

# THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*The miracles of the New Testament no longer heal, but hurt mankind.*—THEODORE PARKER.

## Soul Snatchers.

HEINE pointed out that death-bed conversions belonged to the region of pathology; they only proved that man turns to religion when he is old and fatigued, when his physical and mental force has left him; and they were very poor evidence for the cause of the priests. "After all," Heine said, "they only prove this, that it was impossible for you to convert those Freethinkers while they were healthy in body and mind."

Yet in spite of this truth, so evident to reason, however it may appear to faith, the Church (nay, *all* the Churches) has always made the most desperate efforts to convert notorious Freethinkers at their last hours. When these efforts were clearly futile, as in the cases of Voltaire and Paine, the Church has avenged itself by concocting the most infamous falsehoods; representing that, although these great Freethinkers did not die penitent, they at least died in raving despair. Now and then the Church has hypocritically stepped in when all was really over, when the dying Freethinker was in a state of unconsciousness, and administered the last rites of Christianity to what was practically a corpse. This was done, by the wife's connivance, in the case of M. Littré, the famous French Positivist. It was even attempted in the case of Victor Hugo.

Sometimes there is no need for such desperate efforts. There are diseases which kill Freethinkers as well as other people; diseases which gradually rob the victims of their strength, and leave them at last in a state of helplessness, and quite at the mercy of those around them. Is it any wonder that, in such cases, the pressure of orthodox relatives and friends proves too much for the enfeebled brain, that the little power of resistance left breaks down, and that a passive acquiescence gives room for the pretence of an active conviction? It was a danger like this which made Renan utter his splendid warning. "I protest in advance," he said, "against the fatuities that a softened brain may make me say or sign. It is Renan sound in heart and head, such as I am now, and not Renan half destroyed by death, as I shall be if I decompose gradually, that I wish people to listen to and believe."

Not a great many years ago, the good Bishop Gore, who is now crusading against slightly worse heretics than himself, assisted in this sort of conversion of Professor George Romanes. We say he *assisted*, for there were domestic agencies more powerful than his own. Professor Romanes, in the heyday of his vigor, had written the *Candid Examination of Theism*, and (although anonymously) had proclaimed himself as an utter unbeliever. But he died of a wasting disease, and when he was brought low, and was in all respects but the shadow of his former self, those around him made him a kind of a Christian, and morally drugged him into membership of the Church of England.

Something like a similar farce, we suspect, was played in the case of Mr. George Gissing, the

distinguished novelist, who died so recently. The *Church Times* prints a communication from "R. I. P." (ominous initials!) to the effect that Mr. Gissing ended his life as a sheep in the penfold of faith. Here is an extract from this precious narrative:—

"Although certain journals have laid great emphasis upon the hopelessness of his religious outlook, and have not hesitated even to brand him as the 'Apostle of Pessimism,' yet, in reality, his was a mind always groping towards the light, and longing to find it. This longing, we are glad to record, was at length satisfied, and George Gissing, after much uncertainty and lack of assurance, died at last in the fear of God's Holy Name, and with the comfort and strength of the Catholic Church."

"Catholic Church," in the *Church Times*, does not mean the great Church that radiates over the world from Rome. The statement really is that Mr. Gissing died in the Church of England. The funeral service took place in the English Church of the Nativity at St. Jean de Luz, and the burial in the town cemetery.

Details of this "conversion" are not vouchsafed. Perhaps it is not thought advisable to give them yet. They may cause less unpleasant agitation if they are given hereafter. There is a judicious practice in "the Catholic Church" which common people would call lying. Its technical name is the economy of truth. And we fancy we detect it here—by the "ancient and fishlike smell."

The important fact to be borne in mind is this—*Mr. Gissing died of consumption*. His case was in this respect similar to the case of Professor Romanes. And there was, of course, the same opportunity for the arts of the soul-snatchers. That the opportunity existed, and was taken advantage of, is almost proved by the apologetic tone of this announcement in the *Church Times*.

Mr. Gissing was a Pagan when he wrote *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, which was published less than a year ago. No "longing" nor "groping" was apparent then. He was simply amused at "the superficial forms of reaction against scientific positivism." His own position was Agnostic. He believed that the "Reason of the All" transcended his understanding, and that no glimmer of it would ever touch his apprehension. On the practical side, he thought life was a failure. "Yet compare it," he said, with what might be, if men respected manhood, if human reason were at the service of human happiness."

This last expression is an admirable epitome of Secularism. What a different world we should all be living in now if human reason *had* been at the service of human happiness! It has unfortunately been too often at the service of human misery. Men have been fooled, oppressed, and plundered by liars and scoundrels who traded on the easy credulity of their fellows; robbing them of their welfare in this life, and compensating them with all sorts of fine expectations in the sweet by-and-bye. Small wonder is it that these men still ply their ancient trade, and still batten on the sorry weakness and pathetic hopes and fears of their dupes and victims. That they—or others working under their inspiration—captured Mr. Gissing when he was no longer able to defend himself, is a fact which need not astonish us, however we may regret it.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Herbert Spencer: The Man and His Work.

### III.

THAT Spencer's account of the nature of religion, as given in the first part of *First Principles*, is hopelessly wrong, will be seen if we turn to his own account of the origin and development. It is characteristic of the religious mind that while freely quoting Spencer as a believer in an "Unknowable," an "Unseen Reality," etc., and therefore impressing mental weaklings with the belief that he was a believer in religion, the fact has been carefully hidden that Spencer's account of the origin of religious beliefs completely destroys them all.

First of all, if any reader turns to the *Principles of Sociology*, chap. 7, he will find an analysis of the mental character of primitive man that leaves no room whatever for an "Unknowable." He points out that primitive man is deficient in a conception of general facts, he is credulous owing to want of development of a due sense of causation, there is an absence of curiosity, unreflectiveness is general, and whereas he is "commonly pictured as theorising about surrounding phenomena, in fact, the need for explanation seldom occurs to him." Now, bearing in mind that Mr. Spencer demonstrates that it is with this type of mind that religion began, one may well ask whether it is reasonable to believe that this incurious, credulous, unreflective being could have been responsible for the origin of religion, if religion has always asserted the existence of an "unknown reality," or of "a supreme verity transcending experience?" Clearly, either Spencer's account of the mental characteristics of primitive man is wrong, or his description of the essential nature of religion is wrong.

And if any further evidence is needed, it may be found in those chapters of the *Principles of Sociology* wherein Spencer traces step by step the genesis and development of the ideas of a future life, of God, and other religious beliefs. He points out the net result of the savage interpretation of dreams, swoons, echoes, apoplexy, catalepsy, is to induce a belief in a double, something that is separable from the body, which leaves it at times, and returns after having visited various places and witnessed different scenes. To the primitive type of intelligence death is a case of suspended animation of a longer duration than is usual. This, while responsible for a whole host of ceremonies—burying food and weapons with the dead, and killing the wives and servants of the dead—produces a belief in a future life, interpreted always in terms of the prevailing social conditions. The ceremonies that spring up around the graves of departed chiefs and relations, the belief that the ghosts of the dead influence cosmic phenomena, inflict disease and confer benefits, these lead insensibly to the deification of ancestors, and from this root all notions of deity may be traced.

There is no need to discuss here the claims of Animism to an independent origin, it is enough to merely outline the fact that Mr. Spencer traces all religious ideas to the sources referred to above. It may be noted, however, in passing, that Mr. A. C. Lyall's researches among the peoples of India, where he shows such deification of recently deceased persons to be now taking place, the Chinese people, whose religious evolution practically halted at this stage, and the numerous examples of the deification of individuals to be found in Greek and Roman history, all lend very strong support to Spencer's conclusions.

The only point that needs emphasis is that, after this analysis and synthesis, it is almost absurd to speak of the essence of religion as concerned with that which transcends experience. It is, on the contrary, quite plain that religion began because man was dealing with facts that came under his everyday experience, and his religion was his interpretation of them. There is no consciousness of an "Unknowable"; there is only a misunderstanding of

the known. The "Unknowable," whether in the Spencerian or other form, is only a later invention of the metaphysical spirit reading an interpretation into the facts, instead of extracting information from them.

As to the method of reconciling religion and science, without wishing to appear disrespectful to Mr. Spencer, one can only regard this as a huge joke, albeit of the unconscious variety. All that is known, or can be known, says Mr. Spencer, is the property of science; all that is not known, and never can be known, belongs to religion; and when each party recognises this, conflict will cease. "Permanent peace will be reached when science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are proximate and relative; while religion becomes fully convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute." That is, when science has monopolised the entire field of human knowledge, actual and possible, and when religion is convinced that it knows nothing of what it is worshipping, and can know nothing, that it can offer man nothing in the shape of counsel or advice, but that its sole function is to eternally offer man an unanswerable conundrum, to sit in owl-like solemnity contemplating an insoluble mystery, like a Hindoo fakir meditating on nothing, then there will be peace between science and religion. And this is called a reconciliation! It is the plan on which Poland was reconciled to Russia. Mr. Spencer finds two combatants engaged in a deadly struggle; he murders one, and offers the corpse to the survivor, with the pious wish that they may now live happily together. The religion that is reconciled to science on these terms is committing suicide to save itself from slaughter. There is surely little enough comfort for the religious man in the reflection that science must eventually monopolise the entire field of conduct and knowledge, while religion is left to work in an airless atmosphere, to worship an unknowable object, to cry "Mystery, mystery—all is mystery," leaving its old enemy to monopolise human attention.

Fortunately, the "Unknowable" is not an essential portion of the Synthetic Philosophy. It is on the philosophy of the knowable that Herbert Spencer's fame must rest; and whatever qualifications or modifications future research may necessitate, there is little doubt as to the positive and historic importance of his work.

The greatest generalisation of science is that of the indestructibility of Force. We need not express this in its more familiar dualistic form of matter and force, because all analysis of our perception of matter brings us to that of force. No wider generalisation than this is possible. All science presupposes it; it is, indeed, in the nature of an axiom, once it is understood. Taking this highest of all scientific generalisations as a starting point, Spencer proceeds to establish a series of corollaries, all of which are summarised in his famous "Law of Evolution," which, if granted, does for the whole universe what Newton has done in physics and Darwin in the more limited field of organic nature. The Spencerian formula of Evolution is of necessity a highly abstract one, and some little patience is requisite in order to master it in all its bearings. Eliminating some of the steps, an idea may be gained by the following brief summary.

