

# THE Freethinker

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*Union, organisation spiritual and material, a far nobler than any Popedom or Feudalism in their truest days, I never doubt, is coming for the world; sure to come. But on Fact alone, not on Semblance and Simulacrum, will it be able either to come, or to stand when come. With union grounded on falsehood, and ordering us to speak and act lies, we will not have anything to do. Peace? A brutal lethargy is peaceable, the noisome grave is peaceable. We hope for a living peace, not a dead one.*—CARLYLE.

## Sin and Punishment.

FOR some years the Convict Ship *Success* has been exhibited at various seaports in this country. A month or two hence she will set sail for New York, where the inhabitants of the new world will have an opportunity of seeing one of the most curious relics of the "civilisation" of the old world, or rather of the barbarism which disgraced it at the very acme of its boasted Christianity.

No doubt the *Success* will weather the worst storm she is likely to encounter even on the boisterous Atlantic. In spite of her hundred and eleven years, she is one of the most seaworthy ships afloat. She is built throughout of Indian teak, her solid sides being no less than two feet six inches thick at the bilge. She is broad of beam, and should float when swifter vessels go to the bottom; and her grand old masts, as sound as when they were first shipped, will hold firm even if every rag of her canvas is blown away by a hurricane. She is a monument of the "good old times" as far as her structure is concerned. Those who built her turned out fine honest work, of which they might well have been proud. It was the use she was put to as a Convict Ship that made her a monument of the "good old times" in the satirical sense of the word.

Hundreds of wretched convicts, some of them transported for stealing articles of the value of only a few shillings, have spent hours and days and months and years of torture in the Inferno of this good ship *Success*; built for honorable commerce, but turned into an Inferno by the folly and cruelty of human rulers, who should have been wiser and kinder than their fellow-men. Down below, ranged on either side of the 'tween and lower decks, are rows of strong, narrow, dark cells, that must have been as fetid as they were dismal when tenanted by the prisoners. The *Success* has no portholes. All the light and air that reached the convicts in their cells descended as it could through the narrow grating which runs along more than half the length of the ship, and then crept through the bars about eight or nine inches deep at the top of each apartment. No wonder they nearly lost their eyesight in those miserable holes. The largest cells are only seven feet by seven; others are but four feet by seven; and sometimes three prisoners were placed in each—all chained and ironed. The smaller punishment cells do not permit of an ordinary man lying down in them; the only possible relief is to sit upon the floor, extend the legs, and rest the back against the side of the vessel. The solitary confinement cells

are still smaller, nearly as black as midnight, and horribly stifling. Yet men were shut up there from twenty-four hours to twenty-eight days, fed on bread and water all the time, and fastened up so that they could neither stand, sit, nor lie down. Very often, of course, they went insane under this treatment; but what did that matter to the brutes who were administering a brutal system? Were not their victims criminals? Had they not forfeited their right to every office of humanity? Were they not to be beaten, bowed, and broken into passive submission to their fate? And if all else failed, there was the torture-rail between the rows of cells, with iron anklets to hold the feet, and iron necklets to hold the head, while the cat-o'-nine tails cut the bowed back into a reeking mass of bloody flesh. But somehow or other these means of reformation only made the prisoners worse. It turned the meekest of them into desperate villains, filled with a burning hatred of their warders, and ready to commit murder if only as a means of release from intolerable suffering.

Suppose a mother passed through the ordeal of confinement, and forgetting all her pain for joy that a man child is born into the world; suppose she could see in a vision the future of her babe, grown up to manhood, sentenced to transportation for a trivial offence, chained up in a miserable cell of a convict ship, half starved, bruised and lacerated, treated worse than any wild beast, and crying in vain for death to come and deliver him; would she not implore God to snap its poor little thread of life there and then, or summon resolution to do it herself, saying, amidst her tears, "I must be cruel only to be kind"?

One convict, a man called Garrett, in a fit of desperation, exclaimed that "Almighty God has no jurisdiction south of the Equator." For that true bit of blasphemy he was sentenced to twenty days' solitary confinement on bread and water.

It was impossible to read a word of print in any one of the cells, but in each was placed a Bible! There was even a chapel on the ship. You can see it now. It is a small dark enclosure on the port side in the bow of the 'tween deck. Perhaps a dozen convicts could be crowded into it. The chaplain kept discreetly on the outside, conducted the service there in safety, and preached through the bars to his wicked congregation. This performance took place every Sunday, and the prisoners who attended were given this treat in consideration of their good behavior.

It is a pity that this old Convict Ship cannot be inspected by all the men and women of this country; even the children might be taken on board with advantage, for a sight of the horrors of the past would tend to create a revulsion of feeling within them in favor of more humane methods in the future. A visit to the *Success* should be specially recommended to the ladies and gentlemen who write to the newspapers against the namby-pambyism of such societies as the Humanitarian League. It would do them good to see, not in imagination, but in reality, the horrid dungeons where convicts formerly underwent their awful sentences, and passed their terrible death-in-life; to behold the flagellation rail, and the iron anklets, and the iron necklets—which half-pulled the victim's head off as the ship rolled over; to gaze upon the frightful lash, with its heavy handle,



and its long whipcord, and its intertwined wires, to make it all the more effective upon the naked backs on which it descended. Perhaps the view of these things would *sicken* them into a little sympathy even with criminals. Perhaps it would induce some of them to ask themselves if treating a human being worse than a wild beast is the way to make him a better man? Or what society has to gain by the daily infliction of deliberate cruelty upon helpless prisoners? Or where is the profit at the finish when a studiously manufactured ruffian is turned loose again upon the world?

Human nature does not change very much in a generation or two. The criminals who were transported, and too often turned into finished villains, were just the same sort of men as the criminals of to-day. The warders who looked after them were the same sort of men as the warders of to-day. The governors of prisons were selected from the same class of men as they are now—chiefly from the military profession. To what then are we to ascribe the change that has taken place in penology? It is owing to a change of view. Old principles have been dying out, and new principles have been taking their places. The difference is primarily intellectual. The human intelligence has been at work upon the subject. Evolution, sociology, and ethics have taught us new lessons. We see how a given state of society inevitably produces a certain amount of vice and crime. These are but the symptoms of its imperfect development. Saints and sinners are the natural products of causes and conditions. There is a regularity in the newspaper reports of deeds of heroism and acts of crime. Social phenomena are as much under the dominion of law as physical phenomena. Rage in human eyes and voices is as certainly caused as the lightning and thunder in the skies. Each of us is what he is because of a vast, incalculable process of causation, going back into immemorial time, and extending at present over the whole range of human society. And when this great truth dawns upon us it makes us more tolerant to each other. It humbles our pride and enlarges our charity.

Nor is this all. The old penology was based upon certain theological ideas. Man was full of original sin. He went wrong from sheer "cussedness." It was a question, not of natural character, but of specific will. If he would not do right, he was to be preached into it, or broken into it. The pulpit and the prison were firm allies. The divine methods were followed on earth, and the torture of criminals was only a foretaste of the everlasting torment that awaited them in the world to come. If God would burn a man (or even a child) in hell, how could it be wrong to use the rack or the thumb-screw. The worshippers of God naturally thought that imitation was the sincerest form of flattery.

The old idea of "sin" is played out. Sin is impossible against an infinite being. The only possible sin is against beings who can be made happy or miserable. This takes it out of theology and places it in ethics. When we sin we sin against each other. Some are worse, some are better, but none are perfect. For all of us, therefore, the policy of life should be to bear and forbear. Punishment is a word that should be banished from the vocabulary of jurisprudence. The idea that pain balances pain, that one wrong balances another, is a relic of barbarism. It comes down to us from the ages of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." Society has a right to protect itself; it may stop a man from preying upon it or making war upon it; but it has no right to inflict upon him any more suffering than is necessary to that end. To go further is to pass from self-defence to revenge; in other words, to meet evil with evil—which every great moralist has seen to be the way to social ruin and death.

Do not let us talk of *punishing* criminals. Let us try to *reform* them. It may be a hopeless task, but it is the only one worth attempting. Let us also recollect that prevention is better than cure. Ruskin once said that the way to empty gaols was to fill schools. This is as true as an epigram can be on

such a subject. The absence of disease is better than an army of doctors. It is our first duty to cut down the social disease of crime by wise anticipation. Bright schools, sensible teachers, roomy dwellings, happy homes, and useful occupations; all that goes to the building up of physical, intellectual, and moral health; these are the proper weapons of our warfare against crime. Repressing the bad is useless. Develop the good, and the bad dies of atrophy. Man does not progress by trying not to walk backward. He progresses by walking forward.

G. W. FOOTE.

## The Future of Faith.

ESSAYS on the future of religion are numerous—sometimes amusing, but seldom profitable. In the vast majority of cases they consist of attacks on other people's religious opinions, with the tacit assumption that the writer's or speaker's own religion is the one that will outlive all others. Thus the Roman Catholic writes confidently that Holy Mother Church will survive the assaults of Protestantism and infidelity, and that, after much wandering, people will once more return to her for consolation and guidance. The Protestant is equally convinced that Roman Catholicism is breaking down, and that the future belongs to it; and even the Jew, not to be behindhand in earmarking the future, will often predict that "ethical Judaism" will furnish the man of the future with the necessary religious belief.

Those who write in this strain overlook one very obvious consideration. People, it is true, do modify their religious opinions, and, with a love for that "something in its place" on which a certain class of apologists love to dwell, one form of religion is often exchanged for another, something like the reverend gentleman who announced that he had resolved to give up the errors of the Church of England and embrace those of the Church of Rome. But even where this is so the texture of the new religion, so to speak, becomes thinner and of a poorer quality, and the change, while still keeping them within the borders of the religious world, is at the same time bringing them one stage nearer the complete rejection of all religion. And, apart altogether from those who adopt a modified form of religious belief, there are year by year large numbers who definitely announce themselves as clear of all religious forms once and for all. And what has the future to say to them? For this number does not diminish, but increase. There is not a religious body in Great Britain that is keeping pace with the growth of population. If the numbers of any of them show a slight increase from year to year, it will be found that the normal increase of births over deaths *within the sect* more than accounts for it. The Wesleyan Methodists, one of the largest and most aggressive of Nonconformist bodies, have complained for years of the leakage it is subjected to, and a comparison of its membership roll from year to year will show that even this powerful body cannot keep pace with the increase of population. True, it comforts its members with the reflection that those who leave its ranks are not lost to Christianity, but often join some other religious body; only, as the other religious bodies urge the same plea when dealing with the same phenomenon within their own ranks, the excuse does not seem to be a very valid one.

