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Toleration must be a passing mood only, leading on to appreciation. Simply to put up with people is to insult them.—GOETHE.

Wesleyans and Hell.

THE Wesleyan Conference, which meets in July, somewhere near the Dog Days, will have to consider the burning question of Dr. Agar Beet's relation to the doctrine of everlasting hell. Dr. Beet has been Professor of Theology at the Richmond Wesleyan College for many years, but is now in danger of losing that post, as the Committee have not nominated him for re-election. Their objection to his reappointment is not yet publicly stated, but it appears to be based upon his unsoundness with respect to the fate of lost souls in the world to come. He does not seem to be as sure as they are as to the doom of the damned. And, as most people will be amongst the damned, the question is one in which the committee, no doubt, feel they have a personal interest.

Dr. Beet withdrew his peccant book on this subject in 1898. Great pressure was put upon him, even by such a strong friend of his as the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It was thought that the Twentieth Century Fund would suffer from any suspicion of heresy in the Wesleyan atmosphere; and, as money was the principal thing just then, Dr. Beet gave way. Recently, however, he has burst forth again with a little book on *The Immortality of the Soul*, which has boiled the pot over into the fire and caused a terrible commotion.

Being interviewed a short time ago by a representative of the *Christian World*, Dr. Beet protested that he was in no wise heretical. He declares that he stands absolutely by the teaching of the Bible, without swerving to the right or to the left. He also asserts that he is true to the Wesleyan standards. On this point he spoke as follows to his interviewer:—

"Well, as you know, our standards are somewhat remarkable. They are contained in John Wesley's fifty-three sermons and his notes to the New Testament. Originally the sermons were only forty-three in number, but Wesley added ten others afterwards—no doubt for a reason. Wesley had grown.

"Every Wesleyan minister is asked at his ordination, 'Do you believe in the system of doctrine contained in these sermons and notes?'"

Dr. Beet emphasises the word *system* for a special reason. "Twenty years ago," he says, "Conference decided that ministers were not bound by every detail of the sermons, but only by the system of theology which they contained. With regard to details, Conference must from time to time judge." But what on earth is the system without the details? Is not this a pretty trick of evasion? John Wesley made the system, and the Wesleyan Conference makes the details; yet there are not two standards, but one standard; and whosoever confoundeth the system with the details shall without doubt perish everlastingly. As a matter of system, Wesleyans must believe in everlasting torment; as a matter of detail, they are free to reject it. That is how the Wesleyan men of God, who want to keep their posts and salaries, sail the good old ship Orthodoxy up to the wind of Modern Criticism.

John Wesley was a firm believer in the everlasting punishment of the damned in hell. In one sermon he

quotes with approval from the Book of Homilies the statement that "The right and true Christian faith is also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ." Elsewhere he says on his own account that "The moment a soul drops the body and stands naked before God, it will have full in its view either everlasting joy or everlasting torment." That both the joy and the torment were everlasting Wesley had no doubt whatever. He appealed to Scripture, and to the express words of Jesus Christ. After quoting the famous text, Matthew xxv. 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," Wesley comments as follows:—

"It should be observed that it is the very same word which is used, both in the former and latter clause: it follows, that either the punishment lasts for ever, or the reward too will come to an end; which certainly it never will, unless God should come to an end, or his mercy and truth could fail."

Nothing could be clearer than this. John Wesley always expressed himself with perfect lucidity. He had definite beliefs, and he expounded them in straightforward language. If his theology is behind date, his simple, forcible, and beautiful English never can be. Not to put too fine a point upon it, the modern Professors of Theology would be none the worse for imitating his style as well as his honesty. Dr. Beet does not imitate either. He stands by Wesley's *system*, which is nothing, and rejects the *details*, which are everything. He is so far from believing in everlasting torment that he denounces it pretty vigorously. Here is an extract from his *Immortality of the Soul* (pp. 105-106):—

"Not only against the endless torment of the lost, as our fathers taught it, but against any form of endless suffering, or of an endless prolongation of an existence which is only a helpless consciousness of utter ruin, the moral sense of thousands of intelligent and devout men and women is in stern revolt. The more carefully they consider it, the less they are able to harmonise it with the infinite love, or even with the justice, of God. To such persons it is useless to say that they are unable to estimate the evil of sin, and the punishment it deserves. For, amid human fallibility and error, there is in man an inborn sense of justice and of the due proportion of sin and punishment which, in all ages, has been recognised as a reflection, imperfect, but real, of the justice of God. There are children of ten years old who, if told that their father had punished another child, however naughty, by burning him to death, would at once and justly repudiate the statement with indignation."

Bless the Professor! There are children much younger than ten who would give you the lie very promptly if you said such a thing about their fathers; and you would be lucky if they did not scratch your face, pull your hair, and kick your shins into the bargain. Still, the Professor is on the right road, although he does not go far enough. He sees clearly that the doctrine of everlasting torment is played out because the moral sense of the civilised world has outgrown it. What is to be done then? Give up hell altogether? Oh dear no! There must be some sort of a hell, or the business of soul-saving would soon expire. If we are all going to heaven what is the use of the clergy? The theory of universal salvation must therefore be rejected. Dr. Beet says it is "destitute of solid foundation" and is "directly and indirectly contradicted in the New Testament." Lost souls there will be for certain. And what is to be their fate? Dr. Beet's answer is that nobody knows. The point is one

upon which Scripture is silent. Christ did not choose to "satisfy our curiosity" about it—which is very odd considering what a natural and tremendous interest (according to the theory) we all have in the matter. Dr. Beet is certain, however, of two things: first, that the "wicked" will get it hot in the next world; second, that they will be very lucky if they ever cool down. At the same time, he is not sure that they will *not* obtain relief. The whole subject is one of the most glorious uncertainty.

"Of this acute suffering, the writers of the New Testament see no end; nor do they teach anything which logically implies that it will ever end. On the other hand, they do not go so far as expressly and indisputably to assert the endless permanence of these ruined and wretched ones, and the consequent endlessness of their torment. The curtain is raised for a moment, revealing the anguish of the lost; and then falls, hiding them from our view."

Such is the shilly-shallying to which Professors of Theology are driven when they want to put new wine into old bottles, and at the same time to avoid the proverbial result. Yet this particular Professor actually looks upon Plato as an object of "pity," though it would probably be quite another feeling with which Plato would look upon *him*. Plato taught the natural immortality of the soul, and this "during long centuries [meaning *many* centuries—they are all the same *length*]" has been almost universally accepted as divine truth taught in the Bible." But it is false and mischievous. The hope of immortality, to those who gain it, rests on the "promise of life in Jesus Christ." In other words, the whole Christian world has been deceived by this pitiable Plato until quite recently. Jesus Christ came to teach the truth, though Plato got in front of him and kept there for nearly two thousand years. But the usurping Greek is now being thrust back into his proper place by gentlemen like Professor Beet. Of course it is very good of them, but will they kindly tell us why Jesus Christ was so helpless? Did he come too soon, or did he come too late? Did he fail to express himself with the clearness that should accompany a revelation? If he did, why did the whole Christian world misunderstand him so long? If he did not, how is it certain that Professor Beet understands him now?

G. W. FOOTE.

Atheism and Morals.—I.

THE anxiety that many people display as to the effect on morals of certain speculative theories is curiously at variance with the small effect these speculations have. One might, as a matter of fact, conveniently, and with considerable accuracy, so far as this subject is concerned, divide people into two classes—those whose stability of character and thoughtfulness of disposition render them secure against all injurious speculations, and those who are also unaffected by speculation because their mental indolence or weakness is such that these speculations have for them no existence. Very largely the class who need moral instruction are indifferent to it, and those who are not indifferent to it do not need it. It can hardly be said that the accepted theories of morals have a deterrent effect on the habitual wrong-doer; he scarcely knows what they are, and certainly is not guided by them. Yet it is generally on account of this class that fears are expressed as to what will be the result if the religious view of morality is finally and completely rejected.

This fear is expressed in many different ways—some crude, some subtle. Some fear an actual encouragement to wrong-doing will result from the disturbance of the religious sanctions of conduct; others, of a more educated turn, fear a gradual lowering of the moral tone resulting from the breathing of a more vitiated atmosphere. To this last class belongs a correspondent who recently submitted for my consideration the following propositions on this topic:—

1. The decentish code of morals which prevails in this second year of the twentieth century is the outcome of all the human ages. From the very first, everywhere and all the time, it has, and continues to be, inextricably intertwined with, and influenced by, Theistic beliefs, even when and where such beliefs have been the crudest and most debased form of polytheism.

2. The ethical atmosphere in which we now live, after having had such an origin and history, remains strongly and frankly pervaded by religion of a Theistic type. Atheist, Agnostic, and Theist alike have to live in this atmosphere, and, consciously or unconsciously, are subject to its influence.

3. Even if we could set up a wholly secular code of morals, derived entirely from the exigencies of tribal, communal, and national life, I take it that such a code would be inadequate to form the type of individual character we all most admire, and which acts under a sense of "ought" rather than of "must." The latter is often merely the demand of gregarious or individual comfort and convenience; the former may be quite opposed to the inclinations of the individual, and yet bring into play irksome but ennobling springs of action which a purely secular code could not touch.

These statements are, I think, worthy of close attention, because they come from a man of education, of scientific training, and, so far, may be taken as representing the opinions of thoughtful Theists upon this subject. There is, of course, no insinuation that Atheists are individually any worse than other people, only the belief that, in the absence of some form of Theism, the higher springs of character cannot be touched, and that conduct will suffer as a result. But I think it may fairly be questioned whether even this belief is not far more the result of a general prejudice that exists upon this question, rather than of careful reflection. We are none of us quite secure from the contagious influences of our environment, and the most deadly influences—or, at least, the most powerful ones—are those that it is almost impossible to specify; and the influence of the unthinking crowd may have its effect upon the conclusions of the more thoughtful members of society. Ask the average man whether religion is essential to morality, and he will undoubtedly answer in the affirmative, and, if pressed, will give the customary (second-hand) reasons for his statement. But one has only to observe the same man in his normal, every-day conduct to discover that, whether that conduct be good or bad, its dependence upon religious beliefs is infinitesimal, if not non-existent.

So far as the first proposition is concerned, we may readily concede that our present moral teaching and moral sense is the outcome of all previous evolution, and that in this evolution morals and religion have been very closely—not inextricably—connected with religion. But this bald statement is true, not of morals only, but of almost everything. Art, science, literature, sociology, have all been, during their development, entangled with religious beliefs. And necessarily so. It would be more accurate—or, at least, more useful—to say that *all* human beliefs and institutions are, in the earlier periods of their development, closely associated with supernaturalism, and that this association is broken only when human evolution has reached a tolerably advanced point. The course of civilisation has been to establish each one of the arts and sciences upon an independent basis, even while demonstrating their inter-connection. And a precisely similar development has been taking place in the matter of morals. Here, too, whatever ethical teaching existed in early times was dominated by supernatural beliefs and fears. But each successive stage of civilisation has furthered separation of the two, and now morality, like science, is asserting its right to an independent existence, free from the control or the supervision of supernaturalism.