One of the first things to strike an observer is that the universe is in a constant state of change. In the inorganic and organic world, in the world of ideas and of institutions, change is everywhere taking place. A little further study discloses the additional fact that this change is not a random one. There are certain general features connected therewith, all of which may be brought under two or three headings. The first of these is that all change is from a simple to a more complex state, or the reverse. But dismissing the latter form for the time, we may say that all change is from a simple homogeneous condition towards a complex heterogeneous condition. Illustrations of this may be found in the development of a planet from the

nebulae, in the development of geologic phenomena consequent upon the earth's cooling from the primitive molten state, in the development of society, of language, and of institutions.

But the transformation is not one towards complexity only, but towards coherence and interdependence. Society here furnishes the clearest and simplest illustration. As mankind emerges from the primitive conditions, there arises a greater division of labor, necessitating a greater interdependence among its members, which again involves a more definite coherence among the various parts of the social organism. And this alteration in social life where structure and function become more complex and more coherent may be paralleled by the changes in the solar system, where the primitive nebulae disposes itself into sun, planets, and satellites, or in geology, where the earth originally cooling by simple radiation only, forms a solid crust, and dissipates its retained heat in various ways. Animate life shows precisely the same features. There is everywhere, in short, this steady change from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the definite, from the incoherent to the coherent, structure and function being two sides of the same thing.

Or we may, following Spencer, reverse the chain of reasoning, and show how all these alterations result necessarily from one first principle, as follows. Starting with a primitive homogenous substance Spencer shows how this is, by its very nature, unstable; some change must result. A piece of iron, of equal heat throughout, cools, and at once difference is set up of a cool outside and a warmer inside. The evolution of language, society, etc., shows a similar feature. And these changes once set going continue *with increasing differences*, as the effect of the cooling of the earth gives rise to chemical, thermal, and meteorologic phenomena. Further, these changes are rendered coherent by the principle of segregation, the principle that the same force operates differently upon different objects in proportion to their unlikeness. This may be illustrated by the fact that if a handful of dust is thrown into the air, particles of the least weight will be carried furthest, the heavier ones falling nearest to hand. In social life this is illustrated by the associations formed for philanthropic, scientific, religious, or other purposes. Whether one works from the principle of the Persistence of Force, or to it, the same conclusion is reached. There is everywhere going on a process of change, which is summarised by Spencer as follows:—

“Evolution is an integration of matter and a concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.”

I have done but scant justice to the rare wealth of illustration with which Spencer illustrates each of the principles above noted; but in anything short of a volume further elaboration would be impossible. To guard against misunderstanding, however, it must be pointed out that Spencer by no means loses sight of an equally important fact in addition to evolution, and that is dissolution. Evolution is only one aspect of the history of the universe; there is a descending as well as an ascending change; and full allowance is made for this. But the formula of evolution as stated by Spencer covers *all* the facts as no other generalisation has done—indeed, none other has been attempted. And in the light of that generalisation, with its wide survey and encyclopædic marshalling of facts, I do not think one is without justification in placing its author upon at least as lofty a pedestal as Laplace or Newton.

(To be continued.)

C. COHEN.

## The Dilemma of Modern Theology.

NOTHING has been more patent, during the last year or two, than the utter inability of theology to repulse the hostile advance of science. Latterly this onward march of the true knowledge of Nature has been marvellously rapid and irresistible; but, while people generally are deeply thankful for it, it has plunged the divines into a state of ominous desperation. The official Defenders of the Faith are at their wits' end, and passionately cling to the feeblest straw. Having made numerous concessions and surrendered position after position to the enemy, they are now compelled to admit that their last and strongest citadel is in serious danger. How pitifully impotent they are! how they foam at the mouth with rage and quake with fear! how weak and ineffective is their answering fire! When that famous book, *The Riddle of the Universe*, first appeared in an English translation, both the Pulpit and the religious Press ignored it, pooh-poohing it as a work of no scientific importance. I can testify that for the last thirty years Christian leaders have invariably described Professor Haeckel as a tenth-rate scientist, as a blind advocate of pure materialism, and as guilty of something very akin to charlatanism. It was confidently asserted—I myself often ignorantly repeated the assertion—that all the leading scientists were completely out of touch with him. Hence when his new book was issued it was decided to slay it with contempt. The most effective answer to it would be to let it severely alone. But, unfortunately for the theologians, the public took a fancy to it and began to read and admire it, and “Nunquam” duly boomed it among his 50,000 weekly readers. The book went everywhere, and everybody was talking about it. Then Christian Apologists awoke to the fact that unless they did something for the defence and honor of the Faith very quickly the case would inevitably go against them. The working-classes were being confirmed in their religious indifference, and, with many of them, mere indifference was rapidly blossoming into blatant unbelief. What could be done to counteract this fresh attack upon Religion? The first device was to underestimate the enemy's forces. Great Britain committed the same blunder at the commencement of the South African war, and had to atone for it with rivers of precious blood and millions of money. So the theologians said, of Dr. Haeckel's book, “This foe is scarcely worthy of our steel,” and contented themselves with pouring contempt and ridicule upon the poor German philosopher. Men who are regarded as shining examples of Christian meekness and toleration waxed furious in denunciation of this scientific nobody. Even Dr. Horton removed his kid gloves, forgot his good manners, and treated his congregation, not to a strong chain of reasoning, not to a convincing refutation of Monism, but to an angry tirade of personal abuse against the venerable scientist, calling him “a rude, ill-mannered, ignorant child,” “an atrophied soul, a being that is blind on the spiritual side,” “an unthinking mind,” “an utterly unsatisfactory and essentially ignorant guide,” whose teaching is calculated to plunge mankind into inconceivable “depths of degradation and despair.” We cannot but admire the amazing politeness and exemplary moderation of this preacher of the Gospel of Christ! His modesty is a perfect miracle! But of calm, well-balanced arguments against Haeckel's position, he gives us none. He merely reasserts the truth of the Christian Religion without even attempting to prove it. That was never a successful method of killing giants, nor is it likely to be so now.

Everybody remembers the clamorous advent of the Rev. Frank Ballard to the *British Weekly*, and how we were confidently assured it would not take him long to give the Monistic Philosophy its well-deserved quietus. With the air of an experienced and successful warrior, Mr. Ballard sharpened his weapons, got his big guns into position, breathed out

Admitting that all is true that has been said about the existence of God, I do not see what I can do for him; and I do not see either what he can do for me, judging by what he has done for others.—*Ingersoll*,

terrible threatenings against the enemy; but somehow or other he never succeeded in hitting the foe once, and the big guns never went off at all. Seriously, Mr. Ballard's performance was an ignominious failure, the poorest thing of its kind ever witnessed. Others, such as Mr. Rhondda Williams and Dr. Loofs, have tried their hands at the same game, and with the same result. During the present winter a thousand preachers are endeavoring to annihilate Dr. Haeckel from the Pulpit; and they enjoy the advantage of making what statements they please unchallenged. But judging by the sermons on the subject already published, these men are but feebly repeating the performances of Dr. Horton and Mr. Ballard. It never seems to dawn upon any of them that the people are getting unspeakably sick and tired of bald assertions and unverifiable dogmas.

It cannot be emphasised too much or too often that science has dealt a fatal blow to all religions in which the Supernatural is a vital element. Geology has discredited Genesis, Astronomy has stripped the earth of its Biblical pre-eminence, Evolution has supplanted the theory of Special Creation, and destroyed the belief in the soul as a distinct entity, and the comparison of religions has conclusively shown that Christ and Christianity cannot be put in a class by themselves. These are facts that cannot be intelligently controverted. No eloquence, however impassioned, no denunciation, however vehement, can ever touch them. Abuse is no argument, and rant carries no conviction. Preaching at Dr. Horton's Church last Sunday, Professor Garvil, of Aberdeen, said: "If we believed the Holy Scriptures we had evidence of God's presence with men and of God's blessing for men." But the overwhelming majority of people do not believe the Holy Scriptures and therefore, have no evidence of God's presence with and blessing for men. The Higher Criticism has made it abundantly clear that the Bible is anything but holy, in the sense understood by Orthodoxy. If there is nothing but the Bible to prove the Divine presence and blessing, it is high time to give up preaching the Gospel of Christ, and to teach people to rely upon their own resources, because the number of those who believe in the Bible is extremely small. Christian Apologists of any intelligence to-day are aware that the facts are dead against them, and under such circumstances how can they effectively defend their cause? If the General of an army believes, not only that the enemy is three times as strong as he, but also has the right on his side, how can he inspire his officers and men to fight with the conviction that they must win? So, likewise, if a Christian advocate is but a half-hearted believer in his own cause, how is it possible for him to defend it with any degree of success? If a Christian says to an unbeliever, "I agree with most of what you have said," what chance has he to succeed as champion of the Faith? Science has undermined the Christian Religion, as widely read Christians well know, and this is the reason why there is so little vital discussion at Free Thought and Rationalist meetings. An ever-increasing number of nominal, church-going Christians are at heart genuine Freethinkers, and conscientiously cannot attack the positions of the Secularists. Some of the most popular preachers of to-day have ceased to believe in the Bible as an inspired and infallible Book, and it goes without saying that they cannot honestly defend it against the destructive criticism of either friends or foes.

The accuracy of this representation may be abundantly proved from current religious newspapers and periodicals, particularly from the *Christian World*, the organ of the New Theology among Nonconformists, and the *Guardian*, one of the weekly publications of the Established Church. In the latter a spirited correspondence is going on with reference to the enforced resignation of the Rev. Mr. Beeby. Judged by the theological standards of the Church, Mr. Beeby is undoubtedly heterodox; and it cannot be denied that Bishop Gore had a perfect right to call

him to account. But the correspondence reveals the fact that Mr. Beeby did not by any means stand alone. The Established Church shelters many others who are theologically so broad that they cannot honestly repeat any of the accepted creeds as expressions of their own views; and these men characterise Dr. Gore's action as harsh and intolerant. But without passing any opinion on the merits of the controversy, it is permissible to note the fact that within, as well as without, the Church there is a distinct movement towards freedom of thought and expression, and, consequently, away from all credal bonds—a movement characterised by a growing lack of belief in the Supernatural—and a tendency to enlarge the area covered by myth and legend in the province of religion. Even the most conservative theologians are more or less affected by this movement. They have discovered that the old proofs and arguments which wrought wonders a century or two ago are no longer of any use; and, as a result of that discovery, they are slow to meet the latest scientific onslaughts, and by this very slowness they confess the weakness of their case. Both conservative and liberal divines alike declare that Free-thought lectures and pamphlets do not deserve to be answered; but who, among them all, has answered Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, or Mr. Robertson's *Pagan Christs?* Who, among them all, can explain away the hundreds of facts cited in Mr. Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God?* These works are being widely read in many countries, and they are making numerous converts—why is it that no learned replies make their appearance?

