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Morality or Religion : Which ?

MORALITY and religion are by no means identical, for their origins were different, and in their development they have not been necessarily associated. By morality is here meant that conduct which produces and perpetuates the true happiness of the human race. A moral man is one who does his best to cause and maintain a well-organised state of society. His morality is not imported from a so-called heaven ; it is the production of earth based upon reason and experience, and justified by results. As to religion, it is difficult to clearly define it, for what one man says is religious another regards as the very opposite. While some hold with Matthew Arnold that "religion is morality touched by emotion," the more popular notion of its meaning is that expressed by Gruppe—namely, "A belief in a State or in a Being which, properly speaking, lies outside the sphere of human striving and attainment, but which can be brought into this sphere in a particular way—namely, by sacrifice, ceremonies, prayers, penances, and self-denial." A religious man (in the popular sense) is one who believes in a personal God, the divinity of Christ, man's immortality, and the special inspiration of the Bible. Such a religion is based upon what Froude terms "a sense of responsibility to the Power that made us."

Now, the question arises, Which of the two—morality or religion—is better suited for the promotion of human welfare? From a Secular standpoint, the answer is morality, inasmuch as ethical force contains all that is practicable in religion, so far as human actions are concerned, without being hampered with the absurdities and perplexities of theology. Moreover, religion is not indispensable to a useful life, but morality is absolutely necessary to an honest and well-regulated career. It inspires confidence, wins respect, imparts consolation, and, as Darwin points out in his *Descent of Man*, it enables a person to play his part the better in the struggle for existence. Finally, it proclaims that honesty is not merely the best, but it is the only safe and just policy to pursue.

I have frequently heard earnest, but uninformed, street-preachers condemn morality as being useless of itself as a monitor in daily life. It was, however, a great surprise to me to read that Mr. A. J. Balfour, in his recent speech in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, should avow his belief in this palpable error. Therein he said (according to the *Times*):—

"There were those who had taken refuge from the difficulties of positive religious teaching to what they considered—improperly considered, he thought—the safeguard of ethical moralising. That was not the business of the Christian Church. Any Church which derogated from its great mission was destined to make its moralising barren and useless. Morality was no substitute for religion, and any organised body which in a rash moment thought that that was apparently the easier path to choose was destined to find very rude awakening."

Mr. Balfour is evidently a master of the "art of concealment" as to the meaning of the phrases he uses. Why did he not tell his pious audience what he meant by "ethical moralising" and the term "religion"? Had he done so, few probably of those present would have shared his ideas. It is this "mental reservation," so prevalent in the Churches, that keeps up the theological delusions of the day. He confessed that they "wanted congregations," but is it the best way to

obtain them to allege that it is not "the business of the Christian Church" to take "refuge on the safe ground of ethical moralising"? No doubt one of the principal causes of the failure of the Church has been its lack of ethical fidelity. Is it true that "morality is no substitute for religion"? Here, again, the answer will depend upon what is to be understood by religion. Huxley defined it as "Reverence and love for the ethical idea, and the desire to realise that ideal in life." Of course, this would be no "substitute," but morality itself. If, however, as Ruskin observes, "our national religion is the performance of Church ceremonies, and preaching of soporific truths (or untruths) to keep the mob quietly at work while we amuse ourselves," then morality would be the best of all substitutes, for it would replace fiction and prevarication by truth and candor. Besides, is not the alleged object of both morality and religion the formation of solid and upright character? That such characters can be, and have been, formed and maintained apart altogether from any supernatural religion is a recognised fact. Dr. Chalmers, the Bishop of Hereford, Professor Tyndall, and many other eminent writers both inside and outside the Churches, have admitted that religion is not necessary to the leading of moral lives. Emerson has well said: "The mind of this age has fallen away from theology to morals. I conceive it to be an advance." And it is so, no doubt, for the intellect of the age is more than ever finding its justification for useful and noble conduct in the result of good actions, rather than in obeying the supposed commands of any theological religion.

Mr. Balfour was candid enough to confess the existing difficulty of inducing people to attend church. Further, he stated what has frequently been urged of late by leading clergymen:—

"There was a danger that had to be faced, and it was one that could not be measured by mere statistics. Persons passed from religion to irreligion, and the change was accompanied neither by public nor by domestic division, nor by revolution; they simply said to themselves, the Christian religion might have been, and probably was, a useful instrument of enlightenment and progress in times gone by, but evidently it depended upon a view of the world which science had rejected. They further said that they could not throw it originally aside, but intellectual honesty required them to do so if they had to choose science rather than religion, and with regret—possibly without regret—they insensibly left the faith of their fathers."

Now, what plan did Mr. Balfour suggest to prevent a further falling from the faith? He deplored the fact that in the attitude of the masses towards the Church "there had taken place a revolution during the last hundred years which he believed had no parallel in the recorded traditions of mankind." His only hope was to make the people feel the need of "Christian civilisation," which it "was the object of that meeting, if possible, to secure." One might have expected something better than these stereotyped commonplace utterances from the fertile brain of Mr. Balfour. They were worthy only of a third-rate paid utterer of theological platitudes. Where is Christian civilisation to be found? Not in the Churches, for there stagnation, we are told, reigns supreme; not in the advanced nations, for their governments, so far as they make any approach to civilisation, are based upon anti-Christian teachings; not in the principal progressive reforms of modern times, for these have been secured in spite of the determined opposition of the Churches; and, finally, not in the work of the

Churches themselves, for, as the Rev. G. H. R. Garcia recently stated in the *Christian World*, the "Church to-day has never tried to make herself the social centre in the people's life; and, until she makes a serious effort in this direction, one cause of her impotence will remain..... What makes the present situation so deplorable is that nearly every man who is now outside the worship and work of the Church was once inside."

Notwithstanding these facts, the *Glasgow Herald*, of November 5, has the temerity to write in a leading article upon Mr. Balfour's speech: "Even the starkest Rationalist will not gainsay the dominating influence of religion in the formation of the national character, and it is open to any number of philosophical doubters to proclaim the benefit to humanity of a race sprung from an admixture of practicability and piety." This is a specimen of the pious nonsense which orthodox journals continue to circulate regardless of all veracity. The Rationalist will undoubtedly deny that the religion of the Churches is a "dominating influence in the formation of the national character." Christianity was erected upon the ruins of Greek and Roman philosophy, but it failed to give birth to principles that could be practically carried out in daily life. It is no credit to any faith to have destroyed Roman learning, and then to have plunged Europe into a state of mental darkness. The monuments of Christianity are huge buildings erected at the expense of the strained muscles of insufficiently remunerated laborers. It was this religion that incited Europe to a state of ferment, and inspired the Crusaders to wage their unholy wars; it was this religion that lighted the fires of Smithfield and Oxford, and established the Holy Inquisition and the Star Chamber; and it was this religion that spread war, strife, and desolation among nations in the attempt to subdue races who were no more savages in many respects than were the Christians themselves. For centuries the Christian Church has been the opponent of literary, political, and social progress. It closed the avenues of learning against those who did not accept their faith, and its Protestant adherents protested against giving Roman Catholics and Jews their civil rights. The truth is that Christianity is simply a commercial enterprise, a mere profession that in many cases is found to cover a multitude of "the weaknesses of the flesh." In short, it is a huge hypocrisy, and in every cathedral pile throughout the country we see an emblem of a petrified faith.

CHARLES WATTS.

Buchner's "Last Words."

Last Words on Materialism and Kindred Subjects. By PROFESSOR LUDWIG BÜCHNER, author of *Force and Matter*. Translated by Joseph McCabe. (London: Watts & Co.)

THIS volume is more interesting than important. All the ideas it contains may be found in *Force and Matter*. But they are sometimes presented here in the fresh light of advancing knowledge. Moreover, the author's mind, mellowed by thought, age, and experience, displays a charming urbanity in these numerous essays. A few of them, especially the semi-biographical ones on Moleschott and Vogt, are perfect gems. One would have liked a dozen such memoirs from the same competent pen.

A delightful Life of the author, by his brother, Professor Alex Büchner, serves as Introduction. Very early in it there is a reference to the great Napoleon, that prodigy who set the world spinning, and whose genius is still an astonishment. Büchner's father, born at Darmstadt, migrated to Holland in his youth, and entered the army of King Louis as a military surgeon. One day he saw the Emperor. It was at Versailles, where the Dutch troops, then in the vicinity of Paris, were being reviewed. The Emperor spoke a few words to him. "You ride well," he said, and asked: "How old are you?" That was all. But the young man he spoke to never forgot. It was a red-letter day in his life. Years afterwards, in his German home, his family often heard him speak with pride of that day at Versailles. So potent was the magnetism of that amazing man! Even more than his achievements, such slight incidents give us an idea of the magic of his personality.

How young Ludwig Büchner won his first post at Tübingen, how he lost it by writing *Force and Matter*; how he married a lady of beauty, accomplishments, and amiability, and found his real happiness; how he practised as a doctor and wielded his pen for a living; how he visited America in 1874, and how the profits of this lecture-tour formed the basis of his moderate means; all this and more is set forth in his brother's admirable Introduction. He was not honored as he should have been in his own country. His brother thinks he should have entered the Reichstag. But he himself knew better. How was he to live? "I must go on with my ploughing," he said, "and leave it to others to guard the political interests of the people as they think best."

It will be news to most of Büchner's admirers that his bent was to letters and poetry. He used to say that he had missed his vocation, and that "if he had to begin again, he would not write his books." But that was probably but fancy. A man's destiny is determined by his nature as well as his circumstances. However, he wrote a *New Hamlet*, with the sub-title of "Prose and Poetry from the Papers of a Deceased Pessimist." The sixty lyrics of which it consists are "more distinguished by depth of thought than poetic inspiration," which we can well believe. He was an admirer of Shakespeare, but he called the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy "a trivial dispute between loquacious pedants." The works existed, and had an intrinsic worth and interest, whoever wrote them. True, but are we not naturally grateful to the author of such noble productions? Büchner's deliberate praise of Shakespeare is to be found in one of the essays:—

"Shakespeare was not an over-man in Nietzsche's sense, but a full and complete man in the best meaning of the word, and one who would have only laughed at the Nietzschean idea. He pondered over the loftiest heights and deepest depths of the human heart, and weighed the most difficult problems of humanity in his giant mind. But it would never have given him a moment's gratification to be elevated above humanity."

Despite the *blasé* sub-title of the *New Hamlet*, Büchner was not himself a pessimist. He was richly endowed, his brother says, with an unquenched and idealist optimism, which "pervaded his writings more and more with the advance of age."

"As if trying to outdo the theologian with his promises of sugar plums, he predicted a better future here on earth for advancing science. The fact that this future lay in the almost invisible distance did not distress him, when he thought of the thousands of years it has taken our planet to develop, and still await it before it will reach the desired, and indeed very hypothetical, goal. Whether this trust be well founded or no, it is at least natural and legitimate in view of the prizes which his opponents so generously offered to their followers."

Eternal felicity, to wit, in the world to come; a generous offer, but extremely inexpensive.

