

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Mystery, miracle, and prophecy, are appendages that belong to fabulous and not to true religion. They are the means by which so many LO HERES! and IO THERES! have been spread about the world, and religion been made into a trade. The success of one impostor gave encouragement to another, and the quieting salvo of doing SOME GOOD by keeping up a PIOUS FRAUD protected them from remorse.—THOMAS PAINE.

Herbert Spencer's "Autobiography."—II.

SPENCER deduces many of his personal characteristics from his ancestry. Not only his nonconformity of disposition, but also his prudence in what are called worldly affairs, and his habit of criticising the opinions and tastes of other people. "That the spirit of nonconformity," he says, "is shown by me in various directions, no one can deny: the disregard of authority, political, religious, or social, is very conspicuous." He laments that one result of this trait was "chronic disobedience" in his youth. But the lamentation overlooks the fact that we all have "the defects of our qualities." A character cannot be at once original and imitative, independent and docile. As a boy Spencer would not bully other boys; neither would he stand being bullied himself. Orders even from adults, who failed to appeal to his reason, made little impression upon him. He wanted to know the why and wherefore of everything. He was born, in short, to go his own way; and if he had not been so the world would never have had his great contribution to its intellectual wealth.

"The grand deficiency in Herbert's character," his uncle wrote to his father as far back as 1834, when the lad was under his tuition, "is the principle of Fear." "By Fear," he adds, "I mean both that 'Fear of the Lord' which 'is the beginning of wisdom,' and that fear of Parents, Tutors, etc." Spencer could not be coerced. The only way of leading him was through his sympathies, and unfortunately this method was not much practised. It was also unfortunate that his teachers, chiefly his father and his uncle, did not allow in their scheme of education for "positive amusement." His boyhood does not seem to have been exactly bleak, but it was lacking in sunshine. Nevertheless he appears to have been strongly attached to his parents. The most moving thing in these two big volumes is the story of his flight from his uncle's, when he first went there to school, back to the old nest of his childhood. The poor child—he was only thirteen—was homesick. He does not say so, but it is clear that he wanted his mother. Probably he felt, as many a stern man (Napoleon, for instance) has felt, that he never had and never would have so good and pure a friend. Starting at six in the morning he walked away from Hinton, the other side of Bath, towards his home at Derby. All the cash he had was two shillings—a sly gift of pocket-money from the dear mother to whose arms he was fleeing. His food on the way was an occasional penny roll and a glass of beer. Cheltenham was reached at night, and a bed obtained in a tavern there for sixpence. But the tremendous walk of forty-eight miles in one day kept the poor boy awake all night. He took to the road again in the

morning, and had another bed at Lickey. After another sleepless night, he started off again, getting a lift on the road, and finally reaching home in a state that threatened to bring on an attack of brain fever. The first day he walked forty-eight miles, the second forty-seven, and the third twenty. His food was scanty, and his nights were without sleep. Spencer believed that his system received "a detrimental shock," and that his health in after life always suffered from "the physical effects of this escapade."

But how human it all was! Towards the end of his life Spencer seems to have felt the simple touch of nature more keenly. He does not forget, in telling the story of his flight from Hinton, to mention the kindness of the coachman of what may be called "the Derby express," to whom he spoke at Lichfield, and who took pity upon his pinched and painful face, giving him a ride for nothing, and refusing the few coppers that were offered him. "Good fellow" Spencer calls him; and the words, for so self-restrained a writer, are like a caress. *Good fellow, indeed!* He and his kind act live again in these pages. And we are not sure that his generosity to the forlorn lad was not a better performance than the finest page of the Synthetic Philosophy.

Chiefly from his father Spencer traces his habit of intellectual criticism. His father often expostulated even with strangers on their misbehavior. One day he tackled a half-intoxicated man on the Derby and Nottingham coach. The man listened to him good-temperedly for a while, and then replied: "Well y'see, master, there mun be sum o' all sorts, and I'm o' that sort." A capital story—and a splendid answer. All the logicians in the world could not beat it together. And then the humor of it—and, in its way, the philosophy!

Spencer, and one is glad to note it, was not without an eye for such things. Sometimes they are sympathetic, and sometimes the opposite. Here is a story of a boarding house where he once resided; the landlady being a gushing creature, with all the insincerity that often goes with that feminine variety:—

"She professed to have a high admiration for Shakespeare: was partial to reading his plays aloud, and considered that she declaimed the speeches extremely well. On one occasion, after enlarging upon her reverence for him, she ended by saying—"Ah, I often wish that he were alive, and I had him here. How we should enjoy one another's conversation!"

Prodigious! As a landlady story, one can hardly believe it could be beaten.

Now we come to a point which illustrates the uncommon sincerity with which Spencer writes about himself. Just as some of his father's best intellectual qualities were, in his opinion, slightly improved in himself, so there were others that reproduced themselves in him unpleasantly. Spencer accuses himself of being "greatly given" to "finding fault with others." Elsewhere he says in a vein of striking candor:—

"The tendency to fault-finding is dominant—disagreeably dominant. The indicating of errors in thought and speech made by those around, has all through life been an incurable habit—a habit for which I have often reproached myself, but to no purpose..... When, occasionally, I succeed in restraining myself from making a comment on something wrongly said or executed, I have a feeling of discomfort, as though I

had left undone something which should have been done: the inherited tendency is on its way to become an instinct acting automatically."

Orthodox apologists will make the most of this. We shall see it figuring in diatribes against "natural" morality and "natural" philosophers. But the obvious answer to this form of special pleading is that all men have failings, and few the sincerity and courage to confess them.

Spencer admits, fifty years afterwards, that he was unjust in his earliest manhood to Captain Moorsom, a railway engineer, who had been very kind and helpful to him. Dissatisfaction with one act which he considered unjust was "allowed to outbalance the feeling of gratitude." Very sad—but very common! The unusual thing is the confession and repentance. But here again, in justice to himself, Spencer shows, like a true philosopher, how the fault was connected with the superior as well as the inferior part of his nature.

"In this case, as in others, was shown the predominance of that most abstract of the sentiments—the sentiment of justice. Its supremacy over the other moral feelings is such that when it has been offended there results almost an obliteration of what good opinion I otherwise have had reason to form of the offender. This seems to be one of the results of a mental constitution which has largely influenced my life and thought, and shows itself in my writings; but which, however needful in one who has to do a certain kind of work, is not the most desirable otherwise considered. In most men, personal considerations conquer impersonal ones: in me the contrary happens. And this sway of the impersonal ones caused, in the present instance, judgments and feelings which were too sympathetic. In later years I have never ceased to regret the errors thus committed."

"In later years." How pathetic! We generally near the grave before we learn wisdom—above all in the conduct of life. But here and there a man understands by virtue of intuitive genius. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about Shakespeare, as so many thoughtful persons have found, is the fact that in every great experience of life he was "there before you." Spencer never rapturises over Shakespeare, but an occasional phrase or quotation shows that the Master had made a strong impression upon him. Well, he might have learnt all that wisdom which came to him "in later years" if he had been unoriginal enough to borrow from a mightier mind than even his own. When Hamlet hands over the players to the charge of Polonius he says "let them be well used." "My lord," replies Polonius, "I will use them according to their desert." But the prompt retort of Hamlet speaks the higher wisdom:—

"God's bodykins, man, better: use every man after his desert, and who should scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity: the less they deserve the more merit is in your bounty."

Spencer's account of the few years he spent in railway engineering has an interest of its own, although we cannot follow it here. He was not born to be an engineer, any more than he was born to be a journalist—a profession which he afterwards attempted. Probably his experience with engineers and their work was of advantage to him, and it did him no harm in a way where harm was apt to come easily. Absence from home, from family influences, and the public opinion of friends and neighbors, often causes young men to go wrong. Many of his companions fell into "randomness of living—to use the mildest expression," and he thought it was impossible that they should come to any good. But—

"Sundry of them, whose after-careers I have known, have turned out very respectable men—one especially, who, during many years, has been exemplary in all relations, domestic and social; and who, although in those early years without any thought beyond selfish pleasures, has, during a long mature life, been a man of high aspirations as well as model conduct. Let me add that, strangely enough, this change in him has been the concomitant of a change from the so-called orthodox views in which he was brought up, to the so-called heterodox views which he has held during these forty odd years."

(To be continued.) G. W. FOOTE.

Two Roads to the Revolution.

WE see to-day a double loosening of old ideas. The old industrial ideas are changing; the workers are becoming impatient of dependence on private capital. Old religious ideas also change. The more intelligent people are becoming impatient of the Church. Both movements are signs of one large democratic tendency. Volney, in his picturesque *Ruins of Empires*, describes the double revolt by imagining the western nations divided into a small group and a large group. The large body is composed of laborers, tradesmen, and every profession useful to society. The small body includes priests, aristocrats, and civil and military bureaucrats.

"Why," asks the large body, "stand you apart? Are you not of our number?"

"No," replies the small group; "you are the people; we are a privileged class; we have laws, customs and rights, peculiar to ourselves."

"And what labor," ask the mass of the people, "do you perform in society?"

"None," is the answer; "we are not made to labor."

Volney finds, in superstition and privilege, the double cause of the ruins of empires. His work, issued in 1791, clearly indicates the two labors of the pioneers of the Revolution. Among these pioneers, Voltaire and Rousseau were eminent. Most of the Revolutionary Freethinkers were Deists, somewhat after Thomas Paine's type. Atheism rather belonged to the mansion than the mass. Atheism, combined with a poetic admiration of natural law, is the characteristic of D'Holbach's *System of Nature*. Who was D'Holbach? He was a German baron; educated in France; rich, generous, fond of gathering men of wit and genius at his table. His book closes with an invocation to Nature, not to God:—"O Nature, sovereign of all beings, and ye, her adorable daughters, Virtue, Reason, and Truth, remain for ever our revered protectors," and so on. But this Atheism did not affect the every-day Revolutionist. Robespierre, the guillotine king, worshiped God after the manner of Rousseau.

Voltaire was the master of French Freethought. He was brought up as a boy in a Jesuit school; thrashed as a young man for writing satires on gentry; the enemy of the Church; the friend of Frederick the Great and the Empress Catherine of Russia; admirer of English political liberty; hater of religious bigotry; poet, dramatist, tale-writer, essayist, historian, wit. It is no wonder that this tireless spirit, the author of seventy books, seemed to the Christian eye an awful and evil giant, and that his memoir is, to this day, branded by an orthodox curse. I will first eulogise Voltaire, and then say a word of caution.

