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Outside man is no salvation.—FEUERBACH.

Hugh Price Hughes.

WESLEYAN METHODISM has lost a burning and a shining light. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is dead. He was not a thinker, he was not even a great speaker. There was not a single touch of melody in his voice. It was harsh and nasal from its lowest note to the top of its compass. But it was penetrating, and it reached the back sitters in the largest congregation. This gave him an advantage over preachers of feeble vocal capacity. He made himself heard in all senses of the word. This was the chief secret of his success. His was not a light that could be hidden under a bushel. He was too energetic and pushing for that. In a smaller way he had some of the qualities of Mr. Chamberlain. He brought smart, up-to-date, commercial methods into the preacher's business. He had the sense to see that Christianity had lost its old spiritual power over the people. He realised the need of a spice of the variety entertainment in religious services. So he operated in a big West-end hall instead of a church, went in for a choir and a band, had occasional "show" attractions on the platform, took up the subjects of the passing hour, and gave his addresses something of the character of a music-hall "turn." Whether he brought any "souls to Christ" is another question. My own impression is that the West London Mission, like the Salvation Army, made not the slightest difference to the total number of Christians. The "conversion" days are all over. Christianity loses and never gains. The multitude of the faithful still within the fold are drawn hither and thither by special attractions. In a vast city like London there is a floating population of professed Christians who belong to no particular church, but go to hear this popular preacher to-day and that popular preacher to-morrow. Their attendance at "places of worship" is a pastime—almost a debauch. And there is enough of them to keep several exhorters going. Dr. Parker has no parish. He preaches at large. Mr. Price Hughes had no parish either. He preached at large too. For in the religious world as elsewhere, nowadays, there are ordinary entertainers and extraordinary entertainers; the latter being introduced upon the stage when the former are getting rather tiresome. The interest of the audience must be sustained. This is indispensable in every department, including religion; which shows that Christianity has ceased to be a soul-saving affair and has become a form of public entertainment.

I had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Hughes. Probably he was a good sort of man in private, but that has nothing to do with me. I am not so impertinent as to intrude in such matters. A man's private life, unless he *makes* it public, is for himself, his family, and his friends. As far as his public life was concerned, Mr. Hughes was a go-ahead Wesleyan minister; and when you have said that you have said all. To mention him in the same breath with a Newman or a Martineau is a kind of desecra-

tion. I have looked into some of his addresses—either in book form or in the *Methodist Times*—and I thought they indicated common powers of mind and common gifts of expression. The lightning flash, the felicitous phrase, was always absent. It was an energetic mediocrity.

I may be told that this is ungenerous—that one ought to speak only good of the dead. But telling lies is a very questionable form of generosity. One ought to tell the truth or hold one's tongue. Mr. Hughes was a public man, and therefore open to public criticism. His death is no excuse for an imaginary portrait.

Speaking, I believe, without malice or vindictiveness, I may say that I look back over the old "Atheist Shoemaker" controversy with a feeling that Mr. Hughes succumbed to the peculiar temptations of an enterprise like the West London Mission. In the first place, it is so natural to expect converts, and so encouraging to obtain them. In such cases the wish is often father to the thought. In the second place, he was surrounded by "sisters"—a comparatively new phenomenon in the Wesleyan Church; and they were too much for his fervid Welsh nature. It was so flattering to be surrounded by young ladies of "good families," who served the Lord in slum work, and looked up to you as the Lord's proxy. How could he disbelieve what they told him? How could he help dishing up their story of the "converted Atheist" for publication? How could he decline to be responsible for it to the world? His better as well as his worst side might have co-operated in that great mistake. For the rest, it must be admitted that he was doing nothing very unusual. Great and honored names in the Christian Church had been associated with the same practices. Catching souls with guile, and lying for the glory of God, had been a virtue ever since the days of Paul. One must make allowance for the Christian tradition. It is probable that Mr. Hughes saw no harm in what he did. The end justified the means, the motive consecrated the act. At the worst he was only doing what his betters had done. Why should he be more scrupulous than they? Why should it devolve upon him to initiate a new policy, when it was so much easier to follow the beaten track?

The eminent Secularist who was cleverly drawn into giving a personal guarantee of the truth of the "Atheist Shoemaker" story—a guarantee which I was fortunately soon able to prove worthless—referred to Mr. Hughes as an eminent Christian minister who was entitled to be believed upon his word. He ought to have known—perhaps I should say he ought to have recollected—that no Christian minister is entitled to be believed upon his word in such a matter. "Conversion" stories are notoriously fabulous. There has been a perfect trade in them. The very concealment of names and identities throws them open to suspicion. This is running counter to the very object of such stories. It would surely conduce to the saving of souls if the "conversions" were placed beyond cavil. To give the real names, the real dates, and the real places, would assist in commanding belief. To withhold them is to invite distrust. And how absurd it is to put a personal susceptibility above the salvation of even one immortal soul.

G. W. FOOTE.

Church Attendance at Liverpool.

TAKING stock must be anything but a pleasing task for the religious world. It is in the position of a firm whose accounts show a continued and increasing balance on the wrong side of the ledger, with no possibility of ever making a profit. The very utmost it can expect to do is to clear expenses, and were it not for an enormous credit absolute bankruptcy would be inevitable. To quit metaphor and to come down to plain literal facts, a review of the position of the Christian Churches generation after generation shows it to be constantly losing ground. The doctrines it fought for yesterday it discards to-day; the teachings it protested against a while ago, it is now compelled to adopt. The official teachings concerning the Bible, the nature of deity, the belief in eternal punishment, in prayer, in miracles, have been, or are, being discarded. The Churches stand, not only without any authoritative voice in matters that lie outside religion proper, but without authority even on religious subjects themselves.

Many Christian teachers, with a fine—though unconscious—sense of humor dignify this process by the name of religious evolution. Evolution has now become a veritable "Blessed word," and its use frequently hides an absurdity or usurps the function of accurate thinking. A process that results in the acquisition of new organs or new faculties, is rightly called evolution. But a process that divests an organism of all its distinctive qualities, paralyses its functions, and reduces it to a condition of impotence, is not evolution, it is dissolution. The course of mental development has not given people stronger convictions or clearer ideas on religious subjects, it has robbed them of both. There never was a time when people had more hazy ideas, or more lukewarm beliefs than they have now. And there was never a time when religious belief played such a small part in our national life. There *has* been an evolution, but it has been away from, not towards religion.

The religious census just taken at Liverpool is a fresh proof, if any more proof were needed, of the truth of what has been said above. On November 2 a census of the attendances at all the churches and chapels in Liverpool was undertaken by *The Liverpool Daily Post*, and the results published on Tuesday, November 11. As a similar census was taken in 1881 and again in 1891, one is thus able to note the growth or decline of church and chapel attendance during these years. The figures are anything but cheerful reading—for Christians. The statistics show a gross increase of some 20,000 attendances over 1881, and some 15,000 over 1891. We have no doubt many of the religious journals will chortle over this increase, and proclaim the undying influence of religious belief. The improvement is apparent only. Population has not been standing still during this period, and when one compares the percentage of church goers in 1891 with those in 1902 there is a shrinkage of twenty-one per 1,000 of the attendances in the morning services, and twenty-five per 1,000 in the evening. The net attendance is therefore considerably less, and Liverpool with a population of about 700,000, and seating accommodation in church and chapel for 233,000 people, has a church and chapel going population of 107,000, from which we have to deduct casual visitors. Liverpool, moreover, is a religious city. Sectarian feeling runs as high there as anywhere; and if here the Church attendance represent about fourteen per cent. of the population, the figures in other places would work out much lower. This is certainly the case with London.

The *Christian World*, commenting on this census, remarks that "the religious position revealed is such as calls for the gravest consideration of all the Churches.....The significance of the figures lies largely in the fact that they represent not a local so much as a general condition.....If the figures given related to a branch of commerce, those responsible would realise that a searching inquiry was needed

and some bold new departure called for, if the interests concerned were to be saved from decline and disaster."

Yes, the religious outlook is serious enough; and one has only to consider the causes in order to discover how hopeless is any prospect of improvement. The *Christian World* does not believe that the decline in church attendance is due to any falling off in religious interest. Then, in the name of all that is sensible, what is it due to? What are churches intended for, if not to excite and satisfy an interest in religion? The reply would be, in all probability, that the *forms* of religion no longer attract; that is all. To which all that one need say is that, if people had not lost interest in religion itself, they would not have ceased to be interested in the forms that are intended to subserve it. Religions do not decay from without, but from within. All history proves that, while religious forms are always made the object of direct attack, as being the most vulnerable, it is the decay of religious belief that prompts the assault. When there is a sincere conviction existent of the truth of religion itself, its outward forms can hardly appear very ridiculous or very objectionable. This unbelief may be, and often is, largely unconscious, but it is there nevertheless; and the truth of this is shown in the fact that the attack on forms sooner or later develops into an attack on the thing itself. This was the case in the attack on the forms of the belief in Deity, which developed into positive Atheism, and of the attack on errors of Biblical belief, which grew into positive disbelief in all inspiration. Unbelief does not assume mature proportions at once, in either individuals or communities; but, just as there is the promise of the flower in the bud, of the animal in the ovum, so there is the potency of the complete negation of religion in the present dislike and disgust of religious ceremonies.

The writer is on firmer ground when he cites as a cause of the phenomenon under consideration the fact that the Church no longer monopolises life to the extent it once did. "The Church aforesaid was the people's dramatist, its political instructor, its purveyor of the music and the arts, as well as its religious teacher." Needless to say, it is none of these things now. Literature and the drama are outside its pale. Our greatest dramatists, from the Elizabethans onwards, have been either hostile to the Church or lukewarm in their attachment. The same is true of our best literature, and some of our finest art. Art, indeed, was only subservient to religion at any time from economic causes; and, when economic patronage could be obtained elsewhere, really great artists ceased to spend their best endeavors on religious subjects. Even in religion the Churches have ceased to be—if they ever were—the teachers of the people. No one would dream of going to church or chapel for instruction as to the nature or development of religious beliefs. Really scientific instruction of this character is avowedly and deliberately exorcised from church or chapel. The Church is not a teacher of the people; it is either its toady or its tyrant. When the people are strong it toadies to their passions; when they are weak it trades on their fears. Real leadership is as foreign to the clergy as the very pulpits they preach from.

