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The faintest assured objection which one healthy man feels will at length prevail over the arguments and customs of mankind.—THOREAU.

The Coming Revival.

CHRISTIANITY has always dealt largely in prophecy. Anyone who will turn, with his eyes open, to the account of the birth of Jesus in the first Gospel, will see prophecy after prophecy, not one of which has a real relation to the matter in hand. This, that, and the other incident are said to have occurred "in order that the prophecy might be fulfilled." It was evidently a very profitable game to play with the illiterate and uncritical early Christians. It succeeded so well, indeed, that the second coming of the risen and ascended Jesus was predicted as certain to take place in the lifetime of persons then existing. Saint Paul's epistles are full of this delusion; in fact, he went into detail, and stated how the Lord would descend, how the elect would be caught up into the air to meet him, and how the rest of the entertainment would proceed. Saint Paul died, if he ever lived—which seems somewhat doubtful—without witnessing those marvellous occurrences. No one has witnessed them yet; nor is it likely that anyone ever will witness them—in spite of the predictions of Prophet Baxter. The plain truth is that Jesus Christ, even if he came according to Prophet Baxter's latest prophecy, would be nearly two thousand years behind date. Some people say that Christianity itself is in the very same plight.

A very different person from Prophet Baxter has now entered the prophetic business. We refer to the Rev. R. J. Campbell. This is the gentleman who was invited to become the late Dr. Parker's successor at the City Temple, who turned the invitation over in his mind prayerfully, and was soon enabled to recognise it as a clear call from God. Mr. Campbell, it appears, is not depressed by the spectacle of "the lukewarmness and apparent indifference of the Churches towards vital religion." He expresses his opinion that a great spiritual awakening is not far off. He has no doubt that the movement is coming, if, in fact, it is not already on the way. And he gives four reasons for his opinion—which is one of the most dangerous things a prophet can do.

Mr. Campbell's first reason is rather plausible. He appeals to the well-known principle of action and reaction in human affairs. He says that the spiritual side of human nature has been repressed for a considerable time; a period has been passed through of unsettlement, criticism, negation, and suspended judgment; and this is sure to be followed by a movement in the opposite direction. The pendulum, so to speak, has swung one way, and now it must swing the other. To a certain extent this is undoubtedly true. But it does not follow that Christianity will benefit by the change. The Catholic Church does indeed offer a refuge to all who are afraid of the spectre of scepticism. The same cannot be said, however, of the Protestant Churches; if we except the "High" part of the Church of England, which

is gradually working towards the Church of Rome. The Protestant Churches make concession after concession to the sceptical spirit. They are becoming more formal than ever, speaking spiritually; and are seeking compensations in what they call "social Christianity." Thus they offer nothing to those who are distracted by doubt. Moreover, a large number of persons, who have an inherited tendency towards superstition, have seen through the pretensions of Christianity, and therefore seek satisfaction in other forms of faith such as Spiritualism, Theosophy, and the curious hodge-podge which is known as Christian Science.

Mr. Campbell's second reason is that religion, philosophy, and science have for the first time in history a common view-point. He does not state clearly what this view-point is. But he says that the problem of the moment is personality, and that simply means the soul. And he adds, in the dialect of the pulpit, that human nature will demand its Gospel and its God. He further observes, like a preacher and a prophet in one, that Materialism is the mental dialect of yesterday, and that Haeckel is leading the old guard to its Waterloo.

In what sense is personality the problem of the moment? Has it ever been otherwise? And will it ever be otherwise while religion lasts? Man's interest in God is always, finally, his interest in himself. The central point of religion is the doctrine of a future life. Destroy that doctrine, and men cease to care for the rest; for God is only the necessary guarantee (as they think) of their own immortality.

We are quite aware, of course, that this "problem of personality" is being talked about a great deal at present; and that attempts are being made to throw light upon it through the medium of spookology. But we fail to see what this has to do with "science," or even with "philosophy," however interesting it may be to "religion."

Mr. Campbell's reference to Haeckel and the coming Waterloo of Materialism is not worth troubling about. It is pure prophecy. And the easiest way to answer a prophet, as John Morley said, is to prophesy the opposite.

Now for Mr. Campbell's third reason. He finds even in Occultism, Dowieism, and Christian Science a certain manifestation of man's spiritual nature. They are evidence that man cannot live by bread alone. Well, we quite agree with him that man wants something besides bread. Butter, for instance. And the men of God know this so well that they frequently butter their bread on both sides. We say this, first, because it is true; and, secondly, because we are so sick of that ancient wheeze being used to beg the question at issue between Naturalism and Supernaturalism.

Mr. Campbell is on safer ground in his fourth reason. We say safer ground because he cannot be touched there. But, on the other hand, he is as impotent there as he is invulnerable. He looks to the result of prayer. He believes that if the whole Christian community took to praying in dead earnest it would not have to wait long for its Pentecost. Dr. Campbell's conclusion is "Let us pray!" Yet he knows there is not a Christian, except amongst the Peculiar People, who has enough belief in prayer to stake sixpence upon it.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and Sex.

THE writings of Isaac D'Israeli, father of the Earl of Beaconsfield, are well known to all students of English literature. The elder D'Israeli could not properly be called a first-class man of letters. Rogers is reported to have said that he possessed but half an intellect, but his *Calamities and Quarrels of Authors*, with his *Curiosities and Miscellanies of Literature*, provided a fund of information for the general reader not easily accessible elsewhere, while their discursive, gossiping style, interested those whom a more severe treatise would have repelled. The books had a wide vogue, and are far from being stranded even now, and although there was little of the biting satire or epigram for which his son was famous, they contained a shrewder judgment of men and things than he has usually been given credit for.

The most modern form in which these writings appear, do not bear an exact relation to that of their original production. Most of the essays were recast, and some have been omitted. One instance of omission is before me as I write, and it is an omission that is of interest to Freethinkers. The *Miscellanies: or, Literary Recreations* appeared in 1796. The volume then contained two essays—one on "The Influence of the Female Character in Politics and Religion," the other on "The Alliance between Love and Religion," which do not appear in several modern editions I have looked up, and, for aught I know to the contrary, may not have appeared in any after the first. I do not know whether these essays were dropped by the author himself (who died in 1848), or whether they have been excised by publishers in the interests of religion and Mrs. Grundy. It is enough that they do not appear, and their contents have therefore an extrinsic, as well as an intrinsic, interest. They bear, moreover, upon an aspect of religion to which I have several times called the attention of readers of this journal.

The inner side of the Christian religion is one that comparatively few people know anything about, Christians least of all. To suggest to a Christian that there is an utterly indecent idea at the bottom of the Christian doctrine of the virgin birth, or that the Christian religion has, and does, nourish a quite sexually unclean temperament, is to come near insulting him. Yet it is a statement that a knowledge of physiology and history amply supports. The attractions of sex have been responsible for more religious fervor than the world is aware of, and it may be questioned if the idea of a God would have perpetuated itself to the extent it has done in the absence of male and female personifications of the Deity. D'Israeli says, shrewdly enough, that the female representatives of the ancient creed "must have communicated a more celestial inspiration with their copious tresses luxuriating on their palpitating bosoms, their vivacious eyes, and their snowy arms, than ever a passionate Isaiah or a weeping Jeremiah."

Beyond doubt much of what orthodox historians treat as expressions of religious fervor, are little more than expressions of disordered sexual instincts. The lives of the saints are alone enough to prove this. "Poets are amorous, lovers are poetical, but saints are both," says D'Israeli; and one need not travel far to find proofs of the salacious character of the latter class. Perhaps the commonest feature of all with the "saints" of the Christian religion is their irregular sexual life before conversion, and their frequent relapses afterwards. And where there is not an actual relapse in action, there is in thought. The most frequent figure in which the Devil appears to tempt a saint is that of a naked woman. And in the case of female saints, the favorite figure is that of a handsome young man, also "dressed mit noddings on," as Hans Breitmann has it. In the monastries the prayers of the "saints" were invariably directed to the Virgin; in the nunneries they were as regularly directed to Jesus. Instinct expresses itself even though it be cloaked and hooded by religious extravagance.

There is a vein of satire and some historical warranty for the following from D'Israeli:—

"The Catholic religion is an academy of love. The effusions of a Spaniard to the Virgin, and a repentant frail one addressing her prototype Mary Magdalene, with a *Ora pro nobis*, employ language which comports as little with piety as modesty. I have even heard a pretty Arian speak, with some conviction, of the divinity of Jesus, after having read the beautiful description of his person in Josephus, and which was interpolated by some monk, who well knew that even the Son of God would come recommended to the ladies by the charms of his person. The illustrious pious are always represented as beautiful; from the Oriental obscenities of Solomon, the Jewish Ovid, to the grossness of Zinzendorf, and the indecencies of Whitfield."

And also for this:—

"On the burning pillow of the monk hovered phantoms of melancholy lust; his fancy was the scourge of the furies, and of the innumerable visions with which these men were disturbed, they were ever accompanied by the seducing form of a beautiful female, and the day was passed in contrition for the temptations of the nightly demon. Their homilies were manuals of love, and the more religious they became, the more depraved were their imaginations. In the nunnery the love of Jesus was the most abandoned of passions, and the ideal espousal was indulged at the cost of the feeble heart of many a solitary beauty. Several manuscript diaries have been preserved in which the embraces and sensations of spiritual love are not distinguishable from those of a material nature..... Tissot has given a case of this nature; a young woman having yielded herself up to all the extravagances of love and religion; during six months that he attended her she could only ejaculate at intervals, 'My beloved Lamb, come to my arms.'"

He also describes a copy of verses written by a nun, Marie le Cocque, who describes her betrothal to Jesus with "great lubricity of imagination." Dissenting hymn-books, equally with Catholic manuals, might be quoted to the same end. Many young girls would be heartily ashamed to address to their lovers the sentiments that they are found expressing in song to Jesus. It is not, of course, claimed that the singers are always, or even generally, evidence of the same sexual impulse; but it is certain their origin and influence owes much to its presence. Dr. Maudesley may be well cited here as evidence on behalf of D'Israeli's contention. He says, after characterising much of what is described at present as "deep religious feeling," as being "morbid self-feeling, springing at bottom from unsatisfied instinct or other uterine action upon mind":—

"The ecstatic trances of such saintly women as Catherine de Sienne and St. Theresa, in which they believed themselves to be visited by their Savior, and to be received as veritable spouses into his bosom, were, though they knew it not, little else than vicarious sexual orgasm; a condition of things which the intense contemplation of the naked male figure, carved or sculptured in all its proportions on a cross, is more fitted to produce in young women of susceptible nervous temperament than people are apt to consider..... The fanatical religious sects, such as the Quakers and the like, which spring up from time to time in communities, and disgust them by the offensive way in which they mingle love and religion, are inspired in great measure by sexual feeling. On the one hand there is probably the cunning of a hypocritical knave or the self-deceiving duplicity of a half-insane one using the weaknesses of women to minister to his vanity or to his lust under a religious guise; on the other hand, there is an exaggerated self-feeling, rooted often in sexual passion..... In such cases the holy kiss of love owes its warmth to the sexual impulse which inspires it consciously or unconsciously, and the mystical union of the sexes is fitted to issue in a less spiritual union."