Büchner's own view of social progress was not Utopian. He was not a State Socialist. He believed in the institution of private property, but not in the right of unlimited bequest. His idea was that the State should step in more decisively at the death of the rich, and appropriate the larger part of their wealth for the community. He endorsed the hope of Moleschott that science would eventually obtain such control of matter "that poverty, in the sense of unsatisfied want, may become an impossibility." "Scientists," said Moleschott, "are the most effective workers in the social question. It may reveal itself as necessity, but it will never be solved by violence. Its solution lies in the hand of science." With this Büchner thoroughly agreed.

Büchner's reputation is that of a Materialist. But even in *Force and Matter* he pointed out that Materialism and Idealism are only two aspects of the same thing. Here he observes:—

"A one-sided insistence on matter leads to Materialism; a one-sided insistence on force, to Spiritualism, with all its hurtful consequences. No reconciliation of the two systems is possible except on a monistic basis, by a recognition of the unity and inseparability of force and matter. Most probably there is only one kind of matter and one form of force, of which the various kinds of matter and force are but different modifications or phenomenal forms. As far as force is concerned, this has been demonstrated by the famous discovery of the

law of the conservation of energy; in time it will probably be proved of matter also. Matter and its movement are the ultimate factors to which all things may be traced, whilst they themselves can be traced no further. They are the great unknown X and Y, whose eternal and illimitable process constitutes the universe."

Elsewhere, in another essay, Büchner calls himself a Monist. This designation is also accepted by Haeckel. Long ago it was accepted by Charles Bradlaugh: a fact which we commend to the attention of those who take a supercilious view of his philosophical ability.

Büchner was Atheistic to the end. Monism was his positive philosophy; on the negative side he disputed all Theistic interpretations of the universe. Nor would he dabble in metaphysics and mystery. He had no more respect for Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable" than for the "First Cause" of the theologians. He pointed out, indeed, that this "Unknowable" is only Kant's "Thing in Itself" in a new dress. Neither would he flirt with Agnosticism; he said it was really "dualistic and supernaturalist." A brief, but very interesting, account is given of a conversation he had on this subject with Darwin in 1881. Büchner laid his "more Atheistic views" before the great man, who preferred to be called an Agnostic. "All this," said Darwin, "is very good for well-educated and thoughtful people; but are the masses ripe for it?" To which Büchner made the obvious reply, that if revolutionary truths should be confined to the judicious few, he would like to know why Darwin published his immortal *Origin of Species*.

On the subject of "the soul" Büchner never wavered. In the course of a compact and luminous essay, criticising the latter and more orthodox views of Wundt, he writes:—

"The word 'soul' does not designate an independent entity, but is an expression which is used in a period of scientific ignorance and superstitious animistic ideas to designate the manifold functions or manifestations of the brain in relation to the entire nervous system. In other words, the term 'soul' means nothing else than a collective idea, a general expression for the united functions of the brain and the nervous system; just as the term 'respiration' is a collective idea for the activity of the respiratory organs, the term 'digestion' for the action of the digestive organs, and the term 'circulation' for the function of the muscular system. Hence it does not designate an independent entity, but merely a function, however complicated, of the living body."

Spiritualism he regarded with contempt; he remarked sarcastically that its messages from the land of spirits do not often "show any trace of that higher intelligence which should inevitably be associated with the alleged condition of a better life." What gives Spiritualism its hold on people is what has given every religion its hold on its adherents. "The desire that lives in every man to peep behind the awful mystery of death," as Büchner says, "is so strong that it beats down all doubt on the part of reason or intelligence, and has given rise to a formal science of mystery, or *occultism*, against which the advanced science of our day has struggled without success."

Writing at the very end of the nineteenth century, in 1899, Büchner refers to the causes that hinder progress. Chief among these he places Christianity. In a previous essay he had referred approvingly to one of the sayings of Frederic the Great, that in studying history one feels that the whole world was mad from the time of Constantine to the time of Luther. Man's true relation to the universe is only just beginning to be understood, and many a hard battle must yet be fought before the truth can triumph.

"It certainly cannot be said that the spirit of the time is favourable to such a victory, in spite of the splendid progress of human knowledge and capacity in the last century. On the contrary, reactionary influences outweigh progressive at the moment in science, art, literature, and life. But that this will not always be the case is assured by the experience of history, which teaches that valleys alternate with hills in the life of the mind as in that of nature and politics. But when once the belief in evolution has replaced the earlier idea of creation in educated minds, we shall see without delay the reconciliation of the inner and outer, of thought and reality, of nature and mind, in a monistic theory of the world."

These are the last words of Büchner's last volume, and here we will end. We trust we have said enough to

show that the book is well worth reading, although it is not of the same importance as *Force and Matter*. But before closing we must say a word in praise of Mr. Joseph McCabe's translation. It is in every way admirable. Its English is real English, not the pigeon English that some translators seem unable to avoid.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Pathology of Religion.—IV.

FOR those who take up the study of religion from the point of view adopted in these articles, there is an almost inexhaustible field of investigation opened up by the phenomena of conversion. I do not think that any experienced physician would seriously question the assertion that the normal extravagances of revival meetings, and the tone of the confessions related by converts, are nearly always evidence of a want of balance, and often of actual dementia. Dr. Maudsley points out* that the character of those women who are the "favorite subjects of.....religious revivals, and who commonly exhibit some peculiarity of nervous constitution, such as catalepsy, paralysis, somnambulism, or spasmodic affections," is very closely allied to the insane temperament. Conduct that is attributed by ignorant preachers to the "presence of the Spirit" would certainly be ascribed to nervous derangement by a medical observer. Indeed, the descriptions one reads of religious revivals "carry us far back in the history of the human mind, showing modern men still in ignorant sincerity producing the very fits and swoons to which for untold ages savage tribes have given religious import. These manifestations in modern Europe, indeed, form part of a revival of religion—the religion of mental disease."†

There is something morbid in even the sense of sinfulness upon which converts love to dwell in their confessions, and which preachers assert to be the essential condition of conversion. The normally healthy mind does not, and cannot, dwell upon its sinfulness, for obvious reasons. Least of all is there any fondness for gloating over past misdeeds, when they are once recognised as such. The essential sinfulness and the essential purity of human nature are doctrines that are equally untrue; but, of the two, the former, judged by results, must be pronounced as actually immoral. Still there is, in this harping upon the sense of sin by preachers, an unconscious recognition of the truth of what I have been contending for, since there is with it an admission that a large part of modern religious phenomena is essentially pathological. Of somewhat similar significance is the confidence with which religious teachers look to disease and general weakness as being occasions when religious beliefs command assent. Where such falling back upon religion does occur, the scientific student sees only the triumph of early impressions over later acquired culture. In decay the qualities of the mind lose their force in the reverse order of their growth—those acquired last being the first to disappear. It therefore happens that religion, dating as it does from the purely savage state, is the last to give way. It may, indeed, afford the religious-minded some little consolation to learn that Atheism is unknown among insane people. The Atheism of people disappears with their sanity. The late Bishop of Exeter's apology for confirming a number of idiots, on the ground that "the weak-minded have a natural leaning towards religion," was, although he little thought it, a thoroughly scientific generalisation.

To return to the subject of conversion. The epidemic and pathologic nature of the majority of conversions hardly admits of question. The records of various sects in France, Germany, and Russia, and the rise of Methodism in England, afford numerous examples in support of this statement.‡ The physical aspect of the subjects of the early Methodist revivals is thus described by an eye-witness:—

"There came on first a feeling of faintness, with rigor, and a sense of weight at the pit of the stomach; soon

* *Pathology of Mind*, p. 323.

† Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii., 421.

‡ See Hecker's *Epidemics of the Middle Ages*, pp. 133-150.

after which the patient cried out, as if in the agonies of death or the pains of labor. The convulsions then began, first showing themselves in the muscles of the eyelids, though the eyes themselves were fixed and staring. The most frightful contortions of the countenance followed, and the convulsions now took their course downwards, so that the muscles of the trunk and neck were affected, causing a sobbing respiration, which was performed with great effort. Tremors and agitations ensued, and the patients screamed out violently, and tossed their heads from side to side. As the complaint increased it seized the arms, and its victims beat their breasts, clasped their hands, and made all sorts of strange gestures."*

For the more subjective effects the following, from Southey's *Life of Wesley*, added to the example given in my last article, will serve. It is again the record of an onlooker:—

"At Everton some were shrieking, some roaring aloud.The most general was a loud breathing, like that of people half strangled and gasping for life.....Great numbers wept without any noise; others fell down as dead. I stood upon the pew seat, as did a young man in the opposite pew—an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman; but in a moment, when he seemed to think of nothing else, down he dropped with a violence inconceivable. I saw a sturdy boy, about eight years old, who roared above his fellows.....his face was red as scarlet; and almost all on whom God laid his hand turned either very red or almost black."

Of the real nature of such phenomena there can be but one rational explanation; and while advancing culture has had the general influence of limiting the frequency and violence of such epidemics, yet more modern cases of revival or of conversion yield a substantially similar result. An American professor, Dr. Starbuck,† has gone to the trouble of collecting data upon which to base some sort of scientific generalisation concerning the nature of "conversion." The replies, received from about thirteen hundred cases, are quite sufficient to warrant all that has been said above. Physically, thirty-nine per cent. of the females and eighty-eight per cent. of the males experienced loss of appetite or sleep, general nervousness, affections of sight, hearing, or the muscular sense preceding and during conversion. Subjectively, the cases are quite on a line with those cited above. I have only room for the following examples—the ages of the subjects are in brackets:—"I thought something terrible was going to happen" (14). "I was very wicked; my heart was black; I experienced nothing but unaccountable sadness" (19). "I couldn't eat; I would lie awake at night; I was excited" (19). "I had visions of Christ saying to me: 'Come to me, my child'" (15). "Just before conversion I was walking along a pathway, thinking of religious matters, when suddenly the word H-E-L-L was spelled out five yards ahead of me" (17). "There was a choking sensation in my throat, and every muscle in my body received an electric shock" (16). "I fell on my face by a bench and tried to pray. Every time I would call on God something like a man's hand would strangle me by choking. I thought I should surely die if I did not get help. I made one final effort to call on God for mercy.....and the last I remember at that time was falling back upon the ground with the same unseen hand at my throat. When I came to myself there was a crowd around praising God."

