and not unlike the orthodox method of proving the existence of God from the fact that people believe in it.

John Bunyan's brain disorder is attested by the "fearful dreams and visions" he had even while a boy. Little is known of his personal ailments, but hearing voices and seeing strange figures were common experiences with him; and, bearing in mind the manner in which his father died, it is probable that neurosis ran in the family. The founder of Quakerism, George Fox, is another case in which mental disorder was plainly interpreted as proof of divine inspiration. Ann Lee, the founder of the Shakers, and Johanna Southcote, a lady whose great mistake was in being born too late in the world's history, were both epileptics. Nervous disorders can also be shown to have existed in the cases of Wickliffe, Whitefield, Wesley, Calvin, and many other religious leaders.

It is unnecessary to prolong the list. Anyone who cares to consult Middleton's *Biographia Evangelica* will find plenty of facts to prove the statements made above; and if the lives of all the worthies detailed there were re-written by a specialist in nervous disorders, the evidence would be still more conclusive. Two points worth noting, however, before quitting this aspect of the subject, are that a large number of Middleton's characters were profligate in their youth, and that the sense of conversion is often plainly connected with irregularities of the sexual system. It is surely not without significance that the prayers of monks are usually offered to the Virgin, and that the adoration of nuns is directed towards the young man Jesus. Anyone who has gone through many books of devotion compiled by celibates of both sexes must have noted this, and often the language used would have attracted attention by its gross sensuality had its object been a man or woman.† Here is a single specimen in support of what has been said, taken, not from a Roman Catholic source, but from Southey's *Life of Wesley*. It is the utterance of a convert—a young woman of twenty:—

"Oh, mighty, powerful, happy change! The love of God was shed abroad in my heart, and a flame kindled there with pains so violent, yet so very ravishing, that my body was almost torn asunder. I sweated, I trembled, I fainted, I sang. Oh, I thought my head was a fountain of water. I was dissolved in love. My beloved is mine, and I am his. He has all charms; he has ravished my heart; he is my comforter, my friend, my all. Oh, I am sick of love. He is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand. Oh, how Jesus fills, Jesus extends, Jesus overwhelms the soul in which he lives."

Is it possible to avoid the implications of such expressions? Looking at the age of the writer of this maniacal outburst, is it not morally certain that we are confronted with a simple case of religious excitement acting upon the organism during the period of greatest functional instability? As we shall see later, the age of conversion coincides with the years of sexual disturbance in both male and female. And, while this explanation will cover most cases of conversion among Protestants, the outpourings of monks and nuns may be set down as very largely due to perverted sexual instincts. Indeed, one may go further, and say that the exaggerated self-consciousness of the presence of sexual instincts is in itself evidence of morbidity. There is something essentially unhealthy and unclean in the attitude of many religious teachers, who are forever dwelling upon sexual irregularities. Sex covers a

* See *Jesus and the Gospels*. (Freethought Publishing Company.)

† *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, p. 68.

‡ See article in the *Journal of Mental Science* for July and October, 1869, by Dr. Maudsley; since reprinted, I think, in second edition of *Body and Mind*.

* These instances are all taken from Michelet's *Life*; Bohm's edition.

† Galton notes that "Among the morbid organic conditions which accompany the show of excessive piety and religious rapture in the insane, none are so frequent as disorders of the sexual organisation" (*Inquiry into Human Faculty*, p. 67).

deal of life, but it is not all of life; and one learns to distrust the man in whose mind this factor dwarfs all else. If no class of preachers have dwelt so much upon sexual purity as Christian preachers, this has been the case, not from any extra purity on their part, but chiefly because the uncleanly and sinful nature of the sexual instinct is part and parcel of the Christian creed. It is embedded in the foundation of Christianity, and it shows in every portion of the superstructure. "Madam," said Dr. Johnson to an abbess, "you are not here from a love of virtue, but from fear of vice." It was not cleanliness that produced the obscene virtue of celibacy, but uncleanness. A perfectly healthy mind is not full of doubts and misgivings concerning the operation of the normal functions of human nature, and when such is the case there is a necessity for the physician, not for the priest. We may agree with Maudsley:—

"He whose every organ is in perfect health knows not that he has a body, and only becomes conscious that he has organs when something wrong is going on; in like manner a healthy mind, in the sound exercise of its functions, is little conscious that it has feelings, and only gets self-conscious when there is something morbid in the processes of its activity. The ecstatic trances of such saintly women as Catherine Sienne and St. Theresa, in which they believed themselves to be visited by their Savior, and to be received as veritable spouses into his bosom, were, though they knew it not, little better than vicarious sexual orgasm—a condition of things which the intense contemplation of the naked male figure, carved or sculptured in all its proportions on a cross, is more fitted to produce in young women of susceptible nervous temperament than people are apt to consider. Every experienced physician must have met with instances of single and childless women who have devoted themselves with extraordinary zeal to habitual religious exercises, and who, having gone insane as a culmination of their emotional fervor, have straightway exhibited the saddest mixture of religious and erotic symptoms—a boiling over of lust in voice, face, gestures, under the pitiful degradation of disease."*

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Death of God.

"Sdeath! hear the conclusion."—SHERIDAN.

To Protestants this title may seem startling, and even blasphemous; and yet they tell us that the Almighty was done to death like a common felon upon the hill of Calvary. This is no glaring inconsistency for the Christian; it is merely the old difference between what he believes and what he says he believes. Ask him if Christ died, and he will say "Yes" at once. "Was Christ God?" "Unquestionably!" "Then did God die?" He will look at you doubtfully, and ask you if you take him for a Romanist.

It is not, however, the purpose of this article to uphold the myth of Golgotha, or to pronounce a eulogy upon a legendary martyrdom. We are told that Christ died for the world's good; and, if we believed that the hero of the Gospels was a real personage, we might so far agree with our informants as to admit that the world would not suffer any serious deprivation by his decease.

For many years the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent occupant of infinite blue has been beset by growing infirmities. When he was young and lusty he did not allow the evildoer to ignore him. Even a powerful king of Egypt discovered to his cost that there was a lively assortment of frogs and lice and locusts in the celestial armoury. There was also an illimitable stock of selected diseases always on hand. For severe cases there were thunderbolts and earthquakes.

Well, here is God reclining easily upon a cirrus cloud, surrounded by his potent collection of assorted catastrophes. But still he is not quite settled in his mind. He keeps saying to himself: "So far, all is well. 'I am armed and well prepared.'† I have blains for blasphemy, small-pox for schism, and lightning for larceny. But then there was that little affair of the

Tree of Knowledge. Adam was such a *diable d'homme*. One of these days someone will be finding out something!"

He had not long to wait; someone *did* find out something. It was discovered that when illness came it could be sent away, so to speak, with a flea in its ear; and that, by taking certain hygienic precautions, its arrival could be indefinitely retarded. What could God do? He could only weep and curse. Every day he would send a young angel to visit the ungodly with a bag-full of *bacilli*. And every day his messenger would return disconsolate. "It is no use," he would say; "they laugh at my *bacilli*. They take Beecham's Pills!"*

The discovery of anæsthetics was a terrible blow. When God heard the news, he is reported to have exclaimed, "Damn it!" It is, however, only fair to state that some theologians dispute this. According to them, God was accustomed to speak in German when conversing with royalty, and, seeing the angel approach with the message, he merely remarked to David: *Er kommt damit*. (He is coming with it.) If the explanation is not entirely convincing, it is sufficiently ingenious.

Worse than the discovery of anæsthetics was the invention of the lightning-conductor. The audacity of infidel builders in thus defying the celestial artillery reminds one of the rude little boy who "placed his thumb against his nose and spread his fingers out." There was a time when those divine guns boomed to some purpose. The fortifications bristled with armaments, and Gen. J. Hovah (1st Brigade Heaven's Artillery) was Group Officer. A certain city was reported to be godless. That was enough. The angelic detachments stood at attention on their respective guns. The gun-captains repeated the commands of the Group Officer. "No.—gun, fifteen hundred billion miles, † time-fuse, shrapnell-shell—*lay!*" The gun-layer cocked his unerring eye over the sights, and the piece was laid. No. 4 seized the lanyard; the word was given to fire; and the place that knew the godless city once, knew it no more again for ever! But now—how different! Sometimes the ancient sixty-four pounders miss fire; sometimes they miss their mark; sometimes they are rendered innocuous by lightning-conductors. Projectiles expressly detached to settle the hash of a wicked lecture-hall alight upon the sacred dome of Saint Somebody's, and play old gooseberry with the assembled faithful. The survivors go home in deep dudgeon, swearing that they will waste no more time over a dotard deity who can't distinguish churches from cockchafers.

