

# THE Freethinker

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*What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.*

—TENNYSON.

## An Ambitious Parson.

JOHN WESLEY finely said that the world was his parish. It was what the Americans call a large order, but he made it good by the extensiveness of his preaching and other activities. He could not cover the whole world, but he covered as much of it as was possible to one who could only appeal to mankind in the English language. His object was so simple that he could pursue it over a large area. He was not concerned with *all* the interests of the people he addressed. He confined himself to the salvation of their immortal souls. How to escape hell, how to reach heaven—this is what he taught them; and all the rest was but as dust in the balance.

The Rev. Forbes Phillips, of Gorleston, is not a John Wesley, neither does he take the world for his parish. He is satisfied to labor within the area of his incumbency. But he does not confine himself to the simple object of the great founder of Methodism. Saving souls is too narrow for his broad nature. "We have 16,000 people—all poor—in my parish," he said to a *Daily Express* interviewer, "and I must do something for them." Of course he must. What he has to do for them is to point them the way to heaven, and lead them into it if possible. But this is not Mr. Forbes Phillips' opinion. He is like the character in Plautus, who brought down the house by exclaiming, "As a man, I think nothing human is alien to me." Good bread and butcher's meat for the table, good milk for the babes and sucklings, good hats, boots, and clothes for everybody; all these things, and many more, he is prepared to tackle in due course. But he wants to start off with a theatre. The performance in the parish church is insufficient. Besides, the church is in full swing only on Sundays, while the theatre would be going strong six evenings a week. So the vicar of Gorleston cries with Hamlet, that "the play's the thing." He is all on fire for a playhouse in his parish; indeed, he suggests a plan of playhouses for the whole country. There should be parish theatres (he says) run exclusively by the parish church. We suppose the parson would be stage manager; sometimes, when nature was favorable, he would be the star actor; the churchwardens would see to the advertising, print the programs, and look after other business arrangements; and the sidesmen would take money at the doors. There would be a place for everybody; only one does not see a place for God.

Mr. Phillips is waiting for some millionaire to build the first of these parish theatres at Gorleston. Of course it is necessary to begin there. Meanwhile he has to put up with a tent on the cliff. His parishioners occupy the stage, and his parishioners occupy the auditorium. It is a parish affair altogether, and it is under the control (apparently) of Mr. Phillips. No wonder he is in ecstasies. "You ought to see our butcher's Hamlet," he said to the interviewer. It does not appear, though, that the inter-

viewer was in a hurry for the treat. We should have thought the butcher would shine better in Macbeth. Perhaps he was attracted by the line in Hamlet—

Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt.

It is a line that would naturally appeal to a butcher who had an obstinate bit of frozen mutton to deal with.

Local talent, however, including the butcher as Hamlet, is not to be the alpha and omega of Mr. Phillips' theatre—when he gets it built. "On occasions," he says, "I shall bring down the leading representatives of the drama." How flattered they will feel when Mr. Phillips has them by the hand! How they will admire his condescension! Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Beerbohm Tree, Mr. Charles Wyndham, Mr. George Alexander, Mr. John Hare, Mr. Lewis Waller, and all the other leading lights of the London stage, will soon be familiar with the road to Gorleston. Mrs. Brown Potter has already been there. She seems to like the place and the vicar. Probably we shall see Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Miss Ellen Terry, and the rest of the stage ladies, following suit; and no doubt Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse, and other great continental actresses, will join the Gorleston procession.

Mr. Phillips would make special provision for Advent, Christmas, and Lent. "I propose reviving as far as possible," he says, "the old miracle and mystery plays and moralities of the Middle Ages." Well, that *will* be a treat for his parishioners. But the reverend gentleman had better be careful of the police. They would interfere if Adam and Eve came on without figleaves in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. They would draw the line at Bathsheba's bath in the drama of David. Nor would they wink at the Trinity being brought upon the stage, and made to talk, dispute, and even romp about. All which things were done in the Middle Ages.

During "Holy Week" the Ammergau Passion Play might be established in England. This is Mr. Phillips' "wish," and certain wishes are commands. We shall all be able to go and see Christ crucified. Another week might be devoted to the Incarnation. But the vicar of Gorleston is silent on this subject. Probably he has not the courage, any more than he has the simplicity, of the writers and spectators of the old miracle and mystery plays. They thought nothing of bringing on Joseph asking Mary to account for her rotundity, and calling her shocking bad names until he was satisfied it was the work of the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Phillips says he knows he is "in for a torrent of abuse." Does he really think that people take him so seriously? We have called him "an ambitious parson," but his chief ambition seems to be talked about, and any parson can secure that by rushing out of his church and standing on his head in the public streets.

It is evident that Mr. Phillips talks from a plentiful lack of knowledge. "After all," he says, "I am only leading back the drama to her ancient mother—the Church, of whom she has ever been a devoted and helpful, if now and again wayward, daughter." Fancy the vicar of Gorleston leading the drama back! What a picture of satisfied self-importance! The theme requires the pencil of a Hogarth. It does not occur to Mr. Phillips that the drama might refuse his leading, and bid him mind his own per-

formances in the parish church. Nor is there any sense, or any accurate history, in calling the drama the daughter of the Church. Real drama began, in the modern world, when playwrights and actors turned their backs upon the Church and all her ways, betook themselves to theatres, chose secular subjects, and appealed to the natural intelligence and emotions of the people. This independence excited the rage of the Church. Actors were declared to be rogues and vagabonds by virtue of their calling. Such was the law, however welcome they might be in polite circles. In France it was impossible for actors and actresses to obtain the common privileges of civilisation. The Church would not marry them—and no other form of marriage then existed. The Church would not bury them. Voltaire's most sincere and passionate poem was written on the death of the beautiful actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur, whose body was thrown into a ditch. The Catholic Church still taboos the stage. Nor does the Church of England look upon it with any favor—in spite of the affectations of a few High Churchmen. Dissenters are quite fanatical on the subject. Methodists have only recently been discussing whether a theatre may be entered without positive sin. They commonly call it "the Devil's house." And this is quite natural. There is an essential opposition between the stage and the pulpit. Their objects and methods are entirely dissimilar. They have always been, and always will be, rivals. This talk of the Rev. Forbes Phillips is only froth on the surface of a deadly hostility. When the Church knew its business it waged war against the theatre, and it will continue to do so, according to its opportunities, while it has a spark left of the instinct of self-preservation.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Science and a Future Life.

A FEW weeks back I devoted several columns of this journal to an examination of the first of a series of articles by Madame E. M. Caillard on *Human Immortality*. In the *Contemporary Review* for August this lady favors her readers with the second portion of her essay, which treats the subject from what is intended to be a strictly scientific standpoint. I say *intended* to be, because it is, strictly speaking, a criticism of conclusions, adverse to the belief, which might be drawn from a study of natural science. There is much in Madame Caillard's paper about the limitations, the inadequacy, and the weakness of science; but one looks in vain for even a brief presentation of those scientific facts upon which opponents to the belief in immortality build their case. Those who reject the belief do so because it seems to them that we are in a fair way to explain all the legitimate questionings of man upon strictly scientific lines, and because the *known* facts of physiology and psychology afford no presumption in its favor. And it is surely an unsatisfactory procedure to set on one side as valueless all that we *do* know, because there is much that we do not know, and probably much that we shall never know.

That science has never afforded the slightest grounds for believing in the continued existence of human individuality; but, on the contrary, has demolished many of the "evidences" formerly relied on to prove its truth, are facts which seriously confront believers, and which can hardly be without significance to all. It is easy enough to assert that the "soul" of man does not come within the legitimate ken of science, and cannot become an object of scientific study; but the fact is that all the proofs, so-called, of immortality were for ages drawn from the various fields now covered by science, and were only surrendered when investigation showed their utter worthlessness. Then it was discovered that science really had no say in the matter. The facts of the spiritual life, to use the cant phraseology, belonged to a region that quite transcended the sphere of science, and its verdict thereon was of no authoritative value. The fact remains, however,

that the religious world did not take to this assumed transcendental sphere from any conviction of its veracity, but solely because sheer experience had driven believers from the fields of exact knowledge.

"No scientific explanation," says Madame Caillard, "can be more than partially satisfactory. There is always a residuum left unaccounted for, and that residuum contains the 'why' of all the 'hows' that with infinite pains and toils science has accumulated and co-ordinated. The existence of this residuum can be ignored or held of no account by any who are content to regard the universe as meaningless, but those who are sure that it has a meaning, still more those who hope that the meaning may be discoverable, are fain to seek some method of interpretation which does not presuppose space and time"—which does not, that is, fall within the scope of present science.

Statements of the class to which this one belongs are common enough, and possess an air of strength that impose upon many; but a very brief examination is enough to show how microscopical is the reasonableness and how mountainous the assumption in such assertions. That science *has* not explained everything is, of course, undeniable, that it will explain more no one doubts, and that its explanations are only partially satisfactory may mean either that there is more to be explained, or that it cannot give the kind of explanation that Madame Caillard desires. It is clear that what she requires is not an explanation only, but a particular one—one that will embrace the religious beliefs of God and a future life. Any explanation that does not do this is to her unsatisfactory, and science is so far condemned because it fails to satisfy the feelings of those who are "sure that the universe has a meaning," *before* they have considered whether the facts justify that feeling of certainty or not.

Hence this calm patronising of science by religious people of a certain type, as though *they* were possessed of some superior method of acquiring knowledge, and as though when science has at length recognised its inability to discover the "soul of things," *they* will step in and enlighten the darkness of the poor blundering man of science. But one would seriously ask, granting the constant existence of an "unexplained residuum," how much more does the religious believer know concerning it than other people? Does the demonstration that A does not know *everything* prove that B knows *anything* at all? And may not this "method of interpretation," which transcends "space and time," transcend at the same time reason and common sense? To us it looks extremely like it. For all that it amounts to is this—We must have an interpretation of the universe that satisfies all the assumptions made before we commenced our study of it. If that interpretation is to be found in the world of the known, so much the better; but, if it is not, then we must invoke another world—that of the unknown and the unknowable. It is true that we have no knowledge concerning the sphere which transcends space and time; nay, we do not even know that it exists, but this is a distinct advantage, since as our theories can never be tested by actual knowledge, we may enjoy all the more liberty in framing a theory of the universe that has nothing to urge on its behalf save that it satisfies those who frame it.

But although Madame Caillard opens her paper with this preliminary assertion of the weakness of science, and the impossibility of its ever *satisfying* everybody, she does appeal (in a way) to scientific knowledge in support of her belief. Taking the evolution of man from lower forms of life for granted, she professes to find in the development of the individual and in the persistence of personality, scientific warranty for inferring the existence of a life beyond the grave. These two supply the main arguments contained in Madame Caillard's paper, and it may be well to examine them a little in detail.