"A crowd around praising God"! Could there be a more accurate reproduction of a crowd of savages watching an epileptic patient than this? Yet this was at the close of the nineteenth century, and in civilised America, not in the depths of an African forest. Well may Tylor call it "the religion of mental disease." The facts fully warrant the comment of a Russian physician, that "It is not healthy normal life that one studies in sudden religious conversion, but the phenomena of revival insanity." Dr. Mercier, one of our leading specialists on brain diseases, is equally emphatic. He points out that during development there arises a large body of formless feeling which, when the environment is favorable, may dissipate itself in a perfectly harmless manner. "But if no such natural outlet exists, the

vague, voluminous, and formless feelings.....are ascribed to the direct action of the Deity, and assume a place as religious emotion." Such an outlet he evidently regards as fraught with more or less danger, particularly when it is associated with religious revivalism. He asserts that "Every 'revival' is attended by its crop of cases of insanity, which are the more numerous as the 'revivals' are fervent and long continued."*

There is one conclusion to be drawn from Dr. Starbuck's researches which seems to place the pathological character of "conversions" as beyond question. With rare exceptions the ages of the converts range between twelve and twenty-four years. Conversions after that age are most infrequent. This at once established conversion, as Dr. Starbuck points out, as a "distinctly adolescent phenomenon." The ages of adolescence and of conversion are thus conterminous, and it is difficult to escape the logical inference of such an agreement. There is no period of life at which the individuals—particularly females—are so little able to bear strain as at puberty. The whole organism is undergoing a transformation. The individual is filled with new feelings, aimless longings, and obscure impulses. It is the period of the greatest physical and mental instability; the period not only when religious conversions are commonest, but also when outbreaks of insanity, criminality, epilepsy, and drunkenness are most likely to occur.

The establishment of such a connection at once sweeps away, as mere idle talk, all the expressions one hears about conversion being an "awakening of the religious instinct," a "deepening of the spiritual life," etc. It is generally a purely pathological condition. At a time of its greatest susceptibility the organism is exposed to the contagious enthusiasm of a revival meeting with the prepared theatrical orations of a professional evangelist; and, provided there is not the necessary stability of character to withstand the dual attack, there is an inevitable surrender, often, as Mercier points out, with baleful results. To my mind, there is something almost criminal in thus exposing young men and women to such disturbing influences, at a time when there is so much danger of the organism becoming permanently deranged. Looking at all the influences surrounding revivalism, the result can hardly be healthy even for those above the ages at which conversion usually occurs; while for others the results, individual and social, cannot be regarded with perfect equanimity by the sane student of social development.

It is not my purpose at present, however, to enter into a consideration of the social results of "conversion." All that I am now concerned in showing is that it furnishes a by no means insignificant contribution to the pathology of religion. In what has gone before I have pointed out how, from the very earliest ages, religious belief has rested upon conditions that must be described as pathological. All religions, ancient and modern, savage and civilised, have a common unity in this. Fastings and maceration of the body, epilepsy, catalepsy, and downright insanity have all helped to build up the modern religious consciousness. We are the "heirs of the ages" for evil as well as good; and, while we reap the benefits of wisdom of our ancestors, we also share the disadvantages of their folly. Modern religious phenomena—allowing for the inevitable influence of a different environment and wider culture—simply falls into line with that of previous ages. We no longer, it is true, treat the epileptic or the lunatic as God-inspired, but we still derive no small portion of our religious strength from sources that will scarcely stand investigation.

Unfortunately, as I have already said, you do not kill an instinct when you have shown the uselessness of its existence, or exposed the errors upon which it was originally based. It is one thing to show that religion has been reared upon delusion and fraud; it is quite another to get people out of the old ruts and induce them to tread a new path. Yet, by making plain to all the true nature of religious belief and the character of the forces that have contributed to its growth, we do at least prevent it gaining strength. And, in the long run, the belief or the instinct that cannot receive support from its environment is doomed to perish from sheer want of nutrition.

C. COHEN.

* Quoted by Hecker, pp. 143-4.

† *Psychology of Religion*, by E. D. Starbuck. (Walter Scott; 1899.)

* *Sanity and Insanity*, ch. x.

A Pretentious Prelate.

THE Bishop of London is, or may think himself to be, an important person, if only by reason of his office. Dr. Creighton, and still more his predecessor, Dr. Temple, never allowed it to be supposed that the bishopric of the biggest city in the world was anything but a position of the highest importance.

Yet the elevated position may be one thing, while the person who fills it may be absolutely inadequate to the office, and may indeed make it perfectly clear that his appointment should never have been made.

The present Bishop of London is not a person to command any veneration or great esteem. He has no academic qualifications which are worth considering. He has published a few booklets on Christian Evidences which are very trashy and without a solitary indication of original thought.

Any person who might be "persuaded to be a Christian" by them would be a perfect fool. They are deficient in literary style and grace, the so-called historical facts are altogether wrong, and as for logical argument one might just as well go for it to the Zoo.

We needn't mince terms in the effort to accurately describe Dr. Winnington Ingram. It's neither treason nor blasphemy to picture him as he is. He hopes, of course, to be eventually Archbishop of Canterbury, but he would be a bad successor to any Primate in the last decade. He has no capabilities—scholastic, rhetorical, or otherwise, qualifying him even for his present position, to say nothing of that which he aspires to.

As a matter of fact, which may be tested by reference to newspaper prints, he thinks that blatancy is sense, and that some silly talk about and supposed acquaintance with working men in the East-end should make him popular with the democracy.

But this is idle expectation. Working men will see that he is trying to play them for all they are worth, and for his own game, and that he has practically stepped upon them from his position at Stepney up to a stipend of £10,000 a year, with a palace at Fulham and a town residence in St. James's-square. Thence he preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who had not "where to lay his head," and whose principal doctrine was "Blessed are the poor!"

This lordly cleric has been good enough to talk, the other week, sneeringly about "Secularists who at street corners say that Christianity is a delusion." The Secularists, at any rate, do not say it in a palace, or in a town house in St. James's-square.

Christianity, if we wish to discuss the question, is a delusion; and this man, who makes so much out of it, and hopes to make more, is not the individual in whom we should repose an excessive amount of confidence.

There have been numbers of popular preachers, and Dr. Ingram is no striking example of anything superior to the ordinary sky-pilot with an immense amount of borrowed rhetoric and a limited number of ideas. When you come to think about the preaching by him or others, there is really nothing of importance or special effort about it. Except with his intimate admirers, there has never been any evidence offered in regard to the claims of this very pretentious cleric. He is even worse than Price Hughes.

What is specially obnoxious about him is that (for certain reasons best known to himself) he has endeavored to make it appear that he is on perfectly intimate terms with the working and so-called "lower classes."

Yet he knows little or nothing about them; they don't know him; his pretended knowledge is not *actual* knowledge, but simply what he has been told as an almoner. And down in the East of London, as everyone knows, there are plenty of "fairy tales" flying about for those who will take them.

But why—and this is what is the special objection—should the Bishop of London sneer at "Secularists at street corners"? Are there not heaps of religionists—the Salvation and Church Army especially—who are to be found at street corners, not to mention a number of independent religious idiots?

This sneer is unworthy of the Bishop of London, who belongs to a Christian organisation that not only

stands in thoroughfares, but makes the Sunday mornings hideous with the clacking of cracked or dissonant bells. The silly old poetic stuff about "the bells" has no application to many places in suburban London.

Dr. Ingram ought to offer some explanations which should be apologetic for his present position and for the one that he obviously aims at. He may disavow the designation of "a proud priest," but it applies to him, notwithstanding all his bunkum about worrying in the slums. It has never been made clear that anything was ever done by him of a really serviceable character in East London. The notion with a number of residents in the East-end is that it has been "mostly talk."

With certainty it may be said that Dr. Ingram is the most pretentious cleric in London; and here is the point—he has the least reason to be so.

FRANCIS NEALE.

Poets or Preachers.

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?—KEATS.
How charming is divine philosophy.—MILTON.

IN the "Protagoras" and other Platonic dialogues we learn how the Greek boys, as soon as they had acquired their letters, began, sitting on a bench at school, to read the poets and to commit their verses to memory, as the first step in their education. And in Xenophon's Symposium one of the guests says:—

"My father, earnestly wishing that I should become a good man, made me learn all Homer's poetry; and to this day I could say off, by heart, the whole Iliad and Odyssey."

Indeed, Homer was often and truly declared the educator of Hellas.

It is a far cry from Ancient Greece to the England of the sixteenth century. The Christian superstition had taken the place of the older mythology, and the position of the poet was regarded with disfavor. Against a bigoted Puritanism, which viewed poetry as the mother of lies and the nurse of abuse, the chivalrous Sidney maintained that—

"The ever-praiseworthy Poetic is full of vertue-breeding delightfulness, and voyde of no gyfte that ought to be in the noble name of learning."

And, after proving poetry superior to both philosophy and history, he draws this conclusion:—

"That as vertue is the most excellent resting place for all worldlie teaching to make his end of: so Poetrie, being the most familiar to teach it, and most princelie to move toward it, in the most excellent work is the most excellent workman."

Some of the greatest English poets did not dispute the validity of a didactic purpose in their work. Spenser, in his preface to the *Fairie Queene*, wrote:—

"The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline."

Milton "was confirmed in this opinion that he who would not be frustrated of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem—that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy."

Wordsworth, too, whom Tennyson said "uttered nothing base," has told us:—

"Every great poet is a teacher. I wish to be considered as a teacher, or nothing."

Many votaries of the Muses, however, would repudiate this position. They would prefer to regard poetry as the art which enchants the fancy, and transports the mind away from the dull reality to the pleasant garden of dreams. To them a moral purpose, far from enhancing the beauty of a poem, is a blemish which disfigures an otherwise beautiful production. When they contemplate a work of art, they do not want morality, nor philosophy, nor preaching, but beauty.

And yet the true poet must be more than a mere rhymmer. Verse itself is an absurdity except as an expression of some higher movement of the mind, or

as an expedient to lift other minds to the same ideal level.

The contention that great poetry must embody great thought is, perhaps, nowhere better illustrated than in the Middle Ages. A sweet chorus of song burst forth in Provence, the delight of all Europe. The verse of the Troubadours was without substance; it carried no burden of thought. It quickly died away, and "the rest is silence."

But, from the same principles of art, transplanted to the University of Bologna, grew a distinguished school of philosophic poets, whose supreme and unrivalled master was Dante. It was not only in greatness of style that Dante surpassed his contemporaries, but in profundity of thought. He defined poetry as truth under a veil of loveliness, and throughout his work he aims at instruction no less than beauty. While Homer was the educator of Hellas, Dante stands with Shakespeare and Goethe among the greatest teachers of the human race.

But do we read Homer for the lessons he conveys? Does any reader joyously absorb the *Iliad* as a sermon in twenty-four books? We do not study Dante in order to master the subtleties of mediæval ecclesiasticism. The dreary doctrines of the Christian religion could scarcely need a *Divine Comedy* for their exposition, nor can we peruse to-day without a smile the explanation of the spots on the moon, solemnly put in the mouth of the beatified Beatrice in Paradise. If this were Dante, how far would he stand above those didactic versifiers of the Middle Ages whose endless pages of moralising affright even German professors.

To put to any poem the direct question, "What do you teach?" is spreading a frost over a garden of roses. We take up the *Merchant of Venice*, and yield ourselves to the great magician's power. We are under Italian skies, with Jessica and Portia, Bassanio and Shylock. Then we turn to the work of a critic, and read: "Such, then, is Shakespeare's treatment of the problem of judgment by appearances," and so on.

We turn to Milton, Wordsworth, Browning, and find whole pages of introspection, philosophising, and preaching; and each period is like a milestone to the weary traveller. How gladly, after such an experience, we lose ourselves in the gracious worldliness of Chaucer or the frank paganism of Keats.