Our morality, I am told, is the outcome of all the human ages. Agreed; only I go further than that, and assert that it is the outcome of all the human and *all* the animal ages. There is no break in nature; our distinction of animal and human is a convenient distinction, not a real one, and the evolution of the human from the animal is by imperceptible stages, the human possessing the tendencies and appetites developed during the animal ages. It hardly needs pointing out nowadays that every one of the fundamental moral qualities can be found, in germ at least, in the animal world, and I only emphasise it here to lay stress upon another point so often lost sight of, that morality is only a general expression of the conditions under which life may be rendered most secure and most profitable. So far as any quality is moral, it must find its justification in this direction. The question of incentive we shall come to later; here it is enough to insist upon the simple truth that morality is fashioned, in the main, with reference

to facts, and not with reference to beliefs. Beliefs may influence morality for awhile, but the persistent operation of natural selection ultimately secures the general conformity of conduct with the conditions upon which life depends. Man simply cannot exist unless adequate attention is paid to the legitimate demands of the human organism, and it is these demands which determine the form the morality that persists shall take. And not only determines morality, but religion as well. Often it is said that the function of religion has been to inculcate the importance of conduct. Mr. Matthew Arnold found this to be the quintessence of religion, and Mr. Andrew Lang, in his *Making of Religion*, has made much of the circumstance that there are certain moral teachings accompanying all religions. But, in this case, religion has been subjected to precisely the same pressure as has human nature at large. Natural selection determines the survival of religions as well as of animal forms, and a religion that does survive must become increasingly utilitarian, or, at all events, there is a point beyond which the opposite tendency cannot be carried.

Assume, for example, that a religion exists of a grossly anti-social character, one that teaches doctrines that are subversive of the physical and general well-being of society. One of two things must result. If the religion is strong enough to enforce its teaching, the society over which it rules will disappear, and the religion will die out with it. If, on the contrary, it cannot enforce its teaching, or can only get it accepted in a modified form, then the religion, as such, dies out just the same, and what we have left is a religion socialised by the insistent pressure of natural forces. Religion must, therefore, if it persists, be in some sort of harmony with that course of conduct which makes human life possible and profitable. It may have some influence upon the rate of development, but it is impossible for it altogether to frustrate it. Spencer has shown that life-preserving and pleasure-giving actions must ultimately coincide, since were it otherwise animate life would vanish from the face of the earth; and this principle must hold good of the relations of systems of belief to life in general.

Instead of believing, therefore, that religious teaching dominates life, life, I believe, dominates religion, and forces religions, on pain of extinction, to modify, if not to surrender altogether, any of its teaching that is of an anti-social description. And, as a matter of actual fact, this is what has taken place historically. Over and over again the religious teachings have had to give way before the pressure of social necessity. The ascetic epidemic, the various absurd and obscene sects that have sprung into existence during the history of Christianity, have all disappeared from this cause. True, this is somewhat disguised by our saying that man's better wisdom, or better feeling, etc., rejected these beliefs after a season; but, then, man's wisdom and feeling are themselves but the mode in which the social forces express themselves.

The conclusion is, then, that behind all our consciously elaborated theories of life there exists the unconscious or sub-conscious forces of evolution. These forces compel religion to express itself in terms of general well-being, and, by a not unusual confusion, the fact that religion does express itself in this manner is made the grounds for the belief that religion fashions, if not creates, morality. There is, of course, a certain area of conduct in which speculative opinions play their part, and where actions may be arbitrarily classed as moral or immoral. But of necessity this area is limited, for the reasons I have given above.

Further, the groundlessness of much of the fear expressed as to what will happen if religion disappears may be seen by the reflection that the obligation to morality does not come primarily from consciousness, but from life. Morality, properly understood, is not something highly abstract, but something very concrete. The nicest sense of honor or honesty is but a development of the lowest form of the gregarious instinct and of the animal scramble for food, just as the most idealised form of family life is but a farther stage of the form that meets us in the animal world. And while the method of securing the same end—an end pursued unconsciously at first, and accentuated by natural selection—may vary, the underlying reason must remain

constant, and we must always hark back to it for a justification. Now, no rejection of religious belief can possibly alter the real basis upon which conduct rests, however much it may theoretically; and, as I have said, it is the general conditions of life that ultimately determine our morality, and not our theories of ethics—these, indeed, are themselves, so far as they are operative, expressions of the same fact.

The second proposition, therefore, that Atheist, Agnostic, etc., all breathe the same atmosphere and are affected by the same influences, is one that cuts both ways. If our intellectual atmosphere is pervaded by religious influences, it is also saturated by social instincts that have been perpetually correcting religious extravagances. And it is, at least, open to the Atheist to say, by way of retort, that we have to thank this circumstance that religious doctrines have not committed more injury than has actually been the case. If, for example, the ascetic epidemic of the early Christian centuries had increased in force and remained operative, European society must have disappeared. That this was not so was due solely to the strength of the sexual and social instincts against which even religion was powerless. Similar illustrations may be easily selected from later periods of history. The change that has taken place in public opinion on the question of witchcraft, on the proper use of Sunday, on the burning of heretics, or on the doctrine of eternal damnation, are improvements that are to be placed to the credit of the secular or social instincts operating on religious belief. Right through human history it has been the social instincts that have acted as a corrective to extravagant religious doctrines. And it is worth noting also that, with the exception of a little indirect gain from the practice of pure casuistry, religions have contributed absolutely nothing towards the building up of a serviceable science of ethics. Far from contributing anything, they have been a potent cause of confusion and obstruction. Fictitious vices and virtues have been created, and the essential quality of morality quite lost sight of. Fortunately for the race, morality is not, as I have pointed out, dependent for its existence or practice upon our speculative beliefs, and the saving circumstance that conduct is fundamentally determined by instincts, the essential utility of which has been secured by the incessant operation of natural selection, has been a constant and wholesome check to the extravagant and anti-social character of religious teaching.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Modern View of the Bible.

THE Canon of Westminster, the Rev. Hensley Henson, M.A., B.D., has been preaching on "The Value of the Bible"; and, while claiming that the book is unique in its teachings, the Canon extols the modern views entertained by scholars in reference to both the Old and New Testaments. In recognising the great change which has taken place during the last twenty or thirty years as to the doctrine of inspiration and the authority of the Bible upon human thought, he says:—

"When Christians held a rigid, mechanical doctrine of inspiration, which required them to suppose the direct authority and exact truth of every verse in the Bible, it was practically impossible to arrange the books in a graduated order of merit, and to treat them in a spirit of reasonable discrimination. From this unfortunate lack of just distinction in estimating the books, there followed, and do still follow, the most unhappy consequences. A genuine but unintelligent piety has too often fastened on specific passages of Scripture, and attributed to them the utmost authority which could be conceded to Scripture as a whole; and thus it has happened that the Bible has been bent to the service of the most disastrous fanaticisms which have cursed mankind."

There can be no reasonable doubt that in the past the Bible has been the despotic ruler of the human mind; and the question arises, What has caused the different influence which the book now exercises upon its believers? The false notions so long held as to its superior teaching have largely disappeared, and its intrinsic worth is now estimated, not by a fictitious

authority, but by the value of its contents as a factor in the proper regulation of man's daily conduct. Of course, in the Bible, as indeed, in most books, there is useful teaching to be found, but there is also much within its pages that is either useless or injurious as an ethical monitor. This change in the general attitude manifested towards the "Sacred Scriptures" has been brought about by the bold and discriminating criticism commenced by Thomas Paine, continued by Bishop Colenso, and supplemented more recently by such Biblical scholars as Professor Davidson, Canon Driver, Professor Sayce, Canon Gore, Dr. Horton, W. E. Addis, Dr. Caird, Dean Farrar, Dr. Gladden, Canon Cheyne, Professor Moore, W. F. Adeney, M.A., Archdeacon Hales, J. Wellhausen, and A. Schwartz. The accounts in Genesis of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood are no longer looked upon as records of actual facts, but simply as the recital of Hebrew poems. The "science" of the Bible is thoroughly discarded, and its history is frankly admitted to be exceedingly doubtful. The publication of the Polychrome Bible has demonstrated this fact beyond dispute.

What is termed the Higher Criticism has been valuable in showing how fallacious the old orthodox ideas of inspiration were. It is no longer contended that the "inspired book" is perfect, for Canon Gore says "it is of the essence of the Old Testament to be imperfect" (*Lux Mundi*, p. 274). He quotes Professor Cheyne, who, speaking of certain Bible narratives, "protests against the supposition that they are true to fact" (*ibid.*, p. 288). Now, if the Bible be "imperfect," and its narratives not "true to fact," as these Christian writers allege, what becomes of the orthodox claim that the Scriptural records are trustworthy? Equally destructive of the old notions of the authority of the Bible is the criticism of Canon Driver, who rejects Ezra's account of how he was inspired to write the lost Bible, and also the Jewish account of who did write it. The Canon alleges that "no external evidence worthy of credit exists" as to the age and authorship of the Bible; that the writers of the historical books were compilers, not original authors; that Isaiah was not the writer of several chapters ascribed to him, for they were written by "another prophet writing towards the close of the Babylonian captivity"; that the Song of Solomon is a dream; that the book of Job is a dramatic poem; that we have no authentic tradition respecting the authorship of the Psalms, many of which were written much later than the time of either David or Solomon; and that the book of Daniel did not appear earlier than 300 B.C., and probably only 167-168 B.C. Even Archdeacon Hales admits that—

"The 'sacred writings' are simply the work of eminent Churchmen in the first ages—that is, in the times of the Hebrew nation before Christ, and in the first sixty years or so of the Christian era. These writings, out of a large number of a similar character, were selected for the Old Testament by Jewish ecclesiastical authorities, and for the New Testament by a Church sentiment, gathered by authorities individually unknown to history. Thus it happens that the ancient Jewish Rabbis selected the writings of the Old Testament, which have been accepted by the Christian Church; and the New Testament writings come to us with the authority of general use, without the formality of any express decision of an ecclesiastical body, representing the whole Christian community, till some centuries after Christ, the ancient Jewish Scriptures being imposed upon the Christian community in the same vague and indistinct fashion."

In the face of these severe criticisms and concessions, it is difficult to see the accuracy of Canon Henson's contention that "the Old Testament, rearranged for us by an honest and independent criticism, loses nothing of its value and most of its difficulties. The New Testament comes to us from the crucible of criticism; not, indeed, unaffected, but certainly with its essential features unaltered."

