

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Every wise man will allow others the same liberty of thinking, which he desires they should allow him: and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him, with whom he desires to unite in love, that single question, "Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?"—JOHN WESLEY (Sermon 41).

Lying Up a Lie.

One lie begets another.—Ancient Proverb.

CARLYLE spoke of the Great Lying Church, by which he meant the brazen Church of Rome. But he need not have restricted the application of his adjective. All Christian Churches are lying Churches, and the Great Lying Church is the Christian Church as a whole. Given superstition and supernaturalism, and a priesthood really living on the bump of wonder, and you may look out for any amount of falsehood and trickery; and there is not the slightest chance of your ever being disappointed.

The amusing thing—and the instructive thing, if you look at it rightly—is that every Christian Church is ready to believe every other Christian Church a liar. There is not an atom of love lost between them. They understand each other. Listen to what the Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Holy Greek Church say of one another. Then listen to what the Protestant Churches say of both of them. And then listen to what both of them say of the Protestant Churches. At the finish you have their characters to a nicety.

The average Protestant will tell you that the priests of the Church of Rome lie as naturally as sparks fly upwards. But if you suggest that his own clergy are fairly accomplished in the same art, he flies into a foul-mouthed fury, and the mildest thing he says about you is that you are utterly devoid of the instincts of a gentleman. It is fortunate if he does not insinuate that you are well-known to the police, that you have deserted your wife and children, that you know something about a certain burglary, or that you are not as ignorant as you pretend about the latest sensational murder.

Behind every Christian Church is the same superstition. And it is really absurd, as Byron remarked, to see a Christian swallowing the dogma of the Trinity, and then straining at some petty absurdity. Behind every Christian Church, too, is the same falsehood. It is not only a lie, but the lie of lies. It is the Atlas that carries on its broad shoulders a world of mendacity. No greater lie, indeed, is possibly conceivable.

This lie of lies is that the Bible is the Word of God. The time will come—it is obviously coming—when the pretence that the Bible is an inspired book will be generally regarded as the wildest hallucination, or the rankest imposture, in human history.

Could impudence go farther than to pretend that there is divine inspiration in a volume which contains the record of bloody wars fought at God's command, of lustful outrage and brutal slaughter perpetrated at his express orders? Could folly go farther than

to allege that the play of "Hamlet" is the work of a man, and that the Book of Jonah was dictated or suggested by the Deity?

Such a monstrous fable, if once believed, is enough to pervert any conscience or intelligence. It is anything but wonderful, therefore, that the *Daily News*, with its modest endowment in these directions, should start off its celebration of "Bible Sunday" with the puerile old story of the Queen of England (Victoria, to wit; in the pre-Empress days) having declared that the Bible was "the secret of England's greatness."

Queen Victoria never said so. The statement that she did was officially contradicted by her secretary. The picture in which she is presenting a Bible to some sort of a blackman, from God knows where, is simply a pious invention. It is like the pictures of the deathbeds of Voltaire and Thomas Paine. The wish was father to the thought. The object was "edification," and anything serving that end was acceptable. Whether it was true or false was a matter of infinitesimal importance. What was carnal veracity to the salvation of immortal souls?

The *Daily News* ought to be aware that this picture is a pious invention, that the incident never occurred, and that Queen Victoria never uttered the words ascribed to her. It has to print war news in a hurry, like other papers; but there is no hurry about this "secret of England's greatness" story. It has been investigated, and it may be investigated again. The cost would be trifling, say half-a-crown; which would not tax the financial resources of the enterprise that bore the cost of the Religious Census of London.

And the *Daily News* really ought to be aware that, even if this Queen and Bible story were true, it is silly to use it at this time of day in order to promote the laudation of the Bible; for those who believe the Bible to be the Word of God can hardly want even a Queen's testimonial, while those who do not believe it to be the Word of God can hardly take her testimonial as a substitute for their own judgment. Testimonials, in short, are more proper to the pill trade than to the concerns of philosophy.

Suppose the *Daily News* differed from the late Queen Victoria on any subject: would it accept her opinion instead of its own? If not, her opinion is only of weight when it agrees with that of the *Daily News*; and when the *Daily News* puts forward her opinion, in such a case, it is merely putting forward its own opinion in disguise. Which, by the way, is a very common trick of broken-winged argumentation.

Nothing could be more ridiculous than the assertion that the Bible is the secret of England's greatness. Take away our coal and iron, abolish the "ditch" that divides us from France, and we should be an insignificant extension of the continent of Europe. Remove us from our position on the map of the world, set us down somewhere in the South Pacific, and where would be our greatness then? Besides, it is an historical fact that the strong foundations of England's greatness were laid in the pre-Bible days; that is, before the Bible was in the hands of the people. The people did not read the Bible in "the spacious times of great Elizabeth." They have only been reading the Bible extensively for about a hundred years. But this fact has nothing

to do with the progress of that wonderful century, which is entirely due to the conquests of modern science. England has the Bible; yes, and so has Holland, and the Dutch read it more than we do; but where is the greatness of Holland now?

The Bible Society, whose centenary is just being celebrated, is deluging the papers with the most astonishing proofs of the inspiration of Holy Writ. Fourteen million pounds have been spent on circulating it; a hundred and forty million copies have been printed and distributed; *argal*, we suppose, it is undoubtedly the Word of God. But how does telling a lie a hundred and forty million times make it a truth? The Bible is true or false *in itself*. If it be true in itself, it would still be true if there were only a single copy of it in existence. If it be false in itself, it would still be false if all the fifteen hundred million inhabitants of this world had fifteen copies apiece.

Where is the man to-day in Christian England who will stand up and say that he believes all the contents of the Bible from cover to cover? Many of the clergy reject large portions of it, and what they retain is subject to all sorts of qualifications and reservations. Some of them go to the length of saying that no importance whatever must be attached even to Jesus Christ's approving references to Moses and Jonah and Lot's wife. The fact is that thousands of the clergy themselves do not believe the Bible to be the Word of God as it was believed to be a hundred, fifty, or even twenty years ago. Yet it is in this discarded sense of the expression that the Bible is still presented to the "heathen." Consequently the Bible Society is deliberately circulating a lie; its supporters are subscribing for the circulation of a lie. It is just a case, to use Browning's words, of "Lies, lies again, and still they lie."

G. W. FOOTE.

The Cant of Christian Charity.

FROM a report in the *Burton Mail* I see that Mr. W. T. Lee has been lecturing in Burton on "Man and his Maker" as part of an anti-infidel crusade. Questions being invited at the close of the lecture, one of the audience suggested that there were difficulties in the way of believing that the world was ruled by a God of love and justice, and instanced, among other things, the fact of 30,000 children going breakfastless to school. The suggestion was simple and straightforward. It could hardly be claimed that these 30,000 children had committed any very grave crime; certainly no offence that deserved a course of semi-starvation. Most people would, if they could, see that all children at least should have enough to eat; and if man would act so, why not God? The question was a straightforward one, and deserved a straightforward answer.

But this is precisely what it did not get. The answer given was in true Christian Evidence style—that species of Christian Evidence that consists in a jumble of persons and principles, an appeal to uninformed emotion instead of to the intelligence, with a "We are a much better lot than you, anyway," as a triumphant conclusion.

Mr. Lee replied that "Christians had done far more for earthly wants than had any body of unbelievers;" children were given free breakfasts by Christians, Dr. Barnardo helped destitute children, General Booth had been entrusted with nearly a million of money to help the poor, &c., &c. Now we do not know who the questioner was; but whoever he may have been, we can imagine him smiling at this cataloguing of Christian philanthropic efforts, and wondering what on earth it had to do with the question. The question was what was *God Almighty* doing. The answer was an account of what certain *men and women* were doing. Really any man who gets upon a platform to lecture, and who invites questions, ought to see that his answers bear some sort of a relation to the questions asked.

Now no one denies that a large number of men and women of all classes and creeds are doing what they can to diminish the sum total of human misery. No one denies either that certain Christian ladies and gentlemen are in business as philanthropists, which is, all things considered, about as profitable an undertaking as one can engage in. It is a business in which the public finds the capital, the promoters live in first-class style, by a species of preference shares, and the fact that the Rev. Mr. Blank, who before starting on his philanthropic mission lived on about £100 a year, and afterwards lives to the tune of £700 or £800 a year, is atoned for by the fact that a certain number of waifs and strays receive board and lodging out of the surplus donations.

This aspect of the professional religious philanthropy of Great Britain need not, however, be discussed, although a very interesting chapter *might* be written upon it. There are one or two other aspects of the matter worth noticing. Let us assume that all the men and women engaged in this work are animated by the best of motives. They are in a world which the Christian believes has been fashioned by God, and in which, therefore, all this distress and suffering forms part of the "divine" plan, and which, if left to Deity, would persist in undiminished force. All these men and women are consequently engaged in the task of correcting the mismanagement of God Almighty. This reflects credit upon their good nature, undoubtedly; but the practical condemnation of God's method is exactly coextensive with the efforts of men and women to adjust things so as to secure a larger measure of human comfort and happiness than Deity has provided.

Mr. Lee says, as every lecturer of his type says, that the men and women who do this good work are Christians. Well, this is not true, to commence with. The charitable institutions of Great Britain, where they are not aggressively sectarian, are supported by *all* classes of the community; and it is characteristic of the mental obliquity of Christian Evidence lecturers that they should label hospitals and other institutions so supported "Christian." Mr. Lee may not be aware of the fact, but it is within my knowledge that some of the Christian missions in the East End of London receive financial help from prominent *Jews*, on account of the non-religious aspect of their work; and they would certainly be surprised to learn that their charity was actuated by faith in Jesus. And even in such a case as General Booth's "Self-Denial Week," does anyone imagine that no one but Christians subscribe to this? The difference between the catholicity of Christian appeals and the exclusiveness of Christian acknowledgments is most striking.

It may be said that the vast majority of subscribers are Christians. This may be granted, if it means a mere profession of Christian belief. It is almost humiliating to have to point out that in a professedly Christian country the bulk of what transpires will be labelled Christian, just as in other countries or with other people it may be labelled Mohammedan, Buddhist, Confucian, or Jewish. And one may say with certainty that in Turkey men of Mr. Lee's mental type would be as ready to swear that all goodness came from a belief in Mohammed as in England they are ready to make the same affirmation in relation to Jesus. The majority of people express their feelings in terms of the current religion of the country in which they are living, just as they express their ideas in its language. And really there is quite as much reason for calling benevolence French or German as there is for calling it Christian.