What has happened, then, to the great God of heaven and earth, before whom kings were wont to tremble, at whose bidding whole nations fell prostrate? He is moribund. There is no longer marrow in his ancient bones; his venerable muscles have lost their elasticity. He is dying of sheer old age. His chastisements are made impotent by the petty inventions of his own creatures. His *bacilli* shrivel up under the influence of soap, his plagues succumb to Condy's, and his artillery is rendered harmless by copper rods. From being the inspiration of the sage he has become relegated to the intellectual sewer-trap of the Salvationist, and the apologies of the Christian Evidence man have supplanted the fervid eloquence of old divines. Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen! Think what it must be to hear one's existence defended by gentlemen with the craniums of anthropoid apes! The remains of what was once almighty will hardly survive this blow. We shall soon have to put God comfortably away with his defunct relatives, without, however, betraying any desperate anxiety to replace him.

E. R. WOODWARD.

Thou art not dissatisfied, I suppose, because thou weighest only so many litræ, and not three hundred. Be not dissatisfied, then, that thou must live only so many years and not more; for as thou art satisfied with the amount of substance which has been assigned to thee, so be content with the time.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

* All cheques for the Advt. Dept. should be made payable to the Company.

† "Miles" is here used in an inspired sense. It may mean leagues, or anything other than what it says.

* *Pathology of Mind*, pp. 143-4.

† The hypercritical reader will please excuse the anachronism. He must remember that God, like Charley's Aunt, was "no ordinary person."

The Church of Christ.

"We are not divided,
All one body we,
One in faith and doctrine,
One in charity."
—*Hymns Ancient and Modern.*

I.

THE sect of England, with the breed
Of rancorous striving sects of hers ;
Rome, with her straitened, childish creed,
And impotent anathemas ;

II.

And Greece—what shall be said of thee,
Who hast forgot thy glorious gods ?
The Church that bears thy name is free
To chasten thee with Christian rods.

III.

Thou hast thy tribe of timorous priests
Who prate of some phantasmic hell,
To make men live like hunted beasts,
Nor dare to taste of life too well.

IV.

Are these the limbs of thy torn Church,
O sorrowing seer of Nazareth ?
"Lo ! here or there is Truth"—nay, search—
You shall find nothing there but death.

V.

Death is the wage of all these slaves,
For have they not foresworn to live,
Denied the gifts that life most craves,
Refused the joys that life would give ?

VI.

Go your own ways, ye living-dead ;
One thing is seen in veriest sooth,
That those false words were falsely said,
"Ye shall be led to all the truth."

AMARANTH.

Acid Drops.

CANON GORE has been made Bishop of Worcester. This will necessitate his leaving London, which must be preferable to Worcester as a place of residence ; but it means a step higher in the Church, and a substantial increase of income. His lordship, as we must now call him, is a High Churchman. There is one thing, however, on which all sections of the Church are agreed ; and that is, making the most of this world, financially and otherwise, while waiting for the next.

Bishop Gore first achieved notoriety as the editor of the well-known volume of High Church "Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation" entitled *Lux Mundi*. This was more than ten years ago. The editor's own contribution was the essay on "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration," which was discussed at the time, from the Freethought standpoint, in Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *Is the Bible Inspired?* Bishop Gore left behind the orthodox positions of the gentlemen who had so viciously assailed Bishop Colenso, and his "heresy" caused quite a flutter in religious circles, although it was only an admission of the elementary conclusions of scientific Biblical criticism. It is astonishing what a "dreadful" reputation some "advanced" clergymen obtain by borrowing a little from an old storehouse to which Freethinkers have had common access for generations.

In 1891 Bishop Gore delivered the Bampton Lectures on "The Incarnation of the Son of God"—afterwards published in a rather expensive volume. These discourses were not devoid of ability, which was largely displayed in evasion. The central difficulty of the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus was dealt with in a manner that reminded us—to use Bishop Gore's own words—of "what has at all times been the temptation of the pulpit, to substitute well-sounding phrases for real discussion."

In 1896 Bishop Gore published another volume, *The Sermon on the Mount*. It was an "exposition" intended "simply to assist ordinary people to meditate on the Sermon on the Mount in the Revised Version, and to apply its teaching to their own lives." How many "ordinary" people bought this volume at three shillings and sixpence may be left to conjecture. It was natural that Bishop Gore should prefer "Blessed are the poor in spirit" to "Blessed be ye poor." By a pretty juggling of the two texts, he was able to pretend that Jesus Christ based his kingdom "not upon actual poverty, but upon detachment." That is to say, you can be as rich as you like, provided you do not "cling" to your wealth. When it is God's will to take it away, you must be prepared to let it go. We may add that when it is God's

will to pile it up, you must be prepared to take it on. Bishop Gore's discipleship runs to that extent, at least.

Miss Honnor Morten did well to bring the subject of corporal punishment before the London School Board. It certainly does seem odd that London's teachers cannot dispense with what has ceased to exist in Belgium, Holland, Austria, Brazil, and other places. Miss Morten denounced it with just vigor. But she was not sanguine enough to expect to see it abolished all at once. She proposed, therefore, that it should be abolished in infant schools, and that in girls' schools the power to inflict it should be withdrawn from all assistant teachers. Her proposal, however, was defeated by a very large majority. Dr. Macnamara himself was horrified at the notion of removing the canes from Board schools. He appeared to think it was the only ultimate security for discipline ; and that, without it, the schoolroom would be as great a chaos as the playground.

Miss Morten was also opposed by Mrs. Bridges Adams, who, according to the *Star* report, said that "she had often to correct her own little boy through his physical feelings." This is not a very honorable confession on the part of a lady member of the London School Board. It shows that Mrs. Bridges Adams has still something to learn in the rational and humane treatment of children. It also shows that she fails in discrimination. She may slap her own little boy and fancy it does him good ; but how would she like him slapped by a perfect stranger?—for that is what the average Board-school teacher is to the average parent. Is it not abominable that a mother and father, who have never condescended to strike their children, should be compelled to send them to public schools where they may be struck by strangers ; and that without any possible redress except personal retaliation ?

Flogging is still retained in the army, but only for the common soldier. Why is it not extended to the officers ? Because (in theory, anyhow) officers are *gentlemen*, and corporal punishment *degrades*. This is quite true. And it is true all round.

Long ago rare old Ben Jonson said that he would not have a boy whipped at school, because it "embases his spirit." Members of the London School Board have not yet realised this. But they will realise it some day. For the world goes forward, and even School Boards go with it.

Something has already been said about the Birmingham School Board spending money on hymn-books at the expense of the ratepayers. Fancy hymn-books for Board schools being thought of when "Joe" Chamberlain, George Dixon, Rev. Charles Vince, Rev. Dr. Crosskey, the Kenricks, and other advocates of "secular and unsectarian teaching," were members of the Board !

We now know exactly the hymns which have been printed at the expense of the ratepayers for use in the Board schools. Their titles will indicate their sectarian nature : "Abide with me ! fast falls the eventide," "As with gladness men of old," "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," "Gracious Spirit, dwell with me," "Jesus bids us shine," "Jesus, Lover of my soul," "Loving Shepherd of Thy sheep," "O Jesus, I have promised," "Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed," "The King of love my Shepherd is," "There is a green hill far away," "When, His salvation bringing," and "While shepherds watched their flocks by night."

This retrograde move is due probably to the death of many of the original members, including George Dixon, M.P., who did so much for national secular education ; and most of all it is due to the defection of "Joe" Chamberlain. His influence is paramount in his adopted city. He has courted the allegiance of Conservatives (mostly Church people), whom he previously reviled. He has now abandoned his old platform of "national, free, secular education." He has gone over to the enemy.

Denominational teaching and the use of these hymns have no doubt his approval. If it were not so, his slavish supporters in Birmingham would not assent to the abrogation of an old and at one time widely-recognised and adopted policy.

But "Joe" Chamberlain would have some difficulty in reconciling a number of these hymns with his rather "thin" Unitarianism. Anyway, "Brum," in regard to its Board schools, is obviously on the downgrade.

The sanctity that used to surround a clergyman, like the divinity that used to hedge round a king, has become quite a thing of the past. The other day the Rev. T. B. Nichols, of Weir Hall, Upper Edmonton (that is the address he gave), was charged at the Guildhall with being drunk and acting indecently. When he was tapped on the shoulder by Police-Constable Beeton, he remarked : "You dare not touch me ; I am a clergyman." When told that he would be taken into

custody, he repeated: "I dare you to touch me; I am a clergyman." But the bold representative of the law did dare, after all; and the result was a fine of ten shillings or three days.