The residual fact would seem to be that, in spite of all that can be done to prevent it, large numbers of people drift steadily away from religion and religious organisations; and, even though they may not become active advocates of anti-religious opinion, at least cease to be supporters of religion. The real significance of this is evaded by religious apologists by the plea that people have simply ceased to be interested in religious ceremonies. This is good enough as a *description* of what takes place, but it is very inadequate as an explanation; for the loss of interest is the very thing that requires explanation. Services, say religious writers, require to be briefer,



brighter, more musical, and more attractive in every way. This also is true enough; only the necessity of these artificial stimulants should be anything but pleasant to the religious world. Good, plain food is usually enough for a strong, healthy organism; highly-spiced dishes are just as usually the indication of a debilitated appetite. And one cannot help feeling that, were religion in a healthy condition, the different devices adopted by the clergy to entice people to listen to them would be quite superfluous.

The real reason for this growing lack of interest is that religion can no longer even pretend to rank as one of the organic necessities of mankind. A religion only really lives so long as it expresses an aspect of man's social or intellectual environment. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—later still for the rank and file of the people—there existed no glaring contradiction between the people's religion and their scientific knowledge. Science was only just beginning to walk alone; its conclusions were put forward but timidly; and the immense mass of knowledge that is now the property of a schoolboy had yet to be created. Under these conditions men could look for God in natural phenomena, and find him. Then it was the ordinary man in the street who saw God in nature; the profound thinker who saw through the belief and recognised its hollowness. But nowadays, when scientific conclusions are so generally diffused, it is the plain, ordinary individual who fails to see God around him, and the spinner of semi-metaphysical subtleties who professes to find a Deity operating through Natural Selection or some other of the cosmic processes. But the average man, who has no axe to grind and no theory to drive, yields himself to the pressure of facts, and registers in his general attitude the fact that religious belief has ceased to answer to any intellectual conviction or to any social requirement. This is, of course, not the attitude of all; but that it is the attitude of a growing number of people no one can reasonably doubt.

I have written the above as the result of some one having sent me the report of a sermon on *The Future of Faith*, by the Rev. Warschauer, M.A., D.Phil., to give him his full title, accompanied by a request that I would read it. Well, I have read it, and my first comment on it is that both title and subject constitute a proof of the truth of what I have already said. No one would discuss the question of whether religion had a future or not, unless they believed at least that the negative opinion had an air of plausibility about it. Every defence presupposes an attack, and it is the unfortunate quality of religious defences that they usually suggest far more doubts than they dispel. It was Anthony Collins who remarked that few doubted the existence of God until the Boyle lecturers began to prove it, and his dictum would apply to a great number of the religious apologies of our own day.

Mr. Warschauer, as is usual, lays considerable stress upon man's sense of the mysterious, and the impotence of science, no matter how advanced, to banish mystery from the universe. Both may be admitted without either warranting us in drawing the conclusion that *therefore* religion is indestructible. It is true that religion derives its strength from man's sense of weakness, and from the vague feelings and nameless terror that is to many minds associated with the unknown. But the fear of the unknown diminishes just in proportion as man's conquest of nature proceeds, and as we recognise, to quote Maeterlinck, that "We derive no greatness, sublimity, or depth from unceasingly fixing our thoughts on the infinite and the unknown." Man's sense of the presence of mystery may be as keen to-day as ever, but he shows a decided tendency to study the mysteries that surround him, to solve them as far as they may be solved, and not fall down in adoration before them, which is, after all, only one way of deifying his own ignorance.

Science, it may be admitted, does not banish mystery from the universe. To say that it does so would be to say that it had already solved every

problem, and that there were no worlds left to conquer. But what science does is to induce the growth of a new frame of mind in the presence of the unknown. Our forefathers, wherever they saw a mystery, saw God. The unknown awakened their fear, and their fear encouraged their religion. Science teaches that rational hope, like rational fear, should rest upon a basis of knowledge; and, where nothing is known no reasonable cause exists for either hope or fear. The attitude of religion in the face of the unknown is worship; the attitude of science is that of investigation. One says, "Here is a mystery, adore it"; the other says, "Here is a mystery, study it." The one attitude flourishes at the expense of the other; the two frames of mind are mutually destructive, and he who admits the growth of the scientific frame of mind inevitably admits the gradual decline of religion.

Why should there be this continual harping by religious teachers upon the presence of mystery? Surely nothing valuable is to be gained by continually impressing man with his weakness and ignorance. Surely it were far better to point to the triumphs of human intelligence than to its failures; far better to emphasise the lesson that many of the mysteries that baffled our predecessors have vanished before the steady work of their descendants, than to be continually crying, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity!" Let us take man at his best, not at his worst; exhibit him in his victories, not in his defeats. Mystery is a fact in life, but it is not a *useful* fact—or, at least, its only use would seem to be to encourage religious beliefs, which now, as ever, feel that every advance in knowledge means a weakening of their power.

"Science," says Mr. Warschauer, "informs us only of the will and purpose governing the universe—no more." Science does nothing of the kind. Science knows nothing of "will and purpose" governing the universe, and any such hypothesis would render science an impossibility. So far as science is concerned, "will and purpose" are phenomena strictly correlated with biological processes, and there is no reason whatever for ascribing them to the universe at large. "It is through other, subtler channels," says the preacher, "that there comes to us the knowledge of a holy and living God.....That the methods of science are impotent to reveal such a one to us demonstrates, after all, no more than the impotence of science, not the non-existence of those qualities and attributes in God whereof our conscience..... assures us." This is all so much empty verbiage—the language of the quack or the charlatan. What kind of knowledge is that, the possession of which rests upon a man's bare statement that he has it, but on behalf of which he cannot advance a single spark of tangible evidence? All knowledge that is worth anything is communicable; knowledge that is not communicable is a mere caricature of the genuine article.

Mr. Warschauer thinks that when we want to know the permanent elements of religion, "we should be better employed in listening to the intuitions of our souls than in going to the chemical and biological laboratory." Well, no one, I imagine, ever thought that all the problems of life were to be settled by going to a chemical or biological laboratory, and no one who understood science and scientific methods ever imagined that science stopped short with these two places, or even with an astronomical observatory thrown in. But I venture to say that, even were it so, more good might be done in this way than by placing unlimited reliance upon "the intuitions of our souls." For this, after all, is only another name for the instincts and tendencies that the past has bequeathed to us, and to obey these without question to allow the past to rule the present, is to hand ourselves over, bound hand and foot to all the slavish superstitions and idle fears that the past has given birth to. And this testimony of the soul to God's existence, what is it but the very thing that modern thought is calling into question? And if it is true that our ancestors acquired the belief in God as the outcome of their illimitable ignorance of nature's



methods of working, and that it has been handed on from generation to generation because human knowledge has never been strong enough to crush it under foot, what is the use of bringing forward the presence of this belief as a proof of its veracity? We do not dispute its existence, nor do we dispute that men have a fairly strong tendency towards religious beliefs. We admit this, and point out that these things are adequately explained by the normal workings of biological and social forces. But we point out at the same time that religious beliefs have steadily weakened, as knowledge has developed, and that their disappearance, or at least their transformation into purely social forms, is a mere matter of time.

And when Mr. Warschauer looks into his soul, he discovers that religion is assured because "the very essence of religion is not an intellectual conviction, however clear, but a state of communion, however dim," which is putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance. If the preacher had thought over his subject, to say nothing of studying the history of religion, he would surely have come to the conclusion that a sense of communion must be dependent upon an intellectual conviction, and not *vice versa*. Man must be convinced that there is a God before he can derive any comfort from a sense of communion with him. And historically, the belief in gods long antedates any such feeling as Mr. Warschauer talks about. There is no evidence that early man derived any great pleasure from the company of his gods; rather the reverse. The gods were there, and very unpleasant company they were as a rule. Man would willingly have done without them, but they would not leave him alone, and his chief task was how to get them into a good humor. The sense of some mystic communion with God belongs to a comparatively late stage in religious history, and is characteristic of religions in decay rather than of their essence.

And how would this sense of communion with God prove the indestructibility of religion? Clearly its strength must be dependent upon the veracity of the belief that God really exists. And it is equally clear that this belief grows steadily weaker. We have not yet reached the stage when the majority of people have strength of mind to avow themselves Atheists; but we have reached that stage where vast numbers of people have begun to look upon the belief in God as comparatively unimportant, and this is a sign of the end. And what is more significant than the presence of this state of mind itself, is the manner in which, in large numbers of cases it is acquired. For people do not always reach this stage by conscious reflection. The majority get there they know not how, and by mental processes of which they are unconscious. They are aware only of the result. It is the steady and insistent pressure of the environment that moulds the beliefs of the majority, not the spoken word or the written argument, and against the operation of this force religion, or any other belief, is powerless in the long run.

Of course, no one imagines that there will be any sudden giving up of religious belief, as a besieged town surrenders to an enemy. Mental changes are not brought about in this manner. What is more likely to take place is a gradual transference of those feelings now associated with religious belief to purely social objects. This change can already be observed in operation. The gradual humanising of religious beliefs is one sign of it; the growing emphasis laid on social topics in the pulpit is another. Right through nature development is brought about, not so much by the destruction of existing feelings as by their expansion or transformation. And this is the principle that is now at work in religion. A feeling of responsibility towards our fellow-man is taking the place of the old feeling of accountability to God. The comfort that the mediæval "saint" found in imagined intercourse with the heavenly hierarchy is now being found in sterling social work and social intercourse. Heaven, as an objective of human effort, is fast being replaced by earth, and in numerous ways one can see how the feelings his-

torically associated with religion are being reassociated with social life and work. And this, indeed, is only what one might expect. Heaven itself is but an expanded and idealised society, as God is but an idealised man; and sooner or later the human elements that are embodied in all supernaturalism assert themselves, and we begin to realise that, as man gave birth to his gods, so he is destined to one day absorb them. It is all a matter of self-development—a further and more profound knowledge of self. The process is a slow one, but it is nevertheless sure. Art, science, literature—all make in the same direction. One cannot increase the available sum of knowledge in any direction without at the same time weakening supernaturalism. The perpetuity of religion is all along more or less dependent upon the perpetuity of human ignorance. C. COHEN.

### Darwin's Country.

NEAR the village described in Darwin's day as "Down, Beckenham," but now as "Down, Farnborough, R.S.O., Kent," stand the house and grounds in which was developed the "Evolutiana" which teaches that, probably—as Miss Naden caused the earlier King of the Jews so happily to express it—

From once a soft amœba,  
In ages past and gone,  
You've grown the Queen of Sheba  
And I—King Solomon!

An unimportant-looking edifice enough is the house, abutting on the lane (which a German *savant* called a mule-track) leading to the still more obscure parish of Cudham. There is nothing about the place to stamp it as Darwin's; and the present occupier bears not the immortal name. At the rear a field-path branching from one sinuous lane to another enables one to view the other side of the house and the grounds; and here all is solitude, conducing to reverent train of thought, which naturally seems to overtake a person upon entering, as it were, into the atmosphere of the illustrious dead. In this secluded spot the thoughts that seem to strike you first is the simplicity of everything; even as though the place and its environs had caught the spirit of their erstwhile companion, whose letters written here to Hooker, Lyell, Huxley, and Asa Gray disclose a humility and child-like openness which might well be emulated even by the greatest. Here it was that the great naturalist, stung by the expressions of religious bigotry, uttered his only bitter retort: "Great is the power of steady misrepresentation; but the history of science shows that fortunately this power does not long endure."