First, as to the persistence of individuality. From the cradle to the grave man passes through a series of transformations and experiences. His body is continually undergoing waste and renewal, and his

character is quite as continuously undergoing various experiences. Nevertheless the feeling of individuality persists. "It is I myself and not another who have passed through these transmutations. I was that child, that boy, that youth—I, who am now the grown man." This phenomenon seems to the writer to point so conclusively to a distinct "something" undergoing these changes and impressions, that the opposite view is summarily dismissed as "innately absurd," and which "the plain man may be safely trusted to discard."

Well, whatever the "plain man" may or may not do, it does not seem to me that this persistence of the sense of individuality presents any insuperable difficulty to a strictly Materialistic view of man, nor that what is left, on analysis of this feeling, will not admit of a strictly scientific interpretation. In the first place, I do not admit that I am always the same, despite changes in body and character. An individual is what the sum-total of his characteristics, physical and psychical, constitute him at any given moment. Modify these characteristics, and you have to that extent modified the individual. It is useless availing oneself of a mere habit of speech and writing as though I were one thing and the qualities of mind and body another. It is not I that persist throughout all these changes, but the recollection of the changes or transformations passed through. In other words the sense of individuality resolves into memory, pure and simple. Destroy memory, or suspend it, as it is suspended in some cases of brain disorder, and the sense of individuality is lost, for the time being, at all events. A child sucks at a feeding-bottle, and at a later stage attends school. Yet the experience of sucking at a bottle forms no part of the I of later life, while the school experience may be dwelt on in old age. Why does not the former constitute as lively a portion of our individuality as the latter? Oh, we may be told, we forget it, or we are too young to remember it. Exactly. But suppose we did not remember *any* of our experiences, would there be then a persistence of individuality? Clearly not; and therefore it seems to me impossible to avoid the conclusion that this sense of the persistence of individuality is altogether dependent upon the existence of memory, and not the proof of an underlying something that is the subject of all experiences.

But memory itself needs an explanation, it may be said. Quite so; and, while I do not believe that science is at present able to say definitely what are the exact conditions or nature of all mental functioning, I do believe that science does not find anything antagonistic to its most Materialistic assumptions in the fact of memory. If the nervous tissue, including the brain, underwent a *sudden and complete* change, then memory would be inexplicable upon Materialistic lines; but as the change is in the nature of a steady, ceaseless one, then, if memory be the function of certain brain tissues, the gradual displacement by normal processes of infinitesimal particles can have no effect upon the nature or quality of the function manifested. In other words, the organ renews itself; and, so long as it renews itself, the function of the organ must remain what it always has been.

This phenomenon of individuality supplies Madame Caillard with her chief reasons for assuming that science is not so opposed to the doctrine of immortality as is commonly supposed. There is, first of all, the *growth* of individuality in the organic world. The oyster, she says, is not so individualised as the cow, and the cow is not so individualised as the man, and so forth. And her conclusion is that, as nature places a special value on individualisation, and as this reaches its highest form in man, we may presume that this supreme effort is not destroyed at death. But, in the first place, Madame Caillard is evidently confusing individualisation with specialisation. The oyster is as individualised as the cow, although its parts are not as specialised for the various functions. And specialisation is carried to as great lengths with many of the organic world as it is with man. In some directions, for example, bees and ants

present greater examples of specialisation than can be found. And, if nature's efforts in the direction of man are not to be wasted, why should they be lost in other animals? Nor is it quite true that specialisation is valued by nature. If nature preserves some, she crushes others; and a too marked variation—which is a species of specialisation—is as often, or more often, lost than preserved.

Madame Caillard's reason for making a distinction in the case of man seems to be that advanced by Professor A. R. Wallace and the late Dr. Martineau. This is that the possibilities of man are not exhausted in this life; and we have, therefore, some legitimate reason for expecting another. Says Madame Caillard:—

"Till we come to man.....each individual existence apparently ceases at death.....With man.....so far from actual conditions exhausting his individuality, they rather seem insufficient to rouse his powers, or exhibit its full scope. His conscious demand for himself and his fellows is more time, fewer physical disabilities and mental limitations, a wider sphere, a fuller experience, a larger life.....The body of a bird or of any other animal does not strike us as limiting its individuality—rather as expressing it in a most complete and appropriate manner. ....The individuality of many a human being, on the contrary, seems to be fighting its way to expression through bodily hindrances, rather than clothing itself in a suitable and controllable form."

This passage is worth attention because it shows, in a few sentences, a great many of the utterly groundless assumptions Madame Caillard makes, and the unwarrantable inferences she draws. That man is capable of more than he actually performs is a statement that may contain useful counsel or cover a dangerous fallacy. To be exact, every man is capable of all that he does, and *nothing more*. If it is meant that by varying any human being's conditions—*i.e.*, giving better food, education, or opportunities—a man may do more than he could do otherwise, this is admitted; but then we have changed our factors, and we, of course, get a different result. And exactly the same is true of a horse or a dog, or any animal. Give the horse better feeding and training, and it will do more than it would otherwise. But Madame Caillard does not speak of the unexhausted possibilities of the horse. Why does she do so in the case of man? And as for her whimsical assertion that the *raison d'être* of animal existence ceases at death, but that of human existence does not, one may simply commend to her the philosophy of Montaigne's speculation that, when playing with his cat, it was a matter for doubt on which side the balance of superiority lay.

But the body of an animal does not strike Madame Caillard as limiting its individuality, it expresses it properly and adequately—which reminds one of the old lady's dictum that Adam could have had no trouble in naming the pig, as anyone could tell it was a pig at the first glance. For my own part, I venture to suggest that an animal may feel the need of "more time, fewer physical disabilities and mental limitations, a wider sphere, a fuller experience, a larger life," *in its degree*, quite as much as man. The majority of the human race, so long as their mere animal appetites are satisfied, pass through life without feeling any of these things to any marked extent. And, even where they exist, they are at bottom nothing more transcendental than the reaction of the organism against a painful stimulus. Whether this painful stimulus be the mere want of food, the non-satisfaction of intellectual or æsthetic tastes, or the unpleasantness of certain social conditions, this is its ultimate explanation. All animal life protests against an unpleasant stimulus, and man is no exception to the general rule. Madame Caillard prefers to explain a plain and simple phenomenon as being the result of some mysterious entity imprisoned in the body. A German philosopher similarly explained the crying of a new-born baby as due to the displeasure of the *ego* finding itself confined in the human body. There is a strong family likeness between the explanation of the German philosopher and our lady apologist.

And whether man finds the present life enough to satisfy him, or the reverse, matters little. Our desires will no more create a future life than our dislikes will destroy it. The great thing—the only thing—of importance is to find out what is correct, and to see that our inferences are warranted by our knowledge. And a good rule to adopt in the search is to refrain from adopting recondite causes when simple ones are to hand. Human life is complex enough without our surrounding it with gratuitous mysteries. Whether science will ever unravel all the mysteries of that existence, it is hard to say; but it is tolerably certain that, where science fails, naught else is likely to succeed.

C. COHEN.

### Modern Miracles.

RECENTLY an account appeared of a miraculous cure by the waters of St. Winifride's Well in Wales. Numerous pilgrimages and visits are made every year by members of the Roman Catholic faith to this holy well which, in view of its wonder-working waters, has been called the "British Lourdes." We can easily believe that having regard to these annual pilgrimages, it is necessary for the rev. Fathers and the Sisters, who run the hospice connected with St. Winifride's Well, to publish *occasionally* an account of some miraculous healing. It is necessary, too, that the cure should be invested with something of the supernatural—that it should, at any rate, seem to exceed anything possible to human skill, transcending any conceivable achievements of the disciples of Galen—qualified or quack. Accordingly, in this latest instance, we hear of a youth, a helpless cripple and deprived of speech and hearing for five years past being suddenly restored to the use of his limbs and faculties by bathing in the waters of the well over which the saint presides. Of course, he had been "given up" by the doctors—as the favorite phrase runs in quack advertisements—no human power could save him.

But St. Winifride was compassionate, she looked on him with pitying tenderness and love and graciously cured his ills. He was enabled to walk, and he could hear and converse with freedom, and is now, we suppose, a living proof that the power of working miracles is not, after all, confined to ancient legendary accounts, which are mostly comprised in our treasured Scriptures.

St. Winifride is capricious in the bestowal of her favors. Some distinguished sufferers have sued in vain at her shrine. The Duke of Norfolk, with his unfortunate son, paid, it was said, a visit there on one occasion, but nothing resulted, except gifts to the shrine and an added prestige. Though how the constant failures with the faithful of high social station can impart lustre to the miraculous source, or inspire confidence with the common mortals it is difficult to see, unless there is fashion in piety and a latent idea that the saints prefer the lowly and the poor. This last, of course, was the early Christian belief enshrined in the Gospel traditions.

Still, it does seem rather curious that Providence who is supposed to be behind all these miraculous performances, does not, once in a way, effect some startling cure in connection with personages whose importance would attract world-wide interest. It seems like a waste of opportunity in respect of the confirmation of the faithful and the wholesale conversion of the sceptical. The latter are too fond of pointing to instances of failure amongst the illustrious and of discounting the records of cures amongst the comparatively unknown and difficult-to-be-traced. If the Governor of the Universe is disposed to make any miraculous manifestation at all in these modern days, surely it should be in the shape of something of universal interest, of transcending importance, of indisputable genuineness—susceptible of easy proof, understood of the people, and beyond the range of carping critics. But he doesn't do anything of the sort. We cannot for a

moment admit the King's recovery as a case in point, because that is so obviously the result of natural means—medical skill, nursing attention, sea air, and a variety of favorable contributory causes. The Lord lets the Earl Marshal's heir—the natural successor of Britain's piously Catholic Duke—die; and cures, so it is said, an obscure youth from the neighborhood of Newcastle-under-Lyme, about whom it would probably be difficult to secure reliable or, in any degree, interesting particulars. At any rate, that case is not open to the public tests which might have been applied in the case of the Duke of Norfolk's son, if miraculously he had been preserved.

Were it not that his Grace still remains a devout Roman Catholic, one would have expected to find that he now believed with Protestants that the "age of miracles is past." That is a very convenient phrase, and prevents a lot of difficulties and discussion. Who it is that has drawn the line so finely and clearly between one period and another, it would be hard to say. Still harder would it be to show by what authority—human or "divine"—this abrupt and arbitrary marking off has been effected. There is nothing in the New Testament to show that the age of miracles is past. Quite the contrary, if we may believe an utterance of Christ himself as recorded in one at least of the Gospels. His present day disciples who have gone out to preach the Gospel to every creature should be able to exhibit in themselves evidences of miraculous power. They should be able to cast out devils in Christ's name, speak with new tongues, take up deadly serpents without harm, drink any deadly thing without being hurt, and lay hands on the sick, who shall in consequence recover. These are the plain words—this is the obvious meaning of the passage in Mark. It applies not simply to those to whom it was spoken, but to all missionaries who go out to preach the Gospel; and the promise is evidently intended to last until the Gospel has been preached to "every creature." We are a long way off that point of missionary enterprise and success. Moreover, it was promised not only to preachers of the Gospel, but to "them that believe." If there is any suggestion that this passage is an interpolation, we of course give the New Testament up. It is better, under these circumstances, if we would retain our faith, to revert to our Roman Catholic pastors and masters who, long before any mushroom Protestant sects or Higher Critics were thought of, were the custodians and interpreters of the Scriptures.