A mild sensation was caused in a suburban church near Birmingham on a recent Sunday by the clergyman stopping in the course of his sermon and making pointed reference to a young man who had fallen fast asleep. A similar case of sleepiness occurred not long ago in one of our large towns, when the preacher adopted a singular remedy. "Brethren," he sternly remarked at the close of his discourse, "as this sermon has caused me considerable labor to compose, and as scarcely anyone has remained awake to listen to it, I shall read it again." And he did.

A violent thunderstorm passed over Kingston, Jamaica, on the 22nd ult. The lightning struck Belmont House, Stony Hill. Its only occupant at the time was the Archbishop of the West Indies (Dr. Nuttall). Was this place visited through providential oversight, or was it providential that the Archbishop escaped with a few scratches and a severe shock?

St. Alphege Church, London Wall, E.C., has been damaged by breakage on the roof in the course of a big city fire.

We are solemnly assured—and to some people it may be of interest—that the Rev. Price Hughes is busy during his convalescent period in revising some stories of travel. But it is rather cruel of the *Christian Commonwealth* to announce that "the book will contain Mr. Hughes's investigations as to the true site of the Holy Scripture." Probably what is meant is the site of the Holy Sepulchre, over which, judging from the *Methodist Times*, Price Hughes has gone a little bit cracked.

Here is a commentary on Price Hughes's researches in Jerusalem, and especially in regard to the "Holy Sepulchre": A serious affray occurred at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem between Latins and Greeks, and resulted in serious casualties on both sides. The conflict was due to the Latins having repeatedly attempted to sweep part of the quadrangle of the church, which duty the Greeks claim as an exclusive right. Turkish troops had been posted on the spot for several days in order to prevent a collision, but they were suddenly outnumbered by the contending parties.

Christian Scientists now profess to be able to extend their curative powers to the lower animals. This is a strange reversal of their creed. If pain and illness are but figments of a faithless imagination, how is it that the lower animals suffer at all? Are they lacking in will or faith power? If so, how can a cat, for example, be inoculated with sufficient strength of mind to believe she has not caught influenza?

According to Mrs. Hinsdale, a wealthy lady of New Rochelle, Christian science has not only cured her, but it has cured several of her pet Angora cats, and helped her to find another cat which had been lost for three weeks. Most of Mrs. Hinsdale's cures have been effected by what she calls "absent treatment," or treatment by telephone. Can we any longer refer to the dark ages of superstition as belonging exclusively to the past?

The forthcoming Coronation of the King is affording material for many paragraphs. One is reminded of an observation by Disraeli in a letter to his sister just before Queen Victoria's Coronation. He wrote: "To get up very early (eight o'clock), to sit dressed in the Abbey for seven or eight hours, and to listen to a sermon by the Bishop of London, can be no enjoyment." And he was probably right, especially in regard to the latter portion of his cynical remark.

The *Church Times*, referring to recent judgments on criminous clerics, says: "We have had too many of these cases of late"; and it expresses its thankfulness that the Church has now the machinery by which it can get rid of "scandalous priests."

Dr. Horton has been preaching at Hampstead on something that he evidently does not understand. He said: "Suppose a man's views of this universe are atheist. [We suppose he means Atheistic.] That implies that he feels that there is in this universe intrinsically no power nobler or greater than man—that is, no power intrinsically better and nobler than himself, and practically he takes himself as his god. As there is a curious and subtle tendency in us all to worship something, and to worship the highest we know, it means that the man worships himself."

What nonsense! The universe, with all its potentialities, is obviously greater than man, who, after all, is only an infinitesimal speck in its immensity. And even the worship of Humanity would be more sensible than the worship of such a Deity as is depicted in Dr. Horton's Bible.

In the churchyard at Whalley is to be found an unctuous

epitaph which does not fail to interest any who read it. It runs: "Here lies the body of John Wigglesworth, who was for more than fifty years the principal innkeeper, withstanding the temptation of that dangerous calling. He maintained good order in house, kept the Sabbath day, frequented public worship with his family, and induced his guests to do the same, and regularly partook of Holy Communion. He was also bountiful to the poor, in private as well as in public, and by the blessing of Providence of a long life so spent, died possessed of competent wealth. He died Feb. 28, 1813, aged 77 years."

It will be observed that the model Wigglesworth "died possessed of competent wealth." He didn't leave his dreadful calling till he had worked it for all it was worth. Some ungodly people might hint that the highly respectable Wigglesworth was a bit of a self-seeking pious fraud, and that the parson who composed the epitaph was an Anglican imbecile. And the suggestion wouldn't be far wrong.

Little Johnnie Kensit has been relating "incidents of my youthful days" to the *Sunday Companion*. They are childish in more senses than one. But the surprising thing is that anyone should care to read a single word about the early days of this pretentious ignoramus, who, whether he knows it or not, is doing his level little best to advance Ritualism and the claims of Rome.

He says: "My mother had a peculiar fascination for the Psalms." What he means, of course, is that the Psalms had a peculiar fascination for his mother. And when we have arrived at the fact intended to be conveyed, isn't it absorbingly interesting?

He remembers having a "kind of vision of an angel" when he was a child. He imbibed fighting propensities amongst the boys in Houndsditch. He tells us how he went "fishing" in the canal at Victoria Park, and how he went "blackberrying." There are many other details of a similar kind that none but a silly paper like the *Sunday Companion* would think of according the dignity of type.

The cheek of some religious weeklies is astounding. Here is the *Examiner* giving a column of vapid cuttings from the sermons of such distinguished lights as the Rev. F. B. Meyer, Robert Leighton (who is he?), and other nonentities, and appending the legal-looking announcement: "Copyright—This column must not be reprinted." As if anyone would care to reprint such rubbish, the major part of which, by the way, the *Examiner* has "lifted" from various sources.

It seems to be the fashion or a trick of the trade nowadays to mark all the stupidities and inanities (that none but their authors would own) either in the way of fiction or illustration with the quite unnecessary prohibition: "All rights reserved."

Says the *British Weekly*: "Vast tracts of Scripture, and especially of the Old Testament, which were luminous and very comfortable to our fathers, are bare desert to the younger generation of preachers." Naturally, because they are mostly nonsense.

Recently a preacher asked the congregation to picture "the dim, mysterious figure of the ancient patriarch, standing in the far distant backwaters of Time!"

It might be thought that we are biassed in regard to the "fatal opulence of bishops," which is the title of a little book by a benefited clergyman, of which a cheap edition has now been issued. Therefore, we give the following from a Church paper, *The News*, "without note or comment": "The Bishop of Manchester, speaking at his Diocesan Conference, said: 'I have lived as simple a life, with as plain food and with as simple surroundings, as the very humblest clergyman in my diocese'; and then he added: 'Living simply as I do, I have spent a very large sum more than the income of this See every year since I became your bishop. If I had not had a private fortune, I should to-day be bankrupt.' We think there are 'bishops—and bishops.' But we confess we do not understand the Bishop of Manchester. If his outlay has all been really needed, he ought to agitate for 'a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.' But we doubt whether £5,000 a year would be thought too little, or that more would be found. As a rule, the bishops certainly do not die 'bankrupt.'"

The Bishop of Llandaff recently said: "It is owing to our Nonconformist bodies that the lamp of true religion is kept burning in Wales." The Right Rev. Father-in-God has since been taken to task for a statement so complimentary to Dissenters. Mr. Llewellyn, in the *Examiner*, ventures to declare: "If ever a wave of Secularism and revolution breaks over the island, Wales will save England."

Well, we can only say: "Gallant little Wales!" And yet it might be hinted that Secularism has nothing to do with the kind of "revolution" evidently apprehended by Mr. Llewellyn. We don't desire any disintegration of Wales or

Scotland from the English centre, and the worst effect of the "wave of Secularism" in Wales or elsewhere would be the establishment of sane and perfectly peaceful views.

There are, it is said in a religious print, "wicked inventions" about the late Spurgeon and his sayings. "He is reported to have said that deacons are worse than the devil, because if you resist the devil he will flee from you, whereas if you resist a deacon he will fly at you. Of course this was somebody's invention, and a wicked one too, for he never said any such thing."

If the late Spurgeon's people are so given to lying as this seems to suggest, where did the moral influence of Spurgeon's much-praised and quite over-rated preaching come in?

While he was in Scotland recently Mr. Balfour presided at a meeting in connection with the Church of Scotland Home Mission. In the course of his address he said that "the need for religion had sunk more deeply than ever into the minds and consciences of the Scottish people." But is this true? Was there not a time, and not so long ago, when the Scottish people thought religion was the only thing of any importance in the world—after business? Except so far as they were engaged in earning their livings, religion was their sole occupation; and by a necessary consequence, it has been said, drink and fornication were their sole amusements. Things have changed for the better since then. More rational and legitimate amusements are obtaining, and even the dulness of the Scottish Sabbath is being broken up by cycling and excursions.