Dean Farrar places the expounders of the modern view of the Bible in a dilemma when he states that "it is no part of the Christian faith to maintain that every word of the Bible was dictated supernaturally, or is equally valuable or free from all error, or on the loftiest levels of morality as finally revealed." The latter part of this sentence is perfectly true, but it involves the Christian in the perplexity of trying to decide which portions of the Bible were "dictated supernaturally."

and which were not. Besides, by what test is the alleged supernatural to be distinguished from the natural? Further, who are to be the judges in the case? Shall it be the Roman Catholic or the Protestant, the Trinitarian or the Unitarian, the Salvation Army preacher or the Freethinker? In any case, the decision arrived at would only be that of an individual, and not the decree of any supernatural authority. There was some force in Bishop Butler's remark that, if ever the Bible comes to be understood, "it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at: by the continuance of learning and liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way all improvements are made." It is to this rational process of the mental powers that we are indebted for the modern view of the Bible. While human intelligence is capable of investigating every kind of truth, physical, ethical, and religious, it can only see what is presented to it in the ordinary course of nature. It cannot look into supernatural worlds, of which it has no experience, nor into the future beyond the limited and uncertain deductions which may be drawn from the past. Anything it ventures to foretell is simply drawn from the lessons of past experience, which may be found afterwards to be correct or incorrect in a greater or smaller degree.

The notion that God has spoken in the Bible to man in a language which it is impossible to differentiate from the ordinary language of mortals is the height of theological absurdity. If the Bible contains the word of God, when, where, and how did he give it to the world? It is only reasonable to suppose that such a unique production, upon which the eternal destiny of the human family is said to rest, and which is alleged to have come from an omnipotent source, would be distinct in its origin, its authority would be beyond dispute, and that its original meaning would be preserved. But such was not the case. The many alterations which the Bible has undergone do not evince any special care, either upon the part of God or man, to preserve what was originally written. The Rev. E. Myers, in his *Bible and Theology*, says that "no people could have been less careful of their sacred writing than the Jews." Modern criticism is most emphatic in its verdict against the notion that the writings of the Bible have maintained their original form. The Rev. Dr. Samuel Davidson, in his *Canon of the Bible*, writes:—

"As to Ezra's treatment of the Pentateuch, or his specific mode of redaction, we are left for the most part to conjecture. Yet it is safe to affirm that he added—making new precepts and practices either in place of, or beside, older ones. Some things he removed as unsuited to the altered circumstances of the people; others he modified (p. 25).

"The scribes who began with Ezra, seeing how he acted, would naturally follow his example, not hesitating to revise the text in substance as well as form. They did not refrain from changing what had been written, or from inserting fresh matter" (*ibid.*, p. 34).

Referring to the New Testament, Dr. Davidson observes:—

"The exact principles that guided the formation of a canon in the earliest centuries cannot be discovered. Strictly speaking, there were none. Definite grounds for the reception or rejection of books were not apprehended.....If it be asked whether all the New Testament writings proceeded from the authors whose names they bear, criticism cannot reply in the affirmative" (*ibid.*, p. 153).

It would be interesting to learn how Canon Henson would attempt to harmonise these facts with his claim for the historical value of the Bible.

The object of the Canon's sermon is to show that the Bible has been an active agent in the promotion of civilisation. The effort, however, has been a decided failure, for the reason that the principal elements of modern progress are not to be found either in the Jewish or Christian records. Greece had its high culture, its intellectual eminence, and its moral excellence, without the aid of the Bible. Besides, it should be remembered that the alleged time and place of its production were not favorable to the advent of a unique civilising power. The glories of Greece had departed, the grandeur of Rome had subsided, and modern science

was unknown. Further, moral philosophy was in its infancy, the government of the universe was misunderstood, and the true nature of man was unknown. Moreover, the place from which the Bible is supposed to have emanated was not remarkable for its intellectual culture. Albert Barnes, in his *Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity*, says (page 257):—

"The Bible came from a land undistinguished for literature; a land not rich in classical associations; a land not distinguished for pushing its discoveries into the regions of science. Chaldea had its observatories, and the dwellers there looked out on the stars and gave them names; Egypt had its temples, where the truths of science as well as the precepts of religion were committed to the sacred priesthood; Greece had academic groves, but Judea had neither. To such things the attention of the nation was never turned. We have all their literature, all their science, all their knowledge of art, and all this is in the Bible. Among the ancients they were regarded as a narrow-minded, a bigoted, a superstitious people."

Canon Henson should not forget that slavish submission to any book cannot long co-exist with the mental activity and intellectual discrimination which are the marked manifestations of modern thought.

CHARLES WATTS.

Early Christian Frauds.—III.

6. CONTINUING our evidence from the writings of Justin, it is to be noted that that apologist, when speaking of the baptism of Christ in the river Jordan, says (Dial. 88):—

"And when he had stepped into the water a fire was kindled in the Jordan.....And at the same time a voice came from the heavens.....Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee."

Here we see two circumstances contained in Justin's *Memoirs of the Apostles* which are not found in any of the canonical Gospels. Now, in a version of the Hebrew Gospel in use amongst the Ebionites the account of the baptism of Jesus was thus recorded:—

"And a voice came from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased; and again, *To-day have I begotten thee.* And immediately a great light shone about the place; and John, when he saw it, saith to Jesus, Who art thou, Lord?"

We are indebted to Epiphanius for this fragment of a lost Gospel, which, in all probability, is that from which the narratives common to Matthew, Mark, and Luke were originally derived. The account in Justin's *Memoirs* was a later edition, in which the primitive "light" had developed into a "fire." The Ebionite version appears also to have suggested matter to the compiler of the canonical Acts of the Apostles; for that fictionist, in narrating the conversion of Paul, says (ix. 3-4): "And suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven.....And he said, *Who art thou, Lord?*"

7. After quoting Isaiah lxxv. 2 and lviii. 2, Justin says of Christ (1 Apol. 35):—

"For also, as the prophet saith, they reviled him, and set him on the judgment seat, and said, 'Judge us.'"

No such action as that mentioned is recorded in the canonical Gospels. In the recently-discovered fragment of the Gospel of Peter, however, it is stated that, at the conclusion of the trial before Pilate, "they put upon him a purple robe, and set him on the judgment seat, and said, 'Judge righteously, O King of Israel.'" This Gospel was discovered to be in use at Rhosse, in Cilicia, by Serapion, Bishop of Antioch (about A.D. 190), who, finding in it "many things superadded to the sound faith of our Savior," forbade its further use in his diocese; but, since the Gospel was there when this bishop first took charge, his predecessors most certainly saw nothing heretical in it—neither did Justin. As already stated, the sifting process did not begin until late in the second century.

8. Justin says (Dial. 47):—

"Wherefore also our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'In whatsoever things I shall take you, in these I shall judge you.'"

This is a direct quotation of a saying of Jesus which is

not to be found in any of our present Gospels. It is, therefore, another proof of the existence of fictitious histories. Again, referring to the trials and afflictions borne by many Christians, Justin says (Dial. 116):—

".....out of which, again, Jesus, the Son of God, snatches us. He has promised to *clothe us with prepared garments* if we do his commandments, and has undertaken to provide an eternal kingdom for us."

Here we have further proof that Justin's *Memoirs of the Apostles* were not the canonical Gospels. In none of the latter is there a promise made by Christ to give the righteous "prepared garments." Yet, strange to say, in the apocryphal books of Esdras and Enoch—which are Jewish, not Christian—it is stated that those who died faithful "have received glorious garments of the Lord," and "have been clothed with the garment of life." It would seem, then, that some such promise was put in the mouth of Jesus in some of the primitive Gospels; for there can be no doubt that Justin found it in one included in the *Memoirs*.

9. Speaking of the miracles ascribed to Christ, Justin says (Dial. 69):—

"But, though they saw such works, they asserted it was magical art. For they dared to call him a magician and a deceiver of the people."

In the canonical Gospels, it is true, Jesus is accused of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub; but in none of them is he charged with being a magician. In the apocryphal Acts of Pilate, however, both accusations are brought against him—"and they say again, 'Did we not say that he was a magician?'"

10. Referring to Psalm xxii. 16, Justin says (1 Apol. 35):—

"And after he was crucified they cast lots upon his vesture, and they that crucified him parted it among them. And that these things did happen you can ascertain from the *Acts of Pontius Pilate.*"

Justin says again (1 Apol. 48):—

"And that it was predicted that our Christ should heal all diseases and raise the dead, hear what was said..... And that he did those things you can learn from the *Acts of Pontius Pilate.*"

Here, at last, we have a clear and undoubted reference to an apocryphal Gospel (the only Christian book that Justin names)—the "Acts of Pilate." The work in the hands of Justin was, of course, a more primitive version than that which has come down to us. But the extant *Acts of Pilate* contains accounts of both the circumstances for which Justin cited it. Thus, as regards the first point, it is stated (chap. 10): "Then they stripped Jesus, and the soldiers took his garments, and divided them among themselves."

With regard to the second matter, it is recorded (chaps. 6-8) that at the trial before Pilate witnesses came forward who testified to the reality of Christ's miracles. Among these may be instanced a man who had kept his bed thirty-eight years, a man who had been born blind, one who had been cured of leprosy, a man who had been "crooked," a woman who had had an issue of blood for twelve years. "And others, a multitude of men and women," bore witness to the wonderful cures wrought by Jesus. If we accept the testimony of this book, as did the credulous Justin, the genuineness of the miracles attributed to Christ is fully established.

The result, so far, derived from an examination of the writings of Justin is that about the middle of the second century we find ample evidence of the existence of spurious Gospels, but none that can be relied on which proves the use of the canonical ones. It does not, of course, follow that the latter Gospels (or some of them) were not then in circulation in some parts of the world; but the evidence certainly shows that Justin was unacquainted with them.

Contemporary with Justin was Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, who compiled a book entitled *An Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord*. A copy of this work was in existence up to the year 1218, but is now lost. Nearly all our information respecting Papias and his writings is derived from extracts preserved by Eusebius and Irenæus. The following paragraph was copied by Eusebius from this work as "a matter of primary importance":—

"And the presbyter also said this: Mark, having become

the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ; for he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him, etc..... Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone translated them as best he could" (*Eccl. Hist.*, iii. 39).

This is the earliest evidence we have of the existence of Gospels attributed to Matthew and Mark. No mention is made of a Gospel by Luke or John—the latter appear to have been unknown to Papias. Neither is it at all certain that that bishop ever had a copy of the two Gospels he names in his possession. He was merely told of their existence by his friend, the presbyter John. Moreover, the Hebrew Gospel which Papias mentions as composed by Matthew was not the canonical Matthew, but the "Gospel according to the Hebrews." Jerome, the most learned of the early Christian Fathers, says of this Gospel (on Matt. xii. 13): "In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which I lately translated from the Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by very many *the original Gospel of Matthew*, the man with the withered hand is described as a mason," etc. This was the Gospel, there can scarcely be the shadow of a doubt, which was referred to by Papias; the canonical Matthew, as we now have it, has only been known in Greek.

Eusebius also tells us that the Commentary of Papias contained "certain strange parables of our Lord and of his doctrine, and some other matters rather too fabulous," and that the writer "relates the story of a woman who had been accused of many sins before the Lord, which is also contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews."

The story here referred to was most probably that from which was derived the account of the woman taken in adultery in the Fourth Gospel. Respecting the latter story, the English Revisers of the New Testament say in a note:—

"Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii. 53—viii. 11. Those which contain it vary much from each other."