Voltaire was distinguished for his humane protests against religious persecution. For three years, he wrote letters and pamphlets, and pleaded with all sorts of persons, in order to restore the good name of Calas, the Protestant who had been broken to death on the wheel, when wrongly convicted for killing his son. And Voltaire succeeded. What he did in the case of Calas he did in other cases. These were deeds done on behalf of the pure and sublime spirit of mercy and justice. And then, let us also praise Voltaire for the serene, smiling intrepidity with which he analysed the theology of his day, and reduced it to poor dust and ashes. Never any fury; never any crude abuse; but an easy strangling of monsters, as when Samson slew lions with naked hand and wrist. Voltaire could crush a folly with a phrase. He discusses the miracle of the devils which entered the bodies of the Gadarene swine. There were 2,000 swine; the devils numbered a legion; and a legion (so the classical dictionary told Voltaire) was 6,700. Very well; you divide the devils among the animals: result, three devils and seven-twentieths per pig! He says no more. While you laugh he quits the subject; he knows you will never again accept the story with the old credulity. Take,

again, the light yet penetrating manner in which he exposes the difficulty of the problem of evil. A philosopher converses with Nature, who complacently describes herself and her glories. At length he asks for an explanation of pain and suffering. "For what purpose, Nature, was all this?" He pauses. Nature is slightly irritated. "Oh," she retorts, "pray go and inquire of him who made me!" I suspect Voltaire's deism did not go very deep, else he would have made Nature answer more sedately—more after the pattern of an archdeacon. He detested a pretence of knowledge. Rather would he go to the other extreme, and reduce us to a becoming humility as to human powers. "Thou inquierest after the limits of the human mind," he once observed in a tone of raillery; "they are at the end of thy nose!" It was the Sokratic doctrine wrapped up in a jest. Yet no one could more neatly state a positive principle as well as a negative. When he argued against a Christian bigot who denied that Pagans could be moral, he found an instance in the teacher whom China honors. "Confucius," said Voltaire, "did not invent a system of morals; he found his in the hearts of all mankind." It should be noted that Voltaire was not a political revolutionist. He desired to see reform, but through kings; only let them be liberal kings, like his friend Frederick. "Since one must obey," he said, "I had rather obey a lion of good family, whom nature has made my superior, than two hundred rats of my own species." Had he lived on into the days of the guillotine, he would perhaps have gone to the scaffold with the Girondins.

Now as to the caution which I hinted at. I believe Voltaire did a most necessary work in fighting the Church by his irony and criticism; but such a work ought not to be final. His task was to satirise, denounce, break up. Over and over again he cried "Crush the infamous thing," that is, Catholic theology and the insincerity of the Church of his day. But look at any assembly of ordinary men and women and young people. Ask yourself if you have done all that is intellectually and morally needed for them if you have taught them to smile with Voltaire at the errors of theology. You have not. You have only removed falsehoods; that is not building up the new desires, the new love, the new order, the new character. In one important respect, Diderot was a greater man than Voltaire, though his name is not so well known. It was Diderot who, in 1751, began publishing the many-volumed *Encyclopaedia*. This work instructed and informed; it portrayed arts, sciences, manufactures. It was a treasure-house of pictures, knowledge, solid education. It was a kind of fresh Bible of learning in place of the theological dogmas. Diderot was a Freethinker; a wit; a critic; a scholar. His spirit was constructive rather than destructive.

I have only a few lines left for Rousseau. The first words of his celebrated book, the *Social Contract*, sound like a tocsin,—“Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.” That is his angry and menacing text. As a matter of fact, man is not born free. He is born a servant of the past through heredity; and he is born, even in primitive or savage communities, into a world of custom and tradition. Nor does Rousseau propose that we should separate into anarchic units in order to recombine on scientific principles. He suggests that we set society on the working basis of a supposed universal contract thus:—

“Each giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is not one associate over whom we do not acquire the same rights which we concede to him over ourselves, we gain the equivalent of all that we lose, and more power to preserve what we have. If then, we set aside what is not of the essence of the Social Contract, we shall find that it is reducible to the following terms,—Each of us puts in common his person and his whole power under the extreme direction of the general will, and in return we receive every member as an inseparable part of the whole.”*

Rousseau talks very complacently of the “General

Will;” but his democracy does not go deep. Gambetta used to say Rousseau was an aristocrat at bottom. There is an ominous shadow of bigotry in his proposal to banish from the State persons who object to his form of religion. This religion rather resembled the undenominationalism of our Nonconformists; it included belief in God; belief in a future life, the happiness of the just and the punishment of the wicked; and belief in the sacredness of the Social Contract. On the whole, I confess I cannot join in with the critics who describe Rousseau's book as eloquent and inspiring. To me it appears dull; and I fancy it was received with enthusiasm because it dealt seriously with the great social problem of the age, and not because it was essentially helpful.

F. J. GOULD.

Science and Religion.

THE conflict between Religion and Science is an old and an ever-present one. From one point of view it is the only one with which religion is concerned; for, when all is said, this is the ultimate object of all religious and anti-religious controversy. Textual criticisms of the Old and New Testaments are important enough and interesting enough in their way, as also are such questions as the origin of Christianity and the relation of Christianity to other historic phenomena. But above any of them in importance is the great question of supernaturalism *versus* naturalism—the essence of all discussion between religion and science. One may demonstrate that the Bible is a mere collection of anonymous and untrustworthy tracts without touching the fundamentals upon which religion builds; but once demonstrate the unreasonableness of belief in the supernatural, and all other questions are reduced to a discussion that, whatever be the result, cannot rehabilitate religious beliefs.

A perception that this is the fundamental issue is doubtless responsible for the fact that a discussion of the relations between religion and science is a growing theme with religious apologists. And as it is no longer possible to harmonise the very crude teaching of the Bible with modern science, it is now becoming the fashion to argue that, however religion and science may appear to differ, a deeper analysis shows them to be in thorough agreement. This, at all events, is the method adopted by the Rev. F. C. Kempson, Demonstrator of Anatomy at Cambridge University, in a course of lectures at St. Mark's, Marylebone, for a report of which I am indebted to a friend. Mr. Kempson, it is interesting to note, has a great difficulty in realising that there should be any quarrel between religion and science. Both, he says, are so real to him that it is puzzling that other people should experience any difficulty in combining the two. Still he does admit that there is a “vague idea in many minds” that science has somehow undermined the Christian faith, but is inclined to treat this as a heritage from the days when those who “conducted scientific research were calling the Christian faith in question.” One ought not, perhaps, to expect a Cambridge Professor with the title of “Reverend” to be an authority as to the actual state of public opinion, and therefore he would doubtless be surprised to learn that there is in “many minds” not a vague idea, but a very definite conviction, that by no legitimate means can scientific teaching and religious belief be harmonised. And one may say in passing that Mr. Kempson's lectures will not do much to remove this impression. Moreover, in any fair sense, those who now conduct scientific research have as little faith in Christian doctrines as leaders of science had thirty years ago. It is true that we have men like Sir Oliver Lodge and Lord Kelvin writing in defence of religious beliefs; but only a system that is at its wits' end for reputable intellectual support would claim their vague and general professions as an acceptance of Christian doctrines. Mr. Kempson does not believe there can be any

* The *Social Contract* is translated, with an excellent introduction, by H. J. Tozer, in Sonnenschein's “Social Science Series.”

real quarrel between religion and science, because each deals with *real* things. In his own studies, he says the things he deals with—*anatomical parts*—are real; and as a Christian, "God and our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into the heavens, and his presence in the holy sacrament, and the surrounding company of saints and angels, whose prayers I ask, are equally real." The saints and angels being as real as the vertebral column, and the presence of Jesus in the sacrament as genuine as a skull, Mr. Kempson naturally asks how on earth there can be any fundamental quarrel between realities?

Presumably the conflict arises partly because people think they know more than they actually do know, for at this point Mr. Kempson breaks into an aside expatiating upon his own and other people's ignorance. We know very little concerning even the things that are seen, and how much less do we know of those things that are not seen, and so on in a style that is wearisomely familiar from theologians. It is good, perhaps, to be reminded of how much one doesn't know—although it is far more inspiring to dwell upon human knowledge than upon human ignorance—but it is really difficult to see why, because our knowledge of the universe we know exists is incomplete, *therefore* we should accept unhesitatingly the teachings of Christianity concerning things the existence of which is highly doubtful, and belief in which is not inescapable. Moreover, there is the important consideration that in scientific matters we are not asked to regulate our lives by what we do not know, but only by what we do. It is theology that assumes the existence of something entirely unknown, and deduces from this hypothetical existence conclusions that do not admit of verification, that anyone may ignore and be none the worse for it, and finally assures us that these conclusions must be accepted under penalty of grave disaster.

But however difficult it is for Mr. Kempson to appreciate the existence of a conflict between religion and science, the conflict exists, and it is the purpose of these lectures to bring about a reconciliation. This Mr. Kempson does, to his own satisfaction, by affirming that science and religion are properly concerned with different classes of facts, and that each claims assent on precisely the same grounds. Science, he says, starts by classifying certain things, and, when it has arranged them in groups, generalises concerning them. And in doing this it takes two things for granted—that the evidence of our senses is to be trusted, and the validity of logic. In exactly the same way theology starts with a body of "revealed data," and so constitutes itself a science in turn; while its conclusions follow logically from the "revealed data."

Now, a child might almost be able to point out that the two cases treated as identical are vastly different. In the first place, the facts that science starts with are the common property of all. When Newton propounded universal gravitation, or when Darwin propounded Natural Selection, they pointed out the facts upon which these generalisations rested, and they at once became the property of every normal individual. As Mr. Kempson points out, when a scientific discovery is announced the whole body of scientific men pounce upon it, discuss it, repeat the experiment, and in the end either agree or dismiss it as worthless. Now, suppose one asks the theologian to produce *his* facts. One is met with the reply, "Oh, these are data assumed for the purpose of reasoning, and their justification must be found in the conclusions subsequently reached." And how are the conclusions justified? Well, "they follow logically from the assumed data." It is all beautifully simple—and a first-rate specimen of reasoning in a circle.

To be quite fair to Mr. Kempson, he does say something about the data of theology, which he says lands one in paradox; and this statement is such a splendid sample of verbal moonshine that I cannot forbear quoting it. The data of theology is this:—

"The Father is God, and the Son is God; and yet

there are not three Gods, but one God. God the Son came down from heaven, and was made man; He is Very and Eternal God; He made the world; He is self-existent; He is everywhere; He is also Very Man, with body, parts, and passions, with a human soul and will—two perfect and entire natures in one Person. He is one Person, and yet he belongs to two different categories. Being God and within the Blessed Trinity, He is not divisible from the Father, and yet he could say, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' I cannot explain these things; they are paradox. You cannot expect to explain them; they transcend reason altogether."