Mr. Balfour sang the praises of religion lustily, as befitted the occasion. "Any church," he said, "which taught morality alone, and not morality interfused with religion, was destined to make its moralising barren and useless." There is little likelihood, however, of any Christian church, particularly in Scotland, engaging in such an enterprise. They are sure to agree with Mr. Balfour—because he agrees with them—that "morality is no substitute for religion." Certainly it is not—for the clergy, though it is a very good one for the people. Some of us actually think that a little more morality, instead of so much religion, would be an excellent thing in the House of Commons—even on the Government benches.

John Alexander Dowie, the canny Scotchman (by birth), who runs the Zion movement in Chicago, very much to his own advantage from a worldly point of view, gives himself out to be the Prophet Elijah; and, indeed, there is a certain resemblance, for both are "hairy men." But it appears that Old Dowie's claim is disputed by a Georgia negro. We don't know how the competition will end, but its very existence is a satire on America and the twentieth century.

Dowie is no believer in democracy. The other day there was a "responsive service" in his church. "Has there ever been a vote in this church?" shouted Dowie. "No," answered the congregation. "Have I ruled you?" "Yes." "Don't you like it?" "Yes." Dowie said he would as soon ask the sheep to direct their shepherd as ask his congregation to advise him. Whereupon our contemporary, the *Truthseeker* (New York), observes: "It is likely that Dowie's congregation is not much superior, intellectually, to mutton."

Mr. Benjamin H. Adams, school commissioner, and a leading New York lawyer, was arrested on the Saegkill links by Detective Walsh for playing golf on a Sunday. Fortunately the jury returned a sensible verdict. "We, the jury," they said, "find the defendant, Adams, not guilty, and recommend that the existing law regarding the observance of the Sabbath, or the first day of the week, be repealed or so amended that it will not interfere with the innocent amusement of citizens on that day."

The Sunday Observance people have made another mistake. They tried to summon a Jew named Nosseck for selling bread on a Sunday. This was under a statute of George IV. prohibiting the sale of bread on Sundays within ten miles of the Royal Exchange. Mr. Stipendiary Bros refused to grant the summons, partly on the ground that Nosseck sold bread to Jews who kept their own Sabbath on Saturday. Application was then made to the Court of Queen's Bench, but the Lord Chief Justice upheld the magistrate's decision.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, in a letter to the *Daily News*, recommends a petition to Queen Alexandria with reference to the concentration camps in South Africa. In closing his letter, he describes the "killing of children" as "more frightful and less discriminating than that of Herod, which made his name infamous in Christian annals." Now is there any reason, we ask, why Herod should be libelled in this fashion by a Free-thinker? The "massacre of the innocents" related in one Gospel out of four, and so frequently depicted by Christian artists, is in the first place a mythological story, and in the second place a calumny on Herod. Every student knows it is of no historic value. If it were, it would not have escaped

the attention of Josephus, who paints Herod as black as possible. The Jewish historian, however, was more scrupulous than Mr. Holyoake. We mean, of course, on this particular point.

A verbose bishop rose to address the House of Lords. "I will divide my speech under twelve heads," he said. Thereupon the Marquis of Salisbury (so the story goes) begged to be allowed to interpose. "A friend of mine," the Marquis said, "was returning home late one night, when opposite St. Paul's he saw an intoxicated man trying to ascertain the time on the big clock there. Just then it began to strike, and slowly tolled out twelve. The drunken man listened, looked hard at the clock, and said: 'Confound you, why couldn't you have said that all at once?'" The House rang with laughter, and the bishop took the hint.

Here is another Salisbury story. His lordship often lunches at the Athenæum Club, of which many bishops are members. Once, on a rainy day, one of his secretaries, observing that his chief was starting out to lunch at that Club, rushed for an umbrella and offered it to him. "No, no," said Lord Salisbury; "I've lost too many in the Athenæum. I cannot trust these bishops."

Yet another Salisbury story. After a heated discussion in his presence on a current topic, an emphatic member of the party exclaimed: "I sha'n't get any of you to agree with me; you are such a complete set of Philistines." Lord Salisbury quietly asked him whether he recollected what happened to the Philistines. The reply was "Certainly not." "They were smitten with the jawbone of an ass," said the Marquis, and the "other fellow" collapsed.

Referring to a certain Insurance Association, started by the Methodists, and now carried on by the Salvation Army, the *Daily Telegraph* remarks that expenses ought not to amount to nearly sixty per cent. of the premiums. But is not this one of the chronic peculiarities of Salvation Army finance?

Father Ignatius is reported in the *Evening News* (Portsmouth) as saying: "He could not understand a man being an Atheist, or even an Agnostic, in view of the simple fact that the Jews were still a distinct people, and a man who professed to be such—well, his brain must be a little paralysed." Here is news! Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Clifford, Büchner, Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll, all suffered from brain paralysis. Father Ignatius's brain, on the other hand, is all right. It does not seem right enough, however, to see that the Jews have been kept distinct by intermarriage, and that this in turn was the result of Christian bigotry and persecution. Wherever the Jews enjoy toleration, and even something more, they tend to disappear as a separate caste.

A stained-glass window has been placed in St. Savior's Collegiate Church, Southwark, in honor of Cruden, the compiler of the famous Concordance of the Bible. The *Daily Telegraph* takes occasion to remind or inform its readers that Cruden was "subject to fits of insanity," and was an inmate of several madhouses. "Notwithstanding these drawbacks," our contemporary observes, "he was a diligent reader of the Scriptures." But why "notwithstanding"? A love of the Scriptures is certainly not confined to the sane. The end of poor Cruden came while he was on his knees praying.

The Sultan has given in, and the French fleet has come back. What could not be done to save the Armenians from torture, outrage, and massacre, has been done to enforce the claims of some capitalists. This throws a flood of light on the French criticism of England's doings in South Africa. However bad we are, it is hard to find another country virtuous enough to throw stones at us honestly.

A foolhardy woman went over Niagara Falls the other day in a barrel. She attributes her success to prayer. Next time she should try it without the barrel. Then we should know how much prayer has to do with the result.

The Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, writes to Mr. Foote, as President of the National Secular Society, asking him to join in denouncing the language of a certain Hyde Park lecturer with reference to the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ. Mr. Foote's reply is that the said lecturer has no connection with the N. S. S., and that any complaint as to the language of any lecturer for whom the N. S. S. is at all responsible will receive attention. Meanwhile it is not Mr. Foote's intention to set up a censorship of outside lecturers. If it were, he might begin with some on the C. E. S. platform.

"But why is Mabel so anxious to enter a convent?" "She put on the costume once, and some one told her she looked demurely captivating in it."—*Chicago Post*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 17, Bradlaugh Club and Institute, Victoria Buildings, 17 Little Horton Lane, Bradford; 11, "Lord Kitchener on the Bible and War"; 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

November 24, Leicester.

December 1 and 8, Athenæum Hall; 15, Liverpool; 22 and 29, Athenæum Hall.

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 17, Athenæum Hall, London; 24, Birmingham. December 8, 9, and 10, Newcastle-on-Tyne and District; 15, Glasgow; 22, Camberwell. All communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 17, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 22, Unitarian Hall, Forest Gate; 24, Athenæum Hall, London. December 1, Sheffield; 8, Manchester; 15, Athenæum Hall, London.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for the cuttings.

Z.—(1) We do not think a verbatim report was taken of Mr. Watts's recent debate on Spiritualism. Consequently it cannot be published in the *Freethinker* or issued in pamphlet form. (2) Pleased to hear that you find opportunities to promote Free-thought in private. We quite understand that you have to be very cautious in the Army. The officers come from the same caste as the parsons.

G. W. B.—Thanks for cuttings. We cannot discuss the questions you raise in our columns.

J. C. BURROWS.—Glad to hear the East London Branch is progressing. You will find all the information you seek in the *Secular Almanack*. We are pleased to note that your Branch appreciates Miss Vance's services.

THE FUND FOR MRS. FOOTE.—"H. M." writes: "You must forgive Derby if it is late in coming forward in your hour of adversity, but it is owing to most of our members being scattered on the outskirts of the town. I have pleasure in forwarding the following subscriptions:—W. H. F., 2s. 6d.; T. Newton, 2s. 6d.; H. M., 2s. 6d.; O. Ford, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Harris, 2s.; J. Heritage, 2s.; W. Barnes, 2s.; Mr. Hinton, 1s.; M. S. M., 1s.; W. B., 1s.; T. M., 1s."

R. CHAPMAN.—Your lecture-notice arrived too late for insertion last week. Your date on one side of the postcard was "Nov. 4," but the Tyne Dock postmark on the other side was "Nov. 5." We mention this in order that you may understand the omission.