The man of letters and the medical psychologist are in agreement upon this point, and both might call in the historian to their support. One of the most groundless of superstitions current in the Christian world is that which pictures the early generations of believers as preaching and practising a most austere morality. Those who have studied primitive Christianity know how false all this is. The truth is, that from the first glimpse we get of Christianity as a definite body of religious doctrines

we find it associated with charges of licentiousness, and with licentious practices. Antinomianism was its besetting sin. The principal apologist of the Christians, as early as the second century, was only able to meet the charge of licentious practices by the damning defence that it was not true of all, but only of some. The very asceticism of the early Christians is, in its way, a confession of sexual uncleanness and extravagance. The "unclean virtue" of asceticism could never make headway among a people who were morally healthy, and there is a certain sly humor in D'Israeli's remark that "If one part of ascetic Christianity threatened, if universally adopted, to depopulate the world, the other, of mystical Christianity, appears resolute in rectifying that political error"—a remark which he follows up by saying that "no Society so small as Methodism (he was writing in 1796) has produced to the State so many additional members."

The alliance between salacity and religion continues right through European history. The first rule for the knight in the days of chivalry was concerned with the love of God and the ladies; and it was in no spirit of irreverence that Boccaccio returned thanks to God and the ladies for the success of his tales. A writer quoted by D'Israeli well remarks that in the romances of the Middle Ages "Jesus Christ and Apollo, Cupid and the Holy Ghost, Venus and the Virgin, went hand in hand in the early productions of this kind." The very prayer-books of the great were, in the sixteenth century, ornamented with the figures of the mistresses of kings, nobles, and the "dignified clergy," while the illustrations accompanying them are of a character more easily imagined than described. Some idea of their nature may be guessed by any who have closely examined the carvings in the more secluded portions of some of our own old minsters, churches, and other religious establishments.

The inquiry opens up a wide field of investigation for those who care to follow it. Very recent investigations—those of Mercier and Starbuck, for instance—go to show how close is the connection between purely sexual conditions and such religious phenomena as conversion. Max O'Rell's observation that in England he observed that ladies often gave their hearts to Jesus when no one else had shown any great anxiety to become their possessor had a much deeper significance than he probably imagined. St. Paul's warning that married persons thought less of the things of God than single ones were likely to do was also an unconscious recognition of the truth that under abnormal sexual conditions religion profits most.

However, I set out to call attention to two very suggestive essays that *did* appear in the early editions of D'Israeli's writings, but which do not appear in later ones. Whether their excision is due to the author or publisher, I know not; but either way, the fact of their being dropped out is significant of the fate apt to overtake any writing that helps to set religion before the people in its true light.

C. COHEN.

James Thomson.

1834-1882.

"Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn!
Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears!
Poor perfect voice, most blythe when most forlorn,
That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers,
Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears."

—SWINBURNE.

It is quite possible both to overrate and to underestimate the merits of James Thomson; but no one, we suppose, would contend that he was other than a real and unmistakable poet. Thomson was a very unequal writer, sometimes soaring to the pure ether of the great poets, and sometimes falling to the lower slopes of Parnassus. He had, indeed, his faults, but against them must be placed his poetic nature—or at least the unbalanced, imaginative, reckless nature

with which poets are often credited. There can hardly be a sadder story than his in the whole history of literature, though Savage, Chatterton, Villon, Poe, and Paul Verlaine are among them. To be at once a genius, and a drudge, to live in poverty and to die in a hospital, is as melancholy a lot as can be imagined. Nor would he deserve less pity if we denied his genius. His faults, whatever they may have been, injured himself alone; but genius he most certainly had. It was a genius of a desultory, unpractical sort, and many circumstances of his life forbade its full development.

He was born in Port Glasgow in 1834, and died in a London hospital—whether from drink or exhaustion matters not—in 1882. There is an atmosphere of uncertainty about him. The very portraits in his books have been described as being remote from the truth. So much is vague that whole chapters of his life are blank. His biographers are sometimes reduced to inference. There were two Thomsons, one the darling of the muses, the other the victim of melancholia. The Thomson whom the Muses knew was an extraordinarily picturesque man. He wrote verse as an eagle flies. His prose is magnificent. His translations from Heine and his satires are in every way admirable. His pessimism is his worst point. The sustained splendors of *The City of Dreadful Night* we can all admire. It is when the poet says he is disgusted with

The same old solid hills and leas;
The same old stupid, patient trees;
The same old ocean, blue and green;
The same sky, cloudy or serene;
The old two dozen hours to run
Between the settings of the sun,

that we think his pessimism begins to pall on the reader.

It is true that no poet can be, properly speaking, a real pessimist. An artist is, of necessity, a man who enjoys something, even if the unhappy individual is reduced to enjoying art. Doubtless the best answer to a poet cursing nature is neither fire nor thunder. It is merely to inform him that his enjoyment of that poetic curse has been duly added to the joy of bird and flower in the universal chorus. But this explanation is involved in the nature of all really fine literature. Thomson, in *The City of Dreadful Night*, may insist to his heart's content on the painfulness of life. He cannot avoid the essential pleasantness of his own poetry. However withering may be his disdain of life he cannot alter the fact that his readers catch themselves repeating

As I came through the desert thus it was
for the pleasure of the pulsating words. That is the irony of all pessimism which is so incautious as to be art.

The alchemy of Thomson's genius transmitted the dross of pessimism into the fine gold of poetry:—

Weary of erring in this desert Life,
Weary of hoping hopes for ever vain,
Weary of struggling in all-sterile strife,
Weary of thought which maketh nothing plain,
I close my eyes and calm my panting breath,
And pray to thee, O ever-quiet Death!
To come and soothe away my bitter pain.

Thomson was a militant Freethinker. He voices Materialism more openly than any reactionary ever dared to praise a corrupt Christianity or a senseless superstition. He does not apologise for his Materialism. He positively delights in it. It is because he thinks sincerely that Materialism is absolutely true that his heart goes out to it.

Our Mother feedeth thus our little life,
That we in turn may feed her with our death:
The great sea sways, one interwoven strife,
Wherefrom the sun enhailes a subtle breath,
To float the heavens sublime in form and hue,
Then turning cold and dark in order due,
Rain weeping back to swell the sea beneath.

One part of me shall feed a little worm,
And it a bird on which a man may feed;
One lime the mould, one nourish insect-sperm;
One thrill sweet grass, one pulse in bitter weed:
This swell a fruit, and that evolve in air,
Another trickle to a springlet's lair,
Another paint a daisy on the mead.

With cosmic interchange of parts for all,
Through all the modes of being numberless
Of every element as may befall.
And if Earth's general soul hath consciousness,
Their new life must with strange new joy be thrilled,
Of perfect law all perfectly fulfilled ;
No sin, no fear, no failure, no excess.

This strain runs through his writings. Intense is his love of nature:—

Live out your whole free life while yet on earth,
Seize the quick Present, prize your one sure boon ;
Though brief, each day a golden sun has birth,
Though dim, the night is gleamed with stars and moon ;
Love out your cordial love, hate out your hate ;
Be strong to grasp a foe, to clasp a friend ;
Your wants true laws are ; thirst and hunger sate ;
Feel you have been yourselves when comes the end

Thomson was a man of fine and noble sympathies. In one of his poems, "The Polish Insurgent," he portrays a Pole, ready to die for his native country, although he realises that his country must be defeated:—

'Tis so easy to go and die
Where our country, our mother, the martyr,
Moaning in bonds, doth lie,
Bleeding with stabs in her breast,
Her throat with a foul clutch prest,
Under the thrice-accursed Tartar.

But Smith, your man of sense,
Ruddy and broad, and round—like so
Kindly—but dense, but dense,
Said to me: "Do not go ;
It is hopeless ; right is wrong ;
The tyrant is too strong."

Must a man have *hope* to fight ?
Can a man not fight in despair ?
Must the soul cower down for the body's weakness,
And slaver the devil's hoof with meekness,
Nor care nor dare to share
Certain defeat with the right ?

In Thomson's poetry we find no passionate love-songs. The most glowing sparkles of Thomson in his fieriest moods pale before the glow of such passages as those of Rousseau in the chamber of Heloise, or Goethe when he depicts his Wilhelm Meister at the door of the young actress, while the moon whitened the poplars overhead, and the music of the wandering minstrels came through the silent midnight. Of all poets of real genius, Thomson is the least successful in love poetry. He was not deficient in lyrical impulse. But his amorous adventures in verse will not stand comparison with his lines on the Polish Insurgent, or his glorious lyric, "He heard her Sing." The minor tone of Thomson's love-songs is scarcely noticeable beside the tense vibration and strain of the music of *The City of Dreadful Night*, in which the poet sung to a larger music in a richer tongue.

Thomson was not, as a man of genius, in the first rank, simply because his range was limited. But within that range he was dangerously near perfection. If to write the finest pessimistic poem in the English language constitutes a claim on posterity, then James Thomson is worthy to occupy a modest niche of the Valhalla of Literature. All that seething turmoil of passions, of which he formed the figure, is stilled. The long days with "no pleasure in them" were so drearily many. The silver cord was so slowly loosed, the golden bowl seemed broken on the wheel. His very friends grew tired. He neither paraded his anguish nor tried to conceal it, or assumed stoical airs. Let us think gently of him. He reminds me of the brave captain of a doomed ship, who never loses his heart, who eyes the danger steadily until the inevitable fate overwhelms him, and the gallant ship goes down.

Ah, within our mother's breast,
From toil and tumult, sin and sorrow free,
Sphered beyond hope and dread, divinely calm,
He lies, all gathered into perfect rest ;
And o'er the trance of his Eternity
The cypress waves more holy than the palm.

MIMNERMUS.

Easter a Pagan Festival.

"We find men taught everywhere, from Southern Arabia to Greece, by hundreds of symbolisms, the birth, death, and resurrection of Deities, and a resurrection, too, apparently, 'after the second day,' i.e., on the third day (Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 6). We find propitiation thoroughly accepted by the death of a first-born son."—HEATH, *Phœnician Inscriptions*, p. 5.

"Thousands of years before the Christian era, the Egyptians kept Lent and the forty days' fast. It was the time of mourning for Osiris. Lent was also maintained in Old Babylon, with the usual abstinence from meat. The Spaniards were surprised to see the Mexican keep the vernal forty days' fast. The Tammuz month of Syria was in the spring. The forty days were kept for Proserpine.....Candlemas was kept with many lights at Sais, in honor of Neith."—BONWICK, *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, p. 370.