They—the only Christian Church of antiquity, dignity, and, in its subtlest forms, of intellect—continue to believe that miracles are still possible—especially miracles of faith and healing. They do not recognise this dividing line drawn by Protestants. Cardinal Newman, in a well-known passage, recites a number of post-Apostolic events of a distinctly miraculous nature. We do not acknowledge their credibility, but we are certainly entitled to say with him that they are based on and supported by evidence at any rate equal to that which is offered in proof of the Scriptural miracles. There is also the additional feature that they are nearer to our own time. That is a most important factor in judging narratives of miracles, prodigies, supernatural appearances, etc. The farther they are away from our own time, the less is the evidence or the more it is liable to suspicion. The records are open to manipulation, as some quite too smart Christians might say in regard to that passage in Mark, which bears upon these latter-day marvels. If in a Divine revelation great chunks can be dropped in and for ages accepted unsuspectingly as absolute utterances of Christ, what confidence can afterwards be reposed in the Scriptures as a whole?

The *real* modern miracles—the miracles of science, of extended knowledge, of research, of continued, untiring experiment—of the probing into Nature's secrets, of the utilisation of hitherto unknown or supposed-to-be intractable forces—these, after all, which are capable of everyday verification, are infinitely greater in their utility and their contri-

tribution to general happiness and improvement than isolated, ill-substantiated, essentially incredible "wonders," which at the best are of limited importance, and are only ascribed to supernatural interference by persons having a poor and small idea of Deity.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### The Evolution of Religions.

RELIGIONS, as such, tend to pass through a certain series of stages; though, of course, in the history of particular religions, we do not often find a perfect cycle of development; as special causes may retain a certain religion for a long time at a certain stage in the ladder of progress, and the deliberate imitation of other religions may accelerate or retard its own pace of evolution.

Religion seems to have arisen through illusions based upon ignorance, curiosity and fear, and typified by the phrases "animism" and "ancestor-worship." Men seek to avoid material ills or to gain material blessings by influencing the supposedly free and ghostly causes of special sets of phenomena. Religion tends to take over the moral standards of groups of men, *e.g.*, of the horde, household or clan, and thus we get the hearth-worships of the Aryan patriarchs, and the totem-cults of Red Indian clans, with their tabus and their sacred feasts.

The next important stage in religious development is that of the nation. This grows out of the religion of a dominant clan, the King of which uses a great God (such as Apollo, or Jahwéh Cébaoth) as an unifying and centralising influence. The rites and orgies of the small local clans, and the ghosts of trees, stones, brooks and households are frowned upon by the clergy of the National Church, while at the same time they are taken over to a certain extent under new names for the glory of the national God. A National Church is served by an endowed priesthood, and develops a dogmatic theology, sacred Bibles, uniform official rites, and concrete customs of a sacred character. National priests generally support the tyranny of the King, whom they anoint, and who pays them the people's tithes; they call the King the Lord's anointed, and his wars "holy wars," waged in defence of the higher civilisation and morality and of the true faith. They are exclusive, intolerant, sectarian and contemptuous towards other faiths, which they try to suppress by force; and, as the State strives after Imperial expansion, and wins new subjects to be taxed, so the priests tend to start on a world-mission, and make converts both by persuasion and by persecution, holding aloft the cross of the Gospel, and barking around it as good watch-dogs of the Lord.

The uniformity of such an established Church and theology is eventually ruptured in one of two ways, and often in both ways at once. The first disintegrating tendency is one in the direction of Protestant Unitarianism. This is often allied with a military dictatorship, or with the political revolt of a subject State, or with opposition on the part of lay rulers to over-endowed and dictatorial clerics, or with a *bourgeois* or oligarchic movement, political or economic. The spirit of Protestantism tends to lop off some of the more absurd or immoral rites, miracles, or myths of the national religion. It is complacent, enlightened and individualistic, often Puritanical and prudish. Its theology tends to be as follows: "There is one God Almighty, All-wise, All-good, a First Great Cause, Maker of All Things, including what seems to us to be evil. He has created individual men with immortal souls and freewill, to be the lords of all other created beings on this earth. If men love God, do good, and abstain from crime and sin, they shall go to heaven when they die. The wicked souls shall either go to hell or shall be annihilated at death."

The other tendency, which injures the theological uniformity of the big official Churches, is the theosophical. This is often developed as an esoteric doctrine, held by meditative individuals among the scholars and clergy, but never divulged to the com-

mon people. In other cases it is the creation of poets or of metaphysicians. Sometimes it is intuitional, sometimes intellectual, sometimes æsthetic.

Theosophy says: "There is one living Being or Energy, in and over and through all things, souls, laws, and ideas. In its process of self-manifestation it disintegrates its spiritual unity into separate individualities. These, as angels, play a part in evolving cosmic processes. Becoming more materialised and concrete, they pass through every stage of physical form. At length the tide turns, and they begin their journey homeward again, through chemical atoms, minerals, plants, and man, passing inwards and upwards to God. On the human plane they are re-born thousands of times in human bodies, passing upward or downward according to the treasures of merit or demerit heaped up by them in previous lives. (In this way Theosophy cleverly cuts the Gordian knot of the disparity of congenital psychical peculiarities, a problem which science has as yet failed to solve.) When souls are ascending out of the human into the angelic plane, they often voluntarily condemn themselves to an extra life among men, in order to reveal the true life of holiness which helps men upward to salvation. Such souls were Gôtama and Jesus, Confucius and Socrates.

There are also higher facts in the cosmic process which are not intelligible to the average Philistine intellect, but can only be hinted at or received on faith as being the dicta of sages and of initiates. Spiritual truths appear to be folly to the worldly man; pearls should not be cast before swine."

Lastly, as influenced by secular science, by Socialism, and philosophy, religion tends to become growingly Agnostic as to ultimate metaphysical problems, such as that of the essence and origin of the cosmos, and to concentrate itself upon humanitarian culture, charity, and ethics. What are the laws of mental and moral health for the civilised man, and for the various groups to which he belongs? How are we to move the young in the direction of culture, self-discipline, neighborliness, and justice? How can we alter the laws of the State in the direction of our rational and collectivist ideal of equity? Can we base ethics upon a scientific psychology, and yet not lose the poetry of the brightest mystics, or the intense devotion of the noblest friars and martyrs of the past? Such are the questions of the latter days, and in such an order seems to move the concatenation or wheel of religious development.

J. A. FALLOWS, M.A.

### China and Christianity.

THE Rev. Johnson Stewart says that China is not ripe for Christianity. We perfectly agree with him, and we go farther than he does, and we say emphatically, that no nation is ripe for Christianity, not even Christian nations. No nation can be ready for that which no one can explain. It is the height of impudence to send Christian missionaries to China or anywhere else to preach "the only gospel of believe or be damned" before a reasonable definition of Christianity has been rendered. The heathen, so-called, are rightly beginning to ask the missionaries what Christianity is; so many different denominations puzzles them. Peace and good will among men will never come by denouncing the beliefs of others. If the Christian Church has been "presided over by the Holy Ghost," as its adherents claim, "which cannot err," then we know surely that it has erred, because it has not had the sense to know that all the different religions of the world are just as natural as all the different nations, colors, languages and facial expressions which are manifest in all mankind. The Scripture says that the office of the Holy Ghost is to guide men to truth, and by the way things begin to look the "infidels" are under its control.

—*Freethought Magazine.*

Rev. Goodman: "Mr. Blick, our Sunday school superintendent, is a tried and trusted employee of yours, is he not?" Banker: "He was trusted, and he'll be tried, if we're only fortunate enough to catch him."—*Philadelphia Press.*

A farmer had two sons, a preacher and a publican. One served the Lord and the other the Devil, he said; and he thanked goodness both were doing well.

## Acid Drops.

THREE Bishops—London, Rochester, and St. Albans—all away for their holidays, sent a letter of welcome and encouragement to the Trade Union Congress. Naturally the epistle wound up with a reference to "Almighty God," under whose "blessing and providence" the Congress was assumed to be sitting. It is a wonder that the Congress wasted its time over such rubbish, unless it regarded the Church of England as a big clerical Trade Union, and treated the Bishops' letter as a message from its leading representatives in the district.

Canon Scott-Holland may be a very good man, in his way, but why should he cause a stir in working-class circles by his promise to preach a special sermon to Trade Unionists at St. Paul's Cathedral before the opening of the Trade Union Congress? If the working-classes knew their real interests they would fight shy of priests and churches altogether. Such an exhibition as this sermon to Trade Unionists would be impossible on the continent of Europe, particularly in France and Germany.

Trade Unionists may not be great readers of good literature, but there must be some among them who have heard of Mr. Swinburne's *Songs Before Sunrise*. That volume contains a poem entitled "Before a Crucifix," which is a passionate and contemptuous indictment of Christianity and the Churches. Mr. Swinburne, after pouring derision upon the poor dead god Christ, shaking about on the cross; and after flinging scorn at the priests of all the Christian creeds who traffic on the sufferings of this pitiful deity; goes on to give a bit of sound advice to the people who have for so many centuries been fooled, oppressed, and exploited:—

Thou, in the day that breaks thy prison,  
People, though these men take thy name,  
And hail and hymn thee rearisen,  
Who made songs erewhile of thy shame,  
Give thou not ear; for these are they  
Whose good day was thine evil day.  
Set not thine hand unto their cross.  
Give not thy soul up sacrificed.  
Change not the gold of faith for dross  
Of Christian creeds that spit on Christ.  
Let not thy tree of freedom be  
Regrafted from that rotting tree.

We specially commend the last two lines to the attention of working-class leaders.

Bishop Moorhouse, of Manchester, denounces a large proportion of the novels in our free libraries as "corrupt and degrading." It does not occur to him that the authors of these novels could say the same of the Bible. There is nothing, indeed, in present-day fiction to equal the filth and brutality of "Holy Writ." Whole chapters, many passages, and a multitude of expressions in the Bible would never be printed nowadays if they did not occur in a book which is thought to be "inspired." Shelley said that the name of God fenced about all crime with holiness, and it may be said that the name of "inspiration" fences about all sorts of dirt with impunity.

