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PRICE TWOPENCE

If you are foolish enough to spare the tiger, the tiger is not foolish enough to spare you.—CHINESE PROVERB.

Dr. Clifford on Emerson.

THROUGH the kindness of a friend I was made acquainted with Dr. Clifford's sermon on "Emerson: His Ideas and Influence," which is reported verbatim in the *Christian World Pulpit*. The title attracted my attention and excited my interest. Moreover, I had heard so much about Dr. Clifford as a preacher that I thought I would sample him where he should be at his best. His letters and speeches on the Education Act had not filled me with any great admiration of his powers of mind or gifts of expression. But surely, I thought, if he has anything in him at all a theme like Emerson will bring it out. So I read his sermon in hope, and I finished it in despair. The result, indeed, was little but dust and ashes. And the reflection arose in my mind that if this sort of thing is reckoned worthy of Dr. Clifford's reputation, Christianity must be even more painfully poor than I thought it in the intellect of its present-day advocates.

First, as to the matter of style. Take away the catchwords of the pulpit, which were filed by long and wide practice, and have done duty for ever so many centuries, and I cannot see that there is anything left in Dr. Clifford's sermon worth owning. He is an adept at mere verbiage. His composition looks as though he were paid so much a line for it, and the more tautology he could use the better. He speaks of "loveliness and beauty"—which is both tautology and anti-climax. He speaks of "those deepest, those profoundest things"—which is like calling an object both round and circular. He speaks of "conceptions which mould lives and shape character"—as if these were different processes. He speaks of the "incalculable and enormous claims of the human spirit"—when incalculable and enormous mean precisely the same thing in this connexion. He speaks of the human spirit's "mystery, its fathomless, inexplicable mystery"—as though it could be a mystery at all if it were explicable, and as though fathomless and inexplicable did not here carry the very same significance. This is a form of "elegant composition" in which the late Dean Farrar excelled. It has many practitioners, and Dr. Clifford may claim a first place amongst them.

Next, as to clearness of thought. For the most part Dr. Clifford is clear enough because he is so shallow. It is generally easy to see to the very bottom of his meaning. But this is quite consistent with a certain mental confusion. Dr. Clifford talks, for instance, of Emerson's mind getting "free of the many errors which it inherited from its environment." He means *derived* from its environment. A man *inherits* from his parents or ancestors. But "inherited" sounds more grandiose than "derived," and a slavish accuracy is not to stand in the way of a judicious impressiveness.

Dr. Clifford, like most men of his cloth, has enough self-assurance. He says that he could not let the Emerson centenary go by without "attempting to give out something in the shape of a system of his thinking." He admits that Emerson would "con-

demn it, and condemn it severely," but a hundred Emersons, we presume, would not keep Dr. Clifford off the plain path of his duty. So the Westbourne-park man of God proceeds to systematise the sage of Concord; and the impudence of the attempt is only equalled by the absurdity of the result. There is something irresistibly comic in the heavy Baptist mind setting itself to capture and bottle the ideas of one of the most nimble, as well as fecund, of modern intellects. "Still," as Dr. Clifford says, "we are all thinkers." We suppose he refers to himself and his congregation.

Emerson's greatest praise, apparently, is that he was "the creator of heroes, of Protestants." We did not know that the terms were equivalent. Every hero, of course, is something of a protestant (without a capital P); but it takes far more than our quantity of imagination to picture every Protestant (with a capital P) as a hero. Dr. Clifford had to drag in the London Education Bill. He could no more keep it out than Mr. Dick could keep out the head of Charles the First. Probably he thinks the Passive Resistance movement one of the most heroic in human history. Oh the glory of bothering a bailiff, and arguing with an auctioneer, and mouthing at a magistrate! This is carrying your cross indeed. This is Christlike. It is certainly Protestant. But is it Emersonian?

Dr. Clifford finds one great fault in Emerson: "He says very little about sin." But is not enough said about sin already? Myriads of preachers live by talking about it. Why should Emerson serve as a volunteer in the chorus? The complaint that he says nothing about sin betrays a total misconception of his teaching. Emerson regarded good as positive, and evil as negative. Sin in his philosophy was merely defect or excess. It was for culture to bring about the right equilibrium. And railing against sin in the meanwhile was only a waste of time. "The price of the higher pleasures," as Iandor said, "is abstinence from the lower." For thousands of years the pursuit of the lower pleasures has been denounced from the pulpits in vain. The reformation of culture is to stimulate the taste for the higher pleasures. The tide of life is thus drawn away from the merely animal nature and goes to sustain our nobler faculties.

It is not our intention to follow Dr. Clifford throughout his sermon. Life is too short for such unprofitable enterprises. But we must deal with what he says about Emerson and Jesus Christ. It is really too rich to be neglected. After admitting that Emerson started in the Unitarian Church, and had to leave even that, Dr. Clifford proceeds as follows:—

"But that he himself was a believer in God and in Jesus Christ—notwithstanding some of the phrases he uses—Theodore Parker himself bears witness. Friends who knew him intimately testify to the same thing, and that his life was one supremely Christian.....The superlative goodness and Christ-likeness of Emerson showed clearly that he belonged not to the lower but to the higher. The man had been steering Christward all his life, and although he could not take up the phrases that were current in the churches concerning Christ, he was breathing His spirit, repeating His acts, and influencing the life of the world in a Christlike way."

Assuming that Dr. Clifford is honest, we are bound to say that his mind is in a very sloppy condition. What impertinence it would otherwise be, at this

time of day, to assure the Westbourne-park chapel congregation that Emerson was not one of the "lower" sort. And note the calm, colossal egotism of the assumption that Emerson was a Christian (like *us*, you know!) because he was a good man. Note also the sweet serenity of the reference to Emerson's "phrases" about Jesus Christ; and the triumphant tone of the reference to Theodore Parker and other friends—as though the evidence of such persons were more important than Emerson's own declarations! Dr. Clifford was careful not to quote one of these "phrases." Had he done so his congregation would have squirmed on their seats. Without stopping to criticise the ridiculous observation that Emerson was always "steering Christward," we say it is simply not true that Emerson was "a believer in Jesus Christ." These words have a specific meaning. A believer in Jesus Christ does not mean a person who believes he existed, or was a good moral teacher, or a sublime character. It means a person who believes that he was God. Now it is certain that Emerson did not believe this. It was to him a superstition or a blasphemy. He held that Jesus had been made too much of even as a human being. He accused Christianity of dwelling "with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus." "Standing on his genius as a moral teacher," Emerson said, "it is impossible to maintain the old emphasis of his personality." No wonder it was to Emerson that Carlyle confessed he was "a little bored occasionally with 'Jesus,'" and felt inclined to say, "I have had enough of him; I tell you I am alive too."

We take leave of Dr. Clifford. He has not edified us, but he has given us some pleasure. It is delightful to find fresh proof of orthodox decadence. The fall of brains in the pulpit will lead to the revolt of congregations. It is merely a question of time—and the sooner the better.

G. W. FOOTE.

From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform.

BY RICHARD TREVOR.

I.—INTRODUCTORY.

It is a stupendous leap from the high and lonely prison of the preacher to the low, wide, and free rostrum of the Atheist, and such are the risks connected with it that no one should ever take it except in obedience to the stern voice of duty. Recently, it fell to my lot to be solemnly called upon to take such a perilous jump, and to turn such a bewildering somersault; and I am now obliged to testify that the event formed the most serious and unforgettable crisis of my life. I can honestly state that it was my supreme crisis, and that I feel it to be my duty, as well as privilege, to furnish the reader with a minute description of the various circumstances which combined to render it absolutely inevitable. I think I would be justified in characterising it, further, as a typical experience, through which hosts of others, ere long, will be necessitated to pass. Be it known, therefore, that for upwards of twenty years I occupied the Christian pulpit, and won a moderate amount of notoriety in it. I was what is called "a popular preacher," a fact which was both pleasing and inspiring to me. I trust I shall not lay myself open to the charge of egotism when I affirm that, during the last fifteen years of my professional career, the churches in which I officiated were too small to accommodate the eager crowds. Of course, it often happens that popularity is no proof of superior excellence. The most notorious person in Great Britain at the present moment is Samuel Herbert Dougal, the brutal murderer and clever forger. Let a man leave the ruts in which the wheels of society have been accustomed to run, and become eccentric in his ways, and he will soon become an object of public curiosity. Everybody will be anxious to catch a glimpse of him, and, if possible, to hear him speak. In my own case, I am afraid that the chief element which contributed to my popularity

was a lurking suspicion, on the part of the people, that I was not quite sound in the faith. To myself, however, the most painfully conscious fact was the knowledge that the faith was not sufficiently sound in me. I was theologically eccentric.

I must emphasise this point. It has always been my devoutest wish to hold the Christian faith unhesitatingly, firmly, and in its orthodox completeness; but, unfortunately for my peace of mind, the wish never blossomed into serene fulfilment. It had been carefully handed down to me, as a sacred legacy, through a long line of ancestors, and I had been trained to believe that to doubt it, or to cherish it languidly and falteringly, would have been a heinous sin against God. During childhood and youth, and for at least one year of my ministerial career, I did hold it with tightest grip, and was prepared to defend it against all opponents. I must here explain that, in the school of theology in which I was brought up, the Christian Faith was synonymous with Calvinism, and that the only enemies of it, with whom I was familiar, were Socinians or Arminians. To me, Calvinism was the only true faith, and all who denied it were outside the pale of the Church of God, and would be damned for ever. I shuddered as I thought of the awful doom that awaited benighted Wesleyans and Unitarians in the next world. I placed John Calvin on the same level as the apostle Paul, and pitied all who had the audacity to differ from these two giants. Of *atheistical* teachers, who rejected even Christianity and the Bible, I at first knew nothing. Arminians were bad enough, in all conscience, and their chance of entering heaven at death was infinitesimally small; but infidels and Atheists were too deep sunk in moral filth even to be mentioned in respectable society. They were black emissaries from the Bottomless Pit, whom the Devil had succeeded in making as desperately wicked as himself. With my up-bringing, I would rather have faced a thousand deaths than ventured to peruse the diabolical writings of such reprobates as Voltaire and Tom Paine! But soon after my ordination, my intellectual grasp of Calvinistic theology slackened, and ere long gave way altogether. My precious inheritance crumbled into white dust about my feet, and was blown to the four winds before my very eyes; and I discovered, to my unutterable horror, that I was doomed to be an unbeliever. In my awful misery I went into retirement, there to examine the very roots of the old beliefs. Had I been wise, or wisely advised, I would have there and then abandoned the Christian ministry, and qualified for some other profession. But I fought my doubts, and in some measure overcame them. Then, unfortunately, I resumed my former work, but necessarily without the former intellectual assurance. I persuaded myself to believe that there were still two sovereign truths, to which I could passionately cling, namely, the Fatherhood of God, at one extreme, and at the other, the Brotherhood of Man. During the remainder of my professional career, I proclaimed these two doctrines with considerable fervor, and as vehemently denounced Calvinism, my first love. *Intellectually*, I could not demonstrate and fully justify the Divine Fatherhood, but *emotionally* it was a source of incalculable satisfaction to me. Whenever difficult questions arose (such as, If God be a Father, all-wise and all-good, how is it that the world is the habitation of so much cruelty, injustice, and suffering? If God is infinite, or the Absolute, how can He be a person; and, if He is not a person, how can He be our Father?), I intellectually ignored, while emotionally triumphing over them. In calm, meditative moments, I was often inexpressibly distressed by the puzzling problems that crowded upon me; but my feelings always came to my rescue, enabling me to sail pleasantly on the ocean of maudlin sentiment. This was a state of things that could not possibly continue. No man can be, for any length of time, intellectually a thorough Agnostic, and emotionally an ardent believer. As I now look back upon it all, it is an insoluble mystery to me how I managed to occupy so anomalous a position for so long a time. In part,