Thus, the beautiful and touching story, which for generations has been held up as an example of the mercy and loving-kindness of the Savior, and upon which thousands of sermons have been preached, is now tacitly admitted to be a fabrication.

The following choice sample of the teaching of Jesus, recorded in Papias's book, is preserved by Irenæus (*Heresies*, v. xxxiii. 3):—

".....the Lord used to teach and say: 'The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having 10,000 branches, and on each branch 10,000 twigs, and on each twig 10,000 shoots, and on each one of the shoots 10,000 clusters, and on every one of the clusters 10,000 grapes, and every grape when pressed will give 25 measures of wine,' etc.....In like manner the Lord declared that a grain of wheat would produce 10,000 ears, and that every ear should have 10,000 grains, and every grain would yield 10 lbs. of clear, pure, fine flour, etc.....And these things are borne witness to in writing by Papias, in his fourth book. And he says in addition, 'Now these things are credible to believers.' And he says that when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, 'How can things be made by the Lord to bring forth so abundantly?' the Lord declared, 'They who shall come to these times shall see.'"

From the foregoing it would seem that the sceptical Judas was the only sane man amongst the disciples. Papias's complete "Exposition of the sayings of the Lord," could a copy be discovered, would be deeply instructive. A perusal would throw a new light upon the origin of the Christian religion and the character of the Impregnable Rock upon which it stands. The naive remark of this worthy bishop—"Now these things are credible to believers"—proves that there was absolutely no limit to the credulity of the Christians of his time, and that *anything* that was related as a saying of "the Lord" was believed unquestioned. And it was in this grossly superstitious age, and amongst people whose mental condition verged almost upon imbecility, that the four canonical Gospels first saw the light of day, and, without undergoing scrutiny of any kind, or the smallest investigation, were received by all as authentic and historical.

ABRACADABRA.

The Lay of Jehovah.

AWAY in the mist of an unmade morn
A little wee godling crawled from his hole,
And a lonely godling he!
The puniest godling ever born
To rule immensity.
He sat on chaos and scratched his poll,
And dolefully gazed on the black abyss:
" 'Tis no sweet prospect," said he, "I wis,
To float and flutter in lonely bliss
For a billion years, or three,
To float and flutter in lonely bliss,
O'er a thrice-cursed pit of emptiness,
Oh, this is h—!" quoth he.

*Oh, evil to thee, Jehovah, and evil to thy Tree!
If Death be the root of Forbidden Fruit,
Then Eternal Death to thee!
To make and to slay, thou'st had the day
(Aye, little we'll weep thy loss);
Oh, if Death be the root of Forbidden Fruit,
A swift Death to thy Cross!*

Away in the mist of that unmade morn
The little wee godling chuckled with mirth,
Oh, a cheerful godling he!
The merriest godling ever born,
To rule immensity.
Then a chunk of Chaos coined an earth
And a moon and stars and a white hot sun;
"By Chaos itself! 'tis mighty well done;
To people it first, and then rich fun
For a billion years or three.
To murder and slay for aye and aye,
To blast and to burn through night and day,
Oh, this is heav'n!" quoth he.

*Then evil to thee, Jehovah, and evil to thy name!
If this be the love of the God above,
To thee eternal shame!
Thou hast battered well on thy flaming hell,
Thou hast fattened by Calvary.
If this be the love of the God above,
Undying hate to thee!*

And as year followed year and the earth waxed old,
That little wee godling grew fat and strong.
Oh, a tyrant God was he!
And brainless bipeds bellowed song.
(That godling now was three.)
He sat on a throne of shining gold.
There was one to spare: to earth sent down,
He tramped and ramped in a seamless gown,
And hung on a cross in a thorn-spiked crown
To prove God's love for me.
To darken earth for a thousand years,
To blind Truth's eyes with scolding tears,
O'er rack and stake and flaming biers,
And God-got misery!

*So evil to thee, Jehovah, and evil to thy name!
If thou madest man but to slay and ban,
To thee eternal shame!
Thou art feeble and old, thou hast lived by gold,
By lechery, trick, and lie—
Thou must yield thy breath to thine own King Death,
For thy turn hath come to die!*

E. J. M.

Acid Drops.

EDWARD THE SEVENTH has been the sovereign of these realms ever since the death of Queen Victoria. He has been king by right of succession, king by virtue of an Act of Parliament, and king by popular consent. But all this was insufficient. Something else remained to be done to make him king for dead certain. It was necessary for him to go to the famous House of God at Westminster and get crowned. It was also necessary for him to get anointed. The crowning is politics. The anointing is religion. We shall therefore concern ourselves with the latter. Let it also be noticed that we are writing *before* the Coronation ceremonies, although this number of the *Freethinker* is dated for the Sunday after them. We state this in order to prevent a misunderstanding in case the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, should forestall this whole nation, and do something to render the Coronation impossible. Not that we *hope* he will do anything of the kind; on the contrary, we hope the thing will go through to the satisfaction of everybody concerned; for, although we are Republican, we see no sense or advantage in the shifting of one monarch merely to make room for another.

Speaking in the future tense, then, we say that the Coronation Service on Thursday, June 26, will include a special

sermon by the Bishop of London. This right reverend father in God has recovered from the shock of his appointment to that high episcopal office. At first he staggered and groaned under the weight of his £10,000 a year. He called upon the world to note that it was almost greater than he could bear. But just as eels get used to skinning, and the damned get used to hell, so Bishop Ingram became gradually accustomed to a princely income. By this time he looks as well as could be expected in the circumstances. At any rate, he is well enough to preach at the Coronation; but it will not be an exhausting effort, as he is only to be allowed five minutes for his share in the performance. It may reasonably be hoped, therefore, that a week's rest at the seaside will enable him to pull round and face the duties of his diocese.

Far more important than the preaching is the holy-oiling of the king. This will be performed by that head quack of the Established Spiritual Health Association, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He has to apply the holy oil of anointing to three spots on the surface of the king's anatomy. Holes will be cut in the royal raiment to enable Dr. Temple to put two dabs of the sacred stuff on a spot on the right arm near the elbow and a spot on the breast near the heart. No cutting away will be needed to expose the third spot; it is on the top of the King's head, where there is not much to interfere with the movement of the Archiepiscopal fingers. When those three dabs of holy oil rest upon those three spots Edward the Seventh will be King in the fullest sense of the word—King by the Grace of God. What great effects from little causes spring! Who would have thought that three dabs of oil would work such wonders?

Whether the Archbishop of Canterbury will follow out the Bible precedent to the end is a point on which we have no information. When the prophet Samuel anointed Saul to be King of Israel, he "took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him." We wonder if the King will have to be kissed by old Dr. Temple? Anyhow, he will escape the pouring of the holy oil upon his head. The old-fashioned way, as may be seen in ancient prints and pictures, was to drop a whole bottle of the stuff upon the royal head, and let it flow down as it would over the royal person to the pavement under the royal feet. King Edward is spared that infliction.

We wish the old arch-quack would state what particular fluid he has in that phial. Is it paraffin, colza, or sperm oil? Is it common table oil—as the holy water used in churches is common domestic water supplied (say) by the New River Company? Dr. Temple should imitate the candor of the Bible and enlighten us on this point. One would like a bottle of the mixture to try its efficacy. One would not care to begin on the family. But there is the cat.

The Lord's holy oil recipe, given to Moses, and preserved for the edification of posterity, may be found in the thirtieth chapter of Exodus. The ingredients were 500 shekels of myrrh, 250 shekels of sweet cinnamon, 250 shekels of sweet calamus, 500 shekels of cassia, and an hin of olive oil. This would make a large supply, but various objects had to be anointed with it as well as the priesthood.

This holy macassar was Aaron's patent. Anyone who infringed it was liable to capital punishment. "Whosoever compoundeth any like it," the Bible says, "or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall be even cut off from his people." That is, stoned to death.

We repeat that when King Edward is properly oiled he will be King by the Grace of God. You may read this on the coinage—"dei gratia." To say anything against him after that will be worse than treason, it will be blasphemy. Who will dare to raise his hand, or wag his tongue, against the Lord's anointed? Yes, the grace of God will enter Edward the Seventh on Thursday. And how will he look after it? It ought to make a considerable difference. Will it be visible on his spacious countenance? Will he have to follow the example of Moses, who, when he descended from his long interview with God on Mount Sinai, had to veil his face lest its insufferable splendor should strike blindness into the beholders? We fancy our jovial monarch would laugh at the idea. All the grace of God there is knocking about on Thursday will not prevent him from saying when he reaches home again, "This is dry work, let us have a drink." The grace of God will probably be moistened with champagne.

Seriously speaking, what is this holy oiling of the King but *Magic*? Magic and science are the opposite of each other. Science is concerned with cause and effect; it teaches that effects cannot be produced without causes, and that causes cannot operate without producing effects. Magic supposes a mysterious power to reside in the mere will of human or supernatural beings. There is magical water in baptism, magical bread and wine in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, magical words when a Bishop consecrates a church, and magical soil on the consecrated

side of a cemetery. These mysterious qualities are not perceptible to Reason; they are only perceptible to Faith; and Faith is the organ of Magic, as Reason is the organ of Science. The end of the whole story is that the magical performance called anointing, which is to be gone through at the Coronation in Westminster Abbey, shows that both Religion and Monarchy belong (in their origin and character) to the dark ages of ignorance and barbarism. Yes, the altar supports the throne, and the throne returns the compliment by supporting the altar. King Edward and Archbishop Temple should wink at each other on Thursday. Perhaps they will.

The German Emperor has been at it again. He is nothing if not religious, and he has been maintaining his reputation at Aix-la-Chapelle. Delivering a sort of oration in the Town Hall, he observed that the Germanic Empire was "rooted in simplicity and the fear of God." He went on to express satisfaction at the compliment paid to the Germans by the Pope, who had a high opinion of their "piety." He did not say, however, if the ungodly Social Democrats, who number millions, were included in the compliment. The fact is, he does not like to notice them at all. He prefers to fancy they do not exist. But they do exist, and they form a very serious danger to his Empire.

Emperor William is evidently desirous to enlist the support of the Catholics against the common enemy. "Our two great creeds," he said, "must, while living side by side, keep in view one great aim—to uphold and strengthen the fear of God and reverence for religion. Whether we are moderns, or whether we labor in this or that field, matters not at all. He who does not found his life on religion is a lost man." What the Emperor means at bottom is probably this, that if his subjects did not found their lives on religion *he* would be a lost man. There is no doubt about *that*.

Fresh suspicion is thrown upon the "holy shroud of Turin" which has lately been discovered to bear upon it an actual photograph of the dead Christ, supposed to have been produced by the ammoniacal emanations from the body acting upon the linen soaked in ointment of spices, of which aloes was the principal ingredient. M. Paul Vignon, who has been experimenting in relation to this matter, finds a great objection in the fact that such an impression of a human body would, if photographed, appear out of perspective, owing to the folds of the garment; whereas a photographic reproduction of the markings on the shroud presents "a perfect and complete image of the Holy face, of the hands, and of the limbs." M. Paul Vignon took an experimental impression of his own head, which was so misshapen and out of perspective that he is sure that "by no mere contact could a body have printed on the shroud traces which, upon photography, give such a striking suggestion of a faithful likeness."

