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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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*Nothing is more Atheistic than a fact. Pure science is necessarily godless. It investigates, and cannot afford to shut its eyes even long enough to pray.*—INGERSOLL.

### Poor Huxley !

THE new edition of the *Life of Huxley*, in Macmillan's "Eversley Series," gives the *Daily News* an opportunity of taking the great Agnostic down a peg or two. This process is very easy when you know you are not likely to be answered. Huxley gave a good account of his enemies when he was alive, but they can say what they like now without a reply. His friends and admirers, of course, may defend his reputation; but the organ of political Nonconformity—whose principal owner is Mr. George Cadbury, and whose idol is the Rev. Dr. Clifford—is extremely unlikely to afford them adequate scope for such an undertaking. We are minded, therefore, to break a lance for Huxley in the *Freethinker*. More than once during his lifetime we found fault with him when we thought it necessary. We complained, for instance, of his playing into the hands of the theologians by his ambiguous talk about the "possibility" of miracles, and by his equally ambiguous talk about virgin procreation. Nor were we ever able to admire his invention of Agnosticism; for all he said of it, when he confronted the ultimate religious ideas of God and a future life, was a mere repetition of what others had previously said of Atheism. Had he lived in any country but one peopled by Anglo-Saxons, this little device would never have occurred to him. He had his share, even if it was not a large one, of the timidity and compromise of his race in intellectual matters. He had also to face the prejudices of the social circles in which he moved. For these reasons he halted at a certain point. Up to that point he was a resolute fighter; beyond that point he dealt in reassuring explanations. It may not be pleasant to say so, but what is the use of blinking the truth? And we are not saying it now for the first time. We have said it on many former occasions. Our opinion is that Huxley's "Agnosticism" and Spencer's "Unknowable" are merely pinches of incense on the altar of the national faith; and the priests of that altar have certainly made the most of it in both cases. But when all this is said, the fact still remains that Huxley played a brilliant part in the great fight of Science against Superstition; just as the fact remains that Spencer has done a colossal work in elaborating the philosophy of Evolution. After which admission, perhaps, we may not be considered quite unfit to do battle for either of them when they are wrongly attacked.

Now the *Daily News* attack, signed by C. F. G. Masterman, does touch Huxley at one point. It is only a side point, but there is a hit, a palpable hit. "He refused resolutely," it is said, "to defend the baser and more popular atheisms." Perhaps the word "baser" was ill-chosen, for the "more popular atheisms" were represented by men quite as honest as Huxley, and in some cases not his inferiors except in the knowledge of physical science. Charles Brad-

laugh, for instance, was a braver man than Huxley; and, for our part, we are sure he had as much capacity. Really, we think he had more. We are not aware, however, that the great Atheist received any sort of help or countenance from the great Agnostic. Of course we may be wrong on this point. We hope we are wrong. But we feel that, on the whole, it must be confessed that Huxley did hold himself studiously aloof from men who were fighting for the same cause and under greater disadvantages.

Further than this we decline to follow Mr. Masterman. We think he is mistaken on every other point. Take what he says of Huxley in relation to Gladstone.

"He was never a Liberal, either in politics or in the world of thought. He held in real abhorrence everything represented by the name of Gladstone. To the most heroic and sincere of all English statesmen he found it difficult to acknowledge even the common virtue of honesty. Huxley joined issue along the whole line from Home Rule to the Gadarene pigs; he read into the political action some of the rather complicated and tortuous methods of the theological controversies; he became convinced that a kind of sacred duty was laid upon him to assail the Liberal leader at every vulnerable point."

This may be very clever, and very "fetching" in the *Daily News*, but how far will it bear analysis and criticism? The first three sentences are mere question-begging. If idolatry of Mr. Gladstone is the test of Liberalism, it is perfectly clear that Huxley was not a Liberal. But this definition is simply made to exclude him. There were always some very good Liberals who did not idolise Mr. Gladstone. In some cases they went much further than he did on the road of reform, but they did not like what even Mr. Masterman calls his "complicated and tortuous methods." They felt that he did not confine these methods to theological controversies. It must also be remembered how difficult it is for men of science, and accurate-minded men generally, to idolise any politician. What politician really *thinks*, except from hand to mouth, according to the exigencies of political movements? Mr. Gladstone himself never thought ahead of the immediate situation. The Irish question, for instance, was before him for half a century; and he only "found salvation" upon it at the end of that period, when a compromise, if not an alliance, with the Irish party seemed indispensable to the Liberal party's continuance in power. Is it any wonder that men like Huxley could not regard Mr. Gladstone as a thinker, and were unable to trust him implicitly? But it is sheer nonsense to say that Huxley joined issue with Gladstone at every point. He was a sound Liberal on many points, including the all-important point of popular education; though he did make the mistake, which he lived to regret, of helping to admit Bible-reading into the London Board schools. He did not see eye to eye with the Grand Old Man on the question of Home Rule; but then there is Home Rule *and* Home Rule—and who thinks of defending Mr. Gladstone's Bill now? He "went for" Mr. Gladstone on the question of the Gadarene pigs, it is true; but it was time that somebody tried to stop the religious follies of Mr. Gladstone's old age. Even those who admired him politically

must have held their breath, unless they were very ignorant on such matters, when they heard his pious special-pleadings. Some whose admiration of him was inevitably qualified must have smiled at the assertion of the old parliamentary hand even in his moments of religious abandonment. He had a way of bursting forth upon the British public with a fresh defence of orthodoxy on the eve of general elections. And how adroit he was in the controversy on the Gadarene pigs! The only point worth discussing was the truth of demoniacal possession. But the old parliamentary hand took care to say nothing about it. He spent all his time in debating whom the pigs belonged to. And the worst of it was that Huxley danced off after him; so that one of the leading nations in the civilised world witnessed the spectacle of an elderly representative statesman and an elderly representative scientist hotly disputing the question of the proprietorship of some mythological or legendary pigs who lived, or never lived, nearly two thousand years ago. It was a beautiful illustration of the influence of Christianity on the human intellect.

Mr. Masterman goes on to question Huxley's scholarship. He ridiculously under-estimates it, but the point is not worth discussing, as it is admitted that Huxley's opponents "unfortunately knew less" than he did.

Huxley's objections to Christianity are not appreciated by Mr. Masterman, unless he wilfully misrepresents them. It is absurd to say that Huxley treated the rejection of the Garden of Eden and Flood stories as "the rejection of the whole of Christianity." Nor did he "hold verbal inspiration as the only legitimate theory." He attacked the whole supernaturalism of the New Testament, and ventured to think that if Jesus Christ shared the superstition of his age he could hardly have been the incarnation of Omniscience.

Mr. Masterman pays an unstinted tribute to Huxley's personal character. His was a "strenuous life devoted to high ends." But all the worse was it wasted, apparently; for he "fought for a dismal nescience with the fervor and devotion of a Puritan." Oh those tricky adjectives! Your orthodox champion delights in them. They afford such help to his feeble substantives. It would not have done to say that Huxley fought for bare and naked "nescience," for "nescience" simply means *ignorance*, and everybody knows he fought for the very opposite of that. But sticking "dismal" in front of it makes the foolish readers who are cheated with words feel cold and cheerless: and in that condition they are easy victims of your calculated sophistry. And there is something else to be said. One man's meat is sometimes another man's poison. Even the classic "dismal" is only relative. Christians talk of Freethought as "dismal," but Freethinkers do not find it so; and, after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Huxley himself was anything but "dismal." He enjoyed his life. He drank his cup of existence with gusto, whether it would be filled again or not. This is perceived by Mr. Masterman, who sees the flower and hunts round for a caterpillar.

There is a very pleasant picture drawn of the Sunday evenings in St. John's Wood in latter years. In summer the family are gathered in the garden. Friends drop in, there is talk of the latest scientific results, of progress, and the smiting of the enemy. It is the afternoon of the successful man, golden, but with a faint touch of evening and the approaching night. A pleasant picture. What in it is lacking? Well, it is Sunday evening. Outside the walled garden is a chaos of confusion and pain; men with humility and a great patience once again are coming together to confess their sins and solicit succor from a hidden God.

The one thing lacking to Huxley was to be even as Mr. Masterman. He would have been perfect if he had only held a prayer-meeting on Sunday evening. What he wanted was, first, to confess his sins once a week, like the true believers; and presumably, like them, to arrange sufficient matter for another confession seven days afterwards; secondly, to ask

assistance from a God in whom nobody practically believes, and who was never known to send any except in the Bible, in sermons, in religious tracts, and in other such fantastic literature—including *Daily News* articles for Nonconformist consumption.

Such is Christian criticism in the twentieth century! Three hundred years ago Christian criticism took the form of roasting you alive at the stake; a hundred years ago (or less) it took the form of imprisoning you; now it takes the form of drivelling and snivelling over you. There was something sublime in the first insolence. The last is merely disgusting.

G. W. FOOTE.

## The Utility of Religion.

(Continued from page 131.)

MR. MALLOCK'S next reason for believing that science is inadequate to grapple with the whole of life is that there are beliefs, such as those in God and immortality, concerning the practical influence of which it has nothing to say. "We have," he says, "to take into account not only their agreement or disagreement with the measurable facts of the universe, but also the effects which our acceptance of them has on human society, on moral and intellectual progress, and the quality of civilisation generally. This, however, men of science as a rule entirely fail to see. For them, in their strictly scientific capacity, a belief in the doctrines of religion has no practical effect, good or bad, beyond that of checking the spread of scientific truth, of cramping human activity by needless unmeaning restriction, and enabling priests to obtain the control of education. They fail to see—and, as men of science, have no means of estimating—the moral, spiritual, and mental effects which an acceptance of these doctrines produce on the character of human life, and on human activity generally."

Mr. Mallock is evidently at his wits' end to provide for religion a sphere that is not already covered by science, or he would certainly not have written a passage such as the above—one which not only does not prove all that he intends it to prove, but which carries on the face of it its own answer. If religious beliefs exist, and no one will dispute it, they are as much the material of the science of psychology as any other mental fact. And if they have an influence on human civilisation—and no one will dispute this either—they are equally the material of the science of sociology. And, further, if, as Mr. Mallock says, scientific men assert that religious beliefs check the spread of scientific truth, cramp human efforts, and enable priests to control education, then, whether the generalisation be true or false, it is manifestly untrue to say that scientific men "entirely fail to see" the effects which an acceptance of religious beliefs has on human civilisation.

I imagine that what Mr. Mallock has in mind is science as concerned with physics only; and in this he is following the plan often adopted by religious apologists. And, of course, if one commences by deliberately cutting off a certain area of human experience as being outside the sphere of science, it is tolerably easy to show afterwards that science is not adequate to cover all the facts of life. But this is a quite unjustifiable procedure, and one which Mr. Mallock would have been the first to denounce had he been criticising instead of expounding. It almost seems as though directly a man touches religion he descends several degrees in the scale of mental clarity.