After this very illuminating exposition of the data of Christian theology, with its helpful conclusion, Mr. Kempson devotes a lecture to an exposition of "The Limitations of Science." The great limitation of science is that it can only deal with the things that are seen, and its conclusions are expressed, in its most modern phase, in the doctrine of evolution. But there is this fatal limitation about scientific evolution—it must commence with certain postulated elements out of which things develop. It does not explain their origin. But, asks Mr. Kempson, "Does matter, which is not life.....potentially contain life?" And he answers that there is no reason whatever in science for saying that such is the case.

Now, if science were as dogmatic as Mr. Kempson, if it had less self-restraint and a little more of what is vulgarly called "bounce," it might answer the question in the affirmative; and there really is much to warrant such an answer. But how does Mr. Kempson know that what is called matter does not contain the potentialities of what is called life? His answer would be that by no known combination, by no experiment, has science been able to produce life from inanimate material. And this answer would be conclusive if scientific experiments had quite exhausted all the possibilities of nature. What Mr. Kempson does is to assume that our knowledge of nature is the exact measure of nature's possibilities. Not only this, but there is the further stupid blunder—although a fairly common one—of searching in analysis for what can only exist in synthesis. It used to be the fashion for theologians to laugh at those sceptics who were said to search for the soul by dissecting the body. Well, the theologian nowadays is guilty of the same absurdity. Life, says science, through some of its advocates, is the result of a very complex combination of forces; it is dynamic or nothing. Whereupon the theologian takes force in its simplest aspect, and, because he cannot find it there, decides it must have been miraculously introduced.

Mr. Kempson also assumes—again a very common feature with such reasoners—that unless science can show by demonstration that life comes from non-living material it is bound to accept the supernaturalist's explanation. The notion is absurd. Before there is any logical justification for assuming that life is introduced from without, it is the supernaturalist's task to show that by no possible combination of natural forces could life have originated. Nothing short of this can warrant this absurd dragging in of a deity at one particular stage of the evolutionary process. Until this is done the scientist is warranted in assuming that evolution is thoroughly continuous; and, as a matter of fact, I imagine that no competent scientific authority doubts that such has actually been the case.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

"Dynamiting the Destructionists."

THE above is the title of the Leading Article in the *Christian Commonwealth* for May 26, in which we are solemnly assured that Professor Sayce's little book, *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, has finally established the historical truthfulness of the Bible, and forever discredited the baseless theories of the over-confident Higher Critics. "And if the learned Oxford Professor had done nothing more,"

we are told, "the whole Church would have to thank him with profound gratitude for his brilliant proof that Moses and the Pentateuch are as worthy of our confidence and reverence as our fathers held them to be." Passing over from the eulogistic Leader to the book itself, however, we at once receive our disillusionment. The Professor has not accomplished the feat attributed to him by the *Christian Commonwealth*. His book is full of assertions, but does not present a single proof, that the Pentateuch is historically trustworthy. It is one of the most abusive and insulting books ever published. Its dogmatism is positively nauseating. Dr. Sayce tells the Higher Critics, with an air of superiority, that their critical analysis of the Pentateuch is but a measure of their ignorance and the limitations of their knowledge. He charges them with having adopted a false method which rests, "in default of anything better, on assumptions and theories which have been shown to be without foundation." He accuses them of cherishing "an exaggerated scorn of tradition, and a neglect of those facts of archæology which are the only scientific criteria we possess for testing the truth of the traditions of the past." He says: "They have assumed that what seems to them the natural order in the development of spiritual or moral ideas was the actual order, and they have mutilated and redated the literary material in order to support the assumption." These are serious charges to prefer against the Higher Critics, and Dr. Sayce ought to be quite sure of his ground, and in full command of his evidence in making them. But when we look carefully into his book we discover an entire absence of proof and a perfect jumble of dogmatic assertions. His fondly cherished archæology declines to come to his help, although he takes so many oaths in its name.

What have the Higher Critics really done? So far as the Pentateuch is concerned, they have, by studying it analytically, found out that it is not a simple composition but a strange compilation from various and often contradictory sources, that it could not have been written by Moses, nor for many centuries after his day, and that its history is utterly unreliable. This discovery they have made not by means of philology alone, as Dr. Sayce seems to allege, but by the application to the text of all the accepted canons of Literary Criticism. Dr. Sayce laughs immoderately at their method, and says to them, in effect: "You think you can analyse the Five Books of Moses into their component parts, lay down with mathematical accuracy what section of the same verse belongs to one writer, what to a second, and what to a third, and even fix the relative dates of these hypothetical authors; but you are radically mistaken. Why, you cannot so analyse the composite novels of Besant and Rice and of Erekmann and Chatrin, which are written in languages that are both living, that embrace vast literatures, and with which you believe yourselves to be thoroughly acquainted." But anyone can see that the cases are by no means parallel, and that in supposing them to be parallel Dr. Sayce betrays his ignorance of the laws of Literary Criticism. And the strange thing is that, in spite of the assertion just quoted, Dr. Sayce himself frankly admitted in a previous work that the critical theory of the compilation of the Pentateuch is "fully in accordance with the teachings of Oriental archæology." These are his own words: "The composite character of the Pentateuch, therefore, is only what a study of similar contemporaneous literature brought to light by modern research would lead us to expect" (*Monuments*, pp. 31, 34). In another work still, *History of the Hebrews*, ch. iv., he informs us that the Book of Joshua is "a composite document with conflicting accounts of the Conquest and Settlement of Canaan." How Dr. Sayce can harmonise the two conflicting statements it is impossible to say; but it cannot be denied that his candid admissions on former occasions are as fatal to the historicity of the Pentateuch as the most extreme conclusions of the Higher Critics.

But what are the "Monument Facts" which, as

Dr. Sayce alleges, prove so disastrous to the "Higher Critical Fancies," and for the discovery of which the whole Church should give God such jubilant thanks? I have searched for them in vain in this new book. If they exist, Dr. Sayce does not produce them. He maintains that the arts of writing and reading were well known and generally practised hundreds if not thousands of years before the time of Moses. Granting that archæology has proved this to be true, I hold that the main conclusions of the Higher Criticism are not and cannot be in the least degree invalidated thereby. Dr. Sayce gives the reins to his imagination, and indulges in the wildest and most unreasonable fancies. The "Monument Facts" furnish no justification whatever for the silly assertion that "the Babylonia of the age of Abraham was a more highly educated country than the England of George III.," or that the civilised world of the same period was "a world of books," and that "a knowledge of writing extended even to the classes of the population who were engaged in manual labour," or "that the age of Moses, and even the age of Abraham, was almost as literary an age as our own." A man who can deliberately hurl such crude absurdities at a credulous public is anything but a reliable guide in matters of controversy. Even if high Egyptian and Mesopotamian Government officials could read and write, there is nothing to show that semi-savage and nomadic tribes could do so. In any case, the late date of the Pentateuch is not affected at all by the question as to whether Moses knew the art of writing or not. It can be proved from the history of Israel itself that the so-called Mosaic legislation was not in existence at the time of the Judges or of the earlier Kings, and this proof archæology has not as yet been able to counterbalance.

We now come to the concrete cases dwelt upon by Dr. Sayce. In chapter vii. of his *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, he compares the Hebrew and Babylonian Cosmologies, greatly to the benefit of the former of course. The Babylonian Cosmology is a poem in honor of Merodach, the patron God of Babylon. It describes how the heavens and the earth were made. Merodach was the champion of the gods of light, and in the poem the creation of the world is only an episode in the story of the war between him and Tiamat, the dragon of chaos and darkness. In consequence of his victory over the dragon Merodach became the Supreme God, and it was out of the two halves of his defeated enemy that he fashioned the heavens and the earth. Man was made of bone which Merodach had fashioned, and of the blood of life which the God had drawn from his own divine veins. Here we are dealing with beautiful legends, which, Dr. Sayce contends, "must have been known to Abraham before he left Ur of the Chaldees." Again he says that "long before the age of Moses the Babylonian theory of creation and the myths and poems which embodied it would have been familiar to the educated native of Canaan." This is not recorded, however, on any monument hitherto discovered. All the monuments yet deciphered ignore Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the great heroes of the Book of Genesis; nor do they contain a single reference to Moses and the Exodus. We have absolutely no information as to when and how the Babylonian Cosmogony first became known in Palestine; nor does Professor Sayce condescend to enlighten us as to how any "Monument Fact" proves the historicity of the Genesis Cosmogony, or the contention that the Book of Genesis was written by Moses.

The same remarks are equally applicable to the subject of the Deluge. The Higher Critics contend that in Genesis two different and conflicting accounts of the Deluge are unskillfully welded into one. Dr. Sayce doubts this, saying that "the twofold description of the Flood in Genesis is like the twofold text which, it has been proved, is discoverable in some of the works of Dean Stanley when the 'critical method' is applied to them." He further says that "in the 'critical' theory of the origin of the Biblical narrative archæology compels us to see only a philo-

logical mirage." But this is wholly an unsubstantiated assertion. The composite authorship of the Genesis story of the Deluge is patent to the simplest reader of the English translation. It is immaterial whether or not the critical explanation of this fact is accurate, as the fact itself remains. The discovery of the Chaldean epic of Gilgames proves nothing, although it is certain that the compiler of the Genesis story was either directly or indirectly indebted to that poem.

It is in his treatment of Genesis xiv. that Professor Sayce is most unfair and ridiculous. In this chapter is given the famous description of the expedition of Chedorlaomer and his allies against the Cities of the Plain—four Eastern Kings against five Western. The four conquered the five, and began to return to the East with numerous captives and spoils. Abraham and a handful of followers overtook and smote them, "and he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot and his goods, and the women also, and the people." Most of the critics pronounce this story unhistorical. The law of probability is entirely against it. But "it was the critic," triumphantly exclaims Dr. Sayce, "who was mistaken, and not the writer in Genesis." Surely, a monument has suddenly turned up which contains the identical story told in Genesis xiv. Nothing else could account for Dr. Sayce's joyous mood and scornful attitude towards the critics. As a matter of fact no such monument has made its appearance, and no such confirmation of the story of the Campaign has been discovered. The only justification of the Professor's jubilant tone is to be found in the fact that on monuments recently deciphered the names of two, perhaps of three of the four kings occur, although we are not told that they were contemporaries. No reference whatever is made to the invasion of Palestine, the name of Abraham is not mentioned, nor do we learn anything of the five kings, or of Melchizedek. Never was a cause more hopelessly lost than is the cause of Orthodoxy as championed by Dr. Sayce in this book. As Professor S. R. Driver well says, "the monuments witness to nothing which any reasonable critic has ever doubted."