the explanation is, that I honestly and strenuously endeavored to believe that the *spiritual* faculty in man, is infinitely superior to the *intellectual*. But the attempt turned out a miserable failure. At last, the intellect won a glorious victory over mere emotionalism, and, in consequence, my sentimental adherence to, and enjoyment of, Christianity and the Bible began gradually to diminish. Then I was necessarily obliged to abandon my profession, and to adopt Secularism, based on Atheism, as my only possible creed.

Another explanation is to be found in a circumstance which, to some extent at any rate, extenuates my mistake. You are doubtless aware that not even a conscious hypocrite can be serenely and uniformly happy. He lives a double life, and is in constant dread lest people should perceive that he is wearing a mask, and playing a part. But, surely, inconceivably greater is the misery of a simple, honest man who is striving to act honorably in a totally impossible position. He is perpetually running up and bruising his knuckles against a dead wall, in entire ignorance of the fact that there is a way of preventing so useless and disastrous a performance. That is an accurate description of my experience for many years. I had been most assiduously trained, from earliest childhood, in the narrowest of creeds, and dogmatically taught to look upon it as the only true creed; my parents had been similarly trained and taught in their childhood; for many generations before my birth, my ancestors had successively occupied high and prominent positions in the ecclesiastical life of their country; and, as an inevitable consequence, even the idea of renouncing for ever, not merely the old orthodox Calvinism, but also Christianity itself, was intolerably repugnant to me. Indeed, during the earlier years, such an idea never once suggested itself to my imagination. I was, rather, dominated by the depressing conviction that the intellectual collapse of my faith was the outcome of some unknown but serious spiritual defect or fault, or, perhaps, the penalty of some hidden but most real sin against God. Hence, I multiplied and intensified my devotions, and knocked persistently at heaven's door, passionately pleading for pardon and the restoration of my vanished treasure. The laws of heredity and environment rendered it impossible for me to contemplate a life of Atheism except with indescribable aversion and horror.

The object of the following articles will be to explain, on the one hand, how I was literally forced into the Christian ministry, and, on the other, how I was, with equal literalness, forcibly though gradually driven out of it.

Canon Henson on Atheism and Religion.

(Continued from page 403.)

Having shown, to his own satisfaction, that science has "nothing but rebuke" for Atheism, Canon Henson next turns to a discussion of the relation of science to religion. There was a time when true science was said to be profoundly religious, when people quoted that sample of religious insolence, "the undevout astronomer is mad," with the feeling that no sane scientist could be anything but religious. Some people are that way still; but Canon Henson is not one of them. He admits, as we have seen, that scientific study creates a temper not favorable to religious belief, and also that the majority of scientific men would probably describe themselves as Agnostics. And, as it will obviously not do to label the whole scientific world as mad or unthinking or blind, some other way out of the difficulty has to be found.

Canon Henson's way out is not new, and it is not sound. He commences with the reminder that "science is inexorably true to facts. It refuses to leave outside its reckoning any fact, however difficult to analyse and relate. Science requires us to take account of all facts; and just in proportion to its

inability to do this confesses that its materials are inadequate and its theories provisional.' And one of these facts is "that man *everywhere and always* is religious; that his strangely mingled nature includes the elements of a *religious faculty*; that he is by some interior coercion for ever driven to *transcend his own limitations*, to stretch to a power beyond himself, to confess relationship with the unseen and the eternal..... The fact cannot be disputed..... [And] it comes to this: that in front of the fact of the inherent religiousness of men, science is dumb. But the fact remains, and we must seek its explanation elsewhere than in the lecture-hall and laboratories of physical science."

This is Canon Henson's method—the italics are mine. Science, he says, is all very well for such trivial matters as those that come within the scope of chemistry or biology or astronomy; but when it comes to such a profound subject as that of religious belief, then one must leave the companionship of people like Newton or Leplace or Darwin, and seek the company of—Canon Henson. The arrogance of the apologetic is only equalled by its stupidity. The slightest reflection should be enough to show that man is *not* always and everywhere religious. My criticism of Canon Henson is enough to demonstrate this. His own admission that the majority of scientists are Agnostics is a further proof. And could either of these things be if man was "everywhere and always religious"? What is true is that always and everywhere *some* people have been religious; and that this "some" embraces the majority does not affect the statement. There have been religious people in all ages and places; so also has there been lunatics and fools and criminals, and the existence and the persistence of one class is no more difficult to explain than that of another.

Two other points of fact, before we proceed. First, man is not driven by any coercion, interior or exterior, to transcend his own limitations. He is not driven to this because he cannot be driven to this. Man's talk of God, whether it be the talk of a savage tribe or of a body of worshippers in Westminster Abbey, is nothing more than an expression of belief within the limits of his understanding. Man is no more transcending his limitations when discussing religion than he is driven to transcend his own limitations in the presence of a mathematical problem, the answer to which he is unable to find. And, next, it is simply not true that science is dumb in the face of religious beliefs. And I venture to say that Canon Henson knows that this statement does not square with facts. The writings of Darwin, Tylor, Spencer, Frazer, will give him a perfect avalanche of facts and deductions concerning the origin, the nature, and the value of the "religiousness of men." It is open, and legitimate, for Canon Henson or anybody else to question the value of these conclusions, but it is not open for him to assert in the face of these facts that "science is dumb." Science *has* spoken on the matter. Right or wrong it has given its interpretation of these phenomena of religions, and it is mere pulpit "bluff" for any preacher to tell an audience that science has nothing to say about religion.

It will be noticed that the only apparent reason that Canon Henson has for believing that science is dumb in the presence of religion is, that man possesses a religious "faculty" distinct from his other "faculties." The Canon's psychology is as old-fashioned as his religion, and as unwarrantable. There is no more a special faculty for religion than there is one for science. The development of science and the development of religion is not brought by the exercise of different "faculties," but by the exercise of reason. In religion and science the same function is being performed, the same organs exercised. It is reasoning in both cases; and the fact of one being accurate and the other inaccurate does not in the smallest degree affect the truth of the generalisation.

Let us take, as an illustration, religion as it presents itself during the purely animistic stage.

A savage pictures certain objects or forces as alive that we know to be "inanimate. Canon Henson would say that he is exercising his religious faculty. Not at all; his subjective processes are exactly those of a modern scientist. He has certain facts to go upon, he has a certain amount of knowledge to refer to, and from the fact, say, of motion, and the knowledge that life is always associated with motion, he concludes that there is force before him. And in doing this his mental operations, and those of a modern scientist, are identical. There are errors of classification and errors of inference in the first case that are not present in the second, but that is all. There is no special faculty; and I think I may safely defy either Canon Henson, or anyone else, to point to any fundamental difference in the two cases. A religious hypothesis—that of God or the soul—is nothing more than an unwarrantable conclusion drawn from certain subjective and objective experiences by people without adequate knowledge at their disposal. Later knowledge corrects this conclusion, and the conflict between science and religion is nothing more or less than the conflict between an early and a late, an imperfect and a perfect stage of human knowledge.

In the early stages of civilisation, where man has not yet risen to the conception of all-pervading mechanical forces, the volitional theory holds the field. Deity is everywhere, is everything. In later stages the volitional theory is gradually displaced by the mechanical. Three or four centuries since comets were objects of religious devotion, disease was an agent of Deity, the very planets themselves were kept in their places by angels and spiritual agencies. To-day comets are mere masses of matter, propelled by forces as unconscious, as "dead," as themselves. Disease, too, has passed from the control of Deity to that of man. What is the cause of the change? Nothing more than the fact that knowledge has displaced ignorance. No fresh faculty has been brought into play; man has only learned to use the same powers in a more serviceable manner.

Why does Canon Henson put in the hypothesis of a special "faculty" outside the range of science? Had he lived a few centuries earlier he would in all probability have defended his religion by challenging the teaching of science. The day has gone by for this to be done with safety. The scientist can no longer be burned, which was the greatest religious argument; abuse no longer pays, to argue against science only rouses laughter; and so the last resort is a return to the mediæval theory that there are two kinds of truth, one religious and one scientific, and the latter is incompetent to question the former. And the absurdity of Canon Henson's position becomes still more apparent if we reflect that all along it has been the *scientific* criticism of religion that has brought about its so-called "purification."

Canon Henson entitles his sermon, "Men's Thirst for God," and he has during his address much to say as to man's "inward hunger" for God. In all probability it never crossed the speaker's mind that the eagerness of the clergy to teach people religion, their anxiety to shield them from Atheistic influences, and their assertion that by allowing children to grow up without religion we recruit the Freethought ranks, all prove to demonstration the utter worthlessness of the phrases quoted. If man is inherently religious, if he has this overmastering hunger and thirst for God, why all this anxiety concerning the future of religion? Does it not prove that these preachers *feel* the weakness of all they are saying, and recognise also that in the absence of constant stimulation this "hunger" and "thirst" would soon become a thing of the past.

For my own part I deny that man has any craving for religion, except such as can be accounted for by his education, personal and ancestral. Primitive man has no craving for God any more than he has a craving for a ruler. He accepts one as he accepts the other; and when one is established his inertia and lack of independence enables God or chief to maintain his position. But with the savage, God is not there to satisfy any moral or æsthetic craving;

it is one of the forces with which the savage believes he has to reckon, and believing this, his principal endeavor is to get on the right side of his deity. The attitude of the savage towards his God is that of fear tempered with thankfulness for any favors they care to bestow. And this, as a matter of fact, has been the general attitude of Christians themselves down to within very recent times. God was there, someone quick to anger and terrible to punish; and it was the believer's chief concern to see that the autocrat of the skies was not offended beyond hopes of appeasement. The notion that God existed to satisfy man's moral cravings is one of those refinements that modern humanitarian influences has succeeded in imposing on religion.