Mr. Mallock's belief that science is unable to deal with the facts of man's mental life leads him to the conclusion that "the cosmic world and the moral world are apprehended by us in different ways, or by different faculties of our nature," and if anyone were to take the moral and æsthetic standards by which people have measured and ranked their duties, and maintain that these standards have no objective

reality, and that what we have been accustomed to call the highest are in no objective sense higher than what we call the lowest, those who listened would be both shocked and contemptuous at such opinions.

Well, it is not improbable that people would be shocked at such an expression of opinion, but Mr. Mallock surely does not wish us to believe that their being shocked would be any decisive evidence of their being right. An ordinary audience would be quite as shocked if they listened to many of Mr. Mallock's opinions which are propounded in the earlier part of his book, and I for one happen to believe that our moral standards have no objective validity whatever—no objective validity, that is, outside of human nature or human reason—but I quite dissent from the implied corollary that the denial carries with it the negation of the subjective or moral value of the distinctions mankind commonly draws between things right and things wrong. Does Mr. Mallock mean to seriously assert that moral qualities such as truth, justice, kindness, chastity, have any validity outside of human nature? These virtues exist in human society, we all agree; they should be encouraged and developed, we all admit likewise; but their validity and utility is of human origin pure and simple, and they could no more exist in the absence of human or animal nature than smell could exist in the absence of an appropriate sense organ. Mr. Mallock really might as well speak of the objective validity of a smell as of the objective validity of our moral standards apart from human association and human requirements.

The value of religious beliefs—God, Immortality, Freedom—Mr. Mallock proceeds to illustrate by prophesying what would happen if these beliefs were destroyed. The first example is that of the autonomy of the will. Mr. Mallock, it must be remarked, has already shown that, so far as reason can carry us, what a man does is *always* determined by heredity, by organism, and by environment, and has completely demolished the arguments of other religious pleaders against this position. Yet he believes we must still encourage the belief that we are "Free," because unless we do so, with certain exceptions, "our whole system of moral judgments, of likes and dislikes, of contempt and reverences, would be revolutionised." We could not mentally condemn a man for being cruel or dishonest, and in addition we could not not condemn ourselves. Heroism and cowardice would be recognised by us as the inevitable result of a given set of circumstances on a given temperament, "the truth being that nothing that any human beings do, or are doing, has any real value for us except on the latent supposition that it is possible for them to be, or to do, something different."

So, too, with the other two religious doctrines. The universe has grown to such immense dimensions that the earth and man have become of relatively small importance, and "the great primary effect which a belief in God and immortality produces on human life is to free it from the stifling limitations imposed on it by time and space, by failure and imperfection." And, with a quite touching simplicity, Mr. Mallock concludes that it was instinctive prevision of the belittling of human life as the result of astronomical discoveries that led Catholic and Protestant "to employ every weapon in the armory of violence, sophistry, and desperation in order to obliterate the discoveries and speculations of Copernicus, Bruno, and Galileo." A suggestion that puts the conduct of the churches on quite a benevolent footing.

Now there is nothing strikingly fresh about this objection to the strictly scientific view of life; it is, indeed, very old, and it is surprising that one of Mr. Mallock's mental acuteness did not see how easily it may be disposed of. Let us take the last point first. And here I have no hesitation in saying that the exact reverse of Mr. Mallock's picture has been the result of scientific developments. It is true that while the heliocentric view of the universe prevailed man was the theoretical centre of it all. But he was

a poor, cowed, timid creature at the best. He was under the absolute dominion of a deity whom Christians themselves now reject as the personification of cruelty and caprice. He was the sport of natural forces which he did not understand, and consequently could not control; his life was overshadowed by supernaturalism in some of its most grotesque forms, and to put the man of the past as upon the same level of importance, to himself, as the man of the present, is simply grotesque in its inaccuracy. It is true, also, that science no longer teaches that the universe was made and exists for man. It even teaches that in the economy of things the life of a man is of no more consequence than that of a caterpillar; but it has at the same time so increased the power of the human mind over natural forces, so divested it of groundless fears and superstitions, that man, as man, is of infinitely greater importance and human life of infinitely greater dignity and significance, than ever he or it has been in the history of the human race. Certain morbid or neurotic temperaments may bemoan the littleness of man, the crushing weight of the universe, and the like, but to represent this as either now, or at any time likely to be, the common feeling of mankind, is downright absurd. As a plain matter of fact, human life was never held of so much value, and treated with so much veneration, as at present.

There is the same strange obtuseness to patent facts in the treatment of "free will." There is no need at present to go over the whole, and old, ground of this question, it is enough to ask in what conceivable manner our knowledge of the *causes* of actions can alter our feelings with regard to their *effects*? Mr. Mallock has simply confused the two aspects of conduct. The grounds of our condemnation of an action is neither that it is absolutely free nor that it is absolutely determined, but simply that it has a certain result upon ourselves or upon others, or upon both; and I do not see how any question of "Freedom" can alter this. The smell of a rose is pleasant, the smell of assafoetida is unpleasant. Does anyone imagine that, in proving that both are alike in essence, we have therefore destroyed the distinction, for us, between them? We may feel that a man who commits a murder is acting just as his training, his circumstances, and his heredity have compelled him to act, but I do not think that we shall, on that account, feel it to be less our duty to reprobate the murder, and to prevent, so far as we can, the murderer repeating his offence.

The difference the conception of determinism *does* make is this—and it is a most important one. Instead of being animated by a feeling of stupid and brutal resentment against the wrong-doer, our sentiments have a stronger mixture of that "divine commiseration" about which Christians are so plentiful in the talking but so chary in the practice. We recognise that a given set of circumstances have necessitated this or that action, and that a modification of the circumstances means an inevitable modification of future conduct. Of course, there is "a latent supposition" that it is possible for us to do different to what we are doing—that is, on the latent supposition that one may be in different circumstances to what one is actually in; and it is on this supposition that all really useful education and training is based. There is really no need for us to play fast and loose with our intellectual conceptions in the manner indicated by Mr. Mallock, whose advice is, practically, that unless we pretend to believe as true what we actually know to be false, morality is in danger of complete extinction.

But Mr. Mallock's arguments, both with reference to "Freedom" and the belief in God, are vitiated by one fatal assumption. He assumes that conduct is wholly, or almost wholly, the result of ratiocination. The merest study of life is enough to show that this is not so. The portion of conduct that is the result of reasoning is simply insignificant compared with that which is the expression of non-reasoning impulse or instinct. The feelings that cluster round the family, the love of parent and child, of husband

and wife, have but little direct connection with conscious reasoning. And in life in general people do not set themselves to argue whether a man is or not "necessitated" to perform a particular action; their repugnance or admiration is an expression of their whole nature; and this has been formed for them rather than by them.

The truth of this is seen in the fact that morality exists long before it becomes conscious of its own existence. The rudimentary expressions of fear, love, hatred, courage, cowardice, are animal before they are human. The family virtues likewise. Reason only recognises what is already in existence, discovers the utility and reason of its existence, and takes steps for its expansion and modification. How, then, can our want of belief in God or immortality seriously affect conduct? Morality is not the outcome of these beliefs; why should its departure threaten their existence? Morality is not religious—it is social, gregarious; the same forces that have moulded morality in the past will continue to mould it in the future; and, instead of it becoming a matter of reflection, involving theories of metaphysics and cosmology, it will become less so as social life further modifies our nature in accordance with the necessities of a rationalised social existence.

One word in conclusion. It would be unjust to Mr. Mallock to let readers of these articles who have not read his book labor under the impression that the passages I have criticised are a fair sample of Mr. Mallock's work. They are not. The far larger portion of his work contains as fine a piece of criticism directed against the verbal ambiguities of Theistic apologists as I have read for some time. I have only selected those portions in which he tries to find some use for the religion he has so completely demolished in his earlier chapters. It is not Mr. Mallock's fault that when he descends to the stock religious arguments he becomes mentally religious. One cannot make bricks without straw, and not even Mr. Mallock's wit is able to produce unassailable arguments in an indefensible cause.

C. COHEN.

## Many Inventions.

### AN AT-RANDOM ESSAY ON CREDULITY.

"Who shall forbid a wise scepticism?"—EMERSON.

ACCORDING to Oriental tradition, it was not until the angels had confessed themselves unable to name the newly-created animals that the Deity brought them to Adam, and that he manifested his greater readiness and superior prescience by at once conferring on each of them an appellation declared by those learned in the language of Eden to have been happily descriptive of some distinctive quality of the recipient.

It is contrary to the spirit of the old legends—contrary, we may say, to the belief cherished by many orthodox, if not very thoughtful, people in the present day—that, as long as Adam continued sinless, he should ever have been at a loss about anything. Perplexity and wonderment came in the train of all the woes which fell upon "the grand old gardener and his wife" when they had ceased to be impeccable. One commentator, expatiating on the pristine condition of the human understanding, ventures to state all that follows:—

"Its perceptions were quick and lively, its reasonings true, and its determinations just. A deluded fancy was not then capable of imposing upon it, nor a fawning appetite of deluding it to pronounce a false and dishonest sentence. In its direction of the inferior faculties, it conveyed its suggestions with clearness, and enjoined them with power, and though its command over them was but suasive, yet it had the same force and efficacy as if it has been despotical."

Now, though we have every filial respect for our first parent, and even have sympathy with the Rabbins when they assert that he composed two books on the Creator and the Creation, and that we are indebted to him for the ninety-first Psalm, we

cannot go to the length of believing that his understanding was altogether such as the above quotation has depicted. The very legend of the Fall itself goes to prove that Adam's understanding was anything but infallible. The satanic snake displayed an admirable knowledge of the weakness of human nature when he dazzled Eve, and through her Adam, by representing that the tree was to be desired to make one wise. And thus deceived, we see our inexperienced progenitors start on the Road to Ruin. Perish the fearful thought that any of our popular errors originated within the magic gates of Paradise. If Eve ever thought that the enlargement of her beloved husband's larynx was due to the forbidden apple having stuck in his throat, it could not have been until after "our general mother" was in her dotage. If she ever believed that when her infants smiled in sleep angels were talking to them, it must have been after the expulsion from Eden, for no babies were known in its blissful bowers. If she ever told herself that birds, by raising their heads aloft, say a grace after every draught, she showed an ignorance of ornithological anatomy, which, in the days before she fell, would not have been allowed to remain undissipated.

It was then, we maintain, without the bounds of Paradise, that the crop of weeds sprang up which Saigues, Timbs, Baring-Gould, Tylor, and other industrious workers, have taken such pains to eradicate. After the expulsion from Eden, man, says the old legend, "sought out many inventions."

How could it be otherwise? The world was young, its imagination vivid and eccentric as that of a child. Think what a mystery everything animate and inanimate must have been to the aborigines of the universe, when science was unborn and knowledge was not. Think what an enigma man must have been to himself. Effects he saw in abundance, and reason told him that they sprang from causes, but the causes were often beyond his reach. He could not let facts stare him in the face, and not attempt to account for them, so he took Fiction into his service, and she gave him a reason, or more if he pressed her, for everything.