And as the general intellectual level outside the Churches has risen, so, comparatively and actually, the intellectual level within the Churches has fallen. And it may be taken as a fairly safe historic generalisation that ministers of religion only exert a real, open, and conscious influence so long as the people are below them in education and intellect. This is the opinion of no less an individual than Professor Mahaffy, who, as being both a clergyman and a scholar, may be cited with profit:—

"With the rarest exceptions, missionaries only produce large effects when preaching to a people.....below them so far as to look up with veneration to the preacher as a man of superior learning and higher moral aims. Thus no missionaries are attempted, for example, to the professors at the German Universities, though they are

believed by Evangelical Christians to require conversion as much as any class in the world. But their intellectual level is too high, and, like the Brahmins of India, they look with contempt upon the most earnest and pious missionary, because they believe he has not thought, or is not capable of thinking, as deeply on spiritual subjects as they."*

There is no doubt here as to Professor Mahaffy's substantial accuracy. The whole power of the Christian Church was dependent upon the people feeling that its representatives possessed power or learning, or both, such as those outside the Church did not and could not possess. Hence, partly, the desire of the Churches to limit the little learning they encouraged to their own order. In science everyone who becomes proficient is welcomed as an equal and a fellow-worker in a common fight against a common enemy. In religion everyone who obtains knowledge becomes an enemy, to be bought over, if possible, to be suppressed otherwise if necessary. The fight of the Churches against the extension of knowledge among the people was thus an act of self-defence. The defence failed, however, and every generation that sees the laity becoming better educated and more intellectual, sees also, as a necessary result, the Churches and the clergy playing a smaller part in the nation's life.

The article from which I have already quoted finds a little consolation in the reflection that *some* of the churches or chapels get good congregations, and therefore the question of church attendance turns largely upon getting the right man and the kind of performance. Well, there is something in this, I have no doubt. Any church could be crowded out if we get the right kind of programme for the people. For instance, if one were to announce a bout of fisticuffs between Cardinal Vangnan and Dr. Horton, or between Dr. Clifford and Lord Halifax, as preceding the sermon, I have no doubt whatever that the largest building in England would be crowded for the first part of the performance, even though it were half emptied for the latter portion. Or a first-class band, with some of our leading vocalists assisting, might also draw the people. All these and similar things might do the trick, but if anyone imagines that the fact of filling a church by sensational preaching, spicy sermons, theatrical oratory, good music, and singing, is a proof of the interest people take in religion, a greater mistake was never made. The Temple Church is famed for its music, and hundreds go there for the sole purpose of listening to it. How many go for the sermons? People go to church nowadays for a variety of reasons, a few wise, perhaps, but the majority otherwise, but if only those went to church who were influenced by religion pure and simple, instead of a place like Liverpool showing 14 per cent. of its population attending, I seriously question if it would show 4 per cent.

In brief, what is called making a church service attractive is only another way of saying that distinctively religious subjects must be kept out of sight as much as possible. Provide a comfortable building, with a fairly good evening's entertainment, and people may be induced to attend church. Drop the entertainment, and give the people religion only, and they will certainly stay at home. And even by this means the churches can only attract congregations so long as custom and law combine to limit the opportunities of getting the same things elsewhere. Remove all the bans, social and legal, that stand in the way of Sunday music and Sunday entertainment, and the churches would soon be beaten here as elsewhere. The clergy know this well enough; hence their hostility to Sunday amusement, *not conducted in church*.

The Liverpool census is, in fine, only a single symptom of a general disease. People die of many complaints, religions die of one only—that of being found out. And Christianity is being found out. By the best intellects it has been found out already. These no longer enter the Church, and are no longer

attracted to theological questions. Slowly as the world moves, it yet does move, and its progress is leaving religion steadily behind. Hardly anyone believes in a straightforward, manly, way in Christian doctrines nowadays, and a good many are heartily ashamed of them. They are as a crown of thorns upon the brow of the wise, and as a fool's cap upon the head of the ignorant. Religion may be proof against much, but no religion yet has been proof against time and education.

C. COHEN.

Browning's Theology.

"God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world."

"He, at least believed in Soul, was very sure of God."

ROBERT BROWNING will live as a poet. His attitude as a thinker is unimpressive. In fact, his intellectual position was simply that of acquiescence with current theology and codified morality. His situation in regard to the thought of his age was paradoxical, if not inconsistent. His admirers count him a second Shakespeare. He sentimentalise where Shakespeare thought. Browning was less in touch with the intellectual movements of his own time than Tennyson or Arnold. He was content, in his fashion, to fight during a long life in the ranks of religious conservatism.

Browning wrote much on theological subjects. His early education, his serious cast of mind, the very character of his genius, all tended to make religious speculation interesting to him. In *Saul*, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*, in *The Ring and the Book*, and numerous other poems, he has attempted to depict the heart of the Christian superstition. Truly, he had a robust faith. He was as anthropomorphic as any tradesman who sat at the feet of the Boanerges of the Newington Tabernacle. This is Browning's poetical way of expressing his child-like belief:—

'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! My flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek, and I find it! O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me
Thou shalt love, and be loved by, for ever; a hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

Another favorite belief of Christians finds expression in the simple trustfulness of poor Pompilia, praying on her hospital-bed for her murderer:—

We shall not meet in this world or the next,
But where will God be absent? In his light
Is healing, in his shadow, healing too—
Let Guido touch the shadow, and be healed.

Browning was quite certain about immortality. He apostrophises the dead Evelyn Hope:—

So hush—I will give you this leaf to keep;
See, I shut it inside the sweet, cold hand!
There, that is our secret; go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

With blithe, critical assurance he expresses the current ideas regarding Rationalism:—

What can I gain on the denying side?
Ice makes no conflagration.

Browning did not lack critical acumen, but, like Newman and Pascal, he chloroformed his intellect with the supernatural. As Joubert says, it is so easy to believe in God if one does not trouble about definitions. In *Christmas Eve* the poet listens to the German professor, who, after demolishing the divinity of Christ, tells his audience that the myth thus destroyed still leaves

A man! A right true man, however,
Whose work was worthy a man's endeavor.

The poet goes on to say, with a plainness which leaves no room for quibbling, that if Christ were not God he was nothing. He grudges him even a place among the great ethical teachers,

* *The Decay of Modern Preaching*, pp. 21-2.

The same idea occurs in *A Death in the Desert* :—

If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men
Mere man, the first and best, but nothing more—
Account Him, for reward of what He was,
Now and forever, wretchedest of all.

Call Christ, then, the illimitable God, or lost !

Browning is often called a profound thinker, but his conclusions, which harmonise so well with popular religious prejudice, are dangerously facile and commonplace. The wish is too frequently the father of the thought. It is this which vitiates his claim to be considered a philosopher in verse. Truth may ring regnant in the lines of Abt Vogler—

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days ?—

but, unfortunately, the conclusion is in itself illogical.

Browning's optimism was as robust and as impertinent as that of Dr. Pangloss. To read Browning in sickness, or in great sorrow or physical suffering, in that last resort to which men are pushed so often—

With close-lipped Patience for their only friend—

would be impossible. There are moments when the statement, "God's in his heaven," seems questionable to the staunchest believer. And there are frequent moments when "All's right with the world" is a gratuitous insult to common sense and ordinary eyesight. Optimism is very well, but, pushed too far, it becomes, not optimism, but sheer insensibility.

It is all of a piece, like the all-embracing faith of Bishop Blougram :—

I hear you recommend, I might at least
Eliminate, declassify my faith,
Since I adopt it, keeping what I must
And leaving what I can—such points as this ;
I won't—that is, I can't—throw one away.
Supposing there's no truth in what I hold
About the need of trial to men's faith,
Still, when you bid me purify the same,
To such a process I discern no end.
Clearing off one excrement to see two,
There's ever a next in size, now grown as big
That meets the knife : I cut and cut again !
First cut the Liquefaction, what comes last
But Fichte's clever cut at God himself ?
Experimentalise on sacred things !
I trust nor hand, nor eye, nor heart, nor brain,
To stop betimes ; they all get drunk alike.
The first step, I am master not to take.

Christian apologists never tire of speaking of Browning as a typical Christian poet. They are justified in making the most of a man of genius when they possess one. We do not quarrel with them for that. It is perfectly plain that if Browning was not a Christian, his language is elaborately adapted rather to conceal and misrepresent his mind than to express it. His was a religious temperament. About that, at least, any doubt is impossible to any reader of his poetry, and his letters to Elizabeth Barrett testify to it almost on every page. He always writes as an apologist for the elements of religion, for the belief in God, in free will, and human immortality, the "three buttresses of superstition" as Haeckel has happily termed them. There is only one utterance of Browning's in which he really runs counter to the current views. In his powerful lines on the old morgue at Paris he almost forgot his orthodoxy.* All his life long he went on repeating, with inexhaustible fertility of illustration and ever changing choice of language, the old shibboleths.

The old leaven worked furiously in his veins, the cherished superstitions clung like mandrakes in the soil of his mind. His admirers claim him as the greatest English poet since Shakespeare. He might have been had he brought his mental gifts to the Eternal Altar, the Altar of the Religion of Humanity, which was standing before any other was built, and will endure when every other has crumbled into dust.

MIMNERMUS.

* The poem entitled *Apparent Failure*.

Cremation.

(Continued from p. 733).

II.

The influence of Christianity everywhere extinguished the funeral pyre, and substituted the coffin for the urn, the cemetery for the columbarium. This effect has been attributed to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which is, indeed, brought forward to this day as an argument against cremation. "Holy men of old," says Bishop Wordsworth, who may be taken as expressing fairly the views of modern conservative Christianity, "fell asleep in death, and were laid in the bosom of their Mother Earth ; in a blessed hope, to which Job, the patriarch and prophet of the human race, has given utterance, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.' Actuated by such feelings as these the devout patriarchs were very solicitous for the burial of the bodies of their friends and relatives, and of their own." The right reverend logician omits to mention that what the devout patriarch, Job, is really recorded to have said is not "in my flesh I shall see God," but "out of my flesh I shall see God," so that the whole argument rests upon a mis-translation. He goes on to insist that "the Holy Spirit had surely in his mind an important purpose, when he "took care" to describe the burial of Sarah by Abraham, and the instructions given by Jacob for his own burial in the land of Canaan. Furthermore he finds in the process of decomposition a sort of parable in action, very soothing and edifying. "The Christian knows the reason of that corruption. It is a consequence of the fall of man ; it is the fruit of sin ; and it is well that we should be reminded of this." Ultimately he sums up the question by asserting that, though cremation would not, in fact, interfere with the resurrection of the body (else, as Lord Shaftesbury says, "what would become of the blessed martyrs?"), yet it would tend to bring the doctrine into discredit in the eyes of the majority of mankind who, unhappily, "are not sound believers." "The body of man is a sacred thing," he concludes, "it does not belong to man, but to God.....The burning of the body after death, when referred to the text of holy scripture, cannot be approved, but must rather be regarded with abhorrence."