E. HARVEY.—We have made use of your copy. Thanks.

H. S. WISHART, 18 Oakfield-terrace, Barnfield-road, Belvedere, would be happy to hear from Freethinkers in Woolwich, Abbey Wood, Belvedere, Erith, and Dartford, with a view to forming an active Branch of the N.S.S. in the district. A meeting could be called after addresses are obtained.

E. HARVEY.—The forms will be sent you by the secretary. You can join the National Secular Society without joining a Branch. Apply to the secretary (Miss Vance) at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C. The minimum subscription is two shillings a year.

J. ROTHWELL.—You gave the date, but not the hour, so we could not include it in the announcement. We should be very glad to see an active propaganda carried on in Oldham, and, indeed, in all the South Lancashire towns.

B. DICKSON.—Richard Jefferies died slowly, by inches, and we believe that when his vitality had nearly gone he languished back to the faith of his childhood. But that is only an illustration in pathology. He was very far from being a Christian when he wrote his autobiography, entitled *The Story of My Heart*—a book well worth reading, though not easily obtainable now.

CHEETHAM HILL.—That morality does not depend upon the Bible is proved by the facts (1) that morality existed before a word of the Bible was written; (2) that it exists now in parts of the world where the Bible is unknown; (3) that it is sometimes more operative amongst "heathen" than amongst Christians; and (4) that nearly all the crimes in Christian countries are committed by professed believers in the Bible, not by unbelievers. You would find some serviceable matter in Ingersoll's lecture on *The Holy Bible*. Also in Mr. Foote's *The Book of God*.

A. P. TAVENER.—All nonsense! Charles Bradlaugh expressly repudiated the designation of Agnostic, and called himself an Atheist to the very end of his career. Büchner was an Atheist, and Haeckel is an Atheist. What better company do you want? We shall have the pleasure of reviewing Büchner's *Last Words on Materialism* in our next issue.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Paisley Gazette—Sydney Bulletin—Liberator—Dartmouth Chronicle—Blue Grass Blade—Haltwhistle Echo—Glasgow Herald—Portsmouth Evening News—Two Worlds—Free Society—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker (New York)—Torch of Reason—New Century—Public Opinion (New York)—La Raison—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Book Queries—Crescent—Yorkshire Post—Paisley Gazette.

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.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE delivers three lectures to-day (Nov. 17) at the new premises of the Bradford Branch—the Bradlaugh Club and Institute. It is a long time since he visited the "woollen" capital. Mr. Ward writes that the Branch is doing its utmost to secure a record day.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening to a good audience, and had a gratifying reception. Mr. Watts occupies the same platform again this evening (Nov. 17), taking for his subject "Christian Preachers and their Absurdities, especially in Reference to Peace and War." No doubt there will be another good meeting.

Mr. Cohen lectured at Stanley on Sunday to good meetings. To-day (Nov. 17) he lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road, Gateshead. His subjects should be found attractive. Morning and afternoon the admission is free; in the evening there is a charge at the doors. We hope the local "saints" will make Mr. Cohen's visit a success.

We congratulate Mr. H. R. Taylor on winning a great moral victory. He was nearly elected Mayor of Camberwell, although he declared that he would not attend church, nor lay any foundation stones for church or chapel folk. Neither would he wear the robe and chain of office, which he regarded as relics of barbarism. The cry of "Atheist!" was raised against him on account of his heterodoxy. But it was pointed out by Mr. A. B. Moss, a member of the Council, that this cry was raised against Paine and Voltaire, just to excite the vulgar prejudices of the thoughtless mob. When the division was taken, 29 voted for Mr. Taylor and 30 for the rival candidate. The change of one vote would have reversed their positions.

L'Asino, the illustrated, comic, anti-clerical paper published at Rome, which we referred to lately, mentions the *Freethinker* as "the chief organ of English Democracy." In the broadest, instead of the narrowest, sense of the word, there may be some truth in this description. *L'Asino* acknowledges a courteous and encouraging letter from Mr. W. Heaford; whose name, however, gets misprinted as Mabord.

A few "saints" met recently at the Radical Club, Union-street, Oldham, to make arrangements for restarting the Oldham Secular Society. Another meeting, for the same purpose, is to be held on the first Sunday in December.

Mr. Joseph Symes still gallantly stands by the *Liberator* at Melbourne. His difficulties, however, appear to be great, and almost overwhelming. He appeals to the Freethinkers to rally more strongly to his support, which we earnestly hope they will do. We see that the bigots are prosecuting Mr. Charles Rose. This is more than enough to send Mr. Symes on the war-path. He is raising a fund "to fight the scoundrels." The same number of the *Liberator*, from which we gather these items, contains a pathetic reference to the death of Robert Forder.

The *Haltwhistle Echo* has been printing some correspondence on "Who is Jesus?" This is a noteworthy sign of the progressive spirit of the age. We note an excellent letter by "Rational Searchlight," and a rather enigmatic (perhaps ironical) one by "Free Thinker."

The East London Branch sends us the following resolution: "The members of the Branch beg to express their sympathy with Miss Vance in her present illness and their recognition of her valuable services to the cause of Freethought, and they sincerely hope that she will quickly recover her health." We are happy to state that Miss Vance is making sure, if slow, recovery. She is back in London, but still requires careful nursing, and is quite unable to resume her duties at

r Stationers' Hall Court. She hopes to do so shortly, but we shall see that she does not hurry back to work.

The *Paisley Gazette* prints a long and learned address by Mr. John Hardie, M.A., on "Herbert Spencer's Unification of Knowledge." This is hardly one of the signs of the increased feeling for religion which Mr. Balfour notices in Scotland.

The "young Dartmouth party" has carried all before it at the municipal elections. Our friend Mr. Voisey was one of the successful "four." We congratulate him. We also congratulate Dartmouth.

Mr. George Hewitt's lecture on "Freethought and Social Democracy," under the auspices of the East London Branch, was listened to attentively on Sunday evening by a good audience, and was followed by a good deal of discussion. This evening (Nov. 17) Mr. F. A. Davies lectures on "Faith and Finance."

At the recent municipal elections in Coventry two candidates—Mr. F. S. Jackson and Mr. W. Wincott—were members of the local Branch of the N. S. S. Both entered the field for the first time. Mr. Jackson gained a seat among the "City Fathers," and enjoys the distinction of being the youngest one. He is also the Liberal Registration Agent for the North East Division of Warwickshire.

We are always glad to receive the *Boston Investigator*, the oldest Freethought journal in America, and one of the best. The last number to hand contains the able and eloquent address of the editor, Mr. L. K. Washburn, delivered before the Congress of the American Secular Union. It is entitled "The Infamy of the Twentieth Century." Mr. Washburn asks whether the clergy ought not to be ashamed, after all that has happened, to go on passing off the Bible as a work of inspiration. "It is time"—so his conclusion runs—"to summon Christian ministers into the court of honesty and truth, and ask them to show cause why they should not be condemned for teaching falsehoods, and for upholding and maintaining an imposition in passing off the Bible as the Word of God."

The Garden that I Love.

"The spirit culls
Unfaded amaranth, when wild it strays
Through the old garden ground of boyish days."

—KEATS.

THE garden that I love is old-fashioned. It is not planned on commercial principles, to wring the last cabbage or the last tomato from the reluctant fist of the earth; but designed—or, rather, not designed at all—for pleasure, for quiet rest, and wholesome dalliance with Nature in her brightest aspect of flowers and foliage. These soft grass walks would be condemned by the man for whom every flower has a money value, or whose sole joy is in the trivial triumphs of the local horticultural show. But to me these green walks, with flower borders on either side, are a solace and a perpetual delight. The foot falls noiselessly on nature's velvet. One is walking in silence among sweets. And how fragrant some of the old-fashioned flowers smell in that old garden. To me it seems not only to have the scents of to-day, but odors from other years. Those tall trees which grow between the lower slope and the sun would be cut down by a gardener who gives divided allegiance to Flora and Mammon. But I love those trees. My garden has its temperate and its torrid zone; and while the lower end is under the shade of the trees, and is a pleasant resort even when the rays of the sun fall like sword-strokes at noon, up by the old wall it is out of all shadow in the very eye of day. And there, on that wall, instead of trees forced to bear fruit to the finger-tips, there are some sedate old trees which take fruiting calmly, and give you a few luscious morsels that are sweeter than the over-sized monstrosities grown for show.

The borders are probably ill-kept. They boast no orderly patches of color, but exhibit a profuse and beautiful disorder. Here are no tawdry squares of blue and triangles of gold, but a wilderness of intermingling flowers. They are the expression of a higher art than that attained by the compass and the T-square, for Nature has not been contemned, and in return she

has made my flower-beds a nursery for some of her own darling weeds.