Suppose such stories as those of Tamar, Onan, Judith, and Lot and his Daughters were dished up in twentieth-century novels—what an outcry there would be! The authorities would be called upon to take immediate action against such pestiferous literature. But when such stories appear in an "inspired" book the authorities force them upon the attention of the very children in our public schools.

Mr. W. E. H. Lecky's retirement from the representation of Dublin University was reported in the newspapers, but has since been denied. It would not, however, have inflicted any great loss upon the House of Commons. Literary men pure and simple should never wander into political assemblies. Mr. John Morley himself, who has more popular qualities than Mr. Lecky, is far more useful to the world as a writer than as a politician.

A number of Baptist ministers belonging to the county of Norfolk were entertained the other day by a prominent layman in Norwich. The luncheon and social intercourse in the house and garden were much appreciated, but the *business* of the day—if we may speak in such a flippant fashion—was a conference on "Success in Preaching." The opener contended that "intellectualism and rhetoric were of trifling value compared with the mystic communion between the preacher's soul and the Divine." This was unanimously agreed to, but "it was also felt that it lifted no one above the need of intellectual labor and careful adaptation of the pulpit message to the requirements of the hearers." The preacher

must have reason in his rapture, or method in his madness; if he loses himself in God he must find himself in his congregation—some time at least before the collection.

We read that the adoption of individual cups at the Communion service seems to be spreading amongst Congregational and Baptist churches. Worshippers with some knowledge of hygiene and the microbe theory of disease object to drinking out of the same cup with anybody and everybody. Such indiscriminate love-feasting might take them to the arms of Jesus prematurely. They therefore insist on drinking out of their own "Coronation mugs." And we don't blame them.

One advantage of this "individual cup" plan is that all the partakers of the Holy Communion can drink the Blood of Christ simultaneously. This ought to be followed up by breaking up the Body of Christ for similar consumption. The crumb of bread could be held as a pill, and the drop of wine as the something to wash it down with. The minister could say "Are you all ready?" Then he could give the word, and the Blood and Body of Christ would go down every throat at the same moment.

Mr. Hall Caine gave a flunkey account in the *Daily Mail* of the King's visit to the Isle of Man. It seems that meeting King Edward was the great event in Mr. Hall Caine's life, as well as in the history of Manxland. Jesus Christ takes a back seat now.

In the course of that flunkey account Mr. Hall Caine mentioned Bishop Wilson as the greatest Christian the Isle of Man has ever boasted. He did not mention, though, that Bishop Wilson had a poor girl dragged though the sea at the stern of a boat for a crime which has no existence outside the brain of superstition.

A point of intense interest has now been cleared up to the satisfaction of Church circles. The Bishop of Winchester, it is officially announced, does not receive knighthood in becoming a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order. His spouse, therefore, does not become Lady Davidson. This may be somewhat disappointing to her, but one can hardly see how a professional disciple of the meek and lowly Galilean who preached peace, could be dubbed a knight unless by a revival of mediævalism. The Bishop of Winchester, however, is looking out for something much better than knighthood, namely, the Archbishopric of Canterbury. It was for this he declined the see of London which, as a last resort, was given to Dr. Ingram.

The *Free Church Chronicle*, rather late in the day, expresses its indignation that so little recognition was accorded to the Free Churches at the Coronation. Men, it says, like Dr. Parker, Dr. Clifford, and Mr. Price Hughes were not only shut out from taking part in the ceremony, but were even passed over in the invitation list. One of the Free Churches, however, is now going to locate itself so near to Westminster Abbey that this indignity of oversight or intentional disregard will not be possible on another occasion.

Mr. H. C. Richards, K.C., M.P., seems to have blossomed out of late years. Time was when he was a mere Church defence lecturer and a carpet bagger. He was also an opponent of Mr. Bradlaugh, as far as a pigmy may be said to oppose a giant. Recently he has been discoursing on the evils of gambling by means of "bridge." It is evident he introduces the subject in order to let it be known that he is acquainted with a distinguished peer and the doings of his household, also that he has been invited to mix in society at country houses. All this is very amusing, but Mr. Richards is quite wrong if he really thinks it adds to his importance.

The *Daily News* has been utilising the "silly season" by printing a correspondence on the question, "Is True Love Played Out?" This is not very elegantly expressed. Love is love, and cannot be either true or false. When the poet sings of "my true love" it means the person, and not the emotion. But letting that pass, what a question to discuss after nearly two thousand years of Christianity! Fortunately nature is a better friend to man than any religion. Love will be played out when life is played out. Not before!

There is a curious old custom in Flintshire. The first prisoner who is incarcerated in a new police-station is presented with a Bible. The latest recipient of this curious gift was an old man who was fined for disorderly conduct at Prestatyn. In making him the presentation, the magistrate hoped he would read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest its contents, especially that part relating to temperance. We presume the worthy magistrate did not refer to such texts as "Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more."

At Edmonton, a girl fourteen years old fell dead whilst in the act of prayer at a mission room service the other Sunday. Her heart had been affected by rheumatic fever, and the religious excitement killed her.

The Oka Monastery, near Montreal, was burned down the other day; ninety-seven monks escaped, but 10,000 gallons of cider and 4,000 gallons of wine were destroyed.

John Smith broke into St. Paul's Church, Kensington, and was found the next morning in a state of beastly intoxication from his very free use of the Communion wine. They evidently do things in style at that fashionable gospel-shop. We suppose wealthy people object to the blood of Christ at one and threepence a bottle.

"The collection for the heathen last Sunday," said the minister, "was very gratifying. We got a dozen shirt buttons. If the congregation will kindly put a few shirts in the plate this morning, to go with them, no more can be expected of them."

The promoter of what he calls an "Anti-infidel Tract Enterprise" writes to the *Iock*: "Should anyone doubt that Atheism is sufficiently widespread to create alarm, a visit to our parks or other places of public resort will speedily undeceive them." He says that "Atheistic and impure literature" is being widely disseminated—a false and malicious conjunction worthy of Christian advocacy. But where does he get the following "fact" from: "To disseminate this vile literature the Atheistic party has already subscribed £3,000"?

The Benedictine monks who have quartered themselves in the neighborhood of Ventnor are in treaty for the purchase of Norris Castle and Lord Amptill's estates which adjoin those of Osborne. People are inquiring how this fits in with plaintive writings in the Romanist journals as to the poor monks whose self-denying lives are being so ruthlessly looked into by the French Administration. It is also asked how the monkish vows of poverty are to be reconciled with the fact that the monks of the Chartreuse have, in fear of the new legislation, ceded their *liqueur* manufactories to a company for the sum of £320,000. At the same time the Pope is deploring the smallness of his Peter's Pence.

"Nearer my God to Thee," commenced the recently-introduced phonograph at the parish church of Hessle in East Yorkshire. Then it broke down; that was as near as it could get; and considerable mirth, it is said, was caused amongst the congregation. The *Church Times* is indignant at the innovation; but we don't see why. The parson succeeded in attracting a large congregation of men as well as women, and this is an achievement nowadays, according to the clerics themselves. The temporary breakdown of the phonograph was not more amusing than the absurd lines it was endeavoring to give forth.

The *Daily Mail* publishes a special article on "Why Men Avoid Church: a Question of the Day." We need not trouble to mention the reasons given by the *Mail* writer. One—that the clergy are lagging behind the times—is sufficient. What intelligent man cares to listen to a preacher who is obviously either uninformed or insincere or stupidly bigoted?

How dreadful! Even the grim features of the Scotch Sabbath are rapidly disappearing. Within the past year, says the *Westminster Gazette*, a change has come over Edinburgh. The cars run on Sundays now in spite of the vigorous opposition of the Churches. But an even more striking manifestation of altered spirit is the performance of a band on the Calton Hill on Sunday. The audience each Sunday numbers thousands, and the unco' guid are not pleased.

A large colony in Manitoba has recently gone crazy over religion. They are Russian settlers in the Swan River Valley, and are called Doukhobors. Its members have abandoned the use of horses, cows, and all domestic animals and turned them adrift on the hills. They claim that the Lord never intended horses to labor, and they will do nothing to interfere with what they believe to be the clear intention of the Almighty. They act as beasts of burden themselves; they abjure meat and will not wear wool or leather because these are the products of animals. Of course, they are regarded as insane by their Christian neighbors, who have taken possession of their cattle, and are now looking forward to the state of famine into which they are sure to be landed.

Mr. V. Tchertkoff writes to the *Daily News* with respect to Tolstoy's ideas on copyright. The great Russian author—who, by the way, is a wealthy noble—appears to allow anyone to publish his writings without paying him a single

penny. His principal disciple in England calls this "a new attitude towards literary property which one of the leading writers and of the greatest social reformers of our time has introduced into his own practice." There is nothing really new in Tolstoy's attitude. Voltaire never made a penny out of his Freethought writings; as a matter of fact, he often had to bribe publishers to produce them. Thomas Paine never made a penny by his writings. But he acted more wisely than Tolstoy. Instead of making them a present to publishers, he superintended the matter himself, and had his writings issued at the lowest possible price. By this means he made a present to all his readers, and, if any profit accrued, it went to some cause in which he and they were alike interested.

The Bible Society was not allowed to present the King with his Coronation copy of the Book of God. The volume it meant for that occasion, however, is still to be presented to him. The binding has been done by Messrs. Birdsall and Son, of Northampton, and is a magnificent bit of workmanship; red morocco being decorated with a gold cross, vine leaves, bunches of grapes, and emblematic medallions.

"Search the Scriptures," said Jesus Christ. But who would search the Scriptures through such a costly copy? This particular King's Bible is a show book. And in this it is typical of a multitude of less expensive copies. The Bible is used for all sorts of purposes—including a kissing-block in courts of law, and a flower-pot stand in parlor-windows. But it is very seldom read. That is why there are so many Christians.

Dr. G. F. Pentecost, who filled the pulpit of Spurgeon's Tabernacle for some time, and then accepted the pastorate of Marylebone Presbyterian Church, suddenly threw up that appointment and accepted a "call" to Yonkers, New York—in his native land. His action was considered a mystery, but he has just explained it. "I used to be awake at nights," he says, "and cry for fear that I would die. The home sickness grew to be such a passion that I threw up everything and came home." How heroic! But we always thought a Christian's "home" was heaven. Dr. Pentecost does not seem to suffer any home-sickness for that establishment.

According to the daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience, our English farmers have "still much to learn from both Arthur Young and Richard Cobbett." Such is fame! The first name of Cobbett—the Cobbett—was William.

The British Government is apparently bent on assisting the missionary crusade against polygamy in South Africa. An Ordinance just issued at Pretoria provides an annual capitation tax of two pounds for every adult male native, also one of two pounds for each wife over one that natives may have according to native custom. If this tax were imported into Christian England it would yield a good sum. That is, if the word "wife" were taken substantially instead of technically. The "heathen" are more honest and open than Christians in their dealings with women. They marry all the women they have relations with. The Christians marry one and visit the rest.