I am not going to enter upon a hopeless struggle with the hydra-headed fallacies of such argument as this. If "the holy spirit" was so anxious that we should rot rather than burn (in this world), why did it not "take care" to say so in plain terms, instead of leaving us to infer its "purpose" from the practice of certain legendary Hebrews—a practice not peculiar to them as a chosen people, but shared by the whole Semitic race ? Granting that the body of man belongs to God, what reason have we for supposing that he has made over his proprietary rights to worms, maggots, and all foul things of the earth ? The body of a sheep belongs to the butcher, but if he keeps it until it becomes pestilent, the inspector of nuisances steps in and orders its destruction. If the Hebrew god is indeed so opposed to sanitation as to insist that "god's acre" shall be synonymous with fever-field, it is all the more clearly time that the inspector of nuisances should pay a visit to his premises and insist on their permanent disinfection.

The truth is that the fall of Adam, the incarnation of Christ, and the resurrection of the body, have very little to do with our practice of inhumation. The early Christians were not really so illogical as their episcopal interpreters make them out to have been. They rejected cremation in deference to ethnic habit rather than to specifically religious sentiment or conviction. They did not see in their

belief that Jesus was laid in a cave and did *not* rot, any conclusive reason why we should be laid in graves and *should* rot. They did not believe that rapid combustion could interfere with the resurrection of the body any more than the slow disintegration of fetid decay. The fact was that they had adopted a Semitic religion, and with it accepted as a matter of course the Semitic method of disposing of the dead. They may have quieted some misgivings as to this lapse into uncleanly Orientalism by a reference to their sacred legends and dogmas; but the legends and dogmas themselves would never have brought about the change had they not been backed by the old-age habit of a stiff-necked and profoundly conservative race. "Great Alexander dead and turned to clay" is as effectually resolved into his elements by a few years in the earth as by a few minutes in a Siemens' furnace. His bones might, indeed, be collected and arranged in patterns like those in the vaults of the Cappuccini Monastery in Rome, but even then ultimate decay would be a mere matter of time. If the body is to be kept as nearly as possible intact, so as to save time and trouble at the resurrection, the logical course is not burial, but embalming, petrification, or some sort of hermetic encasement.

Let us not forget, then, that inhumation, as we at present practise it, is a relic of insanitary Oriental barbarism. Our higher and cleaner race had already in prehistoric ages partly outgrown it. Though cremation will soon be, in our crowded cities, much cheaper and easier than burial, the case is precisely the reverse in sparsely-populated countries, and especially among nomadic tribes. The nomads who take the trouble to burn their dead, instead of merely scattering a few sods on them, or depositing them in the first cave that comes to hand, evince by this very fact a power of sacrificing momentary ease to provident considerations of cleanliness and health, which gives them a higher place in the scale of humanity. They may not sing such great songs to the glory of their tribal god, but from them, and not from those who first tolerate and then worship putrefaction, will come the practical civilisation of the world. We have lapsed from the wise usage of our Aryan forefathers into the Semitic slovenliness—excused perhaps in this instance by the scarcity of fuel in the primeval abodes of the race—which has for centuries made the Ghetto or the Jewry an eye-sore in every European city, while it has maintained in its native East an ever-germinating seed-plot of plague and pestilence. The habit which sprang from Oriental indolence and improvidence has now become far more costly and troublesome than the simple method which is destined to supersede it; yet men are found to cling to it as though their salvation depended on the slow poisonousness of their decomposition. What has posterity done for us that we should be so obstinately determined to "do for" posterity?

III.

Whatever may have been the case with the early Christians, our present tenacious adherence to inhumation is certainly not due, in the vast majority of instances, to any religious scruple, but simply to the unreasoning inertia of use and wont. Most people who have ever read or reflected on the subject are intellectually convinced in favor of cremation. Few can have failed to learn, either from personal observation or from reports in the public prints, of the ghastly sanitary scandals and outrages upon decency involved in our present burial system. The Burial Acts are admitted on all hands to have utterly failed in securing either health for the living or rest and respect for the dead; and matters must necessarily become worse as time goes on. But, as a matter of fact, few people who read the daily papers can be either ignorant or sceptical of the growing evils of our present system. They are admitted on all hands. Nor are there many people of the smallest pretence to enlightenment who have any personal objection to cremation. Why, then, does the monopoly

of the "politic worms" remain practically unfringed? Mainly, if not solely, because of our instinctive shrinking from looking the King of Terrors fairly in the face.

The question of what is to become of our dead selves is not at best a cheerful or attractive one. Few men and women care to make up their minds on such a point and declare strongly one way or the other. It is not, after all, a matter of much personal interest. It affects the community rather than the individual, our children rather than ourselves; and the care for generations yet unborn is only beginning to make itself felt as an appreciable influence in determining the actions of the average man. Persons of firm philosophy, and the yet larger number who are morbidly given to Night Thoughts and Meditations among the Tombs, are occasionally found to feel strongly on the question, one way or the other. Jeremy Bentham bequeathed his body to the dissecting-room, and, on the other hand, pious old women of both sexes are often known to give directions with gloating minuteness for the costly mummeries of their funerals. The majority, however, are inclined to elude the horns of an unpleasant and unnecessary dilemma, and trust their cast-off vesture of flesh to the tender mercies of their surviving friends. The ultimate decision necessarily lies with the survivors; and if the plebiscitum suggested above should ever be taken, it would probably appear that while few would object to cremation for themselves, many would shrink from applying the process to their friends. Brought face to face with the eternal paradox of death, men are apt to throw logic and abstract principles to the winds, and glide as best they may along the well-oiled grooves of use and wont. They have not the energy to be original. The presence of the great Radical, the irreconcilable Nihilist, drives them into the arms of Conservatism. The springs of healthy activity are relaxed, and, as action must be taken before time has restored their elasticity, the survivors are listlessly content to let things take their ordinary course, and store up a little more poison for their children's children.

It is the first step which costs. Let cremation be made reasonably easy by the establishment of working crematories in suitable spots, and it will soon conquer its thousands and its tens of thousands, while men will more and more shrink from polluting the soil of their country and their own imaginations by consigning their loved ones to the hideousness of corruption. It is not quite Utopian to hope that we are within measurable distance of the stamping out of zymotic disease; and every body rescued from decay by the beneficent spirit of cleansing fire brings us a little nearer that consummation.

National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive Meeting, held on Thursday, November 6; the President (Mr. G. W. Foote) in the chair. There were also present: Messrs. E. Bator, C. Cohen, J. Cooper, W. Leat, W. Heaford, J. Neate, C. Quinton, V. Roger, E. Parker, F. Schaller, S. Samuels, F. Wood, T. How, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received and adopted.

Five new members were admitted.

The Circular on the Education Bill, written for the Society by Mr. Cohen, was presented to the meeting, and heartily adopted.

On the President's suggestion it was resolved that the *Secular Almanack* should be merged into a new *Secular Annual*.

Other matters of business were transacted, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

Synnex: "You profess to be a devoted believer in Christian Science, but I noticed that when you had a tooth extracted the other day you took gas." Mentor: "I took gas, not because there is such a thing as pain, but for fear that I might be led into thinking that there was in the excitement of the moment."—*Boston Transcript*.

Acid Drops.

MR. TIMOTHY HEALY as a devout Catholic is an edifying spectacle. Speaking in the House of Commons on Mr. Balfour's new closure resolution, he said he should support the Education Bill because it afforded "a prospect of applying conditions of liberality and toleration to a sect which included the poorest amongst his countrymen." He might be helping to alienate the Liberal party, but "he was not prepared, even to gain Home Rule, to sacrifice the chance of the salvation of the humblest exiled Irish child." From the orthodox point of view this is quite unexceptionable. If there is a heaven and a hell, to one of which we must all go for ever and ever, the greatest interest of the greatest possible number of people in this world is as nothing to the welfare of one single person in the next world. But what we should like to know is this. Does the lively "Tim" really believe this doctrine? Or is he only playing at make-believe for obvious political reasons?

The Queensland Congregational Union is deeply moved by the news of the persecution of the English Nonconformists by the Church of England. Perhaps an Australian contingent will be enlisted and sent over here to take part in the struggle. Meanwhile the Queensland Congregational Union sends on an encouraging resolution. It runs thus: "That our deepest sympathies be sent to our brethren in England in their opposition to the proposed Education Bill, and that we express our abhorrence of the attempt to fetter religious liberty and outrage conscience, and that we most heartily encourage those who are seeking to maintain the freedom of the faith once delivered to the Saints."

The Nonconformists, of course, do *not* fetter religious liberty and outrage conscience when they teach Nonconformist religion in Board schools. The fetters and the outrage only come in when Churchmen teach Church religion in Church schools. To put the matter in a nutshell, no injustice is done unless the Nonconformist feels it. When others feel it there is no injustice at all.

The last words of this Queensland resolution show that the struggle is really, as we have all along maintained it was, a fight between Church and Chapel. What has to be upheld is "the faith once delivered to the saints." That, of course, means Nonconformist Christianity. The Nonconformists are the Saints.

Dr. Clifford continues his hectic "Appeals to the People" in the *Daily News*. There is, however, a certain method in his madness. He works his old confusion of "Nonconformist" with "Citizen" for all it is worth, and he is particularly careful not to show that he has ever heard of "secular education." His last "Appeal" ends with the following programme:—

1. Citizens must control what citizens provide.
2. No priest in politics; least of all in State education.
3. Complete liberty of conscience.
4. No theological or ecclesiastical tests for the servants of the State engaged in teaching. An open way for capacity and character into the teaching profession.
5. A system of education really national and universal, efficient and sufficient, free from every taint of sectarianism and injustice.

Now, we endorse every word of this programme. And we have a word upon it for Dr. Clifford. He is fond of challenging others, and we beg to challenge him. We are ready to prove, in public debate with him, either on the platform or in the press, that this programme is impossible without "secular education." Will he have the courage to respond? It is not a particularly brave thing to be always addressing Nonconformists in favor of the Nonconformist policy. Dr. Clifford would display more heroism if he defended the Nonconformist policy against those who attack it, and who do not hesitate to declare that the Nonconformists are themselves responsible for all the present trouble.

The latest Religious Census at Liverpool, organised by the *Daily Post*, shows the number of persons attending church or chapel in that city on the first Sunday in November. The number in 1881 was 146,469; the number in 1891 was 151,846; and the number this year was 178,477. This is a positive but not a relative increase. It does not keep pace with the city's increase of population. It must be remembered, too, that the morning and evening attendances are lumped in the total. A good many persons attend divine service twice on Sunday, and would thus be counted twice. The evening attendance amounted to 107,000. This is about one-seventh of the population of Liverpool. The Anglicans numbered 41,400, the Nonconformists, 50,000, and the

Roman Catholics 15,700. Such figures are enough to satisfy Freethinkers that their work of propaganda is far from ended. But they also show that only a fraction of the people, even in a city like Liverpool, attend the ministrations of religion. We are afraid that the vast majority of the rest are mere indifferentists.