A possible explanation is that the priests in charge of this "holy shroud of Turin" have resorted to a "fake," and have overreached themselves. Too clever people are often not quite clever enough, and this may be a case in point. That the Church is still quite capable of such "fakes" no one will doubt who recollects the annual miracle at Naples of the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius.

It is well known that "General" Booth makes a very large profit by selling articles of general use and consumption to the members of the Salvation Army. There is Salvation soap and Salvation tea—the latter being, as we are assured by persons who have tried it, a most inferior preparation. There is also Salvation clothes, for which a more than market price is said to be charged. And now comes the astonishing news that the cost of a Salvation bonnet is fifteen shillings. Such it was stated to be in a legal action reported in *Lloyd's News* on Sunday. A Salvation Army lady wanted damages for being knocked down and hurt by the driver of a trap while she was helping to make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Fifteen shillings was mentioned as the value of her injured bonnet. "What," said the legal gentleman on the other side, "fifteen shillings for a bonnet like that?" "That is what they cost," was the reply. William Booth seems to charge Coronation prices all the year round.

Sir Francis Jeune, President of the Divorce Court, has issued an attachment against the Rev. Owen Parry, committing him to Holloway Prison for contempt of court. The man of God was ordered to deliver his child to the care of the mother, who is petitioning for a divorce from him. Papers were served upon him, but he threw them all over the street, and ran away. A letter was read from him in court, in which he told his wife that, if she did not sign the agreement he required, he would have the child taken abroad and rebaptised in the Romish Church, with its name changed so that it would be lost to her for ever. A pretty letter, indeed, to send to a mother!

Another severe famine is dreaded in the Bombay Presidency and the Western Punjab, owing to the absence of rain.

Even as it is now, there are 475,000 in receipt of relief from the Government. We suppose this is another case of fatherly "Providence."

The churches in Rome are full just now. All the wealthy people have left for the country, and the poorer masses frequent the churches for the sake of coolness. Their object is not piety, but comfort.

The Maharajah of Jeypore, whom we referred to a fortnight ago as having (according to the *Daily Telegraph*) brought his god in a rich casket with him to London, has been explained and defended by Bábá Premanand Bharati in the *Westminster Gazette*. This gentleman points out that the image in question is that of Sri Krishna, the incarnation of all ideal perfections, and that the Maharajah's worship is not in the least idolatry. The following passage is worth quoting *in extenso*: "This Krishna is the deity of the Maharajah of Jeypore, and his Highness has brought here with him an image of this (his household) deity, named Sri Gopalji, which he worships every day before he does any temporal duty or even breaks his fast. He offers every morning and evening fragrant flowers and the sacred leaves of the Tulsi plant, smeared with sandal-wood paste, to the 'lotus feet' of the image, accompanied by certain formulas of words and ceremonies, as enjoined in his holy Scriptures. This form of worship of Sri Krishna is universally the same in Hindoo India—the image is symbolical, and its worship is essentially mental, the outward forms being only adopted in order to impress the ignorant masses who cannot grasp the abstract idea of the Supreme Deity. The British mind ought to appreciate the necessity of such outward formulas and ceremonies, if it only looks at the forms and ceremonies of its own Church in order to impress upon the average Christian mind the sacredness and functions inside the House of God. As to the objection to image-worship, the Catholics have it, and it will not hold much water with Protestants either, so long as they will raise statues of heroes and offer homage to them some way or other. That is image-worship, whether you bare or nod your head to a statue or worship it with flowers."

"Take no thought for the morrow," said Jesus Christ. He also said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Now it is said that England is the most Christian country in the world. It also boasts of being the wealthiest. That is how English Christians follow Christ.

Mr. Alfred Chapman, of the Income Tax Repayment Agency, writes to the *Daily News* as follows: "From carefully compiled statistics, there were in 1899, 6,000 persons with fortunes of from £100,000 to £150,000; 4,000 with from £150,000 to £250,000; 1,850 with from a quarter to half a million; and 400 with over a million."

Look at these figures. Then look at the multitude of churches and chapels. Then look at the crowd of priests, parsons, and preachers. Then look at the good old texts, "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich." And then cry with Jack Falstaff, "Lord, how the world is given to lying."

Christianity is about the only religion in the world that has no real relation to the life of its devotees. To say a man is a Mohammedan, for instance, is to say he is a teetotaler. To say a man is a Christian is to say next to nothing about him. Moreover, as Emerson remarked, under Stoicism every man was a Stoic, but in all Christendom where is the Christian?

The *Daily News* is getting quite profane. One of its contributors says that the Coronation motto of "God save the King" on the London houses is quite monotonous. He wants to know why somebody doesn't strike out a new line, and put up "Hurrah for the King," or "What ho! your Majesty." Our contemporary's conductors will be sorry for this levity at the day of judgment.

"My first desire," the Bishop of Hereford says, "is to see all public-houses closed on all these holiday occasions, so as to remove the temptation to excessive drinking, with all the dangers and degradations which it brings with it." Such is this wise man's advice for Coronation Day. Evidently he doesn't mean to join the hot jostling crowd in the streets. Just as evidently he will be able to get his "refreshments" without troubling a public-house. It is from this position of advantage that he prescribes for his less fortunate fellow-men. He gravely proposes that hundreds of thousands of them shall be away from their homes—often miles away—for the best part of a day, without an opportunity of obtaining a drink of any kind. For that is really what it comes to. There wouldn't be milk enough to go a twentieth part around, and what chance would such a vast crowd have of getting served with tea or coffee in the existing shops? Besides, a lot of men are in the habit of drinking a glass of beer by preference. We don't say they are right or wrong as a matter of taste or ethics. That is not the point at issue.

What we say is that they have a right to drink their glass of beer—a far better right than the Bishop of Hereford has to stop them. On the whole, we think this right reverend Father in God (not God the Father, mind) should get on with his soul-saving and leave earthly affairs to other people who have brains enough to deal with them.

Dr. Parker, we regret to say, is laid up again with heart trouble. We do not look upon him as exactly a great man, but he gives a touch of color and variety to the dull monotony of Dissent. Long may he flourish, therefore; and long may he continue his famous performance at the City Temple.

John McNeil took Dr. Parker's place last Thursday morning, with Gipsy Smith to assist him. Two well-known entertainers were requisite to make up for the loss of Dr. Parker's "turn" on the bill. John McNeil asked for a few minutes' silent prayer, in which to plead for the life of the pastor of that church. But the silent prayer was not enough. There appeared to be some doubt as to whether it had reached the ears of the Almighty. The Rev. G. Hooper was therefore asked to "voice" the longing of the congregation. This he proceeded to do, and it is to be presumed he spoke loud enough for God to hear.

Mr. Hooper asked that God would so direct the skill and wisdom of Dr. Parker's medical advisers that they might be able to bring about a restoration to health and strength. This is a new form of supplication. It seems designed to save the Parkerites from being classed with the Peculiar People. Leaving the whole case to the Lord is dangerous. The safe method is to call in good doctors and ask the Lord to give them a friendly lift. Which looks like a poor compliment to the doctors—and a worse compliment to the Lord.

All the doctors in the world, with the Lord to help them, will not be able to restore Dr. Parker to health and strength if his heart is seriously affected. From the nature of the case, there is no cure for such a malady. This is perfectly well known, and both the silent and the "voiced" prayers for Dr. Parker's health were lacking in the grace of sincerity.

According to a souvenir handbook, issued in connection with a Primitive Methodist anniversary at Burnley, the old chapel records show that the members bore a striking resemblance (at least, in some things) to the New England Puritans, who forbade husbands to kiss their wives on Sundays. A chapel minute dated 1824 runs thus: "That we do not allow young men and young women of our Society to court with each other on the Sunday, neither do we allow our single men and women to walk arm-in-arm at any time; neither do we allow them to stand at the ends of houses and corners of streets chatting together." It would take a lot of chapel resolutions to stop that sort of thing now. At present, indeed, the courting is done very near the House of God.

Jehovah was quite wrong (as usual) when he accepted Abel's roast lamb and turned up his nose at Cain's peas and asparagus. Herr Karl Mann, the world's champion walker, explained the other day to the Vegetarian Congress how he managed to accomplish 125 miles from Dresden to Berlin in twenty-seven hours on nothing more nourishing than fruit, nuts, and cereals. Out of forty-two who started in the race from England, Austria, and Germany, twelve compassed the whole distance, and nine of these were vegetarians. Mr. Eustace Mills, the Cambridge tutor, and the world's champion of both tennis and rackets, is also a vegetarian.

Thomas Jefferson, like Washington and Paine, and most of the great men who founded the United States Republic, was an "infidel" to the extent of being a Deist. He compiled a sort of Bible, and called it the *Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. Regarding Jesus as a man, he left out all the miraculous parts of the Gospels. Naturally, therefore, the orthodox clergy are protesting against the action of the House of Representatives in ordering nine thousand copies of this wicked work to be published. It is a shocking blow at their professional interests.

Who dares to say now that Unitarians are not Christians? The Rev. R. A. Armstrong, of Liverpool, received an official invitation to attend the Coronation service at Westminster Abbey. That settles it.

Not Quite Converted.

Two Jews, wishing to become Catholics, called at the house of a priest, and, finding he was not in, decided to wait. As the day advanced, and the priest did not return, one of the men became restless.

"Come away," he said to his companion, "or we shall be late for the synagogue."

—*Chambers's Journal*.

The business of the Freethought Publishing Company, including the publication of the FREE-THINKER, is now carried on at No. 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Mr. G. W. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 29, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "Making King Edward Swear."

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS. — Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

ANNOUNCED.—We are in no way responsible for your being pestered with letters and circulars you do not want. Your address was not obtained from the Freethought Publishing Company. It is the law that every Company must deposit a list of its Shareholders annually at Somerset House. No doubt your address was obtained there.

A CORRESPONDENT, who marks his envelope "private," and presumably does not wish to see his name referred to, writes: "When reading your article in this week's *Freethinker*, I was surprised to find you asking for justice. I should have thought that you were too old a bird to expect justice in this world. Blessed is he that expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed." This correspondent forgets that asking for justice and expecting it are not exactly the same thing. Besides, we would rather not belong to the category of those who, in Shelley's words, are "deluded by no generous enthusiasm."

J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham).—Pleased to hear that our paragraphs brought in "some good donations." We hope the Branch's protest is being widely circulated in the city.

A. E. RANDALL.—It is good of you, of course, but there is no need to thank us for our "courtesy and promptitude." We are always willing to answer any reasonable queries from our readers. Write again whenever the spirit moves you.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

E. A. PHIPSON.—You must have a poor idea of the extent of our reading when you advise us to peruse Butler's *Analogy* and Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. No doubt there is truth in your contention that educated Christians no longer believe in hell-fire. But they used to believe in it, and it was the Bible that misled them. Christians grow in knowledge, intelligence, and humanity, and their Christianity has to grow with them. But this very fact proves it is not a divine revelation. To grow is to change, and the divine is unchangeable. For our part, we protest against reading into the Bible whatever Christians want to believe; one thing to-day and the opposite to-morrow. What you say about the evils of life in this world is perfectly arbitrary. You refer to the next world for the explanation. But we are in no hurry to get there, and we guess you are just as slow on the road.