John Cox, a mason, of Victoria-Avenue, Newport, Monmouthshire, thought evil spirits were after him, and shot himself to evade them. According to the orthodox creed, he ran right into their arms, and will now enjoy their company for ever.

Mr. A. S. Greene, in *Pearson's Magazine*, argues that the Christians should buy up Palestine. He thinks it might become a land flowing with milk and honey—which, by this way, it never could have been before; and would stand as "a living example of peace on earth and goodwill to men." This is to be brought about by "the infusion of our Western Christian civilisation." Apparently this particular civilisation is to produce in Palestine what it never yet produced in Europe—which, as our old friend Euclid says, is absurd. We suppose Mr. Greene is working up a new sensation for an enterprising publisher, but he might have hit upon something a little less verdant.

The *Tablet* sneers at the Rev. A. Galton's article in the *Fortnightly Review*, and wants to know what are his credentials as a witness, seeing he is a curate or something in the Church of England. According to this gentleman, there is a revolt going on in the Catholic Church in England against the power of the Religious Orders and Congregations; indeed, he says that 150 of the secular clergy are already banded together to obtain a reformation. "Every English Roman bishop," Mr. Galton asserts, "is an absolute and

despotic master. He is an irresponsible despot who claims power from God through the Roman Curia. He is responsible to the Curia, not to his clergy and people; and the Curia is the embodiment of corruption in every shape and form. Secular priests are only money-taking machines for their bishops and the Roman Curia. It is useless to appeal to Rome. The bishops and the Curia, in these matters, work together. The bishops pour English money into the Papal coffers, and the pockets of the Vatican officials. The episcopal supervision of the Catholics of England is chiefly a financial occupation."

We daresay this is true enough. But it is not new. The great object of the Catholic Church, so far as it was controlled from Rome, has always been to collect money for the "Holy Father." He is only a "poor fisherman," like Peter, and a servant of the servants of God, but he wants a frightful lot of cash to keep up the character.

"Providence" has been active again in India. Floods and landslips have been the order of the day in the valley of Khatmanda, and the cities of Bhatgoon and Patan have suffered severely. Hundreds of lives have been lost.

One is not safe from sudden death even in a place of worship, though "sacred edifices," at one time, were regarded as sanctuaries. Mr. William Gibley suddenly fell to the ground and died in a chapel at Matlock, just as he was telling another member of the congregation that he felt ill.

Our semi-orthodox contemporary, the *Spectator*, says that "The doctrine of human depravity has had its day. Faith in the dignity of humanity is the faith by which alone the residuum can be saved." This is only another way of saying that Christianity is played out. The first doctrine of Christianity is the total depravity of human nature.

The *Daily Telegraph* states that the velvet hangings and blue carpet used at the Coronation in Westminster Abbey have been "a great attraction to many of the clergy," who have endeavored to obtain samples for their own gospel-shops. Could anything be more childish?

Mr. G. Bernard Shaw's letter to the *Daily News* is answered by several Nonconformists who do not appear to understand it. One correspondent, signing himself M. Gray, and dating from Lewisham, denies that all religious teaching must be sectarian and consequently unjust. "The only just way," he says, "where all have to contribute to the cost, is to teach the truths common to all, not those peculiar to some, and such teaching is unsectarian." This gentleman does not state what "truths" are "common" to Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, Secularists, and "Infidels." He does not seem to have heard of the existence of non-Christians in England. Or does he suppose that they should be counted out as beyond the pale of citizenship? They are not, however, outside the scope of his argument, for they certainly "contribute to the cost" of elementary public education.

Rome, we hear, is horror-stricken by the peculiarly dastardly crime of a brother of the Order of Dominicans. The Order owns a vineyard near Porta Portese, and the Dominican brother Cuzzoli, seeing three little boys pilfering grapes, took a musket and fired twice point blank at them. One little boy was immediately killed and another gravely injured. The Dominican murderer fled to the Convent of Minerva for refuge, where he spoke with brutal cynicism of his crime.

A watchmaker named Jenner has been committed for trial at Worship-street on a charge of stealing a number of gold and silver watches. He had been "a Scripture reader and Bible teacher for a long time," it was said, and was so saintly a man that his employer, whom he had robbed, was about to take him into partnership.

Military tribunals are once more stinking in France. Voisin, the soldier, who has been brought back from penal servitude to have his case revised, has practically to prove his innocence. The court takes it for granted that he is guilty, and nothing but a negative demonstration—in other words, a miracle—will shake that assumption. Voisin appears to have suffered much during his transportation. "He looks depressed, delicate, and pale," a report says, "and his gait is shuffling, the bone of one of his legs being still bare from the weight of a too heavy chain he had to drag." To think that such infamies are possible in the twentieth century! Of course the persons responsible are all very pious.

One discreditable racial distinction and barrier has disappeared. The decree forbidding the admittance of Jews to

Russian Universities has been withdrawn. Jesus Christ, who was a Jew, is said to have taught in the Temple, which was the seat of learning, and the Greek Orthodox Church profess to worship Jesus.

The Rabbi of Grojetzk, Russia, is a reputed "miracle-worker and divine healer." He is also the principal shareholder of a railway which derives the major part of its revenue from Jews travelling to seek his preternatural aid. The Rabbi, however, has taken offence at something which occurred at the last shareholders' meeting. He has sold his stock and prohibited his followers from using the road. In consequence the trains are now running entirely empty. This is the "miracle-worker's" revenge.

Dr. Bourne, the Catholic Bishop of Southwark, started on Monday at the head of two hundred pilgrims to Lourdes. It is not stated whether they are going merely to pay honor to the Mother of God or to obtain her assistance in the cure of their maladies. In either case they might as well have stayed at home; for the Mother of God is supposed to be in heaven, which must be about as far from Lourdes as it is from Southwark, and the age of miracles has long been past. If any miracle could be worked at any shrine in Europe it would surely have been worked for the benefit of the poor malformed shortwitted son of the Duke of Norfolk, who died the other day at Arundel, after a life of twenty-two years that must have been a misery to himself and all around him.

Hoaxing the deities is the latest "trick that is vain" of the "Heathen Chinee." There have been so many deaths from Cholera at Chenanfu that it was decided recently to pretend to begin a new year. The idea was to fool the deities who are supposed to control the pestilence into believing that being New Year time it was too cold to have cholera.

We beg pardon of America for having suggested that it produced "Jack Cooke, the Boy Preacher." It did not produce him; it only made his reputation. Still, that is quite enough to answer for. He is advertised over here as having done great things for the Lord, and perhaps for himself, in a grand tour through "the principal American cities." The Boy Preacher seems to have been born in Manchester. His real name is C. HAMBURY COOKE. Like other performers, he requires a more catching and familiar line for the bills. His program name is "Jack Cooke."

The Bishop of London is off for his holiday. Before leaving he visited the patients of an East-end infirmary—perhaps to enjoy the force of contrast. One old lady there remembered dancing with him at Oxford House, Bedford Green. Since then Dr. Ingram has danced himself into a bishopric. "Lor', Mr. Ingram," said the old lady, "ain't you got on since then! Who'd 'a' thought it?" It was a puzzle to her poor wits. It is a puzzle to some others too.

Even the praying-wheel will have to go now. Latest American invention is a nickel-in-the-slot parson. Forty persons drop in a coin apiece, and the figure talks a Talmage or a Beecher sermon for twenty minutes or so, accompanying the delivery with suitable gestures. There are so many points in favor of automatic parsons, and their machinery is so simple, that it is a marvel they have been done without so long.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

When the Royal Humane Society was founded in 1774 (the *Daily News* says) there was "a strong popular prejudice against trying to resuscitate the drowned. If a man was dead he was dead, and it was regarded as blasphemous—flying in the face of Providence—to try to bring him to life again." No matter where one turns, religion is seen to be the constant enemy of progress.

The lengths to which some professing Christians will go, and the "self-righteous" airs they will on occasion assume, are fit subjects for scathing satire. Take the case of a so-called "lady" connected with a church in London who recently prevented a poor little girl of eight years—whose guardian had already obtained for her a ticket—from going to the Sunday-school treat on the ground that the child was illegitimate. The sins of the parents, she said, must fall on the children. It would have done her good if a pail-full of slops had fallen upon her. And many a decent man or woman would not have hesitated, if they had known, about giving her some such drenching.

The *Church Times* suggests that Dissenters are not gentlemen. We are absolutely certain that some clergymen are not.



**Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.**

Sunday, September 7, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: "Jesus Christ and the Trade Union Congress."

September 14, Athenæum Hall, London; 21, Liverpool; 28, Birmingham. October 5, Glasgow; 12 and 19, Athenæum Hall.

**To Correspondents.**

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 7, m., Kingsland.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

OTTO ZOBLINSKY.—We are very sorry to hear of Mr. Dewar's illness, and hope he will soon recover. He is one of the veterans of whom we often think with pride and gratitude. Of course we shall be happy to see you when you come to London. Glad to know you are so pleased with our edition of Paine's *Rights of Man* and regard it as "a worthy fellow" to the Twentieth Century Edition of the *Age of Reason*. Thanks for your personal good wishes.

H. ROTHERTO.—You have our thanks for taking so much trouble, but the new edition of *What Must We Do To Be Saved?* was published before your letter arrived. However, we turned to the part you refer to, and we find that Ingersoll was quite right. You must have read the "not one word about being baptised" without regard to the context. Ingersoll does not allege that Matthew was silent about baptism, but that he did not make it one of the conditions of salvation. You will see that this is accurate if you read the whole passage again.

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

E. R. W.—The *Freethinker* is published by the Freidenker Publishing Company at Milwaukee.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Bethnal Green Branch, 6s.

A. PALLING and J. K.—You can obtain Members' Subscription Cards for Branch members from the N. S. S. Secretary, Miss Vance.

F. J. GOULD.—Received with thanks. Will appear in our next.

G. M. D. writes *re* Boycott of *Freethinker*: "Kindly inform all whom it may concern that Messrs. C. D. Lake, the Square, Ystradgynlais, and S. Baker, Baker Buildings, Ystalyfera, are prepared to supply any quantity of Freethought literature that may be ordered of them, to residents of the upper portions of Swansea Valley—*i.e.*, from Poutardawe to Craigynos Castle, the seat of Baroness Patti-Cederstrom." This correspondent adds that he is glad to hear of our improved health.

J. EDMONDS.—Yes, our health is very much improved. We are nearly in the very best fighting form. Your subscription to the Camberwell Fund, coming from a working man, is doubly valued on that account.

J. R.—Too late for notice in "Acid Drops." Dean Lefroy was drawing on his imagination when he said the antidote to anarchism, according to Zola, was religious faith. Zola has no religious faith himself, in the sense in which a Christian preacher uses the words.