JOHN LLOYD.

## The Ethics of Aristotle.

### I.—HAPPINESS.

CONDUCT has attracted and received the attention of mankind in all ages. The most savage tribes have their proverbs and their moralists; and the earliest known literatures of antiquity—the Egyptian and Babylonian—have produced ancient treatises upon morality. Yet, notwithstanding this wide and protracted interest in the subject, it must be confessed that the study of human life and character is still involved in an obscurity which the brightest intellects have not been able to dispel. Some of the greatest thinkers in this field have felt the apparent hopelessness of their task; none, perhaps, more than the late Professor Sidgwick, of whom it is related that just after having completed his important work, *The Methods of Ethics*, he remarked in conversation with Mr. Oscar Browning, "The first word of my book is 'Ethics'; the last is 'failure.'"

If we inquire why the science of Ethics has remained stationary, we shall find that it has been retarded by two great obstacles. The first is the inherent difficulty of the study, due to the complexity of the conditions which have to be unravelled and explained. The second is the character of the ordinary moralist; for the common, customary, moralist is seldom more than an ignorant, narrow-minded, intolerant busybody, who has not grasped the fundamental fact of the diversity of human experience; and whose only desire is to force his own crude philosophies upon the world at large, and to suppress all modes of thinking but his own.

The first person who realised that the study of human character and conduct required a scientific basis was the great Greek investigator Aristotle. Earlier teachers had endeavored to lay down disconnected rules and maxims, or to recommend certain approved courses of action, or to indicate the alleged consequences of other courses; but Aristotle perceived that such fragmentary treatment could never arrive at the principles underlying human conduct and human volition, and that without a knowledge of these underlying principles human nature must always remain a mystery and an

enigma. He therefore founded a new science—the science of character; and as it was a new thing in the world he had to give it a new name, the name of Ethics. This Science of Ethics was intended as an introduction to “Politics!” Why Politics? The Greeks of that period had tried all the ‘archies and all the ‘ocracies, and had experienced the flat futility of them all. When, therefore, the sage Aristotle discusses Politics, it would seem as if the plain teachings of experience were thrown away; and that even the wisest of mankind was unable to profit by its lessons. This, however, is not quite the case. Aristotle, as his other writings show, was fully alive to the defects of what *we* style “Politics,” that is to say, the struggles of parties and individuals to acquire the power of tyrannizing over their fellow-citizens. But Aristotle meant by Politics, what Comte meant by Sociology, *i.e.*, the study of the condition of the human being considered as a member of society. In this connection, therefore, Ethics formed an appropriate introduction to the wider subject. Not only was Aristotle the founder of the Science, he was, and is, its chief exponent; for it is remarkable how little has been added to it by later moral philosophers. In fact, every later school of Ethics is merely an expansion of some portion of the system of Aristotle; and it is to be especially noted that Aristotle’s Ethics was a purely European product, uncontaminated by criminal-alien elements; for it was not until after the conquests of Alexander that Greek philosophy fell under the influence of Oriental vagaries.

The treatise on Ethics begins, appropriately, with a consideration of the *object* of human conduct. As man is a rational being, every action is dictated by some reason or another; for it is only infants and idiots who do things without any object. The reason may be consciously felt, or it may not. A man getting into a tramcar is conscious that his object is to get to a certain definite spot; but when he eats his breakfast he is only half conscious of the object of that. Then, again, in most cases, we find beyond the immediate object in view there is an ulterior one. The object of the shipbuilder is to turn out a serviceable vessel; but the purpose of the ship is to carry goods and passengers. Consequently, the ulterior object of the activity of the shipwright is to facilitate trade and commerce; although the shipwright may not bestow thought upon that aspect of the case.

As, therefore, every human action is undertaken with a view of attaining some object, what is the supreme aim of human conduct? To this the universal answer is, “Happiness.” Whatever human beings undertake, they have as their final object the attainment of happiness.

The answer seems definite and convincing. But what constitutes happiness? Directly one reflects, happiness is felt to be a somewhat vague term. Is indulgence in pleasure happiness? The gay and brilliant scene upon the stage delights the eye, the music enchants the ear, the drama thrills the heart. Is the theatre, then, the source of happiness? To a certain extent it is; but constant play-going is apt to pall; it is seldom that the same piece can be witnessed a second time with the same pleasure; and the drama is often found to be no solace for an aching heart.

Some seek happiness in intoxication. When the drug mounts into the brain the toper seems elevated into another and a better world. He could give away his last farthing, and forgive his worst enemy. But the exhilaration is a brief one, and is followed by a reaction of greater intensity than the previous enjoyment. Not to mention that continued indulgence in drugs weakens their effect and ruins health and mind. Others seek happiness in the pleasures of the table. A well-filled interior puts one at peace with the world; but the stomach has a limited capacity, and too much attention to it is apt to lead to gout and dyspepsia, which are not conducive to happiness.

Some people, however, will tell you that beer and

skittles are inadequate to produce happiness; that true felicity is only to be found in culture. Yet apostles of culture are occasionally detected in the enjoyment of very vulgar pleasures, which would seem to show that the extremes of refinement fail to make the cultured happy.

Many think that wealth and position constitute happiness. The possession of wealth relieves one from anxiety, and renders possible many sources of profit and relaxation; the possession of power brings the respect and admiration of one’s fellow-men. Yet both these things are vastly overrated as means of happiness. The rich and powerful are often miserable. A man who has always lived in luxury and comfort derives no more enjoyment from them than does a poorer person from his own customary way of living. As Adam Smith very truly said, “In ease of body and peace of mind all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level; and the beggar who suns himself by the side of the highway possesses that security which kings are fighting for.” Then, as regards power, monarchs have laid down their crowns, weary of the burden of empire; and usurpers have bitterly repented the elevation they have striven for, and which, having attained, they dare not relinquish. Thus wealth and power may lead to glory, but not to happiness.

Still others maintain that felicity is attained by seeking the good of others. Yet, to judge by the general complaints of the ingratitude, hostility, and indifference of those whom it is sought to benefit, it would seem that this method of attaining happiness is equally unsatisfactory with the others.

All the things we have enumerated are good—that is to say, they are pleasurable; and yet the possession or exercise of them will not necessarily guarantee happiness. In fact, some certainly, and probably all eventually, will result in misery if they are pursued too far. Many persons will furiously deny that some of the things mentioned are capable of conferring happiness at all, though other people will resort to them for felicity. Thus, although everyone declares he is striving for happiness, no one agrees as to what brings happiness; and most persons confess that, when they have attained any particular object of their desire, they have felt disappointed with it; while moralists and satirists are continually girding at the futility of human endeavor in toiling and moiling over matters that can bring no abiding satisfaction when attained.

Is, therefore, happiness a mere will-o’-the-wisp? Are men striving for the unattainable? When the gutter philosopher lays down his views in the well-known words, “Wot’s the good of anyfink? W’y, nuffink,” has he arrived at the only logical conclusion? Humanity refuses to agree that happiness is unattainable. Everyone has experienced intervals of peace, joy, contentment, and satisfaction. The complaint is only that these waves of happy feeling are evanescent; and the problem is as to how they are induced, and how they can be multiplied and prolonged.

The first point to be noticed is that what brings felicity to one person has no such effect upon another. The musician will be lifted out of himself at the strains of an organ, but will be bored in a picture gallery. The painter is enchanted in presence of a masterly painting, but feels no more emotion at the execution of a Paderewski than at the twanking of a jew’s-harp. The difference, therefore, is in the individual temperament. No amount of painting will make the musician happy; no amount of music will make the painter happy. What is in accord with the individual mind is pleasing; what is opposed to it is displeasing. Thus happiness is the realisation of the individual self; or, as Aristotle defined it, the happy man is “one who exercises his faculties in accordance with perfect excellence.” Thus, in order to attain happiness, it is first necessary to understand one’s own individual nature; and, secondly, to know the best method of utilising that nature. Each individuality has its own bent, and its own capacity. Brothers in the same family often

differ widely in their tastes and in their powers. Many lives have been wrecked through attempts to force them into paths for which they were unsuited. Many men of genius have been dismal failures in the positions assigned them by short-sighted parents, and have only revealed their transcendent abilities when they have been able to exercise them in the proper sphere.

We can now understand, therefore, why it is so difficult to specify happiness; and why those who seek, often fail to find it. Felicity varies for each individual; and is not a concrete thing that can be cut up like cake, and handed round. Self-realisation must be attained by the individual himself; and the only possible method of making other people happy is to give them the opportunities of understanding their own natures, and of developing their own powers. If they fail to realise themselves, owing to stupidity, or mental or moral cowardice, that is their affair. At the same time, if they realise themselves in directions of which we do not approve, that is no evidence that they are wrong: it only demonstrates that their natures are different to ours. The pig delights in pig-wash: Socrates in dialectic. And both are right; for wash is the best thing for the pig, and dialectic the most excellent thing for Socrates. The enlightened man is tolerant of both tastes; though apostles of culture seek to interest the pig with dialectic; and dietetic reformers seek to nourish Socrates with pig-wash. As Aristotle says, some seek happiness in one direction, some in another. And the same man is in different minds at different times—after sickness he is sure that felicity is to be attained in the possession of health: in poverty he looks for it in wealth: and when he suffers from a consciousness of his own ignorance, he thinks those most blessed who talk beyond his comprehension.

The world is wide; and man is a creature of most infinite variety. The field for pleasurable activity is therefore a vast one. Few natures can be content to run in one limited groove; and even these miss opportunities of enjoyment by their narrow concentration. The happiest men are those who have exercised their whole faculties in healthy directions; and who have enriched their natures by manifold experiences from all the sources open to them. But intelligent self-development and successful self-realisation can only proceed from an understanding of one's own individuality, with its capacities and its powers; and thus we are brought to a sense of the importance of the old Greek maxim, "Man, know thyself!" It is the want of such knowledge that renders Ethics a difficult study: and it is the ignorance of our opportunities that makes us miss happiness.

CHILPERIC.

### Acid Drops.

Mr. Samuel Wiles, tailor and Passive Resister, of New Malden, has done his three weeks in Wandsworth Gaol, and had a "noble reception" on his release. The sufferings of this "martyr" do not appear to have been very acute. He was placed on the debtors' side of the prison, wore his own clothes, and did pretty much as he liked consistently with his safe custody. According to the *Star* account of his "experiences" he had "good food in plenty, a good warm bed, and as many books to read as he wanted." A large number of poor wretches at this time of the year would jump at the chance of three weeks of such "martyrdom."