"The Liverpool figures," the *Christian World* continues, "show amongst other things, that the churches whose preachers know how to present their message in a fresh and unconventional way have full attendances." Of course they have. They always did have full attendances, and they always will while the business lasts. But this fact has no relation whatever to the possible number of worshippers. A popular preacher draws a big congregation at the expense of other preachers. He doesn't make fresh Christians. It is just the same in this trade as in others. Successful cheese merchants thrive at the expense of the unsuccessful. If he develops into a millionaire, it doesn't add an ounce to the consumption of cheese. So much is wanted, and so much is sold. All the rest is a matter of distribution. And it is precisely the same with the gospel-shops. The total business and the total number of customers are limited.

A far more interesting census would be that of the number of people who are sincere Christians, the number who are half Christians, the number who are indifferent, and the number who disbelieve Christianity altogether. Unfortunately this census is impossible.

Mr. George Cadbury, of cocoa fame, is a Quaker. He is also a Liberal in politics, and the principal owner of the *Daily News*. We are not astonished, therefore, to learn that he is organising what is called "a religious census of London," on the lines of the Birmingham census some four years ago. Strictly speaking, it is not a religious census of London that is to be taken, but merely an account of the number of persons attending church and chapel on Sunday. The date fixed upon for a beginning is to-day (Nov. 23). The census staff consists of 600 picked men, who will have to visit 4,000 churches, chapels, mission halls, etc. This will occupy several Sundays, and it will be quite six months before the work is completed. The figures are to show the number of men, women, boys, and girls.

The London churches and chapels will probably whip up their attendances for a while. Father Brown, the Catholic priest who is a member of the London School Board, referred to this religious census from the pulpit last Sunday. He urged his congregation to be unrelaxing in their attendance, and especially to avoid coming late—after the enumerators had done counting. Father Brown is fly.

Dean Fremantle protests against being misrepresented. He declares that the brief summary report of his paper read before the Churchmen's Union has caused quite a gratuitous sensation. He means to publish the whole paper shortly, and then it will be seen what false idea of his views has been agitating the public mind. Meanwhile he begs to observe that he fully recognises "the divinity of our Savior," which does not appear to rest upon New Testament miracles, but rather upon "the firm ground of what he did and thought, and what he has been to mankind." There are "difficulties" in some matters connected with the Virgin birth, the "wonderful works," and the Resurrection; and Dr. Fremantle thought he could admit their strength without forfeiting his Christianity. He proceeds in a mystical vein, which we would rather not follow. The best course is to wait for the publication of his paper. We shall then have something definite to go upon.

We have looked through the first number of *T.P.'s Weekly*—which is one of the silliest and most egotistical titles imaginable. The contents are wishy-washy. Nothing else, indeed, was to be expected; for the great "Tay Pay," while a fluent and "taking" journalist, is intellectually as shallow as a saucer. Did anybody (able to judge, we mean) ever see the slightest sign that he had done any thinking on his own account? His chief characteristics are sentimentality and superficiality; and when these are associated with a ready pen and a readable style, they are certain to find an extensive, appreciative, and profitable public. The average man himself is sentimental and superficial; especially in England—Carlyle's country of "thirty millions, mostly fools."

"Tay Pay" opens with an article on "The Tragedy of George Eliot." He gushes over that great writer, but he has read her to very little purpose. He actually fancies that George Eliot's life alliance with George Henry Lewes, which could not for special reasons be legalised, was a "sin" in

the same sense as the selfishness, falsehood, and treachery which she tracks like Nemesis through the careers of some of her characters. "Tay Pay" does not perceive that motive is everything in the estimate of personality. Conduct against your convictions, and conduct in harmony with them, may have the same result to the world; but there is an immense difference in the result to your own character. To slay your own brother is fratricide; but if you slew him because you knew he was plotting against his own country in a crisis of her fate, and believed that his death meant his country's salvation, you might, of course, be wrong, yet the act would have a certain sublimity; whereas if you slew him merely to step in his shoes, and enjoy his wife or his property, you would be a mere vulgar villain. In the same way, George Eliot's living with George Henry Lewes as his wife till death parted them may have been a mistake (we are not arguing the point now); but it was not a "sin" like that of a woman who deserts her own children (say) for the sake of living with another man than her husband. George Eliot became, in fact, the mother by adoption of children whose natural mother had deserted them.

The idea that George Eliot wrote her works as "penance" and "atonement" for the "sin" of her life, could only occur to a Catholic, or one of Catholic training, like "Tay Pay." George Eliot herself would have smiled at the idea. She would not have troubled about "Tay Pay's" censure, and she would not have wished his vindication.

George Eliot was not a believer in God, but she was a believer in Duty. In the philosophy of Naturalism, the only "sin" is selfishness. Every crime, every vice, is a form of that failing. Where there is no selfishness there cannot be any "sin." At the worst there can only be an error of judgment.

Besides the article on George Eliot, this new weekly illuminator has an article on James Martineau, which describes the gentleman who wrote a certain volume with Harriet Martineau as "a nonentity named Atkinson." This is because the man was a Freethinker. Mr. H. G. Atkinson was perhaps not all that Harriet Martineau thought him, but he was not exactly a "nonentity." Probably the reviewer never saw the volume in question. We have read it, and are confident that Mr. Atkinson was a man of brains and erudition. His fault was that he was something of a crank. But he was not a "nonentity." He wrote better things than any in the first number of *T. P.'s Weekly*.

We may observe, incidentally, that Thomas Paine is referred to in "Tay Pay's" organ as "Tom Paine"—which is not good manners in regard to an author of such distinction. We are glad to hear, however, that Mr. John Burns likes Paine's saying: "The world is my country, and to do good is my religion." Mr. Hall Caine's motto is significant: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" How it befits the successful author! The Judge of all the earth can't be wrong while Mr. Hall Caine makes thousands of pounds by exploiting Christian sentimentalism. A big bank account is a solid support of optimism.

Patrick Leggett, laborer, was hung at Glasgow recently for the murder of his wife. It was a deliberate crime, of which he boasted beforehand; but 10,000 Roman Catholics petitioned for his reprieve. He refused to see his mother and sister after his conviction. Owing to the attentions of a Roman Catholic priest, however, he was able to maintain his serenity, and even to enjoy his meals. It is said that he was reconciled to his fate; by which it is meant, we presume, that he looked forward to a pleasant time in heaven. It is not stated whether he had any concern as to the eternal fate of the woman he murdered. His only utterance on the scaffold was, "I am Patrick Leggett." He seems to have thought this very important.

Captain Gambier, R.N., the author of the article on "Macedonian Intrigues and their Fruits" in the *Fortnightly Review*, does not believe that the Turks are a dying people, or that they will be driven out of Europe in a hurry by the Christian nations. The solidarity of Mohammedans all over the world has been growing of late years, and it would not be difficult to rally them to a Jihad, or Holy War, if Islam were attacked through the Sultan of Turkey. Nor would this rally be a thing to be despised. "The modern defenders of the faith of Allah, in Turkey alone," Captain Gambier says, "consist of some 450,000 to 500,000 fairly drilled, well-armed, incomparably brave and hardy men, all within two hundred miles, or a few hours' rail, of Constantinople itself—probably the strongest fortress in the world. Then behind these 500,000 stand over 2,000,000 men, still in the prime of their magnificent and sober manhood, not prowling

about the purlieus of a great city, or passing their nights in the tramps' ward, but agricultural laborers, boatmen, and others who live by their own hands, all trained men who have passed through the ranks. And again, behind them are unnumbered millions, scattered all over the earth, who would unquestionably rally to the defence of their Faith, men more instinct with the fighting quality than any other race."

The more intelligent Turks do not believe in the ultimate triumph of Christianity, in spite of the present dominance of the Christian nations. "He would be a bold man," a deep-thinking Turk said to Captain Gambier, "who would predict that the polytheism of the Christian would not give place in another 600 years to the less complicated belief in the one God of Mahomet."

Mr. Birrell, in his Colston Hall speech, referred to the German Emperor's great slaughter of peasants at Sandringham, and observed that "He was quite sure that he would carry his audience with him when he said that if crowned heads must kill something let it be pheasants." Mr. Birrell would find it difficult to carry a meeting of pheasants with him to the same conclusion. But man was always a vain sort of animal. He actually teaches his dirty-nosed children that they are all the image of God.

Religionists are good at finding grains of comfort. The *Christian World* finds a cheerful feature in the Liverpool religious census. "The people, we are persuaded," it says, "are not hostile, nor even indifferent, to religion." What a magnificent result after nearly two thousand years of a God-given faith! The people are not all ready to "chuck it"! There is a chance for it yet.

The prosecution of Christian Scientists in America is alarming the fraternity. Mrs. Eddy, the high priestess of the sect, now advises "that until public thought becomes better acquainted with Christian Science, scientists shall decline to doctor infectious or contagious cases." Meanwhile it may be noted that the American authorities take the line adopted by the English authorities against the Peculiar People. Mr. and Mrs. Quimby, and John Lathrop, a Christian Science "healer," are being tried for manslaughter, owing to their refusal to call in medical aid to one of the Quimby children who died of diphtheria.

Last week's *Reynolds's Newspaper* had a long leading article, signed "A. E. F.," on "The Breakdown of Old Beliefs." For the most part it was honest and sensible enough, though it managed to pay some indirect compliments to Roman Catholicism—as is usual in our contemporary. The final sentence, however, is of a different complexion. After saying that "man is capable of a higher faith than the faith in miracles and myths," the writer proceeds as follows:—"We can become steadfast in our faith in the eternal order, in the immortal sanctities of righteousness and brotherhood, and in the doctrines of Him who laid down principles of human conduct beyond which we cannot go—principles which mark the limits of social evolution and have thereby established His claim to be the way, the truth, and the life." This sort of thing is hardly the best substitute for the old beliefs. What is the use of destroying one folly to make room for another? Talking about "the eternal order," printing the pronouns relating to Jesus with capital letters, speaking of New Testament ethics as final for the human race, and describing a mythical personage as the way, the truth, and the life for all mankind—is just as nonsensical as the Athanasian Creed. Fortunately there are signs in other parts of *Reynolds's* that its writers have a better understanding of what should—and in the long run must—follow "The Breakdown of Old Beliefs."

Thieves are like the New Testament God in one thing. They are no respecters of persons. They would as soon rob a poor man as a millionaire; sooner when he is easier to rob. Mr. Steadman, the English labor leader, has been eased of £22 by an hotel bedroom thief in America. It was probably all Mr. Steadman's "reserve fund."