Nature is made better by no mean,
But nature makes that mean; so over that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes.

My garden is gayest when one sees it in all the joy and glory of May, with Life at full flood and flow of Spring, with the great trees in the background, half-dressed in a fairy garment of budding green. The severity of the long winter is forgotten in a moment. The rich abundance of the spring-flowers is undiminished. They are more beautiful than ever. If any habitual pleasure fails, it is that the birds are not so numerous. There are fewer thrushes, and one misses the rapture of their music. But the blackbirds are here. Yet somehow *Merula's* magic note is, or so it seems, less wholly dear than is the singing of the thrush. The air he sings is so brief, the burden of it so sad. He only sings over and over:

I live on memory more than hope.

Of course, he does not mean it in the least; but so the tune wears on in sweet, sad iteration.

Although I have been speaking of the garden as a withdrawing-room, where one's best and happiest times can be spent in gentle pleasure, and where the sweet scents of the flowers and the music of the birds minister to the high thoughts which are the poetry of life, do not think the garden that I love is all for show. It is a kitchen-garden too. Behind the borders there are rows of potatoes, and succulent peas, which will in time, perhaps, make a duck doubly precious. There are lusty cabbages and burnished beets. Oh, this is a good garden, giving with liberality to our ordinary wants as well as to our higher pleasures.

And there are seats at the end of the green walk where you can sit and see beyond the garden to the Sussex hills, and where you can, in the evening-hour, hear the merry birds; and, when you have heard them, you can retire with a feeling that, even if God is not in his heaven, "all's right with the world."

In this bustling life of ours each day brings its petty dust; but enough remains of beauty and delight for us to feel as joyously as ever the pleasure of the garden that we call our own. Of that beloved spot well may it be said:—

An hour with thee! When earliest day
Dapples with gold the eastern grey,
Oh! what can frame my mind to bear
The toil and tumult, care and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold,
And sad remembrance of the old?
One hour with thee.

One hour with thee! When sun is set,
Oh! what can teach me to forget
The thankless labors of the day,
The hopes and wishes flung away?
One hour with thee.

MIMNERMUS.

A Suggested Addition to the Church of England Canticle.

"*Benedicite Omnia Opera.*"

O ye Waste and Want,	} bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye Hunger and Thirst,	
O ye Famine and Blight,	"
O ye Blood and Fire,	"
O ye Wars and Pestilence,	"
O ye Crime and Poverty,	"
O ye Deceit and Fraud,	"
O ye Murder and Rape,	"
O ye Cancer and Small-pox,	"
O ye Tape-worm and Bugs,	"
O all ye Diseases and Filth,	"
O ye Pain and Misery,	"
O ye Calumny and Shame,	"
O ye Drunkenness and Vice,	"
O ye Shipwrecks and Earthquakes,	"
O ye Cant and Humbug,	"
O ye Ignorance and Folly,	"
O ye Greed and Avarice,	"
O ye Death and Despair,	"
O ye sons of Belial,	"
O ye sons of Toil,	"
Yea, let all the works of the Lord praise him and magnify him for ever.	

EDWARD HARVEY, JUNIOR.

Darwin and Religion.—II.

DARWIN'S EARLY PIETY.

EITHER the Rev. George Case belonged to the more orthodox wing of Unitarianism, or the teaching at the Shrewsbury Grammar School must have effaced any sceptical impressions he made on the mind of Charles Darwin, whose early piety is evident both from his Autobiography and from several of his letters. And this fact is of the highest importance, since it follows that his disbelief in later years was the result of independent thought and the gradual pressure of scientific truth.

"I well remember," he says, "in the early part of my school life, that I often had to run very quickly to be in time, and, from being a fleet runner, was generally successful; but when in doubt I prayed earnestly to God to help me, and I well remember that I attributed my success to the prayers, and not to my quick running, and marvelled how generally I was aided."*

Speaking of himself at the age of twenty or twenty-one, he says: "I did not then doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible."† When a little later he went on board the *Beagle*, to take that famous voyage which he has narrated so charmingly, and which determined his subsequent career, he was still "quite orthodox." "I remember," he says, "being laughed at by several of the officers (though themselves orthodox) for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality."‡ Darwin charitably supposes "it was the novelty of the argument which amused them." But why was the argument novel? Simply because the Bible is a kind of fetish, to be worshipped and sworn by—anything but read and followed. As Mill remarked, it furnishes texts to fling at the heads of unbelievers; but when the Christian is expected to act upon it, he is found to conform to other standards, including his own convenience. There can be little doubt that the laughter of his shipmates produced a powerful and lasting effect on Darwin's mind. His character was translucent and invincibly sincere; and the laughter of orthodox persons at their own doctrines was calculated to set him thinking about their truth.

ALMOST A CLERGYMAN.

Being a failure as a medical student, Darwin received a proposal from his father to become a clergyman, and he rather liked the idea of settling down as a country parson. Fancy Darwin in a pulpit! The finest scientific head since Newton distilling bucolic sermons! What a tragi-comedy it would have been!

Darwin carefully read *Pearson on the Creed*, and other books on divinity. "I soon persuaded myself," he says, "that our Creed must be accepted." He went up to Cambridge and studied hard.

"In order to pass the B.A. examination, it was also necessary to get up Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* and his *Moral Philosophy*. This was done in a thorough manner, and I am convinced that I could have written out the whole of the 'Evidences' with perfect correctness, but not, of course, in the clear language of Paley. The logic of this book, and, as I may add, of his *Natural Theology*, gave me as much delight as did Euclid. The careful study of these works, without attempting to learn any part by rote, was the only part of the academical course which, as I then felt and as I still believe, was of the least use to me in the education of my mind. I did not, at that time, trouble myself about Paley's premises; and taking these on trust, I was charmed and convinced by the long line of argumentation."

Darwin probably owed most to the *Natural Theology* of Paley. Writing to Sir John Lubbock nearly thirty years later, he said: "I do not think I hardly ever admired a book more." Perhaps it was less the logic of the great Archdeacon than his limpid style and interesting treatment of physical science which charmed the young mind of Darwin. He had a constitutional love of clearness, and his genius was then turning towards the studies which occupied his life.

Scruples gradually entered Darwin's mind. He

began to find the creed not so credible. One of his friends gives an interesting reminiscence of this period. "We had an earnest conversation," says Mr. Herbert, "about going into Holy Orders; and I remember his asking me, with reference to the question put by the Bishop in the ordination service, 'Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit, etc.,' whether I could answer in the affirmative, and, on my saying I could not, he said, 'Neither can I, and therefore I cannot take holy orders.'" Still he did not abandon the idea altogether; he drifted away from it little by little until it fell out of sight. Fourteen or fifteen years later, writing to Sir Charles Lyell, he had gone so far as to speak of "that Corporate Animal, the Clergy."

Looking back over these experiences, only a few years before his death, Darwin was able to regard them with equanimity and amusement. There is a sly twinkle of humor in the following passage:—

"Considering how fiercely I have been attacked by the orthodox, it seems ludicrous that I once intended to be a clergyman. Nor was this intention and my father's wish ever formally given up, but died a natural death when, on leaving Cambridge, I joined the *Beagle* as naturalist. If the phrenologists are to be trusted, I was well fitted in one respect to be a clergyman. A few years ago the secretary of a German psychological society asked me earnestly by letter for a photograph of myself; and some time afterwards I received the proceedings of one of the meetings, in which it seemed that the shape of my head had been the subject of a public discussion, and one of the speakers declared that I had the bump of reverence developed enough for ten priests."*

The Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, accounts for Matthew Arnold's scepticism by the flatness of the top of his head. Mr. Arnold lacked the bump which points to God. But how does Mr. Cook account for the scepticism of Darwin, whose head was piously adorned with such a prodigious bump of veneration?

ON BOARD THE "BEAGLE."

While at Cambridge, studying for the Church, Darwin made the acquaintance of Professor Henslow and Dr. Whewell. He read Humboldt "with care and profound interest," and Herschel's *Introduction to the Study of Natural Philosophy*. These writers excited in him "a burning zeal to add even the most humble contribution to the noble structure of natural science." Humboldt's description of the glories of Teneriffe made him desire to visit that region. He even "got an introduction to a merchant in London to inquire about ships." Soon afterwards he became acquainted with Professor Sedgwick, and his attention was turned to geology. On returning from a geological tour in North Wales with Sedgwick he found a letter from Henslow, offering him a share of Captain Fitzroy's cabin on board the *Beagle*, if he cared to go without pay as naturalist. The offer was accepted, Dr. Darwin behaved handsomely, and the young man sailed away with a first-rate equipment and a pecuniary provision for his five years' voyage round the world. This voyage, says Darwin, "has been by far the most important event in my life, and has determined my whole career."