If Orthodoxy has nothing better to say for itself than it sets forth in *Monument Facts and Higher Critical Fancies*, the sooner it abandons the field the better for all concerned. So far it has ignominiously failed to establish the historical truth of the Pentateuch. The monuments already discovered are all silent in regard to Hebrew history prior to Omri and Ahab. Hitherto archæology has not refuted, nor taken the first step towards refuting, the Higher Criticism. As the Book of God the Bible stands to-day completely discredited. Its real destroyers are the Higher Critics who have not been dynamited by Dr. Sayce, but are still marching on to victory, unchecked by ignorance and bigotry, undeterred by the violent but premature attacks of Assyriologists and Egyptologists, and comforted by the consciousness that their one aim is to dethrone superstition, credulity, falsehood, and to establish the truth on a sure foundation.

JOHN LLOYD.

NATURE AND MAN.

Poor men, most admirable, most pitiable,
With all their changes all their great Creeds change:
For Man, this alien in my family,
Is alien most in this, to cherish dreams
And brood on visions of eternity,
And build religions in his brooding brain
And in the dark depths awe-full of his soul.
My other children live their little lives,
Are born and reach their prime and slowly fail.
And all their little lives are self-fulfilled;
They die and are no more, content with age
And weary with infirmity. But man
Has fear and hope and phantasy and awe,
And wistful yearnings and unsated loves,
That strain beyond the limits of his life,
And therefore Gods and Demons, Heaven and Hell:
This Man, the admirable, the pitiable.
—James Thomson ("B. V."), "A Voice from the Nile."

Acid Drops.

The conquest of South Africa is an easy job when the right man gets hold of it. Gipsy Smith is doing it "on his own." Wherever he goes the unconverted surrender in shoals. Even the "caretaker and his wife" at a Circus held up their hands, and said "they had never known anything like this before." Twenty young men in one boarding house laid down their arms. "The wine business," it appears, "is suffering in consequence of the customers being converted, and one large establishment were considering a reduction in the staff." We never heard that Gipsy Smith, or any other revivalist, made any appreciable difference to the wine business in England. But we can quite understand that these people become more effective when they are at a great distance from their own country—and send home their own reports.

A pious paper called the *Sunday Circle*, and described (by itself) as the best paper for the home, is offering a £50 American organ (warranted *American*, anyhow) for the best solution of a set of picture puzzles. Each picture represents a line of a well-known hymn, and the amount of "blasphemy" involved may easily be imagined. "I heard the voice of Jesus say" includes "vo" and a glass of ice-cream, which gives "ice" to complete "voice." And Jesus is right under the ice-cream, as though it were his favorite luxury. Poor Jesus! The Jews crucified him: the Christians exploit him—which is far the meaner crime of the two.

Romantic people are sad in the neighborhood of Kirkstall Abbey. The latest local ghost turns out to be a mill girl. The disappointed superstitionists have our sympathy.

What a screaming farce Christianity has always been—when it was not a bloody tragedy! Its supposed founder said, "Take no thought for the morrow," "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," "Labor not for the meat that perisheth," and other things of the same kind. But the best advertised Christians in the world are mostly "on the make"—and not too careful how they do it. There is John D. Rockefeller, for instance, described in the daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience over here as "the hard, stern, Baptist multi-millionaire," whose low-flash oils have (as the *Star* is never tired of showing) done so much to keep down the population of Great Britain. This gentleman is now engaged in a monopoly war with the Rothschilds. Mr. Rockefeller's object is "to freeze out his competitor, and then put up prices again." Meanwhile the price of paraffin has dropped fifty per cent.; and for once in a way, quite unintentionally, of course, John D. Rockefeller is a benefactor to his species. We wonder what sort of reception he will get when he goes home to glory.

The Bishop of London will have none of Canon Henson's "heresy" about the resurrection of "Our Lord." His lordship cannot accept the idea that Christ's body perished in the grave. "Of course," he says, "there is a true 'reverent agnosticism' which every Christian must feel about the precise nature of our Lord's resurrection body and its relationship to his earthly body." But there is no such "reverent agnosticism" in the New Testament or in the Church creeds. Nor is it easy to see anything in the Bishop's language but sheer ecclesiastical jugglery. If it was not the actual recognisable body of Christ that rose from the grave, there was no resurrection at all in the case. The post-resurrection body was something new, something specially created; and, from this point of view, the whole story needs to be re-written.

Bishop Ingram talked the time-honored nonsense about the "glorified, transfigured, spiritual body" with which Jesus rose again, and which was "the continuation in a new state of the body which lay in the tomb." Will the Bishop kindly tell us what is a "spiritual" body? He might also tell us, while he is about it, what is a "glorified" body, and what is a "transfigured" body. We understand a long or a short body, a fat or a thin body, a strong or a weak body, a handsome or an ugly body. But, until the Bishop enlightens us, glorified, transfigured, and spiritual bodies are like the peace of God in this, that they pass all (our) understanding. And we have a shrewd suspicion that they pass the Bishop's too.

We are not disposed to cavil at old Donne's lines; on the contrary, we admit their splendor:

Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.
But the lady was alive, and a man was writing of her; in short, it was poetry, and very fine poetry too; and poetry is

not to be read like an affidavit. But if the story of the Resurrection is not to be read, substantially, as an affidavit, it is simply a fraud, and should be hooted off the stage.

We have another request for the Bishop of London. He says that the "glorified, transfigured, spiritual" body of Jesus was "seen by 500 people in broad daylight on a mountain." Will he kindly tell us where we may read this in the New Testament? We know where to find the "500," not "people" but "brethren"—which is a very different thing; but we have never come across the "mountain" and the "broad daylight" yet, though we have read the New Testament pretty carefully. Of course, we may have overlooked these interesting items, and we are only asking the Bishop for information, which we hope he will kindly give; for it will cost him nothing but a letter, and it might be the means of our conversion.

The editor of *Photography* has been exposing the monstrous imposture of "Spirit-Photographs." One point is very illuminating. The "spirit form," he says, in many cases is "lit" from the opposite side to the sitter. After reciting a number of other "fakes" the editor says: "Somewhere or other, in the production of these photographs, where or by whom we are not called upon to show, there has been deliberate, intentional, and, as we hope we have made plain, very clumsy trickery."

Dr. Spence Watson, who is not exactly a reckless speaker, says that the spy system is flourishing in England. He states that Russian spies are acting with our own police, going to people's lodgings when the people are out, opening drawers, examining papers, and taking away letters. Such a thing is a damnable disgrace to a free country. We hope John Bull will assert something of his old spirit before it is too late. And we say this without any party or political feeling. Liberty and honesty are the common concern of all.

The Wesleyan advertisement we quoted last week from the *Essex County Standard* turns out to be (in *Daily News* language) an "impudent hoax." But a hoax is like a parody: to have any success it must imitate something well-known. The satire in this case struck home, for it has made the editor of the *Daily News* and the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference very wild. Perhaps both will reflect, in cool blood, that the least useful protest against satire is an angry one.

Pong Lung, who was hung recently at Liverpool for shooting another Chinaman, was kind enough to let the local Bishop baptise and convert him; so that, as the papers say, he died a Christian. Pong Lung seems to have submitted to these pious operations with a composure amounting to indifference. He took his sentence with indifference; he sat in his cell smoking and looking at his warders with indifference; and he walked to the scaffold with indifference. We dare say he is indifferent still.

Russians are far more superstitious than the Japanese—which is probably a big reason why they are getting the worst of it in the present struggle. Father Ignatius Diatchkoff sends to the Kazan papers the following account of a fair held in his village.

"When I visited the fair on Wednesday night I saw a great crowd of our peasants standing about an itinerant rifle saloon proprietor, who was holding a telescope to his eye. They were evidently waiting their turn.

"Our village coffin-maker was aiming a gun, which he rested in the fork of a small tree. The gun was pointed towards the sky. Suddenly it went off, and a bell clanged, after which followed loud cries of 'Ura! Got him again!'

"After several other ruzjiks had taken shots, I inquired what they were aiming at, and was much surprised to hear in chorus the reply: 'The Japanese, Father.' Looking along the barrel of the gun I could see nothing but the moon, so I demanded a further explanation.

"Our brother," said a bearded giant, pointing to the showman, 'says that the man in the moon is a Makak (Japanese), and that every time we hit him ten Japanese on earth join the devil. We have killed,' he added naively, 'eighty of them already.'"

It is such poor simpletons who are being armed and sent out to the East to be slaughtered by the thousand for the Czar and his autocratic "pals."

The Christian gentlemen who are replying to Mr. Blatchford—and they are like barnacles on a big ship—all rebuke him for saying that "Thomas Paine left Moses and Isaiah centuries behind him when he wrote: 'The world is my country; to do good my religion.'" They declare that Paine borrowed this sentiment from John Wesley. But this only shows how little they know about the founder of Methodism. Wesley was a clergyman of the Church of England, and

when he went about east, west, north, and south preaching, he was told to "stick to his parish." His reply was "The world is my parish." It was a noble reply in its way; but all it meant was that Wesley claimed to preach and save souls wherever he could find hearers. It did not imply what Thomas Paine meant. When he said, "The world is my country," he meant that he was free from the insular spirit of patriotism, that he was a cosmopolitan, and that all men were his brethren by virtue of their humanity. And when he said that his religion was to do good, he said something which was certainly not copied from John Wesley or any other Christian. John Wesley would have repudiated it with indignation. He believed in benevolence—up to a point; but scouted the idea that it was the be-all and end-all of religion. Like other Christians, he believed, apparently, that thoroughly good men, who did not accept Christ, would find themselves in hell. And the Wesleyan Methodist Church would not say "No" to that doctrine even now.

One of the Christian apologists of the *Clarion*, Mr. George W. E. Russell, author of *Matthew Arnold*, a gentleman whose exact identity it is as well to keep clear, asserts that there is not a very exceptional class of persons who say to themselves, "If the Gospel is true I ought to be a better man; therefore I will deny the Faith, which, if it were true, would remorselessly condemn me."

Now, to start with, Mr. G. W. E. Russell knows of persons who deny the "Gospel Faith" who form a "not very exceptional class." Up to the present this is news to avowed Freethinkers. Moreover, he also says this class are at heart Christians who are too cowardly, or too gross, to "give up some sin," and he knows this, because these persons do not say so, but carefully conceal it "in their own hearts."

Now this miserable libel is an idiotic bull. How is it possible for Mr. G. W. E. Russell to know motives which he declares persons keep secret in their "own" hearts? This is solely the outcome of an unbalanced imagination—an imagination guided by the hook of fanaticism and fed by the emotions of the only heart open to that imagination; the heart that flickers and jolts under the sternum of the man who wrote it—that is to say if it is not the mere parrot echo of threadbare, vulgar pulpit vilification.