H. P. BROOKES.—Your sentiments are admirable, but you admit you are "a novice in writing." Better leave the writing, then, in the hands of the more practised.

ANONYMOUS.—Thanks for the copy of Mr. Charles Watts's new circular. We should not have seen it but for your kindness. Of course it is impossible to follow him up through the Post Office, but we have dropped a brief note to the paper he mentions. All we intend to do here is to warn recipients of Mr. Watts's circulars against blindly accepting the statements he makes in that way; the present circular, for instance, containing not only a monstrous suggestion, but also an egregious falsehood. A few persons may be deceived by such artifices, but in the long run he who resorts to them will be the principal sufferer. Mr. Watts should remember what it was that made a reconciliation impossible when he was at variance with Charles Bradlaugh.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Philosopher—Secular Thought—Torch of Reason—Boston Investigator—Public Opinion (New York)—Freethought Magazine—Blue Grass Blade—Weekly Mercury (Birmingham)—Liberator—Truthseeker (New York)—Sydney Bulletin—Reynolds' Newspaper—Yarmouth Mercury—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Crescent—Ilford Recorder.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-Street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

THE London 'buses, with their "Coronation" charges—often sixpence for a penny ride—made it difficult for people to reach the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. Still, there was a very decent audience in the specially unfavorable circumstances. Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall again this evening (June 29). According to the handbill, his subject is to be "Making King Edward Swear." The King's Coronation Oath will be dealt with, and the attitude it places him in with respect to his Catholic and Protestant subjects, together with their attitude towards each other, and the Freethinkers' attitude towards both of them. In all probability this will be the last meeting at the Athenæum this summer.

The editor of the *Ilford Recorder* is indebted to some gentleman who has "very kindly" sent him a copy of the *Freethinker*. "Why he has done so," the editor observes, "I cannot discover, unless it be to prove that the Rev. Silas Hocking was wrong in stating that there is now no open propaganda of infidelity. The *Freethinker* is one of the saddest publications that I know of. Cannot Mr. Foote, its smart and able editor, tell us anything that infidelity has to offer in the way of adding something to the sweetness and happiness of life, or of helping to build up character? The Christianity of Christ, as distinct from the so-called Christianity of the creeds, is doing good work along those lines. Has infidelity nothing of any practical value to offer?" We thank the gentleman who is looking after our circulation in that district. We also thank the editor of the *Ilford Recorder* for his courtesy—not to mention his flattering adjectives. It is not likely, however, that he could appreciate the *Freethinker* as much as those for whom it is written. Many of our readers derive "happiness" every week from what they regard as an intellectual treat. As to "building up character," we venture to think that we do our share by insisting on the claims of truth and common sense. What "character" is possible without these? Did not the great Charlotte Brontë say that sentiment without reason is the washiest thing in the world?

Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* has always reached us fitfully. For several weeks of late we had received no copy at all, and we began to wonder if anything had happened to our gallant old comrade or his paper. Happily the silence has just been broken and four copies of the *Liberator* have reached us by one post. They were all separately wrapped, stamped, and posted; yet the dates were March 15, April 12 and 19, and May 17. Very odd, is it not? There must be a curious mishap somewhere.

The March 15 *Liberator* was rather sad reading. Mr. Symes had been suffering intensely for five or six weeks. After describing his malady he wrote as follows: "After six weeks of almost incessant pain, and not one good night's rest, I am, as the reader may suppose, considerably run down. The doctor, who understands my machinery well, says I need a change, as I am run down through incessant work. A change in the country would probably do me good; but I have no money (never had less), and have nobody to do my work during my absence. I have always expected to die at the oar, and have no doubt that will be the case. A twenty-five years' run for this locomotive, always at highest pressure, with no repairs scarcely and rarely a day off the main line, may account for the present shaky state of things. But I see no remedy for it, for things are extremely bad; and other men cannot, of course, do my work for nothing. It seems unlikely that any successor is coming along to continue my work either with pen or tongue; and the outlook is not the least encouraging in that respect—or in some others. The only thing for me is to do all I am able and then leave the worn-out carcass to be buried or cremated."

From the *Liberator* of April 12 we gather that Mr. Symes was somehow enabled to get away into the country. "I am certainly better," he wrote in that issue, "though still below par, still much weaker than I should be. But, while I needed a longer stay in the country, I have started work again, and shall try to keep it up, though the doctor says I must get a

spell of rest as often as I can." Mr. Symes tendered his thanks to the veteran Mr. Rose and others who "worked so heartily to keep things going" while he was laid up.

Mr. Symes was concerned about Mr. Foote's illness, news of which had reached him at Melbourne. He was glad to hear that "Mr. Foote is somewhat better." This he learned from the *Freethinker* of March 9. Mr. D. Wallwork, writing in the same *Liberator*, said it was "matter for deep regret that both Mr. Symes and Mr. Foote, editors of the two ablest Freethought papers in England and Australia, are both laid up, having nearly killed themselves in working for people who" are not too ready to support them financially. Any man who had a choice and valued his comfort in life (this writer says) would pray "not to be born with the instinct of reform."

Our contributor "Ess Jay Bee," whose complimentary verses so riled the great Dan Leno the other day, had a parody on "All hail the power of Jesus' name" in Sunday's *Reynolds'*. The verses were political—an attack upon Joseph of Birmingham.

Mr. J. W. de Caux has a capital Anti-Sabbatarian letter in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. He pulverises the Rev. W. Thorpe Goodrich, who has been inviting the interference of the law with the Sunday entertainments provided by the Corporation. We wish Mr. de Caux's example were extensively imitated. Freethinkers do a great service to the movement by contributing well-written letters to the local press.

Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., was well enough to preside at a recent meeting of the Council of the International Arbitration League. Mr. Burt has apparently quite recovered from a long and critical illness. His return to public life will be hailed with pleasure by Freethinkers. They remember how steadfastly he stood by Charles Bradlaugh in his great struggle against the bigoted majority of the House of Commons. We do not mean that this is Mr. Burt's only passport to esteem. He is a man of sterling ability and many admirable personal qualities, and an honor to the working classes from whom he sprang, and whom he has for twenty-five years so faithfully represented.

Mr. Herbert Spencer subscribes £2 towards the projected Ingersoll Chair in the Liberal University, Silverton, Oregon.

Mr. W. E. Garrett Fisher, writing under the heading of "Hours in a Library" in the *Daily News*, makes the following reference to James Thomson ("B. V."), which will be appreciated by all who recollect his contributions to Freethought periodicals:—"Of Dürer this is hardly the place to speak, though one may appropriately recall James Thomson's admirable description of his most famous, if not absolutely his finest, work, the 'Melancholia,' of which an engraving is so pleasant a possession even in these days of 'secessions' and new schools of art. Perhaps no poet ever sucked the soul out of a picture as well as Thomson has done in the magnificent lines which close his *City of Dreadful Night*." Thomson kept an engraving of the "Melancholia" over his mantelpiece. He sucked in the soul of it because it was his most constant companion.

Earnest but Confused.

At a recent dinner one of the speakers related the story of a visitor to a Sunday-school who, in addressing the children, said:—

"I come from Massachusetts; I am on my way to Maryland, and I have stopped over here to talk to you children and to save you from going to hell." After repeating this introduction to his remarks the visitor said:—

"Now, my children, where did I come from?"

"Massachusetts," was the reply, in chorus.

"Where am I going?" he then asked.

There was a pause; his geographical route had evidently not been deeply impressed on the gathering. Then the silence was broken:—

"To hell!" came the prompt and startling reply from an earnest but confused pupil.

—*Philadelphia Times*.

A volume of reminiscences by Dean Hole quotes the following prayer as offered by a loyal English clergyman on behalf of Queen Adelaide, the wife of William IV.: "O Lord, save thy servant, our sovereign lady the Queen; grant that as she grows an old woman she may become a new man; strengthen her with thy blessing that she may live a pure virgin, bringing forth sons and daughters to the glory of God, and give her grace that she may go forth before her people like a goat on the mountain."

Mysticism and Muddle.

THE late Mr. Oscar Wilde and Mr. Bernard Shaw, between them, set going a fashion—not new, to be sure—in modern light literature of what might be called the paradox *in excelsis*. Mr. Wilde's plays were triumphs of dialogue, in which each character poured out epigrams and paradoxes like a machine. Mr. Shaw's is a slightly different art. Mr. Wilde achieved fame by making people say, "Two and two do not always make four," or "Why, Lord So-and-So, you are a lion in a den of Daniels." Mr. Shaw's method is generally to spin the paradox, in the form of a theorem, out over a whole essay or play. That a tyrannical Imperialism ought to be supported in the interests of liberty, that the most abject Christian superstitions mask profound truths, that the best way to Socialism is to promote an aggressive Capitalism—these, or their like, are the sort of tricks Mr. Shaw takes delight in. If you are foolish enough to argue about them, Mr. Shaw will say you are a dullard, with no sense of humor; and it all appears surpassingly smart to a certain type of mind. Indeed, most of us would confess to having passed through the Shaw stage at one period of our lives; though, personally, whilst Mr. Shaw's writing is always readable, I confess to finding his humor now rather dull. When you know the secret of a man's fun he ceases to be funny, and the consciously-felt need of being always "brilliant" is an almost certain prelude to dulness. Real brilliance is achieved by the man to whom it is only a by-product—who has something to say, and says it as directly and concisely as he can.

One of Mr. Shaw's disciples, however, in the paradox art, and a promising disciple at that, is Mr. G. K. Chesterton, with whom I dealt some time ago in these columns. Mr. Chesterton writes in the *Speaker* frequently, and, in a recent number of that very able and interesting weekly, he contributes a review of a book on Mysticism, in which the paradoxes and shallow smartness of his school are displayed to the full. Mr. Chesterton begins by saying: "It is useless to preach mysticism to us, for we are all mystics now." This, of course, in its very phrasing, is a copy of Sir William Harcourt's much more pointed saying, "We are all Socialists now." The nature, however, of this universal mysticism to which we have all succumbed is interesting. "Whatever other superstitions," says Mr. Chesterton, "we may or may not have overcome, at least we have all overcome the immense superstition that cows are only cows, that cabbages are only cabbages, that every stupendous thing in the universe can be explained and got rid of by giving it a name." Without arguing over the abstruse question whether cows are only cows, it may be remarked that, if mysticism consists in the doctrine that things cannot be "explained and got rid of" by giving them a name, we are certainly all mystics now, and never were anything else. Even the gentlemen who occasionally figure in the dock charged with trying to "get rid of things" by calling them fancy names learn the lesson of the new mysticism from the police magistrate. In fact, the only genuine anti-mystics now are those mining magnates or South African company promoters who do often "get rid of" things at a very high figure by giving them very high-sounding names, and some of the speculating public have learned to their cost that "things" like, we will say, the "Timbuctoo Finance Corporation, Limited," are not always "explained" by their title.