No, philosophy is not the immortal part, it is not the soul of poetry. Yet, we must ask, what would be left in a poetic masterpiece if the basis of thought were removed? Take away from Homer that element which caused the Greek father to compel his son to learn the two epics by heart; take from Dante all those lessons from the bitter experience of life; take from Shakespeare his rationalism; and what remains would not justify their immortal renown. The poet must never degenerate into the mere preacher; but without noble thought great poetry cannot live.

What the poet becomes when deprived of a strong intellectual element is illustrated by the genius of Poe. Possessed of marvellous gifts, he yet holds a position below many of his contemporaries, who could not pretend to vie with him in originality. His poems are like bubbles in the sunlight, beautiful, iridescent, and—empty.

"All right human song," says Ruskin, "is the finished expression, by art, of the joy or grief of noble persons, for right causes. And accurately in proportion to the rightness of the cause, and purity of the emotion, is the possibility of the fine art. A maiden may sing of her lost love, but a miser cannot sing of his lost money."

In this sense, even the delicate Epicureans, though mostly unaware of their mission, are also teachers. Villon, with his plaintiff query, "Where are the snows of yesteryear?" Catullus singing, "Let us live, my Lesbia, and love. Suns may set and rise again, but when our brief light fades the sleep of that night lasts for ever"—these poets, too, with a thrill of passion flashed across the centuries, cannot evade the lessons they have not the slightest desire to convey. Even art for art's sake is moral:—

The poet gathers fruit from every tree—
Yea, grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles he,
Plucked by his hand, the basest weed that grows
Towers to a lily, reddens to a rose.

MIMNERMUS.

Wily Li Hung Chang.

DURING his government of Chili an event occurred which illustrates the man. An inundation of the Grand Canal was threatened, but was averted by a favorable change in the weather. Li thought proper to give out that the auspicious turn of affairs had been heralded by a river snake, and this creature was at once deified as the Dragon King, placed reverently in a temple, and the Viceroy and his subordinates did homage to it. To see this rank Confucian, as free from any real belief in such fetishism as any Positivist philosopher, this burly six-foot dignitary kowtowing to a little reptile, must have been a sight for the gods. It was playing to the gallery with a purpose. Li proposed that a concession should be made to him to repair the Grand Canal. The request was granted, and ere long he reported to the Throne that the work had been done for "myriads of taels" less than on previous occasions—which, probably, after Celestial usage, meant lying and speculation, things that in the Far East go for high policy. Unluckily for him, heavy rain ensued, the embankment gave way, and the country was inundated. A hostile Censor, named Pien, reported severely against the Viceroy, and he was handed over to the proper Board for nominal punishment.

Li was equal to the occasion; he now did, vigorously and at once, what he pretended to do before, recovered his reputation and rank, and even won additional "Powdered Peacock Feathers." Not to be beaten, Li tried one more appeal to superstition by addressing a memorial to the Emperor predicting the goodwill of heaven to the realm, as in the time of Yao (2356 B.C.), because some double-eared wheat had appeared in the province. The Censor very properly denounced this as adulatory nonsense, such stalks of wheat being constantly to be met with, and he deplored that a man of Li's position should stoop to such folly. Nothing followed the exposure, but the circumstance is typical of the way in which the Celestial Empire is governed. In another instance Li's pretence of superstition had the greatest success. Hantan possesses in one of its temples a mystic iron tablet, which brings rain, so they say, to any district into which it is carried. Li induced the Emperor to have this talisman brought to Peking, where drought prevailed; and, lo! the showers fell, and the tablet was carried back with rejoicing. Apparently Li did not explain why time and again millions of people had been, and still are, permitted to perish in China for want of rain. But there he is, like other wonder-workers: Miracles are occasional things! It is not because the Literati class is unintelligent that it pretends observance of Buddhist and Taoist mummeries. Professor Douglas records that after the capture of Changchow Li memorialised the throne that special honour should be done to Kwanti, the God of War, who, in answer to his prayers, turned a pouring rain into brilliant sunshine, a north wind to a south wind, and gave increased power to the guns and muskets of the Imperial troops—and the Emperor granted the request. The learned Chinese professor appears to think there was some real superstition in this. We shrewdly suspect the Viceroy had as much faith in that most stupid deity Kwanti as he had in the deified little reptile of the Peiho.

—Daily Telegraph.

Christian Carnal Reason.

[Referring to the *Freethinker* being dated 1901 A.D., a Mr. Rumble says: "To date a paper from a particular historical event, and then to raise the inquiry as to whether that event ever occurred, appears somewhat inconsistent."]

THE righteously reasonless Rumble,
Whose judgment is all in a jumble,
Assumes that A.D.

Began with J. C.—
A funny historical stumble.

He fondly and foolishly flouted
A thinker who thoughtfully doubted,
Whilst using A.D.,

The tale of J. C.—
A tale that is sensibly scouted.

The week-days, with constant persistence,
He names after gods whose existence
He stoutly denies,

Yet states his surprise
When others show *less* inconsistency.

The Christian commemorates meekly—
With all of his mind, which is weakly—
The gods of the North:

Old Thor, and so forth,
In *Thor's* day, and *Woden's* day, weekly.

The righteously reasonless Rumble
Should write in a manner more 'umble;
But, if he adore

Gods Woden and Thor,
His logic is less in a jumble.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Acid Drops.

THE new Bishop of Worcester, late Canon Gore, adds his voice to the general chorus of wailing over the dearth of curates. He advises "a serious attempt to meet one of the most pressing of present religious needs." But he does not suggest any paring down of the bishops' salaries, for instance, to make a fund out of which curates could be better paid. Nor does he suggest how intelligent young men can be induced to enter an unintelligent profession.

It came out in evidence in a recent will case that the widow of the late Rev. J. H. Worsley, of Syria, once saw a marvelous rainbow, which descended over the trap in which she was driving and travelled with it for half a mile. At last the trap came to a public-house, and the rainbow went up a lane behind it. This was advanced in proof of her having been out of her mind. But what about that "star" we read of in the New Testament, the one that was chased by some Persian gentlemen, and finally rested over the top of a Jewish public-house? Wasn't it about on a par with that rainbow? Yet millions of people believe in it who are held to be in the full possession of their senses.

"Providence" watches over the sparrows. But it doesn't seem to trouble about the sheep. Drought in Australia between 1895 and 1900 caused 25,000,000 sheep to die of starvation. Every one of that vast number passed through terrible suffering until death came to its relief. Yet the theologians tell us that "Providence" was well aware of the fact, and did not think it necessary to interfere.

More "Providence," this time in Sicily. A violent storm has wrecked many houses and caused a serious loss of life. This may go with the storms and fogs that have made November so calamitous further West. But, of course, he doeth all things well.

The sun is all right again. The Chinese Board of Rites, by burning incense and beating drums and gongs, have rescued him from an eclipse. Very foolish, no doubt. But we have got a Board of Rites over here, only it is called by a different name.

A young woman named Ada Morris tried to commit suicide in a Birmingham canal. When arrested she refused to eat or drink, and was evidently trying to starve herself to death. The magistrate remanded her for an inquiry into her mental condition. Her ailment is said to be religious mania.

The *Daily Express* made special bill-lines of its notice of the new American Bible. This work occupied twenty persons in Chicago for ten years. It does not seem to be a masterpiece of English. "Ye are the light of the world" could hardly be improved as a composition, but the Chicago translators think they improve it into "It is you who are the light of the world." "Let brotherly love continue" is metamorphosed into "Love for the brethren must never be allowed to die out." These samples are sufficient. They show that if the English Bible had been fixed up at Chicago it would not have made much impression on the English people. How few Christians bear in mind what their Bible owes to the noble old English into which it was translated by scholars who had ears as well as pens.

Of the uses of advertisement in times of adversity there have been many quaint, and even droll, samples in the daily Press; but for strange bargaining we must yield the palm to the Swiss.

In a recent issue of a Zurich paper there appeared the following notice: "A Swiss family, Protestant, wants money to purchase a grocery shop. In case the help is forthcoming the family will baptise their three children, aged one to ten years."

It is just possible that, like a young member of the Hooligan class in London, the Swiss parents confused vaccination with the Church's rite. But, anyhow, Protestants seem cheap.

The evolution of the bishop's lady into an ecclesiastical dignitary on strictly Darwinian principles is a process we have watched with mingled amusement and concern. It would seem that the process has reached a stage at which the results are visible even to the observant foreigner. One such, who lately visited one of our cathedrals, related on his return to his fatherland that he had seen in the stalls the bishop, the bishopess, and the little bishops of both sexes.

What promises to be a lively encounter is about to come off in the columns of the *Referee*. One of the Knights of the Editor's Round Table has been repeating, says the *Church Times*, the time-honored charges against the Jesuit Order, which charges Father Thurston, S.J., has affirmed in the columns of that journal to be false. His opponent has not

been content to entrench himself in the strong position that the Order has been discredited at one time or another in every country of Europe, and has been denounced and dissolved by Popes, but has made several charges.

Father Thurston has fastened tenaciously upon one specific charge—namely, that the Order has somewhere or other in writing endorsed the principle that the end justifies the means. He accordingly challenges his opponents to find chapter and verse, and to that end has requested and persuaded the *Referee* to appoint a committee composed of Romanists and non-Romanists, who shall decide whether the charge is proved or not.

The Rev. George Arbuthnot, the very self-assertive vicar of Shakespeare's Church at Stratford-on-Avon, possesses an animal cemetery. In it are deposited the vicar's favorite dogs and horses, and on their gravestones are tributes to their memory. Many of the deceased animals had Old Testament names, and the inscriptions are in English, Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, and Latin. One sentiment runs thus: "From Moses to Moses there's nothing like Moses."

What is the meaning of this "sentiment," which seems extremely ridiculous "in the raw"?

There is some speculation as to the future action of the ministers and members of the United Free Church, who have instituted proceedings against Professor George Adam Smith. That learned and really very rational person (for a Scotch professor) has given great offence by his book on the Old Testament, which disposes effectually of the historicity of many portions, particularly the earlier books, of Holy Writ.

Everything possible is likely to be done to prevent the matter developing into a "heresy-hunt." For, it is said, Professor Smith has many warm friends, though some of them do not share his advanced views as a Higher Critic. The tender mercies of the righteous, however, are often very cruel, and Professor Smith may realise that fact a little later.

"Is the Pulpit Doomed?" was the title of a lecture recently given at Penzance by the Rev. J. Cockin, of Truro. The query is interesting and pertinent. Whatever may be the fate of the pulpit will be due largely to itself. Unless it is possible to make it the vehicle of more sense than at present, the sooner it is abolished the better.

Someone recently wrote to the publishers of *Roads to Rome*, which contains the stories of notable converts to Roman Catholicism, saying that if it were a book for cyclists he would like a copy!

Mark Rutherford's latest work, *Pages from a Journal*, seems to be an interesting book, though some portions will hardly commend themselves to the "unco'guid." There is a chapter on Judas Iscariot in which there is evidence of originality and daring. The author sets himself to discover what may be said for Judas, and it is admitted that he makes out a very strong case.