The *Clarion* prints, as though it were important, a report of a sermon by the Rev. J. Thompson, of Blackpool, on Mr. Blatchford's *God and My Neighbor*. "Some people," the reverend gentleman said, "mistook him for a Secularist, and the successor of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll; but it was a mistake.....Mr. Blatchford was a true man, not an irreligious man." From which it appears that Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, in the opinion of this Blackpool man of God, were not true men! We should hardly fancy that Mr. Blatchford would appreciate such a compliment. For the rest, we quite agree with Mr. Thompson. Mr. Blatchford is not a successor of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll. Bradlaugh and Ingersolls do not leave successors, to begin with; and it is difficult to see, in any case, how a journalist can be the successor of an orator. The two things are so different.

Prophet "Elijah" Dowie has arrived in London again. He has come here, the *Daily News* snickers, with the collecting-box in his hand. "We sincerely hope," it adds, "that no one will give him a penny." But is not this rather rough? Dowie is not alone in carrying a collecting-box. That article is almost the symbol of religion in England. Dowie is bringing no new invention.

Has the *Daily News* writer ever read the Acts of the Apostles? If he has, does he recollect that Jesus Christ himself, and his holy band of apostles, did not disdain the "dollars"? Rich women ministered unto Jesus of their substance. When he retired from the business the apostles called upon the faithful to shell out. All who had any property sold it. And what did they do with the money? They laid it at the apostles' feet—where we guess it didn't stop long.

Zion City, which Old Dowie bosses and apparently owns, seems to be in a bad way. Money, and lots of it, is wanted immediately. "The Work of God," the prophet says, "must be protected from those who seek to destroy it"—bailiffs and such people. "Everyone," Dowie adds, "must do something. Send at once an offering to God in a substantial way: Gold, Silver, Brass, Houses, Lands, Cattle, Grain, whatever you have to give. Let them be sent to me direct." The prophet is not particular. There's no beastly pride about Old Dowie. If you can't send him cash, send him a cow or a pig, or a sack of flour, or the deeds of a house. All is good fish that comes to his net.

"Do you love God?" the prophet asks. "Then," he says, "help now as you have never done before." That is to say, you are to love God and help Old Dowie. It is worse than "love me, love my dog."

Prophet Dowie wanted to visit Russia, but the Russian authorities refused to grant him a passport. Perhaps they thought that Russia wanted all the money she could lay hands on at present, and had none to spare for Old Dowie's collecting box.

Kensitites and High Churchmen got into a squabble at St. Margaret's Church, Burton-on-Trent, on Sunday morning. One of the Wycliffe preachers, as the late Johnnie Kensit christened his touring agents, had his nose punched, and there were other casualties of the description that may always be expected when the "love one another" brethren entertain differences of opinion. Several ladies in the congregation fainted. Happily there were no fatalities; thanks, probably, to the near presence of the police.

The neo-barbarism is going apace. We have so far returned to first principles in religion that an engine in a sugar factory in the West Indies has been "dedicated in the customary manner" to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain! We have heard of the dedication of votive gifts to gods and saints; but this is the first public appearance of the "custom" of dedicating objects to living persons. It appears in "The West India Committee Circular," whatever that is?

The Lord sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust. The storm that frightened the horses on Derby day nearly flooded the "Racecourse Mission" tent and drowned the voices of the soul-savers who took part in a special prayer-meeting while the big race was being run. We read that "a spiritual influence was created" by the missionaries at Epsom, but they do not appear to have converted anybody in particular—not a jockey, not even the King. Next year they should try to convert the horses.

Dr. Bernard Hollander, the brain specialist, corrects the silly statement of a medical man in a pious morning newspaper, that a man may lose portions of his brain without suffering any change or deterioration in his mental capacity. The case of the man Gage that was referred to, known as the American crowbar case, is directly opposed to this medical man's foolish theory of the brain. Dr. Hollander quotes from the report of Dr. Harlow, who attended Gage, to the effect that "his mind was radically changed, so decidedly that his friends and acquaintances said he was no longer Gage." From "a most efficient and capable foreman" he became "a child in his intellectual capacity and manifestations."

Free Church ministers in East London recently held a breakfast conference at Shoreditch Tabernacle; and, according to the *Daily News* report, the atmosphere of the gathering was quite fanatical. The Rev. E. J. Kirtlan's speech "was a strong plea for a fearless advocacy of the right of the Church to take a bold stand in the enforcement of the Gospel teaching as it applied to the great questions that now agitate our municipal and imperial legislative bodies." This may look harmless enough, but it is not as harmless as it looks. We all know what the Church's taking a bold part in politics and social affairs means. History is fraught with lessons on this head. Directly the Church begins to "feel its feet" in secular affairs it tries to realise the good old "reign of the saints," as John Calvin did at Geneva, and as the Puritans did in England. And one of the first results would be a bad time for Freethinkers. Sabbatarianism would flourish, and "blasphemers" would be in gaol by the dozen. We hope, therefore, that Freethinkers will steadily set their faces against this "Christianising" of public life. They should cheerfully work with Christians for common secular objects, but always as fellow citizens, and never as Church members. Representatives of Churches, as such, should be kept at the greatest possible distance. To cooperate with them is to countenance that confusion between the "spiritual" and the "temporal" which is in opposition to the very first principles of civilisation.

The Mayor of Woolwich presided at a recent meeting of the East Ham Labor League in favor of direct representation, and Dr. Stanton Coit and the Rev. E. J. Kirtlan (referred to in our previous paragraph) were the principal speakers. It is difficult to see what either of these gentlemen—the reverend or the half-reverend—has to do with direct labor representation. One is a laborer in the Lord's vineyard, and the other's labor consists in discoursing on "Why I Pray," "How I found God," and "The Sin of

Atheism." If the working-classes of England want such gentlemen to represent them, directly or otherwise, we can only offer them our compassion.

T.P.'s Weekly quotes a passage from Nathaniel Hawthorne about the "whither":—"God, who made us, will not leave us on our toilsome and doubtful march, either to wander in infinite uncertainty or perish by the way." "George Eliot," our contemporary observes, "said the same thing, though with a simpler, and perhaps stronger, utterance." *Where?* We should like to have the passage indicated. George Eliot did not believe in God, neither did she believe in a future life.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who is rather too fond of getting new views of things by turning them or himself upside down, writes in the *Christian World* on "The Strange Nobility of Herbert Spencer." Mr. Chesterton thinks (or says) that Herbert Spencer was great in but one sense. He was really "a great ascetic," and would have made a first-rate monk. In everything else Mr. Chesterton evidently regards Herbert Spencer as distinctly inferior to the writer of a certain novel about Napoleon and Notting-hill.

Destiny is the title of a "Magazine of Astrology" of which the first (June) number has just reached us. It is edited by E. H. Bailey, and published at South View, Sibthorp-street, Lincoln, at the odd price of sevenpence-halfpenny. Those who want to know something about Astrology may become purchasers. One item is a "Horoscope of the Czar of Russia," revealing the "terrible position in which he is placed." We fancy we have read something about this in the newspapers. Editor Bailey puts off fresh revelations about the Czar's horoscope till next month. Prudent man!

A Roman Catholic outdoor procession at Peckham included a number of young girls, wearing black dresses and long white veils, and carrying a bedizened statue of Mary of Nazareth, supposed to be the Mother of God by the mysterious agency of the Holy Ghost. It is to be hoped that these young girls do not try to think out the details of this peculiar case of motherhood.

A "Hindu Lingam God" has just been sold at Stevens's for £78 10s. It contains a jewel of great brilliancy. But it will probably have to be kept under lock and key. Such things are revered in the East. In the West they are only suggestive.

Amongst the new religious sects in America, which bids fair to rival ancient Egypt as the motherland of superstition, is that of the Sun-Worshippers. Their leader, Ottoman Zor Adhust Hanish, teaches that man should attain to the age of 475 years by means of "right living." A quart of water and a few grains of wheat a day will keep a man going, and give his spiritual part a chance of cultivation. Several ladies who tried this regimen have either died or been driven mad by starvation. A wealthy Illinois lady went to the asylum after giving Hanish all her money and jewels, which the family are now trying to recover. The same old game!

Two plain people bearing the simple names of James and Harriet, in the Colony of Victoria, have given their five sons the following names:—Uriah Melancthon Gabriel Wycliffe Wesley, Paul Joshua John Huss, Ross Crammer Ridley Gideon Waldo, Isaiah Claude Tyndale Luther William, and Amos Coverdale Latimer James Whitfield. This case ought to have been taken up by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Ah, ah! It is really *too* funny. Here is Mr. J. W. Shaw, president of the Northern Districts Beer and Wine Trades Defence Association, retaliating upon the anti-publican clergy. He points out that four clergymen in one place were convicted for indecent behavior and attacks on women, while a Baptist minister had to pay £25 and costs for libelling a publican mayor. He advises clerical gentlemen to stick to their own business, and to remember that publicans are "Christians equal to themselves"—which we dare say they are.

A burglar has been sentenced at the Clerkenwell Sessions. He broke into St. Peter's Church, Cranley-gardens, S.W., and concealed himself behind the organ pipes, where his fondness for hymnology betrayed him. He started singing, "They are waiting there for me." So they were, and the result was six mouths' hard labor. No doubt the musical burglar now reflects that many a true word is spoken in jest.

To Correspondents.

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

S. E. FURNES.—(1) Spiritualists do not "as a body believe the popular theology of the day." Some believe in God, and some do not. Their great point is the continuation of personal life after death. (2) Pleased to hear that you have derived great help from reading the *Freethinker*. Your suggestion of "a few simpler articles, as we had a few years back," shall be considered.

H. TUCKER.—The verses you send us, beginning "Money, O Money, thy praises I sing," as by a gentleman at Plymouth, who couldn't get the local press to print him 100 copies, as they were "a scandal on the Church"—these verses are sixty or seventy years old. We reprinted them in the *Freethinker* some twenty years ago, and published them separately as a Tract headed "The Parson's Idol." You can obtain copies from our publishing office at 6d. per 100, or post-free 7d.

A. B. MORGAN.—We shall be dealing with some of these sixpenny Christian apologetics presently; as soon as we have concluded our (far more important) articles on Herbert Spencer.

T. B. BLACK.—Yes, we saw the paragraph in *Reynolds'*. It is easy to understand the frantic desire of certain persons to be regarded as the representatives of English Freethought. But why should we worry? Newspaper paragraphs don't create weights and values. Gravitation and the nature of things do that.

G. WEBB.—Thanks for letter and cuttings. See "Sugar Plums." By all means take a leaf out of the Nonconformists' book and do a little passive resisting at Leeds. Hold meetings, sell literature, make collections, and let the police bring you before the Stipendiary Magistrate. Don't be smothered in secrecy and silence. You may rely upon all the support we can give and find you.

W. P. ADAMSON.—Of course it should be Sale's (not Kale's) Koran. Printer's errors will occur in spite of the greatest care. We have looked up your reference to Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*, section 34. The words quoted, of which you ask the source, are Shakespeare's: they occur in *The Winter's Tale*, Act iv., scene 3.