J. H. GILLILAND.—Pleased to hear the Ethical meetings are good in Belfast. We should prefer to see something more decided, intellectually speaking, but what you are doing is doubtless very much better than nothing at all.

S. BURGON.—Sorry to hear that the weather and your seventy-two years kept you from attending the Failsworth gathering, but glad that you derived pleasure from reading about it in the *Freethinker*. It was good of you to remember the Camberwell appeal at such a distance. We note your suggestion that it is about time for another Shilling Week.

E. JONES.—We agree with you that the reference to the N. S. S. was quite worthy of a Christian Evidence advocate, but the matter is hardly worth pursuing, so we would rather not print your letter.

C. T.—Pleased to receive your very interesting letter, which we hope to make some extracts from in an early issue, without disclosing your identity.

T. FISHER.—English Freemasons, on admission, have to utter Theistic words. We believe Atheists are admitted to the Grand Orient Lodge (French). Our personal view is that societies of this kind may be good when open combinations are dangerous.

G. DICKINSON.—Many thanks, but the reference was to Italian, not Spanish.

J. PARTIDGE.—Subjects forwarded. Very sorry to hear of Mr. Ridgway's fresh illness. Kindly convey to him our sincere sympathy. We hope to see him well on his legs again when we visit Birmingham.

J. BARRY, subscribing to the Camberwell Fund, hopes the committee will find a way to warm the hall next winter.

W. C. INGLIS.—Thanks for your interesting and amusing letter. We can quite understand that "Acid Drops" make a good introduction to the *Freethinker*. Keep on the road you are travelling. We hope to see you when we lecture at Glasgow.

JAMES NEATE, the Victoria Park stalwart, sends his own and his wife's subscription for the Camberwell Fund, and says there ought to be no difficulty in raising £50 for so deserving a Branch.

NEMO.—Your second letter also contains some good suggestions. It shall be kept by us. We may see our way to make fresh moves presently.

THE CAMBERWELL FUND.—J. Edmonds, 4s.; J. E. Pearson, 2s. 6d.; Ingersollian (Gravesend), 2s. 6d.; S. Burgon, 5s.; C. Bowman, £1; Nemo, 5s.; J. Beale, 2s. 6d.; C. T., 5s.; the Misses Pizer, 4s.; J. Barry, 5s.; Dr. R. T. Nichols (Ilford), 10s. 6d.; W. W. Pearce, 5s.; W. H., 2s. 6d.; G. Childs, 2s. 6d.; W. P. Ball, £1; Mrs. Neate, 5s.; James Neate, 5s.; J. Dupin, 1s.

E. G. MAYO.—Your letter went astray during our absence from London. You will find J. M. Wheeler's *Life of Voltaire* quite "reliable"—which, by the way, is a vile word. It can be obtained at our office for sixpence. Major General Hamley's monograph on Voltaire is also a good one—price 2s. 6d. You will find useful information, we think, in our *Infidel Death Beds* (8d).

W. TAYLOR asks whether the writer of the article on "Cobden and Bradlaugh" is correct in stating that Cobden was born at Heyshott. Was he not born at Sabden, in E. Lancashire? We reply that he was *not* born there. John Morley, in his classic *Life of Richard Cobden*, which can be bought at our office for the astonishingly low price of sixpence, describes the hamlet of Heyshott, and then says, "Here, in an old farmhouse, known as Dunford, Richard Cobden was born on June 3, 1804." That should settle the question.

J. GREEVES FISHER.—Thanks for copy of your letter and the recipient's reply. You must excuse us from writing you on this subject through the post. We do not intend to be drawn into any private or even personal correspondence in relation to it, as we perceive the tricks that can be played with such things. There is no reason why your special question should not be answered. You may take it that the proof referred to was the only one, out of many thousands, that was ever posted to us in an unfastened envelope. This could be confirmed both at our office and at our residence. As a matter of chronology, it was sent to us the very day after the Annual General Meeting of the Freethought Publishing Company, at which something occurred that has already been reported in our columns. We do not propose to follow your correspondent through his budget of half-truths and whole falsehoods. If we did he would only start another budget. It is like fighting a pillow. Nor do we propose to amplify the statement we made in the *Freethinker*, unless the party should generally desire us to do so. We are satisfied with the relief we have obtained, after nearly three years' patience, and we intend to get on with our work.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Free Society—Sydney Bulletin—Freidenker—Hawick News—Torch of Reason—Newtownards Chronicle—Public Opinion.

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.**

The Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, London, W., which has been closed during the summer—if there has been such a season this year—will be reopened for Freethought lectures this evening (Sunday, September 7). Mr. G. W. Foote will occupy the platform, and will take for his subject, "Jesus Christ and the Trade Union Congress." London Freethinkers are invited to advertise this meeting amongst their friends and acquaintances. Mr. Foote will lecture again on the following Sunday, when he proposes to deal with Miss Marie Corelli's wonderful new book, *Temporal Power*.

Subscriptions to the Camberwell Fund are flowing in steadily, but the stream is not as wide and deep as it should be. We are just a little impatient at this delay in raising £50 for so deserving a Branch as that at Camberwell; a Branch that has kept the flag flying over the only Secular Hall in South London for twenty years without a penny of outside assistance. Temporary misfortune came along, owing to the South African war, and the Branch got behind financially. It is the plain duty of Freethinkers, and especially of London Freethinkers, to set this Branch

thoroughly on its legs again, free from debt, and with something in hand to face the winter's work with. A good many Freethinkers live a great distance from any Branch, and are never called upon for regular contributions to propagandist work. Surely they might spare a trifle in a case like this. We appeal once more to those who can afford to help. If they do not respond promptly we shall ask for the shillings of the poorer brethren. This £50 has got to be raised.

Mr. Cohen has finished a good holiday, and is now looking very much better. A month or so ago he was looking fagged and worn. The truth is that unless a Freethought advocate has the constitution of a jackass (this is not personal) he marches straight to the cemetery unless he gives himself periodic rest and change. Of course we only refer to Freethought advocates whose heart is in their work, and who try to do justice to their subjects and themselves.

Miss E. M. Vance has fortunately almost quite recovered from the after effects of the attack of diphtheria which nearly put an end to her existence a year ago. She is at present away for a fortnight's holiday, which she has well earned, and which we hope will thoroughly restore her health.

Ingersoll's famous, racy, and effective lecture on *What Must We Do To Be Saved?* has just been issued from our publishing office in a new edition, complete and well printed on good paper, at the very low price of twopence. Forty pages of first-rate reading ought to go off rapidly at that figure. Freethinkers would do well to buy a few copies and give them away to friends and acquaintances. A great deal of useful propagandist work may be done in this manner.

Mr. J. Dewar contributes a long and valuable letter to the *Hawick News*, correcting some hackneyed lies about Voltaire and Paine in the report of an address by a Mr. Charters in the Home Mission Hall, Sunderland.

Once more we draw attention to the advertisement on our last page of the Dresden Edition of the Works of the late Colonel Ingersoll. The Freethought Publishing Company has still copies left for subscription. Purchase on the instalment system is comparatively easy. And in this case there is no hire-system furniture dodge. The twelve volumes offered for £5 10s. in monthly payments of 10s. are the same volumes that are sold for £6 cash in America. Those who like to pay cash here can obtain a further reduction. A remittance for £5 down will clear them altogether. Some who can afford the purchase should wake up before it is too late. Freethinkers ought to take a pride in having the works of Ingersoll in their homes. If the children read them, for instance, it is better that they should do so in a handsome edition than in a lot of skimpy pamphlets. This collection might well be "the family Bible" in many a Freethought household.

## Scepticism and the French Revolution.—II.

Now, in the first place, the "worship of Reason" was not Atheistic—Atheists are not in the habit of overthrowing one superstition to substitute another. The Atheists of the Revolution were as much opposed to the new religion as to the old one. The *littérateur*, Salaville, a real Atheist, warned them from the first against creating a new religion. This caused them to abandon material symbols and set up the living "Goddesses of Reason," which he in turn protested against. On the other hand, he objected strongly to the forcible dechristianisation of France, arguing that it could only be done by the slow and pacific propaganda of persuasion.

André Chenier, who, says Leconte de Lisle, "was a pure Atheist in thought and aspiration; but nevertheless he has been the regenerator and the king of lyric form" (*Fortnightly Review*, July, 1895), published a letter on liberty of worship, and, after lamenting "that the dissensions of the priests have of necessity occupied the first sittings of the Assembly," goes on to argue against any State establishment of religion. He says the National Assembly "has pretended to form a civil code of religion—that is to say, it had the idea of creating one priesthood after having destroyed another. Of what consequence is it that one religion differs from another? Is it for the National Assembly to reunite the divided sects, and weigh all their differences? Are politicians theologians? We shall only be delivered from the

influence of these men when the National Assembly shall have maintained for each the perfect liberty of following or inventing whatsoever religion may please it; when everyone shall pay for the worship he prefers to adopt, and pays for no other; and when the impartiality of tribunals in such cases shall punish alike the persecutors or the seditious of all forms of worship.".....Isnard, another Atheist, who, in his maiden speech to the Assembly, declared: "The law is my God—I have no other; the public good—that is my worship," wished for a decree to "compel every Frenchman, priest or not, to take the civil oath, and ordain that every man who will not sign shall be deprived of all salary or pension." This decree was passed, but it left the priests as free to exercise their religion as they were before; all that was expected of them being loyalty to the Government (see speeches of Isnard and Chenier, *Lamartine*, vol. i., 229-246).

Condorcet, an uncompromising Atheist, who, like André Chenier, had voted against the death of the King, and who, on the very eve of the Terror, wished to pass a law for the abolition of the death penalty, was in hiding, having been condemned to death in his absence, and was spending the last few days before his capture in writing his famous work, *The Progress of the Human Mind*. The fiery Danton, Carlyle's great hero of Revolution, who had done so much to establish the Republic, but who—like Chenier and Condorcet—lost his life in trying to stop the bloodshed, protested strongly against the "Worship of Reason" (see his speeches in Morse Stephens' *Orators of the French Revolution*, pp. 239, 267, 270).

As we have said, the "Worship of Reason" was not an Atheistic cult, and it was strongly opposed by the real Atheists in the Revolution. This is the opinion of Professor Aulard, who, by his exhaustive researches, has brought together practically all that can be known on the subject in his work, *La Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Être Suprême, 1793-1794*. Hébert—who instituted the worship, and whose followers were named after him, Hébertists—was certainly not an Atheist. M. Aulard says: "The Reason which Hébert adored seems to have been only an emanation of God." Chaumette, his colleague, never professed Atheism; in fact, it was really a new religion, invented to fill the place of the old one, which had thrown in its lot with the enemies of the Republic.