Thence arose the pleasing products which may be called myths of observation. They are inferences from observed facts, which take the form of positive assertions, and they differ from the inductions of modern science in being crude and erroneous, and in taking to themselves names of persons and subjective detail, which enables them to assume the appearance of real history. When a savage builds, upon a discovery of great bones buried in the earth, a story of a combat of giants and monsters, whose remains they are, he constructs a myth of observation, which may, perhaps, shape itself into a historical tradition, and be all the more puzzling for the portion of truth which it really contains.

How few good myths have originated on this side of the Middle Ages! We are now too unimaginative to originate any legend which will make posterity prick its ears and believe the pleasing fiction. Our efforts in that respect cannot stand before those of the days when the glories of Greece and Rome were more than a memory.

Yet the modern man is very clever at jumping to conclusions. The world wants to land firmly on conclusions without the trouble of knowing whether these are solid ground, or quaking marsh, or mere abyss. The wish is father to the thought. We easily believe what we want to believe, or disbelieve what we do not desire to credit. In ordinary matters we see how easily men credit exactly what suits their prepossessions, and never give any attention to the contrary evidence. They simply ignore it. When a criminal matter is being discussed no evidence of guilt will satisfy the sentimentalists who desire to believe in the innocence of the accused. No arguments, no facts, have any effect at all on people once bitten by the "Bacon cypher" or by "Anglo Israel." Bacon's own attempts at poetry were pitiful; so, of course, he wrote the plays of

Shakespeare. Where, you ask the Anglo-Israelite, are the traces in early Britain of the arts, inscriptions, or religion of the Hebrews; where, among the British are the noses which Semites have always worn? Argument is as useless as it is with spiritualists. Really, some men are so constituted that it is marvellous that there are not in England cave-dwellers, serpent-worshippers, and people who have no objections to dining on their neighbors.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Sanction of Morality.—II.

(Continued from page 133.)

But there is yet a more moving study, more frightful even than that of history—a study that each one can make around himself, in the circle of his family and his intimate acquaintance, particularly that which a man can make on himself. There the sanction of causes by effects shows itself in full light; there the spectacle of natural morality takes upon itself to awaken carelessness, to disturb scepticism, and disconcert faith. On rising from such an inquiry, no man of sincerity can fail to see that his physical, mental, and moral situation is a necessary and mathematical consequence of the circumstances (either dependent or independent of his free will) that presided at his birth, his education, and his development, and that it would be impossible to conceive it different. It is so to such an extent, that, given certain identical circumstances, no one would hesitate to assign to them, whether in the near or distant future, the identical effects.

Deviations which appear to weaken the law only serve to confirm it. All laws of nature are subject to digression. Gravitation deviates sensibly from the lineal order. The ellipsis described by the planets round the sun is far from being perfect. But this deviation from the ideal line does not detract from the value of the celestial mechanism; on the contrary, it exalts it by showing what little influence the most complicated and disturbing causes have on the law. In the same manner the law of evolution appears to obey a blind force rather than a plan. Moreover, history is full of anomalies, contradictions, and monstrosities that appear to defy calculation. That only proves that the law of evolution follows the straight line when nothing impedes its course, as the compass points to the north absolutely when no immediate influence turns it aside from its natural focus of attraction. Perhaps the exception that we notice forms part of the rule. Identical causes never produce contrary effects. The laws of nature are generally ignored because, in most cases our knowledge of them being relative, we attribute to them a relative character.

Finite man can never control the infinite. His senses and intelligence being limited, embrace but a part of the whole. His curiosity will never penetrate the intentions and ends of nature, because, a feeble and fleeting actor in the universal drama, he will never possess the necessary instruments by which to measure the incommensurable space and eternity of time which serve them as a framework.

Those persons who, free from theologic and metaphysical faith, yet deny natural justice when they behold virtue sacrificed and vice triumphant, are much to be pitied. Let them look around them, let them enumerate the public and private catastrophes, the ruin and the mourning, let them penetrate to the interior of the apparently happy man, and, however miserable may be their fate, they would not perhaps exchange it for his. Happiness does not consist in the possession and enjoyment of a particular thing; happiness lies not in the absolute; happiness is relative. Pleasure palls like trouble; it is in the balancing of these two opposite sensations that an equilibrium is established. The man who enjoys too much ends by enjoying nothing. He who never enjoys feels supreme happiness in the least satisfac-

tion. A workman singing after his day's labor may be happier than a lord leaving a king's banquet. He who has centred his affections on a lowly animal suffers as much from his loss as if he wept over a tomb. The wretches that are buried covered with honors and glory; the conquerors for whom history has woven crowns; the parvenus and the courtesans, whose luxury, fed by shame and infamy, look with contempt at honest but fruitless work—all, even the sheep consumed by man and the grass eaten by the sheep, appear to be a confirmation of blind chance, a denial of justice, but it is only in appearance. In reality, nature is as just as she is wise. Science demonstrates a material equilibrium which has a corresponding moral equilibrium. Modern prejudice has ignored this, but former ages acknowledged it, as shown by the ancient tragedies.

Sanction of causes by effects, such is the law of nature. It punishes ignorance by vice, idleness by misery, lust by exhaustion, greediness by the gout, intemperance by drunkenness and insanity, the weakness of parents by the revolt of the children, miasmas by the plague, youth and health set at defiance by sickness and death.

In moral order, as in material order, nothing is lost; everything is preserved in the universal reservoir. However vast the sphere, it has had an insignificant origin; there is no modest corpuscle, no miserable atom, but what is destined to a noble future.

How can we doubt this when we see infusoria forming the base of future continents, a microscopic cell containing in power all the perfections of the human organism? Let those who, tempted to deny a final equilibrium between causes and effects in moral order as in material order, explain the regularity of certain phenomena pointed out by the statistics of most countries. Why are the births and deaths always in mathematical conformity with the amount of population? Let them show by virtue of what understanding between the procreators of the species, the two sexes figure always and everywhere in numbers about equal in regard to the totality of births.

We might multiply arguments, but to what use? To those who are accustomed to reflect, what has been here said will suffice to prove that humanity may free itself from theologic and metaphysical conceptions by connecting the moral law with natural law, and by giving the sanction of causes and effects as the sanction of morality.

—From the French of C. Mismar.

## God.

WHAT kind of a God is that who must be protected by his creature who grovels helpless and humble on his knees before him? What kind of a God is that who can be endangered by being denied? What kind of a God is that who is believed to be angry if one of his creatures is too blind to recognise him? What kind of a God is that who needs the help of the police or the mob to save him? What kind of a God is that who has no truer guards than the enemies of reason and liberty? How can you expect me to believe in a God whom you exhibit as the essence of hatred and at the same time of impotency? You can produce no stronger testimony of the deficiency of your God than the anxiety and animosity with which you watch and persecute the doubts of his existence. As with your God, so do you practise with the religion which you build upon the belief in a God. You boast of its power, its stability, its imperishableness, yet cry out in alarm and bewail the destruction of all divine things as soon as they are touched with an unbelieving criticism. Can there be a more ridiculous contradiction than this, and at the same time a more striking testimony against the firmness of your own belief? When a boy boasts to you that he will shatter Chimborazo with a pebble, will you prevent his making the trial? If God, as I have before said, is nothing but an expression for the un-revealed cause and nature of things, then an Atheist is nothing else than a friend of revelation of that cause and nature. This must be kept constantly in view, in order to measure the absurdity of those who make the word "Atheism" a word of reproach.—Heinsen.

## Acid Drops.

Edwards, the Leyton murderer, went to glory on Tuesday morning. When his fate was fixed he was taken in hand by two Wesleyan ministers—the Revs. H. Kelly and J. Critchson. It is interesting to note that Wesleyanism was the shade of Christianity that Edwards favored. Perhaps he has gone to the Wesleyan heaven, or the Wesleyan department of the general establishment. Anyhow, the two Wesleyan men of God seem to have worked their hardest to secure him. They visited him daily, and administered “the Lord’s Supper” to him the night before his execution. One of them attended him to the scaffold, where Edwards’s final observations were broken prayers. “Good Lord, have mercy upon me,” are said to have been his last words. We presume they took effect, like those of the penitent thief on the Cross, and that he is now with his Savior in Paradise.

It does not appear that Edwards ever troubled about religion till he had to die and felt some uncertainty as to his prospects when the hangman had done with him. His religion, like that of most other people, was only a form of selfishness.

The Pope was ninety-three on Monday. There are Catholics who believe God will keep him alive to a miraculous age in order to settle the hash of heresy and infidelity. They forget that the age of miracles is past. Even the Pope knows it, though he dare not say so.

There is really no miracle in the phenomena of the Pope’s old age. They follow the common law of organic decay. His frame is thin and frail, his face is perfectly white, but light and life still linger in his eyes. Which is perfectly natural; for the brain takes the life of the system while there is any, and is the last organ to die.

Even the Pope’s diet excludes the idea of miracle. It consists almost exclusively now of chicken broth and bread. His daily allowance of wine is two small glasses of Bordeaux. No common brand, we daresay. Had he been a strict teetotaler he would have been claimed as an illustration of how teetotalism conduces to longevity. As it is, we suppose he will be claimed by the moderate drinkers. But very likely both would be wrong. Longevity is nearly always congenital. Some years ago the *Daily News* obtained answers from a large number of distinguished old men. Some were teetotalers, and some were not; some smoked, and some did not; some took exercise, and some did not; some got up early, and some did not; some went outdoors a good deal, and some did not. The only common point was that they all came of long-lived families.

Who was the greatest political economist? Was it Adam Smith, or Ricardo, or John Stuart Mill, or Karl Marx? No, it was not any of these. In fact, it was not a modern writer at all. Oh then, you will say, it was Plato or Aristotle, or perhaps Xenophon, who was so highly praised by Mr. Ruskin. No, it was not one of these either. You give it up, then? Very well. The riddle shall be solved for you at once. The greatest political economist was Jesus Christ. We have it on the authority of the Rev. Dr. Townsend, President of the National Free Church Council. And he ought to know. Besides, he stated it at a (Prestatyn) Liberal Club bazaar, where he would naturally speak under the gravest sense of responsibility.

We are not going to dispute that Jesus Christ was “the greatest political economist of all time.” We will take it for granted. But, in that case, how lucky it is that England is not a Christian country. We mean, *in reality*, for we know it is so *in name*. True—that is to say, inspired—political economy is more honored in the breach than in the observance amongst Englishmen; yes, and amongst Scotchmen, Welshmen, and Irishmen too. We might also include Manxmen, in spite of Mr. Hall Caine. How many of them, outside prisons, workhouses, and lunatic asylums, and the professional unemployed of all classes, take no thought for the morrow? How many of them, except those who live on the industry of others, labor not for the meat that perisheth? How many of them, except those who cannot get hold of any, lay not up for themselves treasures on earth? How many of them, except in church, and theoretically, give to everyone that asketh, and turn not away from him that would borrow? How many of them, except the perfectly destitute, sell all they have and give to the poor? How many of them, in short, believe that poverty is a blessing and wealth a curse? None of them, as far as we can see, and it is fortunate they don’t. If they did, it would be chaos come again. We hope the political economy

of the greatest political economist will continue to be flouted (in practice) by the people of this country. We are pretty certain it will be flouted (in practice, again) by all the men of God—including the Rev. Dr. Townsend.