"At this season the Egyptians held a feast to Isis, and the palm was carried about as the symbol of reproductive power and triumph long ere Palm Sunday was supposed [to signify the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem."—J. M. WHEELER, *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 168.

"One cannot bring the masses to shout hosanna until one rides into the city on an ass."—F. NIETZSCHE.

LAST year Good Friday fell on March 28, this year it falls on April 10, a fortnight later. If the death of any ordinary person fell a fortnight later than in the previous year we should consider it a very curious circumstance ; but trifles like this do not disturb the true believer. He has been brought up to look upon it as quite natural, and has accepted it upon trust without hesitation or inquiry along with all the other marvels of his faith. If he took the trouble to inquire into the cause of the shifting date of the Crucifixion he might find that he had lost his faith by the time he had reached the end of his inquiry.

According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Crucifixion took place on a Friday, the first day of the Passover, but as the learned Jew, Rabbi Wise, points out:—

"In the first place the Jews did no public business on that day ; had no court sessions, no trials, and certainly no executions on any Sabbath or feast day. And in the second place, the first day of the Passover never was on a Friday, and never can be, according to the established principles of the Jewish calendar."*

To place the trial and execution of Jesus on the first day of the Passover is like placing the trial and execution of a murderer in this country on a Sunday or Christmas Day.

The early Christians themselves were all divided as to the date of the crucifixion. "We learn from St. Ambrose (Epist. 23) that in the year 387 the Churches of Gaul kept March 21, while those of Italy postponed it to March 28, and those of Egypt a week later still, to April 5. Similar discrepancies are mentioned by Gregory of Tours in the year 577. Nor did they disappear till the eighth century."† Our present method of calculating the date was not settled until the year 325. "At the Council of Nice, under Constantine, it was fixed as now, on the first Sunday after the full moon happens upon or next after the vernal equinox."‡ And, as Mr. Wheeler points out, "The fact of Easter being a moveable feast proves its astronomical origin, and the differences among early Christians show their ignorance of the date when their god-man is alleged to have burst the bonds of death."§ The Jewish Christians kept Easter on the 14th of Nisan, the Jewish Passover ; others on the 25th of March, the day of the vernal equinox.¶

As the early Christians did not know the birthday of their God, so they did not know the date of his death ; and as they borrowed the birthday of the ancient Sun-Gods, so they borrowed the time of his death and resurrection from the Gods of Vegetation and Reproduction. Grant Allen says:—

"Thus every year the Church celebrates in mimicry the death and resurrection of the Christ, as the Mediterranean peoples celebrated the death and resurrection of the Attis, the Adonis, the Dionysus, the Osiris. It celebrates the feast at the usual time for most such festivals, the spring equinox. More than that, it chooses for the

* *Origin of Christianity*, p. 30. Cited in Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's *Jewish Life of Christ*, p. 30.

† J. M. Wheeler, *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 169. ‡ *Ibid*, p. 168.

§ Gieseler, *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i., p. 55, note.

actual day of the resurrection, commonly called in English Easter, and in the Latin dialects the paschal feast (or *pâques*), a trebly astrological date. The festival must be as near as possible to the spring equinox; but it must be after a full moon, and it must be on the day sacred to the sun. Before the feast a long fast takes place, at the close of which the Christ is slain in effigy, and solemnly laid in a mimic sepulchre. Good Friday is the anniversary of his piacular death, and the special day of the annual mourning, as for Adonis and Attis. On Easter Sunday he rises again from the dead, and every good Catholic is bound to communicate—to eat the body of his slaughtered God on the annual spring festival of reviving vegetation.....On this subject I limit myself to the barest hint. Whoever chooses to follow out so pregnant a clue will find it lead him into curious analogies and almost incredible survivals.**

Nearly all the ancient religions celebrated the advent of spring by a festival in honor of their gods. To the primitive mind the revival of plant life must have appeared to be a resurrection from the dead; and anything it did not understand it always ascribed to the agency of its gods. Therefore it symbolised the revival of vegetation by a mystery play, in which the God was represented as dead, and after being mourned a certain time, returned to life amid the rejoicings of his worshippers.

Mr. Fraser, in his masterly work, *The Golden Bough*, tells us that "At Bylbus the death of Adonis was annually mourned with weeping, wailing, and beating of the breast, but next day he was believed to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshippers. This celebration appears to have taken place in spring" (vol i., p. 280). The same writer tells us that the Festival of Attis, "whose supposed death and resurrection struck deep roots into the religious faith and ritual of Western Asia," lasted six days; on the third day "mourning for Attis took place over an effigy, which was afterwards solemnly buried. The fourth day (25th of March) was the Festival of Joy (*Hilaria*) at which the resurrection of Attis was probably celebrated" (p. 298). He also points out that "The general similarity of the myth and ritual of Osiris, Adonis, and Attis had their respective seats, as we have seen, in Egypt, Syria, and Phrygia" (p. 363). Nor is this all, for he tells us that "The Greek myth of Demeter and Proserpine is substantially identical" with them (p. 330), and that "the Lydians certainly celebrated the advent of Dionysus in spring; the god was supposed to bring the season with him" (p. 325).

"Ausonius," says Bonwick, "a form of Bacchus, was slain at the Vernal equinox, March 21st, and rose in three days."† Bacchus himself was mourned for on March 23^d, and "the dead body of a young man was exhibited with great lamentations, and on the 25th it was supposed to be revived, when great rejoicings took place."§

The victory of Apollo over the python "was annually celebrated at spring by solemn sports."||

This myth of the death and resurrection of a God at Easter can be traced for at least 5,700 years, for Mr. Pinches has translated two Laments for Tammuz, which he dates "earlier than 3,800 years before Christ."¶ Now this God Tammuz was the God worshipped by the Greeks under the name of Adonis. Says Professor Sayce:—

"Adonis was the Greek form of the Phœnician Adoni, the title by which Tammuz was specially addressed. It was the name under which he became known to the Greeks when they received the myth of his death from the Phœnicians.....It was a myth which was the common property of the whole Canaanitish race. Even within the courts of the Temple of Solomon, in a chamber where the elders of Judah sat surrounded by the images of their totems upon the walls, Ezekiel saw the women weeping for Tammuz.**

In the marginal Bibles this is dated B.C. 594,|| so that the myth of Tammuz or Adonis had then been

in existence considerably over 3,000 years, and was then so flourishing as to invade the Temple of Jews, the very nucleus and centre of their national life. Is it surprising that we should find this myth embedded in Christianity, seeing that Christianity had its origin among the Jews? No wonder that Grant Allen said that this clue would lead "into curious analogies and almost incredible survivals." He had studied the matter, and knew that not only the death and resurrection of Christ is a survival, but also the Baptism and Holy Communion, and all the other ritual of the Church, can be followed backward to the dim dawn of history and civilisation where all records fail us, and they are lost in the sands of ancient time.

W. MANN.

Up-to-Date Religion (Limited).

RELIGION no longer appeals to the multitude; its hold upon people weakens slowly, perhaps, but surely. Men are beginning to see things in a clearer light; not as the promulgators of faith and doctrines would have them see, but with a vision clouded by no selfish sentiment, coloured by no false hopes.

Scepticism is spreading, superstition is on the wane. While every endeavor is made by the clergy to retain each essential part of their stock-in-trade, the tide of progress compels them to continually alter, construe, modify, and "hush up," in order that their creeds and "mumbo jumbo" may at least have a plausible and presentable appearance.

Much in the same way as we regard disease, so must we now look upon religion. It takes hold of a subject sometimes rapidly, in other cases operates but slowly, and if the patient be weak and the treatment inadequate, is sure to terminate hopelessly. Often religion becomes epidemic, and then, of course, the religious medicos and clerical quacks are in their glory. Soon the epidemic dies in spite of their efforts to keep it alive; and the poor patient is left with nothing but a nausea, which in many instances attends him for the rest of his life. To be generally considered a fit member of society it is necessary now-a-days to affect to be religious; that is, to adopt the label of some particular set of precepts. To practise them is quite beside the subject. One may profess to believe in one or as many branches of religion as he chooses, or perhaps finds beneficial in a business way; but, dear reader, do not commit the great indiscretion of disassociating yourself entirely from creeds and dogmas. Even if you have escaped the vortex of belief, and emerged unscathed from the whirlwind of creeds—for Heaven's sake, and the parson's, be a hypocrite. Yet after all a man holds the biggest interest in his own mind, and when he is constrained to barter that interest for filthy lucre or a little barren prestige, his is the loss and no one profits. What, therefore, is held out to the one whose attachment to intellectual freedom is the salt of his existence? Believe! Profess to believe, or be banned here and damned hereafter. Why, the very thought excites rebellion. Stifle all that is noble and best in a man, fill the mind with vain and useless dreams, and thus to the quota of useless lives do we continually add. Teach men to look to the future and its prospective rewards, and that which needs present attention goes by unheeded. This is what religion has always done. It is doing so to-day. There is little reason to suppose it will aid, instead of obstruct, in the future.

In the past, the methods of religion were cruel and sinister. To-day they present a different appearance. We now see a suave exterior, under which is hidden the very perfection of cunning, an urbane veneer overlying a pit of aspid venom. There is no scouting the fact that the old evil, minus much of its former hideousness, is still with us, still in the path of all rational reform, aided and abetted by the monstrous refinements of modern torture.

Modern religion reminds one very forcibly of a great limited company, especially limited intellectually, with priests for directors, and silly, credulous people are the willing shareholders. The company is formed ostensibly to exploit the gods, and to make capital out of a coming land, which is situated as far in the future as is necessary to the ready sale of shares.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, walk up! Come and sell your intellectual freedom for a baseless hope. Take advantage of this munificent offer, plank down your coin for a place in heaven. Give up happiness here for bliss to come. Take all the shares you can afford, BUT DON'T ASK TO SEE THE BOOKS!

FRANK HALL.

* *Evolution of the God Idea*, p. 390-1. Edition 1901.

† *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, p. 170.

‡ Godfrey Higgins' *Anacalypsis*, vol. ii., p. 102. § *Ibid.*

|| Dupuis, *Origin of the Christian Religion*, p. 51. Southwell's

Edition. ¶ *Knowledge*, March, 1895.

** *Contemporary Review*, September, 1883. †† Ezekiel, viii. 14.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Torrey, the Yankee revivalist, is conducting a week's mission in Aberdeen. We did not think he would get so far north. It is said that even Jews cannot live in the Granite City.

We read that Dr. Torrey started off in Aberdeen "under extraordinarily auspicious conditions." It seems to us that *auspicious* should read *suspicious*. For, if the Yankee revivalist is such a splendid soul-saver, why was it necessary for leading citizens and "ministers representing every Evangelical Church" to exert themselves to get him an audience of 3,000 people? What this man really does is to provide already manufactured Christians with a fresh sensation. According to his own account, he converts an "infidel" now and then; but that is only his brag. His converted "infidels" haven't a name amongst them.

