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The misguided imaginations of men have rendered the ascertaining of what IS NOT TRUE, the principal direct service which metaphysical science can bestow upon moral science.....There is a mass of popular opinion, from which the most enlightened persons are seldom wholly free, into the truth or falsehood of which it is incumbent on us to inquire, before we can arrive at any firm conclusions as to the conduct which we ought to pursue in the regulation of our minds, or towards our fellow beings.—SHELLEY.

Herbert Spencer's "Autobiography."

SOME of the most fascinating pieces of literature are egoistical. When a man writes about himself he has always an interesting subject—one in which he is interested, if no one else is; and if there be any liveliness in him he will show it on such an occasion. Saint Augustine's "Confessions" are still read by people who perhaps never heard of his "City of God," and Rousseau's "Confessions" by people who never did and never will turn a page of his "Contrat Social." Even the staid and sober John Stuart Mill set the world talking about his "Autobiography," although it never went wild over his "Logic" or his "Political Economy." Carlyle's personal writings, since his death, have caused something like a convulsion. How we all turn with delight to the pages of garrulous old Pepys. What a spice the personal element gives to the letters of Walpole, Cowper, Byron, and Lamb. And even amidst the poetical splendors of Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam" how the same personal element appeals to the reader, and gives him a profoundly vital interest in the song of the grand old Persian.

Herbert Spencer—the "philosopher of negation," as the Christians used to call him before they learnt to make use of his "Unknowable"—was one of the last writers one would have expected to write two big volumes of more than five hundred pages each about himself. Yet he found time and energy for the performance of this feat amidst the calls of strenuous intellectual labor, and delicate health, and brain-fag, and insomnia, and discouragements that would have turned most men into desperate or apathetic mopers. So invincible is the habit of mental exercise; and (we repeat) so fascinated are the majority of such exercisers—the men of thought as distinguished from the men of action—by the problem of their own personality.

Differing from the general run of Autobiographers, the author of the Synthetic Philosophy opens with the calm colossal statement that "a natural history" of himself would be useful to his readers; and through them, he probably thought, to the world at large. Even in writing about himself, you must understand that his object is purely scientific. He is vivisectioning his past, chiefly by the aid of memory, but occasionally, we may be sure, by the aid of imagination, for the benefit of all future sociologists. It is nearly as magnificent as "Francis Bacon thought on this wise." Not quite so; for Bacon had a concrete imagination, while Spencer's imagination was almost absolutely abstract, and lent no grace to his language and deportment.

Perhaps we may pause at this point to observe that Herbert Spencer mastered the art of saying

what he had to say; no one ever expounded such deep and far-reaching ideas with greater lucidity; but he was somewhat lacking in persuasiveness and charm. He belonged to science rather than to literature. And in this respect he was less fortunate than Berkeley and Hume, for instance, who belonged to both. Those who accept Shelley's phrase of "Science and her sister Poesy" may insist upon the truth that Berkeley and Hume were not the less profound and subtle thinkers because they were masters of the art of expression, who presented their principles and arguments in the most elegant and beautiful attire that could be selected from the wardrobe of philosophical literature. Berkeley, indeed, sometimes laid the wardrobe of poetical literature under contribution; there being a dash of true poetry in his metaphysical genius.

Spencer intimates in his Preface, and frequently afterwards, that he never had any training in literature; and he nearly makes a boast of his deficiency:—

"That neither in boyhood nor youth did I receive a single lesson in English, and that I have remained entirely without formal knowledge of syntax down to the present hour, are facts which should be known; since their implications are at variance with assumptions universally accepted."

He does not state the precise nature of these "assumptions." If he meant that great reading is not necessary to great writing, the facts are all against him; at least practically, however the case may stand theoretically. Emerson was undoubtedly right in saying that Shakespeare was a great reader. Milton was notoriously so. Coleridge read everything. Wordsworth confined himself to the best. Byron read a great deal more than he wished the public to believe. Shelley, the most spontaneous and ethereal poet of his age, was an omnivorous reader. Burns himself was deeply read in at least one great literature—the songs and ballads of his native land. Turning to prose, we may take the case of Cobbett. Cobbett had no education in the ordinary sense of the word; but he took great pains to educate himself; he really mastered English, as he also mastered French, and produced admirable Grammars of both languages; and if he wrote English with almost unparalleled force and accuracy, it was certainly not because he trusted to some occult inspiration of nature. Spencer himself, if we may be allowed to say so, is disproof of the theory he suggests. His style is sometimes abominably bad. His meaning is always clear; but as much may often be said of rural witnesses whose language is frightfully mixed. When the yokel testified in a murder case that

"'E had a stick and 'e had a stick, an 'e 'it 'e an 'e 'it 'e, an' if 'e'd 'it 'e as 'ard as 'e 'it 'e 'e'd a killed 'e an' not 'e 'e,"

he was perfectly intelligible, but it was not exactly an illustration of the advantages of an absence of literary culture.

But let us come closer to the Autobiography. Spencer says that "in the genesis of a system of thought the emotional nature is a large factor; perhaps as large a factor as the intellectual nature." Therefore, in pursuit of the "natural history" of himself, he gives a long account of his ancestry, with particular and minute reference to his uncle, his father, and his mother. It appears that there

was Hussite and Huguenot blood in the family, to which he ascribes his own nonconformity of character. His uncle Thomas had individuality enough to be the only clergyman in the Church of England who dared to give open support to the Anti-Corn Law League. His father had individuality enough to change his religious opinions after he was seventy years of age. William George Spencer was in many ways remarkable; tall, noticeably handsome in face and figure, and of great intellectual ability. "In sundry respects," Spencer says, "I am his inferior. Save in certain faculties specially adapting me to my work, inherited from him with increase, I consider myself as in many ways falling short of him, both intellectually and emotionally as well as physically." As a Wesleyan he became disgusted with the ministers he had to meet, especially on "a committee which managed the Methodist library." He tried to get "books of science and others of secular kinds" into the library, while their aim was "to increase the number of books of the religious class; and especially those concerning their own sect—lives of preachers and the like." For this and similar reasons he turned to the Society of Friends.

"The result was that he fell into the habit of going every Sunday morning to the Quakers' meeting house. Not that he ever adopted any of their peculiarities, nor, so far as I know, any of their special views; but the system was congruous to his nature in respect of its complete individualism and absence of ecclesiastical government. He went there simply for an hour's quiet reflexion. This change had a curious result. Not wishing to assume that absolute power over me which should ignore my mother's claim, there resulted a compromise; so that from about ten years of age to thirteen I habitually on Sunday morning went with him to the Friends' Meeting House and in the evening with my mother to the Methodist Chapel. I do not know that any marked effect on me followed; further, perhaps, than that the alternation tended to enlarge my views by presenting me with differences of opinion and usage."

Spencer's mother was not an intellectual woman; yet she had a sound practical judgment in most things—which is often the case with women who are looked down upon by the more ridiculous, self-conceited part of the other sex. Justice was not done to her even by her own husband until it was almost too late. She remained a Wesleyan to the end simply because she had been brought up as a Wesleyan. Her mind had nothing in it of the revolutionist. She was one of those good women who are a blessing to all who come into contact with them, full of sweetness and unselfish devotion.

"Briefly characterised, she was of ordinary intelligence and of high moral nature—a moral nature of which the deficiency was the reverse of that commonly to be observed: she was not sufficiently self-asserting: altruism was too little qualified by egoism. The familiar truth that we fail properly to value the good things we have, and duly appreciate them only when they are gone, is here well illustrated. She was never sufficiently prized. Among those aspects of life which in old age incline the thoughts towards pessimism, a conspicuous one is the disproportioning of rewards to merits. Speaking broadly, the world may be divided into those who deserve little and get much and those who deserve much and get little. My mother belonged to the latter class; and it is a source of unceasing regret with me that I did not do more to prevent her inclusion in this class."

A Methodist reviewer of the "Autobiography" took the opportunity to say, in the manner of his kind, that Spencer's mother, poor woman, had a hard time. No observation could be more illegitimate, as far as Spencer himself is concerned. It is only the nobler natures that are haunted by such regrets. It is the kind, not the unkind, who, when a dear one is dead, says, "Would I had been kinder." Unspeakingly bald as is the final clause of the last sentence in this quotation from Spencer, a generous heart may be felt beating under the poor ribs of its unhappy expression.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Breaking the Idols.

"To-day there are many temples, many gods, many priests. But they get fewer. There is not a day that passes but some idol is split up to boil the pot with."

THE above quotation, taken from a sermon by the Rev. W. L. Watkinson, is a fair specimen of that species of religious blindness which enables a preacher to detect signs of decay in other religions while remaining oblivious to the same symptoms in his own. Mr. Watkinson is able to see that all development means a breaking of idols and a shattering of superstitions. But he is not able to realise that the same thing is as true of Christianity as it is of any other religion. And not being able to realise this, it would be absurd to expect him to see the greater truth that development of thought that destroys *any* religion must, sooner or later, have a dangerous influence on Christianity. For Christianity is only a specialised expression of the general religious mind, and anything that weakens the type is bound to ultimately affect all its forms. For a time one form may gain at the expense of the other, but it is a temporary gain only, and only those whose minds are narcotised by sectarianism are blind to the fact.

From one point of view Mr. Watkinson's statement is a summing up of the whole of human history. The early history of mankind shows us human life ruled over by gods innumerable. They control all phenomena, objective and subjective. There is hardly an event in human life that may be undertaken without their sanction, or without arousing their displeasure. This cloud of gods represents man's earliest attempts to generalise cosmic phenomena; but having once been called into existence, they stand as a protest and a bar to further development and sounder thinking. Man first creates his gods, and is then ruled by the creatures of his own imagination. The gods, who are to uncivilised humanity the forces of nature, are not to be studied, but obeyed. To act independently of them is to be guilty of disobedience; it is a questioning of their power, and the primitive heretic is crushed out with small compunction.

But the de-theising of nature goes on nevertheless. The more obvious and the more simple of natural happenings are first of all released from the rule of the gods. The more complex slowly follow; the most complex of all have yet to be liberated. To-day theistic beliefs are quite banished from all the purely physical sciences, and if they are still associated with certain aspects of biology and psychology, it is because their complex character has hitherto prevented their real nature being known. But the past is only a promise of the future. No one who looks at the matter thoroughly can doubt that just as science has already reduced all astronomical, geological, or chemical phenomena to the action of non-conscious forces, so one day it will conclusively show that vital and mental phenomena are but more complex presentations of the same fundamental forces. Nature has no mysteries, only problems; and their solution is dependent solely upon time and intelligence.