What quiet, bland, colossal “cheek” some of your good Christians have. Here is Mr. George Cadbury, for instance, telling a *Sunday Strand* interviewer that he hopes the Churches will unite to “grapple with sin and unbelief.” Suppose a well-known Freethinker were to express a hope that the Secular, Agnostic, Rationalist, and Ethical Societies would unite to “grapple with vice and Christianity.” Would not Mr. Cadbury think it a shocking insult? Vice and Christianity, forsooth! Then why sin and unbelief?

Hypocrisy, thy name is—Christian. Mr. George Cadbury’s organ, the *Daily News*, is convulsed with horror by Dr. Dillon’s story, in the *Contemporary Review*, of the Turkish atrocities in Macedonia. Those wicked Mohammedans will torture those good Christians! Which is a very simple view of the situation. There were no convulsions of horror when Dr. Dillon told the story of how the good Christians butchered, outraged, and tormented the wicked Chinese. Such things are “regrettable incidents” or “intolerable infamies” according to circumstances. It is only the Freethinkers who denounce all outrages impartially.

The Select Committee on Monastic Orders has presented its Report to the French Chamber of Deputies. The wealth of these Orders amounts to at least £40,000,000, the bulk of which has been accumulated during the past thirty years. But they are most ingenious in concealing their possessions from the tax-collectors. The Carthusians, for instance, the wealthiest Order in the world, return the value of their real estate at £560! Everywhere, as the Prefects report, the monks wage a war to the knife on the Republic and on democratic institutions. It is a question whether they or the Republic shall go under, and French citizens are now alive to the facts of the situation. Gambetta was right. Clericalism is the enemy. It was so thirty years ago. It is still more so now. And it must be vanquished.

One result of the expelled French Religious Orders taking up quarters in England is that Buckfast Abbey, in Devonshire, has been restored in part to its original use. Of course it is in a nice position. All the abbeys were like that. The old monks knew a good thing when they saw it. They also knew how to lay their hands on it—and keep them there. Nor are the modern monks without some talent in that line; and the nuns are not far behind them. Down at Hastings, for instance, a convent of expelled French nuns have settled down in a commodious and pleasantly-situated building which was previously a hydropathic establishment. The grounds are private, the air is pure, and the prospect is lovely. Yes, the children of piety know how to make the best of this life, while waiting for the next.

Mr. Gatling is dead. He invented the Gatling gun. He was an American, and probably a Christian.

We don’t meddle with politics in the *Freethinker*. But that is no reason why we should not maintain the rights of free speech even in political contests. It was a bad mistake for Mr. Will Crook’s supporters to go to Mr. Drago’s meeting at the Woolwich Drill Hall and turn it into a pandemonium. It is no answer to say that Conservatives do the same thing sometimes at Progressive meetings. Two blacks don’t make a white. Besides, the Progressives should know better—and set a better example. This is not merely *our* opinion. We are quite sure that Mr. Will Crook would say ditto.

There is one admirable feature in politics on the other side of the Atlantic. The Americans never interfere with each other’s meetings. They wax terribly hot—hotter than we do; but they keep the peace, and give each other fair play. It never enters a Republican’s head to go and make a row at a Democratic meeting, nor does a Democrat ever think of making a row at a Republican meeting. Even when the rival parties “process” in the streets there is no disturbance or incivility.

Arguing with Emperors is not always profitable. Who does not remember the story of the Roman philosopher who, in an interview with the Emperor of that time, allowed that mighty personage to have all the best of the discussion, and excused himself afterwards to his friends by asking who could dispute with the master of thirty legions? But there seems to be more courage, or less discretion, about Professor Harnack, who has replied to Emperor William’s letter to Admiral Hollmann upon revelation in the Bible. Professor Harnack says there is only one kind of revelation, and that it is in persons alone—not at all in things. As for the

"Divinity of Christ," it must be questioned, though Christ must not be confused with other Masters. "God was in Christ" is as far as we should go. How pretty! But if God was in Christ, the Emperor's orthodoxy seems nearer the truth than the Professor's heterodoxy. Why make half a dozen bites at one cherry? Professor Harnack nibbles and Emperor William swallows. That is all the difference we see between them.

Dr. Horton, the Hampstead preacher, has been trying to explain to his congregation that they may still go on praying in spite of science. This gentleman says it is absurd to suppose that God cannot do things contrary to our conception of the order of nature. Man himself is constantly interfering with the order of nature; and is God less able than man? But this is all stuff and nonsense. Man does *not* interfere with the order of nature. He is a part of it. Edison and Marconi do not interfere with the order of nature. They have to be in harmony with its laws every moment. And that is what the order of nature means. Mr. Horton appears to think that a man who levels up a hollow, sails a ship across the sea, constructs a railway, or cures a sick person, is interfering with the order of nature. He reminds us of the late Canon Liddon, who actually fancied that he violated the law of gravitation every time he raised his hand! It is only in pulpits that such nonsense is talked; and only in churches that it is listened to with respect.

"You are," Dr. Horton says, "embarrassed in your circumstances. You do not know how to face the morrow's business. Pray, keep praying. God holds all things in his hands. He can deliver us." This is a new recipe against bankruptcy. It may do on Sunday at Hampstead. It will hardly do in the City on Monday.

Lord Overtoun says there is need of a spiritual revival in Scotland. Lord Overtoun's workmen probably think there is need of something else. Salvation, like charity, should begin at home.

The Lord's Day Observance Act was raised as a defence by a Nantwich newsagent named Poole, when sued by Edward Lloyd (Limited) to recover £2 9s. 1d. for copies of a Sunday newspaper supplied to him. Judge Rentoul disposed of this possibly pious but certainly unscrupulously dishonest plea by deciding that the plaintiffs were not "tradesmen" within the meaning of the Act, but "manufacturers," so that the Act did not apply to them. The ingenious defence accordingly failed, and judgment was given for the amount claimed together with costs. Leave was given to appeal, however, as the case was one of public importance, so that we may perhaps hear of the matter again. That a seller of Sunday papers should spend money over so hypocritical a defence and such an appeal, seems strange. Probably some pious Sabbatarians, such as those of the Lord's Day Observance Society, are using the newsagent as their tool. The case shows the necessity of legislation, if, as seems to be admitted, no "tradesman, artificer, workman, or laborer" can enter into a legal contract on Sunday, or enforce payment for goods supplied or work done on that sacred day. Religion ought not to be allowed to protect itself by presenting such tempting opportunities for flagrant dishonesty.

Mr. T. Compton Rickett, M.P., speaking at the Browning Hall P. S. A., Walworth, on Sunday afternoon last, on the present religious outlook in England, is reported to have said: "Scientific research was vindicating Christianity in a marvellous way every day." A statement like that indicates faith, or optimism, or something else, with which it were vain to argue.

When parsons begin to "give the show away," they generally do it to some purpose. We have, in recent issues of the *Freethinker*, given several pungent criticisms by parsons of either church management or their fellow parsons. Here is another by the Rev. Dr. Jessop, rector of Scarning, Norfolk, on what he calls "The Parson's Freehold." "The philosopher of the future will, I believe, be amazed and perplexed by nothing so much as by the strange vitality of this legal phenomenon—the parson's freehold. Imagine a postman or a prime minister, a clerk in the Custom's House, or the captain of a man-of-war, an assistant in a draper's shop, or your own gardener, having an estate for life in his own office, and being able to draw his pay to his dying day, though he may be for years blind and deaf and paralysed and imbecile—so incapable, in fact, that he could not even appoint his own deputy, or so indifferent that he cared not whether there was any deputy to discharge the duties which he himself was paid to perform. Yet all this, and much more than this, is possible for us beneficed clergymen. I am,

myself, the patron of a benefice from which the late rector was non-resident for fifty-three years."

As another interesting sample of the same kind of things, take the following criticism by Bishop Ryle of the manner in which the clergy perform—or fail to perform—the duties pertaining to their office: "It is nonsense to deny that there are scores of large parishes in almost every diocese in England where the parochial clergyman does little or nothing beside a cold, formal round of Sunday services. Christ's truth is not preached. Soul-work is neglected. The parishioners are like sheep without a shepherd. The bulk of the people never come near a church at all. Sin and immorality and ignorance and infidelity increase and multiply every year. The few who worship anywhere take refuge in the chapels of the Methodists, Baptists, and Independents, if not in more questionable places of worship. The parish church is comparatively deserted. People in such parishes live and die with an abiding impression that the Church of England is a rotten, useless institution, and bequeath to their families a legacy of prejudice against the Church, which lasts for ever. Will anyone pretend to tell me that there are not hundreds of large English parishes in this condition? I defy him to do so. I am writing down things that are only too true, and it is in vain to pretend to conceal them."

Some interesting admissions were made by the Bishop of London, in the course of what he called a Lenten meditation at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on Sunday morning last. Alluding to the religious census taken by the *Daily News*, and the "sad fact" that attendance at religious worship was shown to be decreasing, the Bishop said: "Its moral was not to be sought in finding out whether more people went to church or chapel, but in realising that it was a symptom that the appetite for heavenly things would soon die out. This it was that made him so often say in connection with the Bishop of London's Fund that, if in new populations a man was not provided with a church at once, in five or ten years he would not need one, for the faculty of hungering and thirsting after righteousness would be gone." Of course, by "the faculty of hungering and thirsting after righteousness" the Bishop really means hungering and thirsting after superstition. With that qualification we entirely agree with him—that the maintenance and persistence of the religious sentiment is purely a matter of education and habit; which is no more nor less than what his statement amounts to in other words.

The Convent of the Bon Pasteur of Nancy has been condemned to pay 10,000 francs damages to Mdlle. Leccoanet, together with costs, for the loss of her sight and of her health through seventeen years of hard toil in that establishment. Mdlle. Leccoanet was compelled to work hard for very trifling remuneration, and was prevented from communicating with her family. She did not recover her sight and her health until eight years after she left the convent. The Good Shepherds, as they consider themselves, evidently belong to the class of whom the Bishop of Nancy and the late Bishop of Grenoble spoke as people who exploited those whom they professed to take out of charity. Like shepherds in general, they only keep flocks in order to fleece them.

The case of Cavendish *versus* Strutt illustrates the dangers so well as the follies of modern Spiritualism. The plaintiff asks that a settlement of his property which he was induced to make by Major Strutt and his wife and others should be set aside on the ground of undue influence. Mr. Cavendish is a foolish young man with more money than brains. According to his evidence, he fell under the influence of the Strutts, who employed the usual devices of Spiritualism to gain their ends. Table-turning was first introduced at the suggestion of Mrs. Strutt and another lady. The table tilted in answer to questions, and kept coming over towards Mr. Cavendish, who was led to believe that this was done by the spirit of his mother, who thus showed that she wished to enter into communication with him. They "arranged a code with the table for saying 'Yes' and 'No.'" Afterwards, to obtain more perfect communications, Mrs. Strutt introduced a "planchette," which she said was only the beginning of much higher arts. This planchette was a heart-shaped disc of wood with two wheels and a pencil. Hands being placed on it, Mrs. Strutt was able to write with it, though Mr. Cavendish could not. As the pencil ran along she called out the words it wrote on the paper placed beneath it. By such pretended messages from his mother, the Strutts are said to have induced the credulous young man to deal with his property as they desired.