W. J. FRITH.—(1) We take your letter in the spirit in which you wrote it, and are no more offended than you are. At the same time, you must accept what we said last week. Mr. Symes's letter expressed his own sentiments, and we preferred to print it in its entirety, rather than to give extracts. We are not called upon to agree with or to differ from him on matters extraneous to Freethought. (2) Glad to hear that you enjoy reading the *Freethinker*, and "would have it if it were a shilling."

W. P. BAIN.—Many thanks for welcome cuttings.

MONOCLEST.—We have a paragraph on the matter in "Acid Drops." Glad to hear you have seen through the Christian delusion and swindle.

J. McMAHON.—(1) Pleased to learn that "cleared away the mist and gloom of superstition" from your mind; also that you are a convert from Roman Catholicism. The nearest N. S. S. Branch to your residence is at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Thanks for your good wishes. (2) The conditions of the prize essay are limited, as you will see by referring to the announcement again.

E. J. JONES sends us a tracing of an old plate reproduced in Hone's *Ancient Mysteries*, in which Jesus is depicted as spoiling Hell by bringing the dead out of it through the power of his cross. Jesus is spotted all over his flesh like a panther. Our correspondent wonders whether this is intentional, and connected with the origin from Joseph Panther.

G. J.—Are you quite clear in your use of the word "protest"? One protests against a thing done intentionally, but does not protest against an earthquake or an attack of small-pox. Would it be sensible to exclaim when you believe you are not heard?

J. NEAVE.—Pleased to hear of Mr. Cohen's fine meetings in Victoria Park on Sunday.

T. J. THURLOW.—Too late for this week.

M. E. PROSE.—No worry in the matter. Thanks, all the same.

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.

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote will deliver two lectures at Manchester on Sunday, June 26, in fulfilment of an old promise. It is not his intention to do any more platform work during the summer. He will resume lecturing in September.

The National Secular Society's fund for the Rome Congress will be opened very shortly. Meanwhile we have to say that a cheque for £10 was forwarded to the secretary by Major John C. Harris, R.E., immediately on his reading the Leeds Conference resolution on the subject. Major Harris generally manages to be the first in these generous rivalries.

Mr. W. Heaford, as secretary of the so-called English Committee of the International Freethought Congress, has sent a letter to the N. S. S. Executive complaining generally of the references to himself and the Committee in the Executive's Annual Report. The Executive only felt called upon to deal with one point in Mr. Heaford's letter; namely, his denial that either he or the members of his Committee were self-appointed. Mr. Heaford says that they were all appointed by M. Furnemont by virtue of the powers conferred upon him by the previous Congress. To which the Executive replies that M. Furnemont could only have known most of the members of the Committee through Mr. Heaford's introduction and recommendation; and that while this might have been unavoidable at the outset, steps should have been taken afterwards to place the Committee upon a properly representative basis. Beyond the statement of this all-important fact, we understand, there was no intention whatever of reflecting upon the Secretary or the Committee; and any idea to the contrary is a misconception. Being itself an elected body, the N. S. S. Executive cannot approve a perpetual contravention of the representative principle.

We may add, on our own part, that while there are some good names, notably that of Mr. J. M. Robertson, on Mr. Heaford's Committee, there are others of a very different character. We mean as representatives of English Freethought. But there is no need to expatiate upon this, or to enter into a heated controversy. The National Secular Society means to send its own representatives to Rome. And if other Freethinkers, *real* Freethinkers, find their way there too, so much the better. But they need not call themselves the representatives of England. For there are others.

The Birmingham Branch has resolved to have country rambles on Sundays during the summer. The first takes place to-day (June 12), members meeting at the "Mermaid," Stratford-road, at 3 o'clock, to walk to Shirley. Week-night Branch meetings are to be held on Thursdays at 8 at the Coffee House, Bull Ring, three doors below Moor-street. Mr. H. Percy Ward will be engaged for a week's open-air work in July; and at his meetings, as well as during the excursions, the Branch will distribute a large quantity of the cheap reprint of Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*. The Branch's annual picnic takes place on the first Sunday in July to Stratford-on-Avon. Particulars can be had (also tickets) from Mr. J. Partridge, 65 Cato-street.

The Leeds City Council did well to receive a deputation from the local Branch of the National Secular Society with respect to selling literature and taking up collections at its meetings on Woodhouse Moor. The deputation consisted of Messrs. Fisher, Lyon, Smith, and Weir. Mr. Fisher acted as spokesman. He had written out what he had to say, and read it to the Council, so that there might be no mistake as to his meaning and no dispute as to his words. Mr. Fisher's excellent speech is printed on another page of this week's *Freethinker*. He seems to have been listened to courteously enough, but there the matter for congratulation ends. The Council could not, and did not try to, answer his arguments; but, all the same, it accepted the recommendation of the Property Committee, and refused the Secularists what it concedes to all other bodies. That is to say, it uses its power to penalise the Secularists, by deliberately inflicting upon them—simply because they are Secularists—a serious disability.

Now we venture to suggest that the Leeds City Council shows not only bigotry but a want of courage in this matter. Why does it not act in a thorough-going fashion? Why not prohibit Secular meetings altogether? That, if it could be enforced, would carry with it the prevention of selling literature and making collections. And it is far more logical, and not more unjust. But the Council may think that such a prohibition could not be enforced. Probably not. But neither can the Secularists be prevented from selling litera-

ture and making collections. The police have been trying to prevent them for nearly twelve months, and not with any appreciable success.

One point of Mr. Fisher's speech was very shrewd. He referred to the Christians who go all over the world trying to convert the "heathen." Yet the Christians here, who find the money for such aggressive missionary work, often carried on in defiance of the laws and wishes of the nations sought to be converted, actually refuse toleration to their fellow citizens in their own country.

One member of the Leeds City Council, Mr. Henry, expressed an opinion that the deputation had made out a good case, and moved an amendment to the effect that the question should be referred back to the Property Committee. He thought the Secularists should enjoy the same rights as others. If they went against the law, the law was strong enough to deal them. Mr. Henry, we are glad to say, was supported by Dr. Hawkyard and Mr. Ratcliffe; so that there are three sensible and just men, at any rate, on the Leeds City Council.

We must give a special word to Mr. James Brown, the chairman of the Property Committee, who is, technically speaking, a licensed victualler when he is minding his own business. Mr. Brown is probably not a highly-educated person. Perhaps he has heard that Jesus Christ was said to have been a friend of publicans and sinners, and is not aware that the word "publicans" has changed its meaning since the first printing of the Authorised Version. For this reason, perhaps, he feels himself called upon to stand up for the faith of Christ. We are not surprised, therefore, that publican Brown spoke of "the disgusting literature which had been forwarded to him." When a bigoted Christian happens to be in the beer and whiskey business, it is easy enough for him to find Secular literature "disgusting." At the same time, it is rather an odd sort of thing that publican Brown should be in a position to exercise a censorship over the tastes and opinions of his better educated neighbors. If it were worth our trouble we might ask publican Brown, who finds Secular literature "disgusting," what he thinks of a good deal of the Bible.

We are not without hope that the Leeds City Council will yet see the error it has fallen into, and reverse its recent decision. Meanwhile the Leeds Branch may rely upon being supported if it continues its old policy and goes on doing precisely what other bodies do on Woodhouse Moor.

Here, by the way, is a chance for some of the more fervent Passive Resisters. The Leeds Secularists pay rates like other citizens, yet they are insulted and oppressed by the municipal authorities. Churchmen, Catholics, and Non-conformists, as a matter of fact, meet together on the City Council and decree themselves certain privileges in the use of public property. They also decree that these privileges shall not be enjoyed by Secularists. What do the Passive Resisters say to this? What does Dr. Clifford say? Will they display a little impartiality? We wonder.

The late Professor Alexander Bain, whose *Autobiography* has just appeared, wished (and his wish was respected) that his funeral should be severely simple; with no religious service, and no eulogy over his coffin. He also requested that no stone should be placed over his grave; his books, he said, would be his only monument.

Mr. Foote's recent article on Canon Henson's Heterodoxy is reproduced from our columns in the *New York Truth-seeker*.

No man should be blamed, injured, or molested on account of his opinions, whether right or wrong, on any subject. For we always suppose our own opinions to be right, or we should renounce them. And with respect to belief, everyone must be the judge for himself. Everyone comes to a conclusion on a given subject, when a certain weight of evidence has been received—enough to produce conviction on his mind; although perhaps to another individual whose mind is differently constituted the same evidence is quite insufficient. So that one may believe and another disbelieve the same thing, having the same evidence, and both be equally sincere and guiltless. Our opinions are not subject to our will. We cannot believe and disbelieve as we please.—*Horace Seaver*.

For what to shun, will no great knowledge need;
But what to follow, is a task indeed.

—*Pope*.

Freethought Congress at Rome.

A PROPOSED EXCURSION.

ON September 20 of this year the International Freethought Congress opens at Rome, the headquarters of what is still the most powerful and widespread of all Christian organisations. From reports to hand it is evident that the Congress will be attended by representatives from all parts of Europe, and it is hoped from America also. By resolution passed at the Annual Conference the Executive of the National Secular Society is pledged to do all it can to assist in making the Congress a thoroughly representative one by organising as large a body of English Freethinkers as is possible. It would be more than regrettable if, on what may well be an historic occasion, at a Freethought convention meeting on the very scene of the martyrdom of Giordano Bruno, and within sight of the Vatican, English Freethought, with all its glorious traditions, were not well and worthily represented.

From inquiries made some time ago it was ascertained that a party of not less than thirty persons could be taken to Rome, *via* Paris and Turin, allowing time to view places *en route*, with six clear days in Rome, for about £13. This sum covers second class riding and first class hotel fare throughout, with the services of an interpreter during the whole of the time from leaving London to reaching London again. It also includes refreshments while travelling. This amount it should be stated represents a reduction of about £2 16s. on the ordinary charges; and it is possible that with a larger number than thirty the cost would be still further reduced. Arrangements may also be made to meet those who might desire to vary the excursion in any direction.

At the present stage it is necessary that all who would like to form part of the proposed excursion should acquaint the Society's secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., of their determination. Arrangements must necessarily be made some time in advance, and a quick and hearty response will enable the Executive to get the best possible terms from the railway companies and hotel proprietors.

Other matters in connection with the excursion will be dealt with in an early issue of this paper, and details will be published from time to time as it is deemed necessary. Just now all those who intend going should say so *at once*. As a mere holiday trip the excursion will be of a thoroughly enjoyable character. But it will really be more than a holiday trip. Provided the English contingent is as large as it should be, it will be to our Continental friends a worthy representation of British Freethought, and at the same time form a part of a unique demonstration of the power of militant, international, and organised Freethought to the whole civilised world.

