

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*The women fancy, and the fact is
Confirmed, or often so, in practice,
That their admirers are most found
Where your religious men abound—
Love is almost the same emotion :
The devotee—such is their notion—
Thus for the sea feels true devotion,
Courts amorous thoughts and mystic dreaming,
Is led by priests, and follows women.*

—GOETHE (*Mephistopheles* in "Faust.")

Herbert Spencer's "Autobiography."—III.

A MAN'S being the better rather than the worse for his heterodoxy was not a fact calculated to surprise Spencer after his earliest manhood. We have already seen that he was accustomed in his childhood to differences of opinion on the part of persons he loved and respected. His going to the Quakers' meeting-house with his father on Sunday mornings, and to the Methodist chapel with his mother on Sunday evenings, must have had a broadening effect upon his mind. It is also clear that he had, naturally, an observant eye; and behind it was an intensely reflective brain. He was thinking independently about many things even at the age of twenty. Writing to a friend on April 15, 1840, he states that Captain Moorsom, his engineering chief, had recommended him to study geology, which he did some time afterwards, with the result that he was driven by reading Lyell towards the very theory of Evolution which that great geologist was then opposing. But there is a far more significant passage in the same letter. "I was thinking the other day," he says, "that I should like to make public some of my ideas upon the state of the world and religion, together with a few remarks on education." Spencer smiled, sixty years afterwards, at this "amusing self-confidence" in a young fellow not quite twenty; but we may be pardoned for looking at the serious side of the phenomenon. Here was a youth, something between a boy and a man, already gazing gravely at the state of the world—and religion; and even pondering the problem of education, on which he was destined to write a very important and illuminating treatise.

There is something more to be said. Spencer's mind was always of the scientific order. He asked for causation, instead of providence and miracle, by a natural instinct. "Supernaturalism," he says, "in whatever form had never commended itself. From boyhood there was in me a need to see, in a more or less distinct way, how phenomena, no matter of what kind, are to be naturally explained." So strong was this tendency that he regards it as illustrating "the general truth that the acceptance of this or that particular belief is in part a question of the type of the mind."

"There are some minds to which the marvellous and the unaccountable strongly appeal, and which even resent any attempt to bring the genesis of them within comprehension. There are other minds which, partly by nature and partly by culture, have been led to dislike a quiescent acceptance of the unintelligible; and which push their explorations until causation has been carried to its confines. To this last order of minds mine, from the beginning, belonged."

It should be added that Spencer had a fine con-

structive imagination; without which faculty, as he himself says, there can be "no high achievement"—a truth which Professor Tyndall so beautifully and convincingly expounded. This constructive imagination, in his youth, set Spencer castle-building; a pastime which is generally condemned, but which he himself thought beneficial in moderation. "I believe," he says, "that the love I then had for it arose from the spontaneous activity of powers which in future life became instrumental to higher things." Now this constructive imagination tends to make the possessor a thorough-going sceptic or a thorough-going believer. Facts have to be fitted into some definite theory, instead of floating about out of all mental relationship. This may, of course, result in the faith of a Newman or the agnosticism of a Spencer; but never in the poor muddle of belief and scepticism which is the mental condition of the half-baked multitude of religionists.

One is not astonished, therefore, when Spencer states that he was never really a Christian.

"Their hold had, indeed, never been very decided: the 'creed of Christendom' being evidently alien to my nature, both emotional and intellectual. To many, and apparently to most, religious worship yields a species of pleasure. To me it never did so; unless, indeed, I count as such the emotion produced by sacred music. A sense of combined grandeur and sweetness excited by an anthem, with organ and cathedral architecture to suggest the idea of power, was then, and always has been, strong in me—as strong, probably, as in most—stronger than in many. But the expressions of adoration of a personal being, the utterance of laudations, and the humble professions of obedience, never found in me any echoes."

Spencer believed in phrenology in those days, and had his "bumps" told by a professor of it at Derby, who gave him a full written chart of his "development." It is rather an amusing document, right in some particulars and wrong in others, and tending to show that the phrenological expert trusted a great deal to physiognomy. One of his observations is distinctly funny. "Such a head as this," he said, "ought to be in the Church." Herbert Spencer in the Church! Think of it. And then reflect that Darwin was intended for the Church, and grieved his parents by not pursuing the profession of a clergyman. Surely the thought of these two great "infidels" in pulpits is enough to excite laughter in a hypochondriac.

Instead of taking his "head" into "the Church," Spencer allowed his head to take him in the opposite direction. He was even then dimly conscious of objections to the popular creed of which future thought and knowledge gave him a more definite conception.

"Criticism had not yet shown me how astonishing is the supposition that the Cause from which have arisen thirty millions of Suns, with their attendant planets, took the form of a man, and made a bargain with Abraham to give him territory in return for allegiance. I had not at that time repudiated the notion of a deity who is pleased with the singing of his praises, and angry with the infinitesimal beings he has made when they fail to tell him perpetually of his greatness. It had not become manifest to me how absolutely and immeasurably unjust it would be that for Adam's disobedience (which might have caused a harsh man to discharge his servant), all Adam's guiltless descendants should be damned, with the exception of a relatively few who accepted the 'plan of salvation,' which the immense majority never

heard of. Nor had I in those days perceived the astounding nature of the creed which offers for profoundest worship a being who calmly looks on while myriads of his creatures are suffering eternal torments.'

Spencer mentions "a sanguine young fellow" who started a paper called *The Philanthropist*, which, of course, had a very brief existence. But this did not deter Spencer himself from projecting "a weekly paper to be called *The Philosopher*." He actually jotted down the names of likely contributors and persons who might be asked to furnish capital. The young projector also drew "a design for a heading" of this wonderful periodical. But nothing came of the idea. It was only a day-dream. Yet it showed the tendency of his mind. He was enough of a "philosopher" at the age of twenty-four to see that the will of God was an unsatisfactory standard of morals, and to feel that "there must be a basis for morals in the nature of things—in the relations between the individual and the surrounding world, and in the social relations of men to one another." When he was twenty-seven his father grew concerned about him. "I hope," he wrote to Spencer's uncle, "that when the pride of his intellect is a little more subdued, he will be more likely to attach importance to the usual evidences given in support of our faith." The young man suffering from "pride of intellect" was tackled by a Dissenting minister named Mason, who had a "mortifying manner," but "Herbert displayed (his father says) much more coolness than I have hitherto given him credit for." Mr. Spencer senior fancied that his son's unbelief was due to his reading Emerson, and fondly hoped it would abate and disappear when the dreadful influence of the American sceptic weakened. But the evil was not due to Emerson, although Spencer admired him far more than he ever did Carlyle. "My rationalistic convictions," he says, "at that time far more exceptional than they would be now, had been slowly and insensibly growing for years: being, as already intimated, caused by perception of the radical incongruity between the Bible and the order of nature. Such writings as those of Emerson and Carlyle served simply to present to me my own convictions under other aspects."

Not only did Spencer perceive, even so early, that there must be such a thing as natural morality, but he also recognised the absurdity of the Free Will theory, which assumes that "the emotions can be produced or suppressed at will." What he says on this point is admirable, and has the freshness and charm that flow from a fine metaphorical illustration.

"The common idea, as well as the Goethe-Carlyle idea, is that the feelings constitute an assembly under the autocratic control of 'the will'; whereas they constitute an assembly over which there reigns no established autocrat, but of which now one member and now another gets possession of the presidential chair (then temporarily acquiring the title of 'the will') and rules the rest for a time: being frequently, if not strong, ejected by combinations of others, and occasionally, if strong, effectually resisting their efforts."

At the age of twenty-eight Spencer had arrived at the agnosticism—for such, apparently, he preferred to call it—which was set forth twelve years later in his *First Principles*. In the summer of 1849 his uncle, the clergyman, came to London to reside. He had suffered misfortune, and his nature had been improved by it. Previously he had held that energy and rectitude always insured prosperity. He was now undeceived. He recognised that there were other causes for good or ill fortune than good or ill conduct. The result was a great increase of sympathy, which produced a striking effect on his preaching, and attracted immense congregations. With this liberalised uncle Spencer spent his Sundays, and they discussed all sorts of subjects together most amicably. On three successive Sunday evenings they debated the validity of the belief in a personal God. The position Spencer took is shown in a letter to his father written shortly afterwards, an extract from which runs as follows:—

"I hold that we are as utterly incompetent to understand the ultimate nature of things, or origin of them,

as the deaf man is to understand sound or the blind man light. My position is simply that I know nothing about it, and never can know anything about it, and must be content in my ignorance. I deny nothing, and I affirm nothing, and to anyone who says that the current theory is not true I say just as I say to those who assert its truth—you have no evidence. Either alternative leaves us in inextricable difficulties. An uncaused Deity is just as inconceivable as an uncaused Universe. If the existence of matter from all eternity is incomprehensible, the creation of matter out of nothing is equally incomprehensible. Thus finding that either attempt to conceive the origin of things is futile, I am content to leave the question unsettled as *the insoluble mystery*."

Readers of the *First Principles* will remember that its concluding pages, in which Spencer approached as nearly as he ever did to real eloquence, were but an amplification of this extract from a letter written before the close of the first half of the nineteenth century.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

The Triune God.

ACCORDING to the Manchester Christian Evidence Lectures, there are innumerable witnesses to the truth of the Christian religion. In cross examination, however, these witnesses contradict themselves in the most flagrant and discreditable manner; and when the evidence destroys itself it is impossible to arrive at the truth. Christian missions and the Bible Society are witnesses, but not to the truth of Christianity; and, when compelled to bear false witness, or to testify to the wrong object, they become confused and self-contradictory. The twentieth of the lectures mentioned was delivered by Dr. A. T. Wilkinson, Dean of the Manchester Infirmary, and is entitled "The Witness of Physical Science to the Triune God." In many respects it is an able and beautiful deliverance, and many must have heard it with keen delight. Dr. Wilkinson is evidently a close and persistent student of Nature and her ways, and shows a wide, if not exhaustive, acquaintance with the various discoveries of modern science. And yet, so far as the central object he had in view is concerned, his lecture must be pronounced a total failure. One looks in it in vain for the "Witness of Physical Science to the Triune God." Physical science knows nothing of God, either as a Unity in Trinity or as a Trinity in Unity. Nature unfolds herself with admirable assiduity, but she does not sing the praises of Deity. All-conquering are her forces, but they point to nothing outside of themselves. She is the mother of us all, but can give no account either of her own origin or of how she produced us. On all subjects discussed by theology and metaphysics she is profoundly ignorant and wisely silent. As to whether she had a beginning or not she has no information to give us. Hence it is utterly absurd to imagine that she bears, or can bear, any witness to the triune God.