In view of our front article this week on Huxley, it is well to make the following reference to a *Daily News* leading article on the two new volumes of Letters by Charles

Darwin. We do not say "the late" Charles Darwin, for there was, is, and ever will be, only *one* Charles Darwin; so he need not be particularised. Well, the *Daily News* alluded to a certain occasion on which Huxley defended Darwinism against the jibes and sneers of a well-known Bishop. "We are indignant now," our contemporary said, "with Bishop Wilberforce for so bitterly attacking Darwin at the celebrated meeting of the British Association. But at the time he spoke for nearly the whole religious world." Quite so. The whole religious world was wrong, and Darwin was right. Yet the religious world pretended to be guided by Inspiration, and Darwin claimed no other guide than Common Sense.

The Bishop of Bristol intends to stand no Higher Criticism nonsense. He announces that all candidates for Orders in his diocese will have to express their belief in the Virgin Birth of Christ. But there won't be much difficulty about that. Was it not Sydney Smith (or somebody) who, when required to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles, said, "Certainly; forty, if you like"?

Providence has visited the British Isles with a violent gale, which, besides wrecking ships and drowning sailors, has lifted an iron church at Holyhead from its foundations and dashed it down again as a heap of ruins. In Ireland another church was "blown away," and at Accrington a steeple was blown down. Among the deaths caused by the hurricane was that of the Rev. Robert De Winton at Durham. The chimney stack which crashed through the roof and killed him also inflicted such serious injuries on his wife that she is hardly expected to recover. The Deity who rides the whirlwind and directs the storm thus shows his admirable impartiality by caring even less for his own sacred edifices and ministers than for Secular halls and Atheists.

The recent gale, which in one place blew at the rate of seventy-five miles an hour, unroofed or otherwise seriously damaged three churches in the Isle of Man, and uprooted over a thousand trees in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. In Ulster it killed a family. Ten bodies have been washed ashore from the wreck of the English steamer *Ottercapo*, which was driven by a gale on the rockbound coast near Brest. At Padstow Providence was put to shame by eight women, who put off in a lifeboat and rescued nine men from a steamer driven ashore by the gale.

Providence, in its inscrutable but of course undoubted benevolence, sees fit to afflict millions of people with the terrible disease of leprosy. In China, India, and Siam alone there are said to be 3,000,000 lepers. Man, in his perverse ingratitude, detests and tries to exterminate this horrible blessing in disguise. There is hope, therefore, from the Secular or human point of view, in the news that Providence may yet be defeated so far as leprosy is concerned. Dr. Razlag believes that he has discovered a means of curing this hitherto incurable disease. The main features of his method of counteracting the dreadful evils designed by the Deity are minute and prolonged sanitation and the use of highly antiseptic drugs. Three out of four lepers treated by him for four months have recovered so far as to be able to return to their ordinary avocations.

"Providence" overlooked the Church Army the other night and allowed its Social Mission Shelter, in Bannerstreet, St. Luke's, to be destroyed by fire. One "dosser" lost his life.

There was a ghost once in Texas who used to bob up on the wall of a burying-ground in the dark and frighten the passers-by into fits. But he failed to produce the usual effect on one occasion. The passer-by on whom he was operating pulled out a revolver and fired at him, and the ghost dropped with a groan and had to be taken to the hospital.

A somewhat similar ghost has come to grief, though not quite so tragically, in the vicinity of Worsley Old Hall. It appeared at night in woman's apparel, with a hood drawn round its face. For some weeks it caused quite a reign of terror in the locality. But some railway employees sat up on the look-out for it one night, with a stern determination to probe the mystery to the bottom. When the ghost appeared, dressed for a change in a white sheet, they chased it and ran it down; and the apparition turned out to be a well-known Walkden man who was playing the ghost for his own recreation. His capturers gave him a thrashing and let him go home. We guess it will be a long while before a ghost is seen again in that neighborhood.

Before the Charente-Inférieure Assizes, a priest, Father Jules Gatineau, aged forty-four, has been tried, in absentia, on several charges of criminal assault. Father Gatineau was

head-master of the Clerical College of Montfort, at Jonzac, where the crimes were committed in 1900, 1901, and 1902, the victims being his own pupils. Abbé Gatineau was sentenced to penal servitude for life. Brother Duvian, head-master of the Christian Brothers' School at Brest, with seven hundred pupils, has been arrested at Le Mans on charges of criminal assault, and has been removed to Brest. It is understood that, in consequence of this scandal, the Government intends closing the school, as well as the Saint Louis College, an aristocratic establishment managed by the same brothers. It would be unfair to lay on the whole priesthood the blame for the crimes of a few, but it would be culpable blindness to ignore the fact that such crimes are too frequent at clerical establishments. In the course of 1902, fifteen priests, or brothers, were convicted by French Courts for those crimes. In almost every case the offences were repeated, and in some cases running over a period of years. It is, therefore, only too probable that there are other offenders not yet brought to justice. The Church is very much to blame for not exercising a stricter supervision over its members, and must esteem itself lucky that a strong civil power is existing beside it. Priests and brothers are, of course, but men, and no one expects them to be sinless; but is it asking too much that the morality of professors of Christian doctrines should not compare unfavorably, as it does, with that of the State staff of teachers? The former, it might be pleaded, are exposed to greater temptations on account of their celibacy, but the special graces with which they are supposed to be endowed ought to be more than a set-off.—*Paris Correspondent of the "Daily News."*

The redoubtable Jacob Popp, of High Wycombe, is to be congratulated on having at last triumphed over the Sabbatarian bigots of that town who have for so long been persecuting him for Sunday trading under the musty statute of Charles II. of inodorous memory. It appears that on Saturday, February 28, at the usual weekly prosecution of Mr. Popp, the Bench differed on the amount of the penalty, and, being equally divided, the two summonses were dismissed. The decision was received with applause in court. At the same time Joseph Pope, who was also summoned for the same offence, gave an undertaking in future to open only for the sale of Sunday newspapers, and the summons against him was withdrawn. We cannot help thinking that it was a mistake on Mr. Pope's part to compromise even to that extent. It is only by standing up to the bigots and manfully defying them to do their dirty worst that they are made to understand that the day for that sort of thing is long past.

Dr. Spence Watson has been a vigorous and consistent Liberal in politics. No doubt he has earned the compliment recently paid him by the National Liberal Federation. But why on earth did he say, in responding, that "the spirit of materialism was abroad," and that its "paralysis of living belief" was responsible for the present general reaction? "Materialism" may be true or false, but as a theory of nature it has nothing whatever to do with political or social parties or their differences. The best of the joke is that Primrose League leaders and Liberal Federation leaders both charge "the spirit of materialism" with responsibility for the opposite effects. Both sides, of course, talk nonsense in this respect. They have no right to use the word "materialism" in such a connection.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held on Thursday, Feb. 26, 1903. The President, G. W. Foote, in the chair.

There were also present: Messrs. E. Bate, C. Cohen, T. Cooper, F. Davies, T. Gorniot, T. How, W. Leat, J. Neate, E. Parker, C. Quinton, T. Thurlow, F. Wood, F. Schaller, S. Samuels.

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

The President asked the meeting to appoint some one to check the amounts received on account of "Shilling Month," and Mr. E. Quinton was elected.

The Secretary was instructed to send out the usual notice to Branches to ascertain which of them desired to receive the Conference.

Resolution *re* the question of re-organisation, remitted by the Conference to the Executive, and partially discussed at the last meeting, was again referred to, and it was resolved to appoint a committee of three, to consider and report to the Executive. Messrs. C. Cohen, C. Quinton, and Victor Roger were then elected.

The Secretary received further instructions concerning the Annual Excursion, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary.

### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, March 8, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W. : 7.30, "Man's Place in the Universe: a Reply to Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace."

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—March 8, Glasgow; 15, Liverpool.

J. LATHAM, 11 Woburn-place, Russell-square, London, W.C., writes: "I daresay I can answer the queries of your correspondent, J. Young, with regard to the Rev. Isaac Selby, if he will communicate with me, as I have worked with Mr. Symes on the *Liberator*."

S. BEETEN.—Your order is executed. We hope the literature sent will do good propagandist work in South Africa.

W. BINDON.—(1) We know nothing of the Rev. J. Moffat Logan's early days before his "conversion." That he "read infidel literature, and lived a wild and godless life," is a statement to be smiled at. Only utter ignoramuses and reckless bigots fancy there is any connection between "infidel" literature and wild living. (2) We see nothing in your Theist friend's argument. We infer the existence of other "minds" besides our own from similar manifestations. The question of a "general mind" in nature is not prior to that, but subsequent to it. Your friend has inverted the natural order of things. His position eventuates in this, that a man cannot be sure he has a mother unless he believes in the existence of God. Could there be a greater absurdity?

T. HOPKINS.—Miss Vance has handed us your amusing letter and enclosure. Kindly let us know precisely how the latter is to be placed. Meanwhile, thanks.

J. F. HAINES.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Eastern Post*. We appreciate your vigilant love of freedom.

SEVERAL correspondents have sent us letters on "Spelling Reform," but we are afraid we shall not be able to print them, as we can't get in special compositors to deal with folios of phonetic spelling, and we are not rich enough to run our own compositors through a fresh apprenticeship. However, we will look all the correspondence on this subject through, and see if anything can be done with it.

L. SYKES (Liverpool).—(1) The "anti-infidel" you refer to had as much to do as yourself with "the closing of the Hall of Science." His references to the death-bed of Charles Bradlaugh are as decent as could be expected of such a person. We suppose he must live somehow. (2) Who told you that Mr. Foote helped to write the libellous *Life of Bradlaugh*? Pray give us the name and address of your informant. We have come across many pious inventions in our time, but this takes the cake. We shall hear next that Mr. Foote secretly edits the *Christian Herald* for Prophet Baxter; or some equally interesting (and absurd) statement. If you want to know the story of that libellous publication, and some truth (instead of fiction) about the "anti-infidel" aforesaid, you have only to consult Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's biography of her father.

E. G. COVE asks "Where and when did the human family have its origin?" Such a big question cannot be answered in this column. Our correspondent should read Dr. Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy*. The price is one shilling. It will be sent post free from our publishing office for that amount.

JOSEPH EDWARDS.—Card received. We deeply regret to learn of your wife's death, and tender you our sincere sympathy.

B. FOSTER.—*Secular Thought* is the name of the Freethought weekly published at Toronto. The *Freethinker* is sent to Canada at the same subscription rate as in England. You will see that we are reprinting Ah Sin's Letters in pamphlet form. We hope the reprint will be widely circulated.