Mr. Lloyd-George, the Welsh Radical Messiah, lays down the law on the question of religious education in the public schools in the name of the Nonconformists of the Principality. "They would agree," he says, "to a syllabus of unsectarian religious instruction similar to the London syllabus." This is what the Nonconformists want in the public schools, during school hours, and at the public expense. They know very well that Churchmen will not have it, that Catholics will not have it, that Jews will not have it, and that Freethinkers will not have it. If they had a grain of sense and honesty left on this question they would see and admit that they, the Nonconformists, who pretend that the

State should have nothing to do with religion, are fighting to have Nonconformist religion established in the schools which are open to all children and paid for by all parents. This is absolutely indisputable. And as for Mr. Lloyd-George, he seems to us to have a good deal more of the lawyer than the statesman in his composition—at least as regards the Education controversy.

Revivalist Torrey has been resting in Germany—after the fatigue of converting such a crowd of nameless "infidels." It is announced that he will attack London in the name of the Lord in 1905. But he is likely to be anticipated by another enterprising Yankee—Old Dowie, of Zion City, Chicago, U.S.A. He is going on a round trip by way of San Francisco and the East, and is expected here in about six months. The Devil has that time to look lively in. He will hand in his checks when Elijah II. arrives.

Old Dowie applied for the use of the City Hall, Sydney, for three days for "religious meetings," and the Finance Committee decided to grant it at a rental of £215 and a deposit of £100 to cover any damage. No doubt they had been reading of the New York fiasco, and wanted to be on the safe side in case anything should happen to their beautiful municipal building.

How these Christians love one another! According to Dr. B. Tatartcheff's letter in the *Daily News*, there are 20,000 Bulgarians in Athens, who are "neither allowed to build a church of their own nor can conduct their religious service in any but the Old Slavonic language or speak Bulgarian in public." And this in the capital of Greece, who owes her own independence mainly to the efforts of foreigners!

A few months ago, when it was announced that another discovery of manuscripts had been made in Egypt, and that one was a copy of the Book of Genesis, we reminded our readers of the peculiar appositeness of literary "finds," and suggested that some remarkable variation would be found in the text. Genesis has not yet been put forth, but another batch of "Sayings of Jesus" have—and most oddly one is even more up-to-date than the first—showed that he was a Sabbatarian, a teetotaler who saw all men drunk and poor, and a Pantheist who used similes now current.

In the first lot there were only two letters—I S—to indicate they were spoken by Jesus. But, unfortunately, they are the Greek word for force or strength, and are the first of the name of the goddess Isis, who was the strong person of the popular trinity, and was represented as sheltering her husband in her wings. And, more unfortunately, while they do this they do not form the initials of Jesus, which are I. E. This was most awkward; probably some carping subscriber to the funds had bought an old Greek dictionary for a penny and, like ourselves, felt it was a pity the Early Christians economised their ink.

If so, he will doubtless now renew his subscription, for a published translation of the new find gives a paragraph commencing, "The words which Jesus the Living Lord, spake"—and again, most strangely, the words are of immediate interest. Herbert Spencer is just dead, and he regarded "wonder" as synonymous with, or at least the basis of "religion"—a discovery and a view of the matter entirely his own. But Jesus was level with him, and it seems hedged—and as well as saying "Be not afraid—only believe," and "He that believes on the son has everlasting life," and "he that believes not shall be damned"; also said, "Let not him that seeks cease from his search until he find, and when he finds he shall wonder—wondering he shall reach the kingdom, and when he reaches the kingdom he shall have rest." Now, wondering where the *deuce* the kingdom is, is not the same thing as believing off the reel in terror of instant damnation!

Really it would be an inestimable benefit to the world if these extremely fortunate discoverers could get a firmin from the Sultan, permitting them to search Mecca for the remains of the mutton bones on which Mahomet wrote the Koran. It would be so extremely charming to find that he had forestalled the Higher Criticism on the book of Isaiah; or emphatically condemned vivisection and vaccination, and was opposed to Chinese labor!

Dr. Monro Gibson, who is President of the Sunday School Union for 1904, has issued through the *Sunday School Chronicle* a message to all Sunday-school teachers, in which he rather lets the cat out of the bag. "The more," he says, "I consider the problem set up by the disclosures of recent numberings of church-going people, the more I am convinced that the most hopeful way of recovering lost ground is

through redoubled earnestness in endeavoring to keep our hold upon the children so as to pass them on into the church." We are losing the grown-ups; let us collar the kids! Such is Dr. Monro Gibson's advice, and it bears out all we have ever said as to the policy of his profession. The grand object of Sunday-schools is to fill churches. The grand object of religious education in State schools is precisely the same. And the grand object of filling churches is to provide work and salary—especially salary—for the men of God.

The Watford Free Church Council has sent a letter to the Watford Burial Board asking that Sunday funerals should be discontinued unless in very urgent cases. Really, the professional impudence of these men of God is almost boundless. What does it matter to them when bereaved people bury their dead? It can only matter to them in one of two ways; either by keeping the funeral parties away from church, or by keeping the men of God away from the funerals. In either way the men of God feel that they stand to lose a bit. Hence these tears.

Curates are like other men; they prefer an easy job to a hard one, and good society to the companionship of vulgar poverty. The Vicar of St. Anne's, Hoxton—the Rev. W. M. Puttock—says that "Hackney is not the only place where curates are wanted. They are scarce everywhere, where there is hard work and dull surroundings. At certain West-end churches they are plentiful enough. I myself have had no curate since April, 1902. Not long ago Dean Farrar's son made a pitiful appeal for two curates at St. John's, Hoxton. It is hard to find men who can read well, preach fairly, sing decently, and, above all, visit daily and come in touch with the people." Of course the object of these curates—called of God, and filled with the Holy Ghost—is to save souls; but they like the souls to be well-fed, well-housed, well-groomed, and—well-daughtered.

There is an irritating species of crank which persistently intrudes itself on the world as the champion of Romanism, defending it from all that Romanism itself takes the most extreme pains to demonstrate itself to be. Its members, as a rule, are not Papists—they generally pose as ultra-Liberal, or as Christian Socialists or Anarchists; but no one in the Roman Church is so fanatical in contending that it is enlightened, progressive, Socialistic, truly Liberal, and so on, as these persons. The Popes, the bishops, the priests may make every kind of pronouncement against modern ideas and practices, but they ignore it all with the sublimity of a deaf beggar admonished by an exasperated magistrate.

Recent Popes have taken a delight like the fat boy in *Pickwick* in trying to make old Mother Church's flesh creep. They have piled extravagance on extravagance, and to every fulmination this section of maniacs have rushed out and called on the world to see how precisely nothing of the sort has ever been said by them. But Pius X. seems determined to stop this within his own community at any rate, and to have the whole thing unmistakable; and it is to be hoped that his apologists, who pose as everything except Romanists, will moderate themselves down to the level of those who are.

Some while ago an order was promulgated amongst Romanists not to discuss religion, nor to enter into controversy with Protestants—why, except for sheer greed of tyrannising over the minds of more intelligent persons, it is hard to understand. Most certainly a very large proportion of existing Romanists in England and America would now be Protestants had they not discussed their faith with lay persons. Having shut up religion—a blessing no man alive was sanguine enough to dream could happen—the Pope has now tabooed politics from his following—another blessing for which the world will thank him.

But the ultra pro-Papists beyond Popery will go swearing the Roman Church is Freedom, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Socialism, Anarchism, Constitutionalism, Republicanism, and every "ism" that happens at the moment to be afloat; therefore, to warn our readers to crush these vexatious literary jackals, here are the exact words which now constitute Romanism up-to-date—they will be useful to keep at hand for use.

The Pope has tabulated his propositions. Article I. is "Human Society as God has established it is composed of unequal elements." "To make them all equal is impossible." Article V. is "Private property is an unexceptionable right of nature." Article VII. is that in regard to the servile class and the worker; "even in defence of their own right they are never to convert that defence into revolt."

Article XIII. is worth a fresh paragraph. It is: "Moreover, Christian Democracy should never mix itself in politics, and should never serve political parties or objects." "Political action of any kind" "in the present circumstances for reasons of the highest order, is forbidden to every Catholic." Article XVI. goes on to say, "Catholic writers should yield full submission of intellect and will to the Bishops." And Article XVII. says: "Christian democratic writers should submit to the Ordinary all writings respecting religion, Christian morals, and natural ethics." These rules are to be hung in every Romanist institution connected with labor, and every newspaper failing to adhere to them is to be formally forbidden.

Article XIII. while commencing as if it applied only to Italy, is so worded in the translation that it conveys the impression that "political action is forbidden to every Catholic." But it does not much matter, for if the general prohibition to mix in politics is limited to Democracy while the Plutocracy are free to agitate at their own pleasure, it is but another instance of that infamous sycophancy which has always characterised the Great Scarlet Fie-fie!

But it cannot be a very pleasant thing, at the present moment, to be a Romanist, and be restrained from all effort to defend one's opinions or one's Faith—that unique Faith with the very largest of F's—and be compelled to keep absolute silence on the Fiscal question and Chinese immigration into the British Empire.

What the "reasons of the highest order" are which necessitate this general gag, it is impossible to imagine, if it be not a caving-in along the whole ultramontane line, and an intention to throw up the "Prisoner of the Vatican" imposture, which the fact that the Papacy has settled the "nobis" question with France suggests, as this is only possible by the Pope withdrawing its criminal forgery of the word into the Concordat, and its consequent insolent pretensions.

Mr. Joseph Gurney, a Baptist, of Newcastle, who died early in December, has left a deal of money to religious organisations. The Baptist Missionary Society gets £5,000, and an additional £5,000 on the death of Mrs. Gurney; the Baptist Zenana Missionary Society £1,000, the British and Foreign Bible Society £1,000, the Religious Tract Society £500, the Baptist Annuity Fund £500. Such are a few of the bequests, and the rest may be judged from these samples.

Considering what vast sums of money are available in this and other ways for upholding and spreading the Christian superstition, it would be well if Freethinkers were to ask themselves what they are doing to oppose and counteract the evil. They will never fight Christian money with wishes. They may rest assured of that. Something far more substantial is necessary.