This labelling of normal human feelings with a sectarian badge, when it is not due to ignorance, is sheer impertinence. The impudence of Christian speakers who calmly address an audience on the *Christian* virtues of benevolence, truthfulness, etc., would be wholly amusing, did it not convey an insult to all non-Christians, and disclose such an amazing wealth of ignorance on the part of the speakers.

themselves. To hear them talk of this or that Christian virtue, one would imagine that it was Christianity that invented all the virtues, and that all other people who practise them are infringing Christianity's copyright. One might as well talk of Christian electricity or Christian gravitation as of Christian virtue. Human feelings are human feelings, and not sectarian assets, to be exploited in the interests of this or that particular denomination. The fallacy in assuming religion as the creator of morality is exactly that of assuming government as the creator of society. It is the social state that determines the form government assumes, and it is the social and moral state that ultimately determines the form taken by religious beliefs.

But suppose one were to take lecturers of the type of Mr. Lee on his own grounds. It might then be easily argued that this parade of Christian philanthropy is not by any means so convincing as he believes. In the first place we are living in a Christian country, a country that has been Christian for many centuries, and one in which the clergy have exercised an enormous influence on life from the cradle to the grave. And one may well enquire how is it, if Christianity be such a power for good, that there exists so much misery and suffering necessitating the maintenance of so many charitable institutions? Even a Christian Evidence lecturer might be expected to see that all this parade of poverty and vice is an unmistakable proof of the failure of Christianity to rationalise and humanise life. Ruskin said that when people declared the clergy to be the only friends of the poor, they brought the most terrible indictment against the clergy he had ever heard. It meant that they had carried out their functions as teachers so badly that after fifteen centuries of rule they had not succeeded in teaching social classes their mutual duties. And the need for all this philanthropy, the fact that society is so largely made up of the destitute, of people dependent for bread upon the charity of others, is a clear proof of how terribly Christianity has failed in organising society upon a sound basis, if it ever seriously attempted the task. As a matter of fact, the best philanthropy of the Christian world is but an attempt by a handful of Christians to repair the effects of the greed and selfishness and anti-social conduct of the larger portion.

And in the second place one might seriously question whether these Christian philanthropic agencies produce any benefits commensurate with the money and energy spent upon them. What effect, for instance, has General Booth's million of money had in abolishing any of the ultimate causes of poverty and vice? We hear a deal of the number of people who are converted at Salvation Army and other meetings, and of the number who are provided with free meals and cheap lodgings. But what effect has all this on reducing the total of the destitute or of the vicious? Everyone who has studied the question knows that their influence in this direction absolutely nil. The real causes of vice and poverty remain untouched by such agencies. They do not affect the question of the relation of employer and employee; they do not affect the question of land, of housing, or of any other vital problem. In many respects they perpetuate the evil by inducing and perpetuating a spirit of servility and dependance, and allowing the sweater and rack-renter to pose as a charitable individual by means of a subscription to a Christian charity.

In sober truth the charity about which the Christian boasts—the mere distribution of money—is the cheapest, the easiest, and the most worthless of virtues. Any fool can, and many a scoundrel does, practice it. It is an easy way of getting rid of importunities, a simple way of purchasing popularity, and a cheap way of whitewashing one's conduct. The deeper and more valuable charity, that of a ready sympathy with opposite temperaments, ideas, and characters, of this Christianity is practically destitute. And the ideal that places

justice before almsgiving, that says it is better to provide proper social conditions, than administer beef tea and soup, blankets and so on, and that does not preach the duty of the ideal look after the poor, but does preach the duty of society to so organise itself that the where-withal to live decently shall be within reach of all who care to earn it, to this ideal Christian preachers have never yet aspired.

C. COHEN.

A Notable Centenary.

LAST Sunday the British and Foreign Bible Society's Centenary Celebrations took place throughout the world. In London the jubilation commenced on Saturday, and came to a close on Tuesday evening, all the public meetings being held at the Albert and Queen's Halls. In anticipation of this interesting occasion, the religious Press had, for some weeks, been full of unstinted laudation of the Society's work in all parts of the world, and it had even ventured to pronounce fresh eulogiums upon the Bible itself. Particularly, the orthodox *British Weekly*, the pietistic *Christian Commonwealth*, and the heretical *Christian World* bestowed no inconsiderable amount of praise upon the Sacred Volume, and it may be worth while to examine one or two of the articles that have appeared. The *British Weekly* seeks to effect a compromise between Evangelicalism and the Higher Criticism. To the Critics it says: "You must scrupulously avoid destructive extremes, or you will undermine the foundations of the Evangelical Faith," while to the Evangelicals it issues this solemn warning: "You must piously deliver yourselves from cant and bigotry, and learn to cultivate reasonable views of the Bible." But Evangelicalism cannot prosper without an inspired and infallible Word of God, which according to the most moderate Higher Criticism does not exist. But the *Christian Commonwealth*, although from a literary point of view occupying a much lower level, is theologically more consistent than the *British Weekly*. This is largely to be accounted for by the fact that the *Christian Commonwealth* is the offspring of that unthinking pietism which Carlyle so fiercely hated and so vigorously denounced. In a recent leading article this paper waxed ludicrously sentimental over the immense benefits alleged to have resulted from the dissemination of the Scriptures through the agency of the Society whose Centenary has just been observed. Let us examine some of these supposed benefits.

The writer tells us that Russia is pre-eminently "a Bible land." But, pray, what has the Bible done for Russia? Has it redeemed her from any of the thousand gigantic evils which afflict her? Has not her aristocracy gone over to Agnosticism, and are not her peasants worse than slaves? Is it one of the results of Bible-reading that her Jews are so cruelly persecuted and so brutally slaughtered? This writer mentions the "converted Christian Tsar, the good Alexander I.," who made the Bible "his daily companion when he and his army were fleeing before Napoleon," and who wrote a kindly approval of the plan of the Bible Society "while the last tattered remnants of Napoleon's grand army were crossing the Niemen"; but I fail to see the relevancy of these allusions. I readily admit that Russia improved more under the reign of Alexander I. than under that of any of his predecessors from the time of Peter I., but I deny that the improvement was the outcome of the free distribution of the Bible among the people. The natural disposition of that great ruler was mild and merciful; and yet we must not forget that in the affairs of Europe he was not a power that made for public liberty.

What has the Bible done for Great Britain? We are assured that "England only escaped the 'Red Terror' through the overwhelming power of her Protestantism." But there is very little real differ-

ence between the "error" of Catholicism and the Black Book of Protestantism, for the latter has nearly as much innocent blood to flow as the former. Were Cromwell's blood-curdling murders in Ireland and elsewhere the fruit of Bible-reading? Was it the Bible that brought Episcopacy and Presbyterianism into such bloody conflict on this island? Or look at the Great Britain of to-day, and what do you see for which we can be thankful to the Bible? Are not the wretched, dehumanising slums with us still? Are not Capital and Labor still at war throughout the length and breadth of our land? Have our Bible-readers and Bible-lovers ceased to grind the faces of their workpeople? The fact is that whatever improvement has taken place in the conditions of life in our country is due almost exclusively to the spread of natural knowledge, to better sanitation, purer air, and more comfortable houses. The *Christian Commonwealth* says: "The triumphant fact confronts the unbeliever that no spot on earth is safe to dwell in where the Bible is unknown." How utterly absurd such an assertion is becomes evident when we reflect that it is anything but safe to live in the most Bible-loving country on earth. Why does the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* lock and bolt his doors every night? Why cannot he take a leisurely walk through certain London streets at one o'clock in the morning? Why cannot the King traverse our thoroughfares unprotected? Great Britain is by no means a safe country to dwell in. Then think of the vast standing armies which the Bible-reading and Bible-loving Powers are obliged to keep at such tremendous cost. I read the other day that "soldiers, of course, take first place in national esteem;" but were the Bible the book its admirers declare it to be there would be no need of soldiers. Nor would there be any service for policemen, courts of justice, and prisons in our land. The difficulty is to discover a single benefit that has accrued from the reading of the Bible. It is undeniable that the Zulus, for example, were a much more moral people before the Bible and Christian civilisation reached them than they are at present.

In the *Christian World* the appraisalment of the Bible came from the pen of the clever and usually sensible writer who signs himself "J. B." As is well-known, the *Christian World* is theologically advanced or lax; and even in this article Mr. Brierley repudiates the orthodox doctrine of Inspiration. He admits that "astronomy, geology, biology, and criticism, amongst them, have reversed, on a hundred momentous themes, the views held by the originators of the Bible Society," and that consequently "it is impossible for us to-day to think as they did of creation, of human origins, of human history, or to hold their views as to Biblical Inspiration." With this we are in full agreement; but Mr. Brierley adds: "Yet in no whit has their book lost its religious value. It shines to-day as of old with a unique lustre, as the Book of God and of man." What the writer means by "and of man" it is difficult to tell. If the Bible gives us false information about creation, human origins, and human history, where does God come in? Through whom does he speak—the priest or the prophet? He cannot speak through both, because they contradict each other on vital points. Jeremiah (viii., 8) charges the priests with fraud and forgery, while the priests maintain that God revealed their system in its entirety to Moses in the wilderness.

Mr. Brierley wants us to look at the testimonies of "men who have read everything, seen everything, done everything; of revolutionaries, the world-worn spirits who have drained life to its dregs"; but the citations he makes from such testimonies are practically of no value. Rousseau, Heine, and Renan, whatever they may have said about it, did not live as if they believed in the Bible as the Book of God. Rousseau was merely a sentimental Deist, Heine lacked the religious sense, and Renan died in unbelief. George Eliot, as everybody knows, was an Agnostic to the end, and her most intimate friends were unbelievers. She may have called the Bible "a very

precious and sacred book" without committing herself to the conviction that it is a revelation from God. Professor Huxley was a constant reader of the Bible, and said many beautiful and appreciative things about it; but he was the implacable foe of any doctrine of Divine Inspiration.

Furthermore, Mr. Brierley claims for the Bible the high honor of abolishing priestly despotism wherever it goes. But that is a radical mistake. Priestcraft is not dead in Protestant England, as many a rural community can sorrowfully testify. Priestcraft is alive and active even in Nonconformity, the so-called Nonconformist conscience being, in many instances, nothing but another name for it. It is the spread of education and knowledge, it is the triumph of science that can destroy priestcraft; and this also destroys all faith in the Bible as the Word of God. Science puts the Bible in the same class as all other Sacred Books, and reads it only as an interesting record of the evolution of religion as embodied in Judaism and Christianity.

