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Truth, frankness, courage, love, humility, and all the virtues, range themselves on the side of prudence, or the art of securing a present well-being.—EMERSON.

Bible Spectacles.

CARDINAL MORAN, Archbishop of Sydney, made a curious statement in a recent speech. "Some years ago," he said, "a good old lady died at Plymouth, and bequeathed £10,000 to buy spectacles for the South Sea Islanders, to enable them to read their Bibles. I don't know what became of the money," he added, "but I know that if it came into my hands I would have made some better use of it than spending it on spectacles."

We daresay Cardinal Moran thinks the worst use money can be put to is enabling people to see. He would probably do anything with ten thousand pounds rather than spend it on promoting clear vision. Being a priest of the Great Lying Church, as Carlyle called it, he has a professional hatred of sceptics. And what is a sceptic? According to etymology, a sceptic is a person who keeps his eyes open, looks about him, and considers. Naturally a person like that is obnoxious, and even odious, to the mystery-mongers. He is apt to see too much, and to tell what he sees. They therefore hate him with a perfect hatred. Three hundred years ago they burnt him to ashes and warmed their hands at the fire. They cannot burn him now, but they slander him, and ostracise him, and do their best to ruin him, in a quiet, peaceable, and godly manner.

It may sound very odd, but the pious and charitable old lady who left all that money to buy spectacles for the long, short, or dim-sighted South Sea Islanders, was only following a general example. There was this difference, of course, that she gave money to distribute the spectacles, whereas the common practice is to distribute the spectacles in order to gain money. All the priests, clergy, ministers, preachers, or whatever they call themselves, of every Christian denomination, are engaged in this precious business. Every one of them dreads your reading the Bible with the naked eyes of common sense. He says you are sure to go wrong, and consequently to be damned, if you do not read the Bible through a certified pair of his sectarian spectacles. Without them you will read all the signposts on the road to heaven wrongly, and find yourself roasting in hell at the finish.

The Roman Catholic priest has no hesitation whatever. He plainly tells you that the Bible is the most dangerous book in the world if you read it with your natural eyesight. He says that the Scripture is in itself a dead letter, and needs to be interpreted by the living voice of God; that is to say, by the Church; or, in other words, by himself and a number of other gentlemen who are associated in the same religious enterprise. Moreover, he points out a lot of real difficulties in the way of private interpretation. In the first place, it is difficult to find even the doctrine of the Trinity anywhere in the New Testament, except in a passage in the Fourth Gospel, which every scholar knows to be a late interpolation. In the next place, the Bible is a big book; ordinary people can only read it by instalments; it is practi-

cally impossible for them to read it critically; and the result is that their idea of its contents is as confused as a traveller's idea of advertisement literature after some hours' gazing at Beecham, Carter, Coleman, etc., through a train window. The Roman Catholic priest, therefore, prefers your not reading the Bible at all. You had better listen to what he chooses to read aloud in church. But if you must read it, he says you should be particular to get the Catholic Bible, and before you begin reading it you should have on a pair of regulation Catholic spectacles.

The Protestant man of God affects to be more liberal. He calls the Catholic priest an idolator and an impostor. He warns you against taking the Pope's voice as the voice of God. He asks you to read the Bible for yourself. He even offers to sell you a copy—full-price or half-price, according to your financial circumstances. He tells you that his Bible is the true one. The Protestant Bible is the real Word of God. The Catholic Bible is a terrible fraud. There is something of God's in it, and something of man's, and something, perhaps, of the Devil's.

But if you trust to the affected liberality of the Protestant man of God you will find yourself deceived. He is a Church of England parson, or a Wesleyan Methodist, or a Baptist, or a Congregationalist, or a Presbyterian; and he expects you to read the Bible according to the doctrines of his own denomination. Abstractly, he admits your right of private judgment; practically, he denies your right to differ from him. If you read the Bible and come to different conclusions from his you are a heretic; and all heretics—together with liars and infidels—shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with brimstone and fire.

If it is possible for Churchmen, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Baptists, etc., to be all good Christians and all sure of heaven, why are there any Churchmen, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, and Baptists at all? Do they separate into various churches for fun or caprice or contentiousness? Do they not separate for what they regard as vital reasons? Do they not all hold, therefore—at least in practice—the theory of exclusive salvation, quite as tenaciously as the Roman Catholics? To assert the contrary is to stigmatise the Protestant sects as the most quarrelsome wretches on the face of the earth. We pay them the compliment of supposing that they are conscientious. In that case, their divisions turn upon principles, and every such principle is vital to salvation.

You perceive, then, that every one of these Christian sects really insists upon your reading the Bible with a pair of its special spectacles. You must do this if you want to get the right color and the right impression. Perhaps you prefer to dispense with blue, green, yellow, and other tinted goggles. You may think your own eyes good enough at present. Well, we daresay you are right. But you will notice that all the members of every Christian Church read the Bible through their denominational spectacles. They see just what their pastors (and exploiters) want them to—like the horse who wore green spectacles and fed on shavings; only he died, and they would die too, if their lives depended on the truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

"High" and "Low."

AT the conclusion of one of my lectures at Manchester the other Sunday, a gentleman in the audience remarked that I had several times used the terms "High" and "Low," and that in the absence of a definition these terms were rather question-begging in their character. I pleaded guilty, but urged in defence the impossibility of defining at length every important word that one may use during the course of a lecture. Something has to be taken for granted on the part of both audience and speaker, although one's expectations are not always justified. Since then I have received a lengthy and well-reasoned letter—probably from the same person—criticising my use of these words, and also the use made of them by other people. The writer points out that one's sympathies are unconsciously prejudiced by calling one thing "high" and another "low," and suggests that some little good might be done if I devoted an article to stating the exact meaning I attach to these words. My sense of the suggestion is shown by the present article.

I will commence by emphasising what Oliver Wendell Holmes called the "polarised" nature of language. Every word carries with it a whole host of associations, and it is inevitable that when a particular word is used in the course of discussion, a certain train of ideas should arise. In the particular instance under consideration one's feelings are often strongly, and quite as often wrongly, enlisted by the mere use of the term "high." John Stuart Mill pointed out very clearly, in dealing with the question of free will, that the mere use of the word "freedom" introduced an element of unfairness into the dispute. People have an instinctive liking for "freedom" and an equally instinctive dislike to compulsion, and when a writer or speaker annexes the first phrase as descriptive of his belief that volitions are uncaused, and gives his opponent the term "necessity" as descriptive of the belief that actions, like all else in the universe, are the inevitable results of specific antecedents, he enlists a certain amount of sympathy on his own side quite irrespective of the intellectual strength of his position. And it is just as true that when one continuously refers to a certain view of life as "high," and to its opposite as "low," they are also appealing to feeling, rather than to reason, and in a case where mere emotion should be kept under control as much as possible. No one likes to be accused of taking a low view of life, and in the desire to shake off this imputation the question of accuracy is often quite lost sight of.

The simplest method of dealing with the query I set out with would be by framing the answer within the compass of a sentence. But this might leave matters where they were, and it will bring out the scientific meaning of the words, if we first of all glance at the use made of them in ethics and religion—the two departments in which they bulk largest. I take up, almost at haphazard, a recent book on ethics, which contains a severe criticism on the Utilitarian position, a large portion of which consists in a denunciation of that view of morals as being "lower" than the writer's own theory. And not only is there this clear example of begging the question, but there is also the error of valuing pleasures as high or low according to some abstract standard quite apart from the organism itself. Now the truth is that apart from the needs of the organism, and apart also from what we may decide to be the desirable end of organic development, "high" and "low" have absolutely no moral significance whatever. Any specified action or a pursuit is only "higher" than some other action or pursuit on the principle that it ministers to what we believe to be end of all action. And this end is necessarily inter-organic in its nature. What, for example, is the ethical significance of murder or theft apart from their effects on human society? No more than that of the rolling of a stone down a hillside. Morality is not something imposed upon the organism from without, but something developed

from within—developed that is, from the needs of the organism in conjunction with a special environment. In ethics, therefore, "high" and "low" are only used legitimately so long as we use them as referring to the relative value of action in ministering to the permanent welfare of the organism.

In parenthesis I may also note a kindred fallacy—that of speaking of all pleasures as though they were mutually interchangeable. For example, one finds æsthetic pleasures—listening to a piece of music or admiring a picture—described as high, eating a beef-steak or looking at a cricket match as low. Personally, I find it impossible to get any common denominator for the two pursuits; and if I am asked which is the "higher" of the two, my reply is that the use of the word is in this conjunction strained and out of place. Under given circumstances eating a steak may be of greater importance than listening to music, and under certain conditions a man might be blamed for not foregoing the pleasures of the table on behalf of a good concert—not because one is higher or lower than the other, but because the undue devotion to one involves a neglect of the other.

I can measure pleasures of the same class, and that is all. We may speak of one kind of feeding as being higher than another in the sense of being more nutritious; and nutrition is the obvious end here. Or one kind of music may be described as higher than another in the sense of its involving more complex and subtle harmonies, and so doing for our minds what food is doing for our bodies. I can measure pleasures of the *same class* as "higher" or "lower," but I find it utterly impossible to gauge the value of a beefsteak in terms of a beautiful picture, or the value of a piece of music in terms of a beefsteak. Each has its legitimate place and function in the development of the organism; and, as this is so, to call either high or low in relation to the other is a sheer abuse of language.

Discussions on religion, however, provide a clearer example still of the misuse of these two particular words. For our own convenience, and for this only, we have arranged a scale of inanimate and animate existence, ranging from the mere speck of matter up to the crystal, and from the speck of protoplasm up to man. We also call any object "higher" or "lower" as they approach either end of the scale—and so long as we understand exactly what the nature of this classification is I have no fault whatever to find with it. Some arrangement of phenomena is indispensable if we are to introduce order into our mental life; the only thing is to clearly realise what the origin and nature of this arrangement is.

As the case stands, however, the religionist takes this classification as the basis of an argument in support of Theistic beliefs; an argument which owes its apparent strength to a sheer misunderstanding of the scientific implications of the language employed. Finding that things are classified by us as high or low, he assumes that this classification has an extra human significance, and bases his belief upon a term that is wholly conventional, and which has no value whatever outside the human intelligence. He first of all points to this "development" as proof of the existence of a God, and then justifies the struggle for existence on the grounds of the emergence from the conflict of a "higher" type of life. The most glaring recent example of this is the case of Professor Oliver Lodge, who finds support for his very nebulous Theism on the assumed "action of the totality of things trying to improve itself, striving still to evoke something higher, holier, and happier, out of an inchoate mass," and refers to "this planet [having] labored long and patiently for the advent of a human race"; all of which clearly assumes that these terms have some scientific value apart from the human organism.