Part of this process Mr. Watkinson sees and appreciates. He appreciates the fact that every scientific discovery has killed or scotched a god somewhere or other; but he believes all this paves the way for Christianity as a universal faith. He does not believe that the race will ultimately be "Materialist, Atheist, Secularist, but will recognise a spiritual principle and a transcendental universe." Primarily he believes the future will not be without a religion, for the reason that "the race is loyal to the supernatural," although it strikes one as a rather questionable loyalty, seeing that some of the world's leading thinkers have given it up altogether, it has least hold upon the civilised races, and exercises the greatest influence over the least developed. The race is loyal to supernaturalism precisely as it is loyal to ignorance—for which it is really only another

name. It is hard to crush supernaturalism, this all will admit; but it is not harder to do this than it is to acquire more knowledge and make that the common property of the race. There are many other things besides supernaturalism that could be upheld on the same grounds.

A second reason Mr. Watkinson has for believing that the future is for religion is that all science is gravitating towards belief in one principle, and Christianity teaches belief in one God. The absurdity of such a position would scarcely be worth noticing were it not that so many people are impressed by it, and that it appears in a more subtle form in the writings of leading religious apologists. Science, it is true, does tend to larger and larger generalisations, and ultimately to reducing all cosmic phenomena to the expression of a single principle. But what likeness is there between this and the one God of the religionist? Not the slightest; and one or two simple considerations will make this clear.

In the first place, the whole course of scientific development has been, and is, as Huxley expressed it, from the volitional to the mechanical interpretation of nature. Commencing with a view that ascribed volition and intelligence to the whole of nature, human thought has steadily forsaken this in favor of a completely mechanical conception. And religion is as completely tied up with the volitional view as science is with the mechanical. Once admit that an irresponsible and independent, and therefore incalculable, volition operates in nature, and scientific calculation becomes an impossibility. So long as science remains true to itself it necessarily excludes volition and intelligence, save as it is manifested in animal organisation. And, on the contrary, once admit the principle of physical determinism operating in any portion of nature, and the sphere of religion is restricted to that extent. Something is admitted to operate independently of "God," and every extension of this area is a delimitation of the area over which religion rules. The growth of science has always been, and always will be, at the expense of religion.

Mr. Watkinson might reply that the development of science, following as it does the line of reducing many apparently independent forces to manifestations of one, follows that of religion where fetichism gives place to Polytheism, and this to the conception of a single deity. But here, again, there is a very vital distinction in the two cases. In science each advance has been the registration of greater knowledge. Each generalisation made by science has been a register of the knowledge then held on a particular subject; and as knowledge has grown so these have been expanded, until it was found that two or three might be brought under a single generalisation, or all under one. The older generalisation was not disqualified, but superseded. With religion there has been no advance; only a retreat in the face of knowledge. Religious generalisations have not been thrown on one side because some wider generalisation embraced them, but simply because greater knowledge has shown them to be quite false. People gave up religious theories because they were found to be wholly at variance with the facts, and they have in every case been replaced by the scientific interpretation of the same phenomena.

Mr. Watkinson hints, rather than asserts, that the one force towards which science is working is identical with God. The statement is sheer verbiage with nothing to commend it; but suppose it were true, how would that help Christianity? If the universe is reduced to one force, and that force is made identical with God, theism disappears and only Pantheism remains. And between Pantheism and Atheism the distinction is almost purely verbal. Whether one chooses to call this ultimate principle force, or deity, is a distinction of words, and one that is only worth discussing under special circumstances. Any honest form of Christian theism is committed not to a monistic but a dualistic view of nature. It is God operating on and through nature that constitutes the essence of Christian theism; and any

attempt to reduce God and nature to the expressions of the same thing is either stupid or dishonest.

Mr. Watkinson's reasons for believing that his religion will survive all others and so constitute itself the faith of the future are, to say the least of it, peculiar. He tells us he has got "the supreme spiritual truth"—a statement which may be an exhibition of either impudence or simplicity. To do him justice, however, he offers some proof of this. There are forty-nine volumes of the Sacred Writings of the East, and he asks whether all these volumes have given them more knowledge on the highest questions, *i.e.*, God, a future life, and the soul, than they possess in the Bible. Well, one can candidly confess they have not. All the writings in the world have not given us more knowledge on these topics than the Bible does. Nor, as a matter of fact, does the Bible give us more knowledge than they do. One knows as much about it as the other, and Mr. Watkinson is perfectly safe in challenging other books to give us knowledge on these subjects.

One can also agree that the Bible will not be superseded by other Eastern books for English people to build a religion on. The times are really too far advanced for people in this part of the world to build up a new religion on any comprehensive scale. But what these translations and other channels for the study of comparative religions have done is to show the world the real nature of religious belief. We now know the materials from which all religions spring, we know their origin, their development, and he who knows these things is under no delusion as to their ultimate destiny.

C. COHEN.

"Is There a Heavenly Father?"

WE know that, according to the teaching of the Bible and of the Church, God is love, and ought to be addressed as Father. That is the doctrine proclaimed from myriads of pulpits every Sunday. On the authority of Jesus, it is solemnly declared that the Divine Heart is a shoreless ocean of pity, compassion, and helpfulness. But there are people who have the audacity to reject the Christian conception of God, and who, indeed, cannot see their way clear to believe in God at all. Their attitude is one of pure unbelief. They are infinitely far from affirming, in so many words, that there is no God; but it is their settled conviction, based on the testimony of innumerable facts, that the belief in a loving Heavenly Father cannot justify itself at the bar of reason.

In one of the Manchester Christian Evidence Lectures, entitled, "Is There a Heavenly Father?" the Rev. Samuel E. Keeble sets out industriously and sincerely to combat the atheistical position, and to reassert the orthodox doctrine. He begins by stating that to attribute injustice and lack of love to God is virtually to deny his existence, because "the character and the existence of God stand or fall together." This is quite true; but I think Mr. Keeble is wrong in supposing that men "whilst repudiating Atheism, still go on crudely questioning the justice and goodness of the Most High God." There are not many thinkers at present who, whilst doubting the Divine morality, still cling to the belief in the Divine existence. The majority of scientists are Atheists, or Agnostics. They do not believe in God at all, because they discern neither sign nor need of his activity. He is a being for whom there is no room in their conception of Nature.

Mr. Keeble regards man's possession of a moral nature as a conclusive proof of the existence of God. But we maintain that man's moral nature is not a gift, but a growth, and that we can see the beginnings of it in many of the lower animals. Ethical sensitiveness has been slowly evolved through millions of years, and is the outcome of a persistent effort, on the part of living beings, to acquire harmony with their environment. Conscience in man is the product of society, and its function is

to keep him right in all his social relationships. According to Mr. Keeble, "the moral phenomena of Nature are manifestations" of the Power behind all phenomena, which or who "is the fountain of all sympathy, justice, and love," and who imparts these qualities to men. But this is a naked assertion, supported by no evidence whatever, and discredited by the accepted doctrine of evolution. For countless ages life on our planet moved blindly, as if by chance, and yet of sheer necessity, in the direction of ethical conditions which it reached and is still perfecting in man. Science knows of no power behind or above Nature, Nature's evolving energy being inherent in herself. As Mr. Keeble is himself an evolutionist, this point cannot be too strongly emphasised. And yet our lecturer contends that "moral progress, even in this persistent questioning of the justice of God, is an unconscious tribute to the goodness of God, just because it is moral and because it is progress." If the facts of life are such as to make it impossible for many of us to believe in a Heavenly Father, how, in the name of reason, does this inability to believe in him prove that we are his children? Such a position is utterly untenable and laughably absurd.

No one knows that there is a Heavenly Father. Those who are surest of him can only say with Tennyson:—

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see.

No man has seen God at any time, or ever heard his voice. Even the clearest believer is often harassed by doubt. I heard one of the most popular preachers say, in his old age: "For the last four days I have been an Atheist." Possessing absolutely no knowledge of God, those who believe in him are constantly called upon to justify their faith. The difficulties that stand in their way are innumerable and insurmountable. Mr. Keeble makes a bold but unsuccessful attempt to remove a few of them, but leaves the subject just exactly where it was before.

First of all, he grapples with "the difficulties in the physical world, those difficulties created by the miseries and sufferings entailed upon man and the creature through storm and tempest, fire and flood, earthquake and eruption, those natural convulsions and catastrophes over which, so far, man seems to have no power whatever, and of which he and the creatures are merely helpless victims: such, for instance, as the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, the earthquake at Lisbon, the catastrophe at Krakatoa, the eruption at Martinique." Mr. Keeble admits that these are serious difficulties, and he wrestles with them with all his might. This is what he says:—

"First of all, these catastrophes occur under physical laws by which alone the earth is made habitable. By their constant operation this planet came into being, and both the earth and all the life upon it are sustained in being. As Dr. Martineau has said, 'The same laws which are death-dealing for an hour or a day are life-giving for ever.' Now, who are we to criticise the laws by which worlds are brought into and kept in being?"

Freethinkers do not criticise the laws of Nature, nor do they complain of natural convulsions and catastrophes. But according to Mr. Keeble the laws of Nature have been ordained by an all-loving Heavenly Father, whose masterpiece is man. Theology teaches that the earth was fitted by the Creator to be man's abode, and that man is unspeakably dear to his Father's heart. Laws are only God's methods of doing things. Surely if man were his child, whom he loved with an infinite and inexhaustible affection, if he were as mighty as he is loving, or as loving as he is mighty, he would not have allowed his own laws to maul and mangle and kill the son of his heart. To put the blame of destructive catastrophes on physical laws is to beg the whole question, because physical laws, if there be a Heavenly Father, are simply his servants, doing his will. It may be true that volcanoes are "earth's safety-valves," and that "such eruptions as those of Krakatoa and Mount Pelée may have saved the whole earth, with its

hundreds of millions of living beings, from dissipation into dust;" but on the supposition that there is a Heavenly Father, who is omnipotent and all-loving, the earth, man's dwelling-place, ought not to have required such a death-dealing safety-valve. It is not too much to say that an all-knowing, almighty and all-loving Father might and should have conducted the evolutionary process along other lines.

It is the height of absurdity to argue that "vicarious suffering evokes virtue and the highest qualities in the human race." When, "in 1902, the town of St. Pierre was overwhelmed by fiery rains and floods from Mount Pelée, and forty thousand inhabitants perished in an hour, the just with the unjust," what virtue and high qualities did that dreadful calamity evoke, and in whom? Even granting that the sacrifice of the forty thousand was the means of saving the rest of mankind, in what way did or could the involuntary vicarious suffering benefit the unfortunate victims? And it is certainly beside the mark to observe that the forty thousand had no business to pitch their tents within reach of such a possible catastrophe, especially as the Bible assures us that the bounds of men's habitation are appointed by the Father. And, further, the forty thousand were not consulted beforehand as to whether or not they were willing to die in order to save the whole world, and so they displayed no heroism and won no merit when overtaken by their doom.