The *Christian Commonwealth* asserts that England's greatness is directly traceable to the influence of the Bible. Because we read the Bible so incessantly and love it so passionately we have developed into the most glorious and powerful Empire the world has ever seen. But the *Christian World* regretfully affirms that England does not read the Bible. Here are the very words: "We speak of our age as the age of the Bible, and yet can we say that to-day the Bible is a popular book? It is a professional book, a school book, the clergyman's book. But what of the circulating libraries? Is there a run on it there? Do our young people read it in spare half hours? Have we anywhere in society a feeling corresponding to that in Wielik's time when, according to Foxe, 'some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or St. Paul?'" Speaking in the New England of his day of the New Testament, Thoreau said: "I know of no book which has so few readers." And New England in Thoreau's day was wholly Christian in profession. The truth is that the Bible is not read except professionally. Christians generally are disgracefully ignorant of its contents. Many of them have beautifully bound copies of it in their homes, but they scarcely ever open them. They may believe languidly that the book is divine, but there is no transforming fire in their faith. And yet, although perfectly aware of this, Mr. Brierley says: "Yet the Book, despite all temporary obscurations, will fulfil its mission. The elect souls will ever read it, and make its message quiver in the heart of the world. And in the greater moments of life, in its struggles, its weariness, its despairs, in the moment of their highest living and in the hour of their dying, men will come to this book. They will turn their heated brow to its breath of eternity, and listen to its whisper of the love of God." Will they? But they do not do it now. Out of five millions of people in London there are not quite one million who profess Christianity, and out of that million professing Christians there are not two hundred thousand who regularly read the Bible; and there is no proof that the two hundred thousand are elect souls who lead nobler, purer, and more beneficent lives than all their neighbors. And as for the future, judging by the past and the present, there is a strong probability that its men will come to the Bible in ever smaller and smaller numbers. The reign of the Book, as well as that of the Church, is already a thing of the past. The fetters of superstition are being shattered, and men are coming into their kingdom of independence, and freedom, and true nobility. They are slowly learning to walk on their own feet, without the help of ecclesiastical crutches, and to see through their own eyes without the assistance of priestly spectacles. This process has been going on for many years, it is going on more rapidly than ever just now, and all the Christianising Societies on the globe cannot put a stop to it.

JOHN LLOYD.

Causation and Creed.

I READ with interest the article in last week's *Freethinker* on *Man's Place in the Universe*. I have not seen Professor Wallace's book, but I have followed the discussion on it and on his *Fortnightly* article sufficiently to gather its bearings. As a layman it seems to me that Dr. Wallace's theory collapses of itself, without reference to the astronomical argument.

Dr. Wallace sets out to prove the earth's centrality. But of what is it the centre? Space? If that is suggested, it hardly needs to be said that space, being infinite (a purely philosophical conclusion), can have no centre. If, however, it is suggested that, whilst so-called space itself is unlimited, the limits of the sidereal system are definable, the answer is equally certain that, granted the illimitability of space, nothing can be alleged regarding the condition of space infinite light-years beyond the reach of the spectroscope.

"G. S." rightly says the settlement of the question one way or the other does not affect the Free-thought position. There were Freethinkers when the idea of man's pre-eminence was more popular than it is now. If it were to be proved that the earth is the only inhabited planet of this or any other solar system, the idea of God would be advanced no nearer plausibility than it is now. But "G. S." (or I wrong him) seems to think that this last is the case, because "an omnipotent, omniscient, and superlatively beneficent and wise being could" not "be responsible for such an appalling amount of waste of world material as would be involved were life restricted solely to this planet."

In the first case it should be said that this statement does not meet the case against Design. It only meets the case against an all-beneficent Designer. An all-beneficent Designer is not, however, a necessary postulate of Deism as such. It is the claim merely of a particular brand of Deism. The Deistic idea might well lodge itself in the simple statement of God's omnipotence and omniscience. If it did that, "G. S.'s" argument would not meet the case, because if he then referred to the appalling waste, etc., he would be told that it would be quite within the potentialities of such a god to waste worlds for his sport.

The case against God, however, depends on no such process of reasoning. The religionists who cite such pronouncements as this of Dr. Wallace's discard in the act the authority of their sacred books. They will return to them, of course; but for the time the argument becomes one of causation in the abstract, without reference to the particular creed in which the idea is later to become embodied. It will, I think, be found that the plea for a First Cause, however academically it be urged, has, after all, a quite vulgar code of reasoning. A clergyman of the Church of England, in an apologetic sermon the other day, mentioned that the universe had been compared by a well-known Rationalist to a clock, automatic and continuous in its operation, and requiring no adjustment from an external agency. The preacher was willing to accept the illustration, but the Rationalists were not disposed to take it far enough. A clock had a maker; *ergo*, the universe had a Maker. The argument will be familiar, I suppose, to most Freethinkers; and, indeed, the only thing novel about it is the preacher's claim that Freethinkers are not prepared to carry it to its issue. To make the ground clear, however, I will at once state the Rationalist reply. The universe is accepted as resembling a clock, and a clock has a maker; therefore the universe has a Maker also. But the clock-maker having a maker (parents), the Universe Maker must also have had a Maker!

Obvious as the fallacy is seen to be when treated in the concrete, it will be found to underlie the argument of the Higher Critic no less than that of the revivalist. Its genesis is the fact that it is religionists

who will not carry the argument to its issue. They seek for the cause of the phenomena about them; but instead of recognising that the immediate cause of a thing is but the effect of yet another cause, which is in turn an effect, and part of an unending chain of cause and effect, the theist stops at the adjacent cause. Take the example of the clock. In seeking for its cause, the theist stops at the clockmaker, as though the clockmaker himself were self-existent, and there were no need to inquire into *his* cause; to say nothing of the antecedents of the springs, screws, &c., of which the clock was made.

We see that even when applied to everyday matters the habit of examining a thing only in relation to its immediate antecedent is fertile of error. Yet this same procedure is thought worthy of practice in discussing metaphysics! It must be shown to the Deist that the mystery of the origin of a pumpkin is the perennial mystery of the origin of the universe. When he has traced the first to its ultimate he will have solved the problem of the second, and at the last examination there is nothing more awful about the phenomenon of the spectra than there is about veal outlets.

The Rationalist, like the Christian, will use the illustration that lies nearest to him, only he will use it fully. He will find his efforts to trace the origin of a cup of tea confront him with an unending vista of antecedents, of which each unites in itself the positions of cause and effect. He will see that no effect is without a cause, and that every cause is also an effect; and as he will insist on this law which his experience impresses on him, he will lay on the postulant of a First Cause the onus of proof that the law could ever be broken. The existence of a Being without antecedent conditions will be an idea which he cannot accept.

This truth finally grasped, and the sacred books of the world lose their claim even to be answered as arguments for a Creator; whilst it is no less evident that the anthropistic speculations of the Wallaces and the Kelvins will share with the Bibles of the world the proper oblivion of works which ignore the first postulate of connected thought—the eternity of the Cosmos.

P. H.

Thanksgiving Day.

THERE be those of us whose memories, though vexed with an oyster-rake, would not yield matter for gratitude, and whose piety though strained through a sieve would leave no trace of an object on which to lavish thanks. It is easy enough, with a waistcoat selected for the occasion, to eat one's portion of turkey and hide away one's allowance of wine; and if this be returning thanks, why then gratitude is considerably easier, and vastly more agreeable than falling off a log, and may be acquired in one easy lesson without a master. But if more than this be required—if to be grateful means anything beyond being gluttonous, your true philosopher—he of the severe brow upon which logic has stamped its eternal impress, and from whose heart sentiment has been banished along with other small vices—your true philosopher, say we, will think twice before he "crooks the pregnant hinges of the knee" in humble observance of the day.

For here is the nut of reason he is obliged to crack before he can obtain the kernel of emotion proper to the day. Unless the blessings we enjoy are favors from the Omnipotent, to be grateful is to be absurd. If they are, then, also, the ills with which we are afflicted have the same origin. Grant this, and you make an offset of the latter against the former, or are driven either to the ridiculous position that we must be equally grateful for both evils and blessings, or the no less ridiculous one that all evils are blessings in disguise.

But the truth is, my fine friend, your annual gratitude is a sorry sham, a cloak, my good fellow, to cover your unhandsome gluttony; and when by chance you do take to your knees, it is only that you prefer to digest your bird in that position. We understand your case accurately, and the hard sense we are poking at you is not a preaching for your edification, but a bit of harmless fun for our own diversion. For, look you! there is really a subtle but potent relation between the gratitude of the spirit and the stuffing of the flesh.

We have ever taught the identity of Soul and Stomach; these are but different names of one object considered under differing aspects. Thankfulness we believe to be a kind of ether evolved by the action of the gastric fluid upon rich meats. Like all gases it ascends, and so passes out of the œsophagus in prayer and psalmody. This beautiful theory we have tested by convincing experiments in the manner following:—

Experiment 1st.—A quantity of grass was placed in a large bladder, and a gill of the gastric fluid of a sheep introduced. In ten minutes the neck of the bladder emitted a contented bleat.

Experiment 2nd.—A pound of beef was substituted for the grass, and the fluid of a dog for that of the sheep. The result was a cheerful bark, accompanied by an agitation of the bottom of the bladder, as if it were attempting to wag an imaginary tail.

Experiment 3rd.—The bladder was charged with a handful of chopped turkey, and an ounce of human gastric juice obtained from the Coroner. At first, nothing but a deep sigh of satisfaction escaped from the neck of the bladder, followed by an unmistakable grunt, similar to that of a hog. Upon increasing the proportion of turkey, and confining the gas, the bladder was very much distended, appearing to suffer great uneasiness. The restriction being removed, the neck distinctly articulated the words "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!"

Against such demonstration as this any mere theological theorising is of no avail.

—Dod Grile.

Acid Drops.

Those may admire Sir William Vernon Harcourt who choose. We do *not* admire him, and we do not hesitate to say so now that he is retiring from public life. Twenty-one years ago he did us a grievous wrong. And he did it meanly. We were in prison for the crime of "blasphemy," and a great many Englishmen objected to our imprisonment. A memorial for our release was signed by dozens of the leading men in science, art, and literature, and sent to the Home Office. It was a memorial of unprecedented character, yet the Home Office did not deign to return an answer. At last a question was raised in the House of Commons. And thereby hangs a tale. Sir William Harcourt was then Home Secretary, and he actually had the impudence to stand up in his place of privilege in parliament and declare that we were in prison for "obscenity." This was too much even for some of the daily papers. They pointed out to Sir William Harcourt that he was very badly mistaken, that we were prosecuted and imprisoned for "blasphemy," that there was not a word about anything else in our indictment and that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge had almost gone out of his way to rebuke those who used the word "indecent" against us. But Sir William Harcourt never retracted his libel. He felt quite safe, and he sailed along quite happy. But he told a mean and infamous lie about us, and we never forgave him because we never saw any reason to think he deserved it. So we take our farewells of him with one observation. Sir William Harcourt is—a Christian.