It is almost, perhaps quite, grotesque to find a leading scientific man talking of the "totality of things trying to improve itself." Improve, how? In what way? Does Professor Lodge mean, as a

scientific fact, that "things" are more "perfect" now than when this planet was merged in a common nebula with the sun, or that things were less perfect then than now? If he does, then, with all due deference to his position in the world of science, I venture to say that his philosophy is of a most unscientific character. The universe is neither less perfect, nor more perfect, than it was millenniums ago, and it is as perfect now as it will be millenniums hence. In fact, "Perfection" and "Imperfection," "High" and "Low," are quite out of place in this connection. The universe *is*; its condition at any particular time is the exact result of the arrangement of the force or forces that compose the universe, and to speak of this arrangement as being more or less perfect, is scientifically meaningless. More perfect in relation to our ideas or our needs, I grant it may be; but, if Professor Lodge's argument has anything in it at all, it implies that there is a standard of "holiness" or perfection quite apart from the needs or ideas of the human organism.

It is equally absurd to speak of the planet having "labored" to produce the human race. The cosmos no more labored to produce the human race than it labored to produce the pestilence or the earthquake that sweeps a portion of it out of existence. The human race *is* as all else is, and its existence is of no greater cosmical significance than the existence of the nebulae in Orion.

The same may be said, in substance, of our classification of "high" and "low" in the animal world. We place the amœbe at one extreme, and man at the other. And we place animals higher or lower in the scale in accordance with the arrangement. I do not, of course, question the utility of this arrangement so far as *we* are concerned; I am only inquiring as to its extra-human existence, and criticising the use made of it by pseudo-philosophical religionists. On what grounds do we say that the fish, for instance, is lower in the scale than the cow? At bottom, our reason is because the cow comes nearer man than does the fish in points of structure. But, scientifically, the forces that produced the fish could not produce the cow; the forces that produced the cow could not produce the man; and it is equally impossible for the forces that produce a man to produce either cow or fish. Why, then, call one more perfect than the other? Scientifically, to use scriptural language, each is "perfect after its kind"; or, to be quite accurate, and to repeat what I have said above, the terms, except as purely human symbols, coined for our own convenience, and answering their purpose well, have no scientific validity in an extra-human universe.

Let it be understood that I do not question the existence of these distinctions of high and low, perfect and imperfect, nor do I question their utility; all I am doing is pointing out that these distinctions are of purely human origin, that *we* conveniently, and so far properly, classify things in this manner; but that to argue as though these distinctions existed in nature, divorced from human intelligence, is both scientifically and philosophically inadmissible. If one were to speak of nature as being in itself ugly or beautiful, one would be reminded that there were qualities of the mind, not of nature. If one were to say that nature smelt pleasant or unpleasant, one would be again reminded that nature knows nothing of stinks or perfumes, that these are affections of our sense organs. Dirt was defined as matter in the wrong place; and, while amusing, the definition was scientifically exact. A portion of matter became dirt because it was in a place that was offensive to us. Banish the human animal, and the "dirt" disappears with it.

And if I wished to shelter myself in an orthodox manner, I might point out that this argument is far from new. It is only a development of something I learned many years since from Spinoza. That profound thinker saw that the whole of theism rested upon man's reading himself into nature, and with his usual force and clearness he pointed out the

meaninglessness of such terms as those I have been criticising, when applied to the universe at large. And if one studies any of the apologies of prominent Theists, he will find what a large part this misunderstanding of "high" and "low" plays in their performances. Martineau, Knight, Fraser, James, Fairbairn, all furnish proofs of this. With all of them words rule their thoughts instead of thoughts ruling their words. And, therefore, the attempt to settle a precise meaning upon two such apparently simple words as "High" and "Low" may have a deeper significance than appears at first sight.

C. COHEN.

Penance.

"THE tribunal of the Confessional," Catholic or Protestant, in sacred secrecy to a priest, or openly in an "Experience Class meeting"—much the more unpleasant of the two—is supposed to lead directly to penance or penitential mortification of the flesh.

Poor flesh! how it has had to endure the maledictions of the religious, from Apostles like Paul down to the latest zealot priest, or the equally zealot, inquisitorial, rabid Protestant. How the body the Greeks loved to copy in peerless marble has been condemned, traduced, spit upon by overweening, impudent, falsifying "piety"—save the mark!

Paul the Apostle says that "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh." It may have done so in *his* case, and that may have been his "thorn in the flesh." And all through his Epistles runs this keen malice against the body—although once he calls it "the temple of the Holy Ghost." But in general the body and bodily enjoyments and pleasures are severely, fanatically condemned by him. Even matrimony seems only permissible to the otherwise uncontrollable, and all delights of the senses are rigorously tabooed, such as enjoyments, good living, merriment, natural physical expressions, and the employment of natural faculties, the repression of which leads always to unnatural gratification or abominable hypocrisy. We have read how it was in the orgies of the Agapa and the Thyestean Feasts of the Early Christians, who were fully up to date with any late (modern) Christians in their excesses, and might give these latter a few racy points and hints how to be wicked though religious.

"This vile body," says Paul. What a slander on man's splendid physique, and what an insult to its supposed Maker! "Vile only in its base uses," says the religious apologist. But why "vile" in its uses, since these are only natural, pleasurable, and commendable? Right and lawful and harmless in themselves, it is only a wrong use of them that lays them open to blame—not the legitimate enjoyment of them in every physical sense, every faculty, without exception. There is no more harm in their exercise than in eating a slice of good bread and butter when you are hungry. Nature's intention is to satisfy every hungry faculty or appetite.

But we are bidden to be "heavenly minded," and turn our backs on "this evil world"—the best, however, we know as yet—and abandon the things of flesh and sense. The best saint who ever rolled himself in briars to subdue his passions, like the young St. Benedict, could not do this effectually. The temptation would return. Repression to an extreme degree is a violence to our natures, and inevitably leads to revulsion. "Crucify the flesh," says the half-deranged ascetic. "No, thank you," we reply. Do not crucify, but seek lawful gratification; exalt and honor the body. Do not senselessly condemn it, do not be ashamed of it, do not trample it down. Cherish it, remembering that glorious line of Walt Whitman's, "I am not afraid of my body." Why be afraid of yours, or of its complete felicity? It was given to you to use and enjoy—not to despise.

The reputed Founder of Christianity had a human body, and it must have been like all other human

bodies. We read, too, that "He was tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin." Was he always immaculate, *never* yielding to the temptations and desires common humanity knows? It seems unlikely and improbable, and wholly unnatural. He is set forth as our brother, therefore as a natural man, who had the blood, the passions, the affections of ordinary humanity. He must have known all its throbs and thrills, pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, to have been the one represented.

"Yet without sin." Then why not we? Ours is the same human flesh and blood. They claim that he was sinless and could not err, or did not, which is doubtful. And may there not be many things stigmatised as "sinful" that are not so in themselves, and as harmless for us as for him? "O, but he was divine"—which we do not believe. If so, how, then, could any merit attach itself to his actions if he was on this supreme height, and he was intrinsically, necessarily, faultless? Impossible! But we hold all men royal in their manhood, though not above the law; divine in their noblest attributes, and free in their spirits. There, in their thoughts, they are "not under bondage to any man."

Be this our gauge of true, perfect freedom—a freedom that is honorable, just, and happy. Preserving the distinction between liberty and license, too often ignored in the ardors of excess, free in all truth, and not loose in all, we can fully enjoy and gratify "this vile body" in its every portion and faculty.

Nor let us submit ourselves to confessionals of any kind, anywhere. Neither let us be afraid of being as happy as we can. Don't enjoy yourself and then be seized with a fit of contrition or remorse, fearing that you have "done wrong" and ought to do penance—undergo some purgation or suffer some punishment for it. Don't be deluded. Your "ghostly confessor" smiles inwardly at your simplicity as he thinks of his own "primrose path of dalliance," which possibly he treads while appointing mortifications of the flesh for you. And the brothers and sisters of the "Experience Meeting" may give their pious Protestant snivel, yet all the while wish that they had been in your place, with your opportunities. Regard excessive self-examination as a snare, extreme introspection as superfluous and deprecatory, self-recrimination as unnecessary and foolish. Such things are often positive sins against one's self-hood. While you live in the flesh make the most of all it offers. You will not pass this way again, and you will be a long time dead. To-day is our empire, to-morrow we know not. Who lives in the present lives wisely and well. Be sure you're right—then go ahead!

GERALD GREY.

Hebrew Legislation.

THE idea that the Mosaic legislation had any special or supernatural origin is one of the assumptions of ignorance which must be abandoned at the first comparison with the codes of other nations. Everywhere we find peoples living under more or less definite codes of rules that show an extraordinary agreement with one another among people in a given stage of culture, and an equal divergence in comparison with the codes of peoples in another stage. The Mosaic Laws themselves are so confused, so inconsistent, and so insufficient, that it has long been recognised that they are really a compilation from various sources; and that they are, moreover, the work of different periods of time. In addition to this, it must be obvious that very different rules of life must have been current in various portions of the land of Israel. We have only to consider the present state of Palestine to recognise that it must have been so. At the present time the natives of that country may be roughly divided into two classes—the *fellahin*, or settled agriculturalists, and the *bedawin*, or nomads, with divergent interests and

divergent customs, and continually trespassing upon one another's territory. When the government is weak, the bedawin harry the country districts, and force the fellahin to take refuge in the towns; when the government is energetic, the bedawin are driven off and shot, and the fellahin can till their fields in peace; and when the government is oppressive there is a strong tendency for the fellahs to abandon their fields and return to the more independent bedawy life. From many passages in the Old Testament, it appears that the same conditions ruled in ancient times, and that the line between the nomad and the agriculturalist was less distinct. In times of public trouble, the cry, "To your tents, O Israel," resolved the settled community into troops of wandering bedawin. But the settled communities can hardly have rigidly held under one rule of life, for they exhibit traces of organisation upon entirely different principles. In the towns there were, of course, communities of craftsmen, working under their own rules. In the country there were various types of organisation. Judges xvii. xviii. deals with the affairs of a semi-independent chieftain named Micah, wealthy enough to possess large quantities of silver, and able to levy a force of men. In Ruth, we have Boaz, a wealthy farmer, of some consequence in the village, and employing farm-servants. While other passages relate to what are called village-communities where the land is tilled in common by the villagers. These various circumstances would render it excessively difficult to provide a minute legislation to govern all their activities, and we need, therefore, not wonder at the inadequateness of the Mosaic Code, in spite of its efforts to regulate the conduct of the Israelites at every point. The much more voluminous sacerdotal legislation of India exhibits precisely the same defects as the Hebrew, only in an exaggerated form.