The "depopulation" of France, of which her pious traducers make so much, seems, after all, to have been but a temporary phenomenon. The tide appears to have turned. In 1900 there were 853,000 deaths and only 827,000 births. In 1901 there were 784,000 deaths and 857,000 births. The number of marriages also rose from 299,000 to 303,000.

More "Providence." The latest dispatches from Guatemala City state that great havoc was wrought by the recent eruptions of Santa Maria volcano. Hundreds of people are said to have perished. "He doeth all things well."

Mr. Louis Tussaud has failed in his application to restrain Mr. Walter Stiff from showing wax figures at 133 Edgware-road in such a way as to induce the public to believe they were the plaintiff's work. Some of the exhibits had certainly been bought from him, but they had been dreadfully mixed up since. For instance, the head of the Archbishop of Canterbury had been placed on the body of Charles Peace, the Sheffield murderer. How shocking! But it does not appear which misplaced portion has the greater right to complain; the Archbishop's head for being joined to Charles Peace's body, or Charles Peace's body for being saddled with the Archbishop's head.

Poor John Chinaman! The Christian missionaries go out to convert him, and the missionaries' friends go out to rob and murder him, and to violate his wife and daughters. But it seems that he could teach the lot of them some good lessons in common morality. According to Mr. J. W. Jamieson's latest Consular report on China, the business integrity of the Chinese is so high that almost all European banks and mercantile houses in China conduct their business without having in their employment one single white man capable of checking in the slightest degree—be it even to the extent of reading simple numerals—documents submitted by native shroffs, concerning transactions running into thousands of pounds.

According to Lieut.-Colonel Manifold, of the Indian Civil Service, who has lately lectured at the United Service Institute, Simla, the Yellow River in China periodically changes its bed, causing extraordinary destruction of human life and devastation of the country. Forty million people, he heard, had been washed away or starved, owing to its inundations fifteen years ago, the floods rendering vast areas of cultivated land sterile by covering it with sand. Forty millions! The number seems almost incredible. But a calamity that left such a report behind it must have been about the most terrible in human history. What an idea it gives one of the vigilant mercy of "Providence!"

The Church of England, through the Bishops in the House of Lords, opposes marriage with a deceased wife's sister—which it calls sacrilege and incest. Over at Sydney, where the *secular law* is different, a committee, appointed by the Synod, has reported that such unions do not contravene any law of the Anglican Church loyally binding in that State; and the report was adopted, though after an acrimonious debate, by a large majority. The clergy may kick at first, but in the end they must follow their bread and butter.

The *Daily Telegraph* draws from the *Lancet* some interesting particulars of the discovery of a Temple of Æsculapius under the ancient Byzantine church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin of "Tarsus" on the island of Cos, in the Ægean Sea, off the south-west of Asia Minor. Perhaps the excavations, our contemporary says, will result in further discoveries which may "help to decide the question whether there were or were not lying-in or other hospitals before the birth of Christ." But this question was decided long ago. It is well-known that the temples of Æsculapius were really hospitals; as Mr. Pater represents one of them in his beautiful *Marius the Epicurean*. There were hospitals set up in India by the Buddhist King Asoka long before the Christian era; and hospitals were of great antiquity in Egypt, where doctors used to be publicly appointed for the gratuitous treatment of the poor.

Mr. Rose, the West London magistrate, has sent Jules Rudigier to prison for five weeks with hard labor for "pretending to tell fortunes." It appears that the culprit took a shilling from a woman, whom he told that he did not tell fortunes, being simply a palmist. She said that would do, and he read the lines of her hand. He told her she had a strong will, was distrustful, and had a bad temper. That was a strong shilling's-worth, and he should have stopped there. But he went on to say that she would live to sixty-five, would become a widow, and have an offer of marriage at forty-one. Hence he is picking oakum to-day. When he comes out of prison he should try to get into a more "respectable" branch of the fortune-telling business. In one branch he might get a good honest living by telling people how to escape an imaginary fire called hell. In another branch he might take money for hurrying the souls of subscribers' dead relatives through an imaginary place called purgatory. Jules Rudigier has to learn—or rather is learning—that imposture is only a sound and reputable business when it is conducted on a large scale and with a splendid flourish. Call yourself a palmist, and you are run in; call yourself a man of God, and you are honored; nay, the law keeps a "blasphemy" rod for those who laugh at your pretensions.

The Bishop of London takes a high and mighty view of his profession. He says it is a profanation and prostitution of "our beautiful marriage service" to use it over "those who have been divorced." He declares that no clergyman should perform the marriage ceremony for divorced persons. No matter what the law says—there is the "moral conscience of the Church" above it. Indeed! We thought the Church of England was a State Church. Is not the Bishop of London's salary paid him by the Ecclesiastical Commissioner's? And was not the Commission appointed by Parliament? What impudence, then, it is on the part of this State-paid Bishop to fly in the face of the laws of the State! While divorce is allowed by the law of England, under certain conditions, which are applied in a court of justice, the clergy of the law-established Church have no sort of right to interfere. If they want greater freedom they can obtain it by giving up their public posts and living "on their own."

The Dartmouth police seem to have a lot of time on their hands. In order to get through some of it they have been worrying a poor tobacconist, named Joseph Scammell, for assisting his customers to smoke on Sunday. The magistrates responded to the call of the police by fining the culprit five shillings and costs. But the Mayor dissented. He said he did not believe in enforcing an old Act of Parliament passed for a very different purpose; nor did he understand why this one man had been picked out for prosecution. We are glad to see that our old friend Mr. Voisey has raised this matter on the Town Council. There is to be a set discussion upon it.

"Ought Sceptics to Resign?" is answered in the *Midland Express* by "A Clergyman who Voluntarily Retired for Reasons of Conscience." He pleads for common honesty in the pulpit. Clergymen who doubt or disbelieve what they preach should clear out of the Church. We gather from what he says that a good many preachers are telling lies for a living.

John Wesley, in his sermon on "The General Spread of the Gospel," lays his lash honestly enough (as usual) on the Christians. Looking eastward, he finds the Christians in the Turkish dominions "little, if at all, better than the Turks." As for the Georgian, Circassian, and Menegrelian Christians, he says they "are a proverb of reproach to the Turks themselves; not only for their deplorable ignorance, but for their total, stupid, and barbarous irreligion." The Russian and Abyssinian Christians are just as bad. The Western Churches have more knowledge, and more Scriptural and rational methods of worship; but two-thirds are under the Church of Rome, and most of them are "entirely unacquainted with either the theory or practice of religion." Nor are the Protestants any better. So far, indeed, from following the example of Christ, they "are as far from it as hell is from heaven." Honest John does not mince his language. He speaks out straight and true. He may be mistaken, but you may be sure he says what he means. Having been in America, and seen how the "poor American savage" is treated by the civilised Christians, Wesley does not wonder at his asking, "What are the Christians better than we?" And he puts the following words into the mouth of the "Malabrian heathen": "Christian man take my wife; Christian man much drunk; Christian man kill man! Devil Christian! Me no Christian." Yet it is amusing to see Wesley speculating on the good time coming, on how soon God is going to spread real Christianity over the world, and turn *Devil-Christians* into *Angel-Christians*. More than a hundred years have rolled by since Wesley prophesied this speedy millennium; and, alas, it is as far off as ever. The *Devil-Christians* still hold the field.

The Bishop of Liverpool has been "charging" the clergy of his diocese, and warning them (and through them their flocks) against the evils of partisanship, individualism, and materialism. In order to show his own hatred of partisanship he was doing his best to cut off the Ritualistic part of the Church in his own district. Individualism led single churches to look too much to themselves, and too little to the Bishop. Materialism showed itself in the decline of Sunday observance. The Lord's Day was fast becoming a day of work and pleasure, Sunday-schools were on the decline, and there was a marked diminution in church attendance. Alack and alas! The task that lay before the Church was superhuman, but they relied upon the Spirit of God. Yes, but the Spirit of God did not keep the Church out of this mess, and is not likely to extricate it. Perhaps there is more hope in the Bishop's statement that "the clergy must have a higher ideal of life and work." There is room for it—plenty of room for it.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, November 23, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road; 7.30, "The Greatest Lie in the World."

November 30, South Shields. December 1, Newcastle; 14, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 23, Liverpool. Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

J. TOMKINS.—The *Hibbert Journal* is published by Williams and Norgate.

NORTH LONDONER.—It is of no use arguing on the subject with a man who seems quite incapable of understanding Hume; and who, in one column, makes him responsible for the opinions of Philo, and in the next column makes him responsible for the opinions of Cleanthes—two quite different characters in the "Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion." It is perhaps natural that a Scotch Presbyterian cannot perceive when Hume is ironical. There are some persons for whom it is necessary that an author with any humor in him should write every now and then, as Artemus Ward did, "N.B.—This is writ sarcastic." The man who thinks that Hume's death-bed jest about Charon implied his belief in a future life is past praying for. And a controversialist who answers all you don't say, and nothing that you do, is best left to beat the air at his leisure. The one fact which there is no gainsaying is this. Dr. Clifford gave between inverted commas as a quotation from Hume the sentence "It is to the Puritans the English owe their liberties." No such sentence has been adduced in reply to our challenge. So much for the fact. As to the ethics of the matter, it is only a Christian disputant, trained in the worst school in the world, who, when asked for a reference to an apparent quotation he gives from a distinguished author, would think of offering you a totally different form of words as his justification, and afterwards express astonishment at your objecting to his methods of controversy.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks again for cuttings.

D. S. CURRIE.—George Eliot was, we suppose, a Positivist. She subscribed to the Positivist Church, conducted by Dr. Congreve, though she did not join it as a member. She liked the term Meliorist—the golden mean between the Optimist and the Pessimist. It is significant that the two books she translated from German into English were Strauss's *Life of Jesus* and Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*. The former is the most thorough analytical attack on the Gospel story ever written; the latter is an explanation of Christianity on the lines of absolute Atheism.

JOHN BASSETT.—Glad to hear you liked Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening, and are "keeping it in your memory." We have noticed one of the *Reynolds'* articles in "Acid Drops."

J. W. STAFFORD.—Thanks for the beautiful copy of the photograph you were able to take of the portrait of Paine that belonged to the late Earl of Charlemont. It was good of you to think of us.

H. M. (Liverpool).—The reference must be to a political date in America, in view of which the jokist doubted if the world *did* move.

JOHN A. ALLAN.—Matter intended for the *Freethinker* should be sent direct to the Editor.

F. J. VOISEY.—Thanks, we are quite well at present. Accept our best wishes for your success as a friend of freedom on the Dartmouth Town Council.

MUCH UPSET.—We can hardly undertake what you suggest, but we will keep your letter by us and make inquiries. Of course we appreciate the trouble you have taken in the matter.