He says: "The hatred of Judas is not altogether virtuous. We compound thereby for our neglect of Jesus and his precepts; it is easier to establish our Christianity by cursing the wretched servant than by following his master." Or this: "If a record could be kept of those who have abjured Jesus through love of gold, through fear of the world, or of the Scribes and Pharisees, we should find many who are considered quite respectable, or have even been canonised, and who, nevertheless, much more worthily than Iscariot, are entitled to 'champing' by the jaws of Sathanas."

Rev. Samuel Owen, Congregational minister at Daventry, is accused of assaulting a domestic servant named Harriet Elizabeth Miller. The girl said that she left the defendant's church because of disputes with her young man. On November 1 defendant, whom she accidentally met, accompanied her part of the way home. He asked her to return to his church. He put his arm round her waist and behaved improperly. The defendant (sworn) said that he only touched the girl's arm and put his hand on her shoulder when talking to her. He was committed for trial.

At Worcester Assizes Justice Kennedy heard the extraordinary charges of forgery against John Etheride, a student at Birkenhead Theological College, who, it was alleged, substituted his name for that of the Rev. Reece, a former curate at Oldbury, in a certificate of ordination obtained by forged letters from the Worcester Diocesan Registry, and with this and a number of forged testimonials from clergymen as to clerical qualifications and character, applied for a curacy at Prickwillow, Cambridgeshire, where, attired in clerical garb, he stayed with the vicar and conducted services and preached sermons. The accused was not a bachelor of arts, and had not been ordained as he represented. The case was adjourned.

The cry is still they come. Old Chicago Dowie set up as the reincarnation of Elijah, but up started a rival Elijah in the person of a Georgia negro, and now a third claimant starts up in Maine. We guess there must be money in this Elijah fake when so many are after it.

Mr. Stead has taste in spirits. He keeps no House of Call in Norfolk-street for miscellaneous spiritual tramps. He admits only one—the divine Julia, whom Mr. Stead knew in her "earth-life"—a neat phrase that! She is the most engaging, best-mannered, and most communicative of all the disembodied watchers who revisit the glimpses of the Embankment moon. The first letter from Julia tells us that dying is as simple as leaving a ball when the last dance is over. She "stood looking at her own dead body"—which shows that spirits have organs of sight. She "tried to speak" to a person who came into the room—which shows a spirit has organs of voice. She was in a giddy vein, and "could not help laughing"—which shows that the disembodied retain jocund muscles. When she was standing by the side of herself and saw her corpse in bed she "knew something had happened." So it had. She had died and did not know it. Then she found she was without clothing—which naturally rendered her unfit for going into the street where "crowds of spirits" could see her. She says the streets were full of them, but when the "thought of nakedness crosses the spirit," Julia says, there "comes the clothing" which you need. "The idea with us is creative. We think, and the thing is. I do not remember putting on any garments. There is just a sense of need, and the need is supplied." Were this true in this world, it would be delightful. But the tailoring and dressmaking trade must be in a low state on the "other side," if they exist at all. What sort of "clothes came" to Julia? Did they fit without measurement? Of what color were they? Were they becoming? Not one word does the lady vouchsafe to us. Could a real woman, embodied or disembodied, be silent on these things? There came to Julia a "female angel who had wings and wore a white robe." How was the robe cut so as not to interfere with the wings? Julia had a woman's eye and must have noticed. By what sign did she know it was a female angel? How is sex distinguished in the celestial world? "Wings," we are told, "are scenic illusions, useful to convey the idea of superiority to earth-bound conditions; but we do not use them any more than we do steam engines." An ingenious reference that; but it does not explain celestial transit sufficiently. The lady adds: "I was glad my guide had wings. It seemed more like what I thought it would be and ought to be." So I think. What could Milton have done with his angels, fallen and unfallen, without wings? The angel guardian who first attended her had wings. She explains: "It is not usual, but if we please we can assume them." Julia calls wings "scenic illusions." They are, notwithstanding, the most picturesque things in heaven, so far as we know, and no doubt she put them on. The lines of an American Spiritualistic poet, which I thought fanciful, must be true:—

She died, alas! her sweet form fled,
But as she passed the Pearly Gate
She to a sister Angel said:
"Say! are my wings on straight?"

—G. J. Holyoake, in the London "Sun."

"An effort is being made through the post," the *East London Advertiser* says, "to advance the principles of Free-thought. Leaflets are being sent out broadcast to Ilford residents, and we are not surprised to find that parents are anxious to keep this precious literature out of the hands of their children." One correspondent is very "indignant" over a leaflet which dares to ask "Was Christ the Light of the World?" The editor says that the churches of Ilford should see the necessity of "combating the wave of Secularism which is evidently moving in this direction." Probably he is right. But the people whose complaint he voices appear to be much like Mrs. Partington. Their only idea of "combating the wave" is to wield a broom.

"This is no time to sit idly by," says our East London contemporary, "content with merely holding their own. They [the churches] must be up and doing, meeting the enemy on its own ground, and never shirking a contest where one is invited. Secularists declare Christianity is a failure; what answer does Christianity make?" Ay, what? besides the broom to sweep away "offensive" leaflets.

There seems to be an impression that these leaflets are posted from our office. They are not. We do not say so to avoid responsibility. We merely state the fact. We are not rich enough to post our publications gratuitously all over the kingdom. We are obliged to sell them.

We regret to announce that the Empire Theatre, Hull, in which Mr. Foote lectured to large and appreciative audiences

a few weeks ago, will not be available for any more Free-thought meetings. Mr. Sylvester Sage, the proprietor, put up for the City Council since then, and got in by a good majority of five hundred; but he chooses to think he lost some votes by letting his hall to the "infidels," and will not run such a dreadful risk again. We do not argue with him, we do not blame him; we simply look at him and pass on.

Answers is responsible for the story that a Hamburg man, in 1879, placed £100 in notes between pages 141 and 142 of a Bible; doing it "in the sure knowledge that man does not turn to his Bible until he is in the greatest distress"—and then how handy it is to find a lot of bank notes in the Blessed Book. This time the Bible fell into the hands of a bookseller; he regarded it as his Family Bible, and was going to sell it when he discovered the money on turning over the pages. Many Family Bibles are kept just as long without being read, or even consulted.

Some "Paisley bodies" will find shocking reading in the local *Daily Express*, which prints a long paper by William Naismith on "The Higher Criticism." This writer tells the Church that, if it is to live, it will have to give up "dispensing the refuse of a superstitious hash" that was "good enough when it was the most and best that Babylonian and Jewish knowledge could compass," and become of practical use to the world.

Rev. H. Moulson, of Leyton, is a believer in phrenology. He says it helps him in his ministerial work. One member of his church had been an Atheist for twenty years, but the shape of his head showed that he was intended to be religious, and he was soon hooked into the reverend gentleman's congregation. We suppose it would be too bold to ask the name of that Atheist. Perhaps it would be still bolder to ask that we might feel the preacher's bumps. We suspect there is something wrong with his "veracity."

Sunday bigots are still crusading against popular recreations on Sunday, and even against popular education. They think that by closing every rival establishment the people will be driven into the places of worship. "I have no objection," Colonel Ingersoll once said, "to everybody going to church on Sunday who wishes to, but I do not want them to go to church for the same reason that the man had who went home about four o'clock in the morning. His wife said to him: 'John, what makes you come home this time of night?' He replied: 'Mary, to be honest with you, every other place is shut up.'"

A funny advertisement appeared in the *Church Times*. Here it is:—"Priest, Catholic, not discreet, thirty-four, married, no private means, desires work. Liberty to say Mass daily.—Address, Sacerdos, &c." To say the least of it, this advertisement is rather mysterious, and we should not be surprised if some of the true-blue Protestants see in it signs of a Jesuit intrigue against the Church of England. Perhaps it is ironical. Somebody may have spent half-a-crown to have a dig at the High Church party.

Dr. Michael Taylor, the Battersea coroner, should be more careful; perhaps we ought to say more sensible. At an inquest as to the death of Frederick Pollard, a baby-boy of two years and a-half, who had been "doctored" by the mother, Dr. Taylor remarked: "Yes, it's a good job Providence watches over children." This in face of the fact that the particular child in question was dead! But the survey may be extended. It appears that the infantile mortality during the past summer has been as follows in three important towns:—Birkenhead 362, Salford 351, and Manchester 348 per 1,000 births. What an absurdity it is, then, for Dr. Taylor to talk of the Providence that watches over children. The gentleman should save his pious ejaculations for church on Sunday.

According to the Commissioner's official return, nearly half a million men, women, and children have been killed by the plague during the past three years in India. The average number of deaths from cholera in India is 370,000 per annum. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

"God bless you all!" Thus wrote Mrs. Charlotte Elizabeth Smith, of Forest-gate, on a bun-bag to her family before committing suicide. There is no moral, except that it is not the Atheists, as Talmage says, who are always rushing into self-slaughter.

Sunday-school Superintendent—"Children, what are we to tell Satan when he tempts us to commit sin?" Children (with one voice)—"Go way back and sit down!"—*Chicago Tribune*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 24, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester: 11, "Anarchism and Assassination"; 6.30, "Mr. Hall Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy."

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

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 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 24, Athenæum Hall, London. December 1, Sheffield; 8, Manchester; 15, Athenæum Hall, London.—Address, 24 High-road, Leyton.

A CORRESPONDENT, whose name we need not mention, though he does not ask us to conceal it, inquires if the Mr. Taylor who recently debated with Mr. Moss is the gentleman who is commonly known as Teapot Taylor, and if it is advisable for Secular Societies to find him a platform. We should answer the second question in the negative if the first is answered in the affirmative. Perhaps those concerned will explain.

T. YOUNG.—Pleased to hear you regard Mr. Cohen's answer as "masterly." We insert your letter.

C. W. HAMMOND.—We are in receipt of your letters. We do not see our way to insert the long one intended for the *Freethinker*. Your state of mind is too old-fashioned. A Christian who fancies his beliefs are entitled to the same protection as his life, his property, his liberty, and his honor, is a perfect Rip Van Winkle. We have no control over the person who sends you Freethought leaflets, etc., by post. We receive, even at our private residence, lots of pious literature in the same way, some of it denouncing "infidelity." But we don't make a hallabaloo. We only smile. We presume you are in the profession, as you resent the clergy being called "sky-pilots." Millions of people think the designation accurate.

G. W. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

R. BROWN.—You ask what has become of the Rev. H. J. Alcock and the Rev. J. J. B. Coles that they do not any longer try to save souls through the *Freethinker*. We believe the former gentleman has left England for the West Indies, and that the latter is somewhere in Devonshire.

G. J. WARREN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.—Thanks for your letter. See paragraphs. Your letter to the local press is pointed, and should do good.