Many of the Mosaic enactments appear to be attenuated survivals of customs preserved elsewhere in a more complete form. Deuteronomy xxi. 18-21 prescribes a power of life and death over sons in certain cases, but only with the approval of the local council of elders. This is merely the shadow of the old patriarchal power which meets us in the well-known Roman Law of the *patria potestas*. The Roman father in the early period held the uncontrolled power of life and death over his children. He could give them in marriage, compel them to divorce, transfer them to another family by adoption, or sell them into slavery. These powers, it is true, were modified in later times, but they are sufficient to show that the Hebrew laws regarding submission to parents were nothing new in the world's history, but rather the degenerate vestiges of ancient ideas.

Laws which are supposed to have been dictated by sympathetic considerations assume quite another light when compared with their congeners elsewhere. Deut. xxii. 6-8 forbids the taking of a bird with its eggs or young. The old Teutonic laws have the same regulation, not only for birds, but also for wild bees; the idea being expressly stated to be that the villager is only entitled to "right of user" in the bird to the extent of taking its produce. He cannot take the bird, because that would interfere with the similar right of his neighbor.

The enactment of Deut. xx. 19, 20, that war shall not be waged against trees, is exactly paralleled by the Teutonic and the Hindu laws, which likewise inflict penalties upon the destroyers of useful trees. The unauthorised hewing of timber was considered a theft; and the Teuton laws prescribe that at certain seasons of the year the *whole body* of villagers shall go into the forest to cut wood together, in order that the necessary wood-cutting may be carried on under mutual supervision. Deut. xix. 5 shows that the Hebrews had the same custom, for it provides expressly against an accident that might occur "when a man goeth into the forest with his neighbor to hew wood." 2 Kings vi. 1-7 gives us another glimpse of the Hebrew custom of going in companies into the common woodlands for the purpose of providing timber for a desired purpose.

A much-belauded Mosaic institution is the Sabbatical year. Yet Sir Henry Maine assures us that there is no Indo-European race which has not vestiges of such an institution, and that it was customary in the Russian villages. All agricultural communities have passed through a stage which involved the redistribution of the communal lands at given intervals; and the Hebrew sabbatical enactments are obviously related to this. If once in every seven years the land is redistributed, then the debtor starts again on an equality with his neighbors. The accidents that temporarily reduced him to poverty are removed, and therefore there can be no question of servitude. What was lent by the creditor falls again into the common stock, and thus the relations of creditor and debtor are extinguished, each starting again under the same equal conditions. There is nothing in the Pentateuch to imply that the whole country commenced its septennial series at the same time. Even the law that the land should lie fallow every seventh year could easily be complied with by allowing a seventh part to lie fallow each year. It is not until the time of Josephus that we hear of the distress occasioned by the discontinuance of agriculture in the sabbatical year; and we may conceive that the practice may have arisen by his time through a misunderstanding of the Mosaic rules. With the rise of the Maccabeans it became possible for the priesthood to enforce what they considered to be the Pentateuchal legislation; and that they enforced enactments in an entirely different spirit to what was originally intended is only what usually occurs under such circumstances. Uniformity was secured, and the zealots who fancied they were obeying a divine ordinance cared little for the resulting inconveniences. At the rise of the Maccabean power we have even the spectacle of Jews who allowed themselves to be massacred rather than resist their enemies by fighting on the Sabbath Day.

Familiarity with this septennial redistribution of land naturally influenced other customs; the most important of which concerned the status of a bond-servant of Hebrew race (Ex. xxi. 2-6; Deut. xv. 12-18). By these two enactments a Hebrew could only be indentured for a period of six years. In Exodus, however, the bondman goes out as he came in: he merely receives his liberty. Obviously, if the bondman was originally a freeman of a village community, there would be no hardship in this; for he would immediately become entitled to a share in the next distribution of land, and be able to maintain himself in concert with his neighbors. In Deuteronomy, however, it is not contemplated that the bondman would be able to shift for himself. We are evidently in another stratum of law. The patron is enjoined to furnish the client with cattle, corn, and wine. This is exactly on a par with the Celtic custom whereby the chieftain set up a poor clansman with a gift of cattle, and thus rendered the latter his vassal. In Europe this process of "commendation" was an important part of the early feudal system; and we may assume that it grew up in Israel from similar considerations.

Lev. xxv. introduces us to a peculiarly modern subject—namely, leaseholds; and, as the modern leasehold system was originally introduced to prevent the total alienation of the freeholder's property, we may be certain that the same idea lies at the bottom of the institution of the Jubilee. This appears to be a very late piece of legislation; and vv. 39-55 have entirely different provisions in relation to bond-servants than we find in Exodus or Deuteronomy, for the indentures are extended to the year of Jubilee—unknown to the older customs. Houses in a city are exempted from the operation of this form of release; but otherwise it is a rule that real property cannot be alienated from the freeholder. Many communities have enacted similar laws for the protection of the freeholder, but it is doubtful whether they work well in practice; and it would be interesting if we could discover the results of the Jubilee theory in the land of Israel.

Of the other regulations of the Mosaic Law—the

prohibition of particular kinds of food, the rules of marriage, the pursuit of murderers, etc.—the analogies with other codes are too well known to require any detailed treatment. But when we consider the methods by which these customs have grown up, and been modified by various tribes within historic times, no sane person can accept the proposition that the Mosaic institutions were dictated from Mount Sinai. If other nations have adopted similar regulations from perfectly intelligible mundane motives, it follows that the Hebrews were actuated by similar motives in imposing similar rules upon themselves. If laws have been a growth in other lands, they cannot have been an arbitrary creation in Palestine.

CHILPERIC.

A Song of Immortality.

BRING snow-white lilies, pallid heart-flushed roses,
Enwreath her brow with heavy-scented flowers;
In soft, undreaming sleep her head reposes,
While unregretted pass the sunlit hours.
Few sorrows did she know—and all are over;
A thousand joys—but they are all forgot;
Her life was one fair dream of friend and lover;
And were they false—ah, well, she knows it not.

Look in her face, and lose thy dread of dying;
Weep not, that rest will come, that toil will cease:
Is it not well, to lie as she is lying,
In utter silence, and in perfect peace?
Canst thou repine, that sentient days are numbered?
Death is unconscious Life, that waits for birth;
So didst thou live, while yet thine embryo slumbered,
Senseless, unbreathing—e'en as heaven and earth.

Then shrink no more from Death, though life be gladness
Nor seek him, restless in thy lonely pain;
The law of joy ordains each hour of sadness;
And, firm or frail, thou canst not live in vain.
What though thy name by no sad lips be spoken,
And no fond heart shall keep thy memory green?
Thou yet shalt leave thine own enduring token,
For earth is not as though thou ne'er hadst been.

See yon broad current, hasting to the ocean,
Its ripples glorious in the western red:
Each wavelet passes, trackless; yet its motion
Has changed for evermore the river's bed.
Ah, wherefore weep, although the form and fashion
Of what thou seemest fades like sunset flame?
The uncreated source of toil and passion
Through everlasting change abides the same.

Yes, thou shalt die; but these almighty forces,
That meet to form thee, live for evermore;
They hold the suns in their eternal courses,
And shape the tiny sand-grains on the shore.
Be calmly glad, thine own true kindred seeing
In fire and storm, in flowers with dew impared;
Rejoice in thine imperishable being,
One with the Essence of the boundless world.

—Constance C. W. Naden.

"Providence" is responsible for many things. According to Mr. Asquith, M.P., it is responsible for the lunatics and idiots in England. We always fancied this was so, but we hardly liked to say it. Mr. Asquith is less particular. Speaking at a recent meeting of the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded, he said that while 110,000 were under confinement, at least 100,000 were at large, and their case "appealed strongly to the good offices of the community to do the best they could for them in the unhappy circumstances in which Providence had placed them." Evidently that "Providence" has a lot to answer for.

I verily believe that the great good which has been effected in the world by Christianity has been largely counteracted by the pestilent doctrine on which all the Churches have insisted, that honest disbelief in their more or less astonishing creeds is a moral offence, indeed, a sin of the deepest dye, deserving and involving the same future retribution as murder and robbery.—Professor Huxley.

Acid Drops.

There was a rumpus at the Memorial Hall meeting of Free Church, Progressive, and Trade Union organisations to arrange for the projected Hyde Park demonstration against the London Education Bill. The Free Churchmen, as usual, thought the world was going on all right while they had their own way in everything. But imagine their horror when Mr. Hawkins proposed that a second resolution should be put in favor of secular education! The Rev. Mr. Fletcher and the Rev. Dr. John Clifford opposed this in the name of the Free Churches—we were almost going to say in the name of God. Dr. Clifford introduced a little of his customary hypocrisy on this subject. He said that the demonstration was against the Government, and that the Government was trying to destroy the democracy, and that to stand up for the democracy was the one great and glorious object on which they were all united. But this hackneyed rhetoric fell flat on a large section of the meeting, and Dr. Clifford was obliged to try another stage trick. He appealed to them in the name of a wise opportunism. He himself had been in favor of secular education before 1870, but many Free Churchmen were not so, and it was no use trying to hurry the question. The "secular education" party, however, were obdurate; they went to a division, and were beaten by 62 to 41 votes. Technically, it was a defeat; morally, it was a victory. Indeed, it looked very much like the beginning of the end of Nonconformist policy in education.

It is very odd, by the way, that Dr. Clifford should have been in favor of secular education before 1870, and yet have kept it dark for more than thirty years. This gentleman is becoming a perfect Machiavellian. He never says a word in favor of secular education except when he wants to keep the friends of secular education quiet. "I'm quite with you—in principle," he says in effect, "but for God's sake don't talk about it just now; it isn't the proper time, and you'll do no end of mischief; what you have to do is to help our policy along just now; your turn will come by-and-bye." And when he thinks he has worked this dodge successfully he goes off humming "In the sweet by-and-bye."

Lord Kelvin continues to put forward his personal opinions as the teachings of science, and papers like the *Daily Mail* continue to take him seriously. "Forty years ago," he says, in a letter to the *Times*, published after the report of the speech that we criticised last week, "forty years ago, I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers which we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, 'No; no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.'" Really, Lord Kelvin must be in his anecdote. When and where he walked with Liebig, and what he and Liebig said to each other, are of no importance to any man who has the brains and courage to think for himself. We might even say that there was no occasion for Lord Kelvin to question Liebig in that manner, for Liebig's opinions were generally known, having, in fact, been published to the world by himself. His lordship must be pretty far gone if he imagines he is going to convince thinking people by his "I says, says I" sort of argument.