Mrs. Bramwell Booth is doubtless a well-meaning lady, but what odd ideas she must have, if we are to judge from the report of what she did recently in London. She held her annual supper for the women who frequent Piccadilly at night, and about 200 responded to her invitation. The meeting was preceded by a march, headed by the Regent's Hall brass band, through the neighboring streets. Mrs. Booth (we are told) gave a very earnest address (after the supper, we suppose), imploring the women to lead a different life; and at the close of the gathering eleven women who had come to this decision were admitted into the receiving home. How it reminds us of General Booth's proposal, in *Darkest England*, to transfer the young women from Piccadilly to the strawberry-beds of Essex! Of course he has not transferred them yet, and in all probability he never will. Even if he succeeded in doing so in some cases, what effect would it have on the Piccadilly problem? Simply none at all. For if Booth created a dozen vacancies in that shocking labor market they would speedily be filled, as the social and economical causes that drive women into it would continue to operate. Mrs. Bramwell Booth does not seem to perceive this either. She thinks the world can be reformed by the methods of "spiritual" hysteria. Well, it cannot, and she is practically wasting her time. Yet we end, as we began, by giving her credit for good intentions.

We read that no less than 500 young men and women are entering the Salvation International Training Home at Clapton this month. At the end of twelve months they will be "trained Evangelists" and will spend their time in "saving souls"—an easy, genteel sort of a job, which is preferable to ordinary hard work. From an economical

point of view, they will all be loafers. Religious organisations of every kind withdraw able-bodied people from productive industry, and turn them into "respectable" parasites.

The agitation over the state of morals in the Potteries is significant for at least one thing. This is the use of the term "immorality" by Christian writers and speakers. This is used as being wholly synonymous with sexual immorality. One religious journal that lies before us as we write refers to obscene language, untruthfulness, etc., *leading to immorality*. This is worth noting because it illustrates one of the effects of Christian teaching and training upon ethics. Anyone who cares to consult the best of the pre-Christian moralists, or modern non-Christian writers on morals, will see that the word "morality" is used, and properly used, as connoting an all-round excellence of conduct, fitting the individual for the proper discharge of duties in every department of life. But Christianity, with its essentially prurient frame of mind, sees sexual irregularity, not only as a form of immorality, but as practically the whole of immorality.

Anyone may test the matter for himself. Speak to an average church or chapel-goer of Mr. Blank as an immoral man, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred you will be understood to mean that he is a sexually immoral man. A man may lie, directly and indirectly, he may adulterate his goods, desert his friends, persecute for a difference of opinion, and the Christian conscience, particularly the Non-conformist variety, never dreams of calling the person guilty of such conduct immoral. We have not, of course, the remotest intention of apologising for, or condoning sexual immorality, all we wish to emphasise is the Christian view of the case. And this we say is essentially unsound, unhealthy, and fundamentally unclean. What we have to do is to insist upon morality as covering the whole of life, and not one aspect of it only. And this means taking it out of the hands of professional theologians, who are doomed, by their very calling, to a jaundiced view of life and its duties.

Derby Town Council has distinguished itself. It has actually passed a resolution of respect to the memory of Herbert Spencer. One Alderman shook his head, and all that was in it, over Spencer's theories as to "the origin of things," but his colleagues appear to have thought that it didn't matter, and Herbert Spencer's memory pulled through all right. It doesn't amount to much, perhaps, after all; still we wonder whether any other public body in the whole Kingdom has taken any notice of the death of its greatest thinker.

The Alderman who protested against the resolution of respect for the memory of Herbert Spencer was Mr. W. W. Winter. This gentleman was afraid it would go forth to the world that they, the Town Council of Derby, endorsed views which were in flat contradiction to the Scripture record of Creation. When it was a question of sticking to Spencer or sticking to Moses, the worthy Alderman knew where *he* stuck. And he meant to stick there, and he hoped the whole Council would stick with him. Evidently the Bible-loving Alderman had to be pacified, and Alderman Sir Henry Bemrose undertook the delicate task. He began very prudently by smoothing down Alderman Winter's feathers. Certainly, he said, there were teachings of Herbert Spencer's which they all repudiated; but it should be remembered that although they were right and Spencer was wrong, he happened to be a very great man who had "brought distinction on the town"—which, apparently, the worthy members of the Town Council, although they were in the right, were not likely to do. That settled it. The "distinction" argument carried the day, and the resolution was accepted unanimously. Still, it seems to us that Alderman Winter was not really answered, and that he ought not (from his point of view) to have been so easily pacified; for, if "distinction" is the only qualification for a memorial, there is no reason why the Derby Town Council should not erect one to the Devil.

We are bound to say, too, that the Derby resolution was skilfully worded. Here it is *in extenso*:—"That this Council desires to place on record its respectful testimony to the memory of the late Mr. Herbert Spencer. By the early and deliberate devotion of his life to patient, unceasing, intellectual labor and research he achieved a worldwide reputation as an original thinker and scientific philosopher, which gave him a rank among the men of the nineteenth century most illustrious in literature and thought. It will ever be counted a matter of honor by this borough that Mr. Spencer was a Derby man by birth and descent." There is not a word in this resolution implying that Herbert Spencer did any good in the world. Canny Town Council!

Why should the Pope worry himself about ladies' dresses? He has issued an order against low-necked dresses in assemblies at which cardinals and prelates attend. Does he think the purity of these gentlemen is of such a very delicate quality? Or does he dread their special inflammability? Anyhow, the ladies will go on dressing as they please. The Church has been at them for hundreds of years without raising their bodices the sixteenth of an inch. Perhaps if they told the truth they would say to the priests: "Look another way. We don't dress for those who have sworn off love and matrimony."

Jacob Popp is a pertinacious cuss. He pops up weekly. He has just been served with his 108th weekly summons for Sunday barbering. He pays his fine, and goes on doing it, and the strong, slow, stupid police go on "doing it" in *their* way too. Fancy the time they must have on their hands! If they had anything worth doing, they would long ago have tired of popping in on Jacob Popp. There must be a great shrinkage of cooks and cold mutton at High Wycombe.

In spite of the Dual Alliance, a French steamer and a Russian steamer collided in Pera harbor. Both vessels were carrying hundreds of pilgrims, and seventy of them jumped overboard in the panic and were drowned. Perhaps they went to heaven all the sooner.

Samuel Butler, the author of *Erewhon*, left the manuscript of a subtle and powerful novel, which has been published since his death, under the title of *The Way of all Flesh*. There is nothing of a blue or spicy character in this book, but the title may have excited the alarm, and possibly the anger, of the "unco guid" out in New Zealand. It was actually removed from the shelves of the Public Library at Christchurch; a proceeding which was challenged in the local *Press*; whereupon one of the Library authorities defended the withdrawal as necessary to protect "youths of both sexes." This was duly answered by the *Press*, but we do not hear that the book was restored. The *Athenæum*, however, congratulates the *Press* on its "stand for freedom," and wonders significantly "what the Library does about the Bible, much of Tolstoi, *Sir Richard Calmady*, and other admired works of ancient and modern times."

There was another significant bit in last week's *Athenæum*—in a review of the two books on Egyptian religion, published by the French Department of Public Instruction, in connection with the great Museum of Religions founded by M. Guimet. M. Moret, the author of these two books, points out that the King in Egypt, though the son of his mortal mother, was also by theory the son of the God Ra. On which the *Athenæum* commented as follows:—"This notion that a divine and a human paternity were not incompatible was more widely spread than is usually known, and it tends to explain the accepting of divine parentage in other cases than those of the Egyptian Kings." "Other cases" is a delicate euphemism for "Jesus Christ."

The Vicar of Gorleston, on a recent Sunday morning, asked for a collection to provide the choir with new cassocks and surplices, and the result was—thirty-two and six! In the evening he explained that he did not want to rig out one member of the choir, but the whole lot. The next Sunday morning the choir appeared in a state of sartorial destitution, and the object-lesson had the desired effect. We read that "the churchwardens could hardly stagger up the chancel with the weight of the coins a repentant congregation had poured into the plates." Evidently the Vicar of Gorleston is a "good beggar," though we don't think the worse of him for that, for every cause should be supported by its adherents, and what people like to see and hear they should have the honesty to pay for.

A religious contemporary calls attention to the fact that the Royal party at Chatsworth did not include even one of the "dignified clergy." This is sad! Very sad!

So there have been about 7,000 summonses issued for non-payment of rates by passive resisters. The number *looks* a large one, but when it is remembered that there must be about 20,000 dissenting preachers in the country, it is not quite so large as it seems. And the "Martyrdom" is, after all, of a very cheap and easy description. We do not suppose that it means more than an allround "martyrdom" of ten shillings per head. And we have an opinion that if the cases could have been conducted without giving this army of martyrs an advertisement the number would have been smaller still.



**Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.**

Sunday, January 17, Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell-road, London, S.E., at 7.30, "Jesus Christ: the Prince of Peace." Special Lecture. Admission Free.

January 24, Camberwell; 31, Manchester; February 7, Glasgow; 14, Queen's Hall, London; 21, Queen's Hall, London; 28, Coventry; March 13, Liverpool; 27, Birmingham.

**To Correspondents.**

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

W. H. BARRATT.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

GERALD GREY writes: "Let me congratulate you heartily on your last most admirable article on the Chicago catastrophe. It was a capital presentment of the case, and cannot be gainsaid, I think." Gerald Grey, who lives some two hundred miles from London, would have much liked to be present at the Annual Dinner, but was unable to. He sends us hearty new year's good wishes—which we as heartily reciprocate.

RANK AND FILER.—Pleased to hear that your half-crown is the first of four quarterly payments you intend to make as "pew rent" during 1904. There is no reason why the New Year's Gift to Freethought of other "saints" should not take a similar form. Thanks for your cheerful and encouraging letter. Good man! to read the *Freethinker* to your wife. Our compliments to her.

HUGH HOBSON, subscribing to the New Year's Gift to Freethought, says: "Thanks for 'God at Chicago.' Splendid article. I am pleased to say my boys have read it again and again."

T. HIBBOTT.—Pleased to hear that you have taken the *Freethinker* without a break from the very first number, and that it will be the last luxury you dispense with. With regard to the rest of your letter, we can only say that our good wishes will go with you always.

JOHN ELIAS.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. You are certainly in a position to judge, and your appreciation is valued.

THE COHEN PRESENTATION FUND.—Edward Brooks 10s., J. Preston 1s., W. Maack 1s., John Elias 5s., W. T. Pitt 5s., J. Tretheway 1s., Old Freethinker 5s., S. Holmes 2s. 6d., G. Dixon 5s., W. Bailey 1s., R. Trelease 5s., R. Wood 2s., W. Mack 1s., J. Halliwell 1s., Mr. Bolding 2s. 6d., F. S. £45.

P. MULLINS.—See our comments on the matter. Thanks.

F. HERRMANN.—Overlooked last week. Sorry. We will think over your query about the play, and drop you a line by post.

R. DANIEL.—Pleased to have your expression of confidence, and your appreciation of this journal.

A. J. YOUNG.—Thanks for your birthday good wishes. Glad that you and your wife enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's lecture. Mr. Foote is due at Manchester on January 31.