REV. H. M. KENNEDY, vicar of Plumpton, Cumberland, complains that we criticised a letter of his without having seen it. We criticised no letter of his, but a statement that he had prayed for rain to fall at a meeting he did not approve, and that the rain fell. We said that this was "silly." But it is sillier still for the reverend gentleman to say that he stated what took place and "made no claim." If he did not mean that the rain fell in answer to his prayer for it, he was wasting his own time and other people's, and simply playing the fool. If he did mean it, our criticism holds good. The man who thinks he can induce the "Ruler of the Universe" to send down rain to spoil opposition meetings is vain, silly, and blasphemous. And it is not our fault if Mr. Kennedy finds that the cap fits him. Unless he repents and amends, he ought to wear bells too.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

M. E. PEGG.—An answer in a day or two *re* another visit by Mr. Foote to Manchester.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Ilford Guardian—Public Opinion (New York)—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker (New York)—Morning Post—Truth (Christchurch)—Freidenker—El Libre Pensamiento—Freethought Magazine—Open Court—Sydney Bulletin—Progressive Thinker—Liberator (Melbourne)—Discontent—Searchlight—Two Worlds—Paisley Daily Express—Pall Mall Gazette—Huddersfield Examiner—Yorkshire Evening Post—Crescent—Blue Grass Blade.

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.

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Personal.

THE newspaper reports of the hearing of my application for discharge in bankruptcy have been so misleading that I deem it advisable to give an account of it in the *Freethinker*.

The application was heard on Thursday morning, November 14. I was represented by Mr. Harper, of the firm of Messrs. Harper and Battcock, solicitors. The only creditor represented was Mr. George Anderson, who paid for the services of his solicitor, his solicitor's clerk, and counsel, to oppose my discharge; that being the point at which, I suppose, it was thought he could reappear in the case most vindictively—and most effectively.

Mr. Registrar Hope presided at the hearing. This was fortunate in one way, for he had adjudicated on the receiving order, and was more or less familiar with the case; in another way it was unfortunate, as he was naturally prejudiced to some extent in favor of the litigant for whom he had given a favorable decision. I have no doubt he tried to be just, and thought he was being so; but I could plainly perceive that I was not going to have any superfluous consideration, and that my fate was to be decided on purely technical grounds, without any reference whatever to the moral questions involved in the dispute between myself and Mr. Anderson, which, I imagine, ought not to have been entirely ignored when I was to be made the subject of penalties. Moreover, it was apparent that Mr. Registrar Hood was himself the victim of a certain confusion, although, as he had the last word, this could not be pointed out in court. It will be remembered that the receiving order was made against me on June 29; that I then discovered important documents proving that Mr. Anderson had, in his own handwriting, promised to take the Shares I alleged he had promised to take in the Freethought Publishing Company; that the application for the receiving order was, on the strength of this discovery, reheard; and that the Registrar only reaffirmed his previous judgment. Now the point upon which that judgment turned was whether I paid Mr. Anderson £100 simply on account of his old advances—the debt being then statute-barred—or on the condition that he applied the money to the redemption of his promise to take Shares in the Company. On that point the Registrar decided in favor of Mr. Anderson. But he appears to have let this stand in his mind as equivalent to Mr. Anderson's never having made me any promise at all—which is positively disproved by the documents I discovered.

The Official Receiver's report was read out in court as the first proceeding. He stated that my assets had not realised ten shillings in the pound, that I had not kept trade account books, and that I had made preferential payments to certain creditors.

The second "offence" may be dismissed at once. Mr. Harper denied that I was a trader in the ordinary sense of the word. The Registrar did not accept this contention, but he admitted that the *technical* offence had not stood in the way of a disclosure of my state of affairs, and that it might therefore be disregarded.

Of course there was no answer to the charge of the first "offence." My assets had *not* realised ten shillings in the pound. But during the previous twelve months or so I had paid more than that percentage of my total indebtedness; and, as I was not *seeking* relief, but had been *forced* into bankruptcy by a man who knew he could gain nothing by it but the gratification of his ill-will, the fact that I *had* paid so much money ought to have been taken into account; especially as the Registrar is empowered to find, if he can, that the non-realisation of ten shillings in the pound is not the *fault* of the bankrupt, but is due to adverse circumstances. Besides, as Mr. Harper pointed out, I had Mr. Anderson's promise in mind when I paid him the £100; and that, if I had mistrusted his promise, and chosen not to pay him, or not to pay him without a written protection, he would never have been able to sue me at all, and consequently I should not have become a bankrupt. Mr. Registrar Hope, however, turned a deaf ear to these pleadings. He held that the statutory "offence" had been committed and that there was no reason why the order for

my discharge should not be suspended, according to the Act, for the minimum period of two years.

The third "offence" of preferential payment to creditors was urged for all it was worth by Mr. Anderson's counsel. This gentleman grew quite pathetic over the way in which his client had been forestalled. He said I had "distributed" my money so that Mr. Anderson could not get it. And he asked the Court to penalise me accordingly.

Now let me explain. I sold my Deferred Shares in the Company, early in March, for £200. I offered that whole sum to Mr. Anderson, as representing all the balance of his old advances, on condition that he fulfilled his promise to take Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company. That offer he refused; and he coupled with it the statement, which I afterwards *proved* to be false, that he had never, either publicly or privately, promised to take those Shares. He had not then obtained judgment against me. I did not know that he would carry his vindictiveness to the point of driving me into bankruptcy. I had no reason, therefore, to keep that £200 by me. I owed it to creditors who wanted it. They were not *pressing* me—that is to say, they were not *threatening* me; but they had applied for payment, and I knew they needed it. I therefore paid them. That it was an honorable thing to do I had no doubt. I have no doubt still. Mr. Anderson himself is not ignorant of the fact that those amongst whom I "distributed" some of that money are poor men. Yet he complains of my giving them preference. He pays probably more than I paid each of them singly to send legal gentlemen into court to complain there on his behalf. I actually paid (say poor John Jones) £10 instead of keeping it for a gentleman who has advertised that he is able to give away—yes, *give away*—£15,000. For this "offence" on my part, the wealthy Mr. George Anderson asks the court to suspend my discharge in bankruptcy. And the court nods approvingly, and adds another year (three years in all) to the suspension.

I need not expend adjectives on this man's conduct. I leave him to the judgment of the Freethought party.

Mr. Harper justly observed that if I had spent the money on myself, instead of paying my creditors, Mr. Anderson could not have raised the objection to my discharge. I might have said that I was upset, that my wife was upset, that we both needed a long holiday; and then have gone off beyond the reach of bankruptcy notices for a few months. But I kept to my work, paid my creditors as far as I could, and behaved (I hope) like an honest man. I did not rush into luxurious living, I did not gamble, I did not speculate, I did not even get drunk. For these omissions I am penalised; and penalised on the application of the honorable Mr. George Anderson.

The Official Receiver, probably at the instigation of Mr. Anderson's solicitors—for he has been more than two months (since my public examination on Sept. 10) thinking about it—is, I understand, trying to worry those I paid money to in March into refunding it to the "estate." But I believe it is a very doubtful reading of the law under which he is acting, and I fancy the various sums would not be returned voluntarily. Some of the men involved have probably not got the money to return. Does it mean, then, that after failing in the attempt to sell up *my* home Mr. Anderson contemplates with equanimity another attempt to sell up the homes of these still poorer men? I hope he has not sunk as low as that. But if the Official Receiver, perhaps being indemnified by Mr. Anderson against the costs he may incur, should proceed further than correspondence with these poor men, I shall try to see that they are supported to the uttermost. I scarcely think that the generosity of the Freethought party is quite exhausted. Speaking for myself, at any rate, I would rather live on scraps for awhile than see these poor men suffer.

A word or two may be said on the subject of Mr. Anderson's motives. Perhaps he has simply left it to his solicitors to be as malicious as they can, and does not trouble himself about details. Perhaps he is only animated by the freakishness of old age. Perhaps he is worked upon by someone more malignant than himself. Perhaps he wants to make my bankruptcy

look as black as possible to the outside public, who do not, and never will, know the real facts of the case. Perhaps he is merely spiteful, and cares not what he does as long as someone suffers. Perhaps there is method in his madness. He may be acting on calculation. It seems to me that there was a good deal of calculation in that grand contingent offer of £15,000. It was first mooted when he began litigation with me, it was first published when that litigation was coming to a head, and it was withdrawn when he succeeded in making me bankrupt. Was it a bit of "hedging" in the interest of his reputation for generosity? It has something of that appearance. Possibly he calculates now that I may have some luck or other within three years; more likely, at any rate, within three years than two, by the mere extension of time. Somebody might take it into his head to leave me a trifle, and die before I am free again; in which case the benefaction would fall into the hands of the Official Receiver—that is to say, really, into the hands of Mr. George Anderson. Well, if anybody is moved to do anything of the kind, it is only fair that he should have an opportunity of deciding *whom* he would benefit. So much ought to be said; more might not be wise.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE delivered three lectures at Bradford on Sunday. Several years had elapsed since his previous visit, and Freethought propaganda had been under a cloud in that important centre of population. Lately, however, there has been a revival. Mr. Percy Ward has gone to reside in Bradford, with a view to making it the central point of his activities; and Mr. Gott has thrown himself into the enterprise of a Bradlaugh Club and Institute. Naturally the first premises are not palatial; still, they are decent, and in a central position; and, although the lecture room is not of the proportions that Mr. Foote is accustomed to, he felt he could not resist the invitation to come down and give the project (as far as he could) a good public start; for, wherever men and women are working hard for Freethought, duty and inclination both prompt him to be in the midst of them. Sunday's meetings were good in quantity and quality. Freethinkers came in from distant places; Mr. Fisher, for instance, from Leeds, and Mr. Smith from Farsley. The latter gentleman, one of the bravest stalwarts of our movement, has lately been very ill, but is now happily able to get about again—a fact of which his many friends are all very glad. Mr. John Grange, who was Mr. Foote's kind host, took the chair in the morning. We need not say more of him than that he is one of the most valuable men in the Secular party, being possessed of a capital presence, perfect courage, first-rate abilities, and fine powers of speech. Unfortunately, we did not catch the name of the gentleman who presided in the afternoon, but he made an excellent chairman. Mr. Percy Ward occupied the chair in the evening. He spoke as well as ever, but was not looking quite as well as he should be. By special request, Mr. Foote's evening lecture was on "The Doom of the Gods." It was followed with gratifying attention; it was long, but not too long for the meeting; its points were caught with intellectual alertness, and the frequent applause told that everybody was having what the Americans call a good time.

We have just a word of advice to give to the leaders of the Bradlaugh Club at Bradford, which we hope they will take in good part. We know their intentions are admirable, but they must be vigilant. If they firmly keep the social element in its proper place, all will be well, and they may go on from success to success; but if they let the social element get the upper-hand, it will be the ruin of all their hopes. We think they know this. What we ask of them is that they shall never for a moment forget it. One Bradlaugh Club has gone the wrong way already, and we wish it would change its name. We look for better things from the second.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (Nov. 24), morning and evening, in the Secular Hall, Leicester. The subjects are entirely new, at least to the Leicester friends, and there should be good audiences. The usual advertising will, of course, be done, but the local readers of the *Freethinker* might supplement it by giving publicity to the lectures amongst their personal friends and acquaintances.

Mr. Charles Watts's lecture at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening was much appreciated. Some of his auditors wished to see it in print. Mr. Watts lectures to-day (Nov. 24), morning and evening, in the Prince of Wales

Assembly Rooms, Birmingham. He should have good meetings.