Lord Kelvin being on the side of religion, the religious world is affecting to believe that his authority as a scientist is sufficient to settle all the problems of philosophy. We are glad to see Mr. W. H. Mallock writing in the *Times* by way of protest against this absurdity. After referring to Lord Kelvin's dictum that the phenomena of organic life demand the hypothesis of a Creative Power, Mr. Mallock proceeds as follows:—"Now, if this Creative Power is to have anything to do with religion, it must be not only a creative, but a moral power also. What, then, it would be interesting to learn is this: Does the evolution of organic life—does 'nature red in tooth and claw'—suggest to Lord Kelvin, what it failed to suggest to Tennyson, that the source of life is a Power which is not only creative, but is also wise, loving, and just in every comprehensible sense? The only answer to this question at which Lord Kelvin hints is his assertion that the free creative action of a Deity would be no more miraculous than the action of free-will in man. I have often myself insisted on this truth. An unconditioned human will acting on the conditioned brain would be a perfect type of what we really mean by a miracle. But, is human free-will a fact? This is the great question which all the philosophers of the modern world have debated. The affirmative answer may be true; but Lord Kelvin merely assumes that it is, and thus, so far as his recent letter goes, he seeks to reinforce our

confidence in religion, not by meeting our difficulties, but by ignoring their existence."

"Merlin" of the *Referee* naturally cackles over Lord Kelvin's certificate to supernaturalism. "The Prince of Science of his time," he says, "is in himself a proof that ignorance is not altogether a necessary concomitant of faith." But did this need proof? There have always been distinguished men who used their abilities and learning to bolster up the popular religion. Lord Kelvin is no new phenomenon in this respect.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell conducts a correspondence column in the *British Weekly*, and in the number for May 7 proceeds to settle an enquirer's doubts on the question of "Free Will." The Rev. gentleman admits the force of the determinist's reasoning; in fact, it seems to him "impossible to escape from determinism.....The more we dwell upon the facts of nature, history, and individual experience, the smaller becomes the area in which conscious freedom is exercised." Yet Mr. Campbell believes in "free will," because "we feel that we are not simply moved about like pawns on a board. There is a right and a wrong, and a good and a bad, a higher and a lower, and we measure mankind by the way it comports itself among them." As a sample of hopelessly confused thinking this takes the cake. What on earth has our feeling to do with the matter? It is our feeling of freedom that is the very thing called in question; and this, as Spinoza said, only proves that we are conscious of our actions, but not of their causes, and our sense of "freedom" is but another word for our ignorance in this direction. And what is meant by this talk of a good and a bad, etc.? The distinction between the two remains whether the will is "free" or not. Murder is murder whether it is the result of definable or determinate causes or the outcome of uncaused, irresponsible "cussedness." Mr. Campbell is either throwing dust in the eyes of his querist, or his own philosophical equipment needs attending to sadly. Yet this is the man who is at present being lauded to the skies as a profound thinker and cogent reasoner!

Mr Raymond Blathwayt interviewed Father Ignatius for *Household Words*. We note that the reverend gentleman is as outspoken as ever. "I can appreciate an out-and-out Atheist," he says, "for you know where you are with him. Charles Bradlaugh was one of my dearest friends." But he cannot bear with the Higher Critics, like Dean Fremantle and Canons Cheyne and Driver, whom he regards as "infidels" within the Church. You must believe the Bible, he says, or disbelieve it; there is no middle course. The Bible says the world was made in six days; well, it was made in six days. The Bible says there is a hell; well, there is a hell—in the interior of the earth. Father Ignatius does not say he has been there; but personal information is never deemed requisite in these matters.

"John Morley," says Father Ignatius, "is a straightforward, honest infidel, whom I respect as a foe whom I can meet face to face." We are not aware that he has ever met Mr. Morley in that hostile fashion; and we don't believe he ever will. Still, we understand the reverend gentleman's meaning. We must part company from him, however, when he goes on to prophesy all sorts of evil things because "Society, with a big S, is a sink of iniquity." Society, with a big S, has hardly ever been anything else. A nation may be likened—prosaically, if you will—to a pot of beer; there may be a lot of froth at the top, and dregs at the bottom, but it is all right if there is enough good honest liquor in between.

The Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews has just held its annual meeting at Exeter Hall. The chair was taken by that remarkable legislator, Sir John Kennaway, and the principal speaker was that profoundly philosophical divine, the Bishop of London. According to the latter gentleman, the East London Jews were rather more moral than the East-end Gentiles; still, they would be all the better (though he did not explain why) for having the ethically inferior Gentiles' religion. Christ was the light of the world, and the Jews ought to have their share of the illumination. It was the business of the Jew-Converting Society to turn the X rays upon them. By this means they (or some of them) would be brought to Jesus. That they were sometimes brought to Jesus was undeniable. He himself prayed every day at a desk made of wood from the Holy Land given him by converted Jews. That settled it. There was room, however, for other speakers; and the Bishop of London was followed by the Bishop of Mahogany—we beg pardon, the Bishop of Honduras. Finally, it was stated that the Society's income for the past year was £40,699, and that there was a

deficit of £5,399. No statement was made as to the number of Jews that had been converted.

The May Meetings—which commence in March and end some time in July—are now in full swing. Up to the present the bulk of the time seems to have been taken up with the reports of Foreign Missions. There are all the usual wonderful results—so striking on paper, so deficient in actuality. One Wesleyan Methodist missionary for India said there was a “great mass movement among the Pariahs of Southern India towards Christianity.” This began, he went on to say, during the great famine of 1876. We have no doubt. As a matter of fact, famines in India are looked upon by missionaries as quite Providential occurrences. They have the control of a large portion of the relief funds that are raised; the starving Hindoo peasant takes relief, and is triumphantly chronicled in home reports as an “inquirer”; while the advent of thousands of starving natives in search of the Christian cash becomes “a mass movement towards Christianity.” It is quite a simple trick when one sees how it is worked, and it explains the reason for the public appeal of the secretary of the London Missionary Society that contributions to Indian Famine Funds should be sent to the Mission Societies, in order to save expenses.

The same speaker, Rev. J. A. Vance, said that “it was the pride of the Hindoo to bring honor on his household. Hence it was not easy for a member of the family to become a Christian.” Miss Ottman, a Baptist missionary from India, as a instance of the “terrible sufferings” of women in India, quoted a remark made by a Brahmin that “God put together every evil thing when he made a mother-in-law.” Miss Ottman might have found much the same in dozens of our own comic journals, but it would never have struck anybody but a missionary that the statement legitimately afforded anything but a smile. The same lady, to show the necessity of missionary work, said that “The Indian standard of female purity is very high, but that of the men very depraved, and three out of the women they tended suffered, in consequence, from the most loathsome disease.” We fancy that a Hindoo visitor might say very much the same sort of thing of England, nor do we doubt that there would be much trouble in finding the same number of women, and a much larger number of men, suffering from “the most loathsome disease” within a stone’s throw of Exeter Hall. Miss Ottman might do as well to devote her attention for the future to the purification of London, and the instruction of editors of comic journals on the proper treatment of the much-abused mother-in-law, and if only some millionaire would circulate, gratuitously, a few hundred thousands of Mr. Cohen’s exposure of Foreign Missions, she, and others, might be compelled to do it.

The *Christian Commonwealth* remarks that the numbers who attend these May meetings “prove the folly of the Secularists, who are weak by week actually talking of Christianity as ‘the dying faith.’” We cannot, of course, be expected to see in these meetings all that our religious contemporary sees, but it puzzles us how these gatherings of Christians, beaten up from all parts of the country and of the Empire for the occasion, proves that Christianity is *not* a dying faith. A very large proportion of the attendants is composed of people who are directly and financially interested in the Christian Churches as trading corporations. And the balance is made up of visitors from other churches. The outside world does not attend these meetings, and are not affected by them. Moreover, our contemporary is confused between a dying and a dead faith. Christianity is hardly the latter, but it is certainly the former. Its doctrines are being held more loosely by each generation. Criticism has riddled every one of its specific doctrines, and even within the churches beliefs are entertained in a more or less tentative manner. And, in addition, experience and statistics prove that the number of those who are losing interest in Christianity is steadily on the increase. The *Commonwealth* evidently does not bear in mind that the Secularists it refers to are almost wholly converts from Christianity, and thus represent a distinct gain to Freethought. Secularists do not at all expect that Christian *organisations*, which provide a direct financial interest for so many, and an indirect financial interest for a much larger number, will disappear in a day, but they are just as certain that Christianity, as a system of belief, is to-day about as near as extinction as it can conveniently get, without disappearing altogether.

We regret to hear that Mr. Ira D. Sankey, the survivor of the Moody-and-Sankey firm, has become quite blind. It is said that blindness acts as a stimulus to the imagination, and it appears to have done so quickly in Mr. Sankey’s case.

He has just been relating an incident which he calls “the most thrilling of my life.” Once in London he and Mr. Moody “appeared before an audience composed entirely of men and women who were avowedly scoffers at the Gospel.” Mr. Sankey struck up “My Mother’s Prayer,” and sang it with greater enthusiasm than he had ever felt before. “The audience,” he says, “seemed to rise to me, and when the last note had died away Moody immediately followed with one of the most touching addresses he ever preached in his life. He carried the audience like a whirlwind, and when he ceased five hundred of those rude, irreverent unbelievers rose up from their seats beside their boon companions and their accomplices in iniquity and asked for our prayers and the prayers of all God’s people.”

Now this is a very pretty story. Religious people will find it charming. Its only defect is that it does not contain a word of truth. Had such a meeting as Mr. Sankey describes been held it could not have been kept a secret. We should have heard of it before the lapse of all these years. Mr. Sankey does not say where and when it took place. “Once in London” is not precise enough. It reminds us of the statement of a witness that a certain object was about the size of a lump of chalk. What was the name of the building? What was the name of the street? What was the date of the meeting? We invite Mr. Sankey to answer these questions. It would be better if he did so at once; for, under the influence of his blindness, he may soon be “of imagination all compact,” and an appeal to his memory would then be useless.