M. Aulard thus sums the matter up in his fourteenth chapter:—

"It appears, I think, from the documents we have analysed, that the attempt to dechristianise France and establish the cultus of Reason did not arise from a preconceived philosophic idea—from a meditated and, as has been said, fanatical system. The Constituent Assembly, the Legislative, and the Convention had no intention of destroying Catholicism.....The Revolution desired simply that the clergy should not combat the social order it had set up. But it committed the fault of imposing an oath on priests, in order to nationalise Catholicism. The imposition of this oath was the motive, or the pretext, for the coalition of the clergy with the enemies of the State. Hence that civil war which caused to flow so much blood and tears. It was necessary to disarm the clergy and vanquish the insurgent Church."

If the priests had taken the oath their religion would have been nationalised; it would have been the State religion, and would have occupied the same position as the Church of England in this country. M. Aulard continues:—

"We must conclude, and we repeat it without hesitation, that the cultus of Reason was less a change of the religious consciousness of the French than a popular expedient of patriotic defence. That is why it disappeared so rapidly, leaving no deep traces in the heart. That is why the Catholics were not greatly terrified by the phenomena. That is why, also, on the day when it pleased Robespierre to point to the cultus of the Supreme Being as a better arm of war against the foreigner, the Goddesses of Reason fell at once and almost entirely into discredit and ridicule." (See *National Reformer*, Nov. 6, 1892).

We have seen that the Worship of Reason was not Atheistic, and that it was opposed by the real Atheists of the Revolution. As to the character of the Goddesses, which has so exercised the minds of the religious, and upon whom they have expended so much virtuous indignation. It is not the Atheist who is called upon to defend them, but in truth the historians of the Revolution are not agreed among themselves upon the point, and it has merely an academical interest for us, except in so far that Freethinkers prefer the truth to falsehood.

Carlyle says it was Demoiselle Candeille, of the opera. Lamartine, indeed, says that at the inauguration of the worship, a courtesan was installed, and dates it November 9. But the historian Thiers, who, as a Conservative, would not mitigate such a discreditable proceeding, dates the inauguration November 10, and says:—

"She was the wife of the printer, Momoro—one of the friends of Vincent, Ronsin, Chaumette, Hébert, and the like. She was dressed in a white drapery; a sky-blue mantle floated from her shoulders; her flowing hair was crowned by the cap of liberty. She sat upon an antique seat, entwined with ivy and borne by four citizens. Young girls, dressed in white and crowned with roses, preceded and followed the goddess." (*Histoire de la Revolution Francaise*, chap. 29.).

Lamartine says that on—

"The 20th December, the day fixed for the installation of the new worship.....Mademoiselle Maillard, an actress, in the full bloom of youth and talent, formerly a favorite of the queen, and high in popular admiration, had been compelled by Chaumette's threats to play the part of the divinity of the people." (*Hist. of the Girondists*, vol. 3, p. 303).

Michelet, the historian, says they were generally "young ladies of esteemed families. I have known one," he adds, "in her old age. She was a woman of correct character and irreproachable life." And this is the verdict of Professor Aulard, the highest authority on the subject, who says:—

"The movement (*in no wise Materialistic, but generally Deistic*) seems to have been at Paris joyous and superficial, in so far as the people mixed in it; pedantic and barren, where it was only carried on by a few scholars. The provinces took the matter more seriously, making grave and sincere attempts to abolish the old religion and substitute the new. There the Goddesses of Reason were not, as at Paris, actresses, but nearly always (and the most hostile witnesses do not deny it) beautiful and virtuous young girls, belonging to the flower of the middle classes. Indeed, what characterised the movement in the provinces was that it was earnestly followed only by the *élite* of well-to-do or cultured people. The masses ignored or disdained it. The heart of the people is not taken by cultivated ceremonies."

Having shown that Atheists are not responsible for the "Worship of Reason," or for the dechristianisation of France, and that the "Worship" was not the vile orgie that pious fancy has painted, but is another instance of the utter untrustworthiness of religious history, we might fitly leave the matter here, with the remark that pietists have fouled their own nest and left a Freethinker to clean it.

WALTER MANN.

(To be continued.)

### Obituary.

We regret to record the death of Captain Robert C. Adams, one of the best known of Canadian Freethinkers. We had the pleasure of meeting him at Toronto in 1896, and again in London in 1898. He struck us as a capable, good-natured, modest gentleman, and a fluent and interesting talker. We understand that he was a liberal subscriber to the Freethought movement in America. For two or three years he had been troubled with heart failure, from which we presume he died.

The best prayer at the beginning of the day is that we may not lose *its* moments; and the best grace before meat is the consciousness that we have earned our dinner.—*Ruskin.*

### Who Goes to Heaven?

THIS pertinent question was once put to Jesus, or at least in his presence (see Mark x. 26, and also Matt. xix., 25). According to the latter gospel he had been holding forth to the wicked Pharisees on divorce and eunuchs, when children were brought to him, and he blessed them, "and departed hence."

"And, behold, one came to him and said: Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him: Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. He said unto him, Which?"

Jesus then enumerated the Ten Commandments, and the young man told him:

"All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him: If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus to his disciples; Verily, I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Then we can imagine there was a pause, and, as if he did not think his words had made sufficient impression upon his hypnotised and ignorant followers, out it came like a thunderbolt: "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

This is an illustration of that reckless exaggeration of speech, which was a characteristic of Jesus. At first, a rich man shall "hardly" enter heaven, and then when he does not see the expression of terror, which he evidently desired to see, in the faces of his followers, he blurts out with the camel going through the eye of a needle, making it a downright impossibility for a rich man to enter heaven. But of course, if Jesus ever lived, and spoke these words, he never meant them literally, which at once does away with his divinity. An embodiment of perfection would not first say "hardly," and then, thinking the matter over, trump it down as physically impossible. However, the trump had the desired effect, for "when his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who, then, can be saved?" And then it seems that Jesus, seeing their terror, half began to regret having frightened them, for he at once climbed down and minimised his strong expression: "But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible," which is contradicting everything he said before. But of course we must argue from the Christian standpoint. The Christians say Jesus was God, and that therefore he could not err. Everything he said was inspired. When he said that a rich man shall "hardly" enter heaven, he was saying what was just the truth, not a whit more nor one jot less. When he went a step further, and pronounced it impossible for a wealthy man to enter heaven, he was speaking the truth, and when he afterwards said that even that was possible for God, he was saying the same thing, only in another way. So be it! Therefore, a rich man can under no circumstances enter heaven. That shuts out all, or nearly all, lords, dukes, barons, &c., Ministers of State, bishops, prelates, and even, if it is necessary to press an argument to that length, wealthy philanthropists.

Then we know from Revelation that "Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolators, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. xxii. 14, 15). That excludes, first of all, dogs. Now, I do not want to be bigoted, not even against Christianity; so I will assume, for the sake of charitableness, that by "dogs" are meant "two-legged" ones. Then come the sorcerers. Well, the modern form of sorcery is presumably Spiritualism; so our friends, the Christian Spiritualists, had better beware. Idolators! Well,

God help the Mohammedans, Buddhists, and all the others of the thousand and one religions which "know not the light." And those that love and make a lie. O Lord, be merciful to some of our Christian friends who, Sunday after Sunday, on platform, park, or pulpit, indulge in this evil habit! Again, we read:—

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book [the book of life]. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in the book" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19).

Now, I submit that every sect throughout Christendom accuses all the others of adding to or else detracting from *our* book of life—*i.e.*, the Bible. O, for the men that gave us the Revised Version and all those that believe therein! What chance stand they on the Day of Judgment? They both add and take away. And woe unto our friends, the Universalists, who take away hell-fire; and the Unitarians and Theists, who take away two-thirds of the blessed Trinity; and all sorts of Freethinkers, who run away with the lot! And woe unto the Catholics, who have added canonisation and purgatory; and last, but not least, forty times woe unto the Established Church for having added the Thirty-nine Articles and the Catechism!—And, if that does not embrace all Christians, woe unto those who add to the Lord's Prayer—in other words, all those who pray otherwise than "the Lord" commanded. That will brand every Christian in the world as a candidate for hell.

Here is another sample from Jesus's own mouth:—

"But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire (Matt. v. 22).

According to that, woe unto some of the Christian Evidence "spouters"! How often have I heard some of them call Atheists fools, and worse than fools. And here let me say that, if the brotherhood of the Bible is worth anything at all, it must embrace the human race, and consequently also Atheists; if it does not, so much the worse for the Bible. Anyhow, if every man that calls another man—or even his "brother"—a fool is in danger of hell fire, daily experience teaches that everybody must be in danger of perdition, for even the best and most "goody-goody" has one time or other been guilty of that crime.

But, if the foregoing is not enough to damn the human race, take the following:—

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14, 15).

That means, if anything, that if we don't forgive everybody everything, God won't forgive us, which means that we will go to hell. And to forgive means to treat those who wrong us exactly like we would those who are kind to us, and being as sociable to them in every way. And who is guilty of the carrying out of such an unreasonable principle? Absolutely nobody. But if this is not sufficient to damn the world take the following simple-sounding bumper: "Judge not that ye be not judged." (Matt. vii. 1). This does not merely condemn every judge in the world; but, even in the sense, in which the Christians themselves accept it, it sends to judgment—that is, to hell—not alone every Christian advocate in this country and every other, but every being capable of thinking ever created. What is every sermon but a panegyric of denunciation, and every denunciation is passing judgment? What is every street-corner speech, or every other Christian lecture, but exhortations to repentance on the ground that otherwise "You will go to hell?" And if one throws at them the maxim, "Judge not that ye be not judged," these sermonisers reply: "It is not my

words, but the words of Jesus Christ." And, finally, what do every-day conversations that one hears between friends and amongst ordinary people chiefly consist of but criticisms and judgments passed upon other people? A common jest in London is: "You won't go to heaven; you will go to Old Nick." Verily might the disciples of Jesus exclaim: "Who, then, can be saved!" It would seem that the only people that "can be saved" are the desperadoes who, with death staring them in the face, clutch at the last straw and are converted on the scaffold, of which Jesus himself gave us an illustration when he pardoned the dying thief on the cross. In that case decent folks would prefer to go to the other place along with the respectable portion of the community.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