Mr. Keeble is no more successful in his treatment of the difficulties met with in the animal and human worlds. It cannot be denied that "Nature is one great battle-field," that she is red with the blood of the slain, and that she seems to take delight in the most wanton destruction. Mr. Keeble doubts the accuracy of this description, and calls it "a mere parrot-cry," characterising it as "a most incomplete, partial, superficial, and unscientific view of the economy of Nature." Then he adds: "Admitting that there is suffering, physical and mental, in the creaturely world, is it not easy for us to exaggerate, especially when in controversy, both its amount and its acuteness?" Certainly; and it is quite as easy to *minimise*, "especially when in controversy, both its amount and its acuteness." In his most fascinating book, *The Ascent of Man*, the late Professor Drummond eloquently contended that throughout Nature, even in her lowest regions, the love of others much exceeds the love of self. But the Rev. Dr. Dallinger, reviewing the work in the *British Weekly*, boldly challenged the accuracy of the Professor's statement, and supported his challenge by painting a vivid, ghastly picture of the horrible cruelties and sufferings which Nature constantly and heartlessly inflicts upon her offspring. Dr. Dallinger is a man of science as well as a minister of the Gospel, and we may rest assured that his dark and gloomy picture was not colored by any prejudice against religion. If I remember rightly, his contention was that Nature does not suggest the existence of a God of love, that we are indebted to the Bible alone for the revelation of a Heavenly Father, and that apart from Jesus Christ the world would never have found him out.

Mr. Keeble is of opinion that animals are not nervously sensitive enough to suffer keenly, as human beings suffer. He maintains that in the animal world we are "in the presence of a quite different and inferior form of suffering—suffering which loses its main poignancy." Has he never listened to the piercing, heart-rending cries of dogs, and cats, and birds when in pain? St. Paul did not cherish Mr. Keeble's view when he wrote that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

Mr. Keeble comforted his hearers with the assurance that "God is not indifferent to the sufferings of the animal world," and reminded them of the saying of Jesus that "not one sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father." But in what way does the Father *express* his care for the sparrow? By allowing the poor thing to be killed by a stone

from a cruel boy's catapult? If there is a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow, it most assuredly does not show itself in any help or benefit to the bird. The Christians who hunt foxes and stags and shoot game for sport do not believe that God cares for animals. Yes, Nature, of which man is a part, is utterly heartless in her behavior towards animals. Love is at a terrible discount throughout her domain.

Entering the human world we are confronted by the same difficulties greatly accentuated. Mr. Keeble himself admits that he is a bold man who thinks he can solve the principle of moral evil. He says:—

"The injustice, the innocent suffering and hardship, and the unmerited misery endured by multitudes of human beings do indeed present a terrible problem"—a problem he does not even attempt to solve. "The victims of Turkish barbarism and misrule, Russian injustice and tyranny, German absolutism, and British and American Imperialism and Capitalism may well feel inclined 'to curse God and die.' Often in human history have the cries arisen, 'Is there a God?' 'Why does he permit this?' 'Can he be good, a Father?'"

As Mr. Keeble says, that is a terrible problem, and no solution of it is possible; and he must be a bold man who can, in the face of it, believe in a Heavenly Father. Mr. Keeble finds some satisfaction in the fact that it is an ancient problem, and really less awful now than in the past. It is some relief to him also to be able to affirm that most of the misery and wrong of the world "is due to human and not divine action; i.e., that most of it is preventible, and does not exist in the nature of things." "All preventible suffering and pain," he says, "is contrary to the will of the Heavenly Father." This sounds delightfully plausible, but is in reality an extraordinary delusion. If God loves all men without distinction and desires their highest good, he would, if he could, prevent them from committing fatal mistakes, from preying upon and devouring one another, and from being ruined by their environment. If he would and cannot, then he is not supreme; and if he is not supreme, he cannot be a perfect God. The Bible tells us that he "doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," which cannot be true if anything exists that is not in harmony with his will. All injustice, pain, suffering, wrong is preventible, and if God were our Father and supreme, it would be prevented.

We are told that we live "under the gracious control of a Supreme God," that this God is persistently pouring out healing and ennobling influences into human life, and that the all-prevailing spirit of Christ is ever appealing to all hearts; but if all this is true, it follows that man is more powerful than his Maker, and that God is not the Governor of the world. There is positively no escape from this argument. If the Bible doctrine of God be true, man is not a free-agent; and if man is not a free-agent he is not responsible for his actions. If there are things allowed on earth of which God does not approve, then God does not do according to his will among men, but is defeated at every turn by the creatures of his hand. It is the merest cant to proclaim the Divine Sovereignty while the world teems with flagrant violations of the Divine Will.

The position of Freethinkers, whose arguments Mr. Keeble is supposed to be answering, is perfectly clear. What they hold is that Nature does not work as if she were under the direction and control of a good and loving God. Nature works as if she were blind and irresponsible, and as if she did not care what results followed. Nature and her forces are all in all. We know of nothing else.

JOHN LLOYD.

'Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

—Pope.

Those who are horrified at Mr. Darwin's theory, may comfort themselves with the assurance that, if we are descended from the ape, we have not descended so far as to preclude all hope of return.—Dod Grile.

"The Pioneer."

WHEN the *Pioneer* was started, nearly eighteen months ago, I stated that it was an experiment. Several persons had strongly argued that the very name of the *Freethinker* stood in its way, and that a paper with a less "aggressive" title, and of course a less "aggressive" policy, would stand a better chance with the general public. I was doubtful of this, but I was willing to give it a trial. And the result was a little monthly, published at the popular price of a penny, with a suggestive but not alarming title, and not bearing my name or that of any of my *Freethinker* contributors. This cheap little paper was meant to serve as a kind of tender to the older, bigger, and higher-priced journal; as it would have done if it had found its way into a considerable number of outside hands. But this has not been the case. The venture started very well, thanks in great part to the many friends who responded to my appeal to push it in various ways. But enthusiasm of that sort is from its nature temporary. Still, the *Pioneer* might have got along so as to stand squarely upon its own legs, if it had not been for the boycott it had to encounter. That boycott, so damaging in the case of the *Freethinker*, was fatal in the case of the *Pioneer*. We struggled bravely (if I may say so) against it, but all our efforts were in vain; and now that the paper, while enjoying a certain steady circulation, does not show any likelihood of subserving the purpose for which it was intended, the reasonable course is to drop it, and invest the labor and cost it involved in some other direction.

Reckoning from first to last, the pecuniary loss has not been very much, but the cost in labor has been a great deal. Neither the editor nor any contributor has received a farthing for his work. Every line has been written gratuitously. Thanks are due to Miss Mary Lovell, who has contributed the interesting monthly "Questions Concerning Women," and to Mr. C. Cohen, who has written those able and thoughtful articles over the signature of "Julian." My own contribution has naturally been the heaviest. I have written nearly half the paper with my own hand, being responsible for the paragraphs by "Spectator," the Book Chat by "Sphinx," and the articles by "Ignotus" (the editor).

Here let me pause to say what might have been said in the first paragraph, only it is better said in a paragraph by itself. The boycott against the *Pioneer* was as peculiar as the boycott against the *Freethinker*. Even "advanced" journals (with the single exception of the *Humanitarian*) declined to mention it; although sometimes an extract from it, I venture to think, might have brightened up their own pages. Evidently I and my colleagues, who are "thorough" as Bradlaugh was before us, must go on paying the penalty of our absolute straightforwardness. Perhaps a flattering word will be dropped over our graves, but we must expect little recognition while we are living.

Personally, I am not discouraged. I have long outlived that sort of thing. This or that compulsory movement does not affect me as long as I have the opportunity of continuing the fight against superstition, and all the misery and degradation it involves. Fortunately that opportunity is still left me—and those who are fighting with me; for the old flag of the *Freethinker* still flies, and is yet a rallying-point in the greatest of battles.

One fact may be mentioned before I close. The *Pioneer* is not the only paper that has to be dropped. Even a paper like the *Pilot* has to confess that fidelity to principle has been its undoing. All the capital it started with was spent, and then it was suspended; but fresh capital was raised, and it was started again. That also has been spent, and no more is obtainable, so the *Pilot* falls into extinction. "The fact," as the *Athenaeum* says, "does not raise one's opinion of the results of educational progress on the British public." And it is "melan-

choly" that such a paper "should be unable to live, while inferior matter makes fortunes."

The great world moves on, and people love their deceivers, and pay them with applause, and something else which such creatures value still more highly. But here and there a man who stands firm, and uses his elbows against the streaming mob, and dares to tell them his mind, may say of this tragi-comical world with Byron:—

I have not flatter'd its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee,—
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles,—nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo.

That worship of an echo is for weaklings and hirelings. It is something, if ever so little, to have an independent voice of your own.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

The Christian Endeavorers, who have been "congressing" in London, boast of their growing numbers as a proof that "Christianity is not decadent nor the Bible a last year's almanack." But as the Christian Endeavorers are simply church (or chapel) people included in a new society, the boasting is simply ridiculous. The Christian Endeavor movement does not add one to the existing number of Christians. It simply polls some of the old census over again.

Mr. W. T. Stead, who spoke at one of the Christian Endeavor meetings, observed that brotherhood was much needed in South Africa. He said that in Capetown he had met with a highly-educated Malay doctor, who startled him by saying that the one solution of their troubles there would be that all should become Mohammedans. This made the Christian Endeavorers laugh. Poor fools! They don't know that Mohammedanism is beating Christianity hollow in Africa, that it carries a practical spirit of brotherhood with it, and that it elevates the native races in the scale of moral being; making and keeping them sober, industrious, truthful, and self-respecting.

What bigoted fanatics some Evangelicals are to be sure! Here is the Rev. Archibald G. Brown who declines to preach in the same church as the Rev. R. J. Campbell, because the latter was wicked enough to go and see the Pope when he visited Rome. Mr. Brown says that he will take the same liberty to be "narrow" that Mr. Campbell takes to be "broad."

It is difficult to understand why the Coöperators must have a parson to preach to them at their annual Congress. This year they listened to the Bishop of Stepney, who kindly said that "they did not object to private traders, but they as coöperators preferred to do their business themselves." "Now this from a Bishop," says a tradesman, writing to the *Daily News*, "appears to me a bit unkind towards church-going traders, and, personally, it has decided me (after ten years' gratuitous service in a church choir) to be henceforward my own Bishop, priest, and choir. I shall by this resolution save more money and time than the Bishop of Stepney will gain by dealing at a store rather than with a trader."