If Canon Henson had but a little of the scientific or philosophic temper he would see that what man has is, not a "thirst for God," but a tendency to religious belief, and that this is the normal and inevitable outcome of his past history. Men, said Schelling, are born either Aristotelians or Platonists. One might paraphrase this by saying that they are born with a strong tendency to either religion or Freethought. And if natural tendencies had been allowed to work themselves out the religious type of mind would in all probability have been lost long ago. But there has always been proceeding a species of artificial selection, which has allowed the religious type to preponderate. In very early times the fear that the disbeliever in the gods will bring vengeance upon the tribe leads to the suppression of the sceptical type of mind. And at a later stage, with organisations such as those of the Christian Churches, self-interest prompts to a continuation of the same policy. For centuries the sceptical type of mind was sought and suppressed, the religious type found and preserved. And human nature would be other than it is, and the philosophy of evolution valueless in its application to human nature, if this age-long process had not resulted in the creation of a type of mind that, upon the whole, manifested a greater tendency to religion than to Freethought.

And upon this foundation the modern preacher, oblivious or ignorant of the real nature of human history, sets to work. Ignoring the manner in which the type of mind that lends itself to religion has been created, he points to its existence as a proof of man's inability to get along without religion. The child beginning to lisp its letters is taught religious formulas, surrounded with religious objects, has all its innate credulity developed to the fullest possible extent, and then men of Canon Henson's stamp ask us to note how the human mind *naturally* turns to religion. The human animal acts as every other animal acts—in accordance with its education and its heredity. If Canon Henson really has any faith in his own generalisations, if he is doing any more than "bluffing" his audience, let him advocate that people be let alone for a generation or so; let the preacher cease his preaching and exhorting, and then see how strongly man's "thirst for God" will express itself in the absence of artificial stimulation.

Even as it is, man's thirst and hunger in this direction is growing visibly weaker. Very many of the world's leading thinkers, as he admits, are indulging in a prolonged fast, and are none the worse for their abstention. And it is surely a safe thing to say that, if the leaders are dropping religion to-day, the mass of the people will drop it to-morrow. It is only a question of time.

The truth is, as Comte pointed out, that religion only really lives during a fetishistic period. Afterwards it is a question of gradual decay. The science that Canon Henson says is dumb—and perhaps it is, for him—has for all others spoken clearly and decisively. It has analysed all that goes to make up religion, and has found nothing but human characteristics read into nature by man during the infancy of the race. Step by step it has traced the growth of the belief in God and a soul, and has shown a steady decrease in the strength and value of these beliefs as human knowledge has grown. This process cannot go on for ever. It must come

to an end some day. The gods have been reduced from many to one; and the one has passed through all the phases from an autocratic monarch to a constitutional governor existing by the suffrance of his supporters. One step more, and the process will be completed—the tragi-comedy will be over. Man began by fearing his gods, he proceeded by refining them, he has now reached the point of discussing them. And a god is like a privilege—discussion kills it. Man only believes in his gods so long as he lacks the courage to examine them.

C. COHEN.

Christianity Not a System of Ethics.

There are so many so-called "liberal" teachers in the Church in this country nowadays that one is liable to get an erroneous impression of what Christianity really is if he confines his reading to the sensational utterances of those the daily press exploit. Orthodoxy seems to have vanished, and in its place is set up an ethical cult which is alleged to be the core of the Christian religion, and a belief in which, or a following in works, will land one plumb in heaven.

All of this, as we pointed out last week, is misleading. Christianity is not an ethical system, but a hard and fast belief that unless one accepts Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins committed by the believer in him, with a lot of beliefs on the side which are immensely germane and important, he cannot attain to everlasting life among the blest, but will go to hell to burn for ever. Of course such a system of religion shocks the mind of every sympathetic and kind person, and directly impeaches the goodness of God, making him a worse fiend than he himself ever sent into this world, but that is not to the point. Among these side beliefs are those of the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension, and if these are not true, then the system is not true, and whether it be ethical or not is of no consequence. Mankind forms its own ethical rules of conduct, based on the experience of the race, and not on any words which have been spoken by any deity. Ethics is of this world, religion of another. If man's race is run between the cradle and the coffin; if he was not before his birth and is not after his death, he can and will gradually make rules to guide his conduct so as to obtain the greatest happiness while he is here. If on the other hand, this life is but a probationary stage to fit him for another world, and if his entrance into that other world, in which he will live for ever, depends upon a belief held in this world, then religion is of supreme importance to him and ethics of no consequence at all. Any old system is good enough. But any old system of religion will not do. He must have the right one, and he must believe it accurately, or he is damned. Christianity claims to be only true religion, and is essentially intolerant of all others, and it naturally must be if it is what its adherents claim for it. If Christianity be true—that is, if its claims be founded on fact—no other can be true, and all but those who accept Jesus as their savior will be dumped in the rubbish heap, and disposed of by fire.

A writer in a daily paper which devotes considerable space to theological matter calls attention to the averment of the Christian Church that there is no natural immortality, but only such as has been gained through the mediation and teaching of Jesus. This of course damns all of the pagans, but our theologian faces this outcome with the bravery of the self-centred fanatic, the cocksure priest, who is firmly convinced of the truth of his own creed, and the falsity of all others. "From time immemorial," he says, "the vast majority, the pagan world, having never known the true God nor the gospel of his Son, are utterly unfit for the employments and privileges of a heavenly home."

Charitable! isn't he?

But even this writer has gone astray from the "Word." "From time immemorial" means a good while, not the limit of nearly six thousand years given in the Bible. "Time immemorial" is time without limit. Very evident it is that there is no consensus of any religious value, or any value to religion, outside the Catholic fold. The doctrine of "man's natural immortality," he says, is not supported by the Bible, nor by reason, nor by science. Immortality is to be attained only by belief in Jesus. Nor shall many attain it. Christ taught, he says, that "the way of life is narrow; few find it;" while the way to death—and consequently to hell for it—is "broad" and crowded. This is the doctrine taught us in our youth, and still taught in orthodox districts. Christ himself taught it.

"Broad is the road which leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveller."

Christ's plain teaching, he says, is that "that which is

born of the flesh is flesh" only; that before we can own any germ of immortality we must be "begotten again of incorruptible seed by the word [Christ] of God" and "born again." "He that hath me hath life: he that hath not me hath not life" immortal; and "ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "I am the true bread which cometh down from heaven," said Christ. "If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever"; but, not eating it, the natural result is that he does not live forever; "he must slave, die, perish, be as though he had not been," is the conclusion our charitable Christian reaches.

While this is good Christian doctrine, or at least one of the doctrines which the New Testament upholds, it is a doctrine calculated to make heretics, for it certainly requires not only a robust faith but a hardness of heart equal to Pharaoh's to see with equanimity the vastly major portion of the human race going to hell. Men with hearts will not believe such teaching, and thus it is why they sentimentally fling away the theology of the New Testament and sentimentally hold on to it as a work of ethics. But the teachings of Jesus are as bad ethically as theologically, as Mr. Steel has been showing the readers of the *Truthseeker* in his series of articles on the Jesus of the Gospels. The beatitudes, for instance, are often quoted as the quintessence of wisdom and morality. There are but a few good sayings among them. Blessed are the peacemakers and the merciful will pass, and if one is under the influence of Christianity will do good. Blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek, are false teachings. To say that those who are persecuted for Christ's sake are the salt of the earth is foolish. Why should they be? Why not those who are persecuted for Buddha's sake? To restrain anger against a brother is wise, but to send a man to hell for saying Thou fool, is cruelty. The whole Sermon on the Mount is filled with inaccuracies of statement. Adultery with a woman cannot be committed by looking at her; the command to pluck out an offending eye has been the text for many a cruel casting forth to death of one-time friends; divorced persons are not adulterers; the man who resists not evil, who lets his cloak follow the coat to the hands of the thief, who loves his enemies, who does good to those who spitefully use him, is a fit subject for restraint and medical attention. The burden of Jesus's commands is to do these things so that you will be rewarded; let "thine alms be in secret: and thy Father shall reward thee openly"; pray in secret and be rewarded openly; do things secretly, but do them for the open reward. There is no altruism there: a dog will perform tricks for a lump of sugar. "Lay not up treasures for yourself on earth," "Take no thought for the morrow"—are these the ethical doctrines which so highly commend themselves to the sentimentalists as ethical rules? "Ask and it shall be given you." Is that true? "Seek and ye shall find." Is that true? "Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth." Are these statements true? The Sermon on the Mount teaches foolishness when it is not absolutely untrue, yet it is held up as something supernaturally broad, wise, and benevolent.

Without its supernaturalism there is no vitality in the New Testament. Ethically it is the word of a self-deluded prophet. Its claim to be the teaching of the Son of God must necessarily rest upon miracles. And as miracles are no longer in fashion perhaps the clergy who reject all the essentials of the religion they profess to expound will give us some rest upon the subject of Christianity being a superior system of ethics.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Thackeray on the Old Testament.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER OF W. M. THACKERAY TO HIS MOTHER (1845).

BUT I am guarded with Jerusalem, not wishing to offend the public by a needless exhibition of heterodoxy, nor daring to be a hypocrite. I have been reading lots of books—Old Testament, Church histories, travels—and advance but slowly in the labor. I find there was a sect in the early Church who denounced the Old Testament; and I get into such a rage myself when reading all that murder and crime which the name of the Almighty is blasphemously made to sanction that I don't dare to trust myself to write, and put off my work [the sketch of his visit to Jerusalem] from day to day.

I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

—W. E. Henley.

Acid Drops.

"Jadi," who does "The Man in the Pulpit" for the *Morning Leader*, devoted his thirty-first article to Dr. Washington Sullivan, the orator of the Ethical Religion Society. What he says about Dr. Sullivan is no particular concern of ours. What we want to notice is one of his incidental observations. "It is curious," he says, "to note the tendency of freethought towards positivism and away from negationism. The era of destructive atheism and iconoclastic scepticism seems to have quietly died, without any public announcement." Nothing of the sort, Monsieur Jadi; and we believe you are not as ignorant as you pretend to be. The very opposite of your statement is near the truth. The "public announcement" has been made often, but Atheism has never "died"—"quietly" or otherwise.