To the respectful admirer of Darwin the quiet, sequestered scene around this Kentish village affords supreme delight; for, as the modest, unprotected tombstone, shaded by the venerable yew tree, in the little churchyard informs us, he lived there forty years, and, such being the case, may we not reasonably assume that every path, and lane, and hedge at one time or another shared, so to speak, in the meditations whence evolved the mighty Theory which shook the beliefs of Christendom? Communing with that part of nature from which the great teacher derived some of his hypotheses inspires a feeling of veneration and privilege too sacred to be confounded with hero-worship.

The churchyard slab referred to merely records the death of the elder brother, Erasmus Alvey, and of Charles Robert and his wife Emma, and tells us that Charles Robert began life in the country of the proud Salopians, and that his body lies buried in the great abbey, a brief story which can be read by the passer-by as he halts in the main road leading to Sir John Lubbock's charming seat. Of lasting interest, surely, is this memorial, simple and unpretentious though it be; yet the coming ages may regret that death should have severed the connection between the genius and the rustic scenes which he immortalised. George Eliot's "In Memoriam" to Tom and Maggie Tulliver—"In death they were not



divided"—would have graced the tablet erected to the memory of Charles Darwin and Emma Wedgwood; whilst Down, almost in the track of Becket's *Pilgrim's Way*, would have contained a shrine serving as a beacon to pilgrims of another order in remote times to come.

And other memorials, not strictly Darwinian, but of permanent concern, enhance the interest of this strip of Kent, and one of them, we may be sure, must have been contemplated with keenest satisfaction by Darwin himself, hallowing as it does a spot where was conceived a purpose fraught with memorable results, gratifying to the gentle nature of him who, when voyaging in the *Beagle*, was horrified by the incidence of the accursed traffic. Quite close to Down, a short cut through lovely woods to Keston by a path but little used, brings the rambler to the "slave's oak," situated amid surroundings which seem in imagination to concur in shedding a halo of solemnity on the historic tree, whose languishing frame has been tenderly cared for by solicitous owners—repaired here with zinc, propped there with iron bolt, and all railed-in from vandal hands. Under the oak the lord of the manor, with rare thoughtfulness, has provided a seat which should endure for centuries; and the inscription on the back reads:—

From Mr. WILBERFORCE'S diary,  
1788.

At length

I well remember after a  
Conversation with Mr. PITT in the open  
Air at the root of an old tree at Holwood,  
Just above the steep descent into the Vale  
Of Keston, I resolved to give notice  
On a fit occasion in the House of Commons  
Of my intention

To bring forward the abolition  
Of the slave trade.

From Hayes or Bromley station to Down, the route affords a walk the charms of which appeal to the practical or the dreamer; over breezy Hayes common, once so familiar to the elder Pitt, then to Keston Common and its old windmill, opposite which the concealed yet public path may be found leading through Holwood Park past Wilberforce's tree to the lane and village, whose inhabitants, kindly, chatty and cheerful, reverence the Darwin family, to whom the poor and needy of the place owe much more than is even hinted at in Mr. Francis Darwin's memoirs, as a chat with one of the older villagers would soon disclose. Said one the other day, speaking of Mrs. Darwin: "Aye, she was very good to me, she was; and you felt that he meant it with his whole heart. Others preserve relics, not, however, with that degree of sanctity which could be wished, yet there is no disrespect intended. For example, there reclines in a cyclists' tea garden the remains of Darwin's wagonette, possibly the one in which he drove to and from Sydenham station discussing Natural Selection with Huxley, or Hooker, or Lubbock. Pointing to the relic, said I to the waitress, "What are you going to do with Mr. Darwin's coach, miss?" She replied, artlessly unconscious of the contemplated sacrilegious act, "Well, sir, I think the master's going to make it into a place where we can serve tea for two!" W. B.

There are moments when the sage realises that his spiritual treasures are naught; that it is only a few words, or habits, that divide him from other men; there are moments when he even doubts the value of those words. Those are the moments when wisdom flowers and sends forth the blossom. Thought may sometimes deceive; and the thinker who goes astray must often retrace his footsteps to the spot whence those who think not have never moved away, where they still remain faithfully seated round the silent, essential truth. They are the guardians of the watch-fires of the tribe; the others take lighted torches and go wandering abroad; but when the air grows heavy and threatens the feeble flame, then it is well to turn back and draw close to the watch-fires once more.—*Maeterlinck*.

Of moral purpose I see no trace in nature. That is an article of exclusively human manufacture, and very much to our credit.—*Huxley*.

## Acid Drops.

THERE is no profession on earth that would not, if it had the opportunity, enslave all the rest of the world to its own real or fancied interests. Priestcraft is a supreme instance of this, but doctorcraft seems bent on running it pretty close for the second place. It seems to be the general idea of the medical profession that their word should become law for the rest of the community. No matter how they differ on all sorts of questions as to disease and its treatment, if they can only agree about *something* they seem to think that this something ought to be imposed upon the public by the law; that is to say, by means of spies, detectives, police constables, magistrates, and gaolers. Their reply to all objections is that they aim only at our *good*. But that was the plea of the priests when they took a heretic and burned him to ashes at the stake. They were troubled about his poor soul, and still more about other poor souls that might be infected with his spiritual malady.

In spite of the growing revolt against compulsory vaccination, the doctors assemble at the British Medical Conference at Manchester, and pass a resolution in favor of compulsory re-vaccination at the age of twelve. They also call for the transference of the administration of the Vaccination Acts from boards of guardians to sanitary authorities. In other words, the doctors should dictate laws, and enforce them too. It is their part to command; all their fellow citizens have to do is to obey.

This impudent and ridiculous policy will not, in the long run, be to the advantage of the medical profession. If priestcraft could not permanently frighten the world by means of hell-fire, doctorcraft will not permanently frighten the world by means of smallpox. The time comes when men find out that the risk has been exaggerated, that they have been the victims of a scare, and that the scare was got up in the interest of the scare-mongers.

Doctors may stand on their dignity and call every reference to their interests an insult. But what is this vaccination which they put forward as a preventive against smallpox? It is something that a doctor has to do—and of course to be paid for. And that fact ought always to be borne in mind in the consideration of this subject. Let an individual doctor be ever so honest, how is he to help being prejudiced in favor of what brings business and emolument to his own profession?

There are remarkable men in every profession, but their number is very limited. The average man in all professions is a mediocre person. This is true in medicine as well as elsewhere. Therefore, when the average doctor seeks to make himself a medical dictator, he is taking himself too seriously, and wants the "check" knocked out of him. If he comes to our houses (when sent for) as a gentleman who has devoted such faculty as he possesses to the study of the nature and cure of disease, and offers for a fair consideration to put what skill he has at our service, he deserves our respect, and in some cases our gratitude. But if he comes with a posse of police to break open our doors, preparatory to committing assault and battery upon ourselves and our children, it is our duty to bid him defiance and keep him outside as long as possible. As a friend he is welcome; as a master he is to be kicked off the premises.

Dr. Beet retains his professorship at Richmond College by caving in, wearing a white sheet, and eating humble pie. The Wesleyan Conference forgives him on condition that he "does not teach in our pulpits the doctrine of his book, and that he publishes nothing further on the subject except with the consent of the Conference." Dr. Beet "voluntarily accepted these conditions;" voluntarily, that is, in the sense that he preferred humiliation to the loss of his post and salary. Poor man! Why did he not hold his tongue altogether? That would have been better than making a show of independence before signing himself into absolute slavery.

Dr. Beet's one point of heresy was that he was not *sure* that lost souls were tortured for ever and ever in hell. He did not deny it, but he did not affirm it. All the Scripture told us was that they had a very bad time. The curtain was then dropped over their sad condition. But this little uncertainty on Dr. Beet's part is not tolerated by his Church. Hell is still kept hot and everlasting. Let us pray.

*Apropos* of this Agar Beet controversy, Mr. W. L. Watkinson reminded the Conference that the condition of membership in the Methodist Church was "desire to flee from the



wrath to come." And perhaps it is as well for others to be reminded that the Methodist Church still clings officially to this barbarous and brutalising doctrine of religious terrorism.

The Catholic Association is organising a Pilgrimage to Lourdes, which will be led by the Bishop of Southwark, and will leave London on September 4. For the sum of £5 10s., cash down, each pilgrim will be taken to Lourdes, accommodated there, and brought safe back. What he will get besides is more or less doubtful. He stands a fair chance, though, of getting the itch—considering the state of the majority of the pilgrims who go to Lourdes to implore the assistance of the Mother of God in ridding them of more or less abominable disorders.

The late Mr. Robert Arthington, the missionary millionaire, left an estate of the net value of £993,324 18s. to be mostly expended on missionary enterprise. After the payment of certain legacies, the trustees are to apply the residue, both as to capital and income, in their uncontrolled discretion "for the purpose of spreading the knowledge of God's Word among the heathen (including Mohammedan) populations." We don't suppose this will have any effect on the statistics of population in heaven, but it will mean a good line for gentlemen in the missionary business, who are to be congratulated on this splendid windfall.

Tolstoy begs the Russian government to proceed against him instead of persecuting his more obscure disciples. Of course the Russian government will do nothing of the kind. When did a big bully take the advice to hit someone his own size?

Mr. Schwab, the President of the American Steel Trust, has been ill. Mr. Schwab, the President of the American Steel Trust, is better. Such an important fact should be adequately celebrated. Mr. Schwab thinks so anyhow. The "Steel King" announces that he will build a cathedral and orphanage, and an episcopal palace, in the Catholic diocese of Altoona. This will be a handsome acknowledgment of God Almighty's having done his duty in arranging Mr. Schwab's recovery. Some cynics, however, will wonder why Mr. Schwab is so grateful for this delay on his journey to heaven.

Among the effects of Madame Humbert, perhaps, the biggest and most remarkable swindler on record, were found several well-used books of devotion—such as the *Imitation of Christ* and the *Way of the Cross*. It would not surprise us to learn that Madame Humbert is intensely religious. Rascality and piety have often nestled together in human hearts. The common explanation is that the owners of such hearts are hypocrites. But this is usually far from being the truth, as is well-known to those who have studied the matter from a sociological point of view.