Mr. Cohen lectures at the Athenæum Hall this evening (Nov. 24), taking for his subject "Dr. Horton and Atheism: A Study in Christian Ethics." This subject should attract a good meeting.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1902 is on sale. It is issued under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, and is edited by the President. Besides containing the usual information about Freethought organisations at home and abroad, it includes a number of original articles written especially for this publication. The contributors are G. W. Foote, C. Watts, C. Cohen, "Mimnermus," A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, E. R. Woodward, Francis Neale, and Mary Lovell, who reads male Freethinkers a pretty lesson on their intellectual neglect of their womenkind. She says, for instance, that a man who cannot persuade his wife to be a Freethinker ought to be ashamed to stand up in public and try to convert other people. Freethinkers of the male persuasion ought to read this article. Perhaps some of them will pluck up courage (they will want it) to reply on behalf of their sex in the *Freethinker*.

The *Secular Almanack* is published at the small price of threepence, and is therefore within the reach of most Freethinkers. Certainly it is well worth the money it costs. The original articles are alone worth that. It should be borne in mind, too, that nobody gets paid for any work on this publication, and that whatever profit is realised goes into the N. S. S. exchequer, to be spent on Freethought propaganda. So send in your orders, please, and buy out the whole issue before Christmas.

The Twentieth Century Edition of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* is not going with a rush now, but it continues to sell well, and its circulation must be doing a great deal of good to the Freethought cause. Of course we don't get at the general public through these columns; we venture, however, to remind Freethinkers of the service they may render the movement by purchasing a few copies of this immortal work, and giving them away to their friends and acquaintances. Not less than six copies can be obtained at our publishing office, for this purpose, at the rate of 4½d. per copy.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley devoted space in Monday evening's *Sun* to the subject of Mr. Foote's bankruptcy and application for discharge therefrom. We venture to reproduce his remarks in full, as they are such a welcome change from the general press methods of dealing with "unfortunate" Freethinkers.

"Since the death of Charles Bradlaugh," Mr. Bottomley says, "the most prominent figure in the world of militant agnosticism has been Mr. G. W. Foote—a man of very considerable literary attainments, a fine orator, and a brilliant debater. I have known him for many years, having, when a young man, lived with him in the same house; and, whilst a warm admirer of his abilities and character, have always regretted that they were not turned into other channels. After all, what does it matter what men and women believe, provided their actions be right? Attack the frauds and abuses of our ecclesiastical system, by all means; point out what a huge travesty it is of the faith upon which it professes to rest—but leave the faith itself alone. It comforts millions of people, and dries their eyes, and that is enough for me. But Mr. Foote thinks differently. He regards all forms of supernatural religion as so many brakes upon the development of human intellect and thought, and, without any hope of reward in either this world or any other, he regards it as his mission to combat them—by criticism, by logic, by analysis, and by ridicule. And, a man of brilliant parts—who would have made his mark in any other walk of life—he has been content for the past twenty-five years to live a life of penury and struggle—for there are no endowments in his church. And at the end of the period he is made a bankrupt, with total liabilities of £500—of which the bulk is for interest!

"Then all the machinery of the State," Mr. Bottomley continues, "is put in motion to wind him up! His assets realise nearly £50—a much better proportion than that of the usual commercial failure; he undergoes his public examination without a suggestion being made against his integrity, and a few days ago he applied for his discharge. All that the Official Receiver could urge against him was the technical 'offence' that his assets hadn't realised 10s. in the £, and that he hadn't kept his books by double entry! And thereupon his discharge was suspended for three years! Now this is not right. The fact of a debtor's assets being less than 10s. in the pound is simply one of many circumstances which the Court 'may' take into consideration in granting an Order of Discharge, and the offence of 'imperfect bookkeeping' is essentially one which ought not to be construed too literally against non-business men. The Bankruptcy Acts are 'for the

relief of insolvent debtors,' and not for the vindictive persecution of honest, unfortunate men. I deeply regret the action of the Registrar in this case. It is certainly not calculated to impress Mr. Foote with the warmth of Christian charity, or to make him less bitter, in future, in his attacks. And it serves us right. I am strongly disposed to ask the Christian readers of the *Sun* to subscribe a fund to set this persecuted man free. It would be a splendid Christmas action. What do they say?"

Darwin and Religion.—III.

SETTLING AT DOWN.

DARWIN married on January 29, 1839. His wife was singularly helpful, making his home happy, and subordinating herself to the great ends of his life. Children grew up around them, and their home was one of the brightest and best in the world. Here is a pretty touch in Darwin's letter to his friend Fox, dated from Upper Gower Street, London, July, 1840: "He (*i.e.*, the baby) is so charming that I cannot pretend to any modesty. I defy anybody to flatter us on our baby, for I defy anyone to say anything in its praise of which we are not fully conscious....I had not the smallest conception there was so much in a five-month baby." Cunning nature! twining baby fingers about the big man's heart. Still the proud father studied the cherub as a scientist; he watched its mental growth with the greatest assiduity, and thus began those observations which he ultimately published in the *Expression of the Emotions*.

In September, 1842, he went to live at Down, where he continued to reside until his death. He helped to found a Friendly Club there, and served as its treasurer for thirty years. He was also treasurer of a Coal Club. The Rev. Brodie Innes says: "His conduct towards me and my family was one of unvarying kindness." Darwin was a liberal contributor to the local charities, and "he held that where there was really no important objection, his assistance should be given to the clergyman, who ought to know the circumstances best, and was chiefly responsible."

He did not, however, go through the mockery of attending church. I was informed by the late head constable of Devonport, who was himself an open Atheist, that he had once been on duty for a considerable time at Down. He had often seen Darwin escort his family to church, and enjoyed many a conversation with the great man, who used to enjoy a walk through the country lanes while the devotions were in progress.

DEATH AND BURIAL.

Darwin's life henceforth was that of a country gentleman and a secluded scientist. His great works, more revolutionary than all the political and social turmoils of his age, were planned and written in the quiet study of an old house in a Kentish village. He suffered terribly from ill health, but he labored on gallantly to the end, and died in harness. "For nearly forty years," writes Mr. Francis Darwin, "he never knew one day of the health of ordinary men, and thus his life was one long struggle against the weariness and strain of sickness." But no whimperings escaped him, or petulant reproaches on those around him. Always gentle, loving and beloved, he looked on the universe with unswerving serenity. A nobler mixture of sweetness and strength never adorned the earth.

In 1876 he wrote some Recollections for his children, with no thought of publication. "I have attempted," he said, "to write the following account of myself, as if I were a dead man in another world looking back at my own life. Nor have I found this difficult, for life is nearly over with me."

He was ready for Death, but they did not meet for six years. During February and March, 1882, he was obviously breaking. The rest must be told by his son:—

"No especial change occurred during the beginning of April, but on Saturday 15th he was seized with giddiness while sitting at dinner in the evening, and fainted in an attempt to reach his sofa. On the 17th he was again better, and in my temporary absence recorded for me the progress of an experiment in which I was engaged. During the night of April 18th, about a quarter to twelve, he had a severe attack and passed into a faint,

from which he was brought back to consciousness with great difficulty. He seemed to recognise the approach of death, and said: 'I am not the least afraid to die.' All the next morning he suffered from terrible nausea, and hardly rallied before the end came. He died at about four o'clock on Wednesday, April 19th, 1882.*

Thus the great scientist and sceptic went to his everlasting rest. He had no belief in God, no expectation of a future life. But he had done his duty; he had filled the world with new truth; he had lived a life of heroism, compared with which the hectic courage of battle-fields is vulgar and insignificant; and he died in soft tranquillity, surrounded by the beings he loved. His last conscious words were *I am not the least afraid to die*. No one who knew him, or his life and work, could for a moment suspect him capable of fear. Nevertheless it is well to have the words on record from the lips of those who saw him die. The carrion priests who batten on the reputation of dead Free-thinkers will find no repast in this death-chamber. One sentence frees him from the contamination of their approach.

Darwin's family desired that he should be buried at Down. But the fashion of burying great men in Westminster Abbey, even though unbelievers, had been set by Dean Stanley, whom Carlyle irreverently called "the body-snatcher." Stanley's successor, Dean Bradley, readily consented to the great heretic's interment in his House of God, where it is to be presumed the Church of England burial service was duly read over the "remains." Men like Professor Huxley, Sir John Lubbock, and Sir Joseph Hooker should not have assisted at such a blasphemous farce. It was enough to make Darwin groan in his coffin. Well, the Church has Darwin's corpse, but that is all she can boast; and as she paid the heavy price of telling lies at his funeral, it may not, in the long run, prove a profitable transaction. She has not buried Darwin's ideas. They are still at work, sapping and undermining her very foundations.

PURPOSE OF THIS ESSAY.

My object is to show the general reader what were Darwin's views on religion, and, as far as possible, to trace the growth of those views in his mind. I desire to point out, in particular, how he thought the leading ideas of theology were affected by the doctrine of evolution. Further, I wish to prove that there is no essential difference between his Agnosticism and what has always been taught as Atheism. Finally, I mean to give my own notions on evolution and theism. In doing so, I shall be obliged to consider some points raised by anti-materialists, especially by Dr. A. R. Wallace in his volume on *Darwinism*.

SOME OBJECTIONS.

Let me first, however, answer certain objections. It is contended by those who would minimise the importance of Darwin's scepticism that he was a scientist and not a theologian. When it is replied that this objection is based upon a negation of private judgment, and logically involves the handing over of society to the tender mercies of interested specialists, the objectors fall back upon the mitigated statement that Darwin was too much occupied with science to give adequate attention to the problems of religion. Now, in the first place, this is not really true. He certainly disclaimed any special fitness to give an opinion on such matters, but that was owing to his exceptional modesty; and to take advantage of it by accepting it as equivalent to a confession of unfitness is simply indecent on the part of those who never tire of holding up the testimony of Newton, Herschel, and Faraday to the truth of their creed. Darwin gave sufficient attention to religion to satisfy himself. He began to abandon Christianity at the age of thirty. Writing of the period between October, 1836, and January, 1839, he says: "During those two years I was led to think much about religion."† That the subject occupied his mind at other times is evident from his works and letters. He had clearly weighed every argument in favor of Theism and Immortality, and his brief, precise way of stating the objections to them shows that they were

perfectly familiar. True, he says "I have never systematically thought much on religion in relation to science," but this was in answer to a request that he should write something for publication. In the same sentence he says that he had not systematically thought much on "morals in relation to society." But he had thought enough to write that wonderful fourth chapter in the first part of the *Descent of Man*, which was published in that very year. Darwin was so modest, so cautious, and so thorough that "systematic thought" meant with him an infinitely greater stress of mind than is devoted to religious problems by one theologian in a million.

The next objection is more subtle, not to say fantastic. In his youth Darwin was fond of music. He had no technical knowledge of it, nor even a good ear, but it filled him with delight, and sometimes sent a shiver down his backbone. He was also fond of poetry, reading Shakespeare, Coleridge, Byron, and Scott, and carrying about a pocket copy of Milton. But in later life he lost all interest in such things, and trying to read Shakespeare again after 1870 he found it "so intolerably dull" that it "nauseated" him. His intense pre-occupation with science had led to a partial atrophy of his æsthetic faculties. It was a loss to him, but the world gained by the sacrifice.