"Where," the *Morning Leader* man asks, "is the old Bradlaughism? There are no Bradlaughs to-day." Of course there are not. There never were any Bradlaughs. There was one in Bradlaugh's time, and there can never be another, for nature does not produce two men alike, and she is not in the habit of producing a number of persons of Bradlaugh's calibre in a single generation. But Bradlaughism still exists, if by that you mean Atheism. It not only exists, but it flourishes. The belief in God is fast perishing. Nor is militant Freethought deceased. This is one of the silly pretences of orthodoxy, and we are sorry to see it paraded in the *Morning Leader*. Mr. Ernest Parke, the editor of that journal, knows a great deal better. Why doesn't he get his staff to tell the truth?

What an idiotic thing it is to ignore the *Freethinker*, and even to pretend that it does not exist. What an idiotic thing it is, too, to ignore the platform propaganda of Freethought, and even to pretend that it also does not exist. Mr. Foote has had many fine meetings in London, larger than Dr. Coit's or Dr. Sullivan's. What is more, every person in his meetings paid to hear him. Yet "the press" never gave him a word. This conspiracy of silence is one of the most ridiculous things in the world. It was played for ever so many years against Bradlaugh. The London press, especially, only took proper notice of him when the public became so deeply interested in his parliamentary struggle that to ignore him simply meant dangerously bad business.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Churchmen's Union, Lord Avebury said that Lord Kelvin, in recently speaking of the origin of the universe, had adopted one of the aspects of the Divine nature and told them that scientific thought was compelled to accept the idea of creative power. He (Lord Avebury) confessed that in spite of all his efforts the expression conveyed no definite idea to him. Creation was a grand and suggestive poetical expression, and seemed clear enough until they began to think about it, but evidently it was no scientific explanation of the first beginning, since nothing could create itself.

Parson Fillingham, the vicar of Hexton, finds England too small for his anti-ritualistic activities. He has crossed the Atlantic and worked off his spare energy by protesting against the "idolatrous practices" in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York. He has threatened to take "forcible action" in order to "call the attention of the public to this matter." But the Church authorities are ready for him. Directly he begins business they will call in the police and treat him as Jesus did the dove-sellers and the money-changers.

More riots at Wycliffe meetings at Birkenhead. Eight arrests made at one meeting, amongst them being John McKeever, who was charged with the murder of John Kensit and acquitted. It is a wonder that this young fellow doesn't leave well alone. He may play the game once too often. Another rioter, John Morris, had to be conveyed to the station by the combined efforts of six policemen. Christian charity was found in his pockets in the form of heavy pieces of brass nuts; intended, no doubt, to show his appreciation of the speakers.

Mr. Balfour's letter to a correspondent on the Passive Resistance movement is called a "Remarkable Manifesto" in the *Daily News*. And so it is. The Prime Minister does not leave the Nonconformist agitators a leg to stand on. The following passage hits them on a very weak spot:—"I have every respect for those who are ready to make sacrifices for their religious convictions, provided in the first place that their practice is consistent, and provided, in the second

place, that they show themselves ready to give to others what they claim as right for themselves. Unfortunately, in the present case neither of these conditions is fulfilled. The proposition which is supposed to justify resistance to the law is apparently this—that no man ought to be required to contribute to any school in which religious doctrines are taught of which he disapproves. Has the practice of the passive resisters shown the smallest trace of consistency in their application of this supposed 'moral imperative?' On the contrary, they lived peaceably for a generation under the Act of 1870. They now lament its supersession, although it was of the very essence of that Act—that schools teaching many varieties of religious belief should be supported out of public money. They acquiesced, and still acquiesce, in the Irish system and the Scotch system, which, though widely divergent in other respects, are both open to the same reproach, if reproach it be."

Mr. Balfour carries the war right into the middle of the Nonconformist camp; and what he says in the following passage is, however unintentionally, an endorsement of what we have said all along in the *Freethinker*:—"These gentlemen are fighting not for principle, but for privilege. To a man they are supporters of the School Board system. Yet under that system religion may be, and commonly is, taught in public elementary schools. When so taught it is wholly paid for out of rates and taxes—without any separate contribution from those to whose views it more particularly conforms, such as is made in the case of Voluntary schools. From this teaching the Roman Catholic ratepayer differs because the Christianity taught is not his form of Christianity; the Jewish ratepayer differs because it is Christianity; the Agnostic ratepayer differs because it is religion. All are required not merely to pay rates in support of the schools where teaching from which they thus conscientiously dissent is given—which is the grievance supposed to justify 'passive resistance'—but to pay their share of the whole cost of the teaching itself—a demand never made in the case of Voluntary schools. And yet, who are the persons who would most clamorously resent any attempt to evade this obligation? Why, the very persons who propose illegally to resist a similar but less onerous claim when it happens to be made upon themselves. It is not perhaps astonishing that some should be found to pursue such a policy, but surely it is astonishing that they should pursue it in the name of conscience and religious liberty."

Dr. Clifford takes precious good care not to explain why the Nonconformists, who object to religion in State churches, support religion in State schools—especially when they can "run it themselves. There never was such a man for pretending not to hear what is inconvenient to notice. Writing again to the *Daily News* he repeats what he has said a hundred times without once noticing the objections to it; namely, that he is not fighting as a Nonconformist, but as a citizen. This time, however, he advances a proof. "This very morning," he says, "£10 came to me for our fight from an 'Agnostic' through the *Westminster Gazette*." We should like to know the name of that "Agnostic." It would be interesting to know if the gentleman (or lady) has ever subscribed a penny to any "Agnostic" purpose. Anyhow, it is something novel in logic to flourish a cheque as a reply to an argument; though it is quite worthy of Dr. Clifford in his present avatar.

Here is another specimen of Dr. Clifford's logic. In the same letter he says: "I regret to add that we cannot trust some of the administrators of the law. The magistracy is largely composed of clerical sympathisers." We suppose it would be all right if the magistrates were all Nonconformists, and would let every Nonconformist off paying his legal rates. In the meanwhile, however, Dr. Clifford might sit down, if he has time for sitting down, and explain what choice magistrates have in the matter. Is there any statute providing for a "conscientious objection" to paying rates or taxes? If there were, it would be appealed to pretty extensively. More than half the population would be conscientious objectors. There would be a terrible lot of people like the gentleman who said it was against his principle to pay any interest, and against his interest to pay any principal.

Dr. Clifford cannot even find time to answer a clergyman like Canon Malcolm MacColl. "I believe," this reverend gentleman says, "that Secularists and Agnostics have quite as real a grievance under the School Board system as any that Dr. Clifford or Dr. Horton can feel under the Education Act." "Why," he asks, "should an Agnostic or a Jew be rated for religious instruction out of Scriptures which he does not believe? But the most intolerable tenet of all is that which insists on the teaching of the emasculated and amor-

phous Christianity which is called 'undenominational religion,' yet forbids any inquiry as to whether the teacher believes a word of it or of any creed at all. It is to me an enigma how any men who believe in any creed or in any form of truth or of religion can commit themselves to such a monstrous doctrine, and insist on rating the whole mass of citizens for its propagation." We regard this as unanswerable; but, if it can be answered, let Dr. Clifford have the honesty to reply. Probably it would take more courage to do this than to make faces at bailiffs and auctioneers.

Canon MacColl digs the Nonconformist traitors right under the fifth rib. He says their leaders have a way of offering compromises and running away when the other side looks like accepting them. He says that he himself publicly defended Mr. Bradlaugh's right to take his seat, while "the Nonconformists deserted Mr. Gladstone on that subject and lost several seats to the Liberal party."

The *Tablet* gives an account of the last hours of Cardinal Vaughan. It appears that he made a formal profession of faith, in which the following occurred: "I rely entirely on the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ and on the intercession of His Holy Mother, St. Joseph, and the Apostles, especially St. Peter." What a poor compliment to Jesus Christ! God the Son's efforts in behalf of Cardinal Vaughan having to be backed up by fourteen other persons! And one of them a lady, too!

Discussing the death of Cardinal Vaughan, the *Christian World* remarks that "Rome can breed monks and nuns..... of zeal and devotion she has abundance; but of men who can take their place in the ranks of the world's best thought she offers to-day no sign. And this is a fatal omission." We do not disagree with this statement, but it strikes us as a case of pot calling kettle black. In our opinion all the Churches are in exactly the same predicament. Where, for example, are the men in the English churches and chapels who could take their place among the world's thinkers? Could they be found among such men as Archbishop Davidson or Bishop Ingram, or Messrs. Clifford, Horton, or Campbell? The mere mention of their names is enough. The plain truth is that the best intellects everywhere are deserting the faith; and while any Christian can see this of other sects, he is conveniently blind when it comes to his own.

The negro lynchings in America form an apt comment upon the feeling of brotherhood developed by Christianity. Hitherto the Southern States have been foremost in this matter, but the Northern Christians have just shown that they do not mean to be behindhand when it comes to lynching one of their black brethren in the Lord. Within a hundred miles of New York, Wilmington, Delaware, a half-witted negro was charged with the assault and murder of a girl, the daughter of a clergyman. Another clergyman, on Sunday evening last, preached a sermon advocating the lynching of the negro, and exhibited some leaves spattered with the girl's blood. On the following evening a crowd of men dressed as women raided the prison, seized the negro, and burned him, the crowd afterwards fighting for "souvenir morsels." The half-witted negro was no doubt brutal enough, but there really seems little to choose between him and a crowd that could fight for souvenir morsels of a half-baked negro.

Canon Hensley Henson has discovered that "Mankind confessedly reaches its point of highest excellence under the influence of religion." We do not know who confesses this—probably it is some other clergyman, and his evidence would be hardly considered as conclusive. What Canon Henson probably means is, that mankind reaches its highest excellence in countries where Christianity is professed by a number of the population. This is probably correct; but there are many other influences in a modern civilised country that cannot, with truth, be called Christian. Canon Henson should go back a few centuries and take this country when it was wholly under the influence of Christianity, and contrast it, say, with the portion of Spain then under the control of the Mohammedans. He would find that the followers of the Prophet were cleaner, more enlightened, and more civilised than the believers in Jesus. Or, if he does not care for this instance, let him set to work to show wherein the Greek or Roman character is higher under Christian, than it was under Pagan, influences. It is very easy to stand up in a Christian pulpit and make statements of the kind referred to. *Proving* them is quite another matter.