T. EDWARDS.—Necessity does not relieve you of responsibility. That is one of the absurd fictions of orthodox criticism. Responsibility means that you can be called to account. All other meanings of the word should bear different designations. Words with more than one meaning are the bane of philosophical discussion.

E. CHAPMAN.—Mr. Foote will answer by post as soon as possible.

A. GIBSON.—In our next.

A. WEBBER.—Will bear it in mind, but St. Patrick seems an entirely legendary character.

H. C. SHACKLETON.—Thanks for the report of Mr. Philip Snowden's address. We will deal with it next week. It seems to want dealing with.

W. W. HOLTUM.—Politics are not discussed in the *Freethinker*, but we cannot undertake that no contributor shall ever allude to the existence of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. Have you not exaggerated the importance, or the seriousness, of the allusion to which you refer, but which we do not recollect at the moment?

GREYHOUND.—You should ask the editor of *Reynolds'* for an explanation. We know nothing of the "secret meeting of the dignitaries of the Church of England." Of course, it may have taken place all the same.

RANK AND FILE.—Your letter might give unnecessary offence. If you went to hear Dr. Coit lecture on "How I Found God" you ought not to have expected a robust Freethought address. We

daresay the Ethicists do good in their way, though their lack of an intellectual basis is unfortunate.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*, which are most useful in the Freethought Publishing Company's business.

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

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

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

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

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

### That Hundred Pounds.

MR. J. UMPLEBY, a veteran Freethinker, and the oldest of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, wants to start a special subscription of £100 towards the Society's funds. He offers to give £10 if nine others will give £10 each. Another veteran Freethinker, Major John C. Harris, R.E., who has already contributed handsomely to Shilling Month, seeing Mr. Umpleby's offer in the *Freethinker*, wrote at once (for he never loses time in these matters) to express his "willingness to be one of the nine 'others.'"

Novalis said that his opinion gained infinitely when it was shared by another human being. Let us hope the same rule holds good of this subscription.

We have got *two* promises of £10. *Eight* more are wanted. Will *eight* other gentlemen (or ladies) please speak?

This subscription would be entirely for the National Secular Society. My only interest in it is trying to raise it. Every penny of it would be spent on the Society's work by the Society's Executive.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE'S return to the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening brought a capital audience, in spite of the unpropitious weather. And it was a live audience. The lecture was followed with the closest attention, and every point caught up with instant appreciation. One facetious Christian availed himself of the opportunity for discussion, without adding much to the profit of the evening.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall again this evening (March 8). His subject will be "Man's Place in the Universe." The lecture will be a reply to Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace's article bearing that title in the March number of the *Fortnightly Review*. It should interest Freethinkers, and they might try to bring some of their more orthodox friends along on this special occasion.

The March number of the *Pioneer* is now on sale, and we think it will be found an interesting issue. We hope our friends will do their best to circulate it amongst their acquaintances, or in other ways that they may find feasible. It is a curious thing that the ordinary over-the-counter sale of the first two numbers of the *Pioneer*, apart from the sale at special reduced rates for free distribution, only varied to the extent of six copies. This is good in its way, for it shows a sustained interest. But it does not satisfy us. We want to see the regular sale of the *Pioneer*, through common trade channels, increase month after month. This month we are spending a little time and money on advertising the

new venture; but our main reliance is still on the goodwill of our friends, who can advertise the *Pioneer* for us in the best of all possible ways by placing it in the hands of fresh readers. They can do this at a very trifling cost to themselves. We are still supplying copies for free distribution at the following rates:—Six copies for threepence, twelve copies for fivepence, twenty-four copies for ninepence—in each case post free.

Admirers of Colonel Ingersoll will find his views on the Sunday question in the March *Pioneer*. The piece is both philosophical and racy. Good would result if thousands of outsiders could read it.

The "Letters of a Chinaman" which appeared in our columns recently are being reprinted in pamphlet form for general circulation. It is thought that they will be useful in this form. Mr. Foote supplies a few words of Introduction as to the authorship of the Letters. The pamphlet contains sixteen pages and the price is only one penny. It will be on sale in a few days.

Shilling Month was nominally over some time ago, but there are late subscribers as usual, and more are acknowledged in this week's *Freethinker*. The subscription, however, had better be regarded now as closed. A representative of the National Secular Society's Executive has to check our published lists, and the final statement on this matter shall appear in our next issue. The additions made from week to week during Mr. Foote's absence, and in the hurry of going to press, were of course a passing guide to the progress of the subscription. But the strictly accurate figures—which may vary a little from those already printed—will appear after the audit.

The Leicester Secular Society celebrated the twenty-second anniversary of the opening of the Hall on Sunday evening. There was an excellent meeting. A hundred members and friends sat down to a supper on Monday evening. We are informed that in spite of recent serious changes the Society's prospects are very encouraging.

The course of lectures arranged by the South Shields friends was concluded last Sunday evening. We are pleased to learn that the result has been in every way—even financially—satisfactory, the support received having exceeded all expectations. After the lecture Messrs. Hannan and Fothergill proposed, and the President (Mr. S. M. Peacock) supported, a very sincere and hearty vote of thanks to all those who had assisted, by donations and attendance, including the Newcastle friends and their secretary, Mr. Elstob, for their useful co-operation and support, and this was carried by acclamation. The announcement that a social evening was being arranged, and Mr. Foote was to lecture at an early date, was also received with applause.

The *Journal of Education* has taken a plebeian of its readers, and the following list is the result: (1) the greatest living statesman is Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, (2) the greatest living general is Lord Kitchener, (3) the greatest living poet is Mr. Swinburne, (4) the greatest living novelist is Mr. George Meredith, (5) the greatest living painter is Mr. Watts, and (6) the greatest living man of letters is Mr. John Morley. Now it is not our business to discuss the accuracy of this list. We take it for what it is worth. But there is this aspect of it to be noted. It is doubtful if any one man in this list is a Christian. Three of the six—Mr. Swinburne, Mr. Meredith, and Mr. Morley—are certainly *not* Christians. Mr. Chamberlain's religion is not generally supposed to be a very heavy burden. Mr. Watts is a religious man, but we do not think he is orthodox. Lord Kitchener seems to have as much religion as is demanded by the rules and regulations of the Army.

The *Athenæum* contradicts its own incredible statement that Mr. John Morley did not hand over the late Lord Acton's library to Cambridge University in its entirety, but retained some 5,000 volumes for his own use. Mr. Carnegie bought the library as it stood, and presented it to Mr. Morley as it stood, and Mr. Morley transferred it as it stood to Cambridge University.

There is a reminiscence of a very old epitaph in the statement of an Indian newspaper that in Northern India a tombstone stands to the memory of a good missionary with these words: "He translated the Scriptures into Pushtoo, and was accidentally shot by his khitmutghar. Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" It is to be hoped that the khitmutghar only understands Pushtoo.

## Shilling Month.

### GENERAL

(For division between the National Secular Society and the maintenance of the Sunday Freethought Platform at the Athenæum Hall).

The figure after subscribers' names represents the number of shillings they have forwarded to the fund.

T. Pitt, 5.

Per Miss Vance:—J. Preston, 5; J. D., 5; A. P., 4; A. Friend, 5; H. Crossley, 1; S. Newsom, 2; Ipswich Saint, 2; H. G. (Loughboro') 2.

### SPECIAL

(For Maintaining the Sunday Freethought Lectures at the Athenæum Hall).

F. Hermann, 2½.

### SPECIAL

(For N. S. S. General Fund).

F. Hermann, 2½.

## Mr. Courtney on Spiritualism.

SPIRITUALISM appears to be making some headway of late years. Long ago it claimed some two million supporters in America. The Psychical Society collects and investigates stories of ghosts, telepathy, phantasms of the living and the dead, spirit messages, and other occult phenomena. A few scientific men, such as Wallace and Crookes, have fallen a prey to the delusion. The most recent contribution to this superstitious movement is an elaborate work of 1,800 pages by the late Mr. F. W. H. Myers. "Human Personality" is supposed by these latter-day Spiritualists to be based on a "subliminal self"—literally, a *below-the-threshold* self. This unconscious self, not restricting itself to the well-known fact of the unconscious working of our mental faculties and physical functions, is alleged to have the power of acting independently of the body and of quitting it and surviving it as a "metetherial" existence. The crude animism of the savage who in dreams receives visits from the ghosts of his ancestors, and who imagines he wanders abroad while his body is asleep in its den, is made more plausible for modern minds by being invested with the new dignity and authority of scientific and pseudo-scientific pretensions. Ancient superstitions, probably in their main features as old as the human race itself, are being foisted on mankind as scientific realities or objective truths. Mr. Myers's arguments and stories are intended to be powerful support to the Christian doctrine of a future life. Reviewing the work in the *Daily Telegraph*, and speaking from a less decided and presumably more impartial standpoint than that adopted by pronounced Materialists, Mr. W. L. Courtney pens the following well-weighed remarks on the subject of Spiritualism:—

"Fascinating, inspiring, interesting beyond most mundane interests such speculations undoubtedly are, but also more than a little fantastic and, it is to be feared, illusory. What is the attitude which an educated man of common sense and experience, who tries to keep an open mind, but also desires to preserve his own sanity, instinctively adopts towards theories of this kind? He sees that all the phenomena of so-called Spiritualism have attracted round themselves a mass of fraud, of silly and vain superstition, of chicanery, deceit and imposture, beyond any other phenomena with which he is acquainted. He observes that foolish men and women have been the prey of vulgar wonder-workers, who have used their arts for no higher purpose than the mere making of money under false pretences. He remarks, further, that the men who allow themselves to be attracted by these subjects lose no small portion of their logical acumen and understanding, just in proportion to their indulgence in such speculations. He notices, again, as an unfortunate matter of common observation, that a thinker, sound in nine out of every ten branches of study, may yet be hopelessly perverse and insane on the tenth, and especially, perhaps, he is aware of this in the case of some of the greatest thinkers and men of science that have ever lived. Or, once more

changing the point of view, he asks what good all these revelations from the spirit-world have ever done humanity? For the most part, the ghosts are very stupid ghosts, and their messages are absolutely valueless. If they have intelligence, it is intelligence lower than that of most rational human beings. Above all, we discover that in the slow evolution of culture and knowledge we have, on the one side, a steady, broadening advance of useful, illuminating truths, the value and accuracy of which we recognise every day of our lives, and, on the other hand, a slowly diminishing region of superstition and mysticism containing doctrines and a procedure difficult to grapple with because so vague and impalpable, and incapable, so far as we can see, of adding much that is of any service and help to the world. Religion, if it is wise, will do without so dubious an ally."

After referring to differences of opinion among Spiritualists—Wallace, for instance, attributing all or almost all supernatural phenomena to the actions of the spirits of the dead, while Mr. Myers "holds that by far the larger proportion are due to the action of the still embodied spirit of the agent or percipient himself"—Mr. Courtney points out the difficulty of distinguishing between objective facts and the subjective illusions of the agent or percipient. He asks whether anyone yet realises the "enormous potentialities of self-delusion which we all of us possess," and by what tests we can be sure that spiritualistic phenomena are really objective and not subjective. In spite of the innumerable stories collected by Mr. Myers, the reviewer remains unconvinced. He says:—

"The order of established facts accredited by science and verified by centuries of experience is so strong and so secure that exceptions to the known rule, even if they could be proved, would still be regarded as exceptional—in other words, as not yet explicable—but not necessarily as momentous revelations of a higher truth."