Rev. W. A. Presland, President of the New Church Conference, has been lecturing at the Friendly Societies' Hall, Cross Hill, Keighley, in support of the Bible. The title of his lecture was "A Reply to the Attacks upon the Bible by Haeckel and other Rationalists." In the course of it he said that "The critics to whom he referred—men like Professor Huxley, Professor Haeckel, or 'Nunquam'—reiterated objections which were as old as David Hume and Tom Paine, and which had been repeated by men like Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, and Foote." But is it any proper objection to an objection that it is an old objection? If it be a million years old, an objection is as good as ever if it is unanswered. Of course there is nothing new in "Nunquam's" attack on Christianity except his own freshness of manner. But saying that is not replying to his articles. If you say a certain object is six feet high, and someone shows it isn't, is it any answer to say that someone else showed that a long time ago? While your statement stands the objection to it stands also.

A Birmingham "saint" gave us an amusing account of his interview with Dr. Torrey, the Yankee revivalist. Dr. Torrey wanted to convert him, and he wanted Dr. Torrey to prove his statements about Paine and Ingersoll. Dr. Torrey swore that his statements were perfectly true; who said that they were not? Thereupon the Birmingham "saint" produced a copy of the *Freethinker* containing our refutation of the Yankee revivalist's slanders. Dr. Torrey glanced at

the paper and threw it down angrily, and then said to the Birmingham "saint"—"Let us talk about your soul." Anything was better than facing the truth himself.

The Church of England claims to have raised during the twelve months ending at Easter, 1903, the prodigious sum of £8,107,835. This is a pure addition, of course, to the millions derived annually from endowments. Some idea may thus be formed of the immense strength of the Established Church. An institution that handles, in one way or another, some fifteen or sixteen millions a year will take a lot of shifting. The Nonconformists need not talk so glibly about Disestablishment. Even if they were strong enough to carry such a measure the Church of England would still survive, as the Church of Ireland has survived, and would carry with it the support and affection of a multitude of English Christians to whom Nonconformity would continue to appeal in vain. Yes, that voluntary annual subscription of more than eight millions throws a flood of light upon the situation.

Freethinkers should also give that eight millions' subscription a thought. Christianity is intellectually played out, but it may live on in spite of that fact by means of political and social influence and vested interest. Out of that eight millions, for instance, the sum raised for elementary education—that is, for Church schools—was £1,183,491. Now that vast sum is really spent on making Church of England Christians of millions of children. And it is *this* aspect of the question that Freethinkers should seriously consider. Freethinkers will have to supply their cause with far more of the sinews of war if they want to see it make headway against the well-provided cause of superstition. In the long run money has to be fought with money; at least it cannot be fought without money; and this is a truth which the friends of "advanced" causes have never laid sufficiently to heart.

A donor only known as "Sperans" has given £5,000 to the Glasgow United Free Church Presbytery for church extension. A letter accompanying the gift expressed the donor's opinion that ministers should rather be pastors than preaching and praying officials, and should avoid all discursive controversies such as political partisanship and the obligation of total abstinence. Even the distinguishing dress of a clergyman was a mistake, as it served no good purpose, and only fostered self-consciousness. All of which may be true enough, but the gentleman might have said it before parting with that £5,000. It will take a great deal more than his advice to keep down the cheek of the clergy, who are no longer content to shine in the pulpit, but ambitious to excite attention as irresponsible social agitators.

The Archbishop of York has received from an anonymous donor a sum of £20,000 for the assistance of the widows and orphans of the poorer clergy in his diocese. Yes, there is plenty of money in religion yet; and Freethinkers should make a good note of it.

Unless the last chapter of Mark lies, to say nothing of other texts scattered over the four Gospels, the preachers of the Christian faith should be able to cure all manner of diseases by prayer and the laying on of hands. But a Baptist minister who advertises in the *Daily News*, and, for all we know, in other papers too, follows a very different line of treatment. He is the Rev. George Elven, and he is in the pill trade. His liver pills are Mild, Medium, and Strong, and sold at the usual prices; ten per cent. of which, probably, is the cost of the pills, the other ninety per cent. covering the cost of advertising and the patentee's profits. We dare say the Rev. George Elven finds catering for bad livers more profitable than curing bad souls. But whether his pills are really better than his preaching we are unable to say.

Right below the reverend pillman's advertisement in the paper aforesaid we noted a portrait of the late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon over an advertisement of that worthy's sermons. In this portrait Spurgeon looks pretty well *all* liver, and it seems a pity he did not try Elven's pills; for both pertain to the Baptist persuasion, and good ought to result when Baptist pills and Baptist livers come together.

A collier lad named Humphreys was fearfully injured while at work in the Micklefield Colliery, and died after weeks of suffering in the Leeds Infirmary. Out of the money paid by the Colliery Company as compensation he bequeathed £54 to the Wesleyan Missionary Society. It appears that he was always greatly interested in foreign missions. They were so far off, perhaps, that he could fancy they did some good.

Oh those men of God! How they love accuracy! The Rev. Walter Wynn's lecture on Dante is reported in the *Keighley News*, and amongst other remarkable things he said this: "A hundred years after Shakespeare died a German had to tell us that he had lived in this country." Shakespeare students, and, indeed, all ordinary good readers of English literature, know that this pulpit critic is talking the veriest nonsense. Shakespeare was never without honor in his own country. Those who assert the contrary are sheer ignoramus.

"Toby, M.P." of *Punch* (Mr. H. W. Lucy) is responsible for the following missionary story:—"A certain missionary chronicled the state of affairs in a small district of India for the delectation of the worthy people who supported the mission. Somehow or another the congregation of the missionary's church had shrunk to one solitary member, a boy of fifteen. A few years after there appeared in the society's magazine the welcome announcement, 'The congregation at our church is growing.' The youth of fifteen had attained the age of eighteen. A few months later the readers of the magazine were rejoiced to learn that 'our congregation has now doubled,' a result which was brought about by the fact that the youth had taken to himself a wife."

Some curious articles belonging to Nonconformist men of God were sold at a recent Passive Resistance auction at Balsall Heath, Birmingham. One minister's bookshelves were robbed of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* and Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, which were knocked down for 9s. 4d. A Presentation Bible and five volumes of the *Biblical Guide* fetched 8s. 7d. But these were, of course, not open-market prices; for a bicycle went for 9s. 1d., and a watch and chain for 18s. No doubt the bailiff knew, for instance, that the Presentation Bible would be bought back; otherwise he would never have distrained such an unsaleable article.

"Passive Resistance" continues to furnish amusing instances for newspaper paragraphists. Many of those who are summoned for non-payment of rates appear to think that any reason is good enough to justify their refusal. Objections on the grounds that the doctrines taught are "unscriptural" are common. One man objects on the grounds that the government that passed the Act were elected on a "war issue." Another because the second commandment says, "Thou shalt not bow down to any graven image." One Portsmouth objector wouldn't pay because he thought the Act would ultimately overthrow Protestantism. Anything seems good enough to ground an objection on. The climax of absurdity was reached in the case of a Bromley "Resister," who begged the magistrate to send him to the stake or the dungeon. The magistrate expressed his regret at not being able to comply with the request, but he might have compromised the matter by asking one of the Court policemen to take the would-be martyr outside and punch his head. Now if only these comic opera martyrs could be given a sense of humor for six months, the whole movement would collapse like a house of cards.

Some time back the National Free Church Council issued a manifesto on religious instruction in public schools, on which we commented in these columns. In that manifesto the Council, really representing the *least* liberal opinion in the country, had the impudence to demand that "simple Biblical instruction" should be given in all State-supported schools. This, be it remembered, after months of shrieking as to the iniquity of the State teaching the religion of a section with money raised from the taxation of all. This clause forms part of a report to be presented by the Newcastle Conference now sitting. From letters on the subject appearing in some of the Nonconformist organs it is evident that the recent agitation has convinced *some* Dissenters as to the illogical, not to say dishonest, character of the proposal; and these are now suggesting that it had better be dropped forthwith. These objectors point out that simple Biblical instruction is as obnoxious to some Christians as the teaching of Roman Catholic dogmas are to others; while Jews, Agnostics, and Atheists do not believe in any. This is, of course, what we have said times out of number; only it is refreshing to find that the logic of events is driving some portion of the Nonconformist Conscience to the same conclusion.

The more official objections—those emanating from local religious bodies—are, as may be expected, less straightforward. These object to the clause on the grounds that it will cause a division among Nonconformists. That is, those who really wish to see justice done to all by limiting the State to purely secular instruction, will be compelled to

break off from those who, like Dr. Clifford, use the cry of religious liberty merely as a blind to ulterior objects, and who, once they can prevent Churchmen getting the kind of religious instruction they require at the public expense, will work to get their own form of belief paid for from the same source. So they advise that the Council should not make any declaration for or against religious instruction, but simply confine itself to attacking the present arrangement. The cowardice and dishonesty of the suggestion are obvious. One can appreciate a man that makes a straightforward fight, whether it be on the one side or the other. But those who refuse to say whether they believe in Secular Education or not, while conducting a "Passive Resistance" campaign, or who, in the name of liberty, seek to clear the Episcopalian parson out of the schoolroom for the sole purpose of planting the Dissenting minister in his place, can arouse only contempt among people of a genuinely honest type. Unfortunately, the former class are numerous enough to be a public danger.

There is often something vulgar and brutal about English officials, especially when they belong to what Thackeray's Jeames called "the hupper suckles." Mr. Akers-Douglas, the new Tory Home Secretary, was asked a question in the House of Commons the other day concerning the treatment of Passive Resisters in prison. Had his attention, Mr. George White asked, been called to the case of Alderman O'Connor, of Fulham, recently imprisoned in Chelmsford Gaol for default in payment of rates: and, if so, would he say whether it was customary for such an offence to compel prisoners to pick oakum, to search them every day, and to supply them with Ritualistic tracts. Here was an opportunity for the Home Secretary to play the gentleman, but he did not avail himself of it; on the contrary, he gave a callous official reply which showed that he was devoid of common decency of feeling. Passive Resisters have been our own game, but we should deeply regret to see them treated like common criminals. Certainly they ought not to be subjected to the indignities that are inflicted on felons. It may be necessary to deprive them for a while of their liberty, but they should not be dressed as convicts and put to low forms of occupation. Mr. Akers-Douglas, however, is of a very different opinion. "The prisoner in question," he said, "was treated in the same way as other prisoners who come within the rules of debtors. Such prisoners must be given some employment, and when the term of detention is so short as fourteen days it is sometimes impossible to find any better employment than oakum picking. Alderman O'Connor was searched on reception, but only once after that. He was supplied with a Bible and Prayer Book, hymn book, and a book called 'The Narrow Way,' which, I am assured, cannot be called a Ritualistic tract, and a library book. He made no complaint."