A writer in the *Baptist Magazine* is much concerned over the question of whether, at Communion, a number of indi-

viduals should drink out of the same cup, or have a clean cup each. He suggests a separate cup for each individual on the grounds that "the mere fact of the sacred purpose in view will not afford protection from impurities and germs of disease." He also quotes the case of a church on the Congo that was almost wiped out by a disease which spread through the Communion-cup. We are not surprised at this, and we quite appreciate the argument from a health point of view. But it shows a sad want of faith, all the same. "In my name," said Jesus, his followers might drink deadly drinks, and it should not hurt them; and here is a Baptist of the deepest dye who says that this promise can't be depended upon even in a church, and that one congregation was nearly destroyed through trusting to it.

Mr. Rockefeller's Sunday-school is quite a famous institution. So also is his low-flash oil, through which, if Christianity be correct, as many go to hell during the week as are prepared for heaven on Sunday. Mr. Rockefeller said recently that he did not believe in an emotional religion. "I believe in a sound, practical, logical religion, based on facts." This statement has aroused the ire of a Rev. T. B. Gregory, a New York divine, who asserts that all religion is emotional or nothing. Mr. Gregory says: "There never was a logical religion, and never can be, for religion and logic are far apart as the poles of infinity, and between the two there is nothing but war." With which we, of course, agree.

Then the Rev. T. B. G. proceeds in this manner: "So far as logic is concerned, there is no God, for we cannot prove there is one. But religion does not argue; it simply feels. Religion can neither be argued up nor down. It is quite apart from argument, it is grandly above syllogism." This, we suppose, is Mr. Gregory's way of saying that religion is quite an unreasonable thing. If so, we agree with him; although, if he is not *arguing* for religion, what, then, is he doing? And, finally, Mr. Gregory concludes his case thus: "When the eagle, on its way through the heavens, encounters the storm-cloud, it does not parley with it or combat it; it simply rises above it into the region where sunshine is. It is even so with the soul of man. When it meets the facts which would compromise its dignity and peace, instead of stooping to reason with them, it lifts itself triumphantly above them and looks down on them." That is so. When a religious pleader meets an unknown fact he does not argue—not he. He soars like an eagle, even though he be as stupid as a jackass. He gets above it, or below it, or anywhere but in front of it; and then he puts on an air of triumphant idiocy and asks the world to admire how he does it. We hope Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Gregory will continue the discussion.

"Providence" looks badly after the wet on this planet—of course, from a human point of view. There is plenty of it, perhaps just enough of it, but it is badly distributed. Too much of it was granted to England and Ireland in what should have been the beautiful month of June. Great damage was done to the fruit crops; thousands of acres of potatoes were blighted in one night in North Lancashire; and one severe night's frost practically ruined the potato crop in the West of Ireland.

Here are two bits of news immediately following each other in a newspaper. Five shopkeepers at Accrington were each fined five shillings for Sunday trading, or what the town clerk called "a breach of the Law of Moses"—although the Corporation was running Sunday trams all the time. At Belfast a powerful-looking man, named Edward Murray, kicked his wife in the stomach as she was making the bed "to smarten her up," the result being that she bled to death, and the husband is committed for trial on a charge of murder. Paltry superstition and shocking brutality! Two of the most conspicuous features of our boasted Christian civilisation.

Dougal, the Moat Farm murderer, enjoyed a large measure of local popularity. His manner was so genial and free-and-easy, until he wanted to put you out of the way and got you in a dark corner. Dougal also regularly attended the village church. Suppose he had regularly attended a Freethought meeting-place; what loud orthodox cackle there would be on such a point! That he patronised a gospel-shop goes for nothing. It is a way so many criminals have.

King Peter keeps going to the Cathedral. We suppose he meets God there, the being by whose "favor" he was "called" to the throne of Servia; and the being, therefore, who must have prepared the vacancy for him; in which

case, of course, the murderers of King Alexander were divine instruments.

Bishop Lawrence speaks of "infidelity sincere and insincere." There is only one class of infidels that the *Searchlight* can think of as being insincere, and that comprises those who, not believing in its doctrines, join the Church for business and social advantages. There is no motive for a false or insincere profession of infidelity. Infidelity is unpopular with the masses, and can bring to a person no social or pecuniary advantage, nor does it promise him any future reward. Christianity is popular, and in many places to be in the Church is to be in the swim; therefore it is probable that many who at heart are infidels unite with the Church because they think it pays to do so. The openly-avowed infidel may be disliked, and by some socially ostracised, but certainly he is entitled to be regarded as sincere.—*Searchlight* (Waco, Texas).

"Father" Stanton, of St. Alban's, Holborn, is not incapable of a joke. It appears that he gets up at all sorts of times in the morning, sometimes after ten o'clock. He had to admit this to a questioner, who was shocked at it, and remarked that the other clergymen were very different. "Father" Stanton replied that "they belonged to Early Church," while he was one of the "recent developments."

Freethinkers who visit Sonning, on the Thames, should walk up from the river and turn up the hill to the left, behind the hotel; on their right will be a high wall, with all kinds of flowers cultivated on the top of it. When about half way along this wall they pass the house, which belongs to the manager of a large publishing firm in the Strand. The weathercock consists of a pulpit-banger in full canonicals haranguing three empty chairs. When the contractors built this the local clergy, we are told, were so indignant that three times it was removed, but the owner of the house insisted on having it replaced.

The *Open Court* (Chicago) has an article on "The Widow's Two Mites" by the editor (Dr. Paul Carus), in which the Buddhist parallel to the New Testament story is given from Samuel Beal's translation. Evidently the story is very ancient—far older than the Christian religion; and we are once more brought face to face with the fact that Christianity is not a special revelation, but a clever combination of antique materials. This, indeed, is the secret of its success. Such a fresh combination was wanted in the Roman Empire, and if it had not been Christianity it would have been something else, but something very similar.

Not having the fear of God before his eyes, and being instigated thereto by the Devil, Mr. Archibald Watt, a New York man, has brought suit for a bill of divorce against his wife Adele, naming as corespondent the Rev. George Van De Water, of St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church on Fifth-avenue. Mrs. Watt is a strenuous church worker. Dr. Van De Water was chaplain of the Seventy-first regiment in the Spanish-American war times, and is now chaplain of Columbia University. He married Adele to Mr. Watt, who now says that the preacher has since been guilty of adultery with her. Two questions arise out of this case—viz., whether or not the Rev. Dr. Van De Water has gone that far with the lady, and whether, if he has, his conduct is unusual.—*Truth-seeker* (New York).

Christian missionaries—with friends in the Manchester cotton and Bradford woollen trades—forget that the morality of clothes is very much a matter of climate. With the thermometer at 92 in the shade in Paris, we read that "As far as dress is concerned men and women are reverting as closely to nature as convention allows." Quite so. Perpetual summer heat would make loafers of all of us, and we should wear as little as David did when he danced before the ark—or say nearly as little, for some sacrifice would have to be made to common decency.

In connexion with the correspondence on Hospitals which appears in another part of this week's *Freethinker*, it may be well to note the following item of news in Monday morning's papers:—"GUY'S HOSPITAL.—At a meeting of the Court of Governors, it was resolved, on the proposal of the Prince of Wales, president, that Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree be elected a Governor of the Institution. Mr. Charles Goschen was also elected a Governor." "Lay committees" of this sort, so composed and so elected, provide a beautiful security for the rights and interests of "the people."

To Old J.

You one-time dreaded, tribal god,
That juggled with old Moses' rod,
Through the late centuries you nod,
Jehovah.

Your eyes are dim; your blood runs slow;
And spent the arm that gave the blow
That laid the proud of Egypt low,
Jehovah.

Not now the waters stand up high,
And leave between the bottom dry,
Until your Chosen have passed by,
Jehovah.

Not now on Sinai's top you come
Rattling upon the thunder-drum
And hear the trembling vagrants hum,
Jehovah!

Nor now, when broken promise shakes
The Hebrews' trust, and murmur wakes,
You comfort them with fiery snakes,
Jehovah.

Nor, when your high priest asks to see
Your face, play solemn tweedle-dee,
And show what may not mentioned be,
Jehovah.

Your Holy of Holies is a sham,
And no one cares a twopenny damn
For all your bouncing, big I AM,
Jehovah.

You've had your day and worship; Fate
Has clipp'd your beard; you're out of date;
You've chalked your last chalk on your slate,
Jehovah.

The Frenchman† laughed you out of time,
The German‡ rang your burial chime,
And here you're but a bug for rhyme,
Jehovah.

CONTRE L'IDOLE.

On Some Sermonising Remarks

(SAMPLES QUOTED), BY AN OLD MAID IN A YOUNG LADY'S ALBUM.

Some dame, who long upon the shelf
Has lain, without a look from Venus,
Turn'd saint (for her neglected self
The only rôle—but that's between us),
Up on the cold shelf, prim and smug,
Where frolic Love may never reach her,
Turn'd saint, I say, and Bible bug,
To her acquaintance plays the preacher.

"The humdrum life it is that tells;
'Tis this alone deserves reporting":
But, see! a thousand budding belles
And lads beneath the moon are courting.
"Oh! do but keep in very close
Touch with our Lord!" cries poor old Humdrum:
But, hark! the answer comes jocose,
"Oh, get a cushion for your rumpum!"

"Does your salvation penetrate
Into your life?" asks Parson Polly;
"Oh, hang that clap-trap! Take a date!
Here, drink, old lady, and look jolly!
While life's at Spring, by Jove we'll sing
(Plague on your theologic drivel!)
And when the joys of life take wing,
Well, then, perhaps, we'll preach and snivel."

H. BARBER.

MAN AND HIS GODS.

Man and his gods; what a tragi-comedy it is! Man has never seen one of his gods, never heard the voice of one of his gods, does not know the shape, expression, or bearing of one of his gods. Yet man has cursed man, hated man, hunted man, tortured and murdered man, for the sake of shadows and fantasies of his own terror, or vanity, or desire. We tiny, vain feeblenesses, we fussy ephemera, we sting each other, hate each other, hiss at each other for the sake of the monstre gods of our own delirium. As we are whirled upon our spinning, glowing planet through the unfathomable spaces, where myriads of suns, like golden bees, gleam through the awful mystery of "the vast void night," what are the phantom gods to us? They are no more than the waterspouts on the ocean or the fleeting shadows on the hills.—*Robert Blatchford*.

* Exodus, chap. xxxiii. † Voltaire. ‡ Heine.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(All Engagements suspended until September.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—July 5 and 12, a. and e., Victoria Park; 19, m. Kingsland.

RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Truthseeker (New York)—Freidenker—Public Opinion (New York)—Newtownards Chronicle—La Raison—Boston Investigator—New Century Path—Two Worlds—Searchlight—Blue Grass Blade—Progressive Thinker.

F. BUTLER.—Your letter is too long for insertion, and is not up to our standard of composition.

W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always welcome because always useful.