The Torrey-Alexander Mission has been achieving some wonderful results at Glasgow. The usual Agnostic, who had in his "dark days" burned his Bible, was converted, and burned all his Atheistic books. We should be interested to learn his name; but it looks as though this particular Agnostic travels round with the rest of the show. "Mountains of unbelief have been levelled"—a result which makes us tremble for the welfare of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. Another remarkable case was that of a workman who had stolen goods to the value of three shillings. He was converted, and offered to replace the three shillings, but was told to *put it in the plate!* Anywhere else but at a Gospel meeting this would be called receiving stolen goods. We suppose it is all right in this instance, though.

Dr. Wace succeeds Dr. Farrar as Dean of Canterbury. It is a snug post, and we congratulate him. We presume it is his reward for making a stand against Huxley's Agnosticism. A poor sort of a stand, but still his best; and the Church, nowadays, is thankful for any Defender.

After all the fuss made about the Holy Shroud at Turin—which is claimed to be the very one in which Jesus Christ was enveloped when laid in his tomb—it is amusing to find an official judgment pronounced against it by the Abbé Mallot, of the Church of S. Luigi de' Francesci at Rome, and published in the well-known French Catholic review, *Le Correspondant*. It is shown that the shroud now at Turin is the one that was formerly at Lirey, Champagne; that it was presented to the church of Lirey by Geoffrey de Charny in 1353; that all the early documents relating to it show that the donor, his son, the prelates, and Pope Clement VII., all regarded it as simply a "representation"; and that there was never any guarantee of its alleged "authenticity." It was merely allowed to be venerated like a crucifix, a statue, or a picture. So much for the Holy Shroud at Turin! We dare say, however, a good business will be done for some time yet through its agency. Profitable lies take a lot of killing.

Every Monday morning the *Daily News* prints what it calls a "Sermon for the Week." It really should be a "Sermon for the Weak." We never read such twaddle before, even in the name of religion. The last instalment of this precious literature was a report of Pastor Spurgeon's morning discourse at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which was "well filled." Pastor Spurgeon, like other distinguished men of God in these days, had been seeking fresh health in foreign parts, and had just returned from America. Presumably, therefore, he was at the top of his form. And what a top it was! After reading the whole long column of small print, we say deliberately that there is not a single sentence in it that rises above the flattest mediocrity, or that can possibly be of the slightest value to any man, woman, or child in this world. It is said that St. Francis preached to the animals. Well, even that congregation could hardly have stood Pastor Spurgeon often—unless he improved very much on last Sunday morning's performance.

The Borough of Hackney religious census gives far better results (for the Churches) than might have been expected. The population is 215,870—including 99,396 males and 116,474 females. The number of people who attended "divine service" on Sunday, March 22, which was "a beautiful day," was 54,442. This figure is arrived at, of course, by reckoning the morning and evening attendants as different persons; which is an absurdity—but what else can the enumerators do? Estimated on this fallacious basis, the aggregate attendance was one in four of the population.

But let us go more into detail. In the morning one person in nine, and in the evening one person in seven, went to church. One woman in nine went in the morning, and one woman in five in the evening. One man in eleven went in the morning, and one in nine in the evening. Perhaps one man in seven went to church or chapel in Hackney that Sunday; and if this is really "gratifying" to the Christians, they must be extremely thankful for small mercies.

The Church of England does not dwarf the other denominations so much in Hackney. Its share of the total attendances was 16,318. Next came the Congregationalists with 9,630; the Baptists, 4,445; the Wesleyans, 4,270; the Salvation Army, 4,083; Roman Catholics, 3,212. At the bottom of the list come the Unitarians with a poor 111.

Mr. R. Mudie-Smith, Superintendent of the *Daily News* Church Census, does not find our comments to his liking. He sends us the following letter, dated from 103A Queen's-road, Bayswater, W., April 6:—"Sir,—From the cuttings which are forwarded to me by the Press Agency, I find you are laboring under a great delusion. You are evidently under the impression that the Nonconformists have not had a majority in a single borough hitherto enumerated. Kindly note for the benefit of your readers that they (the Nonconformists) have been in excess of any other body in seven out of the boroughs already enumerated, and that the totals as revealed by the census up to date show that the Nonconformists contribute 303,956 out of the 730,240 worshippers. From the cuttings I receive I can only imagine that you do not see the *Daily News* save when the Nonconformists are in a minority. Yours, etc., R. Mudie-Smith."

Mr. R. Mudie-Smith should not *imagine* except for his own personal pleasure. In this case he has imagined wrongly. We see the *Daily News* every day. What is more, we pay for it; which we don't suppose Mr. R. Mudie-Smith does for the *Freethinker*. Perhaps he will say that our "suppose" is as bad as his "imagine." But it isn't. His reference to "cuttings" shows that he does not see this journal.

We hope Mr. R. Mudie-Smith's figures are better than his inferences. We have never said, or hinted, that the Nonconformists are outnumbered by the Churchmen in every London borough. What we have pointed out is that the Churchmen do often outnumber the Nonconformists, and that in all cases the Church of England comes out an easy first in the competition. By this we mean that the Church of England easily beats the Catholic Church, or the Wesleyan Church, or the Congregational Church, or the Baptist Church. Mr. Mudie-Smith has to lump all the Nonconformist Churches together to beat the Church of England in seven boroughs. Well, in all the other boroughs the Church of England beats what the man in the street calls "the blooming lot."

Mr. R. Mudie-Smith does not see that his own figures give him away. Up to the present, he says, the Nonconformists number 303,956 out of 730,240. Well now, that is a long way off a half. Which shows the truth of what we have been saying as to the airs the Nonconformists are giving themselves. They seem to think they are going to pull down the Church of England easily if they only pull together. But that is nonsense. How are 303,956 going to pull down 426,284? They cannot do it by voting. And what other way is open to them?

We are not assuming that all the 426,284 belong to the Church of England. We merely assume that every time the Church of England has to defend itself against the Nonconformists it will have the support of the Roman Catholics.

As was to be expected, Mr. Charles Booth's last instalment of his monumental work, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, has not received a very joyous welcome from the religious press. The *Methodist Times* is of opinion that Mr. Booth is unable to get at the real spirit of the religious life of London, and declares that much of its own work is unchronicled, as stories have to be "dragged" from the unwilling lips of the sisters of the West London Mission. One would hardly have thought this, from the gorgeous advertisements given to episodes of the "Atheist Shoemaker" class. Mr. Booth's description of Wesleyans living in "a false atmosphere of exaggerated language," strikes one as being much nearer the mark. We shall have General Booth setting up a claim on behalf of the modesty and unobtrusiveness of his own organisation next.

The *British Weekly* devotes a long leading article to the same subject, the tone of which is particularly spiteful. It finds that "Mr. Booth's audacity is really staggering." We

are not surprised at this; it is not usual to find a man outside the ranks of militant Freethought who will so far brave public opinion as to condemn the efforts of the religious bodies in the manner done by Mr. Booth; and his action should stimulate those very respectable Freethinkers who are constantly patting such bodies as the West London Mission on the back for their valuable work. The value of the *British Weekly's* criticism, and its tone, may be judged from the following. Mr. Booth writes of the St. James's Hall congregations: "The poor are not seen there, nor the depraved, nor those lifted out of these conditions." Whereupon the leader writer asks, How does Mr. Booth know? and expresses a desire to hear the opinion of the missionaries themselves on the subject. It does not seem to us very difficult for a man of average intelligence to tell whether the poor and depraved form part of a congregation or not. Depravity and poverty are easily enough recognised, especially in a well-dressed crowd. And Mr. Booth's opinion as to the failure of these missions is hardly to be disturbed by the opinions of the "missionaries" themselves. These are interested witnesses at best, and their "self-deception," to use Mr. Booth's mild phrase, has always been pretty evident.

But none of these religious critics touch Mr. Booth's main point, which is that all these religious agencies are absolutely powerless to cure the social evils for which London is suffering. Overcrowding, sweating, lack of education, and similar evils, are hardly to be cured by visits of sisters and sermons on the Atonement. To say that the charity distributed by these missions is only a palliative is to repeat a well-worn truism; but in the main it is, in its effects, not even that, but a downright obstruction. Assistance from this or that charity increases the power to pay a higher rent than would otherwise be paid. The spiritual dram-drinking of the Mission service helps to reconcile people to conditions of living that might not otherwise be tolerated. The most effective friends of the slum landlord and the sweater are the religious charities of the metropolis. Let the *British Weekly* set itself the task of showing that in any one part of London the social life of the people has been raised by mission work, independent of any other agency, and it will have disproved Mr. Booth's main point. Without that it may froth and fume, but the facts stand.

There are two asides in the *British Weekly* article worth notice. "We should not," it says, "be disposed to trust over much to a minister of religion, even when he speaks about his own church. It will be found that he always overrates the number in attendance. As for his estimate of the spiritual results, it is strongly coloured by personal idiosyncrasy." Yet, it is the opinion of such that is immediately after pitted against Mr. Booth, who has no axe to grind in the matter.

The other "aside" is that, "while church-going is not a test of religion, without it religion perishes." This is not a very profitable form of "hedging" over the Church census now being published. It is intended to guard against the plea that a declining church attendance shows a vanishing Christianity. But if it is not a test of religion, why should religion perish without it? And if religion does perish without it, does not this go to show that religion nowadays is a wholly artificial thing, only kept going by a number of purely extraneous and artificial stimuli.

Mr. Labouchere hopes to entertain the House of Commons with a Reform Bill of his own soon after Easter. One clause of it is "That all archbishops and bishops should cease henceforth to be Lords of Parliament." Mr. Labouchere should be diverting on that clause, anyhow.

Professor Turner, of Oxford, replies to Dr. Wallace's *Fortnightly Review* article on "Man's Place in the Universe." He rejects the notion that the universe is limited, or that there is any true centre of it. He also points out that, if our solar system were the centre, it would soon cease to be, as it moves through space at the rate of 420,000 miles per day. Mr. E. W. Maunder also replies to Dr. Wallace in *Knowledge*. We do not know that Dr. Wallace has found a supporter anywhere.

The *Daily Telegraph* allows "Iconoclast" to draw attention to the bell-ringing nuisance in London. St. Paul's, Covent-garden, seems the worst offender. Three or four services are held there every week-day in the year, and the bell is clanged over a thousand times on each occasion. What suffering it must entail upon the poor cancer patients in St. Peter's Hospital! "The churchwardens, the vicar, and the Duke of Bedford," it is said, "have all had their attention drawn to this deplorable fact, but it looks as though the archaic prodigy will beat all humanising efforts."