"The Seventh Day Adventists," said a *Daily News* paragraph on Monday, "who number sixty thousand, are holding their annual Conference at Leeds. They have five tents pitched, and efforts are being made to form a Branch at Leeds. They are vegetarians, non-smokers, and teetotalers, keep the Saturday as their Sabbath, and are looking forward to the second coming of Christ." We hardly suppose there are sixty thousand Second Adventists in England. Perhaps our contemporary means there are that number in the world. They are more numerous in America than elsewhere. America is the land of freedom, but you run a considerable risk there if you differ with emphasis from the majority. Seventh Day Adventists have been seen there, chained and working on the roads like felons, for the crime of keeping the Sabbath on Saturday. They are a quiet, harmless sort of people, with much simplicity of character, as might be imagined from their earnest expectation of the second coming of Christ. They believe the Bible instead of pretending to believe it—which naturally annoys their hypocritical fellow-Christians. They take literally the saying that Christ will come again like a thief in the night. Accordingly they keep ready to meet him. When they hear the trumpet they will put on their Ascension robes, which they have always ready for wearing; and clad in this fashion, they expect to be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air."

Some years ago in America there was a common belief among the Adventists that Christ was coming again on a particular night. They all donned their Ascension robes in readiness for the great event. One stout old lady, weighing twenty stone, expected to float up with the rest. But nothing happened, and the Ascension robes were laid up in lavender again.

According to a correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* the subject that most interested the members of the Wes-

leyan Conference was not the Million Guineas Fund, or the purchase of the Westminster Aquarium, or the heresy of Dr. Beet, but the test match between England and Australia at Old Trafford. The state of the scoring was posted on the notice board and eagerly scanned by ministers and laymen. "At one of the evening meetings on Friday," the *Westminster Gazette* correspondent said, "a reporter who arrived after prayers was surrounded by stewards, who quickly conveyed the state of the game to those on the platform. Indeed, 'Australia, eighty-five for eight wickets,' could be heard being whispered all over the hall."

Mrs. Eliza Pollard, who is charged with the murder of two of her children at Edmonton, is reported to have said, "Poor little dears, it was God's curse. Had he cured them this would not have happened." Her other children were healthy, but these two suffered from a skin disease; and as the doctors could not do them any good, she concluded that the affliction was a curse from heaven. Poor children! Poor mother! And poor humanity that is cursed by such cruel superstitions!

Concurrently with the denial that the King has undertaken to give up patronising horseracing, the *Record* makes the sapient suggestion that, when the monarch has recovered his health, the Archbishops, as the leaders of the National Church, should suggest to his Majesty the grievous evil racing has become. Further, they should "suggest" the propriety of the monarch ceasing to have a personal interest in its continuance, and refusing to lend the sanction of his presence to the racecourse. Now, if we know anything at all of Dr. Temple and Dr. Maclagan, we know enough to believe that they will do nothing of the kind. They are too astute to risk the displeasure of the Lord's Anointed. The day when prophets could rebuke kings to their face is past, and the Archbishops have too much of the courtier instinct in them to be prodded on to anything that is so dangerous.

Why don't these religious busybodies who want to hurry the heads of their Church on to certain destruction try another tack? Why don't they make it clear that because the King does a certain thing or favors a particular sport or is supposed to set in any way a fashion, that is no earthly reason why people should follow him. But then these self-same Churchmen have made so much of the "Lord's Anointed," have kicked up such a ridiculous fuss over his consecration, and have so belauded him to the skies, that they have precluded themselves from the only rational course open to them in regard to the matter they are now discussing.

The Coronation over, we imagine the King will be sick of Archbishops and their tiresome ceremonials, which are insisted upon, not so much for his benefit as for the assertion of ecclesiastic supremacy. We may safely bet that the presentation Bible (including the Apocrypha) will be speedily cast aside for the more agreeable consultation of that Bible of racing men, *Ruff's Guide to the Turf*.

The Church Missionary Society has just issued a fresh appeal for funds. There are scores of villages in India, says this appeal, that might be won for Christ if only the men and money for the work were forthcoming. Doubtless! It is always possible to get converts if enough money is forthcoming. And we seem to have heard of these "scores of villages" waiting for Christ on more than one occasion before. They have done yeoman's service in the annual reports for many, many years. The Society asks for a day of special prayer on behalf of missions, so that increased funds may be forthcoming. It would be just as easy to pray to God to convert these villages straight, without money, and far more sensible and economical.

Heresy in literature is common enough nowadays. "Respectable" publishing houses now issue, as a matter of course, books containing sentiments for the expression of which Freethinkers in the earlier part of the nineteenth century were sent to gaol. Here is a couple of lines referring to Jesus, taken from a just published book of poems, issued by the religious firm of Elliot Stock:—

He, the most pure, yet bore in his veins the blood of incestuous  
Tamar,

Of Rahab the Amorite harlot, of Bathsheba sordid adulteress.

This, used in reference to Jesus, says a *Daily News* reviewer, "is not in the best taste, and contributes nothing to one's reverence of Holy Things." Well, it is an interesting genealogy when one comes to look at it. But it is correct enough, as anyone who examines the Bible will find out. We sympathise with the reviewer's lament, though, all the same, the truth in matters of religion so seldom contributes to one's reverence for "Holy Things."



Our readers will doubtless remember the brief passage of arms between Mr. Cohen and Dr. Clifford in these columns over the education question. Writing in the *Daily News* of August 1, Dr. Clifford refers to his letter in this journal, and explains that when he affirmed that Free Churchmen refuse to accept anything from the State that all citizens may not have on equal terms, he referred solely to education. His defence of the retention of the Bible in schools is that the ratepayers ought to select what shall be taught therein.

Dr. Clifford has had the real point at issue put before him as plainly as it can be put more than once, and one is bound to say that either he will not or cannot see what it is. At any rate, he never even attempts to reply to it. Between the advocates of Secular Education and of Bible teaching in State schools the plain issue is whether the State is justified in interfering in religious questions or not. Nonconformists protest against State religion for adults, and Secularists insist that logically this protest carries a condemnation of the State teaching religion to children. The injustice is clearly not evaded by the State allowing people to select, within limits, the kind of religion that is to be taught. Nor is it to be removed by the State saying: "You can do without it if you think fit, but you must pay for it all the same."

Nonconformists would not be content with such a solution in the case of Church rates, which is precisely on all-fours with the payment of an education rate by Secularists, so long as a portion of that rate goes in religious instruction. The whole question is whether the State has the right to arrange for the teaching of any religion, or whether religion is not one of those subjects with which the State, *quâ* State, had better have nothing to do. Will Dr. Clifford, as a leading Nonconformist, give a plain and direct answer to this plain question? With all respect to Dr. Clifford, we are just a trifle dubious.

An enterprising Sheffield firm is advertising in a trade paper what is called the "hygienic" communion service. This is an arrangement of cups on a tray to facilitate the serving the sacramental wine in a separate cup for each communicant. A correspondent who sends us the illustrated advertisement, appends the following lines:—

O Lord, how joyful 'tis to see  
The brethren joined in unity,  
Drawn to Thine altar where each sips  
The common grace from separate cups.

He suggests as additions to the advertisement the following lines: "No more fear of contamination! One man, one cup (of grace) and all fear of catching infectious sins avoided! Cup custards, ice cream cups, cups of grace and shaving cups supplied to the best families. Try our cut crystal cups, gilt-edged, beautifully designed and carefully consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury."

The Folkestone clergy are up in arms against the proposed Sunday bands on the Lees promenade. They have held a meeting and decided to present petitions to the Mayor asking him to prevent this dreadful outrage. They seem to think that the unholy music of the Sunday bands will get mixed up in the Divine ears with the sanctimonious strains of their church organs and harmoniums, and convey a bad impression of godly Folkestone.

On the ground that games of chance were allowed at bazaars in the town, Bailie Macpherson refused to punish a Glasgow visitor brought before him at Cambeltown police court on a charge of conducting such a game. The Bailie expressed himself as willing to deal with the whole matter if prosecutions were undertaken against those responsible for the bazaars. This is the consistent course to take. For a long time past, church and chapel bazaars have been noted for their lotteries and raffles. It is only of late that, in a shame-faced sort of fashion, they have begun to mend their ways.

While an infant was being christened at Odessa, in Russia, the church was struck by lightning. The priest, the baby's father and godfather were all killed on the spot. What is the moral of this? Was it a judgment or is it a mystery?

"Babu" in his "Musings" in the *Outlook* says:—"There is no established religion in England beyond the weather. After that the Englishman worships himself."

Both the High and the Low Church organs are falling foul of Convocation. The *Rock* now declares that "few churchmen can regard Convocation in its present state as in

any true practical sense a representation of the Anglican Communion." Poor old Convocation! Had it not better take another two hundred years' sleep?

From a religious point of view, a very dismal report is made by Prebendary Reynolds on the Church Training Colleges of which he is Inspector. The students, or at least many of them, appear to leave these Church Colleges practical unbelievers. A man, according to Prebendary Reynolds, is met in college by the damatory clauses of the *Quicunque vult*. "He is perplexed and is silent, and the impression of having been forcibly thwarted is bad for him, especially when he leaves college. When he goes to a Board school where he may think and say what he pleases, he revenges himself in a way that is disastrous to his own faith and the faith of his pupils." The general "looseness of faith" among these students is regarded by Prebendary Reynolds as "deplorable," but other people will probably consider it a hopeful feature under the new educational regime.

Viscount Kitchener's eulogium on Gordon on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue for Khartoum was laconic and pithy enough. But it does not seem to have satisfied the ultra-pious who have detected in it an "all-important omission." Kitchener spoke of Gordon as "a man who led a blameless life, who put duty before himself, and who died happily for his country." There is nothing here, it is pointed out, which recognises the distinctively religious side of Gordon's life and work. And it is asked whether Kitchener designedly omitted any reference to it.

Canon Hensley Henson, preaching the other Sunday at St. Margaret's, Westminster, declared that the constant tendency of the clergy has been towards holding the Christian laity back from religious advance. The clergy, he said, ought never to forget the scandalous and suggestive fact that the general judgment of civilised communities has definitely associated clericalism with the fact of anti-social hostility to intellectual progress.

Dr. R. F. Horton recently addressed the boys at Taunton School on the subject of manners. He counselled the boys to ask, in time of temptation, "What would Jesus do?" That would, he said, make them courteous, gentlemanly and Christian. We are not so sure of this as Dr. Horton seems to be. Jesus, on occasion, could get into a rage, behave with violence and indulge in vituperation. He was rude to his mother, made a furious assault on offending tradespeople (for which in the present day he would have been locked up) and denounced those to whom he was opposed as vipers, hypocrites, whited sepulchres, serpents, fools, and blind, etc. He was meek enough at times, but could be as abusive and offensive as other people when his temper was roused. Anyway, whatever Dr. Horton may think, Jesus was not a perfect example for the Taunton schoolboys to follow.