The Jewish Life of Christ.—III.

(Continued from p. 363.)

On the other hand, none of these objections lie against the Jesus of the Talmud. During the years of exile he spent at Alexandria he could have easily learned Greek, and in fact would have been lost without it. This was also the home of the Septuagint, where it had been translated, and where it was, as we have seen, held in honor.

Moreover, he was no ignorant son of a village carpenter. Jewish tradition held, says Mr. Meade, that "he was a learned man, as indeed is invariably admitted in many other stories; whether or not he got his wisdom from the greatest Jewish teacher of the times or not, is another question" (p. 142). He was also well connected by birth. The Talmud states that there was a tradition that a herald went forth forty days, crying, "Jeschu goeth forth to be executed because he has practised sorcery and seduced Israel, and estranged them from God. Let

anyone who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it." And upon it being asked why such precaution was taken when he was plainly guilty, it is answered Jesus was a person of great distinction and importance, and "near those in power." This is borne out by Wagenseil's edition of the Jewish Life, where we read that the Queen "thought to save him from their hands, because she was related to him by blood."

Mr. Mead remarks that his "mother is in nearly every form of Toldoth exonerated from any conscious breaking of her marriage vows. The bastardy of Jeschu was the result of a trick played upon her." She was regarded as a woman of distinction.

"Not only is she said to have been the sister of a certain Joshua, who is presumably to be identified with Joshua ben Perachiah, but she is also said to have been related to Queen Helene—that is, if our argument holds good, to Queen Salome, whose brother was Simeon ben Shetach. Here we have the close relationship of Jesus to the most distinguished Rabbis of the time."*

Now, in the Gospel of Mark—which, as we have seen, is the most primitive of the four Gospels—we find the name of Salome mentioned twice, and both times in company with the mother of Jesus. In ch. xv., v. 40, Mary and Salome are among the women who watch the crucifixion from "afar off." In ch. xvi., v. 1, they are again in company at the "sepulchre at the rising of the sun." Now, although this is the only mention of Salome in the Four Gospels, and she is there relegated to a mere name, she plays an important part in the Gospel of the Egyptians. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 200)—it is to Alexandria that Jesus fled from Janneus—cites this gospel, which represents Jesus replying to a question put to him by Salome: "I am come to destroy the works of the woman; that is, the works of female concupiscence, generation, and corruption."

"Afterward, Salome asked him how long it should be that death should prevail against men? And he answered, 'While ye women bring forth children.'" "Hereupon she said, 'Then I have done well in bearing no children, seeing there is no necessity of generation.' To which our Lord replied, 'Feed upon every herb, but that which is bitter eat not'" (*Stromata*, bk. iii., ch. vi.). In ch. xiii. Clement cites another answer, from the same gospel, given to Salome in reply to another question. "Our Lord answered, 'When you shall despise the covering of your nakedness, and when two shall become one, and the male with the female neither male nor female.'" This is the same teaching as given by the Gospel Jesus in Matthew v. 28 and xix. 12, and agrees with his dictum that in heaven "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Matthew xxii. 30, Mark xii. 25, and Luke xx., 34, 35).

Now, if Jesus had such a poor opinion of women, why should he select a woman—an obscure, uneducated Galilean—as the receptacle for his wisdom? On the other hand, if it was Queen Salome who was meant, the objection disappears; for Jesus had every reason to be grateful to the Queen who "thought to save him from their hands, because she was related to him by blood"; and says to his accusers: "Get ye hence from my sight, and never bring a like accusation before me."† Policy would unite with inclination to make a convert of such an illustrious protector.

But to return to the "Gospel of the Egyptians." No copy of this work has been allowed to descend to our times; it is one of the numerous company of "Lost Gospels"—a better name for which would be "Suppressed Gospels."

Judge Waite, in his *History of the Christian Religion to A.D. 200*, devotes a chapter to this Gospel, in which he tells us practically all there is to be known of this ancient work. He first cites the testimony of Jerome, who, after citing the preface to Luke, where he states that many had written gospels, declares that the Gospel of the Egyptians—at the head of half a dozen others—was one of them. Epiphanes

also speaks of this Gospel, and tells us that the Sabellians drew their heresy from it. Judge Waite comments as follows:—

"That the Gospel of the Egyptians was one of those referred to in Luke's preface, was the opinion of Origen, Theophylact, and others of the ancients, and among the moderns the same view has been expressed by Grotius, Dr. Grabe, Erasmus, and many others.

"The learned Dr. Grabe has a long dissertation concerning this gospel, the substance of which is that it was composed by some Christians in Egypt; that it was published before either of the canonical gospels, and that Clement of Alexandria did not reject it, but endeavored rather to explain it; which he would not have done, had he considered it the work of a heretic.

"Dr. Mill thinks this and the Gospel of the Hebrews were composed before either of our canonical gospels, and that the authors of it were probably Essenes, who received the Christian doctrine from the preaching of Mark at Alexandria" (p. 72).

Here we have three facts established—(1) a Gospel in existence before our Canonical Gospels; (2) Salome the most prominent character in it; (3) of Egyptian origin.

Let us now return to Alexandria in Egypt. This famous city was founded by Alexander the Great, 332 B.C., the city taking its name from its great founder. Alexander deported many Jews from Palestine to people the place; and, according to Josephus, he himself assigned them a place in his new city. When Ptolemy Soter captured Jerusalem 320 B.C., he carried away one hundred thousand Jews to Alexandria, where he gave them the full privileges of citizenship. Philadelphus, his successor, redeemed from slavery one hundred and ninety-eight thousand more, by payment to their Egyptian owners. In consequence of this considerate treatment, vast numbers of their compatriots voluntarily came into Egypt. Thus, at an extremely early period in the history of Alexandria, the Jews became so numerous in that city, that the north-east angle was known as "the Jews' quarter," and at the commencement of our era there were a million Jews in Egypt.*

There were also multitudes of Greeks in Alexandria. Probably they were more numerous than Egyptians and Jews together, for "while the Ptolemies were Pharaohs to the Egyptians, they were Greeks to the colonists of Alexandria; and they founded or favored that school of thought upon which modern science is established."†

"Greek architects and Greek engineers," says Draper, "had made Alexandria the most beautiful city of the ancient world. They had filled it with magnificent palaces, temples, theatres." The great lighthouse Pharos was counted one of the seven wonders of the world. But the true, the most glorious achievement of the Ptolemies was the Museum. As Draper says, "its influences will last when even the Pyramids have passed away." Its library alone contained seven hundred thousand volumes. No wonder Draper calls Alexandria the "Paris of Antiquity," the "intellectual metropolis of the world," where "the Genius of the East met the Genius of the West." It was, indeed, the headquarters of the culture of the time.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

If any man is able to convince me and show me that I do not think or act right, I will gladly change. For I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

If I read history rightly, the victory of reason over unreason, and the whole progress of our race, has generally been accomplished and achieved by such poor fools as ourselves rushing in where angels fear to tread, till at length the track became beaten, and even angels are no longer afraid.—*Max Muller*.

* Draper, *Conflict Between Religion and Science*, p. 17. Our *First Century*, Scott's Series. Keningale Cooke, *The Fathers of Jesus*, p. 244.

† Winwood Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 97.

* *Did Jesus Live 100 B.C.?* p. 317.

† *The Jewish Life of Christ*, pp. 22-24.

Deputation to Leeds City Council on June 1, 1904.

SPEECH TO THE COUNCIL BY MR. GREEVES FISHER
On Behalf of the Leeds Branch of the National Secular
Society.

To avoid the danger of diffuseness, and to guard against wasting the time of the Council, I have reduced to writing the points we desire to submit, and I propose to read the statement.

We appear respectfully to request the Council to give permission to the Leeds Branch of the National Secular Society to take an offertory and sell propagandist literature at its meetings on Woodhouse Moor, etc.

The Leeds City Council holds the power of refusing to allow begging and peddling in its recreation grounds. This is manifestly for the intended purpose of preserving order and securing against disturbance and molestation those who frequent the Moor for enjoyment.

Seeing that the Council has authorised the provision of stone stands or pulpits for the convenience of those who desire to address persons voluntarily assembling around them, no question need be raised as to diverting a portion of the park area from purposes of mere recreation into spaces allowed for public meetings.

Again, the Council, by having granted permission to certain bodies or groups of people banded together by professing certain social principles to make collections and sales of literature, has recognised the practical point that support to the expense of such propaganda might be accepted and solicited at the meetings.

We suggest and presume that this permission is granted upon the explicit or implied condition that it may be recalled unless the collecting and selling be conducted in an orderly manner amongst the attenders of the meetings, and never extended to begging and hawking all over the grounds and at all sorts of times.

Our Society is willing to accept the same conditions attached to the Council's permission, for which it respectfully asks.

We submit that, on the presumption that there would be little probability of the Council being troubled with complaints as to the Society abusing the permission, this liberty should be granted to us as a matter of routine procedure on the principles of impartial justice.

We submit that no question as to the political importance of our movement as likely to be influential or otherwise in supporting representatives of any of the great parties ought to be entertained.

Nor ought the popularity or otherwise of the views which are put forward at the meetings to be considered. If considerations of this character are admitted then it would be allowable, for instance, for Councils exercising this power to prevent Protestants in some cities, Catholics in others, and even in hypothetical cases Christians from accepting help for their organisations at their meetings.

We are fully aware that there are on the Statute Book un-repealed laws for the suppression of blasphemy. We agitate for the repeal of these laws, which we regard as subversive of liberty. We admit that questions might be raised in the courts as to the exact compliance with these Statutes of the utterances of speakers at our meetings and of the contents of publications we distribute. But we most respectfully, and yet very firmly, submit that is no part of the duty of the Council in exercising its prerogative in this matter to assume any responsibility as to the lawfulness of the speeches delivered or of the books sold at our meetings or any others, and that the bye-laws and the care of the Property Committee are concerned only with the orderly mode of presenting them and of accepting support from voluntary donors and purchasers, and with seeing that it does not interfere with the full and proper use of the recreation grounds.

We trust the Council will act in this matter entirely in a judicial spirit as the repository of a very special function, and will not allow itself to be influenced by extraneous considerations or by open or concealed appeals from prejudiced or fanatical opponents of free speech.

We feel confident that the public in general, and this enlightened Council in particular, has quite outgrown the epoch of religious persecution. Should there be amongst its members any avowed or unannounced Freethinkers we know that such philosophical gentlemen would require no elaborate arguments to convince them that equal liberty should be granted to all, irrespective of their opinions on religion. But assuming, as we may fairly do, that a large number of the Councillors and Aldermen adopt Christianity as their guide in life, accept the New Testament as an inspired rule of conduct, we should remind them of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

We do not ask the Council to do anything which could fairly be construed into acceptance of our views or approval of our purposes, but we would argue that intolerance, even in its mildest form, becomes a precedent and a justification for the most extreme cruelty and for the most virulent persecution, such as has been manifested even in our own country in the comparatively recent penal laws against Catholics and in earlier burnings of heretics of various species, according to the views of those who happened at the moment to hold the reins of power.