Another "trader" points out that the Bishop of Stepney, being a Christian, ought to remember the golden rule. How would he like to be squeezed out of his business by a mass of Coöperators? And why should he shout with the biggest crowd? Well, the Bishop will reply to these questions as he may, or more probably leave them unanswered. For our own part, we venture to observe that the so-called golden rule is simply one of those pretty things with which Christianity bamboozles the public. It is an utterly unscientific rule; in fact, there is nothing in it except talk. Take the case of the Bishop of Stepney, for instance. Might he not talk to this indignant trader as follows?—"My dear sir, just try to put yourself in my place. Suppose you were a bishop with a handsome living at stake, and suppose you found it necessary to shout with the biggest crowd in order to keep that handsome living; would you not find it convenient to do so, and would you not shout as loud as you could? Very well, then; I ask you to remember the golden rule, and act towards me as you would desire me to act towards you if you were in my place. In short, instead of blaming me, please declare that I am the finest fellow in the world."

There is a well-known passage in the Bible, though probably few people know where to find it, about running and reading. It is in Habbakuk II., 2:—"And the Lord

answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Scholars tell us that this is a misrendering of the original; the real meaning of the Hebrew being "that he that readeth it may run"—that is, be stimulated and inspired to fresh effort. But the old version has passed into the common speech and holds the field; the idea of it being that a thing may be so plain that a man may catch all its meaning as he runs by.

This old version of the Habbakuk text seems to be hung up in most popular newspaper offices. Their readers read in a hurry, and their writers do the same. Some of their contributors could not, in all probability, write much better if they wrote more slowly; for they have gathered their information in a hurry, and they have learnt to think (heaven save the mark!) in a hurry, and they are only effective while they write in a hurry—for readers in a hurry.

Here is a sample of such writing culled from the *Daily Mirror*:—

"The question whether Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays having dried up, a new controversy is started in the *Fortnightly Review* for June: 'Was Shakespeare a Roman Catholic or a Protestant?' This is a problem in which everyone can take part. There is absolutely no evidence either way, so there need be no trouble about forming an opinion. Probably Shakespeare was of that religion which Dr. Johnson called the religion of all sensible men. When the doctor was asked further what it was, he made answer that 'Sensible men never tell.'"

The statement that "there is absolutely no evidence either way" may be true enough if it is restricted to the question whether Shakespeare was a Roman Catholic or a Protestant. Yet if it implies that Shakespeare's plays throw no light whatever upon his personal convictions it is simply absurd. But the point we desire to emphasise is this writer's gay and airy ignorance of Dr. Johnson. Boswell's hero was a fanatical Christian. Instead of hiding his religious opinions, he professed them quite ostentatiously; and he loudly railed against partial sceptics like Rousseau, and downright Freethinkers like Bolingbroke and Voltaire. Johnson was one of the very last men in the world to say "Sensible men never tell" their religion. The substance of the story thus fathered on him is at least a century older than his time, for it was told of the great Lord Shaftesbury, and may have been a "chestnut" then. Nor is the word "sensible" right. The right word is "wise." Many sensible men are superstitious, because they do not think about their religion. But no wise man is superstitious.

Revivalist Torrey has taken up Talmage's old wheeze about Atheism leading to suicide. Well, if it does lead to suicide, it goes very slowly. We are reminded of the Voltaire story about the effects of drinking coffee. Someone said in his hearing that coffee was slow poison. "Yes," replied Voltaire, who was an old man and a great coffee drinker, "very slow."

While the Atheists are so slow in verifying Torrey's philosophy of suicide, the Christians are much less dilatory. We mention a case every now and then just to keep the thing alive. The last case before us is that of Emily Marshall, a Salvation Army lass, who was charged at Marylebone with attempting to committ suicide; and was simply bound over on the Salvation Army authorities undertaking to look after her.

Another suicide (just to make up a brace) is that of the Rev. W. S. Norris, rector of Hawbridge, near Berkhamstead. The poor Christian gentleman, who put a bullet into his brain, had been worried about a boy friend who had got into trouble in London.

The nineteenth century was constantly spoken of as an age of progress, although it really broke the record for reaction and superstition. It saw the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the Infallibility of the Pope made dogmas. Inquisitors patronised Queen Isabella of Spain, Sister Patricia, Louise Latour, the Curé of Ars, and other bleeding nuns and miracle-working saints by the score. It saw the revival of witchcraft under the name of Spiritism, and of mediæval despotism under Bismarck; but the twentieth century seems going to cap even all this.

The nineteenth century would have suffocated at the idea of a revival of pilgrimages to Jerusalem, but here they are in full fever, run by all sorts of sects. But what would Mr. Newdegate, or even Lord Palmerston, have said to a Manchester man who reported to a penny newspaper that "The pilgrimage is a success," describing, with accounts of good breakfasts and picture postcards—and kodaks—how, at Milan, "we were admitted to the crypt, and there venerated the sacred body of" St. Charles, "and all of us had our

rosary beads applied to the glass sarcophagus through which the face and vested body could be dimly seen?"

This for a start! All the readers of the *Freethinker* are not aware that the house Jesus and his family lived in is now in Italy. For some cause, which did not affect any of the many other houses he lived in, nor the tomb in which he was buried, the house at Nazareth, once on a time, flew off into the air, and finally landed in Loretto; and this is the way twentieth-century Englishmen act in regard to it, and speak about it. The Manchester man again describes.

"As a mere chronicler of the Pilgrimage I have to note only those things which have for our friends at home a human interest. And there was much at Loretto to impress one. There were manifestations of a very active faith. Pilgrims' lips—in the words of the hymn—'touched the ground.' The sacred walls were kissed over and over again; rosary beads and medals were piously pressed to the stones that, once upon a time, reflected the voices of the Holy Family."

Well, there is only one conversation recorded that those walls reflected—and a man must be in a queer moral condition who would kiss the walls that reverberated it. It is given in John vii., which narrates that Jesus's young brothers, disbelieving him, twitted him for his tales of his miracles, and told him, "Go into Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you do. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." Then the holy walls reflected these divine words from the "True God of True God": "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hates because I show that its deeds are evil. You go up to this feast; I go not up to to this feast." Although they had just taxed him with lying about his miracles, these young fellows did not yet know their brother, so they set off without him; when we are told (John vii., v. 10): "And when his brothers had gone up to the feast, then he also went up, not publicly, but as it were in secret." Considering that Jesus's mother and sisters and young brothers scoured the country after him, to get him shut up as "beside himself," it is safe to assume that the walls heard some family confidences in regard to the "incarnate one" which would make "respectable" congregations gasp could some of these "Holy" voices be kissed off and blown into a phonograph, to be reproduced in our churches by way of sermons—say on Holy Innocents' Day.

"Father" Adderley, of St. Mark's, Marylebone, pokes fun at Dr. Clifford in the *Daily News*. He hopes the Passive Resistance leader will stop talking about "Religious Equality" and declare that "what he and his friends are fighting against is Popery, or Ritualism, or Catholicism, or whatever we like to call it." "What I long for Dr. Clifford to see," he says, "is this: We cannot have religious equality until all religious bodies (and Ethical and Atheist bodies too) are put on an equal footing. Either they must all be State paid or none." "Father" Adderley begs Dr. Clifford to try to see what should be perfectly obvious, namely, that "Popery" and "simple Bible teaching" are both "sectarian."

Passive Resisters at Reading held a prayer meeting in a Congregational Church before attending the Police Court and refusing to pay their rates. Their supplications did not lead to any divine interposition. The bench made the usual order.

"The Victorian elections," said a recent telegram from the Melbourne correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*, "continue to be fought with great bitterness. The Protestant Churches are making strenuous efforts on behalf of the referendum on the subject of Scripture teaching in schools, and are distributing half a million pamphlets." We commend this to the attention of any Freethinkers who have a bit of belief in the honesty of the Passive Resistance movement left in them. Secular Education has long existed in Victoria, yet the Protestant Churches are still trying desperately to get the Bible back in the schools. The same professional instinct is at work amongst the Free Churches in England.

Old Dowie has done no business in Paris. The press and the public there treated him as a joke. They laugh at miracle-workers in the "city of light." That is why Christian Science and Theosophy have no success there. Old Dowie has gone off in disgust to Switzerland—on the heels of another old mountebank, the warrior-chief of the red-jersey brigade.

War has been raging in Switzerland. General Booth has been fighting at Basle. "The General," says the *War Cry*, "led three magnificent attacks yesterday. The thermometer stood at ninety-one degrees in the shade. There were

searching radium-like scenes at the penitent form; total result was 127 surrenders." There were no casualties.

The dear *Daily News*! How pious it is, and how funny! Only the other day it said that we ought not to sympathise too much with the Japanese because they were heathen, and the Russians were at least Christians. Now it is going strong on teetotal lines and it writes about the Japanese as follows:—

"That is the plain fact: that the Japanese are, without making any fuss about it, a nation of clean and temperate livers. There is more 'yellow danger' for Europe in that one fact than in any number of big guns and torpedo boats; but it is not the danger that our alarmists talk about."

This is in relation to statements in a Philadelphia paper about the sobriety of the Japanese soldiers. A correspondent of that paper out in the East gives his personal testimony on this point. "In California," he says, "I saw our boys go off to the Philippines, and I never saw a train stop but that scores tumbled pell-mell out of the cars and rushed for the saloon. I have not here seen one soldier do the same."

The introduction of Chinese labor into South Africa has been opposed on the ground that Chinese morality is not the same as Christian morality. Now, Christian morality is a most elastic thing. The average Christian conceives that all to which he is unaccustomed is rejected by it; while all he has been taught to regard as tending to maintain existing institutions as they are at any given moment is necessarily "Christian." So in a recent number of the *Free Lance* Mr. Clement Scott tells a correspondent "that marriage with an uncle is illegal in all Christian countries."

Nevertheless, however "illegal" it may be, we remember seeing in the Jubilee procession of the late Queen Victoria an Italian who was married to his niece—Amadeo, Duke d'Aosta, ex-King of Spain, the heir-presumptive of the Italian crown. He was not only married to his niece, but the ceremony was performed with all the pomp usual at nuptials which might, potentially, produce a line of kings.

The obstacle to such marriages is apparently only the will of the priests. Dispensations are granted both in reward for services rendered to the Church and for money. Amadeo's was sold him for £4,000. It is a pity that so acute a man as Mr. C. Scott should take his religion without examination. He might pass a well-occupied hour in solving the relationships of the Patriarchs and their wives in the Book of Genesis. Abraham, the father of the faithful, married his own sister, and gave her as temporary wife to two other men; his niece, Milcah, married his brother, her uncle, Nahor; and his brother, Lot, was the father of two of his grandchildren. And we send missionaries to China and India to tell the "immoral" heathen that out of the inconceivably countless myriads of families of human beings this little nest of Bedouin savages was the only one "God" chose for his love and to make a compact with!