Answers is pious. The editor places the Bible and the Prayer Book first as literature. Then Shakespeare, Milton and Dante, Coleridge and Keats, and Tennyson. After this it is not surprising to read the following platitudinous truism in relation to writers like Emerson and Lamb: "The beauty that is in them can only be known to him who reads with the mind." Prodigious!

Poor President Roosevelt! Usually he attends "divine service" once on Sunday, and we daresay he finds that quite enough. But on Sunday, April 5, he had to undergo the infliction twice. The committee at Sioux Falls, looking after the details of his reception and entertainment, took him to the German Church in the morning, in the belief that he was a Lutheran. In the afternoon they discovered their mistake, and to remedy it they took him off to the Reformed Church in the evening. Let us hope it made no difference to the Almighty.

This being such a Christian country, it is not surprising that some very dirty cases get into the Divorce Court; and we can quite understand that Sir Francis Jeune must often be sick of his judicial duties. We fail to see, however, why (as in a recent case) he should be so solicitous about the feelings or morals of the general public as to request all of them who happened to be present to leave before incurring the danger of contamination. This is taking too sanguine a view of the simplicity of the general public. Is it imagined that divorce cases are not talked about beyond the precincts of the court? Are they not reported in the newspapers? What is the use of clearing a handful of people out of the room in which the case is heard? Besides, a court of law is a public place—as it should be; and it seems to us that a judge has no more right to clear the court by persuasion than he has by force.

The *Christian Globe* came out last week with an article on "Is Christianity Declining?" written expressly for it by the late Dean Farrar. A pre-announcement to this effect looked decidedly enticing. Dean Farrar's views on this question derived a peculiar interest from the fact that he had recently changed his address from Canterbury to Heaven. But all our eager expectations were damped on turning to the article. We found it was written while the author was at Canterbury.

A writer in the *Church Times* refers to the published reports of Missionary societies as "works of imagination." He hastens to add that his description applies to the readers, not the writers, of the reports. The distinction strikes us as unnecessary and unfounded. Probably the Bible, Burk's Peerage, and Missionary reports, are among the first works of imagination in English.

Professor Delitzsch raised a rare storm in Germany over his now famous lecture on "Babel and Bible"; and when "he of the mailed fist" interfered, the matter became still more prominent. The current issue of the *Contemporary Review* contains the translation of an article by Professor Harnack dealing with the Emperor's confession of faith, in which he says that the subject matter of Delitzsch's lecture has long been "common knowledge" among educated people. Students have long known "that it was from Babylon that some of the myths and legends of the Old Testament, together with other important elements of Israelitic culture, emanated." He appears to think that Professor Delitzsch's fault lay in making much of what had been commonplaces among authorities.

Professor Harnack, however, admits that, while this information was common with educated persons, it had not become common knowledge among the people. "Church and school have suppressed this knowledge, banishing it from their respective domains." This is the case precisely, and it marks out the task of the propagandist, and the necessity for his work. We have no hesitation in saying that the present stock of information concerning the origin of Christianity, and of religion generally, is such that neither has any basis in fact or reason. But these results are still, in spite of cheap literature and a diffused ability to read, confined to a comparative few. Church, school (under the influence of the Church), and society combine to keep this information away from the mass of the people. In the schools the Bible is selected as the one religious book to be used in the education of children, and, worse still, a certain class of sentimental Freethinkers support the churches in thus exploiting the youth of the nation. Parsons, in magazine articles and elsewhere, will admit the results of archæologic, Biblical, and historic study, but in the pulpit they are found referring to what "Moses said" or what "Jesus said," as though criticism had never spoken a single word against Christian pretensions. It is the popularisation of the results of criticism that is

urgently needed, and they who work at this task are playing no small part in the development of the race.

Professor Harnack is, in one direction at least, typically Christian. He says: "The Christian community is bound to repudiate every appreciation of Christ which effaces the difference between Him and other teachers." This is criticism with a snaffle. The question for an open-minded critic is simply "Is there any difference between the 'Christ' of the New Testament and other teachers?" To set out with the resolve to repudiate everything that clashes with a certain conception of "Christ" is not criticism, but dogmatism apeing liberality. Besides, the Churches hardly needed advising to do this; it has been their invariable rule. Criticism has been damned, not because it was bad criticism, but solely because its results were unpleasant.

A representative of the *Daily News* interviewed a Mormon "Apostle" who is over here seeking converts, and, according to his own account, getting them. The Mormons have now, it was said, 18,000 members in this country and on the Continent. The "Apostle" explained that, while polygamy was now discarded in practice by the Mormons, belief in it as a tenet still exists. "We should not," he went on to say, "believe in the Bible if we did not accept it. The Bible is a polygamous book, with a polygamous history." The New Testament might have been included in the generalisation, and some very high Christian authorities cited in support. We notice that the *Daily News* had no leaderette trying to disprove this assertion. It was obviously an occasion when silence was the wiser policy.

The Bishop of Southwark has been "ordered" to take a period of rest after Easter. "Ordered" is distinctly good—not to say convenient. It throws all the responsibility upon the doctors, and clears the Bishop from any suspicion that he is quitting the soul-saving business for a time of his own free will. According to the report, his lordship is "not ill, but twelve years' suffraganship of South London has brought some strain, and the holiday is an act of precaution." It is designed, that is to say, to save the Bishop from premature emigration to heaven. To avoid that irretrievable misfortune, he is "going abroad for several months." We hope this holiday will have the desired effect. We also offer the Bishop of Southwark our sympathy on account of his terrible labors. A man who has worked for twelve years in succession is almost a miracle of industry.

The West London Mission Committee has recommended the Rev. Charles Ensor Walters as the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's successor. It is to be hoped, if he is appointed by the Conference, that he will keep clear of the converted-infidel business. Fiction of that sort is really played out.

A London Board-school teacher has been "sacked" for proselytising. Being a High Anglican, she had a child baptised "in the Catholic faith"—not Roman Catholic, mark—and supplied it with a Catechism, not the authorised Church Catechism. Very wicked on the part of the teacher, no doubt! Still, if teachers are expected, and even obliged, to impart religious as well as secular instruction, it is only natural that they should do their utmost for what they regard as the true and saving faith. The way to stop proselytising is to shut out religious instruction altogether.

John Thomas Johnston, secretary and manager of Thomson and Sons' brewery at Burton-on-Trent, who has been arrested on a charge of embezzlement, has taken a prominent part in religious affairs in the town.

John Wesley was a man of such natural kindness that nothing but the teaching of the Bible could have reconciled him to the beating of children. In his sermon on "Family Religion" he says that parents may restrain their children from evil "not only by advice, persuasion, and reproof, but also by correction." He is careful, however, to add that "correction"—meaning *castigation*—should not be resorted to until other means have been found ineffectual. "Even then," he says, "you should take the utmost care to avoid the very appearance of passion. Whatever is done, should be done with mildness; nay, indeed, with kindness too. Otherwise your own spirit will suffer loss; and the child will reap little advantage." But there were persons even then who objected to "correction" altogether, and declared it was all "lost labor." They advocated "instruction, persuasion, advice, and gentle reproof"—which, by the way, is precisely what Wesley himself advocated between adults. The great preacher agreed with them up to a point. Their method was no doubt often successful. "But you must not," he said, "in anywise lay this down as an universal rule: unless you

suppose yourself wiser than Solomon, or, to speak more properly, wiser than God." For it was God himself who dictated the words, "He that spareth the rod hateth the child; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes," and "Chasten thy son while there is hope; and let not thy soul spare for his crying."

It is to be noticed that John Wesley had to go straight to the Bible for a justification of beating children. Generally speaking, he was a practical moralist; he appealed to reason and experience as well as to the Christian Scriptures. But on this point he made no such appeal. He quoted the Bible at once. Which seems to show that he felt there was no other justification for this detestable practice.

The Bible that John Wesley quoted to justify beating children is still treated as the Word of God in this country, and it is used as such in the public elementary schools. Is it any wonder then that beating children obtains in those establishments, in spite of all that has been urged against it by reformers and humanitarians?

Children are taught that it is wrong to strike each other; also that it is wrong for grown-up people to strike each other. Having been taught this by words, they are taught the very opposite by practice. They see a man strike a boy, or a woman strike a girl; and they are told that this is quite right. In their young hearts they know it is *not* right; for they are quite aware that they are only beaten because they are small, and that the teachers simply take advantage of their superior size. Still, the practical lesson does its work; and this system of "correction"—heaven save the mark!—helps to breed up a race of ruffians. For the strongest tendency in children is the tendency of imitation. If they see kindness and patience, they tend to become kind and patient; if they see anger and blows, they tend to become irascible and violent.

How absurd it is to tell a boy he must not hit another boy, and then to hit him for doing something *you* don't approve! And are you quite sure you do him no bodily harm when you strike him? There is only one part of a boy's anatomy where you can strike him with moderate safety, and to castigate him there is now considered indecent. What other part will you address yourself to? You will box his ears, perhaps? But you would not if you knew anything about physiology—as you ought to. You will strike him on the hand, perhaps; not with your own hand, but with a rod or cane. But you would not do that either if you knew what a delicate mechanism the hand is. Altogether, it is pretty clear that you sin in ignorance when you strike a child; only the ignorance is not a motive in itself, but just gives scope to your natural brutality.

Fortunately a good many parents nowadays do not, and will not, beat their children. But this is an age of compulsory education, and they have to send their children to the public schools, where the Bible is read and the rod is in daily use. This opens up a fresh difficulty. Parents who loathe the thought of beating their children have to run the risk of their being beaten by strangers.

Down at Leyton a Board-school assault case has been before the magistrates. An assistant master, Mr. T. A. Organ, castigated a boy called Treloar for running away from an arithmetic lesson. According to the mother's account, the lad was not only severely caned, but kicked. Anyhow, her maternal blood was up, and she paid the school a visit in order (as she said) to serve Mr. Organ as he had served her boy. Reports differ as to what actually occurred, but it is admitted that Mr. Organ suffered, and Mrs. Treloar was fined ten shillings and costs for her performance. The comical part of the story is that the boy Treloar was with his mother, and that he got hold of the cane and wielded it upon the body of the assistant master. Some will think this very wicked. But how many boys have longed for a similar opportunity!