H. HAHN.—We are not surprised to learn that the *Rejeree* did not insert your letter. The editorial reply to you is grossly inaccurate. The words you quoted were Dr. Horton's. The passage you quoted from Haeckel would have been too great an eye-opener.

J. E. RHODES (Liverpool).—Your first list of subscriptions to the Cohen Presentation Fund to hand. Cheques should be made payable to G. W. Foote.

T. H. ELSTON.—We should like to see more propagandist activity in Newcastle. There is evidently a public if efforts are made to reach it.

JAMES NEATE.—Thanks. The Bethnal Green Branch's second list is in this week's acknowledgments. We note your hope to make up £5 locally for the Cohen Presentation.

J. W. GOTT.—See paragraph. Your local platform ought to be well supported, and you should see that the cause of peace and order is assisted by discretion on the part of your speakers. What is suited to an audience trained to listen to what it may differ from is unsuited to an audience of a very different description. You must temper the wind to the shorn lamb—without making any concession to sheer rowdiness.

T. GIBBON.—Accept our sympathy. You must fight against dependency. *Reynolds'* was quite right. Cobbett's is a good English Grammar. Punctuation is not easy to teach; it all depends upon the sense, and the effect you want to produce; and different good authors have different methods.

A. E. PAYNE.—You asked us whether we could prove there was no God. We asked you to define "God." You say this is sheer ignorance. We wish you more sense and better manners.

THE COHEN PRESENTATION.—*Sixth List*:—C. C. £1, R. H. Side 10s. Martin Weatherburn 5s., W. C. Middleton £1 1s., J. Kemp 5s., W. Tipper 2s., Mr. How 2s. 6d., Mr. Goddard 2s. 6d., Mr. Brooks 1s., Mr. Dalgleish 1s., W. Metcalfe 2s. 6d., C. Riddle 5s. *Liverpool Branch*: W. Balfour £1, J. Balfour £1, G. Cowan 10s., J. Ross 2s. 6d., J. Bristow 2s. 6d., Mr. Marquis 10s., Mr. Howard 2s. 6d., T. Nolan 1s., J. Spalding 2s. 6d., Mrs. Forrer 5s., Mr. Seddon 5s., T. Jones 1s., J. Ralphoreyman 1s., M. Shaw 1s.

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

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A millionaire infidel named Norton has lately died in Louisville, Ky. He gave the money to build the Norton Infirmary and also the money to build a school. In his will he said that he wanted no religious services at his funeral but wanted his remains taken to Cincinnati to be cremated, and to be carried in a Pullman car with a number of his friends and plenty of champagne. So far as I know Mr. Norton is the largest giver to charity that ever lived in Louisville, and still the Christians will ask, "What good has any infidel ever done for the world?"—*Blue Grass Blade* (Lexington, Kentucky).

Personal.

MR. J. W. DE CAUX, J.P., 92 Jetty-road, Great Yarmouth, is asking Freethinkers to contribute towards providing Mr. G. W. Foote—the editor of the *Freethinker*, and President of the National Secular Society—with a long recuperative holiday, so that he may resume his former platform activity without fear of another breakdown. Subscriptions, which will be duly acknowledged, can be sent to Mr. de Caux, or (if preferred) direct to Mr. Foote. Owing to certain circumstances, every donation must be regarded as a gift to Mrs. Foote. And the friends who see this paragraph will please note that it will not be repeated.

Sugar Plums.

The July number of the *Pioneer* contains several interesting articles, and one of some importance by the editor on James Cotter Morison and his *Service of Man*, with some observations on the cheap reprint of this work, and on Mr. Frederic Harrison's peculiar Introduction. We commend this article to the attention of all Freethinkers.

During the holiday season our readers might make an effort to circulate copies of the *Freethinker* and the *Pioneer* in their wanderings. It should be quite easy to circulate a good many copies of the latter. It occupies a small space when folded up, and can be passed from hand to hand unostentatiously. It is also cheap. Copies for free distribution may be obtained from our publishing office at the following low rates: six copies 3d., twelve copies 5d., twenty-four copies 9d.—in each case post free. We may add that there is a larger proportion of Freethought in the July number of the *Pioneer* than in any previous issue.

We begin to publish in this week's *Freethinker* a series of articles entitled "From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform." It must be understood that these are not imaginary articles. To use the language of a famous Frenchman, they palpitate with actuality. The writer is known to us, and we hope our friends will have an opportunity of hearing him in the autumn, when we start the Sunday evening platform in London again. "Richard Trevor" is an assumed name. The writer's actual name will be disclosed in due course.

Mr. Cohen delivered his second course of lectures on the Town Moor, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Sunday. The evening audience was a very fine one. Two opponents were disposed of most satisfactorily. The lecturer was in first-rate form. We hope the local Branch will follow up the good impression he made.

The new Bradford Branch of the N. S. S. started an outdoor campaign on Sunday. Mr. Gott informs us that Mr. E. Pack was the lecturer, and that nothing was uttered by him that any but bigots could take exception to. Yet the orthodox rowdies were strongly in evidence, and the platform was stormed and all but broken up. Such brutal tactics must not be allowed to be successful. Mr. Pack speaks again today (July 5) on Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, at 3 and 6.30, and at Bradford on the following Wednesday evening; and it is to be hoped that the local "saints" will rally in support of the Freethought platform.

From a Freethought point of view there is cause for congratulation in the success of the Social Democrats at the recent poll in Germany, for most, if not all, the leaders of that party are Freethinkers. Politically and socially, it must not be supposed that the party is as homogeneous as it looks. The test of that will come when it passes from an opposition into a government. Meanwhile, we may count as entirely to the good its opposition to all public recognition of religion. The Social Democrats hold that the State should be absolutely secular; and some day or other they will have a sharp tussle with the Clerical party on the subject. The Clerical party is still the largest in the German parliament, although it lost three seats in the recent elections. It numbers 102 members, while the Social Democratic party numbers 81. This difference, however, is more than balanced in regard to religious matters, by the 51 members of the National Liberal party, who would probably vote straight in favor of secularisation.

Moses and the Pentateuch.—VIII.

AMONG the festivals which the Jews were commanded to observe in the "books of Moses" are the following: the Sabbath; the day of the New Moon; the Feast of Passover or Unleavened bread, lasting seven days; the Feast of Weeks, lasting seven days, celebrated fifty days after the Passover, whence called in later times the Feast of Pentecost; the Feast of Ingatherings or Tabernacles, lasting eight days, during which time the people were to dwell in booths made of the branches of trees; the Feast of Trumpets, lasting two days, the first of which marked the commencement of the Civil year; and the Fast of Expiation or Day of Atonement, on which day the high priest was commanded to offer sacrifices for the sins of the whole nation—the day to be observed by all as a strict fast, no work to be done on that day, and no food taken. These are represented as given by the Lord to Moses, and as being known and kept from the days of the last-named individual down to the present time. Not only were the Israelites commanded to keep these festivals, but, in the case of the three principal feasts, all the males who were old enough to undertake the journey, were further commanded to keep them at the temple in Jerusalem.

"Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able" (Deut. xvi. 16).

The Lord, it will be noticed, did not forget the shekels. Having, in this code, appointed priests and Levites to do the work of the Sanctuary, he knew that these holy men would require as much of this world's goods as they could get hold of. He had previously arranged that they should have tithes, as well as the primest portions of the animals sacrificed; but additional offerings were always acceptable. That these festivals were all kept by the Jews of later times—by those who lived after the return from the Exile in Babylon—no one thinks of disputing. The only question with which we are here concerned is: Were they known and observed before a certain book was found in the temple in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, king of Judah? This is the question we have now to determine.

In the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings we have the history of the Jewish nation, prior to the reign of Josiah, for a period of about nine hundred years. Now, if we examine these books carefully, we shall find that during the whole of this long period only two of the festivals named—the Sabbath and the day of the New moon—appear to have been known or kept. In the case of the two holy days mentioned, the evidence, though slight and incidental, may be taken as conclusive. Thus, we read that a certain Israelite, upon hearing that his wife was about to visit a "man of God," said to her: "Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon nor sabbath" (2 Kings iv. 23). Again, the prophet Amos, who lived about a century and a half before the time of Josiah, records the fact that many of the impious people of his day lamented, "saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" (viii. 5). These two holy days were certainly observed, though often grudgingly and unwillingly. They appear to have been very ancient institutions in Canaan, and were probably kept by all the inhabitants of that country. They were both derived, we know, from ancient Babylonia; "the Lord" had no hand in originating them.

The earliest mention of a "feast of the Lord" is in Judges xxi. In the primitive account in this chapter the chief men of all the Hebrew tribes save that of Benjamin give the following counsel to a number of wifeless Benjamites:—

"Behold there is a feast of the Lord *from year to year* in Shiloh.....Go and lie in wait in the vineyards; and see, and behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to

dance in the dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch ye every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh" (verses 19-21).

This excellent advice the Benjamites are stated to have acted upon. They "took them wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they carried off." In this passage—which by some wonderful chance has escaped revision—reference is made to an annual "feast of the Lord," it being at the same time clearly implied that only one festival was held each year. But it is easy to see that this feast was not one of the solemn festivals commanded to be observed in the "law of Moses." Where is the grand tabernacle? Where is the imposing army of priests and Levites? Not at this festival certainly. There can be little doubt that here we obtain a glimpse of an old Canaanitish feast, possibly that celebrated in the autumn in honor of the Sun-god Tammuz. Respecting this ancient festival Professor Sayce says: "Each year at Gebal, when the streams ran stained with the red clay of the hills, the women wept for the death of Tammuz, and saw his blood in the crimson waters by the side of which they sat. For seven days the funeral feast was celebrated, and the air was filled with cries and lamentations..... When the seven days of mourning were over, grief gave place to uncontrolled joy. It was now that the renewed union of the goddess Istar with Tammuz was enacted in the persons of the worshippers; the women gave themselves up to strangers in the courts of the temples, and license without restraint reigned on every side." Here, it is to be noticed, it was the women who did all the weeping, and who were the chief actors in this festival.

We learn from Ezekiel that in the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah before the Exile, many of the people of Israel believed that "the Lord hath forsaken the land," and so betook them to practices that formed no part of the worship of Yahveh. The Lord, however, had still an eye on the kingdom, and knew all that was going on there, and, on one occasion, called Ezekiel's attention to some of the doings in the temple. Says that prophet:—

"Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house, which was towards the north; and behold, there sat the women weeping for Tammuz. Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man?" (Ezek. viii. 14).