Old Dowie has managed to rope in Mr. Booth-Clibborn who has now been publicly enrolled as a Zionite. Mrs. Booth-Clibborn seems to be holding back. She cannot yet see in the wily old Scotsman a re-incarnation of Elijah. Meanwhile there is war between the Salvation Army and the Zionites. Fortunately for himself, Dr. Dowie has effected in this crisis an alliance with the great Mrs. Carrie Nation. That redoubtable lady is a host in herself. Dowie, however, had better mind his "p's" and "q's" for Carrie is just as likely to turn round and scarify his venerable cranium.

"The Lawyers' Prayer Union" has just celebrated its jubilee. Of course, the last thing its members would pray for would be an abundant crop of wealthy, obstinate litigants. "Woe unto ye lawyers," said Christ, "for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne."

We really shouldn't have thought it, but it seems that, according to the *Methodist Times*, God himself was responsible for the address delivered by the new President of the Wesleyan Conference. Here are the words of the leading article on the front page of the *Methodist Times*, commenting specially on the address: "We believe that our Divine Lord constantly directs the thoughts of men occupying positions of conspicuous authority and influence like that of the British [Wesleyan] Conference." According to this, "our Divine Lord" must have directed the thoughts of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes when he occupied that exalted position. This makes us think less of Deity than we did before.

So that there may be no mistake in regard to its meaning the same unimpeachable authority assures us that Dr. Shaw Banks's presidential appeal on behalf of evangelistic effort was "inspired of God." We have since read through the



whole of that address, and fail to find the least trace of inspiration of God. On the contrary, we think it a very tame, commonplace performance which many a Methodist lay preacher could have equalled, and that, too, without any special Divine assistance. It is quite too rough on the Deity to make him responsible for such an inane, illogical effort. Take the following passage, as an example, from this God-inspired address; "Here in this country Christianity is fighting for its life. It has always been doing it, and it has always been prevailing. It is fighting for its life with Atheism, with vice, with superstition."

True, Christianity is fighting for its life, and is fighting with Atheism (and getting beaten), but what does this Christian minister mean by linking Atheism with vice? How does he justify this gross imputation? Suppose we linked Christianity with vice, and pointed to the fact that nearly all the people in this country who may be accused of vice label themselves "Christians," and are at any rate Christians to that extent? We should have a better *prima facie* case than he has. As to superstition, are not Roman Catholics Christians, and are they not according to Dr. Baucus himself immersed in superstition? May we not then infer that Christianity itself, in some of its phases, is superstition? Such loose talk as the new Wesleyan President indulged in may be described by some fool-friend as "inspired of God," but it is obviously lacking alike in justice and common sense. And we rather think the *Methodist Times* lays itself open to the charge of blasphemy by its endeavour to fasten on God what any rational thinker would indignantly disown.

At one of the meetings held in connection with the Wesleyan Conference, the President gave out the hymn commencing:—

Lord, we believe to us and ours  
The Apostolic promise given.

What was this Apostolic promise? There is a promise recorded to have been given by Christ to his apostles and "them that believe" which we are still waiting to see fulfilled. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

"Going to church" on the telephone has so increased in Indiana that pastors have struck, and announced that they will only make pastoral calls by instrument. Of course, this sort of church-going would never do. How could the pastor be sure that his flock—or any considerable proportion of them—are sticking "at the other end." They may abandon him after the text of his sermon, and go into another room and play cards. Meanwhile he would be wasting his sweetness on an unresponsive domestic air. And then how about the collection? You can't take that up very well by telephone—at least not in hard cash and in the zealous heat inspired by the languishing, beseeching looks of the perspiring preacher.

As for what the One Above thinks about it all, it is difficult to imagine. He may think that the human microcosms with their clever little tricks and devices are trying to evade the proper and adequate worship due to him. The people of Indiana will do well to look out for an earthquake or a deluge. Indifferentists who don't care to hear about him by telephone or otherwise, God has probably given up long ago, leaving it to his great rival the Devil to prepare a hot place for them hereafter. There the infiction will not be by telephone to be rung on or off or to be evaded when one is disinclined.

The prospects of the Southwark Bishopric Bill are not at present quite assured. The promoters of this most unnecessary scheme are hoping to get the Bill through this Session. About £42,200 has, so far, been subscribed. But the opposition is strong, and there is something, moreover, rather ironical about the amendments which have been framed. For instance, it is suggested that the incomes of the Bishoprics of Rochester and Southwark should be cut down. We can trust the present occupiers of those sees, or their immediate following, to make a determined protest against that. Then it is proposed that the Act shall not take effect until every benefice in the latter diocese has been levelled up to an income of £300 a year. The few clergy who receive less will like this. But won't the others, who receive more, raise up a howl?

From the American Spiritualist organ, the *Progressive Thinker*, we learn that an up-to-date healer in the far South West has been experimenting in quite a novel fashion. He claims that he can effect cures as readily by swearing as by praying. Recently he achieved a great success with a county official who was suffering from rheumatism in the shoulder. This is his account of the process:—"After an hour's spirited conversation relative to the interesting subject of healing, we concluded the right moment had arrived for us to perform our duty as healer, and as our patient did not represent the long-faced sanctimonious type of a certain class of believers, and at the same time being a personal friend, we took the liberty of asking what kind of method he would prefer us to use. He replied that he did not know nor did he care, just so he got rid of that jackscrew working rheumatism as quick as possible. We asked him:—'Shall we use the praying method or the swearing method?' His answer was that he believed the one just as effective as the other. Knowing that either method would give exactly the same result, we said:—'For your sake and for the sake of truth, we shall now proceed with the healing act under the swearing method that you may in this experiment have proof that what we have told you concerning this subject is true'—and as we placed our hand at the base of his brain, we commenced cussing him and his rheumatism in this manner (readers will please not get nervous now).....After cussing him and his rheumatism for four minutes, we pronounced him permanently cured. We commanded him to try his arm and shoulder in any way he pleased, he would find them perfectly restored to normal condition with full muscular activity in every respect. The trial he put that arm and shoulder to in windmill-like gyrations was a caution to behold." With modesty the healing Professor admits at present a certain amount of awkwardness in the use of cuss words, not being an adept in that kind of language, but apparently he hopes to improve.

A Shanghai newspaper states that a priest named Barbics has eloped with a nun named Vilandan from Agram, Vienna. The priest supplied the nun with ropes whereby she let herself down from her room in the convent, eighty feet above the ground, during the night. The priest, disguised as a pedlar, was waiting below. The nun changed her robes for the dress of a peasant woman, and together the pair proceeded to America, where they have since married. They are now trying to found a new sect among the Croats of Chicago.

In reply to recent suggestions that a University education should no longer be the normal preparation for the rank and file of the clergy, and that the standard of the ordination examination should be lowered, "Presbyter" writes to the *Church Times*: "Surely, if the future leaders of the nation are learning more and more to look to reason as their guide for conduct, it is sheer folly to lower the intellectual standard of the clergy. The minds of the poor will follow in the track of the leaders of thought (the fact that there is now a shilling edition of Darwin's great book is one out of many signs of this), and how will the type of clergy suggested deal with the new problems?"

Colonel Whale, of Weston Super Mare, seems to be a Protestant fanatic with a special taste for bishop-baiting. Recently some of his pictorial efforts, reflecting upon Bishop Gore, have been posted near Worcester Cathedral. One of them represents the Bishop brandishing a copy of *Lux Mundi*, wherewith he is about to put out the light of Bishop Latimer. So that the *Lux Mundi* label shall be understood of the people, Colonel Whale explains that "in this book many of the facts written in the Bible are denied or questioned." Colonel Whale also publishes some doggerel on the Darwinian theory, the merit of which may be estimated from the fact that "chasm" is made to rhyme with "bosom."

Said missionary Torrey at Ballarat: "If a girl only knew what the man thinks while he is dancing with her, she would never dance again." Evidently Pastor Torrey knows what the man thinks, and knows it's something particularly nasty. The parson's process of mind-reading is very simple—always think the worst. Logically, this lodges the bad mind in the reverend skull. In point of fact, the physical and mental activity demanded by the dance is less conducive to evil-thinking than the dreary process of sitting out a dreary sermon at a close church, in an atmosphere of hymns and hers; and, probably, if the blue-eyed girl knew what the fellow next her in the pew on Sunday was thinking, she wouldn't go to church any more; or, maybe, if the fellow next the blue-eyed girl in the pew on Sunday knew what the blue-eyed girl was thinking, he'd never go to church again—or he'd go every Sunday. It all depends.—*Sydney Bulletin*.



There seems to be a regular campaign carried on against the **FREETHINKER**. We do not know exactly in what quarter to look for our enemies, though they are probably bigoted Christians. What we do know is that a movement of some kind is going on in "the trade." Several newsagents, some of them important wholesale agents, have lately refused to supply the **FREETHINKER** to their customers. During the past week we have received a dozen letters from persons in Edinburgh asking where they can obtain this journal there, now that Messrs. Menzies have struck it off their list. May we ask our friends to do all they can to counteract this insidious persecution? Small newsagents, whose wholesale agents will not supply them with this journal, are requested to communicate with the Manager at our publishing office, who will in every case make some arrangement whereby the **FREETHINKER** will reach them.

### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

August 17, Failsworth Sunday School Anniversary Services.

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 17, a. and e., Camberwell; 24, m., Kingsland; a., Victoria Park; 31, m., Kingland.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

R. J. BROWN congratulates us on the new appearance of the *Freethinker*, and hopes the Editor will come back stronger than ever from his holiday. This correspondent relates his experience in placing *Freethought* tracts, and sometimes copies of this journal, in empty train compartments. He finds that most people pick them up and read them without exploding. He thinks it a good way of spreading *Freethought* views—as we do. This correspondent further asks us to give a strong "Acid Drop" to *Freethinkers* who don't purchase this journal or belong to any *Freethought* Society, and even send their children to Sunday School. He says he knows of such, and they "want waking up." No doubt.

A. WEBBER.—We are answering your letter far from London and books of reference, and cannot tell you at the moment whether the *Reynolds'* quotation from Darwin is accurate or not. Substantially it is accurate enough; we can vouch for that; whether it is so literally is another question. But our contemporary may, we think, be relied on in such matters.

X.—(1) The Shelley pamphlet you refer to has not been reprinted by the *Freethought* Publishing Company. We do not think it is on sale anywhere in a separate form. (2) Mr. Dobell sent us a presentation volume of his poems when they were privately printed. Our own letter of acknowledgment may have helped him to see that they should be published. He announces a public edition at a modest price, and we shall take an early opportunity of bringing the volume to our readers' attention. (3) We note your reference to other verses that appeared in the *Liberal and Progress*. (4) The two "B.V." pamphlets that were issued at the *Secularist* office in 1876 were *The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm* and *A Commission of Inquiry on Royalty*. Both are included in *Satires and Profanities*.