Mr. Chesterton, however, having shown us that we are all mystics, proceeds to do a dangerous thing: he indulges in prophecy. This is how he thinks the history of philosophy will hereafter be written:—

"Those schools of thought which in the course of the nineteenth century have denied the possibility of any mysticism, of any relation, whether positive or tentative, with the unseen, will almost certainly go into the dustbin of the forgotten sects. Atheism, Materialism, Secularism, will ultimately be classed with Manichæism, Gnosticism, Pelagianism, the Fifth Monarchy, the Family of Love, as odd or extreme solutions which, properly speaking, dodged the problem. The energy, the sincerity, the true faith of the Secularists will certainly procure them a place in history. Philosophical chroniclers will discuss the Secularists, a devout Protestant sect, so passionately and

exclusively addicted to the study of the Old Testament that they carried it to the point of arguing through the whole length of long and obscure pamphlets about the precise measurements of the Ark and the precise genealogy of Rehoboam. In the same way future historians will say that there was a school of Materialism, a mystical sect who held that one of the experiences of the mind, the thing called matter, was in truth the cause of all the rest; their theory might be stated mystically in the form that the part was greater than the whole.*

Amongst a people who, in bulk, regard the Boers as sunk in ignorance, this sort of thing passes, I suppose, for smart journalism. It flows along with a superficial verve, and, without being definite, panders to the prejudice of the mass. And, of course, it is, for the most part, impervious to argument. But, between the lines, it is apparent that Mr. Chesterton has been annoyed, as even the old mystics were, by the propaganda of Atheism, Secularism, and Materialism, and is thereby moved to say "cutting" things, if he can. One sincerely hopes, however, for the sake of posterity, that the philosophical historians of the future will be more veracious than Mr. Chesterton gives them credit for, unless, indeed, having overcome the superstition that cows are cows, they might by that time, haply, have got over the antiquated notion that truth is truth. Otherwise those chroniclers would scarcely commit themselves to the statement that Secularists were "passionately and exclusively" devoted to the study of the Old Testament. Though there is one thing they might say, they might in their histories remark that the discoveries and conclusions of Atheists and Secularists were usually adopted a century or so afterwards by the professors of the orthodox mysticism, and by them retailed in high-priced encyclopædias as the newest scholarship, so that what was sneered at in the "obscure pamphlet" was afterwards belauded in the expensive tome.

Through the whole article, however, Mr. Chesterton is true to his character. At the beginning I said he was mainly a dealer in paradox, and all the time he is cracking his elaborate joke or spinning his web of contradiction. Beyond sneering at Rationalism and at Secularism in the fashion set out, he, in so far as he is intelligible at all, borrows Rationalist philosophy and then twits the Rationalist with being antiquated. What mysticism is I do not pretend to know, and I have never met a definition that left me clear about it; it usually seems a synonym for muddle. But Mr. Chesterton, having told us we are all mystics, goes on, taking upon himself to speak for the universe:—

"We are all now agreed that there is a second meaning in things, and are only divided into the active and energetic mystics who think that this second meaning is so interesting that we ought industriously to set to work to discover it, and the Agnostics who think that this second meaning is so interesting that it will never be discovered."

The proposition that there is a "second meaning in things" may stand for anything. Of course, the gentlemen of paradox revel in second meanings. But if Mr. Chesterton means by his phrase that we are all now agreed that cows and cabbages are not simple "special creations," but parts of an organic unity, the laws of which may be scientifically traced, he is right. Only that happens to be known as the philosophy of evolution, which Rationalists have pressed upon the attention of the world, and what "agreement" there is is due to the work of Rationalism in the past. And in so far as there are phenomena "that we ought industriously to set to work to discover," scientists who, for the most part, are mere Rationalists are endeavoring to increase our knowledge. The mystics, as far as I have ever observed, profess to know everything already; with them there is no need for discovery, and they hint at hidden forces and secret knowledge with an air that conveys the sense of their own importance in their own eyes. The idea of a "mystic" industriously trying to discover something would detract from that pose of omniscience which is the most impressive thing about all the forms of the cult.

The plain fact is that when the "mystic," so-called, is not merely struggling with his own muddle-headedness, he is usually found to have got hold of some quite unexceptionable bit of Rationalist philosophy or

Rationalist ethics. And with this stock-in-trade he runs about like a schoolboy who has just learned the alphabet and plumes himself on his knowledge and thinks everybody ignorant in comparison with himself. With a *naïveté* and a conceit that are quite amusing he will announce as profound and newly-discovered truths matters with which most of us became acquainted in our teens. And the real difficulty is that we are all, or nearly all, Rationalists now, only we are divided into the clear-headed Rationalists who apply their reason to all things and are slow in announcing results before they are tested, and the semi-Rationalists who have not yet thoroughly mastered the habit of systematic thinking, or who subordinate the claims of clearness and sanity to the needs of "brilliant" and picturesque writing. But Truth dresses plainly and Science does not wear a tiara of diamonds, and if Mr. Chesterton could only be got to understand that real thinking is not to be achieved by him who has his attention absorbed by the desire to say a witty or a clever thing every few lines, he might yet do some solid and serviceable work.

FREDERICK RYAN,

The Gospels Tested by History.

(Concluded from page 396.)

WE noticed Mark's error in making Jesus pass "through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis" on his journey from Tyre and Sidon to the sea of Galilee, whereas he would pass the sea of Galilee on his way to the Decapolis; it is also an error to speak of the coasts of Decapolis, as if it was a country with a sea coast; the Decapolis was not any distinct country or continued district, but merely the general appellation of ten detached insulated cities, lying all, except Scythopolis, east of the Jordan; the very use of the name Decapolis indicates a late date, for it does not appear to have been used before the latter end of Nero's reign (see *The Gospel History*, pp. 30-31). And there is no doubt that Mark's Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70 A.D., for in chapter xiii., as Dr. Carpenter notices, "The anticipated tribulation in verse 19 is already matter of retrospect in verse 20; the terrors of the destruction of the temple and the fall of the city are over" (*The First Three Gospels*, p. 290). Matthew and Luke also betray their late date by making Jesus speak of the "blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar" (Matthew xxiii. 35; Luke xi. 51). For Zacharias was slain in the temple at the time of the siege of Jerusalem, thirty years after Jesus was crucified (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, iv. 4). Luke, who makes a greater show of historical accuracy than the other Gospels, and, therefore, makes more mistakes, goes to the other extreme; he says that the coming of John the Baptist took place when Lysanias was Tetrarch of Abilene; "but," says the learned author of *The Gospel History*, "Lysanias was put to death, at the instigation of Cleopatra, no less than thirty-four years before the birth of Jesus, and neither Josephus nor any contemporary historian speaks of any other Lysanias" (p. 86); and the Rev. Dr. Giles, in noticing the same error, adds: "It is suggested by those who doubt the accuracy of St. Luke's Gospel that he ignorantly makes Lysanias still alive, being deceived by the fact that the country was still called the Abilene of Lysanias, in honor perhaps of its former governor. It is in vain that harmonists and commentators have attempted to reconcile these conflicting accounts" (*Christian Records*, p. 191).

We have seen that the evangelist's ideas of geography and dates were extremely vague, but not more vague than their knowledge of the characters of the Jewish and Roman rulers of that time. The Pilate of the Gospels is a flabby invertebrate individual who sacrifices truth and honor in subservience to the Jewish priests. "In John xviii. 29, Pilate asks, in the first instance, the reason of his being brought before him, and is curtly informed that, if Jesus had not been a malefactor, he would not have been brought at all—an answer which we may safely say no Roman governor would be likely to

put up with, and which would certainly have tended to defeat the purpose of the accusers."

"In like manner Matthew, alone of the Evangelists, goes on to relate a piece of conduct which is inexplicable in a Roman governor Pilate (he says); seeing that all his efforts to rescue Jesus were useless, calls for water, and, going through a symbolical ceremony which was not Roman, and which for a Roman would have neither force nor meaning, solemnly pronounces wholly innocent a person whom he immediately proceeds to scourge, and then delivers over to suffer crucifixion, a penalty which could be inflicted only by Roman officers. Whatever may have been Pilate's shortcomings, and however much he may have feared the transmission to Rome of hostile reports concerning him, it seems impossible to believe that a Roman governor could pour such complete contempt on Roman judicial processes" (Scott, *English Life of Jesus*, pp. 294-297). To aggravate the case, it should be remembered that the punishment of crucifixion was only inflicted by the Romans upon slaves and malefactors, and when it was desired to combine ignominy with the death penalty. It would be suitable for a murderer, a robber, or a highwayman, but was quite inapplicable to a man in whom the Roman governor could see no fault. Moreover, we know that Pilate, far from being the weak and pliable character pictured by the Gospels, was a stern and uncompromising tyrant quite incapable of being browbeaten by the Jewish priests. To cite the author of *The Gospel History* again, "The Pilate of History is the exact opposite of the Pilate of the Gospels. Philo (*Leg. ad Caium*) says of him: 'Pilate was of a violent and obstinate disposition, which could not lend itself to please the Jews.'" And "Josephus says, 'Between the people and the procurator there existed on either side nothing but hatred, contempt, menaces, and insults'" (Bell, *Jud.* 1, ii., c. 9; *Ant. Jud.*). He adds: "'The Jews said that it was a settled design of Pontius Pilate to abolish the Jewish law.' Such is the man who is represented in the Gospels as sacrificing his own convictions and the honor of the Roman name, and allowing a judicial murder to take place in order 'to content the people'" (*The Gospel History*, pp. 138-139). It is well to remember that Philo was a learned Jew and a voluminous writer, who lived and wrote and frequented Jerusalem at the appointed festivals at the very time that Pilate was ruler there. Josephus wrote his histories, the *Wars of Jews* (A.D. 75) and his *Antiquities* (A.D. 93), long before the Gospels were in existence.

Luke (iii. 2) makes Annas and Caiaphas to be both high priests, being evidently unaware that the Jews had but one high priest, and, as the learned author points out, Caiaphas, far from being the independent leader of the priests and scribes, was a mere tool in the hands of the Roman governor. Josephus tells us that no less than four high priests were successively deprived of their office on account of their hostility to the Romans, but Josephus surnamed Caiaphas—that is, "the support" of the Romans, held the office of high priest for eleven years in succession until A.D. 37, when he was deposed by Vitellius, who wished to render himself popular with the Jews. He concludes:—

"The Caiaphas of the Gospels resembles the Caiaphas of history as little as Pilate does. In the Gospels he is represented as acting in concert with his father-in-law, Annas, and with the chief priests and scribes, and never as acting under the orders of Pilate. The fact, however, is, that at this period the authority of the high priest had been all but abolished in consequence of the action of the Roman procurator. Matters had come to such a pass that the room in the temple to which the high priest retired on the Day of Atonement, and which was formerly called the Council Chamber, was then called the servant's cell. The Talmud (Talmud Baba, treatise Yoma) says: 'The reason of this was that the dignity of high priest was conferred for money'" (*The Gospel History*, p. 140).