Dr. Wilkinson is a Trinitarian, but he ignores the fact that there are thousands of Christians who reject the doctrine of the Trinity and maintain that it is not taught in the Bible. How does he know that the Unitarians are in error, and have no right to be numbered among the genuine disciples of Jesus? The truth is that the Trinity is a creation of metaphysical theology, and cannot be claimed as a revealed fact even by those who believe in the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. Dr. Wilkinson must be aware that for nearly two centuries after Christ's death the Church possessed no doctrine of the Trinity. Tertullian was the first to use the word, as he was also the first to ascribe tri-personality to the Supreme Being. The doctrine was formulated by degrees, amid bitter controversies and in spite of acrimonious opposition; and, when at last the Church adopted it, there was a most determined minority against it. How can Dr. Wilkinson, in the face of such a fact, maintain that the triune God is a revelation of the Bible? It is true that

"when man makes his own gods we get a curious collection, whether it be the idols of Ceylon and India to-day, or the Pantheon of the intellectual Greek and Roman in times gone by," or the Christian Trinity evolved out of the inner consciousness of metaphysical divines. But it is distinctly not true that Christians have any greater right to speak with authority than Buddhists, Confucians, or Zoroastrians. Christian theologians know as much or as little as all their heathen neighbors. And yet the former dogmatise with as much assurance as they would if Omniscience were one of their mental attributes. In reality, however, their whole doctrine rests on mere assumptions, not one of which is capable of verification. They *assume* the existence of God, they *assume* that he created the universe, and they *assume* that he exists as three persons in one substance; but of facts, data, proofs they have none. Nothing is easier than to assert that "God alone is the Original Thinker, Creator, Lawgiver, Evolver, the Master of Science, who has no theories because he is the Truth"; but to prove the assertion is absolutely impossible.

Dr. Wilkinson says that he desires to defend no particular creed; but is not Trinitarianism a particular creed? He tells us that "the word has been coined to express a fact discovered by the theologian in his study of God"; but how does he know that Unitarianism does not deserve to be similarly characterised? Was not James Martineau as competent to judge as John Calvin, and does not the man in the street know as much about the subject as either or both of them did? Dr. Wilkinson waxes exceedingly eloquent, and gives the reins to his emotion, when he expatiates on the marvellous illumination of the human heart effected by the Trinitarian tenet, a fact which, according to him, bears witness to its truth. But had William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, and Ralph Waldo Emerson no illumination? Does Mr. Stopford Brooke nurse his poetic soul in the dismal, gloomy realm of unilluminated ignorance? And what about the unfortunate scientists and people of the world who believe in no God at all? Are they to be pitied as having their abode in a darkness dense enough to be felt? Are they dead to all the finer feelings, sympathies, and enthusiasms of human nature? Such questions answer themselves.

Dr. Wilkinson gives us a graphic though not always accurate picture of what he calls the trinity of the physical Universe. Science assures us that the physical Universe consists of ether, matter, and energy, and that these three elements form a unity. In the opinion of many scientists ether is imponderable matter, and exists only in what would otherwise be empty space. Others believe that ether not only fills all empty space, but also penetrates into the interior of solid bodies. The existence of the ether is a modern discovery, and is assumed to account for the transmission of various effects from one body to another at a distance. To the physicist, especially since the wonderful empirical discoveries in the province of electricity were made, the assumption of a transmitting or conducting medium is absolutely indispensable. It is a truism that no physical influence can travel through empty space: there must be a conducting medium. But the belief in an invisible ether as a physical necessity neither justifies nor suggests the belief in the existence of an infinite, omnipotent, and invisible being, for whom Nature has neither room nor need. Ether is certainly not a time-symbol of the essential nature of such a person.

By matter we understand ponderable mass in a gaseous, fluid, or solid condition. We all know that matter is structurally atomistic, and that among its chief functions are gravity, inertia, molecular heat, and chemical affinity. What matter really is no one can tell. It is made up of a number of infinitely small but distinct portions called electrons. In each atom of matter there may be hundreds of thousands of electrons, each one of which has some definite function to fulfil. But what an electron is no one knows. There are many theories, such as the kinetic

theory, the pyknotic theory, the vortex theory, and the strain theory; but there is no positive knowledge. All that we know is that matter is real and active, and exhibits feeling, or sensation. This is how Dr. Wilkinson comments on this fact:—

"Each theory rests on some fact connected with matter; but the problem is so many-sided, the mystery of matter so profound, that no intelligible account can be given of it. Do not suppose that theology has a monopoly of mystery. Even the ultimate elements of physics, the simplest bodies known, are, like their Maker, past finding out. Generally speaking, the reality of matter is assumed, negative theories failing to account for its combined peculiarities. Brer Rabbit's asparagus experience has true philosophy in it. It looks real, it sounds real, it feels real, it smells real, it tastes real—it *is* real! We have a real Universe, and a real self, because we have a real God."

That is a jumble of words devoid of all intelligible meaning. What an inconceivable leap from a mysterious Universe to a more incomprehensible Deity behind and above it. Nature is said to be real because God is real. But the reality of God is the point in dispute. *How do you know that God is real?* Certainly not in the same way as we know that Nature is real. Nature introduces herself to us, and does her sublime work in our very presence; but God does not thus reveal himself and prove his reality. If he exists he perpetually hides himself, and gives no account of his existence and activity.

The third member of Nature's trinity is energy. We are all familiar with the great discovery of the conservation of energy. The sum of force, which produces all phenomena, is unchangeable. Its form may vary almost without limit, but its quantity always remains the same. As a great scientist says, "No particle of living energy is ever extinguished, and no particle is ever created anew."

Now we come to Dr. Wilkinson's central and all-important point. "On the one hand," he says, "the trinity of the physical Universe is Christian evidence; on the other hand, this scientific discovery, in so far as it reflects the divine original, receives the hall-mark of God; so far it is stamped as truth. The modern doctrine of the conservation of energy, the doctrine that makes it as real as matter and ether, and no mere condition of matter and ether, receives its confirmation in the personality of the Holy Spirit." From a logical point of view that is unmitigated nonsense. If there be no Holy Ghost the conservation of energy is as baseless as a dream. Matter, ether, and force are not real unless they reflect the Holy Trinity, their own original. But on what authority does Dr. Wilkinson assert the reality of Nature's divine original? Who knows that God is, and exists as a trinity? What Professor Haeckel and Mr. Blatchford demand is some sort of proof, some form or degree of demonstrative evidence that God is, and that he made Nature in his own image. Such a demand the Manchester Lecturers have persistently ignored. "The trinity of the physical Universe," says Dr. Wilkinson, "is Christian evidence"; but he does not tell us in what way. It is useless to assert that Nature is a copy unless the original is shown. "Believe me, there is a spiritual world, which is the real world," exclaims our lecturer; but he omits to inform us whence and how he derived his knowledge of the truth of his assertion. No more amazing statement was ever made than the following:—

"The triune God came first. Science was not in at the birth of the doctrine of the Trinity. It lay in the Bible an open secret from the beginning, and for fifteen hundred years and more it has formed the basis of the creed of Christendom. It is at the very foundation of the great and glorious doctrine of the atonement."

But the late Dr. Martineau could not find the doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible, and he pronounced it impossible, unthinkable; and even if it were in the Bible that would be no proof of its truth. Theologians admit now that the writers of the Scriptures were fallible and ignorant like all other men. No avenues of knowledge were open to them which are closed to us.

Dr. Wilkinson represents the man of science of

to-day as telling us that "the Universe as a whole bears the signature of God." But the man of science says nothing of the kind. He has not been able, as yet, to see any divine signature in Nature. To him she is an unsigned document. Dr. Wilkinson cannot but be aware that scientists generally believe in no outside power or creative cause whatever. Are they right or are they wrong? If wrong, where is the proof? Dr. Wilkinson produces none, nor can he adduce any. Whether Nature is a trinity or not, she can tell us nothing of God. Theology used to teach that God is known only in Christ, and so far as Nature is concerned the teaching was and is true.

What Dr. Wilkinson really sees in the physical Universe is a parallel to the theological Trinity. Ether corresponds to God the Father, matter to God the Son, and energy to God the Holy Ghost. Some theologians saw similar parallels in man. When man thinks he is at once the subject, the object, and the element that unifies the two. Or man is said to be himself a trinity, in that he has a tripartite constitution—body, soul, and spirit. But no serious-minded person imagines that such ingeniously woven parallels mean or prove anything. They do not. What is wanted is some proof that God exists—whether as conceived by the Trinitarians or by the Unitarians—and that proof is not forthcoming.

JOHN LLOYD.

Science and Religion.—II.

(Concluded from page 372.)

MR. KEMPSON'S next illustration of the limitations of science is drawn from the question of the origin of matter. Mr. Spencer, he says, tells us there are three possibilities open to us: that matter creates itself, that it exists of itself, that it is created by some self-existent being outside itself. Mr. Kempson has little trouble in showing that no one can have any clear conception of the first two. He might have gone further than he does, and have said plainly that they are mere logomachies, and interest only those who mistake words for things. The one solid and inescapable fact is, that existence *is*. Whether we call this existence matter, force, or merely existence, matters little; but all thinking presupposes it, and to discuss how it began to be is about as sensible and as profitable as discussing the nature of a bird's flight in the absence of an atmosphere.

Mr. Kempson says one of these three things "must" be true, and, of course, decides in favor of God bringing nature into existence by "His simple will." Great is the power of words! Great, also, is the virtue of a "must" when used in such a connection. We may grant that the theory of nature creating itself is as unthinkable as the theory of a God creating it; but the man who asserts that nature has always existed does at least rest content with the one unavoidable fact of existence, and so may be merely expressing his inability to think a beginning; whereas the man who drags in a God not only does not answer the first problem, but actually adds another of quite as incomprehensible a character. God calling nature into existence by "His simple will" is just one of those meaningless jumbles of words with which loose thinkers impose upon themselves first and their listeners afterwards. No one knows, or ever will, know what it means.

Another interesting exhibition of Mr. Kempson's mental output is found in the following passage, which I cite because it again embodies a very common confusion. "Supposing there be no such thing really as life and reason; if all be but matter and motion....." One would imagine from such an expression that he who holds that life and intelligence are as much manifestations of natural force as chemical attraction therefore denies that life and intelligence exist. Of course such an idea is pure folly. The real question in dispute is whether life and intelligence are entities independent of material

organisation or not; and whichever way the question is decided does not affect their existence in the slightest. Nor does it even affect the way in which we shall deal with them. Believers in either theory deal with life and mind in all practical matters, in health and disease, in exactly the same manner. The question of the independency of life and mind has really no practical value; it is only of service in bolstering up certain preconceived metaphysical theories.

But there is a good reason for Mr. Kempson emphasising the limitations of science. The first is that, as science can only trace the connection between cause and effect, as it must always have some material to commence with, it can say nothing whatever of the origin of things. "Therefore," says Mr. Kempson triumphantly, "it has got nothing whatever to say in contradiction to that teaching, that the origin of things is from God." One must admit there is a certain truth about this statement. Science knows nothing whatever of the origin of things; but then neither does anyone nor anything else. Nor does it follow that, because science puts on one side the question, "Where did everything come from?" as a useless or meaningless question, that the answer of a theologian to the same query is to be accepted. Mr. Kempson seems to be perpetually under the delusion that so long as an answer does not admit of direct disproof it is to be accepted. But this is far from being the case. An answer or a theory, to be reasonably acceptable, must not only be not contradicted by known facts, it must also be inherently reasonable and also able to point to undoubted facts as evidence. And the theory of God as the cause of things complies with none of these conditions.

But science, says Mr. Kempson, may come into conflict with religion on the field of history. It may urge that such alleged historic events as the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection either did not happen or could not happen. This brings the lecturer to the question of miracles; and once again we find him voicing one of the commonest and shallowest of fallacies—this is the belief that a miracle can ever be a witness to anything beyond itself. For instance, we are told that the purpose of a miracle is "to testify to the truth that somebody has to tell. The fact that our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead testifies to his being the Son of God." Well, it does nothing of the kind. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead would prove—that Jesus rose from the dead. Just that, and nothing more. Cast in the form of a syllogism, Mr. Kempson's argument would read: Gods rise from the dead. Jesus rose from the dead. Therefore Jesus was God. But the major premiss is here the very wildest of assumptions. We do not know anything of the habits of gods—not even that there are any gods to hang habits on. How, then, can we say that *because* Jesus rose from the dead therefore he was a god? The reasoning is on all-fours with that of a conjurer who should convince an African tribe that he was the accredited representative of the English Government by performing the hat and omelette trick. It *does* seem rather late in the day to have to point out to a teacher in one of our principal Universities that any alleged miraculous occurrence can only prove its own existence, and nothing more. All else is a matter of inference.

As a matter of fact the scientific objection to miracles rests upon two irrefutable arguments, which Mr. Kempson either is not aware of or ignores. The first is that certain alleged miracles are dismissed as worthless, owing to the growth of scientific knowledge having made such occurrences unbelievable, because *unthinkable*. An uninstructed man may believe that an individual can walk on the water, for instance, without any artificial aid, for the reason that it does not conflict with his knowledge of things. But given a certain knowledge of the properties of things, and one cannot *think* of a man walking upon water without annihilating one's knowledge of how two bodies of different densities would behave when brought together. Science does not,

therefore, brand certain miracles as mythical because they are isolated experiences, but because they contradict what we know to be true. The position of science is not negative, but positive.

And, in the second place, it would be pointed out that belief in the miraculous is, broadly speaking, not a question of evidence, but of stages of mental development. Given the human mind at a certain stage of its evolution, and tales of the miraculous are natural and inevitable. Little of the operations of nature are known, and tales of the supernatural abound. Everything is possible because nothing is certain. But as knowledge increases possibility is destroyed by necessity; it is no longer what *may* happen, but what *must* happen. An unreflective wonder is replaced by a reasoned anticipation; and just as the belief in the miraculous can be seen flourishing amid ignorance, uncertainty, and fear, so it may be seen decreasing with the development of science.

Both the acceptance and the rejection of the miraculous is far less a question of evidence than people are apt to imagine. It is certain that no one ever believed in the miraculous because he had first carefully weighed the evidence for and against. All the arguments in its favor are the result of thinking subsequent to its acceptance. And, on the other side, it is tolerably certain that large numbers of people dismiss the miraculous for no other reason than that it is quite out of harmony with all that they know to be true. It is shaken off, much as barbaric habits are dropped through intercourse with more civilised people. It is these two lines of reasoning that constitute the strongest objections to belief in the miraculous. To treat the subject as though it were merely a question of settling the credibility of certain witnesses, *pro* and *con.*, is quite beside the mark.

Mr. Kempson has a separate lecture on the subject of "Evolution and Sin," and his discussion of the subject is as illuminating as such subjects usually are in the hands of religious apologists. He has much to say about the "disorder" in man's nature; but the truth is that there is no disorder—in the sense of a disturbed order—to be accounted for. The only thing to account for in human nature is, not disorder, but a slowly developing order. In other words, the ethical problem is not that of how man came to do evil but how he came to do good, by what means did his nature become so organised as to act with his fellow man in such a fashion that even while pursuing the gratification of his own instincts he was yet subserving the interests of society and of the race. And it is precisely because religious teachers have ignored the real problem and fastened attention upon a fictitious one, that their contribution towards the building up of a science of ethics has been so insignificant when compared with what has been done by others.

Mr. Kempson's belief in a "disordered" human nature resulting from a "fall" creates the problem of how man can be held responsible by God for faults committed by his predecessors. He answers it by declaring that we are only punished for sins of our will, not for sins of our nature. For example, a man wishes to enter the Army. He is sent to school, but instead of studying idles away his time, and fails to pass his examination. This is a sin of the will, and he deserves punishment. But suppose he studied hard and passed; he might still be rejected on a medical examination for weak sight, or some other bodily defect. This, says Mr. Kempson, is a fault of his nature, and he cannot be held accountable for it.

Now Mr. Kempson, it will be remembered, is a scientific man, and it would be really interesting to have him explain what is the essential difference in the two cases. Why is one man energetic and another apathetic? Why is one man industrious and another lazy? Are these not as much the expression of organisation as weak sight or short stature? Would anyone out of the pulpit deny that our ancestors express themselves through us quite

as much in our dispositions as in our physique? Would an educated man talk upon any other subject under the sun, except religion, with such a bewildering lack of reason? Really, the more one studies modern religion the more one sees its demoralising influence. It makes the wise stupid, and the stupid more foolish still. Once get a person on religion and he actually riots in unreason. It is a magician's wand which, instead of turning everything to gold, turns gold to dross, while it gives to dross the semblance of a more precious metal.

C. COHEN.

Correspondence.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your distinguished contributor, Mr. Gould, in his rejoinder to my comment upon his article, "Before and After the French Revolution," savors too much of present-day Ethical and Socialistic platform procedure to suit the taste of many of your intelligent and appreciative readers.

To make a series of general statements without advancing one particular fact to substantiate any of them, whilst fully recognising their inevitable tendency to provoke dissent; and then, when a courteous dissenter adduces a few commonplace facts which obviously compel inferences adverse to said general statements, to answer such facts as Mr. Gould does in his rejoinder with a few more of his general statements, that are both irrelevant and misleading, seems to me to harmonise well with the no-discussion policy of the above-mentioned cults, but not at all with the free and fair discussion policy that makes the Freethinker so unique.

Surely a gentleman of Mr. Gould's intellectual attainments must have known that I only quoted "Nunquam's" assertion about working-men having plenty of money for betting, beer, parsons, missionaries, and party politics, in disproof of his (Mr. Gould's) statement that said workmen are alike under-fed and under-educated; the obvious inference being that the implied hunger and ignorance, to whatever cause due, cannot justly be ascribed to lack of means. Surely if the workman indulge his liking for above luxuries to the extent of going minus of the bare necessities of life, his hunger and his ignorance are of his own seeking.

To tell your readers, as Mr. Gould does, "I have seen too many hungry children, and too many honest people in poverty to be moved by the fact that many working-people are wasteful. Even if they are, the case for reform is strengthened," does not answer one of my facts, but may well engender a totally false impression as to what I really said and obviously meant.

I said not one word to justify Mr. Gould in assuming, on my part, any lack of sympathy with hungry children, or honest people in poverty, or any lack of enthusiasm for what I regard as genuine reform.

Dear Mr. Editor, as your able contributor is so very much given to making general statements, it may well be that he will, with your very kind permission, allow me to indulge in one also. Mr. Gould and many other good and kindly-disposed people are but too prone to mistake that mental condition of the average Secularist which shows itself in a grateful acknowledgment of the good that now is, together with a high appreciation of those good and wise people to whom we owe it, for a lazy indifference to any possible better attainable.

As one who has spent a fairly long life in the industrial ranks, interspersed with periods of intercourse with liberally educated people, I deem myself entitled to affirm of the average workman that he is by no means exceptionally ignorant of the principles of economic science; and that all that can be said of his shortcoming in this connection is equally applicable to the university graduate. Let me just add, more than one Socialist aspirant to Parliamentary honors in his canvassing for votes has been more greatly surprised than pleased when above truth has dawned upon him.

When Mr. Gould designates as waste the money the workman spends on beer, parsons, and politicians, I think he takes a very narrow view of the case. Liking his glass of beer; believing the parson and a special political cult labor to further his (the workman's) interest, surely the workman is only just when he pays his fair quotient in money for services rendered. To my mind, it will be a good long step on a right road when the working classes as a whole realise that tendered services which are to cost them nothing, are mostly dear even at that price. For the sake of perspicuity I reserve my views on Mr. Gould's longing for a religion that is to bind all the honest people in the world into one "great corporation," which will have to be

invented, for a special article; for, to my mind, the facts of real life and the reveries of the religiously-disposed mind are best understood when dealt with separately, each upon its merits.

T. J. THURLOW.

[This discussion is getting beyond our province, so we must see it.—EDITOR.]

Acid Drops.

Mr. Blatchford's attack on Christianity was talked about a great deal at a recent meeting of the diocesan clergy at Lambeth Palace. The Dean of Canterbury (we quote from the *Daily Chronicle* report) said that Mr. Blatchford's articles had "been producing in some quarters a very serious influence, and he mentioned one instance in which three Sunday-school teachers handed in their resignations after reading them." This frank admission of unpleasant facts was discounted, as far as possible, by the Rev. A. J. Waldron, who is described as "lecturer for the Christian Evidence Society." Men of this stamp represent Freethought as a dreadfully strong thing, when they are asking for funds to oppose it. At other times, they are prepared to state that there is absolutely nothing in it; that it is, indeed, a poor, decrepid, toothless old monster. Mr. Waldron told his clerical audience that the *Clarion* articles had not had much influence in London; none at all, in fact, in Mr. John Burns's constituency. "The people of London," he said, "were accustomed to that propaganda twenty-five years ago; it was practically a rehash of the old Bradlaugh system; and it was no novelty in London." This is the sort of silliness to be expected of a person like Mr. Waldron. From the nature of the case, there cannot very well be any new objections to Christianity, although they may be presented with fresh force and effect. But if, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, the essential objections to Christianity have all been stated, is that any reason why a Christian, of all men, should sneer at their lack of novelty? Surely the objections to Christianity are at least as novel as Christianity is. Suppose a man goes on telling a lie, and another man goes on contradicting it; does it establish the lie as a truth to say that the contradiction is ancient? Old as it is, it is necessarily a bit younger than the lie.

Mr. Waldron advocated open-air propaganda. That was the way to settle Mr. Blatchford. It reminds us of the gentleman who said there was nothing like leather.

The Rev. W. Blissard was rather more astute than Mr. Waldron. He reminded the clergy that they had the last word, and—there were twenty thousand of them. Yes, there is a good deal of consolation in that. A business cannot die in a hurry with twenty thousand paid agents to push it along.

The Archbishop of Canterbury contributed his quota to this discussion. He advised the clergy to make themselves personally acquainted with Freethought literature, so that they might arm the young men in their congregations against "these anti-Christian arguments." This is a capital idea. We give it a cordial welcome. We should like to see those twenty thousand clergymen reading the *Freethinker*. It would be good business, as well as good propaganda.

Dr. Stanley, a young medical practitioner, of High Church proclivities, has been fined for punching the head of a protesting Kensitite in the very house of God at Burton. On the other hand, the Kensitites were fined for creating an unlawful disturbance; and, as they would not pay the fine and costs, and preferred "martyrdom," they went to prison for fourteen days, as a protest against "idolrous practices" in the Church of England. But the greatest sufferer, after all, seems to have been the Rev. D. Ombrain, who was responsible for the "idolatry." The Kensitites' protest so upset him that he stopped the prayer, and two or three minutes elapsed before he could resume. The physical shock was so great that he trembled all through the subsequent proceedings. On the whole, we suggest that this reverend gentleman should be kept in a glass case—and by preference in a museum.

Mr. Foote's tract entitled *God at Chicago*, as many of our readers will probably remember, was written in regard to the burning down of the Iroquois Theatre. Amongst the hundreds of victims who perished in that terrible catastrophe was a prominent Methodist, who transgressed the laws of his Church by the very fact of his being in a place of amusement. It appears that this gentleman left in his will a large legacy to the Missionary Society of the American Episcopal Church; and, in order to keep up its character, the Society has had to decline the bequest. This must go very much

against the grain, and perhaps the legacy would not have been declined if the gentleman's death in such a place had not been commented upon at the time.

If the Methodist gentleman's executors don't know what to do with the money, we suggest that they should offer it to an American Freethought Society or to the maintenance fund of the New York *Truthseeker* or the Boston *Investigator*. We believe there is no beastly pride about the editors of those two journals; not enough, at any rate, to lead them to refuse cash because the man who once owned it died in a theatre.

What a farce the Archbishop of Canterbury and his "pals" are going through with respect to the Athanasian Creed. They declare that this Creed is a sublime expression of eternal Christian verities, and must on no account be discarded; at the same time, they feel that it is too precious to be treated with gross familiarity; consequently they want to see it put beyond common reach on a nice shelf by itself; and when it has been there long enough they will cover it up decently and say "Farewell." The problem before them is how to get rid of the objectionable thing without admitting that the Church made a mistake in cherishing it for so many hundreds of years.

Card-sharpers, thimble-riggers, and confidence-trick men are cunning enough; but they are simply not in it with priests, who could easily give all other professors points in the grand old game of bamboozling.

Mr. T. W. H. Crosland's clever-silly or silly-clever *Lovely Woman* is naturally followed by a counterblast called *Lovely Man*—which is not, however, an original title in the circumstances. "Mr. T. W. Crosland," the writer of the counterblast says, "was not the first man. Adam, so we are told, preceded him, and he was, apparently, but a poor, mean-spirited creature at best." Apparently they are all finding out nowadays what Mr. Foote pointed out long ago in his *Bible Heroes*, where he observed that a fellow like Adam was only fit to clean boots and carry slops.

Women may always get their own back by stating the truth about the male half of the first pair of human beings, according to the Bible. Nor is it any use to say, as the man in the meeting did to the lady orator, that the woman tempted him, after being herself tempted by the devil. The lady orator promptly retorted that the woman may have tempted the man to eat, but he took to drinking on his own account.

The Duke of Norfolk, as the premier Catholic peer, gave notice that he intended to move the following resolution in the House of Lords on Tuesday, June 21:—

"That whereas, under the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, the Sovereign is required to join in communion with the Church of England, as by law established, and ample securities are provided to ensure the Protestant succession to the Crown, and, whereas, in addition to these secularities, the Sovereign is required immediately after his accession to make a declaration, commonly called the Declaration against Transubstantiation, which is deeply and needlessly offensive to many millions of loyal subjects of his Majesty, this House is of opinion that the declaration aforesaid ought to be amended so as not to include the condemnation or repudiation of specific doctrines which form part of the conscientious beliefs of any of his Majesty's subjects."

We shall probably have something more to say on this subject after the debate has taken place. In the meanwhile we may point out that it is the existence of the Established Church which justifies the King's declaration against the essential distinctive doctrine of Roman Catholicism. It is, we believe, the policy of Roman Catholics to assist in upholding the Established Church against all sects of disestablishers, on the ground that the Church of England, which was once Catholic, may be Catholic again. Is it not, therefore, hasty and shortsighted to take such action as the Duke of Norfolk has been contemplating? While the Established Church exists, the only objection to the King's declaration against transubstantiation lies on the road towards disestablishment—which is precisely what, we understand, the Roman Catholics do not want.

The Islington magistrates have struck a very hard blow at the Passive Resistance movement by taking the case of the Rev. Charles Brown in the magistrates' room, which shut out the general public. This is, of course, not to the taste of those who are engineering the movement, and the religious press has been loud in its complaints at the magistrates' conduct. As a very important element in these cases is the chance of the defendants posing as "martyrs," with the subsequent sacrifice of a kitchen table or American alarm clock, the proceedings will be robbed of

all their attractiveness if the magistrates take to hearing the summonses in their private rooms. The only thing left will be for Dr. Clifford to throw out vague hints as to the analogy of these private *séances* with the Spanish Inquisition, with the magistrate officiating as a judicial Torquemada. If this example is followed by other London magistrates the results promise to be rather interesting.

Passive Resisters, in some places, are complaining that "the enemy," instead of martyring them, are allowing them to go on defaulting with their rates in order to secure their disfranchisement. The dear *Daily News* positively screams at this move in the party game, and calls it a dirty trick. Our Nonconformist contemporary wants to give blows and take none. It evidently thinks that "the enemy" has no right to retaliate. Which is simply childish.

The Leyton District Council has had to restrain the Rev. C. Edmunds, vicar of All Saints'. This gentleman walked into one of the Council's schools and interrogated the assistant master as to his religious belief. One of his questions was "Do you believe in God?" Which is like a representative of Colman's asking whether you believe in mustard, or a representative of Cadbury's asking whether you believe in cocoa. Such professional queries ought not to be put in public schools, and we are glad to see that the Leyton District Council has issued instructions that Parson Edmunds is not to be admitted to any of its schools for trade purposes.

The Protestant clergy in the Colony of Victoria have been trying their best (and worst) to upset the system of secular education and introduce Bible teaching in the public schools. We are not astonished, therefore, to read that the Rev. Dr. Bevan, at a meeting of the Congregational Union in Melbourne, said: "I have for a long time felt the necessity for giving the children in the State schools some knowledge of the Bible, and if 'Old Nick' had come along and agreed to teach the children, I would have said, 'God bless you; go and do it.'" We can quite understand that the reverend gentleman wants Bible teaching so badly that he would not care if the Devil gave it. We daresay he would get the Bible into the schools if he could, even if the Devil wrote it. When your trade is at stake you cannot afford to look at such questions too nicely.

The Bishop of Norwich jeers at the Nonconformists for accepting the policy of Secular Education rather than agreeing to the Church policy of denominational religious teaching. He says it proves that the Church is the only real friend of religion in England. But the argument is based upon what is not a fact. The Nonconformists have not accepted the policy of Secular Education. So there's an end to the matter. We hope the Nonconformists will accept that policy, and there are signs that some of them are beginning to see that it is inevitable. At present, however, the Free Churches are all in open declaration against it. And the Bishop of Norwich ought to know this.

Another thing the Bishop said was of much the same degree of accuracy. "He had lived in a country," the report runs, "where education was absolutely and entirely secular, where not a word about religion or the Bible or the Gospel of Christ was allowed to be breathed in the common schools of the country, and he knew the result of that system. He had seen it in the gaols." His lordship did not name this country. Perhaps he wished to avoid investigation. But we dare say he means Victoria. We dare say, too, that his statement about the results of Secular Education in that country was first started by Bishop Moorhouse (of Manchester) and has been contradicted and refuted again and again by the official representatives of Victoria.

Old Dowie is such a fine collector of cash for the service of the Lord, and keeps such a tight hold upon it until the Lord demands it, that the *Daily News* hates the thought of his coming to London, and loudly rejoices over the fact that "one of the finest hotels in the metropolis" has refused to "shelter" Old Dowie again. The organ of the Nonconformist Conscience seeks to justify its bigotry in this instance by pretending a passionate love for the King, about which Old Dowie has been saying something "abominable." But this is simply crying "Mad dog!" We ought to be informed what the "abominable" language was before we are called upon to return a verdict and pass sentence. We have heard that the "abominable" language, used by Old Dowie in Australia, was merely a statement that King Edward knew more about sport than religion, and was of no particular account in heaven. Well, if that is all he said, we fancy the *Daily News* is playing the game of bigotry rather

low down. Probably the real objection to Old Dowie is to be found elsewhere. "Under the cloak of religion," our contemporary says, "Dowie has amassed great wealth, has blasphemed against some of the most sacred beliefs of Christianity, has attacked the Scriptures, and slandered the clergy." *Great wealth!* Ay, there's the rub. The *Daily News* wants Protection for the home collectors.

"Liars, cheats, thieves! They rob God." This is what Old Dowie says of the professing Christians who pass by their gold, and often their silver, and "hunt in their purses for a nickel or a copper" for the collection. The men of God are always most excited when the cash is at stake. Old Dowie has only the courage to say what the rest of the tribe feel.

It was very short-sighted of the *Daily News* to chuckle over the London crowd's jeering of Prophet Dowie. "Good old Elijah!" is rather meaningless. But there is more significance in the cry, "Work us a miracle, 'Lijah!" Probably the reporter of this edifying scene forgot that just the same sort of facetious request (if the Gospel story be true) was made to Jesus Christ when he was upon the cross. He also was asked to work a miracle. And when he failed to oblige, the sarcasm smote his ears, "He saved others; himself he cannot save!"

What a crew these Christians are. They wonder that the Chinese don't like foreign missionaries preaching a foreign faith. Yet they themselves cannot stand missionaries born in their own country (Dowie is Scotch), speaking their own language, and professing one of the numerous varieties of their own religion.

The world has been sufficiently informed that the *Daily News* is owned by Mr. George Cadbury, and it has been made to know that Mr. Cadbury is a Quaker who refuses to tender for Army Contracts on principle. In fact, "principle" has been, of late, a primary asset of the *Daily News*, which it has taken the greatest of pains to advertise. Well, the Quakers are the last remnants of the extremest sects which arose during the Reformation, so Protestant in fact, that they were bitterly persecuted by the Puritans, and Mr. Cadbury is the representative man of that extreme; yet his paper is now telling the world that *High Mass* in pre-Reformation churches was: "a service very glorious and solemn performed in the church with every splendor of song and vestment," and that the world of monasticism was: "very curious and beautiful, full of a piety that is now dead, and a wisdom that is now forgotten.....very wonderful and holy once, consecrating a fifth of England to spiritual uses;" while monasticism itself is said to have been: "a system perhaps more beautiful, both in aim and effect, than any which has guided men since the fall of Athens." Further it tells its readers that few will be able to set down the "delightful book" in which this is described, "without a feeling of pity that such a world should have vanished so utterly."

It would save irritation, and worse, if Mr. Cadbury would inform us where his paper is seeking to bring us? Former proprietors of the *Daily News* were Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Samuel Morley; its first editor was Charles Dickens, and one of its chief contributors was Harriet Martineau. But conceive any of these being responsible for an admiration for monastic institutions and regretting that a fifth of England is no longer devoted to maintaining monastic orders! Mr. Labouchere happily is still alive; it would be interesting to know his opinion of "High Mass" being "very glorious."

One cannot, in an "Acid Drop," sketch the nature and practice of monasticism; and the causes of its destruction by our forefathers. The civilised modern version of the institution is intolerable in France, for reasons perfectly intelligible to anyone who will take the pains to read his daily paper with attention. What the friars and monks were to the Englishman of the Middle Ages, is to be seen in Chaucer; and in the records of the trials of those times. But how gross is the ignorance of those modern journalists who take briefs to re-puff priests into domination, may be seen in the *Daily News* comparing monasticism as a system to the government of Athens. The system of monasticism was based on an egotistic credulity which gave the monks for their ideals ignorance, fanaticism, inactivity, filth, and imprisonment. Conceive their state: the vermin found on the body of Becket were solemnly counted by his monks. Yet the *Daily News* likens the system which produced these men to that which developed the bathing, nude athlete, constantly joining in rational disputation, and engaged as a factor in the government of his State: the democratic Athenian!

Certainly a monastery resembled Athens in one particular—that the great majority of its inhabitants were slaves; but only in the fact of slavery, not in its manner; for, as the parable of the talents in the New Testament, for example, shows, a slave in Greek lands not only had liberty to exercise his mental faculties, but he was *required* to do so.

It is much to be regretted that there is no Freethinker with sufficient means to compile from original sources a work on monasticism and the pre-Reformation Church, which will show it in the shape in which our ancestors saw it, to rebut the persistent falsehoods of the queer clique who are now puffing it. The monks were a "holy" crew, devoted to the people! They were barons and earls. Their lands were baronies, and the people on it slaves and serfs. They kept packs of hounds; and made children of seven years old monks; the land was burrowed with the subterranean ways between their houses—roads which yet remain all over the country. The nuns gave balls, at which they danced with knights on the lawns of their abbeys. The infirmaries were larger than the monasteries, and it was common to find the whole community living there, dispensed from all their Rule! But the worst point in monasticism was that it was a purely egotistical swindle, having for its object solely the eternal salvation of the monk; it gave absolutely no return to the nation for the labors of the nation which sustained and kept alive the monk. All the useful institutions attributed to monasticism are fictitious; even the few free schools the monks taught were created to strengthen the Church, for the mere power to sign one's name made a man a clerk, and gave him the "Benefit of clergy"—*i.e.*, the immunities of the clergy from civil justice.

Mr. R. J. Campbell's correspondence column in the *British Weekly* is generally amusing, even if it is not always instructive. The City Temple preacher is in the difficult position of having been labelled a philosopher by his fellow preachers, and has consequently to try and live up to the character. With so little logical power the task is a hard one; and his answers to correspondents must be a source of delight to his enemies. Here, for instance, is one who asks how the belief in the immanence of deity can be reconciled with the belief in his personality. Mr. Campbell sapiently replies: "God is not a personal being in the same sense as you and I are. The word 'person' implies limitations. We become aware of our personality because of our perception of other things outside it.....God is not less than personal—He must be infinitely more—but He is above the limitations of personality." This has, of course, been said over and over again by scores of preachers who are as hazy in their thinking as Mr. Campbell himself. But the repetition of a nonsensical statement does not make it reasonable. When we use the expression "personality" we either mean what we mean when we speak of human personality, or we mean nothing at all. And to say that God's personality is without the limitations of personality is to say that there is no personality at all. Language becomes a cloak for folly or fraud the moment it is used in one sense and applied in another. And this theological method of "debasement of the currency" is always fatal to intellectual sanity and honesty.

Mr. J. Estlin Carpenter has just published what is, on the whole, a very useful and instructive little book on *The Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World*. The bulk of the book is taken up by a popular description of the growth of the science of comparative religion, biblical criticism, and the showing that Christian doctrines are only one form of doctrines that were common over the whole of the East before Christianity, as such, was heard of. As a Unitarian, Mr. Carpenter does not hesitate to accept all that critics and scholars have to say on these matters, and, in addition, points out that in Africa and China, at least, Mohammedanism is now increasing at a much more rapid rate than Christianity. And we may also add that many students on the spot have testified that in Africa, when a tribe does embrace Mohammedanism, the results are far more beneficial than in the case of a Christian conversion.

The weak portion of Mr. Carpenter's book is in the conclusion. Having wiped out the authority of the Old and New Testament as a divine revelation, and having shown that Christian doctrines are properly part of a very widespread mythology, Mr. Carpenter asks, What is left for Christianity? He replies, "There remains Jesus himself." The answer is a good illustration of the hesitancy of a certain type of mind to carry out its thinking to a logical conclusion. It is surprising that Mr. Carpenter does not realise that once the authority of the New Testament is destroyed, and Christian doctrines shown to be the mere survivals of superstitions that owe their origin to human ignorance and fear—when this is done there is really no Jesus left to talk about. The teaching Jesus is as much a myth as the virgin-born, miracle-working,

resurrected Christ. The same myth-making faculty that made one made the other. In brief, the conception of the New Testament Jesus as an actual personality who established a new religion and so rejuvenated the world, and around whom certain mythical ideas subsequently gathered, is in the highest degree unscientific. It is part and parcel of the mythology Mr. Carpenter repudiates. And, having repudiated the one, we quite fail to see the slightest reason for retaining the other.

The current issue of *Pearson's Magazine* contains a series of portraits of "Great Writers." Among them we notice Swinburne, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Silas Hocking, and H. G. Wells—not to mention Hall Caine and others of that class. Now we do not care to say anything about the man who considers either Mr. Hocking or Mr. Wells a great writer; our only puzzle is how this queer jumble is collected. It is difficult to see how by any reasonable standard the first five named can be all "great writers." The first three or the last two may be, but if one set is admitted the other must be excluded. Probably the editor just put a lot of names in a bag and printed the first drawn out. A very important omission in the series is that of Miss Marie Corelli!

A wherryman named Turrell, at Great Yarmouth, has several Humane Society's medals for saving life. On Saturday last he had to go to Norwich, and during his absence from home his own little boy, six years of age, was drowned in the harbour. Surely this is a sarcasm worthy of "the Aristophanes of the Universe." A man saves other people's lives, and "Providence" picks out that very man's child and kills it directly his back is turned. We press this case on the attention of the priests of the God of love. It should form a capital text for a sermon.

A lament is raised in the *Christian World* on the effect of the week-end excursion on Sunday worship. In West London more motor cars go into the country on Sunday than on any other day in the week. Trains, electric cars, bicycles, etc., also draw off those whose purses or tastes favor other methods of locomotion. The result, says the *Christian World*, is that churches and chapels are seriously affected. "Within the last three years three Episcopal churches in West London have been abandoned as hopeless and impossible.....The week-end party, the motor-car and golf are destroying, if they have not destroyed, Sunday in West London." Which, being interpreted, means that people really will not attend church on Sunday if they can conveniently get away from it. Going to church, in fact, offers about the same kind of attraction as did the orthodox Christian heaven. The only reason why people ever wished to get into the Christian heaven was that there was a hell to keep out of. And the vital condition for regular church attendance is to make life outside the churches so deadly dull that even a church or chapel will be lively by comparison.

Some plain words appeared in last week's *To-Day* as to the discussion which has been going on in the Eastern Counties with regard to the effect of revivalist meetings on the morals of the people. "It would appear," *To-Day* says, "that a certain clergyman of the Established Church has been inveighing against the evils of neurotic religion as exemplified in certain sections of Nonconformity. While we are inclined to agree with him that the nervous strain to which the congregation are subjected on these occasions has far from a moral effect on certain physical types, we are not prepared to except the Established Church from all responsibility. At the Keswick Convention, for which the evangelical section of the Established Church is almost entirely responsible, we have had forced upon our notice cases of the most pitiable nature. No one, indeed, can walk the streets of Keswick at the time of the Convention without being struck by the evil effects of the religious meetings on certain nervous temperaments. Sometimes it is with difficulty that one is able to distinguish these pitiable cases from lunacy." We suppose the word "neurotic" in these references is only a euphemism for "erotic."

The new Licensing Bill threatens the orthodox alliance between alcohol and orthodoxy. The other day the Yorkshire Brewers' Association passed the following resolution:—"That, having regard to the unfair and illogical attitude of the clergy towards the licensing question, and other matters connected with the Trade, this meeting of Yorkshire Brewers pledges itself to do all in its power to assist the present movement for the disestablishment of the Anglican Church." So one by one the old landmarks disappear, although in this instance we imagine the separation will be of a merely temporary character.

To Correspondents.

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

R. H. R.—We see no reason for occupying our space with the insolence and absurdities of the Christian Evidence Brigade champion named Baker. Besides, there is nothing new in such persons claiming a monopoly of morals. That claim was a speciality of the Christian Evidence eloquence of (for instance) the sublime Walton Powell—the gentleman who did a long term for debauching girls, and another long term for bigamy.

W. P. PEARSON.—The date is booked.

T. DIXON.—Thanks for copy of the *Sunday Chronicle*, but we see no reason to worry over the views of "Hubert." The writer is an extremely Fabian member of the Fabian Society, who devotes a certain cleverness to arguing, as an Agnostic, that the best thing in the world is religion, and, as a Socialist, that the next best thing is Conservatism.

J. L. G. MACKINNON.—Many thanks. Both matters have already been dealt with in our columns. We devoted a special article to Canon Henson's essay. You may depend upon it that the Bishop of London is only shamming anxiety. He is not such a fool as to start a heresy-hunt.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Unless there is a second Edward Baker in the Christian Evidence field in London, you may regard our letter as sufficiently definite.

T. HIBBOTT.—We have seen to the matter.

J. C. M.—Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., may be all right as a legal gentleman. As a religious apostle, he is one of the greatest jokes of the age. We have again and again asked him for some evidence of his oft repeated statement that "he was once an Agnostic." Of course he never gives it. He dishes up that sort of thing piping-hot for the gods in his threepenny gallery. And his audience are nearly all gods.

A CORRESPONDENT asks us which is the best one-volume edition of Buckle. There is no best or worst. There is only one. But it is a very good one. It is edited by Mr. J. M. Robertson, and is the edition for the thoughtful masses. Messrs. Routledge are the publishers. Copies can be ordered from our own office.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks again for cuttings.

W. J. RUSSELL.—Obliged to you for the cuttings, though we cannot use them this week. We agree with you that the defence of Christianity in the *Clarion* is calculated to do more harm than even Mr. Blatchford's attack. Socialists of the Christian persuasion may be soft-hearted, but it seems pretty clear that they are soft-headed too. We confess that we never read such drivel before—not continuously, week after week. The truth is, we take it, that the men of brains in the Christian Churches are too wise to debate. They know what they stand to lose.

Owing to the Editor's absence from London this week some correspondence stands over until our next issue, and the "Sugar Plums" department is not so well stocked as usual.

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

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

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

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

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

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Personal.

92 Jetty-road, Great Yarmouth,
June, 1904.

TO MY FELLOW FREETHINKERS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

I am repeating my appeal to you on behalf of our leader, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, who is fortunately a good deal better in health than he was this time last year, though not yet all that he should be in this respect. I ask you to provide him with the aid that will enable him to leave off platform work during the present summer, and devote all his leisure to the recruiting of his physical strength.

You probably are aware that Mr. Foote quitted residence in London last October, acting on urgent medical advice; and as the change had to be made in a hurry he was burdened with unavoidable heavy expenses. He has also found in other ways the truth of the adage that sickness is more costly than health. And everybody knows now, after the revelations of nearly three years ago, that the President of the National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*, so far from being a millionaire, has only a very limited and precarious income, which thousands of ministers of religion would look down upon with contempt.

Mr. Foote has been a veritable martyr to our cause, and is still a leader of our no longer forlorn hope whose place it would be very difficult to fill; and I am sure the party must rejoice to see him recovering from the effects of the severe illness they know he suffered. We must try to make his recovery complete, and our part of the process is to free him from financial anxiety.

Subscriptions may be forwarded to me at the above address, or direct to Mr. Foote, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. Every subscription will be personally acknowledged by him.

Yours fraternally,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.

[Readers of this letter are requested to note that it will not be repeated. One insertion should be sufficient for those who have any interest in the matter.—EDITOR.]

Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire friends will note that Mr. Foote delivers two lectures next Sunday (June 26) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester—afternoon and evening. This will be his last bit of platform work until the end of August.

To-day (June 19) Mr. C. Cohen visits Newcastle-on-Tyne for the purpose of delivering two open-air lectures on the Town Moor. This is an annual function that Mr. Cohen has performed for something like ten years, and the large audiences generally warrant the visit. We hope that this will be no exception to the rule. The morning meeting is at eleven, and the evening meeting at seven.

We beg to again call the attention of our readers to the English representation at the forthcoming International Freethought Congress at Rome in September next. It is too soon to expect many replies to last week's notice; but a few have come to hand, and we would strongly urge all who intend joining to write *at once*. We have no doubt that plenty will come along at the end, but an early assurance of as large a number as is possible will enable the Executive to secure specially advantageous terms for the whole party.

Mr. Joseph Edwards, whose name has been so long and honorably associated with the *Labor Annual*, which is now published at the *Echo* office in London, has broached through that journal the idea of a Central Institute for all the *bona fide* advanced Societies in the metropolis. Of course it would have to be on a big scale to be of real utility. The idea is to include under one roof scores of offices for Societies now scattered all over London, and a central office where advanced people could be put into touch with the representatives of whatever cause they were seeking. Also a reference library of all classes of advanced literature, and a shop for the distribution of advanced periodicals, pamphlets, and other publications; which seems to us one of the brightest and most promising features of Mr. Edwards's scheme. There would also be committee rooms and halls for public meetings. Altogether it appears to us to be a capital conception. But the question is, Can it be carried out? And can securities be found for adequate and impartial management? We believe the difficulties are not insuperable, and we should like to see a representative committee called together to sit upon this project, and hatch it, if possible, into realisation. One preliminary difficulty, of course, would be the raising of the money; for nothing less than a quarter of a million would suffice. The working-classes could easily raise that sum, but we all know they won't. It seems a splendid chance for a wise as well as benevolent millionaire.

Mr. Swinburne's new poem, "The Altar of Righteousness," in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* is a surprising item in such a publication. It is a splendid metrical outburst of sheer Atheism, recalling the "Hymn of Man" in *Songs Before Sunrise*. Here are a few lines as a sample:—

Yet, ere faith, a wandering water, froze and curdled into creeds,
Earth, elate as heaven, adored the light that quickens dreams
to deeds.

God by god flits past in thunder, till his glories turn to shades:
God to god bears wondering witness how his gospel flames and
fades.

More was each of these, while yet they were, than man their
servant seemed:

Dead are all of these, and man survives who made them while
he dreamed.

The long fine passage on St. Theresa is full of Mr. Swinburne's passionate love of adorable womanhood; the womanhood which the Churches have so cursed and exploited. The reference to Christ as a man is powerful, but rather against the trend of the best modern criticism. The impeachment of Paul is terribly bitter. But now, as of old, Mr. Swinburne pours out the vials of his wrath and sarcasm upon the "terrible Jehovah," who was always thundering and lightning and slaughtering. The following will please the Nonconformists as much as the Anglicans and the Catholics:—

God Cerberus yelps from his throats triune; but his day, which
was night,

Is quenched, with its stars and the notes of its night-birds, in
silence and light.

The flames of its fires and the psalms of their psalmists are
darkened and dumb:

Strong winter has withered the palms of his angels, and
stricken them numb.

God, father of lies, God, son of perdition, God, spirit of
ill,

Thy will that for ages was done is undone as a deal God's
will.

Splendid are the references to Bruno, Rabelais, and Shakespeare. Mr. Swinburne concludes by singing of "the rule of right" which has always been emerging through the clouds of faith, and is now more visible and recognised than ever before. He sees "the light of manhood rise on the twilight of the Gods." Which is precisely what we, in our own poor way, have been indicating all these years in the *Freethinker*.

Obituary.

ON May 30 there died at Sale, Cheshire, aged 54 years, Edward Brooks, a sturdy and consistent Freethinker for many years. Of a modest and retiring disposition, he did not obtrude, but never disguised, his opinions, and he could stand like a rock when any question of principle was involved. During his life he contributed liberally to many movements for the uplifting and freeing of humanity. His illness was a long and distressing one—practically seven years, during which he bore with patient cheerfulness the gradual loss of his strength and activity, though he kept his intellect clear to the last. He was buried at Padliham, Lancs, on June 2, without any religious ceremony, his friend, F. W. Stansfield, giving only a short address expressing his esteem and affection, and making clear the reasons for a Secular funeral.

Faculty of Theology.

IT is really marvellous how conservative human nature is. Almost everything seems to have unconquerable power to persist. Endurance and a clinging to life is a characteristic of all things. In the economy of Nature as a whole it is difficult to say what is bad and what is good, or whether all things are not equally good and necessary. Good and bad are interchangeable. The good becomes bad, and the bad becomes good. What is bad to one is good to another, and what is good to one is bad to another. The flesh of a slaughtered sheep may be good to man, but the slaughtering was bad to the sheep. The good in many cases seems to spring from something bad, or what appears to us bad; but if the bad was necessary to produce the good, it was really not bad but good. The same train of thought might be pursued in many directions.

It is often said that truth will prevail, and that good will triumph over the bad. We naturally hope that the saying is true. It would be sad to think otherwise. But is it not possible that our wish is father to the thought? To outward appearance

errors are as vital as truths, and sometimes they seem to be more so. At present superstitious errors hold the field successfully against the clearest facts. Whether they will do so in the future we cannot say. It is not in the power of man to read the future. But in the present, facts without number clearly prove that the most absurd errors are able to vanquish the clearest truths. Superstition seems to agree with human nature. Men seem to delight in absurdities. They receive delusions with avidity, and they cling to them as they cling to life. They love their delusions, and would sooner die than give them up.

To witness the struggle between truth and error, and the power of error over men, is almost enough to make one a pessimist. The prophet of science finds it hard to get a few disciples, whilst the prophet of falsehoods finds it easy to draw thousands. The influence that a professional revivalist can exert over vast crowds by twaddle, makes one doubt whether folly is not stronger than wisdom. There is nothing in a religious way too ridiculous to be received with enthusiasm. The more irrational the doctrine, the more seems to be its power to command success. The rise of Mormonism, Spiritism, Christian Science, and other fads seems to show that the less sense a movement has the greater will be its success. For that matter, the wit of man would fail to devise a religious system more absurd than the systems existing to-day, and that very probably is the reason why religious impostors find it so easy to gull the masses.

In the case of the masses it is possible to find many a key to unlock some of the doors that hide so many conflicting facts. At all events, they seem to be conflicting, for there is scarcely a statement that can be made but the opposite might be supported by many plausible arguments and what seem to be facts. Much may be explained by the power of heredity and the conservation of types. The Jewish face of the wandering Hebrew tribes is reproduced from age to age with little variation. Man to-day carries with him evidence of his savage origin. The most refined religion bears within itself marks of its ancient and low beginning. Men and their superstitions have grown together, and are almost inseparable. The masses cling to their religions, because they are ignorant and know no better. They think their errors are truths, and the rites of their church are ordered by their God. Their priests have so taught them. Knowledge has been purposely kept from them in the interest of the church, which in the main means the interest of the priesthood. The masses are more to be pitied than to be blamed, for heredity and environment have made them what they are.

But what are we to say and think of the professors and teachers who know and ought to speak out boldly, but few of them seldom do? They have no religious belief, in a theological sense. They know that all the religions and all the gods of the world are man-made superstitious imaginations. They know that science and theology are irreconcilable. They know, however small their knowledge, that the verified facts of science are true and that all the religions known are not true. Amongst themselves, in private conversation, their unbelief and agnosticism is freely avowed. But in public many of them are dumb. Some conceal their scepticism; some disguise their agnosticism in ambiguous phrases. Others—but only a few—weave meaningless sentences to convey an idea that they are orthodox believers, when they are nothing of the kind. And few honor science and themselves by declaring their convictions boldly and clearly, regardless of consequences. If all professors and teachers were to do the same a revolution would soon be made in the religious world. Why do they not avow their convictions? In the case of doctors, lawyers, tradesmen, and the like there is an evident need for discretion. But teachers and professors in our colleges and universities could afford to ignore the frowns of the Church. How is their silence to be explained? Is it caused by a lingering remnant of

old beliefs remaining ineradicated? Is it caused by cowardice—a fear of Mrs. Grundy? Is it deception and a desire not to offend the Church? Or is it a notion that knowledge is for the few only, and ignorance and superstition are needed for the masses? Is it atavism?

I have been led to write these thoughts by reading an account of a resolution passed by a large majority to establish a Faculty of Theology in the Victoria University, Manchester. To their credit be it said, there was a minority that opposed the resolution. The pity of it is that they were not strong enough to save the University from the dishonor of adopting a resolution so reactionary and unnecessary. To establish a Faculty of Theology in a new University at the beginning of the twentieth century is a regrettable anachronism, a going backward instead of forward. Theology already occupies too much room and time, and wastes too much talent, energy, and means in theological colleges, without adding to them the resources of a University.

It would be interesting to know how many, if any, of the majority believe in theology. It would not surprise me to be told that none of them did. At all events, I cannot believe a majority of the members are believers in supernaturalism; and yet they vote for a Faculty to study exploded superstitions. Our posterity, when they read the account, will wonder how such a thing could have happened in an age of science and evolution. To call theology a science is a misnomer. There is nothing in it that can be verified, and what cannot be verified, cannot be science. Anthropology includes everything in theology that can be profitably studied, and a faculty of anthropology would be far more useful and valuable than a faculty of theology. It is sad to say it, that theologians are not to be trusted as investigators and students of theology. They have preconceived ideas and theories to uphold, vested interests to serve, and wealthy powerful associations to satisfy. However honest they may be, it is difficult for them to be independent and thoroughly truthful. Many professors in theological colleges, who would be honest if they could and dared, when they made the least confession of doubt and the most cautious possibility of mistakes or errors, have had the watching heresy hunters down upon them like a pack of hungry wolves. Human nature is weak, and daily bread is valuable, to theological professors and teachers as well as to all others. We can therefore partially sympathise with them placed as they are in a very difficult situation, but their teaching must be received with watchful wariness.

In theological colleges connected with sects and churches I suppose it would be impossible to have professors and teachers independent and free to teach whatever they believe to be the truth, irrespective of the creeds of their churches. They are neither independent nor free. They are placed in their position to teach and defend the orthodoxy of their churches. Men suspected of heresy would not be appointed, and if afterwards avowed they would soon be removed. The faculty is created, not to discover truth, but to uphold and teach existing doctrines, irrespective of their truth or falsehood. Sectarian colleges cannot possibly be independent, impartial or free, and their teaching is bound to be more or less one-sided and unreliable. Therefore, if the faculty of theology in the University is to be dependent on any Church, the teaching will be covered with suspicion. To avoid that mistrust the professors and teachers must be unconnected with and independent of all churches, and irremovable by the wrath and censure of the religious world. In public Universities, the public should not tolerate a faculty of theology on any other terms.

Faculty of Theology, what does it mean? Has it any definite meaning at all? Could any one of the majority who supported the resolution tell what it is, or which it is? Are there not as many theologies as there are religions? What theology are they going to teach in the Victoria University? Is it Catholic, Protestant, Calvin, Arminian, Unitarian,

Mormon, Swedenborgian, Mohammedan, Greek Church, Jewish, Pagan, or any other of the endless number, or all of them? Really a faculty that can catch and hold such a will-o'-the-wisp, will be a marvellous faculty indeed. With so many theologies in the world, can they be anything but superstitions? And, as such, is it not time to say plainly and sternly that the place for theology is outside and not inside a University? Why should a University establish a faculty to prolong the life of a dying creed? The theology of to-day will be the mythology of the future. The mythologies, fairy tales, and folk-lore of the world are all dead theologies. In their day they were all lively enough as thousands besides Socrates found to their cost. They are dead enough now, and the theology of to-day, in the coming future, in spite of the faculty, will be as dead as they.

R. J. DERFEL.

The Jewish Life of Christ.—IV.

(Continued from p. 379.)

FOR the Alexandrians all philosophy had its origin in Aristotle or Plato. "It was in the fourth century before the Christian era that Plato, the Athenian, visited Egypt to study at Heliopolis, where was then a celebrated school of philosophy.....That Plato's opinions were very much the fruit of his visit to this celebrated school is clear from his writings.....But had Plato's philosophy died with himself it would claim little notice here; it is the writings of his followers that make us note its rise as important in the history of Egyptian opinions." * Now, when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek, at the instance of Ptolemy Philadelphus, B.C. 280—the Greeks thus forming their first acquaintance with the Hebrew Scriptures—a school of writers arose whose aim was to combine the philosophy of Plato with the Hebrew religion. The most distinguished of these writers was Philo, a learned and distinguished Alexandrian Jew. Says the Rev. Baring-Gould:—

"The Alexandrian Jews never submitted to be involved in the meshes of rabbinism. They produced a school of thinkers, of whom Aristobulus was the first known exponent, and Philo the last expression, which sought to combine Mosaism with Platonism, to explain the Pentateuch as the foundation of a philosophic system closely related to the highest and best theories of the Greeks.

"But what is far more remarkable is to find in Philo, born between thirty and forty years before Christ, the key to most of Paul's theology.

"The Fathers, perplexed at finding Pauline words, expressions, ideas, in the writings of Philo, and unwilling to admit that Paul had derived them from Philo, invented a myth that the Alexandrian Jew came to Rome and was there converted to the Christian faith. Chronology and a critical examination of the writings of the Jewish Plato have burst that bubble." (*The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, pp. 19, 21.)

The Rev. J. W. Lake, in his *Plato, Philo, and Paul*, gives many parallels between the writings of Philo and the New Testament to show the "Identity of the Christ of the New Testament with the Logos of Philo" (p. 40), and declares that it would be easy "to multiply such extracts as these to a very large extent, and so to show that before Jesus commenced his ministry, possibly even before Jesus was born, Philo was familiarising the minds of his countrymen with ideas concerning 'a second or delegated God,' 'the first-born son of the Eternal Father,' 'the express image of his person,' 'the word of God by whom the world was made,' etc. We have this thought largely reproduced in the Fourth Gospel, that ascribed to John" (p. 37).

The same writer, in his *Paul: The Disowned Apostle* (p. 39), cites Justin Martyr, the first apologist for Christianity, as saying, in his second Apology, that

* Sharpe. *Egyptian Mythology and Egyptian Christianity*, pp. 71-72.

"Socrates knew Christ in part, for Christ is that 'Logos' [reason] which is in all." Again, in his first Apology, he several times identifies Christ with "the Logos"..... Similar views of the identity of Jesus Christ with the 'Logos,' or the Divine Word or Wisdom, find expression in nearly every writer of the second century—Diognetus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and notably the opening verses of the Gospel attributed to John." And, as he points out, the religious philosophy of Philo, "with the exception of the name and personality of Jesus, was, as a system of ethics and as a spiritual philosophy, almost identical with the Christianity that Paul was teaching, and the Church at Rome was a Church of the 'Logos' rather than a Church of Christ. Paul, we may presume, for we know little of actual fact, aimed to carry this Church a step onward, and to substitute Jesus the Christ as the actual personality of the 'Logos'" (p. 40). It should be borne in mind that the writings of Justin and Paul were composed before the four Gospels of our New Testament.

However, the Talmud Jesus, who lived a hundred years B.C., could have known nothing of Philo, who was born thirty or forty years B.C. But Philo was only one of a whole school of adaptors of the Platonic philosophy to the Hebrew Scriptures, and Plato lived 400 B.C. The learned and orthodox Neander admits that "The Platonists were the nearest of all philosophers to Christianity, and they might find in their religious notions and their psychology many points of union with Christianity."* Mosheim also notices that "There were none whose sentiments and discipline were so well received by the ancient Christians as those of the Platonists and Pythagoreans."†

It should be borne in mind that Philo was not the founder of the school whose endeavor it was to amalgamate the philosophy of Plato with the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact he may be said to be the last exponent of this phase of thought, which commenced two hundred years before his birth, when the Bible was translated into Greek.

As Keningale Cook well says:—

"The assured manner in which Philo enunciates his views leads to the conclusion that he was not the first to affiliate himself to a religious philosophy drawn from Platonic and Hebrew sources indiscriminately, but that a school possessed of a large traditional learning with liberal tendencies of thought, must have been in existence for some time.

"In any case, Philo was in a greater degree an adapter than an originator, and his voluminous works are a sufficient evidence that there was a school of mystical thought existing among the cultured Jews before the birth of Jesus." (*The Fathers of Jesus*, vol. ii., pp. 328-234).

One of the earliest writers of this school was Aristobulus, one of the translators of the Bible into Greek, who "wrote a species of preface, or dedication to the king, which was intended to prevent misconceptions relative to certain biblical expressions respecting God."‡ He also "wrote a book to prove that the Greek sages drew their philosophy from Moses, and addressed his book to Ptolemy Philometer."§ He is described by Keningale Cook as:—

"Aristobulus, an Alexandrian Jew, but believed to have been a Galilean by birth, was one of the first of the school of which Philo is so pronounced an adherent. He belongs to the second century before our era, and is believed to have been one of the translators of the Septuagint. Origen cites his commentaries as an example of the allegorising method, which afforded an excellent means of mediating between the rude legends, alternating with supremely poetic and religious thought, of the Hebrew scripture, and the more philosophic literature of Greece."||

He is no doubt, says the same author, the same Jewish priest with a Greek name, described in the Apocrypha as "Aristobulus, teacher of Ptolemy the

king, and one that came of the stock of the Christ priests" (2 Macc. i., 10).

The Rev. Baring-Gould, who says that there can be no doubt that Paul was influenced by the Alexandrine school, and that it is probable that he had read some of Philo's works, points out, that "How much he drew from the writings of Aristobulus, the peripatetic, cannot be told, as none of the books of that learned but eclectic Jew have been preserved."** There must have been many other writers of this school whose works have not descended to us.

Now, Jesus the disciple of Joshua ben Perachiah, fled to Alexandria with his master, about 87 B.C. For that is the time when King Jannai butchered the 800 Pharisees. He must have remained there at least nine years, for Jannai did not die until the year 78 B.C. So that Jesus had plenty of time to become acquainted with the Septuagint and the school of thought represented by Aristobulus and his school.

The Christian Fathers themselves declare that Monks were introduced into the Western World from Egypt.

"From Philo also we learn that a large body of Egyptian Jews had embraced the monastic rules and the life of self-denial, which we have already noticed among the Egyptian priests. The bore the name of Therapeutae. They spent their time in solitary meditation and prayer, and only saw one another on the seventh day. They did not marry; the women lived the same solitary and religious life as the men. Fasting and mortification of the flesh were the foundation of their virtues."†

The Egyptian monks formed a colony on the shores of Lake Marea, or Mareotis, close to Alexandria. "They read the sacred Scriptures," says Philo, and "they possess, besides, compositions of ancient men, who were the founders of the school."‡ Eusebius, who declared that their practices "are to be found among none but in the religion of Christians" thinks that it is highly probable that the ancient commentaries which he says they have, are the very Gospels and writings of the apostles."§

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Martin McGrundy's Peculiar Experience.

BY PLATON BROUNOFF.

Martin McGrundy was an honest Tammany man (please don't smile—such things happen). He was the president of the wire-choppers' union, also a member of many benevolent associations, in good church standing, but in all a plain, every-day man, without education to speak of, and an excellent citizen of the borough of Manhattan. But, as it happens with all excellent people, he had to say his last farewell, was packed up in a box and sent C. O. D. to Everblue cemetery, in Brooklyn. At his funeral in Manhattan, of course, all the organisations to which McGrundy had belonged were represented. It was a magnificent display of rejoicing on everybody else's account. All were thinking: "Thank God, it is not my funeral." Everything went off smoothly. From the religious ceremonies and eloquent tributes to the well-dressed pallbearers, the carriages with flowers, and people with mourning faces and healthy bodies, everything was all right. But—there is always a "but." I would suggest, dear reader, that the word "but" be stricken out of the dictionary; it is always coming in unawares or when you don't need it at all. But to go on with our story.

When the procession returned from the ferry house and the crowd dwindled away to a few, as our grief dwindles when our friends or relatives leave our neighborhood, the few people who had come in carriages went to the cemetery, where the grave-diggers, anticipating a liberal tip, stood near the fresh excavation. The Catholic priest exercised his eloquence, and then, just as the grave-diggers were about to put McGrundy with his strong box into the safest place on earth, the grave, something unusual happened. Warmed, perhaps, by the hot-air emanations of the priest, or revived by the fresh air of the cemetery, McGrundy raised the cover

* *History of the Christian Religion*, i., 165.

† *Ecclesiastical History*, i., 195.

‡ *The Gospel History*, p. 7.

§ Baring-Gould, *Lost and Hostile Gospels* (p. xx).

|| *The Fathers of Jesus*, p. 247.

* *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. 20.

† Sharpe, *Egyptian Mythology*, etc., p. 79.

‡ Heningale Cooke, *The Fathers of Jesus*, p. 19.

§ *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 2, chap. xvii.

from the coffin, sat up straight, and looked around perplexedly, as though he had forgotten something. What followed upon McGrundy's unexpected resuscitation may be imagined. Everybody except the grave-diggers ran away. McGrundy turned to these and asked them three questions: First, whether the grave-diggers belonged to a union. They answered, "No!" To the second question, whether the grave had a union label, they answered again, "No!" To the third: To whom does the property of the cemetery belong? the grave-diggers replied: "To the Hochi Pochi Trust Co."

Receiving this intelligence, Martin McGrundy got out of the coffin, walked to the entrance of the cemetery, and took the first trolley-car to Manhattan. It was rather a cold afternoon, and Martin felt a little chilly; but you will agree with me, dear reader, that to feel a little chilly in the cold but pure air even of Brooklyn is preferable to lying in the damp soil of the Everblue cemetery.

So McGrundy came to New York and went straight to Tammany Hall, where a meeting of the district bosses was holding. When Martin stepped into the meeting-room there was some confusion, but when order had been restored the chairman asked McGrundy why he was dressed in his Sunday best, to which McGrundy replied that he was about to be buried, but as he found out that the grave-diggers were non-union men, that the grave had no union label, and the property of the cemetery belonged to a Trust, and as everybody knew that he, Martin McGrundy, was all his life a union man and a trust fighter, he therefore positively refused to be buried under such circumstances. He wanted to be shipped straight to heaven. A special conference was at once held by the Tammany chiefs, who decided to cable to the Pope a thousand dollars for a special pass. In response to the request, the pass came by cable, with a supplementary letter of introduction to St. Peter. McGrundy was put in a special rapid transit car, and the next day presented himself at the entrance of Paradise, where St. Peter received him with open arms, owing, of course, to the kind letter of his holiness.

For a month McGrundy went about heaven enjoying himself, but soon tiring of "holy laziness," set about organising a Martin McGrundy Mutual Improvement Association. He got out circulars calling everybody to the first meeting; but (again a "but") nobody came. Martin was deeply disappointed, but not discouraged, and began a canvass of the district to find out the reasons of the people not responding to his invitation. What he learned was this: that everybody seemed to be satisfied with his lot in heaven. Here there was plenty to eat, golden oranges, luscious grapes, diamond chops, no work at all; beautiful harmony of celestial choirs and orchestras, in which all dissonances were prohibited and only consonances permitted. Here was an unlimited quantity of sweet nectar to drink, and lots of time to sleep. McGrundy tried to explain to the contented souls that work makes life sweet, that to be satisfied is to be dead; but all his efforts were wasted, because, since the people of heaven did not need to work, then they did not need to exercise their brains, and as a natural consequence their thinking capacity decayed, and thought degenerated into mere emotion.

"Well," said the disappointed McGrundy, "I guess that after all I do not care much for heaven. There is no life here at all; it is all harmony, but I could never enjoy harmony unless there was a little discord occasionally. And unless a man works, how can he rest? Existence that is all harmony and rest is not life—it is death! I believe I prefer to go to hell." And so he did, to the great dismay of St. Peter, who was shocked to hear that a good Catholic should exchange heaven for hell.

McGrundy took the elevator, and landed in the basement—that is to say, in hell. A hot debate was in progress at the time of his arrival. McGrundy sat down in a corner, unobserved, and listened to the discussion with intense interest. There were in the place Prohibitionists, Single-Taxers, Socialists, Anarchists, Liberals, Republicans and Democrats were not there. As McGrundy afterwards learned, all politicians go direct to heaven, where intellectual effort is unnecessary, and are just fitted for it, while all the reformers and radicals, being kickers and mentally alert, go to hell, where they find a great field for kicking.

"I tell you," McGrundy heard a Prohibitionist say, "if you want to do away with the misery of the world, you must close the saloons; it's there the cause of all misfortune lies."

"You talk like a child," said the Single-Taxer; "it is the saloon that makes the working people forget their troubles. Give the people free land; let every working man own a house so he need not pay out all his wages for rent; then he will have time to think about the bettering of his condition."

"It is very easy to say 'Give the working man free land and let every working man own a house,'" declared the Socialist; "those are nice words all right; but who will

give them the free land, and how will the working man get his house? Such theories may be good enough for heaven, but not for hell or for the earth. I say, do away with private property; let the people own the earth; let them own the tools of production and the machinery; give work to everyone and let everyone have the entire product of his work without paying toll to bosses, middlemen, and agents. Then you do away with misery. Let the people vote for Socialism, and —"

"Vote," interrupted the Anarchist, "don't you see the result of your 'voting'? Whom do the working men elect as their representatives? Take for example a country like the United States. There are about thirty millions of working people, or people who make a scant living by wage slavery. Have they any representatives in Congress that stand for the interest of the working men? No! Has a single representative introduced a single law to check the audacity of the capitalist class and to protect the working man? No, sir! And why do such things happen? Because the people hold to the superstition that they need somebody to govern them, someone in authority."

"Now, look here," returned the Socialist, "I agree with you that the present state of things is bad, but you are entirely wrong with your idea that no government is necessary."

Of course it is not necessary," exclaimed the Anarchist. "What right has another person to tell me to do things in the way he likes? Who gives him the right?"

"Society gives him the right. Your mistake," said the Socialist, "is that you look at the individual as a separate unit. That is the fatal error that all you Anarchist individualists make! A human being is not a separate unit, but a part of that human body which is called society and which cannot be taken apart. I will give you a musical example to illustrate my theory. Take the present orchestra, with all the modern instruments, and analyse it. The old composers, Beethoven and Mozart, never dreamed that the individuality of each instrument could be so developed. There are four groups or families of instruments: string, reed, brass, and percussion. Every instrument is so perfected and the technic of each player is so developed that the most difficult melodies and passages can be played on nearly every instrument. But while a melody played on one instrument may touch you, it will never give you harmony, or the combination of several sounds at the same time, whereas when the whole orchestra, or most of the instruments, play together, under the direction of the conductor, it produces a most wonderful combination of sounds, which uplifts you and gives you entire esthetic satisfaction. But what is necessary to produce that harmony? A law, a conductor, an authority which holds each instrument within certain limits, an authority which does not allow the stronger sounding instruments to suppress the weakest. In other words, my idea is that in the society of human beings there must be an authority to check the encroachment of one individual upon the rights of another individual or of society, and *vice versa*. Yes, some authority is necessary, not an authority to rule and make laws for the people, but to protect the rights of the individual and of the whole. Society gives to the individual all the comforts of life and civilisation, and the individual, after perfecting himself and cultivating his talents and abilities, must contribute his science and art to society, simply because if he keeps all his acquired knowledge and art to himself, he will degenerate, and his talents and abilities will decay."

"You are both right and both wrong," said the Liberal. "My opinion is that humanity will be free and happy only when the egoist and altruist learn that there is no such thing as absolute egoism or altruism. The individual cannot exist without society, nor society without the individual."

McGrundy, who had been sitting all this time in the corner, got up, and said: "Gentlemen, I have listened with great interest to your debate. You do not know me, but I am a plain, every-day man. I have heard many words: *Socialism, anarchism, altruism, egoism, and other 'isms,*" and I am sorry to say that I could not make out what they meant. One thing I did make out, and that is, that *all of you want to make the people happier*. Wouldn't it be better if, instead of debating these high theories among yourselves, you would go among the *people*, study their needs, and give them *education and enlightenment*? I have just come from heaven, where I stayed long enough to find out that it is lack of education that keeps the people satisfied with a hell on earth, and heaven with its mental stagnation afterwards."

Dear reader, don't you think that McGrundy was right? It is education that the people need first of all—education founded not on speculative theories and economic fantasies, or religious superstitions, but on *positive knowledge*?

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent or postcard.

LONDON.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road) : 7, Joseph McCabe, "Church and State in France."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street) : 11.15, Dr. Coit, "Chinese Slavery and the Licensing Bill."

OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. : Station-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies; Brockwell Park, 3.15, J. W. Thresh; 6.30, J. W. Thresh.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste) : 11.30, G. Parsons. Members' meeting at 7, Stanley's Temperance Bar, High-street, Stepney, June 19.

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

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring) : Thursday, 23, at 8, J. Shield, "Plant Life." Sunday, 26, at 3.30, members meet, New Inns, Handsworth.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston) : 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Aynley Park) : 11, G. Weir, "Difficulties of Belief"; Woodhouse Moor : 3, "The Apostle's Creed"; Town Hall Square : 7.30, "Putting Christianity to the Test."

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.

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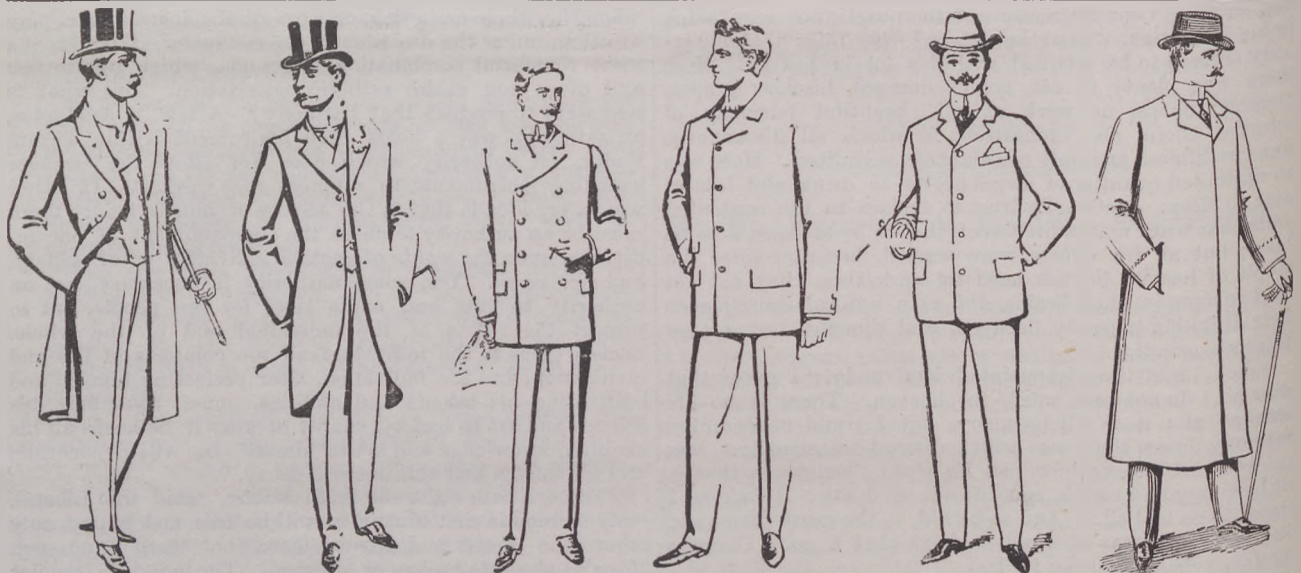
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