A. J. McEvoy.—We have handed your order and remittance over to the *Freethought* Publishing Company. Accept our thanks for your obtaining us two new subscribers. We are glad to hear that you always find the *Freethinker* "vigorous and interesting," and that you "appreciate and admire" our work. Your account of the soul-saving fraternity in your anything but God-forsaken district is quite amusing, though there is a tragic aspect of the matter, as you do not fail to note.

E. PURCHASE.—(1) The explanation is very simple. William Cobbett went to America as a Royalist, and wrote as "Peter Porcupine" in Philadelphia. Writing against the French Revolution, he could not help falling foul of Thomas Paine. When he came back to England and started the *Register* in London, he developed into a sturdy Radical. During the best part of his life he was constant in his admiration of Paine as a political writer. He did not sympathise with Paine's religious scepticism, but he was always ready to defend the great man's character against priestly calumny. (2) Pleased to hear that you and your wife both value your opportunities of coming to London and hearing our lectures. We should be very glad to initiate a fresh effort at Portsmouth if the local "saints" could see their way to co-operate. Can you tell us what good hall is now available for Sunday *Freethought* lectures?

BENEVOLENT FUND N. S. S.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—E. R., 5s.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.—We did not insert Mr. de Caux's appeal a second time, or refer to it again, for what should be an obvious reason. We do not care to have such an appeal running week after week in the *Freethinker*. Those who were ready to respond had at least an opportunity.

E. S. FRANCIS.—James Thomson's ("B. V.") poems are published by Mr. B. Dobell, Charing Cross-road, London, W. There is a collected edition in two volumes at 12s., and a volume of selections at 5s. The latter includes *The City of Dreadful Night* and a considerable quantity of Thomson's best work. We believe the prose volume of *Essays and Phantasies* is out of print, but doubtless second-hand copies are procurable. A good deal of Thomson's prose work has never been collected, and perhaps never will be. His translation of Leopardi's *Dialogues* ought to be accessible. Whether a publisher who ventured to make it so would get his money back is open to question. Thomson's genius was extremely unmarketable while he lived, and it is caviare to the general now he is dead.

G. DAVEY.—(1) Unfortunately we shall not see the paper until our return to London, and perhaps not then, as it may have disappeared. Perhaps you could send another copy under cover. (2) The *Freethinker* used to be in the British Museum. It should be amongst the newspapers. (3) We do not think the book you refer to is of any commercial value. (4) Pleased to hear you were "really thrilled" by the concluding passage on Voltaire in our recent article on Mr. Hall Caine's *Eternal City*. What we wrote from our own heart might well reach yours without a miracle.

W. H. WEST.—It is difficult to get a supply of paper that will be always up to the mark. Now and then some reams run inferior, and the copy you complain of must have been one from such a batch. Still, we have made a representation to the paper merchant.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Leicester Reasoner—Truth Seeker (Bradford)—Secular Thought (Toronto)—Two Worlds—Psycho-Therapeutic Journal—Favorite Magazine—Yorkshire Daily Observer—Daily Mail—Public Opinion (New York)—Yarmouth Mercury—Torch of Reason—Sporting Chronicle—Sydney Bulletin—Durham Chronicle—Boston Investigator—Belfast Witness—Friedenker—Liberator (Melbourne)—Keighley News.

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.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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., and not to the Editor.

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE is deriving much advantage from his stay at the seaside, and is recovering his old tone of mind and body. He looks forward with pleasure to visiting Failsworth on August 17 and delivering two addresses at the Anniversary Services of the Secular Sunday School there. After that he will take another fortnight's complete rest from lecturing, and as much rest from other work too as possible. On the first Sunday in September he will reopen the Athenæum Hall. On the last Sunday in that month he will deliver two lectures in the great Birmingham Town Hall. Later he will visit Glasgow, Liverpool, and other cities.

With regard to the "boycott" notice at the top of this page of the present issue of the *Freethinker*, we beg to remind our friends that the matter is sufficiently serious to merit their attention—if by any chance they are able to do anything towards counteracting this ignoble conspiracy. We have just received from a friendly newsagent (for instance) a copy of a brief correspondence he has had with his wholesale agents—Messrs. E. Marlborough & Co., of 51 Old Bailey, London, E.C. The newsagents note ran thus:—"Freethinker. Last week's and this. You must kindly procure these for us and despatch in Monday's parcel, and then if you cannot supply regularly let us know the difficulty." Messrs. Marlborough & Co.'s reply was written on the margin of this note:—"We decline absolutely to supply any copy of this paper."



Pressure might be put upon newsagents in this way. Our friends might insist on being supplied with this journal, and threaten to buy other things elsewhere unless they are accommodated. The newsagents, in turn, might put pressure upon the wholesale agents by threatening to transfer their orders from a firm that will not supply the *Freethinker* to one that will. We have known this to have the desired effect in some cases. In other cases the threatened transference has taken place. And a number of such transferences might serve as an eye-opener to the boycotting bigots of the newspaper trade.

What we lose through the trade boycott may be estimated by the following illustration. There is a certain big house that will not put the *Freethinker* on its lists or supply it from the centre of distribution in London. Two local agents of this big house, however, get a supply of this journal direct in two different towns. Between them they circulate about 150 copies weekly. Multiply that number by the number of places where the *Freethinker* is tabooed, and you will be able to form some idea of the thousands of copies that are kept out of circulation every week. If only bare justice were done to us, our circulation would soon double, treble, or quadruple.

*Public Opinion* reproduced the greater part of Mr. Foote's first article on Mr. Hall Caine's *Eternal City*, and honorably put the writer's name at the end of the reproduction. It was afraid, however, to conform to its general rule, and did not print the name of the paper from which the article was taken. We do not owe our contemporary any grudge on this account. Very likely the editor thought that too much prejudice would be raised against the article by a reference to the *Freethinker* at the top.

Mr. Carnegie, the Scotch-American millionaire, was understood to be a friend of the late Colonel Ingersoll, and himself an Agnostic; though we never heard that he did anything for the "Liberal" cause on the other side of the Atlantic. On this side, however, he has selected Mr. John Morley as the recipient of the late Lord Acton's library. Mr. Carnegie bought this collection during Lord Acton's lifetime, and allowed it to remain where it was until the collector's death. He now presents it to one of the few known Freethinkers in the House of Commons, the biographer of Voltaire and Diderot, and the one-time editor of the *Fortnightly Review*, in which "God" was spelt with a small "g."

What will Mr. Morley do with this vast library? It is variously stated to comprise from 60,000 to 90,000 volumes. Mr. Morley will hardly be able to cram them into his own house, where he must have books enough already. Probably he will find Mr. Carnegie's gift a kind of white elephant. The simplest plan, perhaps, would be to break it up into several portions, and present them to different institutions. But that is not our business; it is Mr. Morley's.

Some scribes, by the way, know a lot about books. One journal of standing observed that it would cost £20,000 to build a place to hold Lord Acton's library. Taking it at 90,000 volumes, this is a monstrous blunder. The present writer would undertake to shelve a third part of the collection in his own house. A couple of thousand pounds would suffice to erect a building to hold the entire collection. For it should be remembered that books can be packed more closely than they used to be, in consequence of the new methods of casing and shelving.

Mr. Carnegie could hardly have intended Lord Acton's library to have been for Mr. Morley's personal use. Had he meant it for personal use, he might have given it to a younger and poorer scholar. Mr. Morley is far from being a rich man, but he is also far from being what is commonly understood by a poor one. According to report he is receiving £10,000 for his biography of Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. H. Percy Ward continues to make a courageous stand with his outdoor lectures at Bradford. Subsequent to the proceedings reported in our last issue, Mr. Ward held another meeting, and was again assailed by Christian Hooligans. The *Yorkshire Daily Observer* describes the disturbance as "evidently an organised effort on the part of some youthful muscular Christians familiar with the methods of the football scrimmage to impart novelty to the proceedings. This they did so effectually as not only to break up the meeting, but to force Mr. Ward to take refuge in the Bradlaugh Club in Little Horton Lanc. Mr. Ward received no serious injuries in the *melee*, but some of the auditors who protested against his treatment were not so fortunate."

Mr. Ward, in no way daunted, has held later meetings, and chiefly owing to extra police protection the proceedings

passed off successfully. At the last meeting there was an audience of quite a thousand people.

Nearly a column of racy and quite friendly notes on Mr. Gott, Mr. Percy Ward, and the Bradford *Truthseeker* appears under the heading of "Echoes of the Day" in the *Sporting Chronicle*.

Mr. J. W. de Caux has a long and vigorous letter in the *Yarmouth Mercury* in reply to his critics who have taken exception to his attack on the Bible and Christianity, particularly in regard to witchcraft. Two other well-written letters, occupying a column between them, appear in support of Mr. de Caux's contentions.

Mr. J. McGhee writes hoping that a good contingent of friends from Manchester and District will attend the annual services of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School, on Sunday next, Aug. 17, at which Mr. Foote has undertaken to be present. Manchester friends should take the Hollinwood tram leaving Piccadilly about 2 o'clock; this will bring them without changing to The Pole, Failsworth, where, turning to the right, the school is about a minute's walk up Pole-lane.

## Rational Zeal

### IN RELATION TO FREETHOUGHT WORK.

ACCORDING to the dictionary definition, there is nothing essentially wrong about zeal. Dictionaries, of course, are but poor *media* for arriving at the real meaning and application of many terms. But they do not appear to have gone far astray from, or far short of, the specific meaning of zeal. Yet there are some—perhaps many—people who seem to think that zeal *per se* is rather to be deprecated than encouraged. If they do not exactly condemn it, they smile rather pityingly upon it. They would prefer to be excused from exhibiting any evidences of it themselves; they are disposed to make cynical comments on manifestations of it by others. When they have voted it "bad form," they have done their best, or their worst, to damn it.

Somewhat they always associate it with young people and new converts, when displayed in movements for the promulgation of ideas, theories, or systems of a religious, sociological, or philosophic kind. In effect, they seem to say that youth—in its heyday of existence, with all its illusions yet to be dispelled, brimming over with high spirits and ardor, but lacking in experience and discretion—is the natural medium of this moving force which older and wiser people do their best to eschew, and occasionally suppress. New converts they regard as proverbial zealots—like gamblers who have awakened to the discovery that they have been cheated, and are bent on wreaking vengeance for the fraud; or like women whose unreasoning love has been suddenly turned into the bitterest hate.

No doubt there is some ground for these rough generalisations. But all the same, there may be, and often is, discretion about even youthful zeal, and all new converts are not revengeful fools, or children attracted by the novelty of a fresh toy.

If we analyse the views of those who make a point of putting a damper upon zeal, of throwing in an icy-cold word, or lifting a significant shrug, we shall find that, after all, what they are averse to is not the exhibition of zeal itself, but the excesses to which zeal is prone. Their apprehension creates dislike, and habit leads to the neglect of discrimination.