H. J.—Cuttings are always welcome.

E. CHAPMAN.—Thanks for cards of lectures. The other matter shall have attention.

M. SPROUL.—We understand the Company's shop-manager has written you. The fact is, our stock of the "Dresden" Ingersoll is exhausted, and the latest orders cannot be executed until we receive a fresh supply from New York.

J. HALLIWELL.—Thanks for cutting. Your change of address is notified to the N. S. S. secretary.

E. S.—Your letter got mislaid somehow. Hence the delay of our reply. You see we have (at present) only two paragraph headings. What doesn't go under one must go under the other. It was our word of comment that decided the position of that paragraph; otherwise the *fact* was, as you say, a good sign of the times. Accept our thanks for your passing the *Freethinker* round. We could get many new readers if our friends would only introduce this journal to some of the people they know.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Truthseeker (New York)—Liverpool Daily Post—Blue Grass Blade—Yorkshire Post—Haltwhistle Echo—Secular Thought—Midland Express—Leeds Mercury—Reynolds' Newspaper—Freidenker—Public Opinion—Dartmouth Chronicle—Manchester Evening Chronicle—Newtownards Chronicle—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Herald—Freethought Magazine—Railway Times.

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.

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Sugar Plums.

THERE was an unfortunate blunder in last Sunday's *Reynolds'* which announced Mr. Foote to be lecturing in the evening at Camberwell, instead of at the Athenæum Hall. We know that some who wanted to hear him went to the wrong place. His lecture on Mr. Mallock's new book, *Religion as a Credible Doctrine*, was evidently much appreciated by the Athenæum Hall audience. A review of this book from the lecturer's pen will shortly appear in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (Nov. 23). His subject will be, "The Greatest Lie in the World." What that lie is will appear in the course of the lecture. All we have to say now is that the "saints" should inform their orthodox friends that they will hear something to their advantage.

The *Literary World*, reviewing Mr. W. H. Mallock's new book, extracts some strong passages, which, by themselves, look remarkably blasphemous. Such passages, our contemporary remarks, would at an earlier period of English history have "certainly procured him a lodging in one of His Majesty's gaols, and at a still earlier one a place as principal actor in an *auto da fe*." "Indeed, we do not know," our contemporary adds, "in view of the *dicta* of the judges in Mr. Foote's case whether it would be safe to detach from their context certain statements of Mr. Mallock's." That it is not very dangerous is proved by the fact that these statements *are* detached, after all. Perhaps it is a great deal owing to the fight Mr. Foote made, nearly twenty years ago, that the free expression of opinion is far safer in England to-day.

Mr. C. Cohen had an excellent audience at the Leicester Secular Hall on Sunday evening. South Lancashire friends will please note that Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Nov. 23) at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool.

Owing to unforeseen difficulties the publication of the projected Freethought monthly is postponed till the new year. It will be issued on the first day of January. This is not to be an ambitious magazine, but a fighting "pennyworth." It is to bear an "inoffensive" title, and an "inoffensive" imprint, in the hope that it may carry Freethought propaganda into wider circles than are reached at present. Of course it is not to be in opposition to the *Freethinker*, but rather a help in the shape of an "advance-agent."

We beg to draw attention once more to the Appeal of the Leicester Secular Society, which will be found this week in our advertisement columns. This Society deserves all possible support. We do not know of any more meritorious local organisation in the world. It has been for many years an active centre of enlightenment and elevation, and its immediate future should be secured against the miserable want of means. We should be glad to know that the Leicester Secular Society had been placed beyond the reach of apprehension. There must be a good many Freethinkers in various parts of the country who could forward a subscription without much inconvenience. Will they do it?

The Glasgow Branch will give an Orchestral Concert on Sunday evening, November 30. This Branch has now an Orchestra which plays high-class music before each evening lecture. The result is a gratifying increase in the size of the audiences. The Branch has also purchased a piano, which

is in many ways an assistance. No doubt the November 30 concert will be "a treat." Glasgow friends should secure their tickets beforehand from Mr. Baxter, the newsagent, or from members of the committee. The price is only a modest "saxpunce."

The Coventry Trades and Labor Council's notice of meeting for November 16 was a "sign of the times." After the Agenda came an extract on the Labor Movement from Mr. F. J. Gould's last article in the *Freethinker*. And a beautiful extract too.

Dr. Stuart's letters in the *Haltwhistle Echo* have roused up a number of orthodox wasps. One of them says, on the authority of "one of our greatest minds," whom he does not identify, that Atheism is "professed by the coarsest minds." He also quotes from J. S. Mill the sentence that "The laws of nature do not account for their origin." We do not recollect where this sentence occurs in Mill's writings, but wherever it occurs it proves nothing to the Christian's purpose. Indeed, it is a mere truism. It is not easy to see how anything can account for its own origin. Perhaps, if this "Veritas" will read Mill more thoroughly, he will find that all he meant by the laws of nature was uniformities of concurrence or sequence. Meanwhile we have no doubt that Dr. Stuart will be able to settle the hash of his opponents.

Dr. Pierson, the American preacher, now resident in London, has been preaching at the anniversary services of the Leeds Free Church Council. He stood up for orthodoxy. He said the Bible was God's Book from the first chapter to the last. But, our readers will say, there is nothing new in that. Quite so. But it serves as an introduction to something else. Dr. Pierson spoke as follows, according to the report in the *Leeds Mercury*:—"He had seen for the last twenty years a steady and determined Satanic assault on the citadel of the Christian religion. It had moved with a rapidity that had not been equalled by the growth of any similar Satanic assault in all the ages. The inspiration of the Word of God was denied; the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ was impugned, and a future state of rewards and punishments was brought into doubt. Regeneration was superseded by reformation, the Holy Spirit and His personality had become an indefinite influence of some sort, "nobody knows what;" sanctification had degenerated into mere evolution, prayer into the pulling of a man at his boot strings, a blowing with his own breath on the sails of his boat to propel it—a good physical exercise, but having no power to prevail with God."

Dr. Pierson and the Free Churches are waking up. The "Satanic assault" has been going on for more than a century, but they have only just noticed it. Perhaps this is because the "Satanic assault" has got inside the Church of England, and is doing well there.

Mr. G. W. E. Russell has contributed his share to the growing pronouncement in favor of Secular Education. This is what he is reported as having said at the New Reform Club Dinner, at the Hotel Cecil, on Tuesday evening, November 11: "In the matter of education they had no need to wipe their slate, because there was nothing they had written which they would like to see erased. They ought rather to write something which had not been inscribed with sufficient clearness. They stood on the policy of 1870 for free, compulsory, and secular education. And until the Liberal party could harden its heart to write that motto on its slate it would be involved in a miserable half-sectarian and half-educational strife."

Mr. Frederic Harrison writes as follows on the Positivist view of the Education Bill; "The machinery of public education has grown so far outside anything which they regard as wholesome education, that they can take no serious part in these complicated struggles to get hold of poor children. All that they can do is to stand fast to their own principles, and watch the tempests that await those who defy the simple solution of these problems. That solution is that, whilst true education must ever be founded in religion, saturated with religion, given and administered by men inspired by religion, it is monstrous for the State in our age to attempt to force upon the children of the people any sort of theological instruction whatever, or to play into the hands of any theological sect, whether it calls itself an historic Church or a free communion of fellow-believers. The State may, and should, offer the bare rudiments of reading, writing, and counting to all who are willing to be taught, without compulsion, and without fee. It must remain wholly apart from any dogmatic school, even by inspection, grant, or favor. It is for those who really live by a religion of their own to see

that those whom they can influence have an adequate training in what they hold to be so precious."

Messrs. Macmillan have added to their admirable *English Men of Letters* a monograph on William Hazlitt by that most delightful critic, Augustine Birrell. It is worth noting that *Freethinkers* make a brave show among the biographies just added to this series. "George Eliot," Matthew Arnold, William Hazlitt, were all *Freethinkers* as well as great writers. Tennyson was not a *Freethinker*, but he was very heterodox. He was an Evolutionist, and he hated hell almost as much as Colonel Ingersoll.

The *Eastern Daily Press*, Yarmouth, publishes a long and excellent letter from Mr. J. W. de Caux on "Christianity and Science" in reply to the Dean of Norwich. The Dean will probably not answer his critic, though it would be more honest to do so than to answer imaginary opponents—*alias* men of straw. Mr. de Caux's letter is bound to do good in any case.

In the *Freethinker* of November 9 we referred to the sad case of the Rev. William Lee, who died of privation. It was mentioned incidentally that he had earned a little money now and then by doing literary work for Lord Rothschild and other gentlemen. This was not intended as any sort of reflection on Lord Rothschild, whose benevolence is too well known to be lightly questioned. We prefer to be strictly accurate, however; and we now beg to state what we have since learnt, namely, that the newspaper report on which we relied was incorrect. The unfortunate clergyman never did any literary work for Lord Rothschild. About fifteen months ago he applied to his lordship for assistance; this was tendered him after due enquiries had been made; and further help was sent him a few months before his death in response to a further appeal. This was all Lord Rothschild knew of the Rev. William Lee.

When We Die Are We Dead?

PROBABILITY SAYS, YES—HOPE SUGGESTS ANOTHER ANSWER.

BY DR. J. E. ROBERTS

(Minister of the Church of This World, Kansas City, Mo.)

LIFE, an unknown, joining two mysteries—birth and death—out of and into silence—a sleep, a waking, and a sleep; an articulate cry, a gasp, and life's begun; toil, weariness, a gasp, and life is done. Spirit and matter, married by love—spirit and matter divorced by death. What matter is, or spirit, we do not know, and in our ignorance we hope and fear and dream our dreams. What is man, that he should dream of immortality? How should this creature of a day deem himself destined to eternal existence? Is not man taking himself rather seriously? Is he so important that the universe cannot continue without him? If endless life be a boon, what has man done to merit it? If it be a penalty, what has he done to deserve it? Has he found life so pleasant, so fascinating, that he wishes never to give it up? Has it not been a thing of ache, pain, travail, bitterness, disappointment, and defeat? The only perfect freedom from care and sorrow he has ever known has been in the hours of dreamless sleep. Would, then, eternal waking be preferable to the undreaming and eternal sleep? Suppose one, before he were born, before he began to be, had been shown this human world—suppose he had been pointed to its age—ache, penury, and pain; its storms and tempests and stranded wrecks, its strifes and rivalries, its tears and broken hearts, its illusions and deceits, its triumphs and successes won by crushing others into despair—would he have chosen to live? Would he not have said to the Infinite Power: "Wake me not from the unthrobbing sleep"? If he could have balanced against the pain and tears the fleeting joys, against the wrong that rankles the little right, against the poor successes and triumphs the large pathetic defeats—would he have counted life a good bargain at such a price?