The Bishop of Stepney (Dr. C. G. Lang) visited Portsea lately and addressed a meeting in the Parish Institute. He does not appear to be a very accurate speaker. After denying that the working-men of London had no religion, he spoke as follows: “One striking feature of East London was that the wave of Socialism which passed over the country under the leadership of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote had passed away. There were no halls of science now all over the place, and even the debates in the parks attracted but little attention.” This is how the report runs in the local *Evening News*, but we presume the Bishop said “Secularism” and not “Socialism”—with which neither Mr. Bradlaugh nor Mr. Foote was ever associated. With regard to those “halls of science all over the place,” the Bishop must be drawing upon his imagination for his facts. There was only *one* Hall of Science in London. Evidently his lordship counted this one on the principles of Bible arithmetic. With regard to the meetings in the parks, the Bishop is mistaken. We will not put it any stronger. The Freethought meetings in Victoria Park—the district he is most familiar with—are as large and successful as ever.

The religion of royalism seems to need a good deal of stimulating at Portsmouth. A statue of the late Queen Victoria, monarch of England, etc., by the grace of God, was got ready and placed outside the Town Hall; but it could not be unveiled till it was paid for, and only £1,350 out of the necessary £1,820 had been subscribed. In this sad state of things the Committee thought of the Dockyard hands. Sixpence apiece from them would go a long way towards making up the £470 deficit. Accordingly a semi-official appeal was addressed to them, but the result was not at all satisfactory, as many of them resented this sort of attempt upon their pockets. What is to be done now? Is the late Queen Victoria’s effigy to stand for ever inside a hoarding? Or will the Mayor call a public meeting and have the requisite balance raised by hook or by crook? We are quivering with anxiety.

“B.” writes from Liverpool to the *Daily News* with reference to Mr. G. J. Holyoake’s statement in a recent interview that at the time of Charles Southwell’s prosecution on account of the *Oracle of Reason*, “I was no Atheist, but I was for the right of Atheism to be heard, or any other opinion that appealed to reason.” “B.” says that he turned to the *Oracle of Reason* and, opening it at hazard, found the following on p. 186 over Mr. Holyoake’s initials:—“I, as an Atheist, simply profess that I do not see sufficient reason to believe that there is a god.” Comment is unnecessary.

Partisan speeches are often very curious. Mr. Lloyd-George, for instance, was in a first-class partisan vein at the recent annual meeting of the Liberation Society. He likened the Church of England to “an old tree in a park kept together by bands not of iron, but of gold.” This sally provoked loud laughter amongst the Dissenters present. It did not occur to them, apparently, that gold plays a considerable part in holding together their own Churches. Nor does it seem to have struck Mr. Lloyd-George that the

Church of England is as much a living tree as any of her rivals. We do not belong to any of the Churches. We wish to see them all destroyed. But, as a hostile spectator, we are still open to amusement; and we confess to receiving it when the little Protestant Churches ask the big Protestant Church why she isn't buried.

Mr. Lloyd-George, still speaking like a partisan, made a point against the Church of England from the fact that she was not the Church of the nation. Look at the *Daily News* religious census of London, he said; why it showed only "one tenth attending the ministration of this great Church." Yes, but one tenth of *what*? One tenth of all the inhabitants of London, of course; not one tenth of those who attend "divine service." Mr. Lloyd-George is quite clever enough to see that the non-attenders must be left out of the reckoning in any controversy or competition between the various Churches. We dare say he knows, too, that if the Church of England has only one tenth of the people, all the Nonconformist Churches together haven't got another tenth. Consequently there is more cheek than sense in this railing at "the old house." After all it is a question of trade rivalry.

The *Daily News* religious census for Deptford is one of the most "discouraging." The population is 110,179; including 53,501 males, and 56,678 females. The total number of attendances of men, women, and children, both morning and evening, was 19,192. In the morning one person in thirteen, and in the evening one in ten, went to church. One woman in fifteen was present in the morning, and one in eight in the evening. The proportion of men was one in fifteen in the morning, and one in eleven in the evening. The Church of England, in this case, comes out a little lower than all the Nonconformist Churches combined; the figures being 8,005 and 8,476. Roman Catholics were 1,302; Other Services, 1,409.

The Bishop of Ripon, speaking at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, proposed the Bible as the only agency for bringing about the reunion of Christendom. He added that the Bible did not tend to separate nations, but to draw them together. Now this would be very interesting if it were true. But it is precisely the opposite. We invite the Bishop of Ripon to give us the names of any two Christian nations that the Bible ever drew together. On the other hand, it is quite clear that there is nothing like an inspired book for giving birth to a multitude of bitter sects. This was pointed out to the Protestants at the dawn of the Reformation. The Catholic divines told them that they would break up into a crowd of Churches. They have done so, they are doing so still, and they will do so to the end of the chapter.

That great peace-loving and most Christian power, Holy Russia, is again furnishing the world with an object-lesson in the civilising power of Christianity. On Easter Sunday and Monday at Kishineff the resurrection of Jesus was celebrated by a general assault upon the Jewish population. Jewish homes were broken into, shops and warehouses sacked, and the treatment of the women by the mob is perhaps better imagined than described. During the two days' riot some 37 Jews are said to have been killed, 62 dangerously injured, and 240 less seriously hurt. The strange feature of the riot, says a newspaper correspondent, "was the behavior of the better class of the population, who drove about in carriages watching, with the interest which they would devote to a curious spectacle, the acts of savagery which were being perpetrated by the mob."

This feature is not so strange as the correspondent imagines. As a matter of fact, most of these outbreaks are fomented by the ruling powers, and, under the *regime* of M. Pobyedonostseff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, have been far from uncommon. If the government exercised but a tithe of the force used to break up organisations among the students and others, such outbreaks would be an impossibility. The "strange feature" of the case is the way in which these outbreaks are treated by our English press, particularly the religious portion, when contrasted with the treatment of the Macedonians or Armenians by the Turks. In the one case we get leading articles galore, with columns of descriptive matter furnished by special correspondents, in the other a curt press-agency telegram, and nothing more. One reason for this is that Russia is a Christian Power, Turkey a Mohammedan one. Turkey may be bullied; Russia is rather too powerful for this to be tried with success. Yet what is reported to occur spasmodically under Turkish rule is almost the chronic condition of affairs under Russian government. Somehow our sympathies

become strangely active when there is some political or sectarian end to be subserved by their activity.

Some of the most horrid facts of these massacres of the Jews were printed in the *Voskhod* published at St. Petersburg. But the government confiscated the paper, and compelled the publisher to reprint the number in a new version. Some of the outrages of these Christian ruffians upon the compatriots of Jesus Christ and all the Apostles are indescribable. What can be stated is that children were torn to pieces, women violated and their breasts cut off, and old men thrown from garrets to the pavement.

Hume pointed out that the Christians of the Middle Ages generally combined business with Jew-baiting. Commonly they burnt the Jew's papers first, to destroy all traces of their having owed him money. Then they murdered the Jew and his family. Much in the same way the Christians who have lately been murdering the Jews in Bessarabia took all the property they could lay hands on. Spoiling the unbelievers, as well as slaughtering them, must be a fine pastime for the bigots.

The London City Mission held its sixty-eighth annual meeting recently at Exeter Hall. Mr. F. A. Bevan (the banker, we believe), who presided, made reference to Mr. Charles Booth's last book on the religious side of the life of London, and to the *Daily News* religious census, and gave it as his opinion that not more than nine in a hundred persons now went to church. Nevertheless, he said, the people were hungering for the Bread of Life. (So hungry, indeed, that they will not take the trouble to fetch it!) He had received a letter from a lady, who desired to remain anonymous, saying that she wished to give £15,000 to the London City Mission. This announcement was greeted with loud applause. The Bread of Life references fell flat upon the meeting, but the jingle of fifteen thousand sovereigns was most exhilarating music. Mr. Bevan added that another anonymous gentleman had given £400, and if four others would do likewise the Committee would appoint ten more missionaries for two years. Whereat there was more applause—probably helped out by prospective candidates for the ten situations.

One thing is clear, at any rate, about these soul-saving societies. They manage to get hold of the money. We are aware, of course, that they can appeal to the selfish motives of hope and fear respecting kingdom-come; but that does not explain the whole of the phenomena, and it would be well if the "donation mania" spread from orthodox circles and infected the more advanced movements.

Mr. A. S. Greene, a young American, says he has been commanded by God in a dream to start a crusade for the purchase of the Holy Land and the establishment of a Christian Republic there. The principal part of the affair at present is obtaining funds. We daresay Mr. Greene is seeing to that.

It is admitted by the *Daily News* that the Congo Free State is "governed worse than Turkey." This State was carved out of Africa practically by all the Christian Powers and handed over to the government of Belgium—or rather to the government of King Leopold. If half which is reported be true, the atrocities that regularly go on there beggar description. What the Turk does when his blood is up, the Christians in the Congo State do deliberately and habitually. The whole country is simply being desolated. And the Christian Powers that allow such infamies to continue are constantly calling upon the Turk to reform his household. We thought we had read in the Bible somewhere a text, "Physician, heal thyself"—or words to that effect.

The Rev. W. Lewis, Welsh Baptist minister, was fined ten shillings at Merthyr Police Court on May 7 for drunkenness. A policeman said he found this servant of the Lord stripped to the waist in the public street, and using bad language. His solicitor said that his client had been a minister of the Gospel for twenty years, but had been ordered to pay his wife £1 a week under a separation order, and had given way to drink.

Another clergyman, Church of England this time, was fined five shillings at Worship-street Police-court on May 5 for the same offence—drunkenness. Another intolerable injustice to Dissenters. The Baptist pays ten shillings, the Episcopalian five. We earnestly commend this flagrant partiality to Dr. Clifford and the Passive Resistance Committee.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(All Engagements suspended for the present.)

To Correspondents.

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

WALTER HUNT.—You will be able to obtain most of the information you want from our *Crimes of Christianity* (2s. 6d.), *Will Christ Save Us?* (6d.), and *Christianity and Progress* (2d). They can all be obtained from our publishing office. Thanks for your good wishes. So far the weather has been very unfavorable to Mr. Foote's perfect recovery; and cough and insomnia are very unpleasant companions. Were he a Bishop, he would have an easy remedy. Dropping work and courting health in salubrious conditions keep a man of God a bit longer out of heaven. The same regimen is good for keeping an Atheist out of the other place. Probably the great Charles Bradlaugh might have lived another ten years if his nose had not been kept so closely to the grindstone. "Worked to death" could have been his epitaph.