Mr. Akers-Douglas evidently considered that this was an ideal state of things; and, of course, it is no use arguing with him. But what can be said of the Government system of a country in which a political offender is treated like a hardened burglar? Civilised nations are accustomed to make a difference between political and other prisoners. But our Government makes no difference, and is thus behind some nations that England is accustomed to look down upon with considerable contempt.

That "Narrow Way" book, tract, or whatever it was, ought to be exhibited in some conspicuous place for the public edification. Its title is decidedly suggestive. It seems to convey a broad hint that the reader has missed the road to glory, and had better try back again as soon as possible. And in the special circumstances of a Passive Resister, we can quite understand his regarding it as a Ritualistic production. It is a case of "getting at" him, anyway. Even the Prayer Book is not a welcome volume to most Nonconformists.

We have another word to say, before we conclude, about this answer by the Home Secretary. He says that the Passive Resister in this case was treated like other debtors. And what does this mean? It means that the judges and the Home Office have conspired to make laws "on their own" for this class of "criminals." Imprisonment for debt was abolished by law; yet thousands of debtors lie in English gaols to-day. They are committed for "contempt of court" in theory, but in practice for not paying their debts. Thus the judges brought back imprisonment for debt in spite of the law. And then the Home Office added insult to injury by framing rules which—even more in spite of the law—subjected these debtors to practically the same treatment as convicted criminals. What an illustration of the principle that government is almost always the natural enemy of the people!

The dear *Daily News* praised the fighting Nonconformists sky-high for taking such an active part in the London County Council elections. But it rated the fighting Churchmen for doing the very same thing. And for this inconsistency it was taken to task by Mr. Walter Perry, of Manor House, Uppingham. The dear *Daily News*, however, had its answer quite ready. "The appeal of the Free Churches," it said, "is against sectarianism, and to the people as citizens. The appeal of the Bishops is for the control of London in the interest of sectarianism." Now this is what the man in the street calls Tommy Rot. Nothing but the imbecile hypocrisy of the blindest partisanship could seriously ask people to believe that religion in the public schools controlled by the Bishop of London is sectarianism, and that religion in the public schools controlled by the Rev. Dr. Clifford is unsectarianism.

O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!

The Bishop of London was conducting an Ordination at St. Paul's Cathedral, and, in the ordinary course of procedure, he invited anyone who knew of any impediment to step forward. Young Johnnie Kensit accepted the invitation, and was given in charge for "brawling"—for which offence he was subsequently fined £5 by the Lord Mayor. What a screaming farce! Clearly the Bishop did not mean what he said. But is that unusual in a Bishop?

Mr. R. J. Campbell publishes a pathetic letter from a "Heartbroken Mother," on the death of her son, which incidentally illustrates the emptiness of "religious consolation." Her son has recently died "in the beauty and strength of young manhood." He made no profession of religious belief, but there is no suggestion in the mother's letter that he was guilty of any meanness or dishonorable action. And now the "heartbroken" mother asks, "Where is he? There can be no heaven for me without him. How could there be?" Although we do not know who this lady is, and although she may never see these lines, we yet venture to offer her our respectful sympathy in her distress. And we also venture to point the moral of this Christian creed which in a case such as this one, not only fails to give consolation, but adds to the anguish of a mother by suggesting the probability—the certainty according to most Christians—that although *she* will get to heaven her son will be spending eternity in hell.

And now for our City Temple oracle. Mr. Campbell's answer is: "Whence comes this cry of human love, if not from the heart of God Himself? Motherhood is an attribute of deity, and its presence in the world is a perpetual witness of Divine love.....God took him home to show him what a mistake" he had made. "Trust your boy to Jesus, and not only him, but yourself also," and so on for over half a column of small type. The mother asks for advice, and receives a deluge of verbal "hogswash," to use an Americanism. What the mother asks is whether there is any reason for trusting God will look after her boy? Mr. Campbell, with an air of preternatural wisdom, replies, Keep on trusting. The mother's love, he adds, is a proof of the divine love; while upon the face of it, it is exactly this mother's love that is rising in revolt against the teachings of Christianity. The opinion that "God took the son home" to show him what a mistake he had made is almost stupid enough to defy criticism. But, first, the mother's sorrow is the result of this "taking home"; second, what is the use of showing anyone in heaven what mistakes they have made on earth? If they were allowed to come back again, and apply their knowledge, the experience would be useful; not otherwise. And, third, would it not have been better—better both for mother and son—if the young man had been shown his mistake before dying? It is a foolish policy to kill a man in order to educate his corpse. Anyone but a preacher would have seen this.

Japan has about the same population as Great Britain. Out of this number 21,000 are paupers. In this more Christian country we have one million. The difference is said to be largely due to the Japanese treatment of the aged, the younger members of the family regarding it as a sacred act to see to the well-being of the elders. This is really a very backward state of affairs, and we have no doubt that with the spread of Christianity things Japanese will approximate nearer to our own style.

During the war between Russia and Japan the clergy of England are anxious to offer up special prayers, but the Archbishop of York advises them to patronise the old formula in the Prayer Book: "That it may please Thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord." There is not a man in England who believes that this prayer will be answered. What hypocrisy, then, to use it! If the Lord wants to stop

the war he will do so on his own account. The clergy need not jog his elbow or dig him in the ribs.

Mr. George Cadbury, the great cocoa manufacturer, is either the sole or the principal proprietor of the *Daily News*. Knowing what we do of Christians in the way of business, we were not surprised to see an indirect puff of Cadbury's cocoa in the literary department of that pious journal. Under the title of "Bread, Meat, and Drink" our contemporary reviewed Mr. Brandon Head's book, *The Food of the Gods*, which was the name given to cocoa by the old Mexicans. Right in the middle of the review was the following passage—very much like an extract from one of Cadbury's trade advertisements:—

"Cocoa-essence, properly prepared, should have about 30 per cent. of cocoa-butter, 22 per cent. albuminoid substances, and 30 per cent. of carbohydrates (sugar, starch, and digestible cellulose). Nine-tenths of the cacao-bean may be assimilated by the digestive organs, while three-fourths of tea and coffee are thrown away as waste. (The adulterated cocoa cannot, of course, be taken into account; those combined with starch or sugar, or treated with alkali, or mixed with kola, malt, or hops, are not really 'cocoa' at all, and should not be sold under that name.)"

This little trick of running down other cocoas while puffing his own is an old one of Cadbury's. But he takes care not to be specific enough to give his rivals ground for a libel action. He is a perfect adept in the use of the word "adulterated." Clearly, however, he uses it most illegitimately. He knows very well that there is no such thing as an absolutely pure cocoa in the market. Nobody could drink it. The natural excess of fat has to be extracted, and Cadbury does that by his process, just like other manufacturers. That is to say, Cadbury's "pure cocoa" is cocoa with something subtracted from its original elements. Van Houten's process, on the other hand (and it is the *Dutch* cocoas against which Cadbury is always girding), is understood to add skilfully a slight percentage of alkali to the amount which already exists in the cocoa in its natural state. This addition, we believe, is trivial, and, so far from being harmful, it renders the cocoa more digestible—as anybody who will try the two cocoas may easily see for himself. We have no brief for Cadbury and no brief for Van Houten. Our concern is simply the truth. And when the one who takes away something from the natural cocoa, to make it more digestible, sneers (in a politic, safe way) at the other for adding something, to make it more digestible, we can only shrug our shoulders and marvel at the methods of Quaker piety.

Rev. William Carlile, boss of the Church Army, answers the question "Should Clergymen Engage in Municipal Life?" in the affirmative. What a lively time we shall have when Church parsons and Nonconformist ministers all join in the game of local politics! It is bad enough when politicians wrangle, but when the men of God go at it we may look out for tornadoes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions.

The Mansion House meeting in favor of Sunday Closing was very much a professional affair. The Lord Mayor presided out of compliment, but the bulk of the speeches were delivered by men of God—like the Rev. R. J. Campbell and Dr. John Watson ("Ian Maclaren")—who have an obvious interest in making places of worship, as far as possible, the only attractions on the Lord's Day. Probably they think that, if there is nowhere else to go to, the people will rush into the churches and chapels for some sort of relief from the dull monotony of the blessed Sabbath. They may urge, of course, that they really want to diminish the drink traffic in this country. Well, perhaps they do. But why begin with Sunday Closing—except that it seems to serve their turn? Why not go in for closing the public-houses on Monday or Saturday? As a matter of fact, Sunday is far from being the heaviest drinking-day of the week; as the men of God might easily ascertain if they only took the trouble to enquire.

According to the *Morning Leader* there is a Brooklyn minister, the Rev. Cortland Myers, who is something like the man in Harry Furniss's *Punch* drawing, who used Pears' soap two years ago, since when he has used no other. Mr. Myers, it seems, was so impressed with the honor of having shaken hands with President Roosevelt—who pump-handles with some six thousand people a day—that he says he "does not think he has washed his hands since." Talk about the hand of Cain! What is that to the dexter flipper of the Rev. Cortland Myers?

HIS REASON FOR IT.—"How come all de angels in de picture books is women?" asked the lay member. "Don't 'pear to be no men at all in heaven!" "Hit may be," replied Brother Dickey, "dat de men goes de yuther way to git peacc."—*Atlanta Constitution*.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, March 13, Alexander Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool; at 3, "How the Clergy Answer Mr. Blatchford," at 7, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan."

March 20, Camberwell; 27, Birmingham.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—March 6, Queen's Hall, London.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—March 6, Glasgow; 13, South Shields; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 27, Birmingham. April 3, Sheffield; 10, Manchester; 17, Merthyr Tydvil; 24, Fails-worth.

PERPLEXED.—The half-hearted hate the whole-hearted. We owe nothing to the common-garden press, and never expect to. Even "advanced" journals, like the one you mention, would, generally speaking, rather do us an injury than a service. They usually ignore us, and mention us when we can be misrepresented. But they cannot prevent people from reading our writings and attending our lectures. The *Freethinker* is, after all, the only Freethought journal that has really lived; and its editor is the one Freethought lecturer, since Bradlaugh, who commands the best audiences wherever he goes. So thank the press for nothing! Even the "advanced" papers can make a mem. of it, if they choose.