Christians believe it their duty to make their way into all parts of the world and claim a hearing from Chinese, Hindoos, etc. In such cases they greatly blame intolerance and bigotry if their apostles are forcibly silenced. They ought, therefore, in accordance with their own principles in the one case, and in accordance with the claims they make in the other, to grant the opportunity of free debate to opponents. In fact, they ought to go out of their way to avoid the appearance of treating opponents harshly or unfairly.

We sincerely believe that it will be for the honor and dignity of the City that we should be granted this liberty as a mere matter of course, unless it can be argued that we are probably incompetent to carry out the conditions as to avoiding molestation.

We are aware that a method is open to us of availing ourselves, in a roundabout or underhand fashion, of the permits now in existence, but we regard such a course as unworthy of our cause, and as casting a reflection on the Council and the City.

We claim equal and impartial treatment, and we now beg to leave the matter in the hands of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of this City, in the confident hope that they will deal with it in a perfectly unbiassed attitude.

Infinite Fatuity.

"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever."
—CATECHISM.

If a maker of talking-machines
Were so fondly fond of flattery
As to foster his failing by means
Of a dynamo, or battery,
You would call him an Ass ;

If he fashioned a dozen, or so,
To exclaim by electricity :
"You're the cleverest person we know,
And to praise you is felicity !"
You would call him a fatuous Ass ;

If he praised the machines for their praise,
Then *benignly* started breaking them,
Yet, persistently cherished his craze
By repairing them, and making them,
You would call him a frenzical, fatuous Ass ;

But,

If the Christian religion be "true,"
The Creator made Humanity,
And the rest of the Universe too,
Just to gratify his vanity ;
So, of course, He's an ass !

A Creator, whom *creatures* belaud,
Is an ass, and can't help knowing it ;
When his "trumpet" they "blow," 'tis a fraud,
For 'tis he himself that's blowing it ;
So, of course, He's a fatuous ass !!

A Creator who wishes for praise
From his work—in perpetuity,
Or for only a moment—displays
Inexhaustible fatuity ;
So, of course, He's an infinite, fatuous ass !!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Epithets are not arguments. To abuse is not to convince. Anger is stupid, and malice illogical. The combined wisdom and genius of mankind cannot possibly conceive of an argument against liberty of thought. The great men are the heroes who have freed the bodies of men ; they are the philosophers and thinkers who have given liberty to the soul ; they are the poets who have transfigured the common and filled the lives of many millions with love and song ; they are the artists who have covered the bare walls of every-day life with the triumphs of genius ; they are the inventors, the discoverers, the great mechanics, the kings of the useful, who have civilised this world.—Robert G. Ingersoll.

Two Christians

AND AN ATHEIST HANG TOGETHER—MARX, VAN DINE, AND NIEDERMEIER, THE CHICAGO BARN BURNERS AND MURDERERS PAY THE PENALTY OF DEATH.

(By Dr. J. B. Wilson, in the *Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington).

It is very rarely that an Atheist gets hung, and exceptionally rare when he is swung up with two Christians.

The Chicago barn-burners, Niedermeier (Atheist), and Marx and Van Dine (Christians) associates, murderers, and desperadoes in life, parted at the gallows last Thursday, the one either to hell or nowhere, and the other two to go either to heaven or nowhere.

The accounts of the careers of these desperadoes, and the expiation of their crimes on the gallows, which have been printed all over the country, will cause many people to think—principally because Atheist and Christian, gave testimony of their dying beliefs, and the contrast in the character of the men, and the circumstances of their careers which were alike criminal, will lead people to weigh and consider the effect of religious training upon the morals of men.

If we are to believe in the saving grace of Christianity, and that all the murderers go to heaven, who proclaim their salvation on the scaffold, ratified by their "spiritual advisers," it should appal all good people when they stop to consider the number of gallows angels they will have to associate with in heavenly society. These three young criminals present decided mental contrasts. They were graduates of the slums, with but little opportunities for education. The papers make out that Marx and Van Dine were converted to Catholicism by a priest and some sisters of mercy. They were so easily converted that we can safely declare that they were originally parochial school graduates. When death stared them in the face, the transformation from murderer and desperado to good Catholic and prospective angel was an easy thing. They show every evidence of moral degeneracy. They did not fear to murder, and to defy religion as long as they escaped capture, but when brought to face the death penalty they disclosed their true colors, and became just what you would naturally expect of them, both cowardly and religious.

They are now in heaven. Their priest told them they would go there, and they believed it. Sprinkling a little holy water on them, and rubbing them with goose grease and kissing a crucifix, and making a confident of a priest was all the expiation needed for their crimes, and fixed them right up for sprouting feathers.

What is all this but a licence for crime? What other view can all sensible people take of these priestly preparations for the death of criminals than that of license for the very crimes they pretend to abhor?

Niedermeier, equally guilty, presents some redeeming qualities. He was no hypocrite; he was no coward. His judgment could not be warped by fear, or by the sentimental pressure brought to bear upon him under the sentence of death.

He was brave in life and equally brave in death. The other two were brave in life and contemptible, snivelling cowards in death. That was the difference, and everyone may decide for himself which was best fitted for heaven, the one who could not be scared into renouncing his judgment or the two whose conscience could be clarified of their awful crimes with a little holy water and spiritual license.

The difference was also a matter of brains—the criminal Atheist showing the same preponderance of strength over the criminal Christian as the moral Atheist over the moral Christian.

Niedermeier refused to walk to the scaffold for the reason, as he stated, that he did not intend having any hand in his own death, and to walk to the scaffold would be assisting in his own execution; consequently he was carried on a stretcher.

Such a thought would be impossible to the men saved by "holy oil," etc.

He also refused all "spiritual advice," or attendance, declaring to the last that there is no God and death ended all. A brief newspaper account of their last moments is as follows:—

MARX PRAYED.

Marx, when summoned to the scaffold, was praying with the priests and Sisters of Mercy. He rose and tried to speak. His voice failed. He turned to Van Dine, who had been kneeling with him. Marx extended his hand. Van Dine grasped it. The two men stood silent for a moment, then embraced. "Good-bye, Gus," exclaimed Van Dine; "keep a brave heart, old man. Remember what the priest

says. We shall be together again." Marx answered in a tone inaudible to any save Van Dine and the Sisters of Mercy. Then began the second journey to the scaffold.

VAN DINE'S TURN.

Van Dine walked to the scaffold and stood unaided. The drop fell at 11.55. The two priests praying with him had bidden him to be brave when the executioners came for him and had given him a crucifix. He bent his eyes on the cross on the death march, and on the gallows repeated the words of a prayer. Two hundred witnessed the executions.

Father Cox, who had been trying to convert Niedermeier, last night gave him a book entitled *Notes on Ingersoll*. The bandit read a few pages, and returned the volume with the comment: "I get my opinions from my own thoughts, not from Ingersoll or anyone else. I wish I could believe in your religion. If I could hypnotise myself into the belief I was going somewhere to be happy for ever, don't you think I would be glad to die? The world is all wrong. There are no attractions here for men like me. We grow up in the slums, half starved and always miserable. We see our parents work day after day like slaves, year after year, and at the end they die miserably. If I had had plenty of money or an education there might have been some enjoyment for me.

"Chicago is full of boys like me, growing up without advice or help. They drift into cheap saloons, and if they are not good-natured they don't care if they do kill other people. I read your prayer book all right. I can't believe in them. Why should I go to a place of everlasting torture? I've been pretty bad, I'll admit, but I'm going to pay all the penalty I shall ever pay this morning. If the churches did something more for those who need their aid in the struggle to earn a living, they would do more good than they can by converting men who are about to be hanged."

NIEDERMEIER HAD A MIND OF HIS OWN.

From the above it will be seen that the principal interest taken by the reporters was in Niedermeier; first because it was something out of the ordinary for an Atheist to get hung, and because the hanging of Christians is so common that it would be stale news to give it particular notice. Second, because Niedermeier had something of importance to say. His remarks quoted above are surely a terrible truth for Christians to face. While they are sending millions to the heathens, smart fellows like Niedermeier are being developed from our own slums into murderers.

What a scathing commentary upon the misapplied ineffective work of the clergy right here in our own midst, and upon the unjust social conditions which are breeding crime and criminals.

Neidermeier spoke an awful truth—one which should be taken to heart by everyone interested in the public good.

"Chicago is full of boys like me," he says, and he spoke truly. Why, then, should millions be sent to Asia and Africa to make Christians of heathens, instead of spending it right here to alleviate conditions which breed criminals and murderers? These words of Neidermeier, spread broadcast as they have been, will prove of some good, and he has not altogether died in vain.

"NOTES ON INGERSOLL."

It would be interesting to see the *Notes on Ingersoll*, which the priests have gotten up to fool and mislead their poor duped followers. First they put a ban on Ingersoll's works, then fix up a lying book of their own to give them, and these poor victims go all through life believing their pack of lies.

There will be a lot of stories told of the awful death of Atheist Neidermeier, and the awful dangers of Atheism will be pointed out in this case, without any mention whatever of the two cowardly, hypocritical Christian associates who hung with him. The execution of these boys prove two things most conclusively. First, that criminality among Atheists is rare—so rare that it is a newspaper curiosity when one goes to the scaffold; secondly, that Atheism, even under conviction and facing death, is more manly, courageous, fearless, philosophic and self-reliant.

The example of Niedermeier should silence the thousands of lying lips which continually shout from the pulpit of the frightful death of Atheists, and of how they call on God at the last moments.

I feel a sorrow for all these boys alike. They deserved the punishment meted out to them. But they were bred and reared in the slums. Therefore I pity them all alike, Christian as well as Atheist. But to Niedermeier I lift my hat. In death he was manly, brave, noble, and heroic, and showed how an Atheist can die. Socrates wasn't any more dignified than he. While the other two met death like cringing cowards, bolstering up their fears of death with the stimulant of holy water and other priestly hocus pocus. They well illustrated to the world the cowardly manner in which the average Christian dies.

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, J. M. Robertson, "The Way to Utopia."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "God in Nature."

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey; 6.15, F. A. Davies.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

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

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

COUNTRY.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Armley Park): 11, G. Weir, "Vaccination a Fraud"; Woodhouse Moor: 3, "Superstition"; Town Hall Moor: 7.30, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

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 (if wet, Wednesday), 8, Edgehill Church.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints'): 6.30, a Lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Science and Speculation, by G. H. Lewes. A Review."

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