OLD SUBSCRIBER.—The *Pioneer* was started for two reasons; first, to see whether a paper with a less aggressive title than the *Freethinker* stood a better chance of getting into general circulation; second, to see whether a penny paper stood a much better chance than a twopenny one. We don't think the *Pioneer* has existed long enough yet to have tested these two points sufficiently. It has, indeed, so far been a greater success than any other paper of the kind in its infancy. But more than this will be necessary to justify its continued existence. Up to the present all the contributors have written gratuitously, and some discerning readers may perceive that a great deal of the work has devolved upon Mr. Foote. Fortunately, this extra burden only comes once a month; it could not possibly be borne every week.

F. G. H.—We cannot tell you who is the head of the firm of John Dicks & Co., the publishers.

H. R. G. GOGAY, a purchaser as per our advertisement of the "Dresden Edition" of Ingersoll, writes: "A cursory glance is sufficient to show anyone the extraordinary value given in these fine volumes. I hope they will have a very large sale; their contents deserve it."

A. GARDINER.—See the long and careful paragraph on "Charles Bradlaugh" in the May number of the *Pioneer*. It is a complete answer in a brief compass to the insults of the writer in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Freethinkers should mark that paragraph and circulate copies of the *Pioneer* amongst their friends and acquaintances who are likely to be interested in the matter.

H. T. MAC NAB.—We are obliged to you for your trouble, though you take a poor view of our intelligence and the extent of our reading. Mr. H. G. Wells's *Anticipations* was dealt with in our columns at the time of its first publication. The passages you have marked on Free Will, and which you consider so clear and convincing, only satisfy us that Mr. Wells does not really understand the question. This may seem a hard saying, but we are quite willing to make it good, if he is ready to defend himself. Perhaps you will turn your attention to him now.

J. C. POINTON.—The point is one for you to decide. It might be very difficult to carry on a Branch of the National Secular Society on board a British warship. What is called "discipline" too often touches matters with which it has no proper concern. However, we have desired the N. S. S. secretary to send you full particulars; and your order for literature, with remittance, is passed over to the right hands.

J. H. THATCHER.—We had already dealt with Lord Kelvin's utterances. Unfortunately they are not very much better than your own pious hysterics. Certainly truth will prevail—but only in the long run. So many men are interested in burking it. Truth has a hard task in fighting errors that have a war-budget in this country alone of some twenty millions a year.

W. MANN.—Received with thanks.

R. AXELBY.—We are keeping your letter over till next week, when we may have something to say on the matter to which it relates.

A. L. CLARK (South Africa).—We have handed over your letter to someone who may answer it as you desire.

J. E. PHILLIPS.—Hardly up to the mark yet. You cannot expect to write good verses straight off at the first attempt. It is said that poets are born, not made; but the truth is, they are both. They must be born poets first, but they take a lot of making afterwards.

E. POMEROY.—There is a long essay on Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* in Mr. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* (second series). It originally appeared in the *Freethinker*. So you see we have not overlooked a great writer for whom you have a just admiration.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We note what you say.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

MISS VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, has received from time to time several scurrilous letters, all bearing the Fleet-street postmark, and probably written in the immediate vicinity—for there is a certain disguised familiarity in the handwriting. She begs the writer, at whom she can make a shrewd guess, to have the courage to date and sign his communications.

F. CORNERFORD.—Thanks for the reference. Alfred Porcelli, who writes in the *Rock*, and says that Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote never were Atheists, is an adept in that Christian veracity

which Herder said deserved to rank with Punic faith. Ingersoll also was an Atheist. See our pamphlet, *What Is Agnosticism?* Ingersoll's declaration is given there.

H. PERCY WARD desires us to state that his permanent address is 28 Cheadle-avenue, Stanley, Liverpool.

A. C. (Benwell)—Yes, there is a Branch of the National Secular Society at Newcastle-on-Tyne. The Secretary is Mr. Elstob, 24 Woodbine-road, Gosforth. You could join the N. S. S. through the general Secretary (Miss Vance) on Whit-Sunday, if you preferred; but that would not give you any right to vote at this year's Conference, though you could sit at the back of the hall. The evening meeting is entirely public.

STAFF-SERGEANT.—Never mind; the gentleman isn't going to annihilate the influence of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll.

F. J. VOISEY.—Too late to notice this week; in our next.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Shall appear.

SIRIUS.—Will send you proof.

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 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.

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 *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.

We print this week the Agenda of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday at South Shields. It will be seen that there are important proposals to be discussed affecting the Society's constitution, in view of the changing conditions and requirements of the times. It will also be seen that there are resolutions of a general character, trenching on the political and social spheres—though in the direct interest of Freethought. These should attract attention and excite interest. They are an effort to give a less domestic character to the Annual Conference, and the discussions upon them may obtain some report in the local press.

We earnestly hope the Scottish Secularists will make an effort to be represented at the Shields Conference. Certainly the large and flourishing Glasgow Branch ought to send delegates. The Conference would heartily welcome the two Glasgow vice-presidents—Messrs. Robertson and Turnbull. Mr. Dewar and other friends might drop down from Edinburgh; and it would be all the better if someone came from Dundee, and even from Aberdeen.

Branch delegates or individual members attending the N. S. S. Whit-Sunday Conference, and desiring hotel or other accommodation while in the district, should communicate with the local secretary, Mr. E. Chapman, 32 James Mather-terrace, South Shields. If they tell him what they require, he will do his best to have it provided. Those who intend to stay over the Conference, on Monday and perhaps Tuesday, should also inform Mr. Chapman; as the local "saints" wish to show hospitality to the visitors, at least by taking them round to view the principal sights of the neighborhood. Should the weather be fine—as it ought to be by then—the visitors may reckon on "a good time."

Members or friends going from London to South Shields will find suitable excursion trains if they apply at King's Cross Terminus. Those who prefer ordinary trains will be able to take a week-end ticket to Tynemouth for £1 3s. 6d.—only a shilling over the single fare. This ticket (a return, of course) is available from Friday till Tuesday, and by any train (except on Sunday) between those days; that is to say, you can travel by Great Northern from King's Cross by any train either on Friday or Saturday, and return by any train on Monday or Tuesday. If further information is required on this matter, it can be obtained on application at the N. S. S. office, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

The *Aberdare Leader* devotes a column to Mr. Cohen's lectures on May 3. The reporter at the conclusion of a very

fair description, observes that "Perfect order prevailed throughout, and judging by the frequent and loud applause, Freethought has many adherents in this locality." We hope that the "many adherents" will see that this gentleman is provided with plenty of "copy" in the future.

We hope we are not too importunate, but we venture once more to solicit the active goodwill of our friends on behalf of the *Pioneer*. It is so easy to push about a paper published only once a month and at the price of one penny. Many of our readers could afford to purchase and circulate six, twelve, or more copies. By so doing they help to advertise the *Pioneer* in the most effective fashion.

"After much delay at the Custom House," says the New York *Truthseeker*, "we have got some more of the English books advertised in our columns, with others on the way. Mr. Foote's writings seem to be popular in this country, and deservedly so. He is an able and aggressive opponent of religious shams."

The French President has signed a decree authorising the erection of a statue to Renan on a public square at Tréguier, the great writer's birthplace. The authorisation has been delayed on account of clerical opposition. The local Bishop has moved heaven and earth—and perhaps the other place—to prevent a public recognition of Renan. He declared that the erection of the statue would be an act of sacrilege, and he still prophesies that God will call Tréguier to account for it.

The hard logic of facts, combined with a perception of self-interest, is slowly bringing the Nonconformists round to the policy of "Secular Education." Professor Massie, of Oxford, who is taking a leading part in the "Passive Resistance" movement, tells a *Daily News* interviewer that to this complexion they must come at last. "I do not think," he says, "that concurrent endowment is a natural outcome of the principle of compulsion. Compulsion inevitably leads to free education, and also to secular education.....There is no logical solution except secular education by the State, leaving religious teaching to the Churches and the home." Professor Massie added that he "accepted the compromise" but it "did not satisfy his principle."

"Verax" of the *Daily News* has been writing on "Shakespeare and the Renaissance." He has evidently come to the conclusion that we have often stated in the *Freethinker*, that Shakespeare was a Pagan. Here are a few of his sentences:—"Shakespeare's healthy-mindedness consists not in his showing no preference for any particular form of religion, but in his being seemingly oblivious to the existence of any such differences as matters of the least importance. It was human life in its oneness, in its fullness, and in all its manifold varieties. Religion he regarded as a kind of color or the soul's differing in hue according to the difference in the climate of circumstances. The question for him was the kind of life underneath. Irrespective of sects or of faith, it was human nature in its awful depths of passion and sorrow; its heights of heroic achievement which alone aroused his interest and called forth his powers of mind in their joyous Titanic vigor.....Human life rolls on like a full deep river. It is life according to the instincts, moral, intellectual, physical, but instincts found in man's own nature. It is not intended that there should be vice, or depravity, certainly not meanness, or selfishness, or unmanly dishonesties of any kind. It is natural, but earthly healthy-mindedness. In this Shakespearian atmosphere life may become vere jolly, very manly, very brave, and even truly magnificent; but it may be doubted whether the Shakespearian atmosphere is one in which faith or spirituality can flourish."

"Verax" simply says more diffusely and ponderously what "Sphinx" says in the May number of the *Pioneer*:—"I am quite certain that Shakespeare was a Freethinker. I am sure that he smiled at all the creeds. They had no business with him, or he with them. He laughed at the Puritans; for the rest, the religious strife of his time passed by him like the scuffling of kites and crows. He dealt with what was older than religion and would outlive it: with Human Nature."

A collection is contemplated of Mr. Foote's longer and more important essays contributed to the *Freethinker*, the old *National Reformer*, the defunct *Progress*, and other publications, during the past twenty-five years—all of which would be carefully revised. A handsome volume could be produced at (say) six shillings. At present the matter is only in embryo, but it may take definite shape very shortly, and an effort be made to publish the book by subscription.

Moses and the Pentateuch.—III.

5. IN the Book of Genesis we find a paragraph of thirteen verses (xxxvi. 31-43) which most certainly was not written by Moses. This paragraph commences: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." Then follows a list of the kings of Edom. The words in italics imply that at least one king, if not a succession of kings, had reigned over Israel at the time the paragraph was written—which time could not be earlier than the reign of King Saul, the first king of Israel, though it might be long after the Exile. In any case, the writer could not have been Moses, who, if he ever really existed, lived several centuries before the time of Saul. It may, however, be argued that the list of the kings of Edom has been inadvertently placed in Genesis by some later editor; for the list is given again in 1 Chron. i., 43-54. That the same paragraph is found both in Genesis and Chronicles is unquestionable; but it is impossible now to say whether the compiler of the Chronicles copied from Genesis, or the writer of the paragraph in Genesis from the Chronicles. Some light may, perhaps, be thrown upon this question by the following passage which is also asserted to have been written by Moses:—

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until [Shiloh come]. And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."
—(Gen. xlix. 10).