## Woman and Christianity.

By JOSEPHINE K. HENRY

(A leading American Freethinker).

THERE is no assertion more frequently made and emphasized than that the present advanced and elevated position of woman is due entirely to the Christian religion.

This claim has been made so often that it passes current as fact, and the mass of women never think of questioning it.

Yet there are two sides to every question. It sometimes happens that even the theologian and historian, in their enthusiasm, are long on assertion and short on proof.

It is a matter of fact that the nations which treat women with the most consideration are all civilised nations. These questions then naturally arise: Have the teachings of the Bible advanced or retarded the emancipation of woman?

Has the Bible teaching dignified or degraded the mothers of the race?

If the condition of woman is highest in Christian civilisation, is it Christianity or is it civilisation which has accorded to woman the most consideration?

Christianity means belief in the tenets laid down in a book called the Bible, claimed to be the Word of God.

Civilisation means the state of being refined in manners from the grossness of savage life, and improved in arts and learning.

If civilisation is due entirely to the teachings of the Bible, then, as claimed, woman owes to Christianity all the consideration which she receives.

After studying the Bible, the history of the Christian religion, and other religions for years, and giving deep thought to the subject, we claim that woman's advancement is due to civilisation, and that the Bible has been a bar to her progress.

It is true that woman receives most consideration in so-called Christian nations, but this is not due to Bible religion, but is due to the mental evolution of humanity, stimulated by climate, and by soil, and the intercommunication of ideas through modern invention.

All the Christian nations are in the North Temperate zone, whose climate and soil are better adapted to the development of the race than any other portions of the globe.

Christianity took its rise in thirty degrees North latitude.

Mohammedanism took its rise in the torrid zone; and as it made its way North it advanced in education, in art, in science, and invention, until the civilisation of Moslem Spain far surpassed that of Christian Europe; and as it retreated before the Christian sword from the fertile valleys of Spain

into the arid plains of Arabia it retrograded, after giving to the world some of the greatest scientific truths and inventions.

The women of the United States receive more consideration, and are being emancipated more rapidly than are the women of Europe. Yet in Europe, Christianity holds iron sway, while in the United States the people are free to accept or reject its teachings.

In the United States out of a population of seventy-six millions, but twenty-five millions have accepted it, and a large percentage of these are children who have not arrived at the age of discretion, and foreigners from Christian Europe.

The consideration extended to women does not depend on the teaching of the Bible, but upon the mental and material advancement of the men of a nation.

If it can be proven that Bible teaching inspired men to explore and to subdue new lands, to give to the world inventions, to build ships, railroads, telegraphs, and telephones, to open mines, to construct foundries and factories, and to amass knowledge and wealth, then the Bible has been woman's best friend; for she receives most consideration where men have liberty of thought, and of action, have prospered materially, builded homes and have bank accounts.

In Christian Russia, Spain, Italy, and Germany, a large percentage of the able-bodied men are either soldiers bearing deadly weapons, or priests wielding the sword of theology. Only women and old men and children seem to be humanely and usefully employed. The women of these Christian lands are pathetically submissive, patient, and subdued, performing drudgery too heavy for human beings to perform, many of them mothers, or soon to become such. All over Christian Europe

"It was once the fashion to plow,  
With a woman and a cow,  
And the woman pulled her share  
And never did falter,  
But those good old times have flown  
And we're now compelled to own  
That the woman has contrived  
To slip her halter."

But there is no record on the face of the earth that priest with Bible in his hand ever helped woman to slip her halter.

Yet Bible religion flourishes in all these lands like a green bay tree. The women in the slums of Christian London and New York receive no more consideration than the women in the slums of Peking, Hong Kong, and Bombay.

If the nations which give the most consideration to women do so because of their Christianity, then it logically follows that the more intensely Christian a class of individual may be, the greater consideration will be shown their women.

The most intensely Christian people in Christendom are Negroes, yet it is an incontrovertible fact that Negro women receive less consideration, and are more wronged and abused, than any class on earth.

The women of the middle and upper classes in the Bible lands receive consideration just in proportion to the amount of intelligence and worldly goods possessed by their male relatives, while the pauper classes are abused, subjected, and degraded in proportion to the ignorance and poverty of the men of their class.

The Church is the channel through which the Bible influence flows.

Has the Church ever issued an edict that woman must be equal with man before the canon or the civil law?

Throughout Christendom woman is to-day a silenced subject before her ecclesiastical and civil lawgivers. Any Church Council or national or State legislature in Christendom would spurn the idea of consulting with women. None of these are yet wise enough to recognise the fact that the force which impels woman to demand her human rights is the irresistible force of evolution, and the tide that rises highest against this force is ecclesiasticism. Upon woman's success or failure depends man's own position, the future progress of the human race, and the perpetuity or decay of the American Republic. All things have been tried in the history of the world to stay the decay of nations except this one thing, the development of all that is best in woman, "The eternal feminine leaders onward forever." The faith-laden woman can never do this; but the woman who is a clear and robust reasoner is what the world needs to-day.

If this American nation fails to cultivate and utilise the mental and moral forces in its womanhood, in the future another Gibbon will arise who, musing amidst the crumbling arches of the Capitol at Washington will write of the decline and fall of the American Republic.

Has the Church ever issued an edict that woman's thoughts should be incorporated in creed or code; that she should own her own body and property in marriage, or have a legal claim to her children born in wedlock, which Christianity claims is "sacrament" and one of the "holy mysteries"? It sometimes happens in Christian lands that marriage, instead of being "sacrament," is sacrifice, and instead of being a "holy mystery" is an unholy misery.

Women, too, are securing higher educations; but they have fought the battle for themselves and battered down the doors of colleges and universities.

Did the Church ever demand that woman be educated beyond the cook-book and the Bible, and that interpreted for her?

It may be said religious denominations have schools for women. True; but they never did have them until the educational influence of the world, propelled by Freethought, forced them to it.

The education in religious schools to-day is to teach woman that she is an inferior and subject creature; and, above all, she must have faith, without asking any questions about the religious tenets taught, and give her devotion and best efforts to the Church. The female congregations attest the influence of the teaching. It propels the very life blood of Christianity.

No institution in modern civilisation is so unjust to woman as the Christian Church.

It demands everything from her and gives nothing in return.

The history of the Church does not contain a single suggestion for the equality of woman with man.

Yet it is claimed that women owe their advancement to the Bible.

It would be quite as true to say that they owe their improved condition to the almanac or to the vernal equinox.

Under Bible influence Christian history bears testimony that woman has been burned as a witch, sold in the shambles, reduced to a drudge or a pauper, and silenced and subjected before her lawgivers.

"She was first in the transgression, therefore keep her in subjection."

This is the Bible command, and I fail to see how it elevates woman. These words of Paul have filled our whole civilisation with a deadly virus, yet how strange it is that the average Christian woman holds the name of Paul above all others, and is oblivious of the fact that he has brought deeper shame, subjection, servitude, and sorrow to woman than any other human being in history.

The nations under Bible influence are the only ones in league with the liquor traffic. Both England and the United States are in partnership with the liquor trust, and trade upon the vices and degradation of their people. Certainly it cannot be claimed that drunkenness elevates woman.

Throughout Christendom millions of wretched women wait in suspense at the midnight hour to hear the roeling steps of drunken husbands or sons, while in heathendom a drunkard's wife cannot be found unless a heathen husband becomes the victim of Christian whiskey.

The United States, according to the last criminal statistics, pays six hundred millions annually for the punishment and restraint of criminals. It is natural to suppose that all these criminals had mothers; surely it cannot be claimed that Christianity has elevated and protected these women; 350,000 saloons in the United States surely attest that drunkenness is quite an element in our civilisation. Women are the daughters, wives and mothers of this element.

The press bears testimony to the fact that the crimes against women are as frequent, and more atrocious, than any in the calendar.

Add to this the tens of thousands of women who appeal to divorce courts for release from the cruelties and wrongs they suffer, and the consideration and protection Christianity claims to extend to women is not so apparent. Yet all this is going on in the very centres of Christian civilisation.

(To be continued.)

### The Perils of Hissing.

It appears to be an established rule now that you may express approval, but not disapproval, of what is presented to you on the stages of theatres and music-halls. You may clap as much as you please—in fact, the more the better; but if you hiss you must expect to be treated as a criminal. An auditor at a London music-hall has just been fined twenty shillings with ten shillings costs, with the alternative of ten days' imprisonment, for misbehavior of this kind. He hissed a topical song about aliens in England, which the rest of the audience enjoyed; whereupon "the management" requested him to leave, and on his declining to do so "chucked" him out. The wretched man added to the enormity of his offence by not letting himself be thrown out like a bundle, and the effort of expelling him without his own active assistance in the process gave an attendant a sprained wrist. This was treated as an "assault" on the attendant; hence the fine or the ten days; and it happened in England—the home of freedom, etc., etc., etc. The reader can fill in the panegyric from memory.

## Correspondence.

### A VETERINARY SURGEON ON VIVISECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I hope you will accept, as a contribution to the subject of Vivisection, some extracts from an article by the late Mr. W. G. R. A. Cox, M.R.C.V.S., late hon. Veterinary Surgeon to the National Canine Defence League. Mr. Cox wrote:—

"If the opinions of the whole of the medical profession were taken, we anti-Vivisectionists should equal in numbers the Vivisectionists; their ranks are recruited from experimentalists and their college following, and those members of the profession who have given no thought to the subject or who lack the courage of their opinions. We have had in our ranks innumerable medical men who have made history: The late Sir W. Fergusson, F.R.S., Sir Thomas Watson, M.D., Sir Charles Bell, F.R.C.S., Dr. Charles Clay, Professor Lawson Tait—one of the finest surgeons of his day—Professor Spooner, R.V.C., and a host of illustrious dead, from Cullen downwards.

"Amongst those with us to-day (1899) we have Dr. Charles Bell Taylor, M.R.C.S., Surgeon-General Gordon, C.B., Surgeon-General Thornton, C.B., M.B., B.A., Doctors Arnold, Bowie, Berdoe, Blackwood, Beale, J. H. Clarke, W. T. Clarke, Davies, Ferris, Houghton, Herring, Hoggan (let me add Dr. W. Hadwen, Dr. Harvey, Professor Atkinson, who said: 'I have come here to tell you, from a scientific point of view, that Vivisection is the greatest curse of this age'; Dr. Stephen Smith, M.R.C.S., and many others). Even Koch says: 'Experiments on the animal is not conclusive for the human being.' We have besides Lupton, Macaulay, and Dr. Lutaud (editor-in-chief of the *Journal de Medicine de Paris*), who does not believe in the filthy manufacture and use of the deadly serums and anti-toxins."