Mr. H. G. Wells, who has managed to get himself taken as a great thinker and a wonderful prophet, has just been telling an elect audience at the Royal Institute that "our first need is a truthful, wise, and altogether honest Press." Mr. Wells appears to have overlooked two things: first, that this is a Christian country; second, that the age of miracles is past.

According to the Rev. Lawrence P. Jacks, of Manchester College, Oxford, who has lately been addressing the Unitarians at Essex Hall, London, there is great need nowadays for clear and accurate thinking in matters of religion. We quite agree with him, but we are afraid that Unitarians are not doing very much to bring about this desirable improvement. Had it been otherwise there might have been less room for Mr. Jacks' complaint in another direction. "Christendom," he said, "was being invaded by a pestilent host of amateur theologians, the children of a feeble will and a muddled conscience, with hardly enough vigor in them to dig their own graves." Christianity itself, we admit, has enough vigor in it for that operation. What it lacks is the honesty.

Agnes Repplier, in *Lippincott's Magazine*, says that "tourist hates tourist with a cordial Christian animosity that casts all pagan prejudices in the shade." This is rather strong for such a publication. Not that we object to it. Oh dear no!

"Washable" Bibles have made their first appearance at the Maidenhead Police Court. A Bible bound in ivory, with an ivory back, has been presented to the Court by Mr. H. J. Mount, J. P. This swearing-block can be kissed and

washed, and kissed and washed again. We mean as far as the outside is concerned. The cleansing of the inside would be a more difficult and complicated matter.

The *Essex County Standard* (so the *Daily News* says), recently contained the following pious advertisement:—

"Take Notice. Glorious News. Wesleyan Methodist Church, established by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. New members wanted. There is only one condition required of those who desire admission, viz., a desire to flee from the wrath to come. Every member contributes one penny weekly and one shilling quarterly (unless he is in extreme poverty), for which he receives a ticket to admit him to heaven.—Marshall Hartley, President of the Wesleyan Conference."

The *Daily News* shudders (or affects to) at the "innate vulgarity" of this advertisement: Anyone would think it was something fresh. We beg pardon, *novel*. But hundreds of such things have come under our notice. We are so used to them that we haven't a shudder left. We only smile.

The Primrose League appears to have an official organ in the *Darwen and County Gazette*. This journal, under date of May 21, contained a long manifesto of the "Graham Habitation," written specially for its columns, and printed in big bold type in a double-column space. This wonderful document—of which more presently—is headed with the following lines:—

A primrose by the river's bank,
A yellow primrose 'twas to him,
And it was nothing more.

We judge from this that poetry is not the strong point of the Primrose League, or at least of the Graham Habitation. Wordsworth is "translated" like Bottom the weaver in this extract. What that great poet really wrote, we believe, was this:—

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

Perhaps there is some member of the Graham Habitation of the Primrose League who will take the *Freethinker's* tip, and see that Wordsworth is not mangled in future issues of this manifesto.

We have something else to say about this Primrose League manifesto. Here is an interesting paragraph:—

"In Darwen we have seen how its ranks have been swelled by members from nearly all denominations, and with one accord the principles laid down in the constitution that the authority of God must be recognised has been cordially approved. We may thank the League that during its existence there has been no serious attempt to set aside the guiding principles which have made the British Empire great. The wave of agnosticism which spread over the country in the eighties, and which was headed by the late Mr. C. Bradlaugh, Mr. Foote, and others, was defeated in no small degree by the efforts of the Primrose League. Its second great work has been to combat the heresies of the extreme wing of the Socialist Party, which if realised would have destroyed the foundations of the constitution. The Primrose League wisely stepped in, and by faithfully carrying out its propaganda has neutralised the ignoble and mischievous work of the rabid Socialist."

Mr. Foote never helped forward any "wave of agnosticism." Neither did the late Charles Bradlaugh. The latter always was, and the former always has been, a straightforward Atheist. Their propaganda, such as it was, has certainly not been "defeated" by the Primrose League. Its results are apparent through the length and breadth of England in the general hostility or indifference of the thoughtful working classes to Christianity. The last portion of the extract applies, we presume, to Mr. Robert Blatchford, whom we leave to take care of himself, as he is quite able to do. We only wish to observe that Mr. Blatchford is as "rabid" as Mr. Foote to the Primrose Leaguers. In which fact there is a good deal of philosophy, if you only take the trouble to dig it out.

Rev. Thomas Evans, a Welsh Baptist missionary, writes home from India that the natives are attributing the plague to the desire of the Government to keep down the population; and that this belief of theirs "has been a serious hindrance to Gospel preaching in the bazaars and zenanas." In view of this gentleman's letter, we are bound to conclude one of three things; either that he is very simple himself, or that he thinks the British public very simple, or that the Hindus are bigger fools than laymen ever represent them.

The Great Eastern Railway is putting down the "music" nuisance on its trains. "Some time ago," an official of the Superintendent's Department says to the *Morning Leader*, "we had to stop several people who would persist in singing hymns to a compartment full of people." Soul-savers, we suppose.

The cheek of these Christians! At the great Albert Hall demonstration against the Licensing Bill, at which Mr. John Morley was the principal speaker, the Free Church people would wind up with what the *Star* calls "the grand old Doxology." They cannot keep their religious sectarian out of political meetings.

We would advise such of our readers as are able to, to take a look around Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral and note the manner in which the ancient idolatries rejected by this country with so much bloodshed, and by no less than three revolutions—the Reformation under Thomas Cromwell and the Protector Somerset and Queen Elizabeth, the Republic and the Protectorate of Cromwell, and the deposition of James II. in 1688—are being resuscitated and obtruded on the nation which has sacrificed so much to destroy them.

Everyone knows that a crucifix and a statue of Mary have been placed over the communion table of St. Paul's. But the object of the two doors placed in the screen now erected behind the table is not suspected apparently, as they have been derided as purposeless and leading to nowhere. That is merely viewing the alterations being made from the point of view of the English State religion to which the edifice now belongs. But in Papist churches these doors are so placed as to allow the fetish biscuit to be solemnly removed at the close of the day's services and locked in an iron safe kept in the chapel behind; and to allow the officiating priest, on the holidays of Mary, to offer incense to the idol of the mother of Yshun-ben-Miriam, which is kept there.

After meditating on the initial process of creating a myth as exhibited in the cenotaph of Gordon, whose death has never been assured, and whose body has never been sought; and listening to the clink of the hammers which are turning the severe mouldings Wren placed around the panels on the walls, into vulgar picture frames, the reader will be able to ponder on the "relics" inserted into the wall and pavement of the south aisle of the choir, a fragment of a capital of the temple at Jerusalem and a bit of pavement of one of the houses there.

Mr. Shiel, the Westminster Police-court magistrate, would do well to leave his theology at home or in his private ante-room. He should certainly not take it on the bench with him. Only a few days ago he had to fine a furious motor-driver £15 and costs, or two months' imprisonment, for almost running amuck along a busy thoroughfare, and smashing up a hansom and nearly killing the driver. Mr. Shiel remarked that "it was only by the mercy of Providence that the cabman was not killed." It might have occurred to Mr. Shiel, if he had taken the trouble to think, that the mercy of Providence would have been more sensible and valuable if it had operated at an earlier stage of that motor-driver's excursion; for instance, when the police were trying to get him to stop. That would have been better for all concerned, including the unfortunate cabman.

Archdeacon Sinclair, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral on "Disunion," was rather ill-advised in drawing so much attention to the "desolating unbelief" which is being promoted by Church clergymen. He was still more ill-advised to remind a Christian congregation of the fact that some years ago Japan sent a deputation here to inquire into the merits of the Christian faith, with a view to adopting it if it was suitable, and that they were so puzzled by the differences among Christians that the project fell to the ground.

This is a story which is being told of the American Bishop Potter. It occurred when he was preaching one Sunday evening in a small town in the Adirondack Mountains. When the service was over a tall, gaunt man, with the air of a backwoodsman, came up to the Bishop with outstretched hand. "I've heerd ye preach twice afore this," he said, "an' I like yer preachin'. I alluz larn somethin' new from ye. I rid ten mile to-night to hear ye, an' I'd a-rid ten more, fer, as usual, I heerd somethin' new to-night that I never knowed afore." "Well, I am glad of that," said the Bishop, shaking the outstretched hand; "and what was it you learned to-night?" "Why, Bishop, I found out for the fust time in my life that Sodom and Gomorrah wuzn't twins."

DENYING HIMSELF.—"And has your husband given up anything for Lent?" asked Mrs. Girlbride, as she pushed her veil up and settled back in her chair. "Yes," replied Mrs. Suburba, "he has given up going to church." "But that is hardly what one would deny oneself!" exclaimed Mrs. Girlbride. "Oh, it is in Henry's case," replied Mrs. Suburba, mentally calculating what her visitor's hat cost, "for he can't sleep nearly as comfortably in his chair at home as in his pew."—*Cincinnati Times-Star*.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—June 5, afternoon and evening, Victoria Park; 12, afternoon and evening, Victoria Park; 19 and 26, Newcastle-on-Tyne. July 3, afternoon and evening, Victoria Park; 10, afternoon and evening, Victoria Park.

ICONOCLAST.—Yes, as you say, the slaughter amongst (and by) Christian nations in war during the past century is enough to show any honest man the real value of Christianity as a guide and controller of mankind.

W. GRENPELL.—The sixpenny edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*, issuing under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, will be published shortly. Most of the sheets are already printed. Mr. Foote has been revising the work, though not rewriting it, and adding two chapters, which will probably give the work a fresh interest to many of its old readers. Of course the idea is to get this new edition into the hands of the general public. It will be a remarkable sixpennyworth. Should it "catch on" satisfactorily, a sixpenny edition of *Bible Heroes* will follow.

The Secretary of the "English Committee" of the Rome Congress sends us a reply to the paragraph in the N. S. S. Executive's Annual Report. We have advised him by letter that, as the Report is entirely official, his complaint must be sent to the N. S. S. Secretary in the first instance, and that, when it has been considered and answered, both sides of the correspondence shall be dealt with fairly in our columns. As far as the *Freethinker* is concerned, the difference will have to be confined to the statements of fact in the Report.

GEORGE JACOB.—Our unimportant statement that to the best of our belief Mrs. Besant was in India has been twice corrected. This is practically the third time. We hope it may be the last. Thanks for the cutting.

JOHN ROSS.—The N. S. S. honors itself by electing you a vice-president. When we think of the real stalwarts up and down the country, John Ross is always amongst them.

CLARINETTE.—Yes, we have been reading Dr. Warschauer's reply to Mr. Blatchford under the title of *Anti-Nunquam*, the publisher having sent us a copy for review. It has afforded us some amusement, and may afford some to our readers when we notice it more fully, as we hope to do next week.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

N. D.—Thanks. It is rather odd to find a Tory paper like the *Darwin Gazette* referring to the *Freethinker* when the Liberal papers seem all afraid to mention it.