The senses return no report of a life beyond. Indeed, the senses are very stubborn in their declaration that the dead are dead. The voice that spake

so late is dumb. The curtained eyes give back no eager answering look. Frozen are the tides of life, and the faithful heart is still; and yet, in spite of the fact that life is more of pain than joy—in spite of the fact that the senses persist in saying the dead are dead—in spite of all this the world, as a rule, has gone on believing that there is a life beyond. The human race, for the most part, have not only believed it, but have been willing to take the chances of whether the life to come is more of good than ill. The impressive fact is the human hope. Whether there is any basis for it or not, the hope itself is a fact. It must be reckoned with. As far as we know, the race was not indebted for that hope to anything outside of nature. It seems to be a part of the constitution of man. It is not peculiar to any religion—the Pagan, the infidel, the Christian share that hope alike. It did not come with civilisation—it came before; it did not come with religion—it came before religion came. No less surprising a thing about it is that civilisation has not eliminated it. No advance of knowledge, no discovery of science, no experiment in laboratory, no secret wrung by the alchemist from the crucible—nothing that man has ever found out makes that hope unreasonable. The whole world has been changed since this hope first found lodgment in the hearts of men. It may have been a comparatively easy thing for people to believe in heaven when heaven was only a few leagues away, and as easy to believe in hell when hell could be reached by an underground passage. But the astronomer came after awhile, and showed that there was no up and no down, no forward, no backward, no here and no there—that the universe must be conceived of as an indefinite illimitable expanse, any point of which may be considered as the centre. They took away the idea of the crystalline disc which answered for the firmament of the early worshippers; they took away the little perforations through which they imagined the light from the celestial home shone; they placed the world in happy harmony with ten million times ten million fleeting planets, and there was no longer the heaven that might be reached with an ambition tower or by the flight of wings. They took away the underground world; they showed that there was no longer the possibility of believing that Vulcan or Hephæstus or any of the fabled gods had a dwelling-place there waiting for us. They blotted out the conception of the great white throne and the streets of gold; they left nothing but space and planets and worlds; they reduced it all to a material universe throbbing with intelligence and filled with light—and yet the old hope in immortality did not cease. It adapted itself to the new conception of time and space and worlds, and went on without apology.

This is the fact, it proves nothing. All men might believe in a delusion; all the race has at more than one period believed in things that were afterwards proven to be false, superstitions, myths, and unrealities. Though it could be shown that all the world believes and has always believed in immortality, it would not prove anything, but it would be suggestive. It is freely admitted that the faith in immortality is not universal. It has perhaps never been. There have been some distinguished religions that did not believe in it, that of the ancient Hebrew people, for example, but the race for the most part has. The savage and the civilised, the saint, the seer, the philosopher, the ignorant, and the untrained; the barbarian and the scholar. They are digging in the ruins of some of the cities believed to have been the most ancient of the earth and they find the pathetic story of the faith in immortality. A piece of pottery shaped like a human skull, and attached to it, or rather a part of it, the miniature figure of a human being in a sitting posture. Thus ages upon ages ago, before history began to be, so long ago that there is no means of computing the distance between that unknown people and us, then they were uttering in this symbol their belief that after death man should rise; he was not dead. This again proved nothing.

To-day very generally throughout the Christian world all peoples of varying degrees of religion and irreligion, of faith and scepticism, throughout and around all the world are the songs of faith and acclaim singing man's old-time belief in immortality. This again proves nothing, but suggests much. If it cannot be accounted for in any other way, the hope must be attributed just to nature. It must be taken as a part of primitive man, and also a part of civilised and developed man. Nature, then, is responsible for the hope. I think the question will come at last to this: whether Nature is a liar or tells the truth. If it rests with her to fulfil the hope, then we are not responsible, and need not concern ourselves about the method by which she will do it.

The only consistent theory of immortality is that it is a fact of nature, if it is at all. It does not depend upon any religious belief, or any complexion of religion whatever. If it is, it exists as a fact of Nature. The man that does not believe it does not destroy the fact; the man who does believe it does not make it any more a fact. A man to have immortality does not need to prove it, or demonstrate it, or even to believe in it, if it be regarded as a fact of Nature.

The world has never been able to formulate a satisfactory working idea of future existence. The Church attempted that and failed. It is beyond the reach of our imagination to picture where they live, if they live, or what they do, if they do anything but sleep. The thought of the future life has been confused and complicated by these attempts of men to explain what the future is. The Christian world, for the most part, has settled down upon those two antithetical ideas—the heaven of joy, the hell of punishment. There is nothing in either of them but what a good man would shun. The inane heaven has no attraction. The selfish, cruel, heartless joy is abhorrent to every man and woman with a truly human heart. No one wants heaven, if while they are rejoicing any they love or any they do not love must be consuming in quenchless fires. And the other place with only punishment is just as useless and unmeaning and unworthy as a rational destiny or a rational God.

(To be concluded.)

Some Children's Sayings.

FROM THE *Referee* COMPETITION.

"Who made you?" a little girl at a Sunday-school class was asked. Putting her two forefingers about four inches apart, she replied, "Dod made me as big as dat, and the rest I growed myself."—(Mrs.) FLORENCE MACRO.

Little Ethel, who was of an inquiring turn of mind, said to her mother, "Mamma, when I go to Heaven, may I take my best wax doll?" "Oh, no, dear," was the reply. "Well, my second best?" "No, no!" "Well, my baby doll?" "Certainly not, dear; dollies do not go to Heaven." "Then (triumphantly) I'll take my rag doll and go to hell."—(Miss) MAUD NEVELL.

My little girl, aged five, has recently commenced to learn Bible history, as a consequence of which we were recently entertained by the following proposition: God made the earth and all that is in it in six days, and He rested on the seventh day. What's He been busy about ever since?"—C. KARL.

A little girl, being invited to a children's party, was cautioned by her mother how to behave, and that when the cake came round the first time she should say "Yes, please," and take a piece; also the second time to do the same, but at the third time of asking she was to refuse any more cake and say "No, thank you." The next morning the mother asked her little girl how she got on at the party. "Well, mother, I did as you told me; but they brought the cake round a fourth time, and you didn't tell me what to say. So I looked at the lady and said 'Take the damned thing away'—like pa says."—H. J. ANDREWES.

A child was taking tea with us, when he suddenly asked me my name, also my mother's. I told him, and in return asked him what his mother's was. He informed me that it was Mrs. Morris. "No, dear; what is her Christian name?" I said. But he did not seem to understand, so I said, "What does your papa call her?" "She-devil," he replied.—GEORGINA I. JEFFREYS.

American Novelties.

THE Freethought Publishing Company has received a large consignment of an eighty-page pamphlet, entitled *Facts Worth Knowing*, from America. They are forwarded through Mr. Farrell, the late Colonel Ingersoll's publisher, on behalf of a wealthy lady Freethinker, who presents them for distribution in this country. The pamphlet is well printed on good paper, and contains matter from the pens of some of the leading Freethinkers of the United States, including Ingersoll, Pentecost, Washburne, and Roberts (of the Church of this World). It is meant for free distribution, but the Company's expenses must be covered. Nothing less, and nothing more. A charge of one shilling per hundred copies will therefore be made. The cost of carriage (in addition) will be sixpence per hundred for London applicants, and one shilling per hundred for provincial applicants. We may mention that a parcel of one hundred copies will weigh about fifteen pounds. "Saints" who want a hundred for free distribution will please forward 1s. 6d. if they live in London and 2s. if they live in the country. There ought to be hundreds of applicants during the next week.

Branches or other Societies wishing several hundreds or a thousand (or more) copies of *Facts Worth Knowing* for distribution should apply to Miss Vance at our publishing office. Special terms will be made in each case according to circumstances.

The Freethought Publishing Company has also received a large consignment of "Ingersoll Gems" from Mr. Farrell. These "Gems" are three in number, and are all beautifully lithographed on cardboard fit for framing. No. I. is entitled "Life." It contains a fine prose-poem by the Colonel, with a very pretty portrait of himself nursing his grandchild upon his knee. The little thing is in long clothes, and looks up to granddad with one of those old expressions of which only infants are capable. No. II. is "The Declaration of the Free"—Ingersoll's noble Freethought poem which was published during the last few years of his life. This has a very artistic border with appropriate mottoes. No. III. is "The Creed of Science," containing the whole pith of Ingersoll's gospel in a brief compass. The bordering of this is very elegant. We may add that each "Gem" bears a facsimile of Ingersoll's signature.

These "Gems" are sold for two shillings each in America. They are offered by the Freethought Publishing Company for sixpence each in this country. The postage is one penny each in addition. Freethinkers would do well to buy these "Gems" and have them framed. They would look attractive on the wall, and friends and acquaintances might be attracted into reading what would give them a good idea of the higher spirit of Freethought.

Gospel and Ice Cream for Japan.

THE Paris letter in the Philadelphia *Post* tells of the two blessings of western civilisation it is the ambition of an American-educated Japanese girl to take home to her land. It was at one of M. Delcasse's receptions in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. She came with the Japanese Ambassador's party, and she was winsome as a flower, this delicate Japanese girl—oh, an amber girl!—dressed in the silken splendor of her race. Therefore was it almost uncannily to hear her talk with a down east accent. When you gasped, she said:—

"Why, I'm a Wellesley girl, you know."

"And you are going home?"

"Yes, back to Japan."

The small face grew very serious.

"I want to teach my people two things when I get back," she said—"ice cream and the Gospel."

A Wonder.

"You mean the clergyman with whom you exchanged pulpits a few weeks ago? Oh, yes! Mamma, liked him very much."

"Yes? She enjoyed the sermon?"

"Oh, yes. She says it does her heart good to listen to a preacher who has nothing to say against the Bible."

When the Gardener "Said Things."

His religious training had been carefully given. One day while he was still a very tiny chap he heard the gardener, who had just struck his thumb with a hammer, expressing himself in vigorous language. The boy listened; then, running into the house, cried, delightedly:

"Oh, mamma, John knows God, too!"

Dean Fremantle's Interim Explanation.

From His Letter to the "Ripon Gazette."

THE object of the reporter seems to have been to make a sensation, not to give the facts. He chose out just the things which might, when dis severed from their context, rightly cause alarm. He did not give the other side of them which was expressed in the paper. He did not recall the full recognition of the divinity of our Savior, "of Whom," the paper said, "we are all, I trust, devoted followers." Above all he gave no idea whatever of the argument of the paper. The argument was that the words "nature" and "natural" had been misused; they had been made to mean only nature in its lower developments, whereas the true nature of man is only found in Christ; and the true nature of the world in its highest ideal to which the Creator is guiding it by working in it, and through it. Thus the laws of nature cannot be separated from God, nor from Christ.