Now upon this fact is based the objection I am dealing with. In the days of Sir Isaac Newton or Bishop Butler, when belief was supposed to rest on evidence, the objection would have seemed preposterous; but it is gravely urged at present, when religion is fast becoming a matter of candles, music, and ornament, seasoned with cheap sentimentality. Darwin's absorption in intellectual pursuits, and the consequent neglect of the artistic elements in his nature, is actually held as a sufficient explanation of his scepticism. His highly-developed and constantly-sustained moral nature is regarded as having no relation to the problem. Religion, it seems, is neither morality nor logic; it is spirituality. And what is spirituality? Why, a yearning after the vague, the unutterable; a consciousness of the sinfulness of sin; a perpetual study of one's blessed self; a debauch of egotistic emotion and chaotic fancy; in short, a highly-refined development of the feelings of a cow in a thunderstorm and the practices of a savage before his inscrutable fetish.

Spirituality is an emotional offshoot of religion; but religion itself grows out of belief; and belief, even among the lowest savages, is grounded on evidence. The Church has always had the sense to begin with doctrines; it enjoins upon its children to say first of all "I believe." Let the doctrines go, and the sentiments will go also. It is only a question of time. Darwin tested the doctrines. Miracles, special providence, the fall, the incarnation, the resurrection, the existence of an all-wise and all-good God—all seemed to him statements which should be proved. He therefore put them into the crucible of reason, and they turned out to be nothing but dross. According to the "spiritual" critics this was a mistake, religion being a matter of imagination. Quite so; here Darwin is in agreement with them; and thus again the proverb is verified that "extremes meet."

The last objection is almost too puerile to notice. It has been asserted that Darwin was an unconscious believer, after all; and this astonishing remark is supported by exclamations from his letters. He frequently wrote "God knows," "would to God," and so forth. But he sometimes wrote "By Jove," from which it follows that he believed in Jupiter! On one occasion he informed Dr. Hooker that he had recovered from an illness, and could "eat like a hearty Christian," from which it follows that he believed in the connection of Christianity and voracity!

Mr. F. W. H. Myers is too subtle a critic to raise this objection in its natural crudity. He affects to regard Darwin's tranquillity under the loss of religious belief as a puzzle. He asks why Darwin kept free from the pessimism which "in one form or other has paralysed or saddened so many of the best lives of our time." What "kept the melancholy infection at bay"?

"Here, surely, is the solution of the problem. The faculties of observing and reasoning were stimulated to

* *Life and Letters*, vol. iii., p. 358.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 307.

the utmost ; the domestic affections were kept keen and strong ; but the atrophy of the religious instinct, of which we have already spoken, extended yet farther—over the whole range of æsthetic emotion and mystic sentiment—over all in us which 'looks before and after, and pines for what is not.'**

This is pretty writing, but under the form of insinuation it begs the question at issue. Religious instinct and mystic sentiment are fine phrases, but they prove nothing ; on the contrary, they are devices for dispensing with that logical investigation which religion ever shuns as the Devil is said to shun holy water.

G. W. FOOTE.

Morality of Unbelief.

THE first element of morality is self-respect. Under any religion, or under any philosophy, that ought to come first. It is not humility, it is not arrogance, it is not egotism, it is not self-abasement. A man's first duty is not to rummage into the story of the past to find out really how much he did sin in the Garden of Eden ; his first duty as a moral being is to stand up and respect himself. Nature has not played fast and loose with her children. If one stopped to think of it, ages upon ages passed, when it seems that there was going forward a preparation for the coming of man. It may be we are not warranted in the assumption that there was any thought of us, or any provision ; but this we know, that ages came and went before man did come—ages that were necessary to his coming and to his maintenance after his arrival. So that back of man there are the processes and the potencies that have bloomed and fruited into the world as we see it to-day.

Religion comes and says : "The first thing for you to do is to slander your ancestry and talk ill about the past, and humble yourself as a worm in the dust fit only for a vessel of wrath." That is humility. I say that is nonsense. It is a man's duty to justify, as far as possible, the nature that brought him here and sustains him here. Great nature, if she be considered as personal or intelligent, has a right to demand of every man and every woman a justification for her wisdom in making him or her.

Self-respect, intellectual self-consciousness, is the first element of morality, and out of it grows the beginning of all unbelief. It is out of that feeling of self-respect that there comes a protest against the domination by a majority, by an external authority. I have respect for the past, I revere it ; I respect the fathers of the Church when they were respectable, but I protest against them, or any number of them, against the popes, or any number of them, against the councils of the Church, limited or ecumenical, or any number of them, saying to me, a rational being like them, possessed with reason as they were, endowed with human and spiritual instincts as men have always been—I object to them saying to me, under pain of eternal death, "Believe or be damned." It is not a question of death, nor a question of salvation ; it is, first of all, a question of intellectual self-consciousness and self-respect.

Living as they did, they knew a great many things that I cannot know ; living, as we do, in an age that they never dreamed of, we know many things they could not know. As for the Infinite, as for God, as for the future, veiled from mortal ken, we know just as much about them all as they did, and we know nothing at all.

So the protest is bound to come. Unbelief, then, has within it the instinct of morality—the very element of self-consciousness that is necessary to develop manhood to the honorable mental state. Unbelief has regard for the whole man ; it does not seek the salvation of the soul at the sacrifice of the reason ; it does not attempt to advance one at the cost of the other ; it will not degrade, pollute, or profane any part of the sacred thing called human life. Within its view all is worthy, all demands respect, and merits culture and development. Unbelief seeks, without selfish or personal interest, to know the truth.

When a man goes into the world simply to seek salvation, it is my opinion that he is on a foolish quest. When a man goes into this world honestly to seek truth,

he will find salvation without looking for it. It is exactly like the man who, overcome with worry and work, goes into the woods and seeks out the winding, shaded stream, and, with rod and fly, angles for the elusive trout. Now, if he goes doing that simply to get well—if he goes fishing for health, appetite, vigor, better circulation—he will catch neither health nor appetite, better circulation nor fish ; but if he forgets all those things—if he forgets what he went for ; if he forgets that he ever had an appetite, or needs circulation, or ever lost any sleep, or ever wanted any ; and, in the splendid, fine enthusiasm and isolation, in the keen thrill and exquisite excitement, seeks for fish, and crawls upon his belly to get his fly over beyond that rock without startling the pool with the shadow of his rod, and works and calculates and schemes and plans—he will return to camp at night with his creel full of fish. As for appetite, ask the camp cook. That is exactly the difference between salvation by faith and salvation by unbelief.

The unbeliever seeks truth. If the truth damns him, he wants the truth ; if the truth saves him, he wants the truth ; but whether it saves him or whether it damns him is no concern of his. He didn't organise the universe, nor lay the foundations for eternity ; he does not lead forth Arcturus and his suns, nor bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades ; he is simply a learner, a child in the great limitless expanse. He asks only for truth, only for what may be believed in consistence with his reason and his moral sense. Whatever the results or the consequences may be, he leaves them to eternity, to destiny, to fate, to nature, to God, to whatever may be within, above, and behind all things. Salvation as an end is an ignoble end ; salvation as the result of faith is a mean and degraded thing ; but manhood, destiny, development, character, completeness, life, knowledge, reason, the complete fulfilled man—these do not need salvation : they are salvation.

—*Truthseeker* (N. Y.). (DR) J. E. ROBERTS.

Correspondence

MR. RUMBLE'S FUNNY ARGUMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It was with some interest that I read the letter of your correspondent, Mr. Rumble, in your issue of November 10, and, although I think Mr. Cohen has given a complete answer, there are one or two remarks I should like to make if I am not trespassing upon your space. Mr. Rumble takes exception to a publication using the common A. D. date when an inquiry has been raised in that publication as to whether that date is from an historical event. Now, he must have forgotten that the seven days which make our week are all named from Pagan deities, concerning five of whom Christians do not raise any inquiry, but positively deny that they ever existed at all ; and the other two, the sun and moon (from which Sunday and Monday are named), although existent, to render worship to them is denounced as Paganism. Yet I suppose Mr. Rumble still retains the names of the days, in common with other Christians.

With respect to the persecution of Christianity for the last 1900 years, which he speaks of, it certainly is a piece of information. If history is to be depended upon, Christianity has been the persecutor, not the persecuted. It has been enforced and guarded by numerous laws, all the privilege has been on its side, and it can show a fairly long list of persecutions against Freethinkers during the century just closed. Unless Mr. Rumble is a very young man, it is within his own recollection when three persons connected with this publication were imprisoned, let alone the persistent and most bitter persecution of the late Mr. Bradlaugh ; and all in the name of Christianity, and by its professors.

T. YOUNG.

BACON-SHAKESPEARE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *National Review* for this month the writer of an essay headed "Did Shakespeare Write Bacon?" starts a quasi "cryptogram," containing eighty-one letters, and rearranges these in an "anagram." I do the same, and place the two in juxtaposition below :—

<i>His</i>	ANAGRAM	<i>Mine</i>
CREDE WILL SHAKESPERE,		GREEN READER ! FRANCIS
GREEN INNOCENT READER ;		BACON HELPED. IDLE IF FREE
HE WAS THE AU- OF EX-		W.S. HE—NOT W.S.—THE LIKELY
CELLENT WRITING ; F.B.N.		AUTHOR OF EXCELLENT WRIT-
FIFTH IDOL, LYE.		ING.

Has he "killed his pig" ? Have I "saved my Bacon" ?
What say you ? GREEN WRITER.

* *Charles Darwin and Agnosticism*, by F. W. H. Myers, *Fortnightly Review*, January, 1888, p. 106.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Dr. Horton and Atheism: A Study in Christian Ethics."
NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7.30, Joseph McCabe, "Christianity and the Fall of Rome."
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, E.): 7, W. J. Ramsey will open a discussion.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, W. Sanders, "Class Consciousness."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, J. M. Robertson, "Decadence in Civilisation."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, J. A. Wilkes, "The Necessity for Faith."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Hyde Park): Lectures every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.; Sundays at 11.30 a.m.
BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall): 3.45, Rev. W. H. Drummond, "Mazzini and the Movement for Italian Unity."
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): C. Watts—11, "Büchner's Last Plea for Materialism"; 7, "The Growth of Freethought."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, H. Snell, "What is Left to Believe?"
GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—D. Prosser, "Some Elementary Facts in Astronomy"; 6.30, J. Macdougall, "Revolution, Political, Social, and Religious: Is it Inevitable and Near at Hand?"
HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, Room No. 2, Albion-street): 7, G. E. Conrad Naewiger, "Municipalization of Drink."
LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): G. W. Foote: 11, "Anarchism and Assassination"; 6.30, "Mr. Hall Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A. E. Killip "Christianity and Progress."
MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): H. Percy Ward—3, "Has Man a Soul?"; 6.30, "The Nightmare of Hell." Tea at 5.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Lecture or reading. See Saturday's local papers.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, A reading.

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