W. W. R.—We did not know at the time that Mr. John Lloyd was unable to fulfil his engagement at Merthyr Tydfil through illness. We are glad to see that he is to lecture there to-day (June 5), and we hope the *Freethinker* notice (as you say) will bring him the same large audience it did before. We note what you say about Mr. Symes, to whom we are writing privately. The matter must wait until we receive his reply.

H. ELLIOTT and GEORGE PARSONS.—Mr. Symes's letter must be taken as a personal communication from a veteran Freethinker at the antipodes. We cannot allow a controversy over its contents, especially on matters outside Freethought. Mr. Symes is too far off to defend himself, and what interest is there in a necessarily one-sided discussion? No doubt you will understand our attitude.

T. J. THURLOW writes that our report of the N. S. S. Conference makes him say the opposite of what he did say in moving Mr. Foote's re-election as President. "What I said," he states, "was that when Mr. Bradlaugh nominated you for the Presidency I was an active member of the only Branch of the N. S. S. that raised a dissentient voice, and that I wrote you at once to assure you that our delegate in no way represented my view of the case."

S. SYMES.—The new volume of selections from Mr. Foote's writings, which you inquire about, will probably be published in the autumn by subscription.

DAVID WATT.—Glad to hear you are having such good meetings at Paisley. Keep pegging away. You will make an impression on the thickest orthodox heads in time.

W. NELSON.—You cannot call an excursion a lecture notice. In the circumstances, we have given you a "Sugar Plum."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

One rarely sees a good word for Thomas Paine in an English paper. We were delighted as well as surprised, therefore, to note a very complimentary reference to Paine in a recent number of the *Westminster Gazette*. A review of G. L. Scherger's *Evolution of Modern Liberty* ended as follows: "It is perhaps strange that a bibliography which finds space for so trivial a work as Lyman Abbott's 'The Rights of Man,' should omit the famous work of Thomas Paine, and that this powerful thinker and great builder of American liberty should find no mention in the book."

The impudence of the Papacy was met with firmness and dignity by the French government, which recalled its Ambassador to the Vatican from Rome. This act was resented by the Clerical party, but Premier Combes was supported by an overwhelming majority in Parliament. During the debate a Radical deputy, M. Meunier, said that the only proper reply to the Papal circular was a complete rupture of diplomatic relations. "Suppress the Embassy, give the Nuncio his passports," he exclaimed amidst great cheering from the Extreme Left. M. Allard said it was a mistake to take the Papacy seriously. It was but a shadow of a ghost. He denied that France was a Catholic nation. This remark called forth wild protests from the Right. Whereupon M. Allard turned to them exclaiming, "In spite of your religion you remind me of your monkey origin."

We have a number of articles in type by valued contributors, which we have not been able to find room for in consequence of the space required by the Report of the National Secular Society's Conference. They will now appear in early issues of this journal.

The Bethnal Green Branch starts its Sunday evening meetings in Victoria Park to-day (June 5). Mr. Cohen is the lecturer. He also occupies the platform in the afternoon. No doubt there will be big meetings (D.V.)—that is to say, weather permitting.

Mr. John Lloyd visits his native land again to-day (June 5) and delivers two Freethought lectures at Merthyr Tydfil. No doubt a large number of our readers in the Rhondda Valley will go to hear him, and give him a hearty reception.

Last week's *Yarmouth Mercury* contained another excellent letter on "Agnosticism" by J. W. de Caux, in which he pins down another Christian like a specimen in a collection. Another letter on the same subject by "Samuel Adams" is a clever piece of irony, which the duller sort of Christians will probably read seriously. "Samuel Adams" is clearly not a tyro with his pen.

Mr. W. H. Thresh's lecture at Kingsland on Sunday morning was much appreciated by his audience. The Christian Evidence meeting was not far distant, and there were a few disturbers in Mr. Thresh's meeting, but they were dealt with satisfactorily.

Our witty contributor, Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, got a good letter in the *Sun* correspondence on that funny parson, the Rev. R. C. Fillingham, who has been declaring that no true Christian could ever fight—in which case, by the way, there must be very few of them. Christ said "Resist not evil," but he also said "Take no thought for the morrow," which is dead against sending linen to the laundry. Mr. Mackenzie calls on the reverend gentleman to be candid, and either give up his laundress or give up Christ. "With regard to fighting," he adds, "Mr. Fillingham ought to know that Christ ordered his disciples to buy swords (even if they had to sell their clothes), then led his commando against the Romans, and only surrendered to superior numbers after Peter had wounded one of the enemy."

Rev. J. Page Hopps having lectured at Darwen on "A scientific basis of belief in a future life," and his address being reported in the local *Gazette*, a correspondent signing himself "Enquirer" was prompted to write to that paper asking for the "scientific basis" which Mr. Hopps forgot to give. Well-written, pertinent letters, like "Enquirer's," do great good in local newspapers. They meet the eye of thousands who would never read a Freethought journal.

We are pleased to hear that Freethought propaganda is being carried on in the open air at Paisley. Meetings are held in the Jail-square (a vile name, by the way, but not of Freethought origin) every Sunday evening. The Glasgow

Branch is supplying the speakers. There are capital audiences, and a lot of Freethought literature is disposed of.

The Sheffield Secular Society goes on excursion to-day (June 5). Members and friends will meet in front of Victoria Station at 1 o'clock, and proceed by the 1.15 train to Deepcar for the New Reservoir, etc., Langsett. Return tickets (6d.) to be had of Messrs. Dean and Dawson.

The June number of *Dana*, the little Irish magazine we referred to a few weeks ago, opens with an article by Mr. J. M. Robertson on "Catholicism and Civilisation." An anonymous writer contributes a rhapsodical paper on "Religion and Love," which, however, is not without a vein of sanity. Mr. George Moore continues his "Moods and Memories," and Mr. F. Ryan (known to our readers) winds up with an article on "Young Ireland and Liberal Ideas." We should like to believe—better still to know—that this praiseworthy new publication represented a considerable section of the younger men in present-day Ireland.

MAN AND NATURE.

Oh, mother Nature! teach me, like thee,
To kiss the season, and shun regrets.
And am I more than the mother who bore,
Mock me not with thy harmony!
Teach me to blot regrets,
Great mother! me inspire
With faith that forward sets
But feeds the living fire.
Faith that never frets
For vagueness in the form.
In life, O keep me warm!
For, what is human grief?
And what do men desire?
Teach me to feel myself the tree,
And not the wither'd leaf.
Fix'd am I and await the dark to-be!

And O, green bounteous earth!
Bacchante Mother! stern to those
Who live not in thy heart of mirth;
Death shall I shrink from, loving thee?
Into the breast that gives the rose,
Shall I with shuddering fall?

Earth, the mother of all,
Moves on her stedfast way,
Gathering, flinging, sowing.
Mortals, we live in her day,
She in her children is growing.

—George Meredith, "Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn."

DIVINE DESIGN.

If organisms are to live at all, a certain adaptation to their environment is not marvellous, but inevitable. The wonder is not its presence. The wonder would have been its absence. We presume the adaptation. We inquire how God achieved it. And what we find is this:—That God has achieved the production of these living things and their adaptations by a process as little suggestive of skill or even of sanity as the shooting of a man with a rifle would be suggestive of accurate marksmanship, who, daily firing at random a thousand shots at the sea, should twice in his life make a hole in the same bathing-machine. For at every stage of the evolutionary process, God—since the theist compels us to speak thus—succeeds in his divine attempt to produce the result he is aiming at only by making a thousand, a hundred thousand, or a million attempts, successive or simultaneous, of which all but one are failures.—W. H. Mallock, "Religion as a Credible Doctrine."

SIMPLE REFORMERS.

Most reformers have infinite confidence in creeds, resolutions, and laws. They think of the common people as raw material, out of which they propose to construct institutions and governments, like mechanical contrivances, where each person will stand for a cog, rope, wheel, pulley, bolt, or fuel, and the reformers will be the managers and directors. They forget that these cogs and wheels have opinions of their own; that they fall out with other cogs, and refuse to turn other wheels; that the pulleys and ropes have ideas peculiar to themselves, and delight in mutiny and revolution. These reformers have theories that can only be realised when other people have none.—Ingersoll.

The Jewish Life of Christ.—II.

(Continued from p. 331.)

MANY critics think that the Gospel of Mark is the earliest of the Four Gospels, and if we consider it from a literary point alone it is certainly the crudest. Compare it with the artistic presentment of John; there is all the difference between chalk and cheese. The author of John is acquainted with Pagan philosophy, identifies Christ with the Logos of Plato, and he is no mean literary artist. In the Gospel of Mark, on the other hand, the author gives Jesus more the character of a wonder-worker, a powerful magician, to be feared rather than loved. "What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?" cry the possessed, in terror; "art thou come to destroy us?"—the scribes declaring, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils casteth he out devils." When he rebuked the storm "they feared exceedingly." After casting a legion of devils into a herd of swine, the people "pray him to depart out of their coast," preferring, apparently, legions of devils to his company. When a woman is healed by touching his garment, he perceives that virtue has gone out of him, and the woman falls at his feet "fearing and trembling." When his disciples see him walking on the sea they "cried out" and "were sore amazed," "and were troubled," Jesus having to tell them to "be not afraid" of him. He curses a fig-tree, and it withers up. But although he commands such great power, he is not all-powerful, for in his own country we are told "he could there do no mighty work," being on that occasion in the same plight as the Toldoth Jesus when he had lost the use of the Holy name.* The Gospel of Mark paints the character of Jesus as a sorcerer much as we find it in the Toldoth.

Now let us return to the story in the Babylonian Gemara. In the first place, it should be borne in mind that we have only one side of the story—that of the opponents of Jesus, who of course do not show him in the most favorable light. For instance, we cannot believe that the favorite pupil of the most learned Rabbi of his time would, under any circumstances, set up a brickbat and worship it. And further, as Mr. Mead remarks, "Why the whole orchestra of the Temple at Jerusalem, apparently, should be requisitioned to give world-wide notice of the excommunication of Jeschu simply because he admired the eyes of a landlady.....is passing non-oriental comprehension," and suggests "that Jeschu was formally excommunicated for heretical tendencies from the school or circle over which Joshua presided. The 400 horns, trumpets, or trombones may be taken simply to mean that the excommunication was exceedingly formal and serious."†

Now in other parts of the Talmud it is asserted that Jesus learned magic in Egypt, and Mr. Mead considers that "The kernel of this persistent accusation may perhaps be reduced to the simple historical element that Jesus went to Egypt and returned with far wider and more enlightened views than those of his former co-disciples."