W. T. PITT.—We have applied the 10s. as desired, and are obliged to you for your good wishes for the Dinner and for our own health and prosperity in the new year.

J. TRETHEWAY.—Pleased to receive your letter. Certainly, as you say, even the poorest who can afford to do anything should do it.

A. HOLMES.—Mr. Foote's three pamphlets on Theosophy, price twopence each, might help you. Deism hardly exists now as a distinctive party; but all who believe in the existence of God, yet not in revelation, are Deists as the term was understood in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

W. H. MORRISH.—You are a veteran, and your opinion is entitled to respect, but our own remains unchanged, and we have said our last public word on the subject. Always glad to hear from you, however, if only for the sake of "auld lang syne."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

M. PEDERSEN.—Acknowledged as desired.

S. HOLMES hopes we shall receive a great number of half-guineas, like his own, for the New Year's Gift to Freethought, and wishes us health in 1904.

S. D. S., E. J. T., and J. G. S.—Thanks.

R. LEWIS.—The gentleman may not go farther, and may call himself a Christian to the end.

C. MASCALL, a veteran Freethinker, sending a subscription to the New Year's Gift to Freethought, hopes we shall "have a hard time in opening similar communications" to his own. We wish we had, but it hasn't worked out that way yet.

E. BROOKS.—Sorry to hear of your illness. We wish you an early recovery.

J. PRESTON.—Mr. Foote would be happy to lecture again in the West of England if the local "saints" would only bestir themselves a little.

SOME letters arriving at the *Freethinker* office on Wednesday morning (Jan. 6) were posted in one packet to the Editor's residence, but they never arrived, and no news of them has been obtained. Some correspondents may thus appear to have been neglected; which, after our explanation, they will see is not the case. We should be obliged to any of them who will take the trouble to communicate with us again.

T. KEHOE.—Glad to hear from you, as secretary, that Mr. Lloyd had such a fine reception at Liverpool and delivered such a splendid lecture in the evening. We quite understand that you all want to hear Mr. Lloyd again.

M. E. FERG.—We did not know that Miss Pulman, whose sad death is announced elsewhere, had been for two years an active member of the Manchester N. S. S. Branch. We note the fact in this column, in response to your letter. You appear to have lost a very good member, from all we can learn.

S. EDMONDS.—Thanks for your felicitations. Your order and remittance have been placed in the proper hands.

W. A. WILLIAMS.—What has reached us has been acknowledged.

Pleased to hear you enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's lectures at Liverpool.

JAMES NEATE.—Not too late. See list.

W. D. C.—Paper shall be forwarded as desired. Glad to know you so enjoyed our last lectures at Glasgow, and pleased to have your good wishes for our future.

J. O. BATES.—We echo your concluding words. Best wishes for the new year.

ALCHEM.—The cuttings are, as you say, rather belated, but they may come in handy all the same.

G. DIXON.—Acknowledged as desired. Of course it will be all right. A number of small subscriptions to the Cohen Presentation Fund have rolled in quite unexpectedly at the last minute, and we shall therefore have to print the precise final figures next week. The road is now clear for the New Year's Gift to Freethought.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SPECIAL.**

**The New Year's Gift to Freethought.**

MY readers are gradually waking up and giving this matter their attention. One friend, whose generous subscription is always ready when he recognises a reasonable call for support, sends us £10. This starts the big donations, and I hope to receive a good many more. But I am very far from wishing to damp the enthusiasm of the poorer "saints." Every one of them who can send anything should send it. Even a single shilling (I do not want less), is acceptable. And there are many, of course, who can afford to send two, three, four, or five shillings—and so on up to a pound.

The long and short of it is that all my readers should do *something*, if they can; and let it be the *best* they can do. I do not believe they will ever wish they had been more niggardly. What people give in this way is very rarely missed. I think the man who seriously injured himself by giving to struggling, unpopular causes has yet to be found.

Take the case of a man who says to himself, "Well, I will send Mr. Foote something." He takes out, say, a shilling or a half-crown, with a view to buying a postal-order. Now just at this point I beg to intervene. The probability is that the sum he first thinks of will not bankrupt him; that he could increase it without ruin, and even without inconvenience. I suggest, therefore, that he should give the matter a second thought—and second thoughts are generally an improvement. I suggest that he should ask himself, "Can't I make it a bit more? Suppose I send two shillings instead of one shilling, or a crown instead of half-a-crown?" And nine times out of ten, if a man talks to himself in that way, I know what the result will be. Nobody likes to feel mean; and we are all apt to feel mean if we have had a clear opportunity of doing a good thing, and have only half done it.

When the pious old lady gave the tramp a piece of dry bread, and told him that she did it for Christ's sake, he replied, "Then for Christ's sake put a bit of butter on it."

Now you will suppose me to be the tramp. I am begging at your door. I don't exactly want anything for myself; I want it for a weary, footsore friend round the corner. That is to say, I want it for the Freethought movement, which cannot come up and ask for itself. Well, you hand me a bit of bread; and I smile and say "Don't forget the butter."

I have already stated what I shall do with the money I receive through this appeal. One half of it will be paid over to the National Secular Society. I am President of that Society, but I do not take a penny of its funds, not even the cost of the postage stamps I use in correspondence for it. So that half is clear enough. The other half I intend to use in promoting the circulation of the *Freethinker*, by various forms of advertising, and by other agencies—which must, of course, depend on the resources at my command. I have already made a beginning with advertisements in *Reynolds'* and the *Clarion*.

There are five Sundays in January, and therefore five issues of the *Freethinker*. Consequently I shall have five opportunities of "getting at" my readers. And I shall use them. There will be no peace this month for the wicked: I mean the non-subscribers. Those who don't like being worried had better subscribe at once.

G. W. FOOTE.

### The New Year's Gift to Freethought.

#### SECOND LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

F. S. £10, Hugh Hotson £1, Rank and Filer 2s. 6d., Dr. R. T. Nichols 10s. 6d., New Reader 1s., John Elias 5s., C. Mascall 2s. 6d., J. Preston 1s., F. Herrmann 2s. 6d., Frank Smith £1 1s., A. M. C., 2s. 6d., R. Daniel 3s., T. Dobson 1s. 6d., W. T. Pitt 5s., J. Trethewey 1s., S. Holmes 10s. 6d., G. Button 2s., J. Halliwell 1s., S. Edmonds 3s., W. A. Williams 1s., Alchem 5s., A. Barnard 1s. 6d.

### The Cohen Presentation.

WHEN I returned from my last visit to Birmingham, where I had taken Mr. Cohen with me, in order that the important Town Hall meetings might not (as seemed more than possible) break down through my illness, I seized the opportunity to make a fresh appeal on behalf of the Cohen Presentation Fund, and I named £200 (the £100 had been turned) as the sum I should like to see realised. A few days afterwards I was delighted to receive a letter from a gentleman I knew, stating that in response to what he called my "powerful appeal" he would himself "make good any deficiency" if "at the expiration of the period arranged the subscriptions did not amount to the sum required." Naturally he thought it advisable "not to make this known." Nor, for my own part, should I have thought of throwing out the slightest hint of it. I kept pegging away, in the hope that this generous donor would not be taxed too heavily. But I was obliged to close the subscription list practically—though not positively—in last week's *Freethinker*; and as soon as he saw the figures the gentleman in question (who only desires to be known as F. S.) forwarded me a cheque for the £45 still wanting. Thus the £200 was handsomely made up, and I was able to announce the fact at the Annual Dinner on Tuesday evening.

I have now to thank all (and especially F. S.) who have subscribed to the Cohen Presentation Fund. Had I not been "an old hand," had I been as readily discouraged as some persons with less experience, and perhaps less patience, I should have wound up this Fund before the last summer holidays. I was told that I was ill-advised to resume it in the fall of the year, and reminded that warmed-up dishes are seldom appreciated. But I knew what I was doing; I believe I know the Freethought party quite as well as the next; and I am very glad now that I was not disheartened. This £200 is certainly not

enough to justify Mr. Cohen in taking financial liberties with his future. He cannot retire on it, nor go round the world with it, nor even buy a house with it, so as to live rent free. No, it is nothing of that kind. But it is a tangible assurance that he has friends, who entertain respect for his past, and hope for his future; who believe in him as a true, brave, devoted soldier in the great war of human liberation.

G. W. FOOTE.

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote starts the new missionary effort at the Camberwell Secular Hall, New Church-road, with two successive Sunday evening lectures. The first will be given this evening (January 17), the subject being very reasonable just now: "Jesus Christ: the Prince of Peace." On the following Sunday evening Mr. Foote will discourse on "How God Governs the World." The admission to these lectures will be absolutely free, but a collection will be taken up towards the inevitable expenses. This is quite a new departure on Sunday evenings at Camberwell, but it is part of the missionary effort, and its object is to get at the people who live in the neighborhood, not merely those who are attracted from various parts of London. Those of Mr. Foote's auditors who would have paid for their seats in the ordinary course of things need not save anything on these occasions. They are quite at liberty to drop the usual price of their seats into the collection plate. They can drop in even more if they like.

Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged by the Secular Society, Limited, for another course of Sunday evening lectures from February 14 to March 6 inclusive. Mr. Foote will take the first two Sundays, and Mr. John Lloyd and Mr. C. Cohen the third and fourth. Here also there will be a new departure. There has been such a bother with the ticket arrangements hitherto that resort will now be had to the policy of "free admission"—with a collection, of course, towards defraying the heavy expenses. For the sake of elderly Freethinkers and ladies, who may come from a distance and be anxious both to avoid a crush and be sure of a seat, a row or two of chairs will be reserved in front at the price of one shilling. This is not meant as a money-making device, nor could it very well be so; it is meant as an accommodation to the persons already mentioned. We may add that these meetings will be well advertised in suitable newspapers, and that an advertisement card for the waistcoat pocket can be obtained at 2 Newcastle-street by friends who care to circulate them. With a slight effort the Queen's Hall might be crowded; not only with the "chosen people," but also with a large number of "the heathen."

We hope Freethinkers are doing their best to circulate the cheap edition of Mr. John Lloyd's *From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform*. The National Secular Society's Executive has had the story of Mr. Lloyd's conversion put into pamphlet form at the very low price of twopence (it runs to 64 pages) in order to give it the widest possible circulation. Of course it should be read by Freethinkers, and they should always keep a copy by them; but they should also try to place copies in the hands of their less heterodox friends and acquaintances. Having gained Mr. Lloyd, the Freethought party should make the most of him; and the narrative of his mental history while travelling from orthodox Christianity to Secularism is so honest and manly, as well as able and lucid, that it is a most excellent intellectual and moral advertisement of the cause to which he now gives his adherence. Any Freethinker who purchases a few copies of this convincing pamphlet, and distributes them judiciously, is really helping forward the propaganda of Freethought, and at a very small cost to himself.