Readers of Darwin's fascinating *A Naturalist's Voyage*† know that his great powers were matured on board the *Beagle*. "That my mind became developed through my pursuits during the voyage," he himself says, "is rendered probable by a remark made by my father, who was the most acute observer whom I ever saw, of a sceptical disposition, and far from being a believer in phrenology; for, on first seeing me after the voyage, he turned round to my sisters and exclaimed, 'Why the shape of his head is quite altered.'"

During the voyage Darwin was brought into close and frequent contact with "that scandal to Christian nations—slavery."‡ This was a matter on which he felt keenly. His just and compassionate nature was stirred to the depths by the oppression and sufferings of the American negroes. The infamous scenes he witnessed haunted his imagination. Nearly thirty years afterwards, writing to Dr. Asa Gray, he wished, "though at the loss of millions of lives, that the North would

* *Life and Letters*, vol. i., p. 45.

† *A Naturalist's Voyage*. Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries visited during the Voyage of H.M.S. *Beagle* round the World. By Charles Darwin.

‡ *Life and Letters*, vol. i., p. 237.

* *Life and Letters*, vol. i., p. 31.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 45.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 308.

proclaim a crusade against slavery." His impressions at the earlier date were recorded in his book, and it is best to quote the passage in full :—

"On the 19th of August we finally left the shores of Brazil. I thank God, I shall never again visit a slave-country. To this day, if I hear a distant scream, it recalls with painful vividness my feelings, when passing a house near Pernambuco, I heard the most pitiable moans, and could not but suspect that some poor slave was being tortured, yet knew that I was as powerless as a child even to remonstrate. I suspected that these moans were from a tortured slave, for I was told that this was the case in another instance. Near Rio de Janeiro I lived opposite to an old lady, who kept screws to crush the fingers of her female slaves. I have stayed in a house where a young household mulatto, daily and hourly, was reviled, beaten, and persecuted, enough to break the spirit of the lowest animal. I have seen a little boy, six or seven years old, struck thrice with a horse-whip (before I could interfere) on his naked head for having handed me a glass of water not quite clean; I saw his father tremble at a mere glance from his master's eye. These latter cruelties were witnessed by me in a Spanish colony, in which it has always been said that slaves are better treated than by the Portuguese, English, or other European nations. I have seen at Rio de Janeiro a powerful negro afraid to ward off a blow directed, as he thought, at his face. I was present when a kind-hearted man was on the point of separating for ever the men, women, and little children of a large number of families who had long lived together. I will not even allude to the many heart-sickening atrocities which I authentically heard of; nor would I have mentioned the above revolting details had I not met with several people, so blinded by the constitutional gaiety of the negro, as to speak of slavery as a tolerable evil. Such people have generally visited at the houses of the upper classes, where the domestic slaves are usually well treated; and they have not, like myself, lived amongst the lower classes. Such inquirers will ask slaves about their condition; they forget that the slave must indeed be dull who does not calculate on the chance of his answer reaching his master's ears.

"It is argued that self-interest will prevent excessive cruelty; as if self-interest protected our domestic animals, which are far less likely than degraded slaves to stir up the rage of their savage masters. It is an argument long since protested against with noble feeling, and strikingly exemplified, by the ever-illustrious Humboldt. It is often attempted to palliate slavery by comparing the state of slaves with our poorer countrymen; if the misery of our poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin; but how this bears on slavery I cannot see; as well might the use of the thumb-screw be defended in one land, by showing that men in another land suffered from some dreadful disease. Those who look tenderly at the slave-owner, and with a cold heart at the slave, never seem to put themselves into the position of the latter; what a cheerless prospect, with not even a hope of change! Picture to yourself the chance, ever hanging over you, of your wife and your little children—those objects which nature urges even the slave to call his own—being torn from you and sold like beasts to the first bidder! And these deeds are done and palliated by men who profess to love their neighbors as themselves, who believe in God, and pray that his Will be done on earth."*

The sting of this passage is in its tail. Darwin must have felt that there was something hypocritical and sinister in the pretensions of Christianity. He must have asked himself what was the practical value of a creed which permitted such horrors.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Obituary.

By the death of Mr. B. Parsons the Birmingham Branch loses one of its oldest and staunchest members. During his connection with it he was unfailing in his work for the cause, and lost no opportunity of spreading and defending its principles. Notwithstanding his great age (seventy-nine), he retained his activity to the last, a stroke cutting off his long and useful life. He kept steadfast to his Secular convictions, and passed away undisturbed by any concern about another existence. A large number of members and friends attended his funeral at the Wilton Cemetery on Saturday, the 9th inst. The Secular Burial Service of Austin Holyoake was impressively read by Mr. E. Andrews at the graveside.—J. PARTRIDGE, *Secretary*.

* Pp. 499 500.

The Godly Gang.

JEHOVAH says he made the light
Before he made the sun,
And also made the day and night
Ere Time began to run—
To tell a lie is never right,
By whomsoever done.

Creating ante-solar light
Required a little skill;
But ditto ante-solar night
Was far more tricky still—
To tell the truth with all your might
Is well, and never ill.

With light diffused no night could be,
For night's the lightless cone
That's left upon our planet's lee
By solar rays alone—
O lying priest! forego your fee,
Confess, repent, atone!

Though time, the son of earth and sun,
Begot the day and night,
The grand-bairns both began to run
Ere grand-pa "came to light"—
Our children should be taught to shun
The parson's moral blight.

The "first day" wasn't "day" at all,
For time had not begun—
The product of our wheeling ball,
The stars, and central sun—
To priests, the sweetest truth is gall;
By lies their bread is won.

The "fourth day" was the "first," of course,
For Time began to run
When earth's diurnal wheeling force
Was belted from the sun—
The facts which thoughtful folk endorse
The parsons fear and shun.

The "morning and the ev'ning" are
But glances of the sun,
The all-sustaining parent star,
Around whose smile we run—
The priests have cheated more, by far,
Than other rogues have done.

The sun is cause of night and day,
The mountain and the glen,
The mead, the mind, the cloud, the clay,
The egg, and eke the hen—
The crimes of men, as priests, outweigh
The good of priests, as men.

The parsons may have some remorse—
Since rogues have sometimes shame—
And do some good; if not, of course,
They badly play their game—
A game which is the tainted source
Of status, "oof," and fame.

Did vision ante-date the eye;
And thought, the mind and things?
Did "creatures" walk and run and fly
Before they'd legs and wings?
Will priests and parsons always lie
Till truth more profit brings?

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Correspondence.

REPLY TO A CHRISTIAN CRITIC.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I must content myself, and also Mr. W. J. Rumble, with a very brief reply to his letter in last week's *Freethinker*. Enforced brevity in this instance is less irksome from the fact that my critic is woefully wide of the real points raised in my article, and consequently much of his reply (?) is beside the mark. I will only trouble the readers of this journal with a word on the more important questions raised.

Mr. Rumble starts with a quotation, or what purports to be a quotation, from my article. It is nothing of the kind. I did not question the historical character of *Christ*, but of *Jesus*—an important distinction for all competent to understand the difference. If Mr. Rumble questions that the trend of modern criticism is in the direction of the teaching that nothing certain is known concerning what the New Testament Jesus taught, what he did, or even when he lived, I cannot pile up proofs, in the shape of lengthy quotations, here, but will refer him to the articles by Doctors Bruce and Schmiedel in the second volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. The "hedging" of preachers is evidenced in the article I took as the basis of my own criticism.

There is something cryptic in the statement that Christianity "could not at any time have relied" for support upon

a procedure which I said was risky. There has always been a risk about Christian defences, and it is sheer nonsense to talk about Christianity surviving the "constant danger." The truth is that the history of Christianity is a history of endless modifications, each new apology only enduring for a season, to be replaced by others that were foredoomed to the same fate.

Mr. Rumble seems to believe that I have no right to quote the alleged utterances of Jesus unless I accept his actual existence. But surely there is a difference between questioning whether a certain individual ever really existed, and criticising the teachings that are put forward in his name? In the same way my critic discovers dogmatism in the statement that people clothe their moral aspirations with the name of Jesus because he happens to be the figure-head of the current creed. The assertion *may* be wrong, but surely there is no dogmatism in making it. And to me it seems a simple statement of fact. It is a truth that, while the moral instincts are necessarily tolerably constant, the *form* in which they are expressed is determined by local circumstances. In this country Christianity is dominant, and human virtues are expressed in Christian language. Where Buddhism or Mohammedanism is paramount, Buddhistic or Mohammedan terminology is adopted. The Secularist sees in all this not the influence of various religions inciting their followers to right conduct, but the expression of social qualities colored by the predominant form of religious thought. I fail to see where the dogmatism lies here, and also the relevancy of the assertion that "no one ever heard of inspiration" derived from Atheism. As a matter of fact the statement is untrue. Charles Bradlaugh derived plenty of inspiration from his Atheism, and inspired more people during his lifetime than Christians allege Jesus inspired during his whole career.