Now Alexandria in Egypt whither Jesus and his master fled, was in those days a harbor of refuge for all exiled or persecuted Jews. Says a learned writer:—

"About two centuries before the Christian era, foreign conquest and domestic dissensions had led to a very general dispersion of the Jews. Jewish colonisation in Egypt was favored by the Ptolemies, and Alexandria, where this Jewish population principally resided, became the centre of an active propaganda in favor of Judaism. The genius of the religion thus became mingled with that of Greece, and this was the origin of the influence which the Greeks afterwards exercised upon Christianity. By degrees Alexandria became a sort of metropolis for the Jews of the Dispersion." (*The Gospel History*, p. 6).

* The newly discovered portion of the *Gospel of Peter* says that Jesus cried from the cross, "My Power, my Power, hast thou forsaken me?" This comes nearer the Toldoth than the Gospels.

† *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* p. 146.

As a natural result of this mingling of Greek thought with Judaism, Alexandria speedily became a hot-bed of Jewish heresy, culminating in the translation of the sacred books of the Jews into Greek, at the instance of King Ptolemy Philadelphus. The day on which the Greek version of the Pentateuch was presented to the king being kept as an annual festival, in which eventually the whole population of Alexandria used to take part.

The Palestinian Jews, however, looked upon the translation of the sacred idiom into another language as a profanation, and they kept the same anniversary as a day of national mourning. The day being thus marked in the Palestine calendar: "The law in Greek! Darkness! Three days' fast!"

Not only the Septuagint—as this Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was called—but the Greek language itself was considered accursed. The Talmud declares: "Cursed is the man that shall rear swine, and that shall teach his son Greek."

"From the date of the Antiochian persecution, the names of "Greek" or "friend of the Greeks" were used as synonymous with "traitor" and "apostate." Seventy years before Christ.....the heads of the synagogue solemnly cursed from thenceforth whosoever of their nation should for the future teach the Greek tongue to his son."†

Josephus, who wrote his *Antiquities of the Jews* in Greek, for the use of the Greeks, declares that no other person, Jew or foreigner, "could so accurately deliver these accounts to the Greeks as is done in these books," and tells us that he has "taken a great deal of pains" to learn the Greek language. Even then, he adds, "I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness; for our nation does not encourage those that learn the languages of many nations."§ In his *Treatise Against Apion* (i., 9) he tells us that it was not in Palestine that he learned Greek, but "I got leisure at Rome; and.....I made use of some persons to assist me in learning the Greek tongue." It should also be borne in mind that Josephus was a renegade, and accompanied the Roman army of Titus to the siege of Jerusalem, and acted as interpreter for them; being regarded by his countrymen as a traitor and an apostate.

We have gone to some length to prove that Greek was unknown in Palestine during the time of Jesus, as it has a very important bearing both upon the Jesus of the Talmud and the Jesus of the Gospels. For when the Gospel Jesus quotes the Bible *he quotes from the accursed Septuagint, written in the accursed Greek language.* How did Jesus the carpenter's son come by a knowledge of Greek? How did he become possessed of a copy of the Septuagint, a work that was absolutely prohibited in Palestine? How is it that, as the Rev. Dr. Giles points out, the four Gospels, "written by those who witnessed the events which they describe, should be written not in the language of the Jewish people, among whom those events took place, but in Greek, a language almost unknown, and rarely studied, as we are informed by the Jewish historian, even by the most educated persons of the Jewish nation?"|| Moreover, accord-

* See *The Gospel History*, p. 8. *Our First Century*. Scott's Series of Tracts. "The Jews of Palestine viewed the Alexandrian Jews with dislike, and mistrusted the translation into Greek of their sacred books. They said it was a day of sin and blasphemy when the version of the Septuagint was made, and equal only in wickedness to that on which their fathers had made the golden calf." Rev. Baring-Gould, *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. xviii. To add to their sin "The translators often show a leaning towards opinions very foreign from those of the original writers.....making the world older by an Egyptian cycle, of four times 365 years." "To make it better agree with Egyptian history." Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity*, p. 75. Sharpe notes that besides altering the history, they were not "behindhand in" introducing "mysticism and spiritual refinements."

† Sota, 49. Hershon, *Talmudical Commentary*, p. 87.

§ Baring-Gould, *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. xvii. He says that Gamaliel understood Greek, but "that this caused un-casiness in his day is probable; and, indeed, the Gemara labors to explain the fact of his knowledge of Greek, and apologises for it," p. xviii.

|| *Antiquities*, ch. xx.

|| *Hebrew and Christian Records*, vol. ii., p. 419.

ing to the synoptics, his ministry takes place in Galilee, from whence he draws his disciples. Now, the people of Galilee were the most boorish and uncultivated of all the population of Palestine.

"His ministry, therefore, must have been among a population who were despised by the Jews of Jerusalem, who spoke a dialect which the more cultivated Jews laughed at; who were considered in religious matters to be ignorant and unorthodox, and who were proverbially called 'Galilean fools.'"

How, then, could they understand quotations from the Greek Septuagint? And, lastly, how comes it that the Four Gospels are written in Greek? For instance, the Church has a tradition that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew; but our Matthew is not a translation from Hebrew, but an original Greek composition! Again, the Greek of St. John's Gospel, says Dr. Giles, is "such as we should think it impossible for an uneducated Jewish fisherman ever to have produced."† The fact is they were not, and could not, have been composed in Palestine.

W. J. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Intelligence.

THE genial Bishop of London, who is regarded as the representative chevalier prelate of the day, and whose democracy with the people of the East End and whose sensible words on family and home life win respect and approbation, much as one may disbelieve in the prolific extension of the family among the poor and the unfit, has yet thought it incumbent to set forth his orthodoxy recently as to the Virgin Birth and its cognate antiquated superstitions. The rejection of a man who sought ordination, but could not honestly subscribe to these hard, impracticable, unreal doctrines, which the world has outgrown, is an evidence of how a man of unusual intelligence and great common sense in other questions, like the Bishop, can allow himself to be blinded by religious fantasies and overcome by old dogmatic prejudices that even priests like M. Loisy in France do not accept. M. Loisy is likely, probably, to have a bad time of it with the Vatican, despite any trimming he may do between plain common sense and theological dogma. As Rev. Mr. Inge says, he regards the Jesus of the Gospels as an ordinary—very ordinary—human being, and "his attitude towards the Gospel history is that of rationalism pure and simple."

While in the Church's ranks the "Bible destroyers" like Canon Henson, Canon Cheyne, and others are unconsciously strengthening the hands of Free-thinkers, and laying mines under the old superstitions, we can but rejoice that "men of thought and men of action" are clearing the way for future free progress and enlightened views.

Yet we must not relax any efforts ourselves, but ever press on, with the banner of truth "going on before"—not kept "safe behind the door," as the vicar said of his processional cross. By-and-by may be realised the ideal standard that Mr. Derfel's article sets forth in the issue of May 1, when even in the Church, if the clergy do not suppress it, there may be a wide acceptance of the true teachings of intelligence *versus* superstition. It may sound the knell of many a present religious sect and system; it may rend the Church as we now know it asunder, but it will be an open blessing to humanity. Out of the chaotic, confusing errors and legends of Theism and a fallible, unbelievable Christianity, as heretofore proclaimed, may come "purer manners, wiser laws," with the ethics of reason and intelligence.

As Buckle has asserted, intelligence has always been arrayed against religious dogmatism and incredible creeds, so it will forever continue to

* *The Gospel History*, p. 90. Renan says that in positive science "Palestine was, in this respect, one of the most backward countries. The Galileans were the most ignorant people of Palestine, and the disciples of Jesus might be counted amongst the persons the most simple of Galilee" (*The Apostles*, p. 10).

† *Hebrew and Christian Records*, vol. ii., p. 419.

uphold the supremacy of intellect, the certitude of science, and the undeniable right of private judgment and freedom of opinion to all. Opinion must be accorded the fullest liberty, and every statement be subject to interrogation. If it cannot be proved, it assuredly deserves denial and rejection. No matter how high may be the authority, no matter how solemn may be the utterance, let nothing be accepted as binding that is not capable of actual, unquestionable proof—rational proof. Then how rapidly incarnations, virgin births, atonements, resurrections, and ascensions will “fade into the light of common day.” They will be seen to be the myths, the phantasms, they really are, and men will wonder that they could have been dominated by their obsolete mental tyranny, or “all their lifetime been subject to bondage.”

We live in a material, tangible, bread-and-butter world, out of which we have to eliminate the supernatural element. Yet we know there must subsist the æsthetic, the poetical, the imaginative, to relieve existence of its bareness and dullness. We would not ignore or dismiss these in our rationalism or materialism; but beneath all ideals, fancies, and dreams, we must have the solid soil of fact, the substratum of truth. The ancient Greek, in his surpassing culture of the beautiful, realised that there was also the good and the true. When he saw no more the dryad as he trod the soft herbage of the forest, nor beheld the nymph as he wandered by the sylvan stream, he knew that the woodland was still there in all its glory, and the silver waters in all their beauty, though he could no longer watch “for Proteus coming from the sea,” nor “hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.” And so it will be hereafter in the age when the fictions of faith shall have been dissipated. “The consecration and the poet’s dream” will ever abide when a higher, loftier, purer rationalism shall supersede all effete supernaturalism. Nothing beautiful or exalting shall be lost, only transmuted into purer gold. The poetic longings of present religious devotion, “the early heaven, the happy views,” shall find a truer, because a *real*, satisfaction. In that day some future Bishop of London—if that office shall be perpetuated—preaching at a brilliant service of rationalistic splendor in St. Paul’s (which one can picture), shall say: “Note how our forefathers clung to those old mystical, mythical standards and fables of pious religious belief which long since have been abandoned, and which we should not, and do not, ask to see revived!” The crucifix on the reredos may still be there to represent *all* martyrdom for principle, and the sacrifice for whatever is believed to be truth; the Madonna and Child above shall simply set forth the stainlessness of all motherhood and the innocence of all infancy. They will not be there to show forth virgin birth or incarnation or atonement, only the devotion and the glory of Humanity. Then he who frequents the venerable temple can say with the poet:—

Man I am, and man I would be,
Simply man, and nothing more;
Angels may have shining pinions,
—Let them soar!

GERALD GREY.

A GLUT OF GODS.

We began to find out a few more things in nature, and we found out that we were supporting more gods than were necessary—that fewer gods could do the business—and that, from an economical point of view, expenses ought to be cut down. There were too many temples, too many priests, and you always had to give tithes of something to each one, and these gods were about to eat up the substance of the world. And there came a time when it got to that point that either the gods would eat up the people or the people must destroy some gods, and of course they destroyed the gods—one by one and in their places put forces of nature to do the business—forces of nature that needed no church, that needed no theologians; forces of nature that you are under no obligation to; that you do not have to pay anything to keep working. We found that the attraction of gravitation would attend to its business, night and day, at its own expense. That was a great saving.—*Ingersoll*.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

(Report continued from p. 349.)