We beg to draw our readers' attention once more to the *Secular Annual* for 1904. This also is issued by the National Secular Society—which stands to bear any loss, or profit by any gain, on its publication. The price is only sixpence, and we do not hesitate to say that the contents are worth more money. The official information at the end of the *Annual* is important to Freethinkers, to begin with. There are the names and addresses, for instance, not only of Freethought organisations at home and abroad, but also of a large number of leading Freethinkers in Great Britain. There is likewise a list of newsagents who supply the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature, which should be very useful to "saints" who travel, or are holidaying, or shifting

their residences. The major part of the *Annual* consists of good reading from well-practised pens. Mr. Foote leads off with a characteristic article on "Death or Westminster Abbey." This is followed by one of Mr. F. J. Gould's brightest and most inspiring productions. Mr. Cohen comes next with a long and able study of Lucretius, the great Roman poet who, as Mrs. Browning says, "denied divinely the divine." Miss Mary Lovell contributes a brief, forcible, and sensible article on "Women's Religion," which we commend to the attention of men as well as women. Mr. John Lloyd's article on "The Signs of the Times" is a powerful piece of writing. "Chilperic" is lively, informing, and witty in his "Sinlessness of Atheism," and "Abracadabra" is able, learned, shrewd, and convincing in "Moses Wrote of Me."

Mr. J. W. de Caux's letter on "The Story of the Resurrection" in the *Yarmouth Mercury* has brought forth only one reply as yet. The writer does not give his name, but he is used to writing, and we should not be surprised if he turned out to be the Honorary Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. It smacks remarkably of his peculiar blend of humility and infallibility. Mr. De Caux will not find it difficult to reply to the gentleman's criticism—whoever he is.

The *Humanitarian*, the little monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, is one of the most welcome of our exchanges. It does so much steady good work for the best of causes. The January number contains an editorial paragraph about two matters on which we have already commented. "The result of the Coleridge libel suit," our contemporary says, "can hardly have been a surprise to those who know what great odds the champions of advanced causes have to contend with, when they come into that citadel of prejudice and superstition, a law court. The moral of this case, as of another recent miscarriage of justice in which Mr. J. M. Robertson was the victim, is plain—that social reformers should never challenge an appeal to a British judge and jury." This is precisely what we have said all along; it indicates the very course we have always pursued. Naturally we are glad to see that other reformers—some of whom shook their heads at us—are recognising the truth in this direction.

We must supplement our last week's paragraph on the new number of the *Humane Review*. The admirable article on "Anti-Vivisectionists and the Odium Theologicum" ought not to go unnoticed. Miss Cobbe and the editor of the *Abolitionist* were good enough, as perhaps our own readers will recollect, to couple Atheism and Vivisection as fine companions, or at least as natural friends and allies. Against this insolent folly the editor of the *Humane Review* pens a strong and dignified protest. We commend it to the attention of all who like to see an intellectual and moral castigation delivered to aggressive bigots. The following is a concrete passage from this article: "The subsequent explanation, that the writer was 'glad to learn that there are many Atheists who do not need to refer to any such arguments to condemn vivisection,' can hardly be regarded as improving matters, for one might be expected to have learnt before now of the services performed in the cause of anti-vivisection by such leaders of Freethought as Colonel Ingersoll in America and Mr. G. W. Foote in England, and the names of such men as Mr. Philip G. Peabody, Mr. J. H. Levy, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, and other Freethinkers who might be mentioned, must, one would suppose, have not been entirely unfamiliar."

*Secular Thought* (Toronto) still lives, we are glad to see, but it has to become a fortnightly instead of a weekly periodical. This is how Editor Ellis explains it. "For some time past," he says, "the general support accorded to us has been so limited that we have been unable to issue the paper every week. There has for a long time been a demand on the part of some friends that the journal should be printed in a smaller and more convenient form, and we have therefore concluded to begin a New Series in octavo." Of course it is quite natural that Editor Ellis should put the best possible face on the matter; still, it is plain enough that the "therefore" in the second sentence really relates to the first sentence. *Secular Thought* appears to have suffered like most Freethought papers in America during the last few years. Part of the explanation is probably to be found in the death of Ingersoll, whose platform work was in itself a big advertisement of the Freethought cause, and incidentally of the Freethought press. The other part is doubtless to be found in the condition of trade and the general turn of affairs. We trust, however, to see a reaction against reaction in the not too distant future.

## Obituary.

We deeply regret to report the death of Miss Bertha Pulman, daughter of Mr. Sam and Mrs. Elizabeth Pulman, well-known Freethinkers of Manchester. Deceased met her death by a burning accident. She was only twenty-one years of age, bright, intelligent, and of a beautiful nature. The tragedy is, therefore a profound one to her adoring parents, who have the sympathy of a wide circle of friends. The funeral took place at Southern Cemetery on January 8. Mr. J. Sanders, a member of the local N. S. S. Branch, read a Secular address at the grave. The mourners included close friends of the deceased from Secular and Co-operative Societies, Art and Science Classes, and other organisations. Deceased had been secretary of the Levenshulme Branch of the Co-operative Women's Guild for some years, and a touching personal tribute was paid to her memory by the editor of the *Co-operative News*, who described her life as "beautiful, pure, and noble." Her father, in the midst of his grief, recollects with satisfaction, that she was never inside a place of religious worship, and that her bright young life had never been shadowed by creeds and dogmas.

## National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive Meeting, held at the Society's Offices on Thursday, January 7, 1904. Mr. G. W. Foote in the Chair. There were also present Messrs. C. Cohen, H. Cowell, F. Cotterill, F. Davies, T. How, E. Parker, V. Roger, F. Schaller, S. Samuels, F. Wood and the Secretary.

The Minutes of previous meetings having been confirmed, and monthly cash statement adopted, the President reported the death of an old and esteemed Vice-President, Mr. Edward Bater, and moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. F. Wood, and carried unanimously.

"That this Executive deeply deploras the death of Mr. Edward Bater, one of its most faithful and zealous members, and desires to convey to Mrs. Bater a message of strong sympathy in her bereavement, and of assurance that her husband's memory will always be cherished by those who had the privilege to be associated with him in public work."

One new member was admitted to the Society for the South Shields Branch.

After some discussion *re* the Congress at Rome, it was moved by Mr. Cohen, seconded by Mr. Davies—

"That this Executive, having resolved to be specially represented at the Rome Congress in September, deems it advisable not to involve itself further with the general English Committee, and therefore instructs the Secretary to intimate that it withdraws from the same."

Other routine business was dealt with and the meeting closed.

EDITH M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

## Correspondence.

"B. V.," DR. BASTIAN, AND MR. JOHN MORLEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am pleased to see Dr. Bastian is one of the executors of the will of Herbert Spencer, and that Mr. John Morley was honored by Herbert Spencer with a request that he should speak a farewell address at his (Mr. Spencer's) obsequies. For these two names, intimately connected as they now are, with Herbert Spencer's, help to connect the memory of the great philosopher and that of the not less great poet, James Thomson—our Saint James.

When "B. V.," dying from internal hemorrhage, was taken to University Hospital, Dr. Bastian was one of the first to attend him. As an instance of Dr. Bastian's insight I may add that one of his questions was, "Has Mr. Thomson ever suffered from sunstroke?" As a matter of fact, "B. V." had so suffered whilst acting as Special War Correspondent with the Carlist forces in Spain many years before. To Mr. John Morley belongs the honor of admitting "B. V.'s" contributions in verse to the *Fortnightly Review*, the first recognition of Thomson's genius in any periodical of first-class literary standing and world-wide circulation.

I have always felt admiration and gratitude to Mr. John Morley and to Dr. Bastian for their help to "B. V.," and take this opportunity of expressing it.

I may add that a lady friend of mine was a nurse at University Hospital at that time, and assured me that everything was done for "B. V." that kindness and ability could do.

J. W. B.

## The Father of Sileby Music.

THE Father of Sileby Music, as his neighbors affectionately called him, is dead. One or two of the more stupid class of villagers knew him as a "damned Atheist," and had eyes to see no more; but most of the community among whom he lived for so many years will remember him as the man who loved music and taught others to love it.

Sileby is a Leicestershire village, partly rural and partly invaded by factory-life. The Father of Sileby Music was Joseph Whittington, wheelwright and joiner, who died on Sunday, December 27, aged sixty-four. He was one of a small party of Free-thinkers who would occasionally walk to the Leicester Secular Hall, some eight miles distant, to hear an address by Mr. Foote, or some other favorite lecturer. It was his wish, expressed when dying, that I should conduct his funeral, and I did so on Wednesday, December 30. A band, playing the Dead March, led the party of mourners to the cemetery. The little chapel was crowded when I read the farewell discourse, from which I take the following passage. The opening reflections had dwelt on the elevation given to life by the sentiments of honor, justice, and love:—

"In this religion of honor, justice, and love our friend Joseph Whittington was a believer. He would not take the name of Christian; it was too narrow for him; he belonged to the freest of all free churches, the church of Humanity. He believed that truth and goodness were manly things, and not things brought down from heaven. When, a few years ago, I called to see him, I found a book lying open on his table—a brave book written by a brave man, Paine's *Age of Reason*. Whittington had read this and other books that taught the world new doctrines of life, new standards of conduct. He was not afraid to use his reason. Living in a village, and among people who were not so ready to accept new ideas as himself, he had the courage to say honestly, and as man to man, that he could not believe the teachings of the Churches. He had the courage to say honestly, and as man to man, that he looked for a better world—a world made better by the work of men and the patience of women, a world made better by secular means alone. I wonder if his neighbors understood what real, deep courage this man must have had in order to stand alone and utter thoughts that the great majority did not share. He did as Dean Alford bids us do:—

Show forth thy light! If conscience gleam,  
Quench not the rising glow,  
The smallest spark may shed its beam  
O'er thousand hearts below.

He was honest and diligent in his daily work, and what he undertook to do, he did. Not any great man on earth—statesman, artist, poet—can do more than this simple and fair-dealing wheelwright; and it would be a noble world to live in if all men did work as useful, as sensible, and as solid as Joseph Whittington's. His religion was in his carpentry; his faith was in his daily business. And with solid work went a taste for cheerful music and for poetry. The village wheelwright, like Handel's "Harmonious Blacksmith," loved to join music and labor. He loved to go in company with others, putting all his heart and joy into the playing of his favorite instruments. He loved to teach as well as to perform, as if he felt it was a kind of delightful mission to make the world more musical, and to train young ears to harmony. Poetry also he loved. Even when the gentle finger of death was laid upon him, he must needs hear the words of Shakespeare; and his wife at his side must needs repeat to him snatches of the poet's verse, such as—

O sleep! O gentle sleep,  
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frighted thee,  
That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,  
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?