Mr. Rumble did not know, until he read my article, that Jesus taught that the earth was flat. Well, I never said that he did, although I now say that teaching it to be either flat or spherical seemed to be altogether beyond the mental scope of the gospel Jesus. I said that he *accepted* the superstitions of his time, and that in support of the doctrine of a flat earth his followers appealed to the New Testament. My critic's reference to Luke xvii. 33-36 is misleading. There is nothing in the passages referred to about day and night existing simultaneously, nor, indeed, in the whole of the chapter. But if Mr. Rumble will explain how the Devil could take Jesus up to an "exceeding high mountain," and there show him "all the kingdoms" of a globular earth, he will have performed a service.

The reference to the Y. M. C. A. and science-classes is quite irrelevant. The question is not *who* teaches science, but *what* science teaches. Beside the mark also is the query concerning Atheists in Rome. When Mr. Rumble informs me *who were the Atheists in Rome*, I shall be pleased to answer his query. I must decline to discuss generalities of this description.

What Mr. Spencer calls "the theological bias" shows itself in the statement: "Judging from the character of some Secular publications, the sexual teachings of the gospel should be a point in its favor." "Secular publications" is a very wide term, and may embrace anything that is not avowedly religious. All I can say is that I am prepared to place the teachings concerning the relations of the sexes, *put forward by any responsible Secularist*, or by any official declaration of the N. S. S., against the gospel teaching on the same subject. Let Mr. Rumble refer to Matthew xix. 10-12, and also to Paul's indecent reason for sanctioning marriage (1 Cor. vii.), and I do not think that he will find this easily eclipsed in any "Secular publication." The results of this teaching among the early Christians is known to all students of ecclesiastical history, but common decency prevents me giving details.

I do not think I need spend much time criticising Mr. Rumble's remarks concerning Christian orphanages as proof that the "followers of Christ are to-day in the run of social reformers." The reply to such a contention is threefold. First, a great many who call themselves followers of Christ are sufficiently influenced by the secular forces of civilisation to counteract the evil influence of their creed; secondly, the charity that prompts to the care of the poor and needy is not Christian, but human; and, thirdly, my critic is himself an unconscious witness to the weakness of Christianity socially in imagining that charity is any part of a scientific social reform. I say nothing whatever against the motives that prompt to charity (where such motives are honest ones), but I assert that the man who works to raise the general level of the common intelligence, and establish institutions that shall ensure justice to all, is doing more to advance the cause of civilisation than all that the charitable agencies of Christendom ever have accomplished, or ever will accomplish. It is curious, too, that Christians do not see that the existence of so much misery, and the necessity for so much charity, is itself a complete answer to their claims on behalf of their creed.

Mr. Rumble finds "something pathetic" in my statement that "the results of criticism take a long while to sink into the minds of the people." Well, pathetic or not, it is a fact; and the shame of it lies with those who have charge of the people's religious education. I do not scruple to say that

there are hundreds of clergymen teaching to-day as absolute certainties doctrines which they know are either disproven or open to the gravest suspicion. The clergy are the very last to tell the people from the pulpits all that is known concerning Biblical criticism, comparative mythology, and much else that has a vital bearing upon the religion they profess to believe in. It is pathetic, it is unfortunate, it is, perhaps, disastrous, but it is true. It took nearly 200 years to get the real nature of the old Bible accepted by educated believers; it has taken 150 years to get some of the results of comparative mythology accepted by a few Christians; it may take as long to get believers to deal with the New Testament as they have dealt with the Old, with Jesus as they have dealt with Jehovah. But it is bound to come in time. The people, it is true, learn but slowly, and in that circumstance, combined with the power to obstruct the growth of knowledge, lies the opportunity of the clergy. And, to do them justice, they avail themselves of it to the full.

C. COHEN.

MORALS AND THE WILL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Might it not be well to permit this discussion to reopen? It is now pretty clear that it had developed into an inquiry into the Freedom of the Will. A question old enough, in sooth, but never yet, so far as my reading has gone, satisfactorily answered. Supernaturalism as a theory is not so very interesting perhaps to your readers, the majority of whom have, I doubt not, like myself, come to the conclusion that it is, in every known theory of it, self-contradictory, and therefore absurd; and that of evidence for its existence as a fact there is none, whilst there is abundance of evidence which cannot well fail to convince us that the supernatural has no existence outside the imagination of mankind. The theory then being absurd, and the evidence either lacking or antagonistic, we are forced—if we want a solution—to try to find one on naturalistic lines. But does our knowledge of natural law enable us to confidently affirm and reasonably prove that the human will is free? And if not free—or free only within certain limits—how far can we properly commend or blame any action? This seems to me to be really Mr. Kingham's problem, and it is certainly an absorbing one from the intellectual standpoint, if not perhaps so very important from the standpoint of every-day conduct. For the absolute freedom of the will I imagine there are few sticklers to-day, at any rate among educated or thoughtful people; for it is patent that in many most important matters to us our will is not consulted at all. For instance, we are not permitted to choose whether or not we will be born, or when or where, or of what parents we will be born, or whether we will be born idiots or wiseacres, diseased or healthy, short or tall, male or female; nay, we are not even permitted to choose the length of our days, though we may have the liberty to shorten them, as indeed most of us do (parsons, who are as a class the longest livers, perhaps excepted). Yet between birth and death may we not have some modicum of free will? That seems to me the point most deserving of elucidation, and I personally keep an open mind on the matter—or think I do. Certainly, our greatest Englishman, writing the following lines, seems to have had very little free will in a most intimate experience:—

But my five wits, nor my five senses, can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee,
Who leaves unswaid the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave, and vassal wretch to be.

This suggests that some of our most serious decisions may be come to *against* our will; and I certainly do not remember the time when I was free to dislike the perfume of a rose or the odor of musk. And yet I seem to have written so far hereon of my own free will and desire. I need not, and perhaps had better not, have written at all; and even now I seem free either to send what I have written or not as I please. Is even this apparent freedom an illusion? It may be, for it has often seemed to me that the very rapidity with which we "make up our minds" at times, and which seems a really free use of our volition, might prove not to be free after all if we were capable of observing those seemingly spontaneous mental processes which at times so closely precede the exercise of our will.

Before the words "morality" and "morals" can be serviceably used in a discussion such as this, I think we ought to have a common agreement as to what the word "morals" shall be taken as meaning; if it is to mean more than—as James Thomson ("B. V.") defined it—"local habits expanded to universal rules," we should agree as to how much more.

S.

Grog.

A well-known vicar in Yorkshire was teaching his Band of Hope to sing "Little Drops of Water." The children, however, were dull and stolid, and at last the despairing vicar exclaimed:—

"Now, children, try again. 'Little Drops of Water,' and do pray put a little 'spirit' in it."

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. Watts, "Christian Preachers and their Absurdities, especially in reference to Peace and War."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. M. Robertson, "The Clergy and Unbelief."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, E.): 7, F. A. Davies, "Faith and Finance."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, Stanton Coit, Ph.D., "Christ's Kingdom of God."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Stanton Coit, Ph.D., "Christ's Parables."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, Wm. Sanders, "Socialism in Germany."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Hyde Park): Lectures every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.; Sundays at 11.30 a.m.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mr. Schaller.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall): 3.45, W. M. Knox, "The Gospel of Zola."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): 7, Major-Gen. A. Phelps, "Vaccination." Illustrated with lime-light views.

BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 17 Little Horton-lane): G. W. Foote—11, "Lord Kitchener on the Bible and War"; 3, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 7, "The Doom of the Gods."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Mr. Odell, "The Democratic Ideal."

GATESHEAD (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road): C. Cohen—11, "How to Deal with the Criminal"; 3, "What is Man's Chance of a Future Life?"; 7, "What Civilisation Owes to the Cross."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—A. McGregor, "Perpetual Motion"; 6.30, D. Black, "Is there a God?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, H. Snell, "Bishop Colenso as Theologian."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. M. Labouchere (Fabian Society), "Imperialism: What it Means to the Industrial Working Classes."

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Walter Sanders, "The Curse of Empire."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "Is Competition an Evil?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): Mr. Cohen's lecture for Newcastle Branch; train leaves South Shields at 6.20.

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