Ezekiel was, of course, shocked at such profanation; but it would seem that the old Canaanitish feasts and ceremonies had taken such firm hold of the people, that they were not easily extirpated, even after the finding of the "book of the law" in the reign of Josiah—and some of the kings that succeeded the latter, Zedekiah for instance, did not attempt to suppress them. In the time of the Judges, Yahveh was merely one of the gods of Canaan who was worshipped occasionally by some of the tribes, but more often was superseded by a rival deity.

In 1 Samuel i. we have an account of a certain pious Israelite named Elkanah, who "went up out of his city *from year to year* to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh." It is also stated that "the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord *the yearly sacrifice*, and his vow." There was thus an annual feast held in Shiloh "from year to year." But what about the Lord's command that "three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose"? This regulation was evidently unknown. The god-fearing Elkanah had certainly never heard of it; neither had Eli the chief priest, who had charge of the house of God at Shiloh. Neither had David, "the man after God's own heart"; neither had anyone else who lived before the time of Josiah. Solomon, it is recorded, summoned upon one occasion all the chief men of the kingdom to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast of the Lord, and he sacrificed "two and twenty thousand oxen and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep" (1 Kings viii. 63); but this was a special festival held at the dedication of the temple which had just been completed. Neither this favored king, nor any other king of Israel or Judah, before the

time of Josiah, appears to have known anything about the great festivals commanded to be observed by the whole nation in the "books of Moses."

If we believe the compiler of the Chronicles, the good king Hezekiah kept the feast of the Passover for seven days, and sacrificed 2,000 bullocks and 17,000 sheep (2 Chron. xxx.); but this statement, like many others made by the same editor, is not in harmony with fact. The compiler of the books of Kings knew nothing of the keeping of this Passover. Had he heard of it, he would certainly have recorded it; for the observance of this great festival in the manner related in the Chronicles would be one of the events in Hezekiah's reign which he could not possibly omit. Anything which had to do with the worship of "the Lord" took precedence of everything else. As to the Chronicles, it should be borne in mind that the editor of these books had before him the books of Samuel and Kings, from which he made copious extracts; and that the main object he had in view in writing a new version of Old Testament "history" was to make it appear that the Mosaic laws were known in early times, and were observed by David, Solomon, and other good kings.

We come now to the reign of Josiah, when "the book of the law" was mysteriously found in the temple. Previous to this reign there had been fifteen judges who had at different times exercised authority in the land, there had been three kings (Saul, David, and Solomon) who had for 120 years ruled over the entire kingdom, there had been nineteen kings who had borne rule over the northern province of Israel, and fifteen kings who had reigned in the southern kingdom of Judah. During this long period (about nine hundred years) there is no sign of the observance of any of the feasts mentioned in "the books of Moses," save only that the people refrained from labor on the days of the new moons and Sabbath. After the finding of "the book of the law," however, king Josiah gave orders that the feast of the Passover should be kept "as it is written in the book of the covenant"—which was done. Then comes the following remarkable statement, which the compiler of the Kings has allowed to stand:—

"Surely there was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah was this passover kept to the Lord in Jerusalem" (2 Kings xxiii. 22, 28).

Here we have proof that this festival was not kept by Hezekiah (who lived three generations before Josiah) as stated in the lying book of Chronicles. The editor of 2 Kings, who compiled that book from earlier writings, had means of knowing, and did know, that the feast of the Passover was first kept, as prescribed in the "Law of Moses," in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah, immediately after the finding of the book.

After the return from the Exile in Babylon we have a record of the first keeping of the Passover by a new generation of Jews (Ezra vi. 20) which we may take as historical. Later on we have an account of the first keeping of the feast of Tabernacles, according to the regulations in the law of Moses. "And they found written in the law, how that the Lord had commanded by Moses that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month" (Neh. viii. 14). This command is found only in the Priestly Code (Lev. xxiii. 42) which was unknown to king Josiah or to any one who lived before the Exile. With regard to the observance of this festival on that occasion we have the following very significant statement:—

"And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and dwelt in those booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so.....And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the ordinance" (Neh. viii. 17, 18).

Just so; the feast of Tabernacles was never kept before the Exile, and the feast of Passover was never

kept until the eighteenth year of Josiah (B.C. 612); which was only one generation before the destruction of Jerusalem and the commencement of the Exile. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the reason for the non-observance in both cases, as well as for that of the other festivals named in the books of Moses, is the same—the Lord's commands in those books were unknown. After the return from the Exile, when all the Mosaic laws were in existence, and were read by the priests and made known to the people, all the festivals were properly observed. It may be noticed that the compiler of 2 Kings speaks of the beginning of the nation as "the days of the judges"; while the author of the book of Nehemiah, following the fictitious account of the conquest of Canaan, mentions "the days of Joshua the son of Nun." The book of Joshua is a late writing, and by the same authors as the Pentateuch. The compiler of the Kings appears to have had no knowledge of this book, or of the great general who performed all the wonders recorded in it.

ABRACADABRA.

Jesus and Paine.

(AN ADDRESS IN THE PAINE MEMORIAL HALL, BOSTON, BY L. K. WASHBURN, EDITOR OF THE *Boston Investigator*.)

(Continued from page 412.)

If Jesus was possessed of divine power why did he not do something practical, something useful, something that would help the world? Why did he not give to man the telescope, the microscope, the sewing-machine, the reaper and binder, the printing-press, the telegraph and the telephone, the power loom, the cotton-gin, ether or chloroform, something that would increase human knowledge, something that would save the backs of the toilers, the tired eyes and worn fingers of mothers, something that would banish suffering and agony, something that would sweeten life and give more music to the dull air?

He saw men wanting everything and he gave them nothing; saw them poor, lowly, and unfortunate, and he never told them how to better their condition; saw them naked, and told them that God would clothe them; saw them hungry, and told them that God would feed them; saw them cold, and said that God would make it hot for them; heard them crying for bread, and he pronounced beatitudes upon them.

Jesus, out of all his miraculous wealth, did not give to the world a brass pin, a cut nail, a lucifer match, an agate button, a glass bottle, a lead pencil, a fish-hook, a jack-knife, or a pair of spectacles. Take those few things out of human life to-day, and back to the "chaos and old night" of barbarism would man go in one minute; and yet Jesus did not seem to know the importance of one of those things.

Jesus had twelve apostles—twelve men whom he selected to carry out his mission to mankind. When he sent them forth into the world, what do you suppose he told them to do? To show the people how to make window-glass, how to do sanitary plumbing, how to saw logs into shingles and clapboards, how to make a cook-stove, how to distil illuminating gas, how to make a leather shoe, how to construct a clock, how to make a plough, how to build a ship, how to manufacture paper, or how to make soap? Not a bit of it. Jesus told his apostles to go, "preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." That was his charge. The apostles were to be preachers, doctors, and—impostors. The kingdom of heaven which was "at hand" two thousand years ago has not shown up yet; the dead have never been brought back to life; leprosy is still an incurable disease; and devils have never been found by the surgeon's skill in human bodies.

The only sane thing that Jesus charged his apostles to do was to heal the sick, but not one of them immortalised his name as a physician by his remarkable cures.

We live in a magnificent age; in an age of wondrous inventions, of glorious achievements; in an age when science stands triumphant upon prostrate superstition; in an age of emancipated mind, of intellectual light and moral warmth; in an age when humanity's heart is touched by humanity's wants; in an age when the welfare of man is the highest concern of human government.

What did Jesus contribute towards the glories of this age? Had men obeyed his voice, they would still be standing with folded hands and praying lips. The fertile brain of man, and not any father in heaven, sowed all the seeds of progress and civilisation.

Jesus never said a word that would put a star on our flag; never said a word out of which could come the Declaration of Independence; never uttered a sentence from which could grow the public school, the public library, or the public platform. Jesus did not work for his fellow-man, but for his Father in heaven. He told men to seek the kingdom of God, not the republic of man. That kind of talk never would have pushed this world ahead half an inch politically, socially, or morally. Jesus and his Father in heaven together did not do what Thomas Paine did for human freedom, for human enlightenment, for human happiness.

A great many people think that we have no right to speak of Jesus as if he were a man; no right to criticise his words or deeds as reported in the Bible. They say that it is irreverent to do so. I want to say that I have no reverence for myths, for impossible beings, for falsehoods or frauds; no reverence for priests and their impositions; but I have reverence for right, for justice, for truth, for anything and everything that consults man's interest and man's well-being.

It may shock the miseducated ears of some Christians to hear the names of Jesus and Paine coupled together, but I think that I can show that Jesus has been in worse company. People who worship Jesus think they do no wrong in slandering Thomas Paine. It is irreverent to my mind to lie about a great and good man; far more than to tell the truth or to give an honest piece of one's mind about a Holy Ghost.

Too many people reverence what is called "holy" without inquiring whether it is good for anything. Now, my test of goodness is usefulness, and I apply it to things religious as well as to things secular. Does it help man in this life? That is the question. If a thing does not help man here, then it is no good. I do not want to buy stock in gold mines in another world, and pay for them in the gold of this world. The holy things of the Church are of no practical value. You could not sell them on a bargain-counter. Not a thing that Jesus did is put into practice by man to-day—except praying, and that is putting a pump into a dry well. Real things are holier than "holy" things. A good home is worth a dozen heavens. What is beneficial to man is more sacred than what priests and ministers have mumbled a lot of pious nonsense over. If only those things are holy which have been consecrated by a priest, I prefer to take mine profane.

I honor all the sensible teachings of Jesus, and would not rob him of one leaf of the laurel of fame which honestly crowns his dead brow; but I must let my lips speak the truth, and say that, grand as are some of the moral precepts in the "Sermon on the Mount," it would have been impossible for Abraham Lincoln to have found his Emancipation Proclamation in its words. The slave had to wait nineteen hundred years after Jesus died before there was enough love of man in the breast of a nation on this earth to strike the shackles from his limbs; and, more than this, the followers of Jesus called those who advocated the abolition of slavery—infidels.

The pathway to liberty from the first morning of the first year of the first Christian century has been blocked by men who upheld tyranny in the name of God. Aye, and through all those long centuries was the struggle for human liberty resisted by those ordained to do the divine will, and the sword of the

Church, which was drawn to defend God, was plunged into the hearts of the noblest lovers of men. But, in the language of Byron:—

They never fail who die
In a great cause; the block may soak their gore;
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls—
But still their spirit walks abroad. Tho' years
Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

THE KING AT ST. PAUL'S.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I read your leader under the above title with feelings of the deepest regret that such poor stuff should fill space in the *Freethinker*.

I had to turn over the front page and look at the signature before I could believe that the articles which have appeared on Emerson—articles which had a literary perfume all their own, and which have, I am sure, delighted all who have read them—could have come from the same pen as the "clotted bosh" appearing this week.