The auditors, Messrs. Cotterell (London) and Thompson (New Brompton) having been elected for the coming year, Mr. Fathers moved on behalf of the Birmingham Branch:—

“That all Branches paying the Annual Subscription to Headquarters, as fixed by the Society’s rules, shall be exempted from making Collections for the General and Benevolent Funds.”

This having been put to the vote and lost, after some discussion, Mr. Schweizer moved on behalf of the Liverpool Branch:—

“That the capitation payment to the Central Fund be abolished, and that an annual affiliation fee of ten shillings be paid by each Branch.”

He said the whole object of this motion was to give the Executive a certain sum annually. If the affiliation fee was fixed at a definite sum to be paid at a definite date, a special effort might be made by Branches to meet their liabilities. Mr. Hammond, in supporting, said the present system led to evasions by Branch Secretaries, who kept back from headquarters lists of members’ names, because the affiliation fees were needed for local effort.

Mr. Pegg thought it unfair to expect all Branches to send the same fee irrespective of numbers or position. Mr. V. Roger having moved as an amendment that the word “minimum” be introduced before “annual,” the mover of the resolution said he would be pleased to accept the addition.

At this point the Conference adjourned for luncheon.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

The Conference having reassembled, the discussion on Motion 8 was continued by Mr. R. Chapman and Mr. C. Cohen, who said the Conference seemed to be coming to the point of view rejected at last year’s Conference, namely, that the subscriptions of Branches to headquarters should be of a purely voluntary character. Messrs. Pegg and Ward having pointed out that the resolution, if carried, would disturb the existing method of representation, which depended upon payment per member through the Branches,

The President said he wished to state his position in the matter. At present if a poll were demanded there existed a check in the shape of the capitation fee, which enabled them to check by the Society’s books the number of votes to which each Branch was entitled. But if this were abolished he confessed he did not see how a poll could be taken. The whole financial difficulty arose out of the fact that the Society was a purely voluntary one, and their rules could only be in the nature of pious opinions. The financial support given to the Society was not of a regular character, but necessarily intermittent, being given as special circumstances prompted people. It clearly did not profit either the Executive or the movement to wipe out Branches or members because their support was not as regular as some thought it ought to be. It was impossible to tell what any Branch *ought* to send to London. As a way out of the difficulty he would suggest that a Sub-Committee be appointed from the Branches themselves, and that this Committee report to the next Conference on the whole question. The suggestion was then put in the form of a motion, and carried.

After some little discussion, and in view of the above resolution, it was agreed that the resolution of the Manchester Branch, “That the Individual Members’ minimum subscription to the National Secular Society be four shillings a year instead of two shillings as at present,” also stand over for the report of the Sub-Committee.

Mr. Hammond next moved:—

“That whenever funds are at the disposal of the Executive for propagandist purposes the same should be utilised in the endeavor to establish new Branches in the provinces; money so expended being more likely to result in permanent good to the Society than if spent on lectures in already existing centres.”

He said the object of this resolution was to impress upon the Executive that there were many well-populated areas where, if a lecturer were sent down for a short period—long enough to become acquainted with local sympathisers—many fresh Societies could be established and much good done to the general movement. In this way the movement would profit by the zealotism of new converts, which was always a valuable factor in missionary effort. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pegg, who said this had been one of his pet ideas for many years past. He believed new Branches would only be made by this method. On the suggestion of the President, the motion was amended by the insertion of “as far as possible” before “utilised,” and carried.

Mr. T. Thurlow next moved :—

"That we the members of the National Secular Society in Annual Conference assembled do most strenuously protest against the employment of alien laborers in the Transvaal under other conditions than those which apply to other laborers who voluntarily engage in the same work; and also against the mine-owners of the Transvaal being endowed with any privilege of employing alien labor that may not be lawfully exercised by all other employers located in any British crown colony."

He would not, he said, dwell upon this at any length, as he felt it would commend itself to all lovers of liberty, as well as being in thorough consonance with the principles of the N.S.S. All ought to be opposed to a ring of wealthy individuals taking an unfair advantage of ignorant and credulous men. Our principles called upon us to protest against the degrading conditions under which Chinese labor was being imported into the Transvaal. The motion was seconded by Dr. Nichols.

Mr. H. P. Ward, while agreeing with the views of Mr. Thurlow, thought the subject did not come within the legitimate scope of the Conference's business. Mr. C. Pegg and Mr. Greevz Fisher agreed with Mr. Ward in his view of the matter. Mr. Chapman thought that if we were to refrain from expressing an opinion upon all subjects that touched a political issue we should be indulging in a species of "other-worldism" such as we blame Christian Churches for. Mr. Davies thought that a political bogey had been raised. Our principles upheld the right of labor to organise itself for its own betterment, and this was all that the resolution really affirmed. He did not see how the Conference could refuse to pass the motion. Mr. Cohen pointed out that the essence of the whole question was whether we had a right to protest against special privileges being given by law to one class, and special disabilities imposed on another class, such as were not common to the whole community. He thought we had that right, and should use it.

The President said this was certainly not a political question in the form in which it came before the Conference. Had it been so, the Agenda Committee would not have sanctioned it. He took the view that the essence of the resolution was a protest against a law passed for the Transvaal which did involve social slavery, and which ran counter to the basic principles of human society. Fundamentally the resolution was a protest against conditions that were an abnegation of the first principles of civilised society, and in the interests of a common agreement he suggested the following amendment :—

"That this Conference while desiring not to interfere with any matter of party politics, resolves to record its protest against the introduction of what is really slave-labor in South Africa under the sanction of the British Parliament."

After some further discussion, Mr. Thurlow having withdrawn the original motion, the amendment was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Mr. C. Cohen next moved :—

"That in view of the widespread nature of the Passive Resistance movement, and of the repeated declarations of the Nonconformist leaders, officially endorsed by the Free Church Congress, in favor of Christian teaching in the State schools; this Conference is of opinion that the whole dispute is one between rival Churches desiring to control education in their own interests; this conference therefore regards the dispute as one in which Freethinkers have no special reason for concerning themselves; and the Conference further desires to warn all lovers of true religious and political liberty against being led away by plausible appeals to the very principles that are being outraged, and begs them to remember that the only policy which should command their support is the policy of complete secular education."

He said the present contest between Nonconformists and Churchmen could not be regarded as involving any principle, but only as a fight between rival churches, each careless of the interests of non-Christians, and each striving to control education in the interest of their own denomination. With Churchmen in power Secular Education was out of the question, as it was one of their principles that the State should teach religion. And the dominance of the Nonconformists during the past generation, in spite of their many hypocritical professions, had served to push Secular Education into the background, until the present controversy had revived it. The only interest Secularists had in the dispute was to keep the two parties fighting; then by awakening a sense of justice in the minds of some Christians and disgusting others with the continuous obstruction by religion of education we might be able to secure Secular Education

in State schools. After a few remarks from Mr. R. Chapman the motion was put and carried.

Mr. R. Chapman then moved, on behalf of the South Shields Branch :—

"That Branches of the N. S. S. should appoint deputations to wait upon their local members of parliament in reference to the Education question, and urge upon them the importance of Secular Education as the only permanent solution of the problem on its political side."

Mr. V. Roger moved an amendment that the words "councils and" be inserted after "local members." This having been accepted by the mover of the resolution, it was then put and carried.

On behalf of the Executive, the President moved :—

"That the N. S. S., as the one national Freethought organisation in Great Britain, should be strongly represented at the International Freethought Congress to be held at Rome in September; that a Special Fund should be raised for this purpose; and that the Continental officials of the International Freethought Federation should be apprised of the practical determination of the N. S. S. to contribute as fully as possible towards rendering the Rome Congress a splendid demonstration of the Freethought forces of the world."

The President thought that three or four N.S.S. delegates should be sent to Rome, and that Mr. Roger should be one of them, partly on account of his good working knowledge of the French language. But everything would, of course, depend upon the resources that might be placed at the Executive's command. One beneficial result of the Rome Congress—held in the city of the Vatican, and the city where Bruno was murdered—would be a break in the press boycott of the Freethought movement. It would be impossible to ignore a world-wide representation of Freethought, and the British public would learn of the growth of Freethought in all civilised nations.

This resolution was carried, and the Conference broke up after a hearty vote of thanks to the handful of Leeds members who had worked so hard in seeing to the local arrangements.

Correspondence.

ART AND FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In justice to myself I submit cutting from Mr. Trebells article to which I referred. For the words underlined I wrote "Freethought pictures" for the sake of brevity. Surely the difference is not great enough to justify the accusation of quoting him incorrectly; and Mr. Trebells, in replying, referred to a different sentence entirely. My contention is that other artists *have* had the courage to paint such pictures, since the fifteenth century, and before Verestchagin. Men like Hogarth, Watts, and Laureus are, in my opinion, more entitled to the rank of Freethought artists than the Protestant Reformers who had a religion of their own nearly as dark as the one they were warring against. Hogarth unmercifully satirised the Church and the clergy in his pictures. He was a moralist, and had ideas of social reform as well as being a reformer in Art; and I submit that he is entitled to the position that Mr. Trebells assigns to Verestchagin; I say this without lessening in any way my own admiration for the great Russian painter.

G. D.

LIFE AND DEATH.

A child
Curious and innocent,
Slips from his Nurse, and rejoicing
Loses himself in the Fair.

Thro' the jostle and din
Wandering, he revels,
Dreaming, desiring, possessing;
Till, of a sudden,
Tired and afraid, he beholds
The sordid assemblage
Just as it is; and he runs
With a sob to his Nurse
(Lighting at last on him),
And in her motherly bosom
Cries him to sleep.

Thus thro' the World,
Seeing and feeling and knowing,
Goes Man: till at last,
Tired of experience he turns
To the friendly and comforting breast
Of the old nurse, Death.

—W. E. Henley.

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.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. W. Sullivan, "The Moseley Education Commission to America."

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

OUTDOOR.

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

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, E. Pack.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, W. J. Ramsey.

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

COUNTRY.

COVENTRY BRANCH N. S. S. (Baker's Coffee Tavern, Fleet-street): 7, S. Shufflebotham, "The Fallacy of Free-will."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Armley Park): 11, Debate, "Are Christ's Teachings Practical?"—Woodhouse Moor: 3, G. Weir, "Creation"; 7.30, "The Confession of Faith."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Outdoor Propaganda: Islington Square, 3 and 7 (if wet, in the Hall), H. Percy Ward; Tuesday, 8, Edgehill Church.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. C. Schweizer, "The Religious Struggle in France."

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