His very death bore the mark of love. For the shock that helped to weaken his heart was given by the news of the death of a child for whom he entertained a special affection. A man of his character was respected in his life; and he is respected in our memory. He met death without fear.

The soul that loves and works will need no praise;  
But, fed with sunlight and with morning breath,  
Will make our common days eternal days,  
And, fearless, greet the mild and gracious death.

And now we go forth with our dead that the place where he shall die may be consecrated by our tender regard.

Some hundreds of the village folk had gathered about the grave, despite the bleakness of the hillside air, and they listened in deep silence to the closing words which, to their ears, would be peculiarly devoid of theological allusion:—

"We commit our friend Joseph Whittington to the keeping of the mother earth which bears us all. We are thankful for our pleasant relationships with him. We cherish the memory of his words and life. And, as we stand by the graveside, we are reminded that life passes, and there pass with it so many opportunities of doing good. To do good is our religion. The way of life is through justice, kindness, honesty. The way of death is through injustice, unkindness, insincerity. Let us therefore go hence and truly live:—

Think truly, and thy thoughts  
Shall the world's famine feed;  
Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a fruitful seed;  
Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed.

"We leave our dead in peace. With respect we bid him farewell. In love we remember his life, his sincerity, his quiet industry, his companionship. And, thus thinking of him, let us go in quietness of spirit, and live in charity one with the other."

The band then played a melody of which the deceased was fond, and the assembly dispersed.

As I watched the faces of these country people, eagerly turned towards the unaccustomed scene, I could not refrain from compassion at the thought of the mind-hunger which afflicts the English village. Those broad views of history, religion and art which we townsmen enjoy, seldom reach the rustic cottage or farmhouse. A more or less progressive politics (there is a Liberal Club at Sileby) may feebly stir the air; but the wholesome truths of the modern Rationalist re-birth—the messages of science and humanitarianism divested of all theological encumbrances—do not penetrate to the little colonies that dwell in charmed circles about the village churches. A vast area awaits the awakening.

As I write, the last chime of the Old Year has died its eternal death, and the bells of 1904 clang across the frost-bound pastures of the Midlands. Not for long—as the Genius of Evolution measures time—will the bells ring in Christian towers. The very cathedrals will change their dedication, and acknowledge the presidency of Man in place of God. Humanity will take the rod of sovereignty from the hand of the fallen Master of the White Throne. The bells, in the old familiar peal, will tell of the advent of a new thought and hope; and the village-folk, coming to their cottage-doors, will hear and understand.

F. J. GOULD.

## Differences of Opinions—their Causes and Lessons. II.

(Concluded from page 22.)

But what are the lessons which these differences ought to teach unto us?

Firstly, the differences of opinion existing teach clearly that we ought not to be dogmatic in our own opinions. However clear our intellects may be, however laborious and careful the process by which we have arrived at our conclusions, we should still remember that other men with talents equal, if not superior to our own, by equally laborious and careful an inquiry, arrived at very different conclusions to our own, and that therefore it is quite within the bounds of possibility that we are in error, and that those who oppose us are in the right. We have no right to assume infallibility to ourselves, nor to treat our opponents as if they were fools. Whilst we have a right to speak our convictions boldly, and to give our reasons for those convictions, I think that on every doubtful and debatable question we ought so

to speak that our opponents may listen to us without pain and shame.

Secondly, they teach the utmost tolerance of the opinions of others. The world has been a long time in learning the A B C of this lesson. After so long a time and so much practice the principle of tolerance is very imperfectly understood, and more imperfectly practised. In our own country, whilst tolerance of every opinion is the law of our land, it is scarcely yet the law of our people. Outside the law court and the prison the public have got thousands of effectual ways to persecute those whose opinions disagree with the different orthodoxies of our countrymen. In some quarters there are signs as if the monster Intolerance was again struggling into life; but should it do so, I hope it will be only to receive its final death-blow. All who have minds to think have an equal right to their opinions with ourselves, and we have no more right to try to crush their opinions than they have to crush ours. Were there only one in a country differing from all others, that one would have a right to differ, and the country would commit a wrongful act, and do itself as well as the one an injustice, in trying by brute force to crush the convictions of his mind.

Thirdly, they teach plainly the duty of personal inquiry into those things which men call upon us to believe. We should remember that those who are called to be our teachers are interested in what they teach in a very different way to ourselves. We should therefore examine their teaching personally; and the examination ought to be honest and thorough, and to be honest and thorough it must include all sides of every question. Hear what all have to say, read what all have written, dare look at all that can be seen. Be afraid of nothing. This advice may not be very orthodox; at the same time, I believe it is the only sound advice to be given in a case like this. To follow this advice may damage creeds and systems, I admit; but it cannot damage truth. Therefore follow the advice boldly, caring nothing for the anathemas of those who disapprove your conduct. Fire will not descend from heaven to destroy you, nor the earth open to engulf you, at the bidding of any man, however strong they may wish it. Follow after truth until you find it, and when you do find it avow it, whatever may be the consequence. To do this honestly would, I think, be followed with very beneficial results. I have no doubt in my own mind that most of the narrow-mindedness, prejudice, and uncharitableness existing between sect and sect and nation and nation is the result of our elaborate systems of exclusive teaching; and were these systems to be abolished, and men generally to be made acquainted with the views and practices of all, that a broader and more charitable sentiment would prevail throughout the land, and greater peace and happiness would be the result.

Fourthly, they teach us that, however important right opinions may be, no opinions have any indispensable connection with goodness. The orthodox belief, very likely, is contrary to this. There seems to be a notion prevailing that unless men believe so-and-so they cannot be good men, and, especially if they are heterodox in opinion, many believe that they must be bad men. But my experience, assisted by observation and reflection, has taught me that it is not so. Many men are better than their creed—and many are worse. There are some good and some bad amongst all, and the average of both would not vary much amongst the holders of different dogmas. As far as all the substantial virtues of life are concerned, anyone may verify the fact for himself that a professing Christian in his life may be a devil, and that a Sceptic or an Atheist may in life be a saint. Therefore we ought not to condemn men on account of their opinion, nor treat them with suspicion and contempt because they differ from us. On the contrary, if men are good, honest, industrious, and virtuous in all the relations of life, I think we ought to give them all the hand and the love of a brother, whatever their opinions may be.

Lastly, they teach us that doubtful and uncertain opinions ought to remain no longer a part of education; but that they should be banished from the pulpit, the school, and the press, to make room for something more substantial and positive. I fear my opinion on this matter at present will be shared by few. It is quite possible also, that many would listen to such an opinion with pious horror. At the same time, I feel confident, though that confidence is no guarantee of success, that the time is coming when it will be shared by an ever increasing number. And what good purpose can be answered by teaching and cross teaching opinions and dogmas upon which the two first that meet will disagree? Does not this teaching and cross teaching bewilder and perplex the minds of nearly all enquiring students? Does it not create and foster divisions where there ought to be unity? Does it not set class against class, families against families, neighborhoods against neighborhoods, and nations against nations? Does it not array men in hostile armies against each other, on questions that can benefit no one except the teachers on either side? Does it not, in the case of our toiling millions waste the little time given them for instruction, upon things that can give them no assistance in their life's struggles? Does it not stand like an alps in the road of progress and improvement, causing men to waste their time and energy in fighting one another, instead of in battling against the evils which continually attack our lives? Whilst divines and men with high-sounding titles, like overgrown boys, are squabbling and fighting over their marbles, pegtops, and hoops, do not men starve for the want of bread in the land of plenty? Do not ignorance, pauperism, crime, prostitution, and many other evils thrive and increase, almost unchecked and unopposed? Are not our working population behind that of nearly every other country in education and accomplishments? And why? Have we not riches enough? Are there not materials enough? And, let me ask, are there not matters enough upon which all men substantially agree, to occupy the time of teachers and pupils? If there is, why continue any longer to teach and cross-teach opinions, which, apparently, can never be satisfactorily proved? Far better would it be, in my humble, but firm opinion, to teach those things only which qualify men to fight the battle of life successfully. And were it possible to unite the pulpit, the school, and the Press to make one common effort for the good of all, what happy and glorious results might we not expect. So far, men have never been united in any effort made to better their condition. Whilst one section has been bravely fighting for the good of all, another section has been almost always fighting against them, for no reason probably except the different color of their opinions. And this disunion has been originated and perpetuated by the teaching and cross-teaching carried on systematically all over the world. Therefore, I would say, that it is time to change and try a new system of practical utility and positive good; discarding doubtful theories and opinions, to make room for useful instruction and scientific truths. To bring this change about, all lovers of man ought to unite, feeling assured that by so doing, they shall best promote the highest interest of society, and make life worth having and living for all, which is more than can be said of it at the present time.

R. J. DERFEL.

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#### ROCKEFELLER, JUNIOR.

Said Rockefeller, senior, to his boy,  
 "Be good and you shall have eternal joy."  
 Said Rockefeller, junior, to his dad,  
 "I never do a single thing that's bad."  
 Said Rockefeller, senior—long gone gray  
 In service at the altar: "Ever pray,"  
 And Rockefeller, junior, being bid,  
 Upon his knees and neighbors ever did.

—Ambrose Bierce.

## 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.

**NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL** (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."

**EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Brickley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. Snell, "Jesus: Prophet or Social Reformer."

**SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Charles Watts, "The Case of Rationalism."

**WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY** (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, H. Snell, "The Other Side of Darwinism."

### COUNTRY.

**EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY** (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, Mr. Mcara, "Morality of the Bible God."

**GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY** (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class; Open Discussion, "Free Trade v. Protection"; 6.30, Social Meeting in Commemoration of Burns and Paine.

**LEEDS** (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, George Weir, "Bible Folly"; Woodhouse Moor: 3, "Religion in Schools"; Town Hall Square: 7, "The Devil."

**LIVERPOOL** (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, Mr. Schweizer, Does Man Survive Physical Death? 7, H. Percy Ward, "Religion Without God." Monday, at 8, Social Meeting. Tickets 6d.

**MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL** (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): Ernest Pack, 3, "The Bottomless Creed"; 6.30, "A Blasphemous Trinity." Tea at 5.

**SOUTH SHIELDS** (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting, Proposed Lectures.

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