And yet the chief priests are represented as giving large money to the guard to say: "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you" (Matthew xxviii. 13-14). It is evident that the writer was ignorant of the fact that the high priests had no influence over Pilate, and also that the penalty for a Roman soldier sleeping at his post was death,

To sum the matter up, we may say that if there were no miracles in the Gospels, and if scholars had not proved by literary criticism that the Gospels, as we know them, were not in existence until late in the second century, yet they carry upon the face of them the marks of a spurious historical composition.

WALTER MANN.

Ethics and Personal Identity.

If Personal Identity really were all that orthodox and semi-orthodox philosophers assume or affirm, then any superstructure reared upon it would at least have a solid foundation, whatever might be the qualities of the erection itself. But no building can be more stable than its foundation, though it may be much less stable. It will not be denied that rewards and punishments are distributed in civilised society, and promised and threatened by theology regarding a future state, on the assumed ground that Personal Identity is not merely true, but so true that it may be safely taken as an axiom in political science and theology. If, therefore, this axiom be called in question, or its truthfulness shown to be extremely doubtful—as I respectfully venture to say is the case—on what grounds can society or the State proceed to punish or reward its members or its subjects? Surely, it will be argued, if a man is not the same man at two periods, however short or long the time may be which divides those periods, then it is manifest folly to reward, it is manifest injustice to punish him at the later period for what was supposed to be done by him in the former; for he is not the same man: it is to reward or punish the present individual for what his ancestor, or, rather, his antecedent self, did! Certainly appearances are in favor of that view, and of no other.

Now, the honest and enlightened seeker after truth will welcome truth, no matter in what shape it present itself, no matter what inconvenient or unexpected logical consequences may attend it, no matter what readjustments of his mental and moral furniture may be necessary, no matter what revolutions may spring from it. No man is a fit discoverer of truth who is not prepared to follow it when found. All truth has not been yet discovered; even old truths are not fully appreciated. The student of history, philosophy, and religion is well aware that man's ancient stock of truth was very scanty indeed; that life has been for man a mixture of truth and falsehood, in which the latter has terribly predominated. Time, however, has been on the side of truth. As ages have rolled on more of it has come to light. Truths the ancients must have thought impossible of discovering—could they have thought of them at all—have again and again presented themselves to men of later epochs, changing their thoughts, reconstructing their habits, turning the course of their lives, opening up new hopes and pursuits, and moulding States into adaptation with new surroundings. Nothing is settled for all time. Every institution, every law, every philosophy, every science, changes with the altered times; and creeds and beliefs once held for absolute truth, once fought for and died for, must be laid aside. This is the indispensable condition of social growth. A nation's growth is effected by thought, the canvass of new ideas, the investigating and testing of old ones. We must doubt the infallibility of the ancients, and be resolved to live as men and women who have as good a right to know and think as the ancients had, and as grand a chance of erecting new institutions or altering old ones as our fathers could boast; who have as good a right to originate philosophies or destroy them, to formulate creeds or neglect them, as men ever possessed at any period of the world's history. It will be a sad time, no doubt, for man when he ceases to respect the past; it will be worse for him when he fails to trust the present and to hope for the future. To affect to despise the great men of the past were silly—no wise man can do thus; but to conclude that all great men are past and gone would be far worse for us. The world's intellect now is as great as ever it was, we may hold; and the question we have to decide is, Shall we permit ourselves to be crushed to death beneath the

accumulated wisdom of the past, mixed as it is with folly, or shall we dare investigate the most fundamental principles of society, and extract the good of the past from its evil alloy, while we venture upon the use of any new ideas within our reach, and blend them with our ancient civilisation? A nation can no more exist and prosper without the birth and growth of new ideas than it can without new generations of people. No subject must be deemed too sacred, too settled, too axiomatic, to be investigated afresh and subjected to the most severe scrutiny. And the subject of rewards and punishments requires as close and searching an investigation as it is possible for the human intellect to give.

Now, what is the true theory of rewards and punishments, supposing there is a true one? Does society or the ruler punish the individual or the deed? Is there such a thing as *guilt* or moral demerit, as well as innocence and merit? If so, what is the true sense of these words, and why should society or the State concern itself about that meaning? There can be no doubt that an autocrat may erect whatever actions he pleases into crimes, and punish them as he thinks fit. Society is often as capricious as a tyrant, and its moods are exceedingly changeable in ethics, as well as in other matters of fashion or taste. But we must pass by the mere caprice of rulers and the aberrations of public opinion, and inquire for whatever permanent truth may underlie the notions of right and wrong, of actions deemed to be the proper objects of reward or punishment.

I assume that in every case to which ethical principles can apply there is the recognition of the welfare or damage of the one in power or of society. Now, society, whether tribe or State, may be regarded as a corporate body—and the body politic is, in many respects, similar to the body physiological. Both are liable to injury, external and internal; and both are equally endowed by nature with the instincts of self-preservation, or whatever that feeling or tendency of living things may be called which leads them to dislike and shun that which is destructive, and to seek the possession of whatever is advantageous. In society too much independence on the individual would rend the State asunder, and resolve it into its original elements. Actions which would be quite innocent, and neither good nor evil, if done by a solitary, have quite other qualities when performed or attempted in society; for there nothing is isolated; all is relative, and each unit must have some regard for the units round about him. A man that will show no (outward) respect for his neighbor's life, limb, and property is unfit for social life; and society must either restrain or remove him. And here we land in a well-known physiological, as well as social, fact. Every plant, every animal, has its likes and dislikes. This is a fundamental law of nature, though far more easily appreciated in animals than plants. And this fundamental law has reference to the welfare of the individual. If plants and animals could flourish just as well in one set of surroundings as in another, if all external influences had similar effects upon them, then all things would be alike indifferent, and likes and dislikes would never be known.

And it is the same in society, where the individual's likes and dislikes go to form the same feelings in the corporate body. And if all external forces and internal actions equally resulted in the good of society, then social and national likes and dislikes would be unknown, and ethics would be equally unknown; right and wrong would never have been distinguished, and rewards and punishments would never have been distributed. Municipal law, jurisprudence, criminal codes, public opinion, sentiments arising from moral relations and directed against certain actions, while others are encouraged, are all but expressions of the law of self-preservation in society. Let society be persuaded that a given class of actions is calculated to advance its interests, and it cannot help encouraging them, and *vice versa*. Society is but a compound individual, as the man is a compound aggregate of individual physiological cells. And whatever the compound organism, in either case, thinks to be for its good it will strive to attain, while it shuns that which it believes to be injurious.

And here we find the whole of morality, and the whole

reason and end of it. Actions are moral or immoral, good or bad, only in so far as they tend to the good or evil of society. They extend not beyond that; they have neither higher nor lower relationships; nor is there any thing or any being external to society that can either be interested in social actions or possess the right to reward or punish them.

I do not pretend that society is infallible any more than the individual. The individual is subject to mistakes, and will sometimes reject the good and embrace the evil. Sometimes mental and moral insanity possesses him, and in that state he does himself injury, though his better judgment would have otherwise directed him. The ignorance and weakness of the individual reappear in society. Often epidemic excitement, or general insanity, leads society to the committal of most terrible excesses. But, it seems to me, society can never wish or intend its own real injury; it runs riot from ignorance, or in a panic.

J. SYMES.

(To be concluded.)

Two Sonnets.

BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.

I.

O BLEEDING heart, not thine alone the pain
Of shattered joys and hopes like sparks of light;
That vanish into nothingness and night,
Leaving the sense that everything is vain
Not thou alone, fate-smitten, desolate, and fain
To die and quit the world's destructive blight
That blots and blurs the beautiful and bright.
But all who love some bitter cup must drain.
Since in this sad "fraternity of woe"
We are akin, let each to each prove more.
"Love is enough." To it all fortune's frowns,
All outward evils, but more fully show
Its power 'gainst the adverse winds to soar,
To lift us up and never cast us down.

II.

I wish no life crown'd with unfading flowers,
To pass the days without a thought of care;
Dower'd by Fortune Time cannot impair,
Or lapped in dreams through the unclouded hours.
No! Let me with the sweets of life take sours;
The foul and false as well as true and fair,
The worst as well as best I'd freely share
Of all this April life, part sun part showers.
For when I think of all the toil and pain
By which alone Humanity could gain
Such little heights as it has won—ah, then
I'd gladly suffer the worst strokes of fate
If haply so I might alleviate
The woes and burdens of my fellow-men.

Correspondence.

STURDY WORKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In common, I am sure, with many of your readers, I exceedingly regret the misunderstanding existing between such valiant defenders of Freethought as Messrs. Foote and Watts, and I fervently hope ere long the breach will be healed.

My intention at present is not to pronounce any opinion on the merits of the dispute, but only to correct an error which Mr. Watts has made when he speaks of the secession from Mr. Foote of the six "*sturdy workers*" whose names he gives. As to Mr. Holyoake, it would be a stretch of imagination or courtesy for Mr. Foote to call him a *personal* friend after what he did in handing to the opposition his report on the "Athiest Shoemaker" case without ever hinting to Mr. Foote that the gist of it would be very damaging to him by making him out a liar. Had he been imbued with a friendly feeling towards Mr. Foote as a fellow-worker in an unpopular cause, he would have submitted it for his reply, and published both simultaneously. We all know that, after a lengthy and expensive investigation, Mr. Foote was able to expose the whole case as a tissue of falsehoods.

Mr. Watts also speaks of Mr. J. P. Gilmour as another "*sturdy worker*" who has deserted Mr. Foote. I have been connected with the Glasgow Branch for thirty years, and I cannot recall anything done by this individual entitling him to be called a "*sturdy worker*."

The opposite opinion was very generally expressed. During his connection with this Branch he was either so ashamed of his name, or the people with whom he associated, that, when appearing among them, he was known as "Zosimus."

How did Mr. J. P. Gilmour behave when our Branch was attacked through the late Mr. Ferguson for selling the Christmas number of the *Freethinker*?

This "sturdy worker" left the defence to others, who carried it to a successful issue, and dared all consequences.

Had Mr. Watts not introduced those six names as good and true men, who had left you with an implied stigma upon your reputation, I would not have mixed myself with your quarrel. But, knowing something of two out of the six, and taking for granted that they are all alike, I approve of your shaking them off.

Wishing you well out of your troubles, and that the silver lining of the cloud is within view,—Yours faithfully,

JAMES P. BROWNE.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

LONDON.

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Making King Edward Swear."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A lecture.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, A lecture.

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

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Bible and Blasphemy."

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, Mr. Ramsey.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch N. S. S.): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N.S.S.): 7.30, A lecture.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.): Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, A lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Is there a God?"; 6.15, A. B. Moss, "The World we Know."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

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

BRADFORD (Open-space, Morley-street, opposite Bradlaugh Institute): H. P. Ward—3, "The Curse of Christianity"; 6.30, "Shall we Live After we are Dead?" June 30, at 8, "Is There a God?"

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): No lectures during June, July, and August.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "The Attributes of God."

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