### The Feminine Mind and the Clergy.

It does not follow that the most highly developed feminine mind is to be found in women; on the contrary it is found in a form of man, namely, the clergyman. The term clergyman is used with hesitancy. The words priest, parson, and cleric have an air of disdain, which is out of place, and clerk is old-fashioned. The term clergyman is used in its broadest sense to cover all exponents of the supernatural on lines handed down by authority. It thus covers the Catholic priest, Sheik, Rabbi, Minister, Medicine man, Salvationist, Brammin, and their counterparts in all parts of the world, and even the apostle of Brigham Young or Mrs. Eddy; but we need only consider Christian clergymen. The word clerk would have been better, as it denotes more what is intended, namely, a learned man, that is to say, one who has learned all he was told, and believed it because he was told it young. The whole education and training of a clergyman is especially arranged to develop the feminine mind as completely as possible. The fundamental basis of his profession is rubbed into him dogmatically when a child, and is purely a matter of authoritative or "believe it because I tell you so" training. The special training consists largely of dead languages, and a final saturation of the patient with the ideas of other men who are set up on pedestals as authorities. At present only men who have specially feminine minds become clergymen, and there is at last some difficulty in getting them, but in early days it was different. From nearly two thousand years ago, until quite lately, masculine thought has not been permitted. The clergyman has been all powerful in the past, and practically stopped all development of the masculine mind for nearly twenty centuries. The masculine mind has broken out during the last hundred years or a little more, and the result is civilisation. In old days men with minds had to enter the Church and develop only the feminine side, and had to avoid thought altogether. If a layman thought about things they pulled his teeth out with hot pincers, or fried him, and if that was not effective they discouraged him. The history of Europe for this large period is nearly all an account of the miserable doings of soldiers and clergymen, with some kings and queens as figure-heads. Ninety-nine per cent. of our knowledge of nature has been gleaned during a century, though blind experience amassed a good deal of uncorroborated fact during the long existence of man. No doubt the clergyman does not directly retard knowledge effectually now, except by preaching the iniquity of testing the local religious belief by inquiry. He does not openly oppose scientific work; whether because he cannot or does not want to is immaterial. He does not fry his victims himself now, but hopes it will be done subsequently. His past influence, however, has left us a heritage of worship of the feminine mind. ....It may be said that, if a clergyman is the highest development of the feminine mind, women would do well in the Church. So they would; but they are kept out chiefly by what is said to be a mean mistranslation in the Corinthians. Women could do all the mental work of most clergymen; they are said to be good emotional speakers, and they do much visiting, and they emascuate the poor and multiply the wretched, and do other good works already. They could also set an example of unselfishness and devotion to their causes. No man is worthy of mention in the same breath with a truly unselfish woman, and there are many of these all round us if we will only look. The powers that be know better than to let women into the Church. Dog does not eat dog, and woman won't worship women; and if women were in the Church clergyman-worship, on which the Churches chiefly depend, would vanish, and the whole structure would crumble away.

JAMES SWINBURNE.

—"Westminster Review" for August.

## Correspondence.

## THE REMEDY FOR MILITARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is quite beside the question of the remedy for militarism to come to a decision as to the political philosophy of Anarchism, and it is to be regretted (if any conclusion as to the subject of this correspondence is ever to be arrived at) that Mr. Frederick Ryan, in his letter in the *Freethinker* of August 24, should raise this side issue.

There is no Anarchism in the statement that "Government has only one correct function and one righteous source of revenue—the administration of justice. Taxation in general is very like blackmail which we pay to a big thief to get him to prevent other and smaller thieves from plundering us. Every other operation of life and of commerce is better in private hands. The competition of the struggle for existence is a self-acting corrective and perfecting force for securing the best performance of all mutual services. Possibly even justice itself may eventually be left to competing agencies; but at present it is generally received as axiomatic that individuals must not take the law into their own hands." The concluding phrases of this paragraph were added, not for the purpose of dragging Anarchism into this argument, but with a view, rather, of disarming any Anarchist correspondent, if such a writer might be disposed to raise a further side question on the grounds that the true function of Government were actually too widely stated in the commencement of the paragraph.

It must at the same time be admitted that the principle assumed to be axiomatic is that the function of Government is naturally and rightly limited to governing, and that it has no right, for instance, to preach or uphold religion, nor to teach spelling, history, economics, science, etc.

But still, apart from all such side issues, the point specially aimed at is something as follows: If Government (be its functions what they may) were to sell its services in a similar way to that in which railway proprietors and insurance companies sell theirs, then the ultimate result of basing public revenue upon such a mechanism for its collection would be to diminish very largely the power and the spirit from which wars arise. If all taxation (or as far as ever practicable) were raised only by fees and stamps for special services (as postal revenue is now obtained), and especially if the employment of Government in these functions were optional, then there would be very little for nations to fight about, and they would have very little money to spend in fighting.

To one so very well versed in, and so profoundly immersed in, the study of recent political and military operations as Mr. Ryan, it may seem very thin and aerial to soar into a region of suppositions and speculations, and he may deem it not worth while to spare much time to study the possible effects of the improbable, or to investigate how certain events might have been quite different if certain preceding conditions had been other than they actually were.

It would be hardly fair to trespass on the space of the *Freethinker* by attempting to discuss even a very small number of recent cases of military activity. It may suffice to observe that neither of the very ill-advised parties to the South African War would have been likely to have had either the inclination or the funds for that most lamentable exhibition of human folly had it not been for the fatal facility with which, in their dominions, as well as throughout the world, money can be raised by flagrant injustice and aggression for every such purpose as may sway the fickle mob at the moment. Of course, nothing could well be more unprecedented than a nation like our own, nagging and forcing an assumed dependent nation into war on the ostensible plea that it was unwarrantable for a Republic to refuse to convert citizens of the larger monarchical Government into Burgessesses of their own Government, or, in other words, refuse to alienate them from citizenship in their fatherland. On the other hand, little Governments are almost always in many respects more tyrannical than big ones; and to this the Transvaal is no exception. Both in financial matters and also in the labor restrictions, which Mr. Ryan appears to favor, this petty State very greatly exceeded its true and just powers of interference with the freedom of its population.

As to the possible benefits or injury to the people of this country, or any of them, or to the capitalists of the Cecil Rhodes or Barney Barnato class, or to the Boers, from this war and its revolution (apart from the lives and property wasted by its violence), perhaps Mr. Ryan can enlighten your readers. Will freedom of thought, for instance, be more or less practicable here or in South Africa in the new conditions?

If Government could get funds only by the sale of tangible services to each and every taxpayer in exchange for which he voluntarily plunks down his money, then Government would have no spare cash for aggressive wars.

War may be but one phase of the process by which one class lives on the labor of others; but surely it is the most devilish (unless this term be a libel on respectable poor devils, if any such exist), and the most horrible in its physical and mental features. If one wins a quantity of valuables from another in a fair wager, he may be said to live on his labor when enjoying the expenditure of his winnings. But, without justifying this, or more innocent and more wicked means of living on others, it is surely far worse to violate every rule of the civilized game of grab, and resort to the horrible carnage and absolute disregard of every moral principle in the deadly game where all's fair. GREEVZ FISHER.

## The Two Tolstois.

FRAU SEURON says there are two Tolstois; one, the author, the farmer, the shoemaker, the nobleman, the head of the family; the other, himself. Sometimes he shows one characteristic, sometimes another; for he has the gift of being able to peel himself off in layers, like an onion. When he is really himself he acts with primitive simplicity, exactly as though he were alone, giving no heed to the presence of other people. His renown is often oppressive to him; such publicity is contrary to his inmost feelings and tastes. He was always careless about his appearance, even in the city. His hats and caps had neither shape nor color, and he was quite indifferent as to whether they were suitable or becoming. Only his blouse must be long, as he considered it more chaste to wear it in that form. Closely-fitting trousers he did not approve of; he objected also to low-necked dresses for women. Like many another sensitive human being, he was often oppressed by the apparent cruelty and injustice of killing animals for food, and once he made trial of the vegetarian system. For more than a year he followed the rule, yielding only now and then so far as to partake of bouillon. His health suffered from the change, and he was persuaded to include poultry in his bill of fare. Often, too, the roast beef from which the family had been served at supper was found to have been well eaten into during the night, and the Count was suspected of being the cater, although he never would acknowledge the deed. This plan of living soon lost its force, and the Count returned gladly to the fleshpots, as many another vegetarian has been forced to do, by reason of well-grounded fears of a permanent loss of vitality. A few years later he made another attempt. A Russian exile, who had lived a long time in America, came to see him. The man was fifty years old, but looked much younger, and he ascribed his blooming appearance to his diet. For ten years he had lived on vegetables, and had eaten all his food without salt. Not only the Count, but also the daughters of the house, resolved to try this way of keeping young and beautiful but in less than a year the girls grew thin and pale, and the whole company of converts went back to their former mode of living. Also, the Count tried once to give up tobacco. "Smoking is unhealthy," he said, "it is a luxury. The fields given up to the weed might better be planted with grain to feed the hungry." So cigars and cigarettes were laid aside, and the Count wandered up and down forlorn. But, finding that his health suffered from the abstinence, he resumed the habit and was comforted. His biographer remarks in this connection that those who imagine the Count to be an ascetic are greatly mistaken. His physical and psychical characteristics are not those out of which a saint is made, and his seasons of self-mortification were irregular and few. It seemed to her that his whimsical industries, such as lighting his own fire, blacking his own boots, working as a shoemaker, digging in the field, driving the plough, carting the manure, were so many ways of refreshing his mental energy through bodily exercise. He gave up riding after being obliged to sell his favorite horse; he gave up hunting after adopting vegetarian principles—he says, too, that he dared not go out alone with a gun, for fear that he should be tempted to shoot himself—and so he turned to more plebian methods of letting off steam, so to speak, for the health and safety of his spiritual as well as physical nature. MRS. ELIZABETH E. EVANS.

—The Open Court.

A Scotch minister from a large town once visited and preached in a rural parish, and was asked to pray for rain. He did so, and the rain came in floods and destroyed some of the crops, whereupon one elder remarked to another: "This comes o' entrusting sic a request to a meenister who isna aequentit wi' agriculture."

"Mr. Grimes," said the rector to the vestryman, "we had better take up the collection before the sermon." "Indeed?" "Yes. I'm going to preach on Economy."

**SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.****LONDON.**

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote: "Jesus Christ and the Trade Union Congress."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. A. Davies.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, E. Pack; 6, E. Pack.

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

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N. S. S.): 7.30, Debate between Rev. A. Seton and R. P. Edwards. Subject: "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Best for the Human Race?"

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.). Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, Debate between J. Bruce Wallace, M.A., and R. P. Edwards. Subject: "Christianity: Its Reasonableness."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Mr. C. Cohen.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., W. J. Ramsey.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, E. Pack.

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

**COUNTRY.**

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (69 York-street): 3.45, Mr. J. H. Gilliland, "Prof. Tyndall's Belfast Address, 1874."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, E. B. Rose; "A Freethinker at Large in South Africa."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward. 11, "Did Jesus ever Exist?"; 3, "How Christianity has Degraded Women"; 7, "The Jokes of Jehovah."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Geo. Berrisford, "Man, and the Struggle for Existence."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting.

**LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—September 7, Freethought Mission at Liverpool; 28, Sheffield.

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