T. H. ELSTON.—Your letter was dated Feb. 29, but it did not arrive at our office till Wednesday morning. Hence your lecture notice was too late for insertion. Thanks for the publication enclosed.

F. S.—Thanks for useful cuttings.

O. ALLEN.—Your orthodox friend, who states that Charles Bradlaugh gave his children a Christian education, either lies himself or has lent a ready ear to the tale of another liar. Charles Bradlaugh had three children—a son and two daughters; the son died when quite a boy; the elder daughter, who died some years ago, was a grown-up young woman, and was a professed Atheist; the younger daughter still lives, is a professed Atheist, and edits an Atheistic periodical. So much for this yarn.

A. E. Q.—Sorry you could not induce your orthodox friends to attend the Queen's Hall lectures. As you say, fiction is preferred by the masses—and they get it.

A. G. LYE (Coventry) writes: "You certainly *did* put vigor into your lectures, and they have done much good. That the effort cost you the price of a relapse makes us more deeply indebted to you. Personally, your encouragement has been felt all along. I write it sincerely."

H. J. THORP.—Thanks, though the matter is not quite up to date. We can quite understand that you received no sort of assistance from Mr. Boardman, who is a friend of nobody's freedom but his own.

R. E. HOLDING.—We already had that Answer to Mr. Blatchford. Thanks all the same; also for your kind enquiries.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your ever-welcome cuttings.

A. WEBBER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. BARROWMAN.—We are obliged, and will try to deal with it next week.

G. SCOTT.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO FREETHOUGHT.—H. Byshe £1, J. Barbel 6s., A. Tarlton 2s. 6d., D. Powell 2s. 6d., J. R. Webley 5s. This fund may now be considered closed. We shall deal with it next week.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 3 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.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote visits Liverpool again to-day (March 13), and delivers two lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square. His subjects are "live" ones, and should crowd the hall on both occasions. Mr. Foote has thrown off his recent attack of influenza, and expects to be in good form when he meets his Liverpool friends.

There were reporters present at Mr. Foote's Coventry lectures, and they were fairly industrious with the pencil. The *Standard* devotes an editorial paragraph to the meetings. It prints some broken English of its own manufacture as a sample of "the stuff" Mr. Foote said. If we wanted to flatter the *Standard* very highly we should call it an honest journal. The *Coventry Herald* impartially reports Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture on "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan," and says it was "delivered in a witty and telling strain."

Mr. John Lloyd pays a second visit to the Tyneside to-day (March 13). He lectures twice, morning and evening, in the new Tivoli Hall, which is situated close to High Shields railway station, and near the Green-street and Laygate tram terminus. Those who heard Mr. Lloyd before will be glad to hear him again, and we trust he will also have many fresh auditors.

Mr. John M. Robertson takes this evening's (March 13) lecture in the special course now being conducted by the Secular Society, Limited, at the Camberwell Secular Hall. Mr. Robertson's subject is "The Sermon on the Mount." Such an able advocate should command a good audience, and we hope the local "saints" will see to it that there is one.

About two hundred youngsters between the ages of six and fourteen attended the National Secular Society's Children's Party, at the Club and Institute Union, on Thursday (March 3). The admission was free, and the program included a tea, the attendance of a band, races, skipping-rope contests, etc., etc. There was also a maudoline performance on the stage, and some juvenile cake-walkers, and towards the end of the evening a number of the elders, under the supervision of Miss Vance, sacrificed themselves for the benefit of the youngsters by donning various motley dresses and disguises in a performance of *Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks*. Judging by the attention given, their performance met with the full approbation of the youthful audience, who applauded lustily at every opportunity. There was a distribution of fruit and sweets during the evening, and on leaving every child received a small present. Everything went off well with the exception of the weather. That came on. It rained heavily before, during, and after the gathering, and doubtless had the effect of keeping away many who lived at a distance. The only other feature to be recorded is that there is still a deficit of some six or seven pounds, and this we hope to see made up by those who intended contributing to the cost of the entertainment, but have not yet done so. Those who *have* subscribed would have felt themselves well repaid had they been present at the children's enjoyment of what was evidently to them a happy evening.

Mr. D. Baxter, the Glasgow Freethought newsagent, has removed from his old address in the Trongate, and is now more suitably fixed at 32, Brunswick-street. Mr. Baxter is a pushing business man, and has also a genuine interest, quite apart from business, in the circulation of Freethought literature. He keeps a good supply of all advanced books, pamphlets, and periodicals, and may be relied upon to do justice to orders for anything he does not happen to have in stock. For some years Mr. Baxter has been the trusty and trusted newsagent of the Glasgow N. S. S. Branch at the Secular Hall on Sundays.

Our indefatigable friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, has another letter in the *Yarmouth Mercury* on "Truth and Superstition." It is in reply to an orthodox gentleman who signed his letter "T."—which Mr. de Caux assumes to mean "Timothy." This poor "Timothy" has a job on hand if he means to answer his heterodox adversary's questions. We expect some amusement if he comes up to the scratch.

Councillor Voisey, a veteran Freethinker, has a bright and pointed letter in the *Dartmouth Chronicle* in reply to the Rev. Mr. Soper; a gentleman who lives some ten or twelve miles (and some people think it too far) from the Exminster Lunatic Asylum. The subject of the correspondence is the Christian consistency of the late Pastor C. H. Spurgeon, whose fine villa and grounds have just passed under the

auctioneer's hammer. Mr. Voisey points out what a great difference there was between the poor Master and the comparatively wealthy disciple. "In conclusion," he says, "I would venture an opinion that if Jesus Christ had owned ten thousand pounds and lived in comparative affluence there would have been no Christianity to-day; and if, instead of the modest animal on which he made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he had used Spurgeon's brougham, or its equivalent, there would have been no need of any crucifixion."

Dr. H. P. Smith's *Old Testament History* is the latest volume in Clark's "International Theological Library." The author is one of the "Higher Critics," and is pretty plain-spoken. He declares, for instance, that "the individuals, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are eponyms—personifications of clans, tribes, or ethnological groups—and they are nothing more." This position has been held by us in the *Freethinker* and elsewhere for more than twenty years, and we are pleased to see the "Higher Critics" overtaking us at last. Perhaps they will soon accept our other position, that Moses himself is as much a legendary character as Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

"Many scholars of the conservative school," the *Athenaeum* says, in reviewing Dr. Smith's new book, "reject the first three chapters of Genesis as unhistorical; and only the representatives of a forlorn hope, with zeal beyond their scholarship, accept them as containing the narrative of actual events." This must be pretty reading for the strait-laced orthodox.

The March number of the *Pioneer* is a very good one for passing round. It contains a number of interesting and informing articles and leaderettes, and a supply of bright paragraphs, written by a lady, under the heading of "Questions Concerning Women." The *Pioneer* is not quite as strong meat as the *Freethinker*, and may therefore be more welcome in some circles. Copies for free distribution can still be obtained from our publishing office at the following cheap rates:—Six copies for threepence, twelve copies for fivepence, twenty-four copies for ninepence—in each case post free.

Ingersoll on the Bible.

THE believers in the Bible are loud in their denunciation of what they are pleased to call the immoral literature of the world; and yet few books have been published containing more moral filth than this inspired word of God. These stories are not redeemed by a single flash of wit or humor. They never rise above the dull details of stupid vice. For one, I cannot afford to soil my pages with extracts from them; and all such portions of the Scriptures I leave to be examined, written upon, and explained by the clergy. Clergymen may know some way by which they can extract honey from these flowers. Until these passages are expunged from the Old Testament it is not a fit book to be read by either old or young. It contains pages that no minister in the United States would read to his congregation for any reward whatever. There are chapters that no gentleman would read in the presence of a lady. There are chapters that no father would read to his child. There are narratives utterly unfit to be told; and the time will come when mankind will wonder that such a book was ever called inspired.

I know that in many books besides the Bible there are immodest lines. Some of the greatest writers have soiled their pages with indecent words. We account for this by saying that the authors were human; that they catered for the taste and spirit of their times. We make excuses, but at the same time we regret that in their works they left an impure word. But what shall we say of God? Is it possible that a being of infinite purity—the author of modesty—would smirch the pages of his book with stories lewd, licentious, and obscene? If God is the author of the Bible, it is, of course, the standard by which all other books can and should be measured. If the Bible is not obscene, what book is? Why should men be imprisoned simply for imitating God? The Christian world should never say another word against immoral books until it makes the inspired volume clean. These vile and filthy things were not

written for the purpose of conveying and enforcing moral truth, but seem to have been written because the author loved an unclean thing. There is no moral depth below that occupied by the writer or publisher of obscene books, that stain with lust the loving heart of youth. Such men should be imprisoned and their books destroyed. The literature of the world should be rendered decent, and no book should be published that cannot be read by and in the hearing of the best and purest people. But as long as the Bible is considered as the Word of God, it will be hard to make all men too good and pure to imitate it; and as long as it is imitated there will be vile and filthy books. The literature of our country will not be sweet and clean until the Bible ceases to be regarded as the production of a god.

We are continually told that the Bible is the very foundation of modesty and morality; while many of its pages are so immodest and immoral that a minister, for reading them in the pulpit, would be instantly denounced as an unclean wretch. Every woman would leave the church, and if the men stayed, it would be for the purpose of chastising the minister.

Is there any saving grace in hypocrisy? Will men become clean in speech by believing that God is unclean? Would it not be far better to admit that the Bible was written by barbarians in a barbarous, coarse, and vulgar age? Would it not be safer to charge Moses with vulgarity instead of God? Is it not altogether more probable that some ignorant Hebrew would write the vulgar words? The Christians tell me that God is the author of these vile and stupid things. I have examined the question to the best of my ability, and as to God my verdict is—Not Guilty. Faith should not rest on filth.

Every foolish and immodest thing should be expunged from the Bible. Let us keep the good. Let us preserve every great and splendid thought, every wise and prudent maxim, every just law, every elevated idea, and every word calculated to make man nobler and purer, and let us have the courage to throw the rest away. The souls of children should not be stained and soiled. The charming instincts of youth should not be corrupted and defiled. The girls and boys should not be taught that unclean words were uttered by "inspired" lips. Teach them that such words were born of savagery and lust. Teach them that the unclean is the unholy, and that only the pure is sacred.

—*Mistakes of Moses.*

Honesty.

"You remember the story told about the Mexican who believed that his country was the only one in the world, and said so. The priest told him that there was another country where a man lived who was eleven or twelve feet high, that made the whole world, and if he denied it, when that man got hold of him he would not leave a whole bone in his body. But he denied it. He was one of those men who would not believe further than his vision extended.