Mr. Cox here quotes, from the *Journal of Physiology*, one or two most terrible and fiendish experiments, performed without anaesthetics, upon dogs and rabbits, at the Physiological Laboratory at Cambridge, the torture in some instances extending over five or six hours! Referring to a certain unspeakably horrible and atrocious operation, also at Cambridge, he said:—

"Chloral, morphia, urethan, and curare were said to be used, but none of them caused insensibility to suffering, and this Vivisectionists, like the late Claude Bernard, acknowledge; but they render the animals incapable of resisting their cowardly torturers. And what is the issue? Nothing; because the lower animals are not physiologically alike to human beings. We are perpendicular, they are horizontal; the volume of blood is different, the action of the heart and vessels are dissimilar."

The instances I quote could be endlessly multiplied. Schliff—a notorious vivisectionist with a very black record of the torture of dogs—cut off the teats of dogs suckling pups, to see if they maintained the maternal instinct. Sir W. Fergusson (late) said that experiments on animals had not led to the mitigation of pain or improvement in surgical detail. Professor Lawson Tait (late) said that vivisection had not helped the surgeon one bit, but had often led him astray. The late Sir T. Watson said that young men had often to unlearn at the bedside what they had learnt in the laboratory. Surgeon-General Gordon says experimenting on the lower animals with a view to benefiting humanity is fallacious. The late Sir Charles Bell said experiments have never been the means of discovery. The opening of living animals has done more to perpetuate error than to confirm the just views taken from the study of anatomy and natural motions. Dr. Charles Bell Taylor says there is no necessity for vivisection, because it has not only proved useless, but misleading. Professor Ferrier, the monkey torturer—who, it was said, had, by experimentation on these and dogs, been able to localise function and disease of brain—had himself to confess that he had finally to fall back upon clinical methods; and the *Lancet*, speaking of his method, said that, if carried out, "it would have more deaths to answer for than cures to boast of." It is discredited by our best authorities at home and abroad, and well it may be.

Dr. Lutaud and Dr. Bantock have shown up the worthlessness and dangers of serums and anti-toxins, and the whole thing is, in the minds of true scientists, an imposture. Some argue that the atrocities of vivisection have been for the relief of pain and cure of disease. Two of the most prominent vivisectionists, Claude Bernard and Cyon, derided this; they have said that it is not for those purposes, but in pursuit of an idea; and this, when discovered, is invariably denounced by succeeding vivisectionists as untrue.

Two thousand years have elapsed since vivisection began—and then human beings were subjected to torture—and nothing has come of it. The greatest vivisectionist—as far as numbers go, for he dissected thousands of dogs alive—

speaking of the results of vivisection, said: "Our hands are empty to-day." So are the hands of all vivisectionists. The whole thing is worked for ephemeral fame, and it pays well! Much better, then, to be an anti-vivisectionist.

Our cause is gaining ground; the masses only want educating, when public opinion will put a stop to this unscientific and unnecessary barbarity by confining its perpetrators in either lunatic asylums or a gaol. Medical thought and practice would then be diverted to its legitimate channels, so that lives would be saved and suffering relieved. The vivisectionist has not found out this. Men distinguished in clinical knowledge say vivisection has thrown back true pathology and surgery by years."

The above valuable remarks must convince your readers that vivisection—torture of dogs and other animals—is an accursed, devilish thing, cowardly and shameful, worthy only of fiends, and that it can no longer be permitted to disgrace our national humanity.

C. A. M. BAILEY,  
Member of Executive Committee, National  
Canine Defence League.

## Cremation and Crime.

### NEW HOME OFFICE REGULATIONS.

WHEN, last Session, Parliament passed the Cremation Act, the duty was thrown upon the Home Secretary of making regulations as to the maintenance and inspection of crematoria, and prescribing in what cases and under what conditions the burning of any human remains may take place.

Mr. Akers-Douglas thereupon instructed a Departmental Committee to prepare a draft of the regulations. The Committee consisted of Mr. Troup, Mr. Byrne (both Home Office officials), and Dr. Franklin Parsons, Senior Assistant Medical Officer of the Local Government Board. Their report was issued recently as a Blue Book, and contains interesting if somewhat funereal matter.

The Committee held ten sittings and heard evidence from the following gentlemen: Sir Henry Thompson; Mr. J. C. Swinburn-Hanham, Hon. Sec. of the Cremation Society of England; Mr. Herbert Thomas Herring, M.B.; Dr. Stevenson, Home Office Analyst; Mr. Noel Humphreys, Chief Clerk to the Registrar-General; Mr. Simpson, Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium; Dr. Danford Thomas, Coroner for Central London; Dr. William Holder, Chairman of Cremation Sub-Committee of the Hull Town Council; Sir Francis Seymour Haden, F.R.C.S.; and Mr. W. Schröder, Hon. Sec. to the Coroners' Society.

The draft regulations deal with (1) the maintenance and inspection of crematoria; (2) the cases where cremations may take place; (3) the disposition of the ashes; and (4) registration.

In some preliminary remarks descriptive of the course of their inquiry, the Committee point out that they were dealing with a matter which had not hitherto in this country been regulated or controlled by any public inquiry. They obtained particulars of regulations in force in other countries; but these were meagre and of little assistance. So the Committee had in the end to direct their inquiries mainly to the voluntary regulations in force in this country.

### RISKS AND POSSIBILITIES.

Public interest will doubtless be centred in one point—to wit, the risk of cremation being used to destroy the evidence of murder by violence or poison. The Committee considered it of prime importance to frame regulations which, while avoiding unnecessary restrictions such as might discourage cremation, or involve undesirable delay, would reduce this risk to a minimum.

They studied the records of murder cases in which evidence has been obtained by the exhumation of the remains of the murdered person, and directed special attention to the question of what certificates or other evidence of the cause of death had been produced in those cases before the burial took place.

In some cases they found that the bodies of murdered persons were buried without any certificate of the cause of death. The law, unfortunately, as they point out, permits burial without certification of the cause of death.

In other and more numerous cases the certificate had been given without sufficient inquiry. For instance, when Mary Ann Cotton, who, for the sake of insurance money, murdered no less than twenty persons, had disposed of a husband and four children in quick succession by arsenic poisoning, a medical man certified the deaths to be due to "gastric fever," although the symptoms were inconsistent with death from that cause. In the case of Matilda Clover, for whose murder by strychnine poisoning Neil Cream was convicted in 1892, a certificate of death from "delirium tremens" was given by a medical man who had not attended

her during her last illness, and who had not seen the dead body.

They also had to consider the possibility of cases in which the person who would naturally give the death certificate was himself the murderer, such as the case of Dr. Palmer and Dr. Pritchard in this country, and Dr. De la Pommerais in France.

### NO ABSOLUTE SAFEGUARD.

While agreeing with the view of Sir Francis Haden that no regulations can be framed which will entirely eliminate the risk the Committee think that the risk can be so reduced as to make cremation at least as safe as the existing method of burial. They have therefore come to the conclusion that before cremation is permitted there must in every case be a personal inquiry by some one besides the medical attendant of the deceased. That is to say, in every case there should be required either (a) two certificates, one given by the medical attendant, the other by an independent person; or (b) a certificate given after a post-mortem by a pathologist named by the cremation authority, who may or may not be the medical referee; or (c) a certificate by a coroner given after an inquest. There are two other regulations which, although the necessity for them seems hardly to require discussion, are important. They provide that cremation is not to be allowed in the case of an unidentified body, or in the case of a person whose last expressed wish on the subject was that his body should not be cremated.—*Daily News*.

## Prophet Burns.

A Glasgow minister, the Rev. Robert Thomson, of St. Bernard's, addressing the Rosebery Burns Club, said he regarded Burns as a prophet sent from God to purify the theology of the Church by his satire. With regard to the poet's "failings," he declared that "Burns was a child in sin compared to many Bible characters who were regarded as saints." The heresy of Burns was now the belief of every thinking man. Mr. Thomson even said that there were many ministers sick of their Church's creed. What they wanted to preach was the God of Robert Burns, not the God of John Calvin. Finally, the reverend gentleman said that "Though the name of Christ was not in any of Burns's works, he was firmly convinced that Burns was in his heart a true Christian." Well, it all depends on how "a true Christian" is defined. When the definition is settled, the question of Burns's orthodoxy can be argued. Meanwhile the "firm convictions" of Mr. Thomson are of no importance to anyone but himself. They are really no substitutes for evidence and proof.

## A Noble Sport.

Five thousand people went out from Brighton on Tuesday, February 17, to see the start of the deer-hunt at Sayers-common, near Hayward's Heath. It was a glorious morning, as befitted such a noble rendezvous; and the spectators, the huntsmen, the horses, and the Surrey Staghounds, were in a great state of delight. The deer, however, called Lady Gertrude, was differently affected. She had been brought there in a cart, and when the door was thrown open she flew off at a tremendous speed straight towards the sea. She was seen from Shoreham dashing along the ridges of the hills above Lancing, with hounds and huntsmen in hot pursuit. Her head was hanging down and her tongue was lolling out; she was, indeed, in a state of exhaustion. But she preferred the sea to her pursuers; she rushed into it, was carried away by a strong current, and the next morning her body was washed up near Worthing. And this sort of thing is called sport!

An English regiment had not long been quartered in the Fair City when it had to perform the sad duty of burying a deceased comrade. A large concourse of people gathered to witness the funeral, and stood around the grave to view the ceremony. In front of the crowd was Tam Fiskins, a well-known worthy, who, as the phrase goes, was "half-sprung." While the chaplain of the regiment was reading the English burial service, Tam pushed over to the other side of the grave from the said chaplain. Amid a perfect silence the clear voice of the cleric pronounced the words, "There is no peace this side of the grave," when Tam shouted, "Come ower on tae this side, then, ye fule!"

Imperial Caesar, dead, and turned to clay,  
May stop a hole to keep the wind away.

—*Hamlet*.

**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, "Man's Place in the Universe: a Reply to Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace."

**CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL** (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "God So Loved the World." 7, Music.

**EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "How and Why I Pray."

**SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Joseph McCabe, "Early Christian Women."

**WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Graham Wallas, M.L.S.B., "The Ethic of Party."

**COUNTRY.**

**BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S.** (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 3, Charles Watts, "The Religion of the Future." 7, "The Ethics of Unbelief."

**CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY** (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Jas. Hutchison (C.E.S.), "The Essential Truths of Christian Belief."

**LIVERPOOL** (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "King Edward VII. and his Ancestors: or, the Curse of Monarchy."

**MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL** (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 3, J. McLachlan, "Ethical Fallacies"; 6.30, "Life as the Only Basis for Ethics." Tea at 5.

**NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY** (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, March 12, at 8, A. L. Coates, "The Drink Question."

**SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY** (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson. Second Lecture, "Spencer's First Principles."

**LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

**H. PERCY WARD**, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool.—March 8, Liverpool; 22, Liverpool; April 5, Liverpool; 19, Glasgow; May 3, Liverpool; 17, Liverpool.

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