We sympathise with Mrs. Treloar. But we also sympathise with Mr. Organ. It appears that he has "authority from the Leyton School Board to administer corporal punishment." Having made this bad start, the Board proceeds to do worse. It does its best to try Mr. Organ's temper. When the irate mother paid him a visit she found him in charge of a classroom with eighty children. How could the sweetest saint on earth keep cool and calm under such a task? The wicked cane and the big impossible classes are parts of the same stupid system. Yes, it is the system that is at fault; though we fear it will never be remedied until the religious squabble is ended, and "secular education" is established on the ruins of priestcraft.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

April 19, South Shields; 26, Manchester. May 10, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.
- E. PARKER.—See "Sugar Plums."
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges, with many thanks, parcel of cast-off clothing from John Samson, Esq.
- ANIMO.—Sorry your last week's *Freethinker* did not reach you. Another copy has been sent—we hope with a better result. Mr. Cohen has never debated with the Rev. Stanley Parker. He authorises us to say so. You should ask the reverend gentleman what he means.
- ANTI-HUMBUG.—Shall appear.
- W. P. BALL.—We are much obliged to you for sending us weekly batches of useful cuttings.
- E. BEARD.—Miss Vance has shown us your letter. We are sorry to hear you have been so unwell, but glad to learn that the other matter has been settled to some extent satisfactorily. Copies of *Letters of a Chinaman* have been forwarded.
- H. SILVERSTONE.—See paragraph. Please send future lecture notices on the model of our printed list. You can write on a postcard and save a halfpenny.
- A. DYSON.—(1) You can obtain a copy of the *Age of Reason* bound in cloth from our publishing office: price eighteenpence. (2) Professor Huxley did not say it was necessary to resort to "spirit" in order to account for the introduction of life on this planet. He believed that life appeared naturally in the course of evolution. He did not believe that life originates now—the conditions having altered. Perhaps this is what you allude to.
- SHILLING MONTH.—We have received the following very late subscriptions: T. Gibbon, 1s.; A. Harrington, 4s.
- E. CHAPMAN.—Choice of subjects received and noted.
- A. WORRAILL.—We are sorry we cannot help the Chatham friends to find some "Secularistic" plays for performance in their Hall, instead of the ordinary plays issued by John Dicks. Several of Ibsen's plays are tinged with Freethought, but we are afraid these would be too heavy work for your dramatic class. It may be that some of our readers could help you with advice. If they can, we invite them to communicate with us.
- JAMES NEATE.—We admire your own manly and constant work for the Freethought cause. The Branch you have so long supported does an immense amount of good in a poor neighborhood. We recollect, too, that it raised £1 11s. for the Camberwell Branch Fund, when we made last year's appeal. To be poor, and yet helpful to others, is great praise, and your Branch has won it.
- JOHN ROBINSON.—We tender you our sincere sympathy.
- GEORGE PORTER.—Never fear; our eyes are open.
- 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 SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 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.
- FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- 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 National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS: Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions

Sugar Plums.

Next Sunday (April 19) Mr. Foote delivers two lectures at South Shields. The district "saints" will please note. We understand that these lectures are being specially well advertised, and that good audiences are expected.

Mr. Foote's new pamphlet—*God Save the King: and Other Coronation Articles*; by an English Republican—will be on sale at our publishing office next week. It is one of the liveliest and most outspoken things ever published. We wish it could be circulated as extensively as the organs of the Christian and Monarchical superstitious. The pamphlet runs to thirty-two pages, and the price is twopence.

Freethinkers in the East-end of London, and elsewhere for that matter, will please note that the Stratford Town Hall, Broadway, Stratford, has been taken for a special lecture this evening (April 12) by Mr. C. Cohen. The hall is one of the finest in the East of London—it is capable of seating somewhere about 2,000 persons—and we hope that every seat will be occupied. Admission is free, with a collection to defray expenses. The title of the lecture is "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?" It is a subject that should tempt Christians as well as Freethinkers, and in all probability will lead to plenty of discussion.

Mr. Cohen opened the ball for the Bethnal Green Branch in Victoria Park on Sunday afternoon, lecturing to a large and appreciative audience on "Our Objects." There was a good sale of literature; in fact, there were not enough *Freethinkers* and *Pioneers* to supply the demand.

The Bethnal Green Branch sends us a copy of its modest but healthy balance-sheet. Thirty-six meetings were held in Victoria Park, subscriptions were given to benevolent objects, and the Branch paid its way with a slight balance in hand. It is wonderful what can be done when even a few men (and women) mean business.

The East London Branch commences the new season's open-air propaganda to-day (April 12) on the Mile-end Waste at 11.30, when Mr. Ramsey will be the lecturer.

Ingersoll's *Hope of the Future* has long been out of print. We are reissuing it—well printed on good paper—at the price of one penny. It will be on sale next week.

According to the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, the French "Nationalists" have never been tired of repeating that the country was being goaded into exasperation by the anti-clerical policy of M. Waldeck-Rousseau and by the still more determined policy of his successor; but every by-election gives the lie to this prophecy. M. Maurice Barrès, who invented the "Nationalism" label, was defeated on Sunday by M. Deville in the Fourth Arrondissement of Paris.

Branches are now voting as to whether the National Secular Society's Annual Conference shall be held at Birmingham or South Shields on Whit-Sunday. The Branches in both places have invited the Conference. South Shields has not had a Conference for a long time; it is a pleasant seaside resort, and it is comparatively near for the Scotch and North of England Secularists, who are usually not well enough represented at these yearly gatherings. Birmingham, on the other hand, is very central for the whole country, and the Town Hall would be available for the evening public meeting. For our part, we express no preference either way; we merely state the facts.

It is to be hoped that all the Branches and friends of the National Secular Society will try to make this 1903 Conference a great success. There are special reasons why they should do so. We do not dwell upon these, at least at present, as they should be sufficiently obvious.

How any rational being can believe in a good, wise, and powerful God in face of the facts of Nature, is a thing hard to be understood—except on the ground of early impressions. If such a God had never been heard of till now, certainly no rational being could give rise to such a fiction. What can you think of a God who rages furiously in a dust-storm, in a hurricane, or a blizzard? Of a God who keeps large countries without rain for years upon the stretch? Of a God who revels in earthquakes and volcanic eruptions? Of a God who makes thousands sick every day, and who is always killing as many as he is able? Is this wisdom, goodness? Is it the work of a rational being or of a mad one? Let common sense reply. All the facts of Nature deny God, and Nature and experience say that it is just impossible that such a being should exist. Nature is amply sufficient for all natural processes and productions; nor is there one mystery of the universe which is rendered any plainer or to the smallest degree solved by the assumption of a God. Indeed, the existence of such a being would, if proved, deepen immeasurably all the enigmas of life and resolve the universe into as deep a puzzle for us as it ever was to our savage ancestors. God is embodied darkness, not light. The fiction is useless in every sense—except as a means by which rogues gull mankind. The belief in gods or God is fraught with mischief and disaster; and it becomes our duty to kill that belief as fast as we may. This can be done; Atheism is widespread already; and all Science, all Truth, all Art are purely Atheistic. So must every element of life become.—*Joseph Symes.*

"Girded with an Ephod."

"THE Ephod was a kind of surplice, was it not?" asked a friend the other day. He remembered having read about a *linen* ephod, and had seen pictures of a sleeveless tunic which professed to represent that article; but that was the extent of his acquaintance with the subject, as it is with most of us.

Unfortunately, the form and use of the ephod is nowhere distinctly described in the Old Testament, and we are left to glean the details from scattered incidental notices. Furthermore, it is not at all certain that the Hebrew words *ephod bad* mean "ephod of linen." It is true that all the versions of the Bible translate *bad* by "linen," when they translate it at all; but that only proves that they did not properly understand the phrase. The ordinary Hebrew words for linen are *shesh* and *bus* (*bus* is simply the Greek word *byssus*, and is only found in Esther and Chronicles). Some of the priestly garments were made of *shesh*, and linen was the prescribed attire for the Egyptian and other priesthoods of antiquity. When therefore the translators came upon a word describing an article of priestly dress, it is no wonder that they jumped to the conclusion that its technical name was intended to describe it as being of linen. Consequently, no importance need be attached to the English rendering "*linen ephod*."

Whatever it was, we may see from 2 Sam. vi., that the ephod was a very scanty garment indeed. David, girded with an *ephod bad*, danced before the Lord, offered sacrifices, and blessed the people in the name of Yahveh Sabaoth. These capers were watched with scorn by his wife Michal, who looked on from an upper window. She was the daughter of Saul, whose father had been a petty chieftain, and therefore she had very aristocratic notions, as is usual in such cases. What she chiefly objected to was the extremely abbreviated costume affected by her husband. When she met him, she sneeringly remarked, "How glorious was the King of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself." David replied that it was all done in honor of Yahveh, and added, "I will be yet more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: but of the handmaids which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honor."

Oriental ideas of propriety take a great deal to shock them, and we may be sure that Michal would not have made such a fuss if her spouse had been habited in the linen tunic of popular fancy. Her objection was that the king had uncovered himself. Dr. Robertson Smith, in his *Religion of the Semites*, shows that this was the usual Semitic practice. At Mecca, before the time of Muhammad, it was the custom of the Arabs to go through the sacred ceremonies in a state of complete nudity. Later apologists pretended that this was to show that they had cast off their sins as they had their garments; but the real reason was, that if an Arab walked in procession around the Caaba, his clothes became *tabu*, and he could never wear them again. At other sanctuaries the worshipper borrowed clothes from the priest, and the same thing appears to have been customary in the worship of Baal (see 2 Kings x. 22). Muhammad would not allow the shameless exposure of the pilgrims to continue, and nowadays the Hajji to Mecca has to figure in the *Itram*: a somewhat scanty costume, but sufficiently decent for Orientals. In the parallel passage, 1 Chron. xv. 27, the scribe suppresses the whole indecorousness of the Book of Samuel, and habits David in a robe of fine linen, which would have left no cause for Michal's complaints. The episode with that lady is omitted, because the mendacity of the Chronicler prompted him to suppress anything he thought derogatory to the ancient saints.

It may be thought that 1 Samuel xxi. 9 somewhat

negatives the idea that the ephod was very small, because the sword of Goliath was said to be behind the ephod, wrapped in a cloth. But ancient swords were not very large, and all that we need infer was that the weapon was hanging as a votive offering upon a peg, and that the ephod was suspended upon the same peg. The various passages in which the ephod is mentioned, speak of it as being carried in the hand, and handed about like a very light and ordinary piece of apparatus, and very unlike an article of clothing.

The narrative in Judges xvii., xviii. is very instructive. A wealthy chieftain had a house of God (just as a mediæval lord of the manor usually had the parish church just outside his castle). Micah had a "graven image and a molten image" weighing 183½ ozs of silver, and he made an ephod and teraphim. The ephod and the teraphim appear to have been complementary, for Hosea (iii. 4) likewise associates them together. Having this gear, Micah only wanted a priest. At first he consecrated one of his sons; but, on the appearance of a wandering Levite, the chieftain congratulated himself on his good luck, and thought Yahveh would now be propitious, seeing that he had a real Levite for priest. But, a raiding party of Danites coming along, they helped themselves to the ephod, the teraphim, and the image, and persuaded the Levite to accompany them. The Jewish chieftain protested against the theft, but saw it was useless to pit himself and his retainers against six hundred armed bandits, and submitted to seeing his gods carried away. The Levite accordingly set up as a tribal priest, with his employer's property.