That there are difficulties in some matters connected with the manifestation of God in Christ it would be untruthful not to admit, especially in those of the Virgin birth, in some of the "wonderful works," and in the Resurrection. But in the first of these though the facts (1) that it is never mentioned in the New Testament except in the first two chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and (2) that it was not a part of the creed of Nicæa, make it of less authority (as in the parallel case of the words "Descended into Hell"), yet the accounts might be understood without any violation of biological law.

The incarnation and divinity of our Savior stand on the firm ground of what He did and thought, and what He has been to mankind. As to the last point, that of the Resurrection, the views of Bishop Horsley, of Dean Goulbourn, and of Bishop Westcott, which have so often been urged by Canon MacColl, as well as by myself in Ripon Cathedral and elsewhere, were followed, namely, that the Resurrection was not a return to the mortal conditions of this life, but a manifestation of the spiritual state, and the "spiritual body." As to the "mighty works" of our Lord, in some cases we could see them to be instances of the power of a Majestic Presence and Personality over weakened and hysterical frames; and possibly other cases might be similarly accounted for. But since in all things, even the commonest, there is an element of the unknown, we must expect that this would be the case still more in the works of Christ Himself. If we could know everything do doubt all would appear quite natural according to the higher conception of nature, for which the writer is contending. This is brought out in the late Duke of Argyll's great work, *The Reign of Law*.

A Night Watch.

THE lurid sun had set.

Across the sky the black'ning rain-clouds swept,
And wildly surging met.

And over all the land thick darkness crept.

Like one that suffered pain

The hollow moaning of the wind went by.

And then down came the rain

Like tears to weary eyes, grief-parched, dry.

Throughout the whole night long

I heard the sobbing of the wind and rain,

That, like a tale of wrong,

Kept ever beating in upon my brain.

"Is all our toil in vain?"

Is all the labor of the circling years

But adding pain to pain?

And will the darkness end our hopes and fears?"

"Our tearful eyes are blind,

But through the deep, deep darkness of the night,

At last! oh, shall we find

The dawning or an everlasting light?"

"With changeless faith you sought

The day eternal in the sunset's gleam.

Your strength is spent in nought!

The life that is, you barter for a dream."

Deep silence fell on all,

And then a whispering sound the trees among

That broke the night's dark thrall,

And hill and valley woke to joyous song.

Oh, welcome that glad voice!

Oh, welcome that bright glory on its way!

Rejoice! oh, heart, rejoice!

Behold! behold! the breaking of the day.

Come, dawn of higher faith,

Of liberty from crafty, cruel creeds!

Then God shall die the death,

And Man shall rise, espousing human needs.

L. J. NICHOLSON.

Correspondence.

HELPING FORWARD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Through Darwin's *Descent of Man* I have been converted to Secularism. This happened about a month ago. The other Sunday afternoon, in Brockwell Park, I had a back number of the *Freethinker* placed in my hands by a lady, apparently a member of the National Secular Society, who were at the time delivering a lecture. I have kept that number, and bought the last two weeks' issues. From notices therein I learnt that you were to lecture in Camberwell Hall, New Church-road, November 9. I determined to hear the lecture, and asked a friend to accompany me. We heard you speak, and were greatly influenced.

I have decided to do what lies in my power to advance the cause. It is not much that I can do, but every little helps. This morning I took out with me on my travels round London the back numbers in my possession, and left one in the train I travelled in from Loughboro' to Victoria. At Brixton three ladies entered the compartment which I had to myself. One of the three picked up the paper, and began to peruse it carefully. After a short interval I overheard the remark made by the reader that "there was a good deal of truth in that," and pointed out the object of comment to her friend, who, after reading it, said "Yes." They conversed freely on the subject, but in subdued tones. On reaching Victoria, one of them rolled up the paper, and took it with her. Successful in my first throw, I was much gratified with the incident. I shall repeat my simple plan of distribution weekly. That is better than throwing the paper amongst the waste-paper at home.

I think your paper would stand a better chance of publicity if it were issued in the middle of the week. Could you not see your way to have it placed on S. & Sons' bookstalls? Last week I made innumerable inquiries at different bookstalls in London, but could not obtain a copy. Publicity means advancement. J. C.

VIVISECTION AND UTILITARIANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Deputy Surgeon-General Thornton says that I am mistaken in supposing that he referred to Freethinkers in his use of the terms "Utilitarian" and "Materialistic." He should have said that *he* was mistaken in wrongly using words which *do* unmistakably refer to Freethinkers. He might also have expressed some regret that he had unintentionally countenanced and aided the slanders with which Secularists are only too familiar. A gentleman who pleads for "justice" and "humanity" should himself display justice and consideration towards those to whose sense of justice and humanity he is appealing.

If I were to say that assassination can only be defended by purely Nonconformist and Spiritual arguments, would a Nonconformist be satisfied if I calmly answered his remonstrances by assuring him that he was mistaken in supposing that I referred to Christians? Would he think that I had said all that was necessary if I explained that I only referred to persons who conformed to no rules or laws of Secular morality?

The words "Utilitarian" and "Materialistic" have their legitimate meanings, and ought not to be used in other senses, especially when confirmed in their proper distinctive meanings by the use of capital letters and by the absence of any reference to any exceptional or unknown sense in which the writer might be using them. Who could have expected, for instance, that the word "Materialistic" was being used to signify the preposterous idea that animals have no feelings? Christians, indeed, are more likely to hold this absurd view than Materialists. Materialism points to the essential unity of the animal scale, and sees that the differences between man and the lower animals are only differences of degree. It is Anti-Materialists, such as Christians, who hold that animals are essentially different from man, and that there is a great and impassable gulf between them. They commonly assert, for instance, that man alone has a soul or spirit. They thereby assume that all non-human animals are destitute of at least such faculties and feelings as result from man's possession of a soul. Christianity takes little or no thought for animals, and never dreams of providing any scheme of salvation on behalf of such relatively unimportant creatures. It reserves its heaven, as Jesus did his miracles, for the benefit of the human race alone. It clearly regards the feelings and interests of animals as of extremely little moment compared with those of man. W. P. BALL.

NOSTRUMS AND LEGALISED CRUELTY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is gratifying to find that public attention is at last turning to vivisection, and is unearthing the dreadful truths which underlie the euphemism of those who practise it. Their plea that, in pursuit of the alleviation of human suffering "the end justifies the means," is a defence to which justice never listens, and which even the mere law of the land ignores in every other case. The wretched hawker, whipping up a lame and agonised horse, is punished with imprisonment, however he may plead that his exercise of cruelty was but to earn bread for five starving children at home. This plea—that the end justifies the means—would, if carried into other spheres, justify the seizure of property by those who might pretend they would manage it in the public interest. It would justify the assassin, who chooses to regard his ruler as a tyrant, whose death would free a nation. Finally, it would justify a doctor in "making an experiment" on any obscure patient whom he might choose to regard as "a useless life," if thereby he might hope to learn how to save "the valuable life" of monarch, statesman, or general. No member of society is safe if once we throw away or endeavor to relax the rule that wrong is never right—that if cruelty is ever wrong it must be always wrong.

The licensed torture of animals seems indeed a strange preparation for the care of the sick and dying. Vivisectors sometimes try to set up a curious claim to tender-heartedness and delicate honor. But what do facts teach? Have not a crowd of rude medical students been known to "boo" the moans of a poor dog, suffering under the experimental knife of their professor? Is there not a story told of one of the great British vivisectors that in his youth he was fain to hang his sister's cat, and to find "great fun" in the performance? The cruel "means" found sufficient ends for him in his own delight in torture. There always have been people who delight in torture, and many of the "experiments" detailed in medical journals—notably those of one American vivisector—seem like nothing but the disgusting and diabolical tricks of criminal lunatics. Such can now be licensed as vivisectors, and can dupe their patients by promulgating "preventions" that do not prevent (like the "innoculation against enteric," which left our troops in South Africa to perish like flies) and "cures" that do not cure. Ask one doctor his opinion on these blood-bought remedies, and he will tell you that they are infallible; ask another, and he will tell you that they are worse than useless. Wait for a year or two, and one after another they are exploded and cast aside.

Meanwhile the only sound methods of medical progress—those of clinical observation and experience—are apt to be cast into the shade. So long as people are entirely satisfied with evil ways they are not likely to be on the look out for better ones.

If the men to whom we give the charge of our health, and its lapses would be instant, in season and out of season, in inculcating temperance, chastity, and pause in pursuit of wealth, and would claim for the poor the possibility of pure air, wholesome food, and sufficient rest, diseases would dwindle away. Under the present vivisection régime they are admitted to be on the increase. But till the public are aroused to the furious and futile medical cruelty which the law at present puts beyond the reach of the agencies which exist to check cruelty, innocent animals will be tortured in hopes of discovering nostrums even to palliate diseases voluntarily bred of human sin and filth! Surely the dawn of a better and wiser day is already brightening around us, and it lies in the power of each to set wide the windows of his soul to admit the sunbeams of justice and mercy.

I. F. MAYO.

"My Religion."

To love justice, to long for the right, to love mercy, to assist the weak, to forget wrongs and remember benefits, to love the truth, to be sincere, to utter honest words, to love liberty, to wage relentless war against slavery in all its forms, to love wife and child and friend, to make a happy home, to love the beautiful in art, in Nature; to cultivate the mind, to be familiar with the mighty thoughts that genius has expressed, the noble deeds of all the world; to cultivate courage and cheerfulness, to make others happy, to fill life with the splendor of generous acts, the warmth of loving words; to discard error, to destroy prejudice, to receive new truths with gladness, to cultivate hope, to see the calm beyond the storm, the dawn beyond the night; to do the best that can be done, and then be resigned—this is the religion of reason, the creed of science. This satisfies brain and heart.

Robert G. Ingersoll.

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, "The Greatest Lie in the World."

CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell) 7: F. A. Davies, "The Priest and the Child."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, W. Sanders, "The New Element in Politics."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell) 7, Miss McMillan, "Slum Life."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Miss McMillan, "Child Life in the Slums."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): Tuesday, November 23, at 7, Miss L. George (Spiritualist), a paper, "Charles Bradlaugh."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY: 7, R. P. Edwards, "The Gospel According to Cheyne and Fremantle." Preceded by Musical Selection.

GLASGOW (Secular Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Joseph McCabe, 12, "Hypatia"; 6.30, "The Unknown God."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 11, "Giordano Bruno and Modern Science"; 3, "What is Man's Chance of a Future Life?" 7, "Has Christianity a Future?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Nunquam's Ethical Fallacies."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Final arrangements for Mr. Foote's lectures.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "Man and a Future Life."

LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—November 25 and 26, Bolton: Debate with G. H. Bibbings. December 7, Failsworth; 9 and 10, Staleybridge: Debate; 11, Pudsey; Debate with Rev. W. Harold Davies; 21, Glasgow.

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