Now, without noticing the words placed within brackets, it is perfectly certain that the writer of the foregoing passage knew, as a historical fact, that a line of kings of the tribe of Judah had borne rule in Canaan. The statement—which is placed as a prediction in the mouth of the legendary patriarch Jacob—has reference only to the ending of that dynasty. The writer predicts that a succession of kings of the tribe of Judah should continue to reign in Palestine until—something happened. What that event was cannot now be known; for the various readings of the words within brackets all appear to be corrupt. This portion of the pretended prophecy does not, however, affect the main statement. The writer knew, from actual knowledge, that a number of kings of the tribe of Judah, all lineal descendants of David, had reigned over a kingdom in the south of Canaan. This writer, therefore, could have written the paragraph commencing: "These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." We may consequently assume that he did. And this writer, there is not the slightest doubt, lived several centuries after the time of Moses.

6. The grand "prophecy" put in the mouth of the mythical Balaam (Num. xxiv.) was not written by Moses, nor was it ever delivered orally, as described in the Bible story. It is a purely literary composition of a comparatively late date, and contains numerous examples of Hebrew parallelism similar to those found in the Psalms and the book of Isaiah. This peculiarity of Hebrew poetry consists in most cases of two sentences, the second being a repetition of the first, though in somewhat different words. The following is an example both of parallelism and of knowledge of the history of the Israelites later than the time of Moses:—

"There shall come forth a star out of Jacob,
And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel,
Which shall smite the corners of Moab,
And break down all the sons of tumult."

—(Num. xxiv. 17.)

Here we have two cases of synonymous parallelism: the second line is a varied repetition of the first, and the fourth of the third. In the first two lines the words "star" and "sceptre," "come forth" and "rise," "Jacob" and "Israel," are intended to be synonymous. The "sceptre" was the "star" which "rose" or "came forth" out of "Jacob" or "Israel."

So, also, in the last two lines, "smite" and "break down," "Moab" and "sons of tumult" are variations of the same ideas. The "star" and "sceptre" referred to a Hebrew king, who was no other than David, "the man after God's own heart." Of this king it is stated: "And he smote Moab, and measured them with the line, making them to lie down on the ground.....two lines to put to death, and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David" (2 Sam. viii. 2). The writer of the passage quoted from Numbers lived subsequent to the time of David, and knew perfectly well that the Moabites had been subjugated by that monarch. He could, then, with perfect safety represent Balaam as predicting the event.

A second example of the knowledge of later Jewish history in the grand "prophecy" ascribed to Balaam is found in the two verses following those already cited. These read:—

"And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession.....And out of Jacob shall one have dominion, and shall destroy the remnant from the city"
—(Num. xxiv. 18, 19).

This descendant of Jacob who should have dominion over the Edomites was again the man after God's own heart, who "put garrisons in Edom.....and all the Edomites became servants to David" (2 Sam. viii. 14). The writer of Balaam's "prophecy" was, of course, aware of this conquest of the Edomites.

The third example of a knowledge of later events in Jewish history in the same so-called "prophecy" is the reference to the destruction of the Amalakites by King Saul. This reads:—

"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy tabernacles, O Israel!.....And his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be *higher than Agag*, and his kingdom shall be exalted.....Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall come to destruction"
—(Num. xxiv. 5, 7, 20).

We are told in the book of Samuel that king Saul received orders from the Lord to "go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." In obedience to this humane command Saul "smote the Amalakites from Havilah as thou goest to Shur, that is before Egypt. And he took *Agag the king of the Amalakites* alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword" (1 Sam. xv. 3-9). The writer of the fictitious prophecy in Numbers had, of course, heard of the destruction of the Amalakites by Saul. He was therefore able, with perfect confidence, to place the prediction of the event in the mouth of an imaginary prophet Balaam—and did so. The introduction of the name "Agag," as that of a great Canaanitish king was, of course, an oversight.

The foregoing examples place the fact beyond dispute that this fictitious prophecy was not written by Moses, nor in the age when Moses is supposed to have lived. The writer was not only well acquainted with the names and geographical positions of the cities of Canaan, but he possessed an accurate knowledge of Jewish history several centuries after the time of Moses. Further examples of these two facts will now be given.

7. In Exod. xvi. 35 we read as follows:—

"And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat the manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan."

In this passage reference is made to the withdrawal of the daily supply of manna with which the Israelites are stated to have been fed during their wanderings in the wilderness. According to the Bible "history," the Hebrew tribes, after the death of Moses, crossed the Jordan and encamped at Gilgal, where they were all circumcised. This over, they kept the Passover—the first in the land of Canaan—and ate of the corn of the land, which, of course, could only have been obtained by plundering the much-maligned Canaanites. Having now food in abundance, the next day the supply of manna ceased.

"And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land that year" (Josh. v. 12).

Now, it goes almost without saying that the passage in Exodus referring to the withdrawal of the daily supply of manna was not written until the Israelites had ceased to eat that heavenly food—which event did not take place until after the death of Moses. Neither that reputed lawgiver, nor anyone else, could state as an actual fact that the Israelites "did eat manna forty years.....until they came to Canaan," without knowing (either personally or by tradition) that after the period mentioned the supply of manna ceased. The writer of the passage in Exodus was therefore certainly not Moses.

8. Another matter which tends to prove the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is the mention of cities which had not been built in Moses' days.

"And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, and Atroth-Shophan, and Jazer, and Jog-behah, and Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran.....And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealah, and Kiriathaim, and Nebo, and Baalmeon [their names being changed], and Sibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded" (Num. xxxii. 34-38).

The tribes of Reuben and Gad, it is said, received for their portion the land on the east of Jordan, taken, just before the death of Moses, from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites. This territory was, however, only given to them on condition that they crossed the Jordan with the other Hebrew tribes, and assisted in the conquest of Canaan (Num. xxxii. 29-33). This stipulation they are stated to have fulfilled (Josh. iv. 12-13). The conquest of the country by the Israelites under Joshua is said to have occupied seven years (Josh. xiv. 7, 10; Deut. ii. 14), after which the land on the west of Jordan (*i.e.*, Palestine proper) was divided among the other tribes, and the men of Reuben and Gad were free to return and begin building or rebuilding the cities named. Moses, therefore, could know nothing of these building operations, which were only commenced seven years after his death—if so soon. Hence the paragraph in Numbers in which these cities are stated to have been rebuilt could not have been written until the Israelites had been settled in Canaan for some considerable time. In other words, the writer could not have been Moses.

ABRACADABRA.

Human Perfectibility.

FOR man to have arrived at the degree of civilisation which he possesses, he must have passed through a triple evolution: that of physical development, language development conjointly with the development of the larynx, and the historical phase. In the beginning human intelligence was neither speculative nor abstract. Truth, beauty, and goodness made no part of its ideal. Surrounded by dangers and wants, man thought only of satisfying or avoiding them. His history is scarcely more interesting than that of the great apes. It may be comprised in two words: to kill, in order to eat or not to be eaten.

The science of language, like all sciences, testifies to the antiquity of man and to his humble origin; it brings also another testimony to human perfectibility. Formerly language was considered as a natural attribute primordial to man: man must speak, as he could eat. The sight of dumb infancy passed unnoticed. The gradual perfection of the human organism, particularly as regards the brain, being a fact sanctioned by experience, it is evident that the different parts of this organism have been brought to perfection along parallel lines, one influencing the other.

Thus, articulate language, which did not exist at first, and is still very defective with many savages, whose vocalisation is less varied and less expressive than the song of birds, depends on the state of perfection of the larynx.

Linguistic science proves that language is a slow

and gradual acquisition; in that, as in all things, man is a parvenu animal. Humanity was dumb like childhood; like childhood it gesticulated and cried before speaking. Inarticulate sounds, exclamations of grief and joy, laughter and tears, a rough dance and songs without words—such was the origin; the rest is the fruit of centuries of education. According as languages are more or less perfected, it is possible to measure the intellectual force or weakness of a nation, and its degree of civilisation. These constitute one of the greatest measures of progress. Amongst the 3,000 languages still spoken on the earth, there are some the origin of which is unknown. The connection between the languages of India, Persia, the Greeks, the Latins, the Celts, and the Germans, is shown by their common roots. All modern languages are connected with the Persian and the Sanscrit. These latter are derived probably from more ancient languages, as French is derived from the Latin and Greek, as English is derived from the French and German.

The great number of languages, their relative imperfection, their simple beginning, visible in the ancient documents, the incessant modifications they have undergone under the influence of general progress, their passage from a fossil state, all testify in favor of human perfectibility. The law follows its course. The insufficiency of the present languages has already been recognised, as well as the necessity of some day replacing them by one single instrument, so as not to sacrifice to the routine and fruitless study of grammar and syntax precious time that may be more usefully employed in penetrating the secrets of nature.

The study of the human races furnishes another argument for perfectibility. Our contemporary state shows order and gradation between the races; some are more or less elevated in the scale of civilisation, whilst others remain not far removed from animalism. A constant coincidence is remarked between the degree of physical beauty and the intelligence of races. At first sight no one can have the idea of establishing any parentage common to the Australian negro and the Anglo-Saxon. The difference which separates them in their structure, the form of the brain, the color of the skin, the manifestation of intelligence, is so great that, without the intermediate races which serve as landmarks in Evolution, one would believe them to be two distinct species.

The greater part of negroes are incapable of representing to themselves the invisible in the visible, a force in the centre of an action. Their intelligence cannot form an abstract idea; it would require an education continued through several generations; whilst the Brahmins of India, by the mere force of their intelligence, can solve mentally the most complicated problems, although the methods of calculation are inferior to ours.

The same difference is found in a higher degree when we compare the present humanity with the humanity of other days. As we go back along the course of ages, the human type is degraded; they are not men that we meet, but animals with a human face. There is a hierarchy amongst the races. The superior races are to the inferior races what the present man is to the prehistoric man. The enormous difference observed between the different races of men that people the earth may be explained by the accidental survival of a few primitive specimens in favorable surroundings. But we must not conclude from the apparent immobility of certain races that the progressive virtue is absent. Everything is relative: a progress that appears insignificant to us has immense value if we take into account the slender resources that produced it.

Humanity, says Pascal, comports itself as a being who, living for ever, is always learning.

Experience taught man the necessary connection between certain causes and certain effects.