In the first place, it is simply untrue to say that "the King went to St. Paul's to do the doctors a good turn," and you ought to know it. The King went to St. Paul's for the same purpose the dance was held in the Albert Hall—to raise money for a charity; and "the doctors" were as much thought of in the one case as in the other.

You will perhaps allow me to tell you—as you certainly don't convey the impression that you know—in the first place, that there are only *very few* of the medical profession connected at all with hospitals, and that these men give their time and talents voluntarily, without hope or wish of reward; and, secondly, that *the large body* of the profession—men who have to earn their daily bread the same as you—suffer considerably in a financial sense from the hospital system of this country, and yet you have the ignorant audacity to assert "that their exploitation of the King has reached the proportions of a grave public scandal."

The plain truth is, as you would write, that not a single member of the medical profession has anything to do with the handling or distribution, "departed" or otherwise, of the hospital funds, and that not a penny of this money, directly or indirectly, reaches the pocket of any medical man; and it is a gross libel even to imply such a thing, as you do.

You surely, if you knew anything of hospital management, could never have written "that the doctors are exploiting the King for their own ends in getting him to act as a supreme advertiser of THEIR hospital funds."

Every hospital in London, and in this country, is managed by a lay committee. Everything the physicians and surgeons on the staff require has to go before this committee, which is comprised of the most diverse elements; and anyone who has worked with an hospital lay committee will tell you how difficult it is to get even the necessaries of everyday hospital life without a struggle. I have been connected with several hospitals in this country, and I have never seen anything that the most particular could object to in the way of management; but, as the medical officer, I never had a vote on the committee, whose chief concern regarding their medical officer was to know if he was a good surgeon, and to pay him a journeyman's wages.

You say that the medical profession, like other professions, requires watching, instancing "dogmas like vaccination and matters like vivisection." The juxtaposition of these two in your article is not just. Vaccination is a subject on which medical scientists can honestly differ. I am an Atheist, but a strong advocate of vaccination. Vivisection, rightly understood, is the horror of all—the hell of science, as Ingersoll said—and requires no "special conscience," as you write.

If you seriously are of opinion that "the poor are doctored for nothing in order that large incomes may be derived from doctoring the rich, that this is the 'raison d'être' of hospitals, all else is by the way," then your mind is in a state of utter chaos on this question; and the sooner you make a careful inspection of a few hospitals, the better, and inquire into their management, their method of working, etc., etc.; or, if we can make an appointment, I shall have much pleasure in showing you sufficient of hospital life to clear your mind of the most serious ignorance on an important question that I have ever met in a man of your position.

One cannot help but feel pity at the long screed you write about "the bias of their profession," etc., which reminds one

of the scribblings of a Salvation Army penny-a-liner. How you can read into the words of the Bishop of Stepney any such meaning as that "the doctors want to keep the hospitals on the present basis, and are exploiting the King for that object," passes my comprehension; as, indeed, also does the question why you have written this leading article at all.

You say "far more might be said on this subject, and we are ready to say it if challenged." I would like to know from you how many hospitals you have been inside of in London and in the provinces; and, when you have satisfied "the interests of common sense and common justice" by enumerating these, I shall expect you to show a concrete instance through which you have been impelled to write this leading article, "in the interests of common decency and common morality."

I imagine from this leader that you must have some strong animus against the medical profession, and that you are incapable of discussing anything even remotely connected with it in an unbiassed manner.

Whether the municipalisation of hospitals would be well or not, is a question you may discuss with your friends, the Socialists. I am only anxious, as a Freethinker, to utter the strongest protest I can against an article in the *Freethinker*, the very basis of which is untrue, and I must say, without wishing to be offensive, the tone of which is not worthy of the pen that wrote it.

THOMAS MARSHALL.

[The tone and language of the above letter prove that our article was necessary. If this is how the medical profession takes criticism, it is high time to increase the dose and administer it more frequently. Our correspondent is so angry that he overlooks a good deal of what we wrote and misreads all the rest. The professional bias, which he so fiercely denies, flashes forth in every sentence. We said (for instance) that "plenty of doctors are good and true men individually, and some of them belong to the finest type of humanity;" yet we are accused of cherishing "some strong animus against the medical profession."

With regard to the Hospital funds, we never said or hinted that the doctors handled them; what we said was that the present system, which the doctors were trying to perpetuate, placed the hospitals "under the immediate control of the medical profession." And this we adhere to, in spite of what this correspondent says about the "lay committees." These committees control the purse-strings, but they do not really control the hospitals. It is idle to try to blind sensible laymen with mere technicalities.

Everybody knows that only a relatively small part of the medical profession are connected with hospitals, but these "few" are often of very considerable importance; and, through the students, who are not a few, it is still a fact, as we stated, that "the hospitals are training grounds for the medical profession." We are quite aware, again, that a number of medical men connected with hospitals "give their time and talents voluntarily." Everybody knows that too. But have these medical men no outside practice? And does this correspondent mean to say that the wholesale experience they gain in treating the poor for nothing does not enable them to make large incomes from the treatment of richer patients?

Our correspondent's offer is doubtless well-intentioned, but it is superfluous. A thousand visits to hospitals under his guidance could not possibly affect our view of the *system*. We made no charges against the internal management. That is another question altogether. We have our opinion upon it, and that opinion is based upon information, but it is not germane to the present controversy.

It is obvious that our correspondent detests the idea of municipalising the hospitals. His last paragraph proves it. And this may prevent him from discussing the question we raised in "an unbiassed manner."

We are glad to hear our correspondent calling himself an Atheist. We are also glad to see him taking Ingersoll's view of vivisection. But how does he account for the "professional bias" of the craft towards the wrong side of this question? Only the other night, in the House of Commons, men of light and leading in the medical profession were defending vivisection, and defending it with arguments that, even from an intellectual point of view, were unworthy of a South African bushman.

The "professional bias" of doctors makes the overwhelming majority of them favor vaccination. The medical profession was infallible when it opposed vaccination, and is equally infallible now in supporting it. The truth is that vaccination is a dogma which medical men learnt when they were students, just as parsons learnt the Thirty-nine Articles. Whether a doctor is in favor of vaccination or not ought only to be a question for his own patients. It is the medical dogma, established by law, and enforced by fines and imprisonment, that the public is more and more objecting to. The promotion of this dogma by such means is enough to satisfy lovers of liberty that doctors do "want watching."—EDITOR.]

MORAL SUASION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of June 7, under the heading of "Acid Drops," you designate the friends of Temperance "fanatics"; that they are such because of their advocacy of social and political coercion; that they have dropped mental and moral persuasion, etc. Really, is this a true statement of affairs?

I think not. I candidly admit that moral suasion has done much for the world, and it has done much for the Temperance party. Even from the midst of deepest ruin, some quiet word or kindly deed has brought back the erring to virtue and duty. And, Mr. Editor, I venture to think that it is doing much yet for the Temperance cause, while there are hearts to love and be affected by its kindness. But moral suasion has its limits. It will neither preserve the child from danger nor the vicious from crime. It is too feeble to combat the drunkard's appetite when excited by temptation, and it is too feeble to combat the selfishness by which unprincipled men are actuated. Will moral suasion do for the drunkard? My conviction is that drunkards, as a class, never will be reclaimed by argument or motive. They know their duty; but their moral purpose is weak. With the temptation to their besetting sin meeting them at every step they take along the street, how can we expect to preserve them? Why do so many who take the pledge of abstinence go back to their vile habits? The temptation is to be found in the allurements of companions; but were the facilities for indulgence destroyed, comparatively few would be tempted to abandon the resolution of abstinence.

The question assumes an aspect of national importance when we reflect that if intemperance is permitted to destroy our most gifted minds, and add to the burden of our national taxation, while America emancipates herself from this social curse, and continues to progress, as she has been doing, in manufacturing and mechanical inventions, we shall find ourselves speedily on the verge of national ruin. I am a strong advocate of legislative suppression of intemperance, and, if I am a "fanatic" for such a position, then I glory in the fact. I contend that if it is right in law to punish crime, it is right in law to prevent crime. Let a man steal or murder, and vengeance is instantly on his track, while no city of refuge quickens his pace; but let a man make as many thieves and murderers by means of alcohol as he pleases, and no penalty is inflicted. I'm afraid your "moral persuasion" remedy falls somewhat flat here, Mr. Editor. I prefer to embrace "political coercion," and permit someone else to be the "reformer."

EDWIN E. KITCHENER.

[We insert this correspondent's letter to show that we are very far from wishing to play the part of an infallible Pope. What he says, however, is really no reply to our paragraph. Drunkards are not the only factor in the drink problem; and as a matter of fact, we never referred to them. The question is both large and complicated. It cannot be discussed in a footnote. But this may be said at once: that all the teetotallers in England have been made so by moral suasion, and that all the sober people in England are kept so by their own common sense.—EDITOR.]

SUMMER FOODS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The English people are too largely the slaves of custom in their habits of eating. There is not enough adaptation of diet among them to the changes of temperature and the variations of the seasons. This is the special month of the year in which the temperature attains a permanent increase in heat, and in which a rapid interchange of the fluids of the blood takes place owing to increased perspiration.

At the same time, Nature provides a fitting change of food by supplying a profusion of juicy salads and vegetables, and the luscious first-fruits of the orchard.

It is at this season of the year that the rheumatic and gouty and scorbutic tendencies engendered by heavy winter dietary can be best thrown off by giving up flesh food entirely, and by adopting a fruitarian *regime* with additions of eggs and milk.

The result in many cases is marvellous, and a new lightness and joy in life replace the megrims and weariness that so often follow the continuance of winter foods into the spring and summer.

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A PHYSICIAN.

A PERMANENT CURE.—Hodge: "You mean to say that Christian Science cured you?" Podge: "Sure." Hodge: "Of appendicitis?" Podge: "No. Of Christian Science."—*Brooklyn Life*.

KNEW THE BROTHER.—Struggling Pastor: "Brother Skinfint intends to give our new chapel a beautiful memorial window." Wife: "He probably wants something to look at when the contribution box goes around."—*New York Weekly*.

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.**OUTDOOR**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, G. Parsons, "Secularism Triumphant."

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): 11.30, A Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): A Lecture.

STRATFORD GROVE: 7, F. Davies, "Wicked Voltaire."

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

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Morley-square): Wednesday, July 8, at 7, Ernest Pack, "Life and Times of Jesus."

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): 3, Ernest Pack (of London), "Free-thought and Religion"; 6.30, "Miracles."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Wellington Column, 3, and Islington-square, 7.15; Edge Hill Lamp, Monday, 8, H. Percy Ward.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting: Annual Excursion and Lectures.

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