What the world has suffered from misdirected or unbridled zeal, especially in relation to religion, history and present-day experience only too clearly show. When zeal has transformed itself into fanaticism, the bitterest results have accrued. Persecution, crusades, and internecine war have shed innocent blood and immersed in ruin and tears what might have remained a smiling earth. Christ never said truer words, if he said any that are attributed to him, than when he declared: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." Christian zeal carried to excess,



has been the cause of incalculable bloodshed and misery. Far be it from us to advocate a zeal of that kind, which, from the very nature of the beliefs upon which it is founded, is always liable, when left unchecked, to eventuate in outrage and murder.

Rational zeal, which limits itself to persuasion by the force of argument rather than the argument of force, is the moving power in matters of opinion that we should wish to see at work. And what finer field is there for its display than in the promotion of Freethought, and the emancipation of the human mind from the thralldom of superstition? Here is a life's work for those who are actuated by a generous enthusiasm for the progress and happiness of their fellows. Here is ample scope for the exercise of such capabilities and energies as we may possess—a golden opportunity for self-sacrifice and service which, in the beneficence of the results, will exceed anything achieved by the martyrdom of all the saints in the Romish or any other religious calendar.

Why, one is often inclined to ask, is there not more zeal displayed on the side of Freethought? It is not for want of example on the part of the Christian forces to whom we are opposed. Though their dogmas and creeds are rotten and the fabrics built upon them, destined to crumble into dust, they are able to keep up, at least, a show of organisation and stability. The latest achievement of the Wesleyans in the purchase of the site for their Central Hall is a case in point. It cannot be that there are so few Freethinkers in the world, or that there is any deficiency of vital force in Freethought principles themselves. The lack of proselytising zeal, of earnest and sustained effort, of some achievement that shall set the world agog, may be attributed to several causes. Perhaps the chief cause is the too general reliance on the working out of that old adage: "Truth is mighty and shall prevail." No doubt it will. But when? The ultimate triumph may be indefinitely delayed if there is not a sufficient multiplication of Truth seekers and Truth teachers. Truth in the abstract is unassailable and eternal, but in its concrete forms it depends for its maintenance and successful promulgation on human effort. Its mere acceptance by the few does not mean the overthrow of error held by the many. There must be exposition—energetic, extensive, persistent. And this is the immediate requirement if Freethought principles are to be spread.

For my own part, I cannot understand the mind, or enter into the sentiments of one who being a Freethinker himself does not wish to make other people Freethinkers also; and not only "wish," but make every possible and reasonable effort to effect that conversion. It seems but a poor appreciation of Freethought itself not to put forth strenuous endeavors to promulgate it amongst others to whom it is unknown, or by whom it is misunderstood. Where is the sense in complaining of pulpit or platform misrepresentation of Freethought, and not helping zealously in the exposition of Freethought as it really is? Public attention needs to be constantly arrested and the public mind constantly instructed before any appreciable impression is made. That, of course, can only be done by an energetic, efficient propaganda.

All this may seem mere platitude—something which goes without saying, which everybody knows and about which everybody is agreed. Call it commonplace, and still it needs to be said; and if there is a general agreement upon it, that agreement still remains to be translated into general action. One would not willingly underrate what has already been done in the promotion of Freethought principles; or speak in other than terms of grateful praise of those ardent, undaunted, consistent Freethinkers who, year in and year out, continue their self-sacrificing services to the cause which they hold dear. One would wish to appeal to the less active for a greater display of enthusiasm and zeal. The intellectual evolution of the world depends upon the activity of individuals and the cohesion of kindred spirits having a common aim. The methods to be

employed and the machinery that is needed are known and provided. The requirement is the vital moving power which only earnest men and women can impart.

There are self-centred people in the world who, being as it were a law unto themselves, and rejoicing in their own freedom and independence, never deign to cast more than a casual glance abroad, and who imagine that there is little or nothing for them to do but to attend to their own individual concerns. Some of these, though Freethinkers, are undisturbed by the most ostentatious display of theological supremacy, and are moved only to a mild expression of surprise at even theological aggression. They feel that all this sort of thing is doomed, but as to when or how its end will come they have but a hazy notion. They imagine that possibly it will die of natural decay at some distant period. They fail to perceive that, in the meantime, it is capable of effecting, and does indeed effect, incalculable evil, and that, if its death would be a good riddance, the sooner that consummation is brought about the better. As a matter of fact, at the present time it lives more upon the apathy of those who should be its natural assailants than upon its own inherent vitality and vigor.

But apart from mere anti-theological work, there is much to be done in the way of disseminating those affirmative principles of Freethought by which life and conduct are to be regulated and the evils of mankind mitigated, if they cannot be entirely removed. Is there not room in these two branches of Freethought work, the clearing of the ground and the sowing of new seed, for a greater display of rational activity and zeal?

FRANCIS NEALE.

### Our Coronation Decorations.

THE Coronation having now been definitely fixed, there is again a flutter in our neighborhood as to putting out the decorations; and the drapers are renewing their exhibits of colored stuff at 3¼d. a yard, flags of all nations at 4¼d., gilt cardboard crowns, Vauxhall lamps, paper lanterns, and other cheap devices for combining loyal display with rigid economy. The neighbors are again hanging out the faded and dilapidated banners that did duty at the Diamond Jubilee, Mafeking Night, C.I.V. Day, etc.; the object of every man being to make the front of his house look like the backyard on washing day. The contemplation of these tattered remnants of past rejoicings is a source of serene enjoyment to us, for the flags are hung upside down, sideways, and inside out, with the most guileless innocence of the most elementary heraldry—and there is no sensation that fills the human heart with such unalloyed satisfaction as the consciousness of other people's stupidity. Of course we are endeavoring to show the neighbors how the thing *should* be done; and our little display is quite a model in its way, although we have merely utilised the same materials as the other people in the street. Our first aim was to have our flags correct. It's wonderful what funny ideas people have about flags. The shoemaker has a large *Dutch* flag, all real bunting, which he hoists upon all possible occasions, such as Derby Day, the Oxford and Cambridge Boat race, and the local bean-feasts. I could not understand for a long time why he had chosen a *Dutch* flag, so I asked him if it were intended as a compliment to Queen Wilhelmina, and he staggered me by replying that it was the *British* national colors—red, white and blue! It appears that he knew the French tricolor when he saw it, but he was not aware that if you put it the other way round it was the national flag of Holland. Some of the neighbors, however, who think they know more than our shoemaker, try other combination of stripes, because they are unaware that every possible combination of red, white and blue stripe has been appropriated as the standard of some benighted foreign country or other. Consequently they display the Servian, Russian, Batavian, Algerian, Tripolitan, Costa Rican, Nicaraguan, Paraguayan, and Sand-



wich Island flags under the fond and fervent delusion that they are flying the British national colors. Our youngest boy brought home a tricolor, with a crown, and "God Save the King" upon it. This was vetoed at once, first, because it was a *Dutch* flag; secondly, because of the inscription. I offered, however, as the young gentleman seemed aggrieved, to display it if it had a green stripe sewn along, for then it would be the Transvaal flag, and a Transvaal flag with "God Save the King" upon it would be taken as a sly dig at President Kruger. But this brilliant idea was quashed by Mrs. E., who said, "Whatever do you want to put up *Kruger's* flag for?"

This reminds me, too, about the mottoes. Wherever you go you see nothing but the monotonous "God Save the King." We have had long and heated discussions at our club over this silly phrase, and my eldest daughter, Bridget, was the innocent cause. At our last series of concerts she undertook to play the piano, and at the end of the first evening the child very naturally executed the so-called "National Anthem" as a signal that the affair was all over, because when people hear that tune they no longer demand *encores*, but grab their hats and umbrellas and make for the door. But M'Quillan was awfully angry. He didn't mind God's name being taken in vain, but he's a Red Republican, and loses his balance when the Royal Family is mentioned; although on other occasions he has been heard to boast that his ancestors were kings in Ireland. M'Quillan insisted that the last piece ought to be "God Save Ireland." But young Spencer, who is rather sweet on Bridget, took it as a reflection on the girl's playing, and said our's was not an Irish club, and Ireland was past saving. This led to some confusion, and I understand that M'Quillan had to be held down in a chair, while young Spencer escaped through the window. (I always did think the fellow a bit of a fool, but his father is a butcher in a big way, and in the natural course of things young Spencer will come into the business, so Mrs. E. thinks he ought to be encouraged, as he would not be such a bad match for Bridget.) Dodson suggested that we should end our concerts with the fine strains of the *Marseillaise* Hymn; but this was condemned by a large majority, who considered it highly improper that we should identify ourselves with the war-song of our hereditary enemies. Rosenberg moved as an amendment that the *finale* should be "The Watch on the Rhine." Rosenberg is a humorous sort of Hebrew, and I believe he really intended to poke fun at us; but Cameron took it very seriously indeed, and made a long and indignant speech, proving minutely that the "Watch" was entirely unsuitable; and he wound up by assuring us that we were not

"*Deutscher, bieder, fromm und stark.*"

We all agreed we were not, although some of us did not understand exactly what the words meant. So this brought us back to "God Save the King." Now, it seems to me that this phrase is decidedly stupid, not to say disloyal. For, after all, King Edward VII. is the acknowledged head of the English Church, and therefore His Majesty is the sole guardian of deity and its attributes. By the Coronation Oath the King undertakes to maintain "the Protestant religion as by law established," so that if the law chose to alter the national worship, then that alteration would constitute "the Protestant religion as by law established," and the King would be bound to maintain it. The Anglican religion has been profoundly modified by previous monarchs, and what is to prevent future sovereigns from altering it further? The bishops are quite powerless in the matter, because they have to submit their difficulties for final solution to His Majesty's courts of law; and it will be remembered that in the course of the last century some important judgments were pronounced, which have gone far to upset old ideas of Anglicanism. Fortunately there is no beastly cant about our Royal Family. Her late Majesty ordered the bands to play on Sunday in the grounds of Windsor Castle, to the great disgust of the Sabbatarian party; and when the dean was find-

ing fault with the Nonconformists, she reminded him that he might have to put up with them in heaven; so he had better get used to them on earth. Furthermore, his present Majesty used to attend the French races on the Sabbath day, and since his accession he has honored the concerts of the National Sunday League with his presence. Consequently it is quite within the bounds of possibility that, by the co-operation of the King, the Higher Critics, and the Ethical Societies, a new Protestant religion may be worked out, with no God at all. And then where would "God Save the King" be?