Experience condensed and transmitted becomes science. The first counsel given by a father to his son founded the theory. The sciences were not developed in parallel lines, but in a succession of

lines; between them there is a logical and obligatory precedence, a connection like a key to a lock.

Theoretical science came after art. In the domain of art, man may attain perfection at a bound. An explosion of individual genius is sufficient to produce a *chef d'œuvre* of art, whilst science is the result of collective genius. On the road that leads to the conquest of forces and the laws of nature, each step in advance is the price of long and unceasing efforts, the reward of labor distributed over several generations.

Thanks to perfected tools and instruments, man has wonderfully increased his power. The thirst for knowledge being irrepressible, and the means of satisfying it unlimited, he has made use of science to invent instruments, and instruments to increase science. Science cannot diminish by use; on the contrary, it is extended, perfected, accredited, and perpetuated. Science once acquired is indestructible; one nation loses it, another gathers it up and makes it the point of departure for fresh progress. Egypt sleeps, but Greece awakes; Greece is extinguished, Rome is illuminated; Rome is submerged to give place to Arabian civilisation; Islamism becomes stagnant at the precise moment when the Protestant reform becomes the signal for a renaissance in Europe. Thus days follow each other, and civilisations are linked together. Whilst the light disappears and night come on us, elsewhere mankind rejoices at the rising of a new aurora.

Amongst the higher grades of humanity in the present day each brain is a laboratory of ideas. From time to time a brain is set in motion, the particles of truth received as inheritance, increased by personal elaboration and contact with contemporary surroundings, take substance, are spread by word or pen, until they meet with convenient ground for a fresh fecundation.

Before the spectacle of so much misery and human turpitude, it may happen that the thinker is discouraged and despairing; but he is wrong. What matters it that in our age science is still disdained, and that red-tape or routine governs! Future ages will adopt what the present sacrifices to the past. Such is the force of natural law that since the beginning of the ages good has always prevailed over evil. If primitive man, stupid and ignorant, has submitted to the good, in spite of his passions and his urgent wants, the gratification of which inconsiderately might bear him towards evil, contemporary man courts the good with all his power. Besides, what is our task compared with the task of the ancients?

We must go back in imagination to the early ages in order to understand the progress accomplished. At that time climate, wants, ferocious beasts, devouring insects, venomous plants, overflowing rivers, pestilential marshes, earthquakes and volcanoes, a thousand accidents and fatalities, were let loose on ignorant man and made this proud king a miserable slave. Scarcely was he able to add to his natural forces the help of a simple instrument—a stone, a club, the backbone of a fish sharpened as an arrow by which to attack his enemy. Then the struggle for existence was a struggle man to man without other issue than victory or death.

The war between nations is a legacy from savage times that will disappear only with religious and philosophic systems, the morality and justice of which are still confined to the admiration of numbers, force, and success.

With the science that he possesses, man may change the face of the globe, and ameliorate indefinitely the moral and physical conditions of his existence. Formerly all the forces of nature were leagued against him; now the forces of nature are submissive to his empire. He has vanquished his enemies; the only one remaining to conquer is himself. By means of universal solidarity, the man who works his own perfection works at the same time towards the perfection of the universe. There is no more noble, no more sublime, ambition.

—From the French of C. Mismar.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

SOUTH SHIELDS—WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1903.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
Motion by Finsbury Branch: "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.
 - (a) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: E. Bater, Victor Charbonnel, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, J. F. Dewar, Léon Furnémont, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Neate, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, William Pratt, E. W. Quay, J. H. Ridgway, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, F. Schaller, W. H. Spivey, H. J. Stace, Charles Steptoe, Joseph Symes, W. B. Thompson, S. R. Thomson, T. J. Thurlow, John F. Turnbull, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, Frederick Wood, W. H. Wood.
 - (b) The following are nominated by the Executive for election: W. Leat (London), F. A. Davies (London), R. Chapman (S. Shields), J. G. Bartram (Newcastle-on-Tyne).
 - (c) The following is nominated by the Birmingham Branch for election: R. G. Fathers (President, Birmingham Branch).
7. Election of Auditors.
8. (a) Fresh Report of Executive Sub-Committee, in pursuance of resolution passed at last and previous Conference—"upon the whole question of Branches, subscriptions, and membership, with a view to securing an increased revenue and a more satisfactory list of adherents."
 - (1) That payment per member by Branches be abolished, and that in its stead two collections be taken annually—one for the General Fund and one for the Benevolent Fund—and forwarded to the General Secretary before the last day of January of each year. In cases where no regular meetings are held the local secretary shall undertake the collection of member's donations by means of visiting or circularising.
 - (2) The minimum subscription for each member joining the Society through the Central Executive to be 2s. 6d. per year.
 - (3) That all members of the Society, whether joining through a local Branch or by the Central Executive, shall have a card of membership, signed annually by the General Secretary, without which no one is to be counted as a *bona fide* member of the Society.
 - (4) In the event of a poll being demanded at the Annual Conference, the voting power of each delegate to be in the proportion of one vote to every ten Branch members whose names are registered before the last day of March preceding the Conference.
 - (5) A complete list of names and addresses of members to be forwarded to the Central Office before the last day of March of each year.
- (b) Motion by Birmingham Branch:—
"That all Branches shall pay 5s. for every twenty-five, or fraction of twenty-five members, on its books; and that no Branch be allowed to vote until such contribution be paid."
9. Motion by Executive:—
"That Branch secretaries, and individual members in places where no Branches exist, should be requested to forward to the General Secretary in London the names and addresses of unattached local sympathisers with Freethought."
10. Motion by Executive:—
"That in addition to whatever co-operation is possible with the general English Committee, arrangements should be made for a special representation of the N. S. S. at the International Freethought Congress at Rome in 1904."
11. Motion by Camberwell Branch:—
"That this Conference is of opinion that the principal part of the religious difficulty in National Education is directly due to the illogical and recreant policy of the Nonconformists in supporting the State teaching of religion in Schools while denouncing the State teaching

of religion in Churches; and this Conference further declares that the only policy that is wise, just, and peaceable is the policy of Secular Education."

12. Motion by C. Cohen:—

"That the Progressive parties in Great Britain should adopt the policy of the Republican parties in France and oppose the entire connection between Religion and the State; not only in regard to education, but also in regard to public worship, marriage, divorce, and all other civic functions.

13. Motion by Executive.

"That this Conference, while noting with pleasure the general growth of the sentiment of Sunday Freedom, is nevertheless of opinion that much legislative and other work remains to be done before the question can be brought to a satisfactory settlement; and that the Progressive parties should give this question their serious and immediate attention."

14. Motion by Executive:—

"That this Conference desires to emphasise the fact that Secularism, until it is triumphant, is necessarily committed to a war against theology as a merely mischievous superstition; and also to deprecate all attempts—for whatever reasons—to obscure the honest implication of Secular principles."

From Gallows to Heaven.

LAST Friday morning three men were hanged for murder in the State of Missouri. According to reports, all were swung directly into heaven; and, as one man remarked: "If a few words of absolution by a priest, a little sprinkle of water, and a noose are all that is necessary to land a man into heaven, it is too cheap a place for a decent person to want to go." If modern theology is correct in the matter, the three or more victims of these murderers are in hell, where also most decent and respectable people will have to go.

Dr. Gartrell, who was hanged at Butler, Mo., said: "I never had any fears about my final home, for I have been calling on the Lord for thirty-five years. I don't want to die, but am ready, because I have to be."

"Bud" Taylor was hanged in Kansas City for killing his sweetheart, Miss Ruth Nollard, some two years ago, "because he loved her"! Miss Ruth had grown tired of Taylor, and he, being jealous, waited two days at a window on West Ninth-street to kill her, and then, according to his own story, was going to kill himself, but the police interfered. The victim had no time to repent her sins, if she ever committed any.

The day before the hanging Taylor was very brave, and loved the girl so much that he wanted to go to hell with her. He said:—

"I know that if the Bible is true she is in hell. And if the Bible is true I will be in hell this time to-morrow morning. If she is there I want to be with her. I would be a dirty, mean, contemptible, cowardly cur to try and sneak into a more comfortable place than I sent her to."

But such a noble (?) spirit was never intended for the infernal regions, and Rev. Father Lillis, of the Catholic Church, so convinced Taylor. The result was that in less than eight hours after the murderer had declared his willingness to go to hell for the girl he had murdered, he was baptised in the Catholic faith, and in an interview with a reporter, he said:—

"Do you know, I am at peace with everybody now? I have made my peace with God and that is the great thing. I have been baptised, and all my sins—even the sin of killing—have been washed away. In all the two years I have been in gaol I have never been haunted by dreams. I have been happy most of the time. But now I feel a peace of mind which I can't describe. It is a wonderful relief to me. I do not dread what is ahead of me. It will all be over before I know it. There will be no pain. Why, it will be like riding into heaven on a fast train. I am happy because I know I am going to heaven and will be with mother, and I am going to die brave."

But according to modern theology, "Bud" Taylor is in heaven with his mother, and if it were all true, no doubt Ruth Nollard would be better pleased with it all than is Taylor's mother.

But, seriously, what is the use of criminal laws if the Church has the powers it claims? Is a death sentence a punishment to a man when he thinks it is simply an eternal life-imprisonment in a "land of bliss"? If the Lord forgave Taylor for his crime, what benefit was that to Ruth Nollard? A religion that saves a murderer and punishes his victims has no place in the hearts of a really civilised people.

P. W. G.

—Torch of Reason (America).

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, J. McCabe, "Women in Early Christian Teaching." (Last lecture of the season.)

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15. Mr. Edwards, "The Fruits of Christianity."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N.S.S.: Station-rd., 11.30; Peckham Rye, 3.15; Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 7.30—A Lecture.

FINSBURY BRANCH N.S.S. (Clerkenwell-gn.): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): C. Cohen.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Is There a God?"

STRATFORD GROVE: 7, G. W. Parsons, "Is the Bible True?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Hyde Park, near Marble Arch): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; (Hammersmith Broadway) 7.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?"

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): Special Services—Charles Watts: 2.30, "Robert Owen: Lessons of His Life"; 6.30, "The Religion of the Future." Hymns and Choruses by the Choir and Recitations by Mrs. Watts.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "Does God Answer Prayer?" Mr. Ward will Lecture in Islington-square on Saturday, 16th inst., at 8 p.m., weather permitting.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 6.30., J. B. Hudson, "Science, Religion, and Theology: What They Are and What They Have Done."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "Christ and His Teachings."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting—Conference arrangements.

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