"So one day in his boat he was rocking away when the wind suddenly arose and he was blown out of sight of his home. After several days he was blown so far that he saw the shores of another country. Then he said, 'My Lord; I am gone!' I have been swearing all my life that there was no other country, and here it is!' So he did his best—paddled with what little strength he had left, reached the shore, and got out of his boat. Sure enough, there came down a man to meet him about twelve feet high. The poor little wretch was frightened almost to death, so he said to the tall man as he saw him coming down, 'Mister, whoever you are, I denied your existence—I did not believe you lived; I swore there was no such country as this; but I see I was mistaken, and I am gone. You are going to kill me, and the quicker you do it the better and get me out of my misery. Do it now!'

"The great man just looked at the little fellow, and said nothing, till he asked, 'What are you going to do with me, because over in that other country I denied your existence?' 'What am I going to do with you?' said the supposed god. 'Now that you have got here, if you behave yourself I am going to treat you well.'"

The Kinship of Life.—II.

A SECULARIST VIEW OF ANIMALS' RIGHTS.*

(Concluded from page 146.)

This principle, at least to the Secularist, is strengthened by the teaching of Evolution. Darwin and his successors have demonstrated the kinship of life, and thus the lowliest organisms that swim, or creep, or fly, or run, are brought—at first negatively, and then positively—within the scope of the spirit of brotherhood. Strictly speaking, of course, the lower animals are not our *brothers*, but it is incontestable that they are our *relatives*. This is not a mere spiritual perception, which is liable to be neglected in the tumult of actual life; it is a scientific fact, a truth of biology, a practical lesson from the history of our planet. In the ultimate analysis, then, I say that the moral rights of animals, their claims upon our sympathy and consideration, are involved in the Darwinian demonstration of the kinship of life.

Let us also recollect the great part which animals have played in the preparation of this planet for man's habitation, and in the subsequent drama of civilisation. Look at the little worms, for instance, which men tread upon so carelessly, and which they impale upon hooks for the purpose of fishing. Apparently nothing could be more inconsiderable, and yet those insignificant worms pulverise the soil upon which we live, and their continued action is the first condition of its fruitfulness. Think of the horse, and his services to man in civilised countries; think of the ox, and his use in more primitive communities in traffic and agriculture; think of the dog, without whose assistance it is difficult to see how man could have passed from the nomadic into the pastoral state. Surely the thought of what these animals have done, in aiding the development of our race, should give them a kind of consecration. Certainly it should save them from insult and cruelty. They have done more for us than we can ever do for them; and even if their service was at first compelled, it was afterwards rendered with a certain cheerful willingness.

It is the teaching of science and of history which is our best support in defending the moral rights of animals. As a Secularist, at any rate, I should be sorry to leave them to the tender mercies of unadulterated theology. And I think that Christianity has been the most callous of all religions in its treatment of them. It has denied them souls, which it perceived even in idiots; and upon this arbitrary and fantastic difference it has erected a superstructure of injustice. The first book of the Bible gives man absolute dominion over the lower animals; and in the story of Cain and Abel we see the Jehovian preference for the sacrifice of animals rather than the peaceful tribute of the fruits of the earth—a preference which ran through the whole Mosaic Law, and befouled the Temple altars with perpetual blood. Saint Paul himself, who wrote that immortal panegyric on charity, stopped short at the confines of the human race. "Doth God care for oxen?" he asked, with the supercilious arrogance of a member of the elect species. I think it may be said, without fear of serious contradiction, that the Christian Church has never recognised any *rights* in animals, although individual Christian divines have asked that they should be treated mercifully.

Freethinkers, on the other hand, have usually looked upon animals in a different light. Sir Arthur Helps, in his delightful book on *Animals and their Masters*, selects his strongest quotations from the writings of Voltaire and Bentham. After giving Voltaire's touching picture of a dog who has lost his master, who runs about wildly seeking him, and who testifies the liveliest joy on finding him, Sir Arthur Helps cites the following passage (in French) from the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* :—

"Barbarians seize that dog, who so prodigiously excels man in friendship; they nail him down on a table, and dissect him alive to show you the mezzaraic veins. You

discover in him all the organs of feeling which you possess yourself. Tell me now, mechanician: has Nature arranged all those springs of feeling in that animal, in order that he may not feel? Has he nerves in order to be impassible? Do not suppose that impertinent contradiction in Nature."*

The quotation from Bentham, who is known to have been an Atheist, is still more striking:—

"The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withheld from them but by the hand of tyranny. It may come one day to be recognised that the number of legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the caprice of a tormentor. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason; or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational as well as a more conversable animal than an infant of a day, a week, or even a month old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not 'can they reason?' nor 'can they speak?' but 'can they suffer?'"

"No human government," Bentham elsewhere says, "has ever recognised the *jus animalium*, which ought surely to form a part of the jurisprudence of every system founded on the principles of justice and humanity." Schopenhauer, the German philosopher, whose irreligion was notorious, wrote very strongly on this point:—

"The unpardonable forgetfulness in which the lower animals have hitherto been left by the moralists of Europe is well known. It is pretended that the beasts have no rights. They persuade themselves that our conduct in regard to them has nothing to do with morals, or (to speak the language of their morality) that we have no duties towards animals; a doctrine revolting, gross, and barbarous, peculiar to the west, and having its root in Judaism."

The National Secular Society, in the list of its Immediate Practical Objects, has the following:—

"An extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty."

Thus we place ourselves on the right side in this matter, and we are ever ready to help the Humanitarian League, or any other body specially organised for similar purposes.

Of course it may be said that I have hitherto been indulging in generalities, and I may be asked to condescend to details. I recognise this request as perfectly legitimate, and I will attempt a brief application of the foregoing principles to the present relationships between man and the lower animals.

Let us first take the subject of domestic animals. And let me here observe how difficult it is, on grounds of abstract right, to justify man's lordship. When it is said that the animals "like it"—as is even said of the foxes who are hunted—we must remember that one party is speaking for the other; the master is voicing the supposed satisfaction of his slave; which, by the way, is an extremely common thing in the infancy of our struggles for reform. We must, therefore, look at the matter practically. We have to accept the historic fact that certain animals have long played a part, and probably will long continue to play it, in association with man's progress. They are what we call domesticated, and it would be a serious proposal to turn them adrift. What we have to do, and what we may do easily, is to render their position tolerable. All domestic animals should be brought within the pale of legal protection. A minimum of consideration and comfort should be stipulated for them, and the denial of it should be treated as cruelty.

I would also observe in this connection that, in a country like ours, the distinction between "domesticated" and "wild" animals is really fictitious. No animals live here except such as are *allowed* to live. All our animals, therefore, are more or less domesticated, and, as such, should be protected against carelessness and brutality. A great deal of what is ridiculously styled "sport" calls for imme-

* Voltaire's exquisite French cannot be translated satisfactorily into another language. I have simply tried to give the substantial meaning of this passage.

* A Lecture given before the Humanitarian League.

diate suppression. It is enough to make a decent person sick to read of the agony inflicted by "sportsmen" on helpless rabbits, pigeons, pheasants, and deer. The very dogs are brutalised by the men who keep them to hunt without the prompting of necessity. If it is wrong to shoot a man for amusement, it must be wrong to shoot an animal for amusement. Dear old Uncle Toby would not kill the fly that teased him; he opened the window and let it out, remarking, "The world is wide enough for me and thee." How different is this from the spirit of English "sportsmen!" It is different, too, from the spirit of the more "heroic" sportsmen who travel thousands of miles for the utterly immoral pleasure of killing large game. Where it is necessary to exterminate predatory animals, let it be done as swiftly and mercifully as possible. But why should the blood of even a tigress be poured forth over her cubs—why should the wounded lion drag himself off to die in slow agony—merely because a "sportsman" with a rifle happens to spy a fine opportunity for gratifying his lust of slaughter? It may be urged that lions and tigers kill their prey. Yes, but they do it under an imperious necessity. They do not hunt for sport, but to allay their hunger. It is not amusement, but self-preservation. They simply follow the law of their being.

With regard to the Food Question, I admit the progress of Vegetarianism, but it will take a long time to wean the majority from flesh-eating; and some of us consider that the dietary problem is not to be settled by sentiment, although it may have *its place* in the settlement. People will eat to live, and they will eat whatever is necessary. Those who are too squeamish to do this will simply be eliminated by the law of natural selection. We must also bear in mind the force of heredity, the power of the organic habit of countless generations. I am a vegetarian myself, but I like a little meat with it. My vegetarian friends will consider me one of the unregenerate. Perhaps they are right. But I am what I am, and millions of others are what they are. The better treatment of animals must not wait until the millennium. Let us be practical, and deal with the existing situation; at least, let us deal with that *first*. Animals have to be killed for food, and Sir Benjamin Richardson says they can be killed almost if not quite painlessly. Well then, I am prepared to pay whatever is necessary to have it done in that way. I am strongly in favour of the most drastic regulation of the slaughter-house and the cattle-ship. I would not allow animals to be driven into towns to be killed. What bewilderment must assail them as they tread the busy haunts of men! Let them spend their last hours amidst the accustomed peace of their lives, and let their death come (as some day it *must* come) with the swiftness of lightning, leaving no time for suffering or apprehension.

I beg to assure you that drastic regulation is required. On a Saturday afternoon, I was once in a train with some cattle-dealers. One of these gentlemen chuckled over his defeat of an obstinate cow, who refused to rise from the floor of a cattle truck, probably because she was weary and sick of the whole business. The expedients he resorted to were really ingenious. Snuff and tobacco were rubbed into the cow's eyes, but she resisted these gentle solicitations. Finally the truck was flooded with water, and as the sawdust floated into her nostrils she had to rise to avoid suffocation. It was a triumph of brains—at least the gentleman thought so; but I shuddered at the thought of his victory, and felt humiliated by the knowledge that he belonged to my own species. Yet the great irony of the situation is to come. This gentleman had been unable to go to church for some weeks, owing to his professional engagements, and was looking forward to attending service the next morning.