Both these narratives imply that the ephod was a necessary adjunct to the proper worship of Yahveh; but neither give any explanation of its use. If we turn to 1 Sam. xxx., 7, however, we find that it was the means by which devotees discovered the will of Yahveh, and divined the future. Furthermore, the Septuagint of 1 Sam. xiv., 17-20, substitutes the word "ephod" for "ark," or, more correctly, the Hebrew has been altered in this place to make Saul inquire of the Ark of God, rather than the ephod. The method of inquiry is not indicated, but Saul stops the ceremony by saying to the priest, "Withdraw thy hand," apparently implying that the method of divining involved the insertion of the priest's hand in the ephod. The Israelitish king saw that the condition of the enemy demanded a prompt attack, and he therefore pushed aside the priest with his auguries, for fear the auspices might demand a different line of action to what his military insight showed him to be the immediate necessity. Similar flashes of common sense appear in like cases in Roman history.

Lastly, and it may be thought far from leastly, we may refer to Exod. xxviii., where there are elaborate instructions for making the arch-hieratic ephod. This chapter is a part of the late ritual document which the critics style the Priestly Code. The instructions may have been intelligible at that period; but they are certainly enigmatic now. All we can gather is that the ephod supported an article called the "breastplate of judgment," into which were put the Urim and Thummin; but what the Urim and Thummin were is not explained. They were the peculiar property of the Levites (Deut. xxxiii., 8), and when Saul was in disgrace with Yahveh "the Lord answered him not neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. xxviii.). Urim and Thummim, therefore, were instruments of divination, and declared the will of Yahveh equally with dreams and prophets.

All that we can learn, therefore, points to the conclusion that the ephod was a kind of girdle which, either by itself or by a suspended pouch, contained instruments of divination. Later scribes and editors desirous of eliminating superstitious elements, have deleted or obscured the divinatory allusions; but the connection of the ancient Levitical priests with magic and necromancy was too deep-rooted to be entirely concealed. The narrative in

2 Sam. vi. seems to be expressly directed against those scoffers who contemned the priestly girdle; and we are expressly informed that in consequence of her sneers at the ephod, "Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death;" the greatest punishment that could be inflicted upon a daughter of Israel.

CHILPERIC.

Ingersoll on the Bible and Women.

I HAVE taken the ground, and I take it again to-day, that the Bible has only words of humiliation for women. The Bible treats woman as the slave, the serf, of man, and wherever that book is believed in thoroughly woman is a slave. It is the infidelity in the Church that gives her what liberty she has to-day. Oh, but says the gentleman, think of the heroines of the Bible. How could a book be opposed to woman which has pictured such heroines? Well, that is a good argument. Let's answer it. Who are the heroines? The first is Esther. Who was she? Esther is a very peculiar book, and the story is about this:—Ahasuerus was a king. His wife's name was Vashti. She didn't please him. He divorced her and advertised for another. A gentleman by the name of Mordecai had a good-looking niece, and he took her to market. Her name was Esther. I don't feel like reading the whole of the second chapter, giving the details of the mode of selection. It is sufficient to say she was selected. After a time there was a gentleman by the name of Haman, who, I should think, was the cabinet, according to the story. And this man Mordecai began to put on considerable style because his niece was the king's wife, and he would not bow, and he would not rise, or he would not meet this gentleman with marks of distinguished consideration, so he made up his mind to have Mordecai hanged. Then they got out an order to kill the Jews, and Esther went to see the king. In these days they believed in the Bismarckian style of government—all power came from the king, not from the people, and if anybody went to see the king without an invitation, and he failed to hold out his sceptre to him, the person was killed, just to preserve the dignity of the monarch. When Esther arrived he held out the sceptre, and thereupon she induced him to rescind the order for killing the Jews, and, by way of revenge, to send out another order to massacre the fellows who were to kill the Jews; and they killed 75,000 or 80,000 of them. Then they said, "We must now kill Haman and his ten sons." So they hung the family up. That is all there is to the story. And yet Esther is held up as a model of womanly grace and tenderness. There is not a more infamous story in the literature of the world.

The next heroine is Ruth. I admit that it is a very pretty story. But Ruth was guilty of some things that would be deemed indiscreet even in Brooklyn. That is all there is about Ruth.

The next heroine is Hannah. And what do you suppose was the matter with her? She made a coat for her boy, that's all. I have known a woman to make a whole suit.

The next heroine was Abigail. She was the wife of Nabal. King David had a few soldiers with him, and he called at the house of Nabal, and asked if he could get food for his men. Nabal said "No," but Abigail went down to give him something to eat, and she was very much struck with David. David evidently fancied her. Nabal died within a week. I think he was poisoned. David and Abigail were married. If that happened in Indianapolis there would have been a coroner's jury and inquest; but that was all there was to that.

The next is Dorcas. She was in the New Testament. She was real good to the minister! Those ladies have always stood well with the Church! She was real good to the poor. She died one day, and Peter raised her from the dead, and you never hear of her again.

I would like to know from a person that has been recently raised from the dead where he was

when he heard that he was wanted, and what was he engaged in. I cannot imagine a more interesting person than one who has just been raised from the dead. Lazarus comes from the tomb, and I think that sometimes there must be some mistake about it, because when he came to die again thousands of people would say, "Why, he knows all about it." Would it not be noted? Would it not be noted if a man had two funerals? You know it is a very rare thing for a man to have two funerals?

Now, then, these are all the heroines they bring forward to show you how much they thought of woman in that day. In the days of the Old Testament they did not even tell us when the mother of us all (Eve) died, nor where she was buried, nor anything about it. They do not even tell us where the mother of Christ sleeps, nor when she did. Never is she spoken of after the morning of the resurrection. He who descended from the cross went not to see her; and the son had no word for the broken-hearted mother.

The story is not true. I believe Christ was a great and good man, but he had nothing about him miraculous except the courage to tell what he thought about the religion of his day. The New Testament, in relating what occurred between Christ and his mother, mentions three instances. Once, when they thought he had been lost in Jerusalem, when he said to them, "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" Next, at the marriage of Cana, when he said to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"—words which he never said; and again from the Cross, "Mother, behold thy son"; and to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!"

So of Mary Magdalene. In some respects there is no character in the New Testament that so appeals to us as one who truly loved Christ. She was first at the sepulchre; and yet when he meets her, after the resurrection, he had for her the comfort only of the chilling words, "Touch me not!" I don't believe it. There were thousands of heroic women then, there are thousands of heroic women now. Think of women who cling to fallen and disgraced husbands day by day, until they reach the gutter, and who stoop down, down, to lift them up and help them to be men once more! Do you find among the women of the New Testament any women that equal even those born of Shakespeare's brain? You can find no woman like Isabella, in whose spotless life love and reason blended into perfect truth; no woman like Juliet, within whose heart passion and purity met like red and white within the bosom of a rose; no woman like Imogen; who asked, "What is it to be false?" no woman like Cordelia, who would not show her wealth of love in hope of gain; nor like Hermione, who bore the cross of shame for years, and at last forgave with all her heart; nor like Miranda, who told her love as freely as a flower gives its lips to the kisses of the sun; nor like Desdemona, who was so pure that she could not even suspect that another could suspect her.

And we are told that woman sinned first and man second; that man was made first and woman not till afterwards. The idea is that we could have gotten along without the women well enough, but they never could have gotten along without us. I tell you that love is better than piety; love is better than all the ceremonial worship of the world, and it is better to love something than to believe anything on this globe.

We heard a priest making a lot of noise over the necessity of "saving the immortal soul." This priest pronounced the word "God" as though it was spelt Gud. Now, we think it far more necessary to save the mortal body. Let the "immortal soul" take care of itself. It is better to let future feathers go and put shoes on the naked feet in the here and now. What a lot of fakes these priests and ministers are, to be sure. They tear down homes to build up churches. They rob men to help God. They let women and children suffer and starve that a church spire can be ornamented with a gilded cross. Men and women need to be saved in this world first.—*Boston Investigator.*

Book Chat.

War and Worship is the title of a handsome book of verses by Henry Bedlow, published by the "Truthseeker" Company, New York. The frontispiece, from a picture by Debat-Ponsan, represents Truth emerging from her well, in spite of the efforts of representatives of Church and State to keep her down. Mr. Bedlow, it appears, is a lineal descendant of the Isaac Bedlow who owned the island which bears the statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. Graduating at Harvard in 1842, he joined the Dead Sea and Jordan exploring expedition under Commander Lynch in 1848. While the officers attached to this expedition were encamped at En Gedi, on the shores of the Dead Sea, a messenger from Jerusalem "brought tidings of the revolutionary state of Europe, and the spirit of 'Popular Rule' animating all parties against the dominant powers." The verses in *War and Worship* were roughly sketched in Syria, and completed in Palestine and New York. The measure is that of *In Memoriam*, but the author treats us to little of Tennyson's exquisite music. He has thought, knowledge, and power, but not melody. The pictures of War are striking and terrible. But those are held to have been fortunate who died fighting for freedom. They struck at despots, yet not at the heart of despotism. They did not recognise

Chief among thralls, and most abhorred,
The bondage of Belief and Creed.

It is this bondage that Mr. Bedlow denounces with such vigor and gusto through more than half his poem. Must superstition, he asks, ever blind humanity to truth?

Are there no tyrannies but thrones?
Beneath the Priest's empiric rule,
Believing man—weak, hoodwinked fool!—
In abject bondage, trusts and groans.
Are there no slaves save those who wear
Fetters of metal? Faith will breed
Helots of dogma, cult and creed:
Are such less worthy Freedom's care?

Mr. Bedlow points out that all theology is muddled or perverted mythology.

To every faith on Earth that's been
The Sun-God is the master-key,
Unlocking every mystery
From Brahma to the Nazarene.

After a strong impeachment of mediæval Christianity, with its faith, filth, and fraud, and its almost incredible cruelty, Mr. Bedlow attacks the whole Christian Church as the enemy of mankind.

Amid the wrongs which earth has cursed,
Degrading God, enslaving man,
Since Creed was schemed, and Fraud began,
This Holy Church is wholly worst.

Mr. Bedlow hopes that his native land will lead the world in freethought as well as in Democracy. He thus apostrophises the great American Republic:—

Thou art the Chosen land where worth
And wisdom will establish sway,
Scourging all holy wrongs away,
And all the crimes of feudal birth;
Where man in scorn of cleric rods,
Will yet turn Churches into Schools,
When Fact and not Assumption rules
Those shrines of misbegotten Gods;
And changed in later times to be,
With all their ruck of Rite and Creed
(Warped trappings of the priestly breed),
The Junk-shops of Theology.
And Science' guiding light appears,
And man, sustained by Truth, not Hopes,
No longer onward blindly gropes,
Seeking his God through grief and fears,
Nor by invented facts allured,
Which Dupes accept, but knowledge spurns;
To THAT as to the Godhead turns,
Finding Eternal Life assured;
Nor harried by the silly fake,
In making man, God was at loss
How otherwise than on the Cross
To expiate his huge mistake.