I put these views before the club, and they all agreed there was a great deal in them. Donaldson was particularly impressed, and remarked, "Ta be logeecal we wad hae to sing, 'Ta King save Gahd.'" Some of the members laughed at this, but Donaldson quite failed to see what there was in "logeec" to be laughed at. Then I proceeded to point out that I had no objection to the *tune* of the "National Anthem," but only to the *words*, and these might easily be altered. The anthem was a product of a superstitious age, and that was why it was so overloaded with the word "God." M'Quillan jumped up at that, and said he thought it was overloaded with "King." Ours was not a political club, and he did not see why we should end our concerts with a political song. But, as I told him, the tune is not confined to any school of politics. In America it is sung by Republicans to the words, "My country, 'tis of thee;" in Germany it is Imperialist, being applied to the words, "*Heil dir im Siegenkranz*;" and in France and other countries it has still other wording. Now, I would suggest that, instead of commencing the Anthem with "God save our gracious King," we might make it

Long live our lord, the King:  
Long live our noble King:  
Long live the King.

But Cameron objected to any such "Jesuitical reservations" as he called them. We might profess to understand the wording of the tune to be anything we liked; but any stranger who came in and heard our instrumentalist playing "God Save the King" would naturally conclude that we were all Theists, and he, for one, objected to sailing under false colors. He was as loyal as anybody, but he never played "God Bless the Prince of Wales," because people mistook the tune for "Greenland's Icy Mountains," and he thought principle ought to go before party. As it thus seemed evident that we could not agree upon anything national and patriotic for winding up our musical evenings, young Spencer proposed that, for the present, the *finale* should be "The Honey-suckle and the Bee," but M'Quillan promptly told him not to be an ass.

My boy, Denis, announced that he had a splendid design for a motto, which he was going to carry out in colored lamps. (That boy has too many ingenious ideas for me. His mother thinks him a wonder; but I'm afraid, if he isn't watched, he'll grow up to be an inventor, or some useless being of that sort.) He had seen some wire frames for holding lamps, and he thought it looked quite easy to make up a large frame with some wire and a soldering-iron. I tried to warn him that the art of soldering is not as simple as it looks, and you cannot do work of that kind by merely heating a copper bit and whistling *Dolly Grey*. But he insisted on trying, with the usual result. The pieces of wire burned away, and got shorter, quite readily; but, as he phrased it, "They wouldn't solder for nuts." He just missed setting the house on fire, burned his arm severely, and ruined his best trousers; for it is a most remarkable thing that, whenever a boy starts a filthy-dirty or a dangerous job, he invariably puts on his Sunday clothes to do it in. After giving up the motto as a bad job, Denis turned his attention to our flagstaff; for we have a tall flagstaff in the garden, put up by some former tenant. It has a long, endless rope to it, running through a pulley at the top—a halliard, I think they call it—and Denis must needs untie the cord that fastens the two ends of the halliard



together. The consequence was that the shorter end of the rope ran up through the pulley with great force. "Oh! strike me pink!" cried the boy, when he saw the rope run up. It did *not* strike him pink, but it gave him a nasty slash on the side of the face as it came down, narrowly missing cutting his eye out. Mrs. E. was dreadfully alarmed, and bathed his head with vinegar and water, and said she never dreamed that a flagstaff was such a fearfully dangerous thing; it was positively disgraceful to allow it to stand within reach of children, and she insisted on its being cut down at once; and, if I was too lazy to do it, *she* would, or she would take the dear children to some other place, where their lives would be safe. However, I calmed her down after a while; and we completed our Coronation decorations without the help of Denis, who was put on the sick-list. The house certainly does look fine, and young Spencer is coming round with his camera to take a photograph of it.

C. E.

### Help for the Selp-Helping.

THE Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society has a long and honorable history. For nearly twenty years it has provided regularly Sunday lectures, and occasional week-night lectures, in the Secular Hall, New Church-road. During the summer months it has carried on open-air propaganda at Brockwell Park, at Station-road, and on Peckham Rye. A vast amount of work has been cheerfully performed by its officers and committee. They have also often taxed themselves financially to meet the Society's expenses.

During the period covered by the South African war, which has been so injurious to all advanced movements, the Branch has naturally suffered from a diminished income. One result is that rent is owing to the Secular Hall Company, the non-payment of which would create serious difficulties.

Knowing all the facts of the case, and being confident that this Society deserves hearty support, I have undertaken to raise for it (if possible) the sum of £50. This would enable it to face the next season's work, in September, free from debt and sanguine of a greater prosperity in the immediate future. A breathing time would also be gained for arrangements whereby the Secular Hall—the only place of the kind at present owned by Freethinkers in London—might be secured in perpetuity to the Freethought movement.

It should not be difficult to raise this £50. London Freethinkers alone could provide it. But the appeal is not confined to them. Freethinkers throughout the country should be interested in maintaining one of the few halls belonging to the Secular party.

Cheques or Postal Orders should be sent to me *crossed*, and will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. I hope the response to this appeal will be prompt as well as generous, so that the Fund may be closed at the end of August.

G. W. FOOTE.

(President, National Secular Society.)

2, Newcastle-street,  
Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

For me, I know nought: nothing I deny,  
Admit, reject, condemn; and what know *you*,  
Except, perhaps, that you were born to die?  
And both may, after all, turn out untrue.  
An age may come, Font of Eternity,  
When nothing shall be either old or new.  
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep;  
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

—Byron.

Theology makes God a tyrant, man a slave; credulity a virtue, thought a crime. Everything is demanded—obedience, faith, meekness; the only reward: Well done, good and faithful servant. Everything is promised except liberty.—

R. G. Ingersoll.

To pray is to flatter oneself that one will change entire nature with words.—Voltaire.

### The Decay of Worship.

[The Rector of Birmingham, preaching in Peterborough Cathedral, complained of the atrophy of man's spiritual nature, which is going on in the religious world, as the principal cause of the decay of worship in the present age.]

WHY this confession of weakness, if an apprehension of coming decay and dissolution in religious organisations is not seriously felt, even in "the fold"? It is felt, it is known. Christianity, no longer what it once was, is undermined, and, like the Campanile in Venice, will eventually suffer collapse. The crack in the wall visibly widens more and more. By-and-bye the whole structure will fall with a crash. Men will seek to reconstruct something better than the old faith upon its ruins—something stronger, more reasonable, and better adapted to modern life and practical ways, however vehemently legions of clerics and their adherents may oppose the march of free thought and progress.

This wail as to religious "atrophy" or impotence is in good time. With an ever-increasing majority Religion—*i.e.*, the Church—has lost its power. Its doctrines and scriptures, its traditions, its orders, sacraments, and ceremonials. Catholic and Protestant, are lacking in the vital force they once possessed. Men are less and less affected by them, and young men, as we continually witness, are more and more indifferent. A young man of the "Masses" said to the writer recently: "I have done with all that." He felt its falsity, he saw through its artifices. And he was but one of a great number who are lost to the cause of religion, strenuous as the efforts may be to reclaim them to the churches. They find a healthy, honest Rationalism made congenial, and a better helper and guide.

If there is this "atrophy" in Christianity and the churches, is it not the fault of the system and its preachers? Continually depreciating human excellence and merit, always presenting discouragement and fear, viewing our human efforts in a gloomy light, crying that we are "unprofitable servants" when we are doing our best to be profitable and benefit our fellow creatures, harping for ever and ever on sin and evil and wrong-doing and penitence, when there is very little to repent of, after all, in so many who hear these harsh rebukes, who can wonder that repulsion and repugnance are felt?

John Quincy Adams, when President, once wrote to his wife from Washington: "I want to go to some church where I am not *doomed* every Sunday." So do the majority in these later days. What we all need is elevating, cheering, consoling, encouraging, animating to the best efforts. Only a rational, common sense, free, and liberal teaching can effect this—one truly comprehensive of human duties and human rights, and the human privilege of being happy. In such teachings, founded on reason and wisdom, there is no mournful cry of "atrophy."

GERALD GREY.

### To the Priests.

(From Hugo's "Aux Prêtres.")

Upon your brow be cambric turban's twist,  
Or mitre mingling pearl with amethyst—  
O Priests, in holy motley 'neath the moon,  
Being given the privilege to play buffoon,  
You use it with an ardor past compeer—  
Because the Most High turns so deaf an ear—  
Seeming to see nought, yet all accepting,  
Your God submits to treatment high insulting  
(In his great goodness) and, worse than all,  
Suffers *Te Deums*, with even a Bishop's brawl!  
You profit, and by his good-natured way  
Make him endorse the Absurd's triumphal sway,  
There in your Sanhedrins and council halls;  
And, to patch up a host of silly tales,  
Priests! you smooth out just as easily,  
The malediction, the inclement lie,  
The imposture and error in your pond'rous tomes,  
As some small bird may preen his erring plumes.  
Where find'st thou monk, abbot, in vision schooled,  
The Almighty Myope, that Most High Befooled,  
That gouty deity (like Orgon lost in dreams)  
Dupe of a young and agile Devil's schemes?  
Ah! Doctor; what an imprudent joke thou dost bequeath  
To wits not vexed to grind God 'twixt the teeth.  
Hear them now:

"Fakir, Telapoin, Magian, or Mufti,  
Sayest thou, good man, God in his image made thee?  
How ugly, then, is God!"

GEORGE WOODWARD.



## Correspondence.

## HOW TO DEAL WITH PRIESTCRAFT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have very much sympathy with all who, like myself, desire to overthrow every form of usurpation, and particularly that which is to be based on claims of knowledge concerning the alleged supernatural. May I presume to observe that I do not expect much success from controversy with the minds disposed to believe or to affect belief in matters or things or fancies spiritual. The theological coercion must be got rid of on this ground—that it is a self-assumed office to teach one's fellows anything about a hereafter. The real genesis of the theologian is desire to rule a neighbour's mind, and to make him fear his ruler. Even if the so-called orthodox view were established by proof it would be intolerable that any one set of men should be allowed to assert the right to deal with the mind or conscience of the other portion of the community. If it is left to the work of argument to emancipate the people from their slavery to churches, then the day of liberty is far off yet. Either every person should have as much power as his neighbour to preach the Gospel of Faith or no one have it at all. Religion of mere faith is a fraud on children; were it not such it would be impossible. All attempts to instruct concerning an unproved hereafter should be prohibited.

"PRACTICAL FREEDOM."

## 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 ATHENEUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): Closed during August.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, Mr. R. P. Edwards; 6.30, Mr. R. P. Edwards.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch N. S. S.): 11.30, Mr. F. Schaller.

HANMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N. S. S.): 7.30, Mr. R. P. Edwards.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.): Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, Mr. R. P. Edwards.

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

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, Mr. F. A. Davies.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., Mr. F. A. Davies.

## COUNTRY.

BRADFORD, Vacant Ground, Morley Road: H. Percy Ward lectures on Sundays at 3 and 7, and on Mondays and Fridays at 8. Local Secularists are specially requested to attend and support the platform.

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

## LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—August 17, Freethought Demonstration at Shipley Glen; August 31 to September 7, Freethought Mission at Liverpool.

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