And now for a few words respecting vivisection. I regard it as the ultimate horror of man's unjust dealing with the animals. I believe that Secularists are prepared to support legislation for its entire pro-

hibition. We are not in favor of any priesthood. The old ecclesiastical priesthood burnt men for the good of mankind; the new medical priesthood tortures animals for the same object. But bad means never led to a good end. I suspect salvation that has to be promoted by murder. I am not in love with health that has to be promoted by torture. Personally I do not want to find a little gold dust in the polluted troughs of cruelty. I would rather keep poor and clean. Nor will I be misled by cheap talk about the great principle of sacrifice. When an Anarchist told me, soon after the assassination of President Carnot, that new ideas always had their baptism of blood, I told him that I did not object to their shedding blood: they might shed all they had; what I objected to was their shedding the blood of others. If some person, full of scientific zeal, and burning with the enthusiasm of humanity, will offer himself to be vivisected, I shall respect his generosity, whatever I may think of his intelligence. But I object to his offering me. He must wait till I offer myself. And I object to his offering any other man—or any other animal.

No one has denounced vivisection with greater eloquence and sincerity than Colonel Ingersoll, the famous Freethought orator of America. The following passages are taken from his appendix to a book entitled *Personal Experiences*, by Philip G. Peabody, formerly President of the New England Anti-Vivisection Society:—

"Vivisection is the disgrace and shame of some of the sciences."

"Of what possible use is it to know just how long an animal can live without food, without water; at what time he becomes insane from thirst, or blind, or deaf? Who but a fiend would try such experiments? And, if they have been tried, why should not all the fiends be satisfied with the report of the fiends who made them? Must there be countless repetitions of the same horror?"

"Let us do what we can to do away with this infamous practice—a practice that degrades and demoralises and hardens, without adding in the slightest to the sum of useful knowledge."

"Without using profane words, words of the most blasphemous kind, it is impossible to express my loathing, horror, and hatred of vivisection."

Ingersoll said that a physician who practises or upholds vivisection is unfit to have the care of the sick, or to be trusted with the life or welfare of any human being. He declined to take the hand of a vivisector, or to sit at the same table with him. Some such ostracism is really necessary until we are able to stop this infamy by law. We must let doctors see that the lust of knowledge is no excuse for the deeds of a Jack the Ripper.

After all, it seems to me that the true guarantee for the eventual better treatment of animals is the cultivation of humanity—the greatest word in the world. This is a far safer ground for our hopes than any abstract theory of "rights." It is in the gradual extension of the sympathetic instinct, from the individual to the family, from the family to the tribe, from the tribe to the nation, from the nation to the race, and from our own race to that of the animals, that we find the surest promise for the future of humanitarianism. Above all things, let us cultivate sympathy and imagination. Imagination brings near to us the distant in time and space; and all cruelty, short of positive malignity, would be restrained by a realisation of future consequences. Children should be taught to be humane. Mere cleverness may make a clever rogue; it is *humane* education that is most needed, and, alas, that is most neglected. The scientific side of life is better able than the poetic to take care of itself. True culture involves the training of the emotions as well as the intellect, otherwise we shall never realise the fine ideal of Renan, who "could not be discourteous even to a dog." When we have cultivated humanity in children, and afforded later opportunity for its practice by men and women, the problem before us will be solved. My last word, then, is this: Let us be humane to each other, and the spirit of humanity will naturally extend itself to the whole kinship of life.

G. W. FOOTE.

National Secular Society.

REPORT of Monthly Executive Meeting held on Tuesday, March 1. There were present:—Messrs. C. Cohen, H. Cowell, F. A. Davies, T. Gorniot, T. How, W. Leat, E. Parker, V. Roger, S. Samuels, F. Schaller, T. Thurlow, F. Wood, and the Secretary.

The Secretary read a letter from the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, informing the meeting of his inability to attend in consequence of an attack of influenza.

A message of sympathy was ordered to be forwarded to Mr. Foote, and Mr. Cohen was elected to occupy the chair.

The Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the Monthly Cash Statement examined and adopted.

The Secretary reported upon the arrangements for the Children's Party, and that the President had taken part in the very successful "Secular Education" meeting held on February 26, at Queen's Hall.

The Secretary read Mr. J. W. Gott's reply to the resolution moved by the Executive at its last meeting, which ran:—

"In answer to yours of February 1, I have publicly stated in February *Truthseeker* that I regret having referred to the complaint from Leeds Secularists *re* the proposed Leeds Branch of the N. S. S. especially after finding that my friends were not prepared to back up their information with the necessary facts to prove the case.

"At the same time I think the N. S. S. Secretary might with advantage have supplied me with the information I asked for, so that I could have fixed the responsibility on to the proper parties. *Re* my complaint about being badly treated at Conferences, your Executive may fully associate themselves with the President if they wish. My complaint was not against the Executive, because I know they were never consulted on this matter. I have nothing to withdraw, my statement on the question being absolutely correct.

In reply to a further letter from the Secretary, asking Mr. Gott if he still adhered to the statement that he was "turned out" at Conferences, he wrote:—

"In answer to yours of the 23rd inst., certainly! I still adhere to the statement that I have been turned out of the meetings at Conferences of the N. S. S. for selling the *Truthseeker*. The last time was at South Shields. Does anyone doubt my statement?"

The following resolution was then proposed by Mr. Roger, and seconded by Mr. Davies:—

"That the Secretary be instructed to write Mr. J. W. Gott, informing him that this Executive accepts his withdrawal of the statement *re* the proposed Leeds Branch of the N. S. S., as published in the *Truthseeker*, and trusts he will be more careful in the future. And that he also be informed that, as he seems unable to discriminate between being ejected from Conference meetings and prohibited from hawking papers in the meetings to the annoyance of the audience and the Branch newsagents, this Executive does not think any further discussion of the subject advisable."

Carried unanimously.

The Secretary was instructed to issue the usual circular to Branches to ascertain which amongst them desired to invite the Conference, and to make a further attempt to obtain addresses of persons in sympathy with the movement, in accordance with the resolution passed at the 1903 Conference.

The meeting then closed.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE.

The candidate will soon come forth
And shake you by the hand,
And show you what great plans he has
To benefit the land.
And when he gets the place he seeks,
You'll note with wild dismay
The world he promised to reform
Plods on, the same old way.

—*Washington Star*.

Jones's Mishap.

(A Brand New Vision of Judgment.)

ONCE on a time there lived a pious man whose name was Jones,
And when he died, beneath the sod they laid his lifeless bones;

In certain hope that when the resurrection morning came
His scattered fragments would unite and answer to his name.

When Mr. Jones beneath the ground a certain time had lain,
His bones and muscles gradually returned to earth again;
The particles and gases to the surface found their way,
And turned in time to edibles, man's hunger to allay.

Another man, named Smith, some of these edibles consumed,
So part of Mr. Jones defunct a living form resumed;
But, by a slight mistake of the controller upon high,
The atoms were identical which formed each man's left thigh.

The promised Day of Judgment, long expected, came at last,
And like a million hurricanes there blew the trumpets' blast;
Both Smith and Jones rose slowly, and, forgetting where they were,
Awakened suddenly, began with one accord to swear.

But, seeing all the heavenly host clad in their best attire,
They both remembered that the world was doomed to final fire;
And so in haste began to put their fragments into form,
Lest they should both be left behind to face the coming storm.

The saints on every side were fixing up their worn-out frames anew,
And crowds of angels helped them on with paste-pots and with glue;
But oft in the confusion the materials got mixed,
And so it was a long, long time before they all were fixed.

"Where is my head?" "Who's got my teeth?" "I'll swear that is my nose!"
And such like cries from nervous ones on ev'ry hand arose;
Until the judge, kept waiting long, began to get quite hot,
And said, "If you folks don't make haste I'll burn the blessed lot."

But Smith and Jones, as you may guess, are in a sorry plight,
For each one grabs the same thigh-bone, and over it they fight;
The pious two aim blows and utter "cusses" without end,
And all the saints come round and each cheers his respective friend.

But soon the judge the sight perceives, and from his throne jumps down—
"Hallo! what's all this row about?" he asks with holy frown;
But the frenzied fighters pay him not the smallest of attention—
Still struggling and contesting o'er the thigh bone of contention.

"I can't stand this," then said the judge. "Ho, Michael, ring the bell,
And summon my friend Nicholas to come at once from hell;
You really have disgraced yourselves, and are not fit, you know,
To enter into heaven with us. You both must go below."

But Smith a final effort made and gained the fought-for thigh,
He fixed it in its place and quickly mounted up on high.
The judge gave chase, and Nicholas too, but they were both too late,
For Smith had gained the clouds and shut himself within the gate.

When Nicholas returned and saw the still dismembered Jones,
He said unto the judge, in very loud and scornful tones:
"I'm awfully particular about the men I take,
So, if you please, I'll leave him, and he'll roast instead of bake."

So Jahveh then admitted Jones, but stowed him out of sight,
And made him sweep the streets of gold and light the lamps at night;
He also had to feed the beasts and polish up the throne,
And work for ever on one leg because of that thigh-bone.

N. R.

MATERIAL AT HAND.—A church in a small Western town has a woman for its pastor. She was called to the door of the parsonage one day, and saw there a much-embarrassed young farmer of the German type. "Dey said der minister lifted in dis house," he said. "Yes," replied the fair pastor. "Vell—m—I—I vant to kit merrit!" "To get married? Very well, I can marry you," said the mistress, encouragingly. "Oh, but I got a girl alretty," was the disconcerting reply.

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, J. M. Robertson, "The Sermon on the Mount."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Brunley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Our Guilt and the Forgiveness of Sin."

NORTH KENSINGTON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Cornwall Hall): 7, Gustave Spiller, "Mankind in the Making."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. W. Sullivan, "The Ethics of Monasticism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Dr. Coit, "The Millennium."

WOOD GREEN ETHICAL SOCIETY (Fairfax Hall, Portland-gardens, Haringay): 7.15, Dr. J. Oaksmith, M.A., "The Politics of Reynard the Fox."

COUNTRY.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Discussion Class, "Crime," Mr. Glen; 6.30, Mr. A. G. Nostic, "Prehistoric Man." With Lantern Illustrations.

LEEDS (Covered Market, Vicar's Croft): 11, George Weir, "The French Revolution"; Woodhouse Moor: 3, George Weir, "The Life of Jesus"; Town Hall Square: 7.30, W. Woolham, "Socialism and Christianity." Secular Club, 61, Portland-crescent: Members' meeting every Wednesday evening.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): G. W. Foote, 3, "How the Clergy Answer Mr. Blatchford"; 7, "Holy Russia and Heathen Japan." Monday, 5 p.m., Children's Party.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 6.30, Tom Swan, "Blatchford's Latest Critic: An Examination of George Haw's Case for Christianity."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday Evening—Musical and other Recitals, &c.

SOUTH SHIELDS ("The Tivoli," Laygate, High Shields): J. T. Lloyd, 11, "Christianity at the Bar of Reason"; 7, "The New Bible."

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