The Epilogue of *War and Worship* appears to have been written after the outbreak of the American-Spanish war. Mr. Bedlow pictures "Britain, proud pelagic Queen," watching the "envious Powers" who would like to have a "go" at America if they did not fear the siding of the old Mistress of the Seas with her kin across the Atlantic. Mr. Bedlow asks his countrymen not to forget this—especially if the Motherland should ever be threatened by a confederation of despotic Powers.

Who Shall Command the Heart? is "Part IV. of *Towards Democracy*," by Edward Carpenter—although his name, by a curious oversight, is omitted from the title-page. It is published by Swan, Sonnenschien & Co., at 2s. 6d net. Mr. Carpenter is the only literary disciple of Walt Whitman that we know of in England. His prose is often admirably beautiful, but his verse (if it should be called so) is rather poetic material than poetry. A certain deference is paid to form; there is rhythm, generally vague but sometimes definite; and there is some attempt at cutting up the matter into lines that look now and then like regular versification. But an ocular delusion of this kind is probably, after all, only one of the author's weaknesses. Very likely he feels that some concession must be made to the orthodox tastes of the most "advanced" readers. But for all practical purposes his compositions might as well be printed right on like ordinary prose. It must be admitted, however, that Mr. Carpenter's poetic material, as we have called it, is frequently excellent; so much so, indeed, at times, that we wish he had played the artist more strenuously and given us a finished production. Gold itself is made more precious by being wrought and chased; the finest diamonds derive additional value as well as beauty from cutting and polishing; and a waggon-load of the richest Spanish mahogany is not the equivalent of a noble piece of cabinet-work.

Take, for instance, the following; not as the best or the worst piece in Mr. Carpenter's volume, but as brief and typical:—

NIGHT.

Darkness o'erhead, around,
A curtain closing down upon the earth,
Drowning the woodland tree-tops.
Stretching of hands, straining of eyes—to feel, to see,
To catch the faint faint glamor here and there amid the
branches,
The waving dubious forms and presences.
No floor, no sky, no sound. Only a soft warm moisture in
the nostrils,
Folding and brooding all the land in silence.

What is this but an impression? Many such often go to the making of a real poem; just as many rough sketches often go to the making of a real picture. But the impression and the rough sketch are not so much art as the means to art. And in artistry of every kind the means are to be lost in the end.

Of course there are beautiful and powerful things in this book of Mr. Carpenter's. Especially is he sweet and sane on love and sex. The piece entitled "The Babe" is very noble. We follow him, too, in his call for greater simplicity and naturalness of life. Human society does not reach its highest possibilities in producing what Mr. Carpenter calls "brutalised workers and cultivated nincompoops." Things have gone far wrong "When Art is divorced from Life, Science from human feeling, Marriage from Love, Education from Affection." On the whole, it must be allowed that this writer is just in a great deal of his denunciation of England in "Empire." How is a strong nation to grow out of "brutish squalid joyless drink-sodden populations"? Mr. Carpenter thinks the heart of England is "dying down, withering within the body; and the veins are choked with yellow dust." "And this Thing," he sneers, "cries for Empire."

One very terrible piece is entitled "Portland." There never was a more powerful indictment of our prison system. It goes to the heart of the evil. The prisoners are "Damned; without interest in life." "Never to use nor exercise the sense of helpfulness—the source of all human virtue." Think of it! And a true picture is given of the prisoner in his cell, his body not too well fed and his soul starved, brutalised in whitened sepulchres in the name of religion and morality. Thank you, Mr. Carpenter, for "Portland." We wish it could be read (with understanding) by some of the smug judges who rattle off their tremendous sentences of penal servitude. We wish it could be read, too, with the same understanding by the mob of coldly virtuous people whose imaginations never realise what a convict's death-in-life means.

Mr. Carpenter's last pieces deal with body and soul, and death and—whatever follows. He believes in a future life, but does not seem confident about it; and his final word is that perhaps in the end, if we make this life all it might be, we shall "need no other world" than this.

Clergyman (lately come to parish)—"Your neighbor, Smith, says my sermons are rubbish." Farmer—"Ah, ye needn't mind 'im, sir; he's merely a mouthpiece for other folks."

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT MARTYRS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With several other friends of Freethought in North London, I recognise the justice of your remarks on the Holyoake reception at South-place.

Remembering with much pleasure his first interview with Mr. Holyoake in 1860, no one more highly appreciates his long life spent in more than one good cause than the present writer.

It should, however, be borne in mind that if, in this celebration, the end of either persecution or prosecution for opinion sake is implied, the time for such celebration has scarcely come; while any statement or implication that Mr. Holyoake was the last martyr is most untrue and misleading, many having suffered since.

It seems to us that impartiality and accuracy should characterise every public and important tribute to person or principle.

Has Mr. Holyoake a mandate to represent the martyrs to free speech since his own imprisonment, so long ago as 1842; or is it thought he can better represent them than the martyrs themselves? Some explanation of this will, perhaps, be given.

Great men do sometimes need to be taught their equitable relation to each other. Not always are they guiltless of jealousy and inappreciation of rivals, nor do they always acknowledge the good work done by others in the same field.

Mr. Bradlaugh did a great work, and we pronounce him prominent beyond all others in his day. He died at the age of fifty-eight, leaving us the significant reflection as to what he might have accomplished and become had he lived longer by twenty-eight years.

Our plea, then, is for a less individual, and for a wider, juster, generous, recognition in relation to both dead and living.

R. CHILD.

MARTYRS AND MARTYRS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Re Mrs. Smith's letter in *Reynolds's Newspaper* of March 29, dealing with the proposed reception to Mr. George Jacob Holyoake. Like yourself, I was somewhat surprised at finding Mr. Holyoake referred to as the last "living representative" of the martyrs for free speech. I accordingly wrote a brief letter of correction to the editor of *Reynolds's*, pointing out that the statement was both incorrect and, in its way, an injustice to others who had not hesitated to face imprisonment in the interests of liberty. Your own case, with that of Messrs. Ramsey and Kemp, occurred in 1883, and is well known to all Freethinkers. But as I stated in my letter, there was the case of Mr. Fred Brocklehurst at Manchester, some six years ago, and a little earlier that of Mr. Cunningham Graham and the Socialists. I conceive I did Mr. Holyoake a service in thus disassociating his name from what was at least an inaccuracy, and at its most a misrepresentation. To my surprise my letter did not appear in *Reynolds's*, but was excluded, apparently with others, as being personal and ungenerous. I am sorry that to this extent the editor seems willing to slur over the legitimate claims of Secularists and Socialists and others to the public notice for their efforts on the public behalf. I do not, of course, wish to detract from the credit due to Mr. Holyoake for his efforts on behalf of free speech, but I think that justice should be done all round. I am for keeping the names of all who have set an example worth following before the public. They serve as a constant incentive to others to emulate their example, and in the present flabby state of the public mind, such examples are badly needed.

C. COHEN.

Obituary.

It is my painful duty to inform you of the death, on March 30, of my dear wife, Martha Robinson, at the age of fifty-four years. She died from a severe attack of pneumonia. She suffered most acutely, but bore her affliction with the utmost fortitude. She was an ardent admirer of Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. C. Cohen, and other Secular lecturers who visited the North of England from time to time, and has frequently walked miles along dark and unfrequented roads in order to be present at their lectures. She was interred at the Chester-le-Street Cemetery, County of Durham, on Wednesday, April 1. Mr. John Hume, of Willington, read Mrs. Besant's eloquent service at the grave in an impressive manner, surrounded by a large concourse of relatives and friends. This, the superintendent of the cemetery informed me, was the first Secular funeral that had ever been held in that cemetery. He congratulated me on the very respectable and orderly character of the proceedings.

—JOHN ROBINSON.

A Big Circulation.

WE have read and heard of great sales of certain modern books, but have never seen them. A British publisher recently opened his ledgers to a critic to show exactly what the circulations of his productions were. A sale of 3,000 copies he regards as good. One of 5,000 is very good. One of 10,000 is extraordinary. In the last ten years he has published 800 different works, and in only six cases did the sales reach 10,000. This looks discouraging to the writer. One hundred and twelve years ago one Thomas Paine, a convivial Anglo-American patriot and Freethinker, wrote a book called *Rights of Man*. Its actual circulation was 1,500,000 copies. That is a record to be proud of.

—*New York Press*.

Giving the Devil His Due.

"Lightning knocked the church steeple down," someone said to Brother Dickey.

"Yes; Satan's eyes always flash fire when he sees a church steeple gwine up."

"And here's a colored brother killed another at a camp meeting."

"Yes; Satan goes ter meetin' 'long wid de res' of dem, en sometimes shouts de loudes'."

"And a preacher was drowned in the river last week."

"Oh, yes; Satan's in de water, too. He 'bleege to go dar ter cool off."

"So you blame everything on Satan, do you?"

"Bless Glod, was the reply, 'ain't dat what he's fer?"

—*Atlanta Constitution*.

The Important Thing.

"Brother, don't you know if you swear at those mules you won't go to Paradise?"

"Yes, parson; but if I don't swear at them I won't get to the end of the row, and that's the important thing at present."

—*Philadelphia Record*.

In a Hurry.

Noah was excitedly pacing the quarter-deck.

"I see," he exclaimed, "the Standard Oil Company has just bought Popocatepetl for sulphur. If we don't hurry up, they'll get Mount Ararat, and we won't be able to land."

Giving orders for full speed ahead, he anxiously awaited the denouement.

Easier than Housecleaning.

Samson had just pulled the temple down on himself.

"You see," he gasped, "it will do away with the spring housecleaning."

Realising too late what a great man he was, the people made haste to do him reverence.

Unorthodox.

The Bishop: "Why did they ostracise Oownthorts from the theological society?"

The Rector: "Just because he thought Goliath was killed by a golf ball which David drove."

Compromise.

Freddy—"Say, ma?"

Mother—"Well?"

Freddy—"Can we play house on Sunday if we only go in the side door?"

Of all the detestable mortals,
Who ever have come my way,
Is he who prays, and prays, and prays,
And then goes forth to prey

—*Alfred Knight*.

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.)

CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): J. McCabe, "The Bible in the School." Good Friday, April 10. 8, Ball for Members and Friends.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, J. M. Robertson, "Freethinkers in the Church."

STRATFORD TOWN HALL.—7.30, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity Worth Preserving? An Easter Address."

STREATHAM AND BRIXTON ETHICAL INSTITUTE (Carlton Hall, Tun-stall-road, Brixton): No Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. Mile End Waste.—11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Genesis 1, 2, 3."

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, J. M. Bonner, "Vaccination." Discussion invited. Music at 6.15.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' Quarterly Meeting; 7, Mr. Berrisford, "Easter: Its Origin and Meaning." Tea at 5.

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