

THE Freethinker

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What reason have you for believing that God will do better in another world than he has done and is doing in this?—INGERSOLL.

The Dismal Failure.

THE worst of Christianity is that it is such a dismal failure. Jesus is reputed to have said that the tree must be judged by its fruit. Apply that test to the religion which bears his name, and what is the result? We may settle the point by taking a single fact. Not many years ago the Japanese had an official report presented to them as to the advisability of their accepting the Christian religion—and the report was unfavorable. The social and moral state of Christian nations was such as to condemn Christianity. The commission recommended the Japanese not to plant a shoot in their own country from so rotten a tree. So they accepted Western science and declined Western religion.

What reader of Newman's *Apologia* does not remember the magnificent and pathetic passage in which he describes the contradiction between the idea of God within him and what he beheld when he looked into the world and human society? Amongst the miserable things he enumerated were "the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion." All which, apparently, ought to have been banished from the world, or hopelessly subdued, in the course of nearly two thousand years.

A very different writer from Newman preached a powerful sermon from the same text forty years afterwards. James Cotter Morison, the Positivist, in his *Service of Man*, had a chapter on "What Christianity Has Done." He argued that it had done very little for men in this world, whatever it had (or had not) done for them in the next world; and he quoted Spurgeon, the famous Baptist, as declaring that the world was as bad in his day as it was in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Coventry Patmore, the poet, saw that Christianity could not be defended on the ground of its temporal benefit to mankind; so he took this difficulty by the horns and tried to turn it out of the way. Speaking as a Christian (he was a Roman Catholic), he admitted with regard to Christianity that "it is open to question whether the race, as a race, has been much affected by it, and whether the external and visible evil and good which have come of it do not pretty nearly balance one another." But what of that? Christianity was not meant to give people food and drink, comfortable houses, and easy work; nor to improve bad or even indifferently good people. Christ came for the sake of those who are called "the elect." He lived and died to give all a chance of salvation, but he knew and said that "the number of individuals to be actually benefited by his having done so would be few; so that it was practically for those few only that he lived and died." Judging Christianity, therefore, by the common standards of progress was judging it unfairly. It was asking whether it had done what it never professed to do. The real question was, had it done what it did profess to do? And the answer to that question could only be supplied by "the elect" themselves.

This was not meant to be clever. Coventry Patmore meant it seriously. But it was clever, all the same. His admission, however, remains; namely, that, as far as human reason and common evidence are concerned, Christianity is decidedly not a success.

The very reverse of this is maintained by the general crowd of Christian apologists, who pretend that all the good—even the *secular* good—in modern society is due to their religion. They are the salt of the earth, and they keep it from stinking. They do even more than that. They are gradually "curing" the whole mass. Such is their contention, and they satisfy the ignorant believers who listen to them; while those who are better informed smile at the latest arts of successful priestcraft, and recognise that a religion founded upon ignorance and credulity must preserve itself by a continuance of the same agencies.

Murder will out, and so will truth. The most plausible deceivers have their lucid intervals of sincerity. General Booth let the cat out of the bag in his last words to the Salvation Army Congress. This is what he said:—

"Those who followed the Master two thousand years ago turned the world upside down. Go and turn it upside down again. There is as much sin, as much wickedness, and as much devilry in the world as there was then—ay! and more."

Here we have a corroboration of Newman and Spurgeon. We are told by one who is supposed to know that the world is positively worse than it was nineteen hundred years ago. Not the *heathen* world, be it noticed, but the *Christian* world; for it is chiefly within Christendom that the Salvation Army operates, and we do not remember General Booth's having visited any heathen country in his circumnavigations of salvation.

Jesus Christ is said to have come from heaven to save the world. According to the New Testament there is no other name by which men *can* be saved. It is Jesus Christ or nobody. He lived a troubled life, died an ignominious death, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. But before leaving this world he commissioned his apostles (the first Salvation Army) to found his Church and preach his gospel to every creature. They did their best, though they did not quite "turn the world upside down." For three hundred years Christianity made its way by persuasion, and converted about a twentieth of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Then it secured the patronage of Constantine, and was made the State religion; and by means of bribery, ostracism, and bitter persecution it overcame all opposition in a century or so, and afterwards had the Western world to itself. From that time until quite recently it tolerated no rival, and wielded an absolute power. Its income runs into scores of millions, it has hundreds of thousands of churches and preachers, it has all the power of respectability on its side, and in some countries it still controls education. It does so in Great Britain, for instance; yet it is in the capital of Great Britain, the biggest Christian city on earth, and the birthplace of this very Salvation Army, that General Booth unhesitatingly declares that there is more sin, wickedness, and devilry in the world now than there was before Christianity was introduced.

Did any Freethinker ever frame a more terrible indictment of Christianity than this?

G. W. FOOTE.

Dr. Horton on Atheism.

DR. R. F. HORTON, of Lyndhurst-road Church, Hampstead, has been for some time suffering from an affection of the eye. This has doubtless given him an opportunity of reflecting upon the perfect character of God's work, for one of his earliest sermons, after his return to the pulpit, is on "The New Atheism." Why "New" is rather difficult to discover. Atheism itself is not a new thing; there has been nothing *new* in the exposition of Atheism by its representatives—except so far as they have availed themselves of the most recent developments of knowledge to strengthen their arguments—and there is certainly nothing new in the arguments of Dr. Horton. Probably the word is just thrown in to impress upon the congregation the up-to-date character of Dr. Horton's sermons.

The text of Dr. Horton's sermon is supplied by three volumes by Haeckel, Maeterlinck, and Zangwill. Of Haeckel Dr. Horton does not bother to say much; he reminds his congregation that he dealt with *him* some time ago, and it is hardly to be expected that there is much of Haeckel left to-day—at least, not in the speaker's estimation. It is only necessary to mention Haeckel's book, *The Riddle of the Universe*, as "apparently by some it is credited with honesty;" but Dr. Horton, who described Haeckel as rude, ill-mannered, and ignorant, does not labor under any delusions on this head.

It is only fair to Dr. Horton to point out that he does profess to discover something new in connection with modern Atheism. Thirty years ago, he says, men dismissed God with a shout of delight; now they lose him with a sigh of despondency; and one often detects "a most pathetic note, as if men were conscious that something is slipping out of the world which has been not only the beauty and joy, but the comfort and support, of the life of men." A deliverance that is as muddle-headed as Dr. Horton's usually are. A man with any ability for logical thinking would have reflected that when a person gives up a belief—or, to be more accurate, when a belief leaves an individual—its power to give comfort and support is gone. A belief can only give comfort and support while it is treated as genuine; when it is looked upon as false one can no more find support in pretending to believe it than a hungry man can fill his stomach with the picture of a well-laden dining-table. And those who know Dr. Horton will not be surprised to find that, while in one sentence he finds the world now dismissing God with a note of "poignant regret," in an adjoining sentence he finds that Haeckel's position that science has "abolished the idea of God, and has destroyed the belief in immortality," is accepted with great "joy" "by people in England as if it were a veritable gospel." So that, as people accept with great joy something they receive with a "poignant regret," one may consider the account, debit and credit, equal, and we are as we were.

Dr. Horton also warns his hearers that the arguments for the existence of God remain absolutely untouched by modern science and modern thought. "Such evidences of God as there were abide"—a statement that has a certain truth about it, although not such as the preacher imagines. All the ingenuity in the world cannot take something from nothing; nor can it, by adding nothing to nothing, make something. There is exactly as much genuine evidence for the existence of God as there was a thousand years ago; and there will be just as much a thousand years hence.

The only evidence Dr. Horton produces in favor of his statement that people now regard the disappearance of the gods with regret is a few lines from a poem by Mr. Zangwill depicting the vanishing of the gods, and ending with the line, "And man is left alone with man." This is a terrible prospect—to Dr. Horton. This line, he says, "exactly expresses" the New Atheism, although it seems to me equally true of *all* Atheism. But why should this be depressing? The only reason one can see is the ingrained

and inherited pessimism of Christianity, which, although now dropping the orthodox terminology, still thinks in terms of the essential depravity of human nature. If Atheism be correct, says Dr. Horton, there is nothing for us to depend upon but human intelligence, human industry, and human co-operation; and if this be all, "God help us!" Well, the Atheist is quite content, even cheerful, in the face of such a calamity; and to him reliance upon these forces seems far healthier, and far more helpful, than to treat human nature as though honesty were impossible in the absence of a policeman, or co-operation a dream in the absence of a slave-driver.

The arguments (?) against this "New Atheism" are, we are told, threefold. There is first the argument from the universe. Here Dr. Horton reproduces the argument from design in all its ancient crudity, evidently under the impression that the repetition of an absurdity gives it an air of reasonableness. The universe is "ordered," "regular," and it is as absurd to say that it came without conscious design as it would be to assert that a clock came without a maker. Poor Paley! It may, however, be urged in Paley's defence that he wrote a century and a half ago. Dr. Horton lives in 1904, and his mind still revolves round the crude argument of the eighteenth century. Yet he is declared by the religious press to be one of the most cultured and most profound of modern religious leaders!

It would, I presume, be hopeless to expect Dr. Horton to recognise the truth that no cataloguing of the marvels of adaptation in the animal world, or of the incidence of forces in the physical world, would be enough to prove design. The logical inference of design is not due to the fact that certain wheels and levers produce the result of marking the time, but to the fact that this arrangement carries out a certain purpose. To establish design, the true relation is not that of cause and effect, but that of purpose and result. The result must be compared with what the assumed designer *intended* should take place; and *in* this instance we have a knowledge of *results* only, proof is clearly an impossibility.

The second argument of Dr. Horton is drawn from the nature of man; and its logical value is on all-fours with that just noted. Here, again, the preacher is moving in an atmosphere quite remote from modern thought. This argument is that, "since we as men are conscious of possessing an intellectual, a moral, and a spiritual nature.....we are bound to attribute to the cause of our being the moral, the intellectual, and the spiritual qualities which we find in ourselves."

Well, we are *bound* to assume nothing of the kind. It would be just as reasonable to attribute to the "cause of our being" whiskers as to give it intelligence and a moral nature. If I were to say that because we possess a spinal column, two arms, and two legs, we are bound to attribute these to the "cause of our being," even Dr. Horton would be able to see the absurdity of the argument. Yet it would puzzle anyone to give a reason for the first that would not serve equally well for the second.

What Dr. Horton is really struggling with is the utterly unscientific notion that there must be an identity of expression between cause and effect. *Because* man has intelligence, an intelligent cause is essential. *Because* man possesses a moral nature, there must be a moral nature in the "cause of his being." But as a matter of fact cause and effect never are identical. There is not a single instance in which an effect resembles the causes or conditions that produce it. One has merely to state that cause and effect are identical in appearance to see its gross absurdity. The merest smattering of scientific method would have been enough to guard a speaker against falling into such a vulgar fallacy. That man possesses among other qualities that of intelligence is a fact, but that this intelligence is an entity given to him by some being from a general supply, as a shopkeeper might give out soap or candles, is the most absurd of all absurd statements.

How does Dr. Horton know that intelligence is *not* the result of the combination of non-intelligent forces, just as sweetness may be found in a compound the constituents of which are deficient in that quality? Man's nature as a whole is the *result* of the combination of innumerable factors and forces, and to claim that the result must be, as a result, in its cause, is a statement that finds its chief strength in its lack of intelligibility.

Dr. Horton's third and final plea is "The Argument from Christ." It is not quite clear from the cheap rhetoric used in what way "Christ" is supposed to be a reason against Atheism; but, presumably, the argument runs that "Christ is a fact" in the lives of people, and therefore God exists, because the working of this "fact" proves a supernatural element. It is really difficult to deal seriously with an argument of this kind, especially when used by a man whose degree of M.A. would infer some amount of education. But one would ask, If this is true of "Christ," why is it not also true of Mahomet, or of any other semi-mythical character? After all, all that the facts really come to is that some people describe a change of opinion or belief in terms of one religious influence, some of another, and some in terms of an influence that is not religious at all. A really sober student would seek in these diverse cases for some common element that would explain all; but such a method seems quite foreign to the bent of Dr. Horton's mind. What we are treated to is, first, the statement that a fact like Christianity could never have been established by a book. If this means that it could never have happened that a committee met, wrote the New Testament, and so launched Christianity on the world, no one, I imagine, believes that this did happen. Dr. Horton ignores the simple consideration that the fundamental Christian legends existed prior to the alleged birth of Jesus, and that it was around these, by gradual accretions, some due to unconscious delusion and some to deliberate imposture, that the Christian legends gathered. And while the legends acted on the literature, the literature reacted on the legends.

Finally, we are favoured with a long disquisition based on Tolstoy, to the effect that Russia and European nations are going down hill because "the bulk" of the people "live without God." One moment the Atheists are in a pitiful minority, the next the "bulk" of the people of Europe are Atheists. So the preacher pulls whichever string suits the moment best, and the very intelligent congregation of Lyndhurst-road Church are apparently unable to perceive the hopeless self-contradiction of their favorite preacher. And if Russia—one of whose faults is that it is really *too* religious—is going down before Japan, what are we to say of the Japanese? The leaders of Japan are Agnostics, the "bulk" of the people are without God, in Mr. Horton's view; and so the argument comes to this—the Russians are being beaten because they are without God, and the Japanese are conquering because the "bulk" of them are Agnostics!

It is useless to follow Dr. Horton further. There is something in the New Testament about the dangers of the blind leading the blind, and one can only think mournfully of the results of a generation brought up in such an environment as Lyndhurst-road Church and looking for guidance to a man of Dr. Horton's curious mental calibre.

C. COHEN.

The Resurrection of Christ.

CAN anything new be said on so trite a subject as the Resurrection of Christ? Certainly no other subject is so frequently, dogmatically, and passionately dwelt upon by Christian teachers. It was the theme of which the Apostles never tired, which their successors never neglected, and which the Church soon learned to regard as its corner-stone. And yet, even to-day, in the very heart of Christendom, in

the twentieth century of the Christian Era, there is no agreement among Christians as to what this corner-stone of the Church really is. Some maintain, with an air of infallibility, that for three days Christ's soul and body were separated, the soul roaming about in the spiritual world, and doing strange, incredible things, such as preaching to "spirits in prison," and the body lying, cold and stiff, in Joseph's new grave, but that, at the close of that short period, the soul descended into the tomb, re-entered and re-animated the dead body, and that then the Christ emerged from the darkness of death, and made himself known as still alive to his disconsolate disciples. The risen body, said to have been identical with the body nailed to the accursed tree, possessed astonishing powers, such as that of floating invisibly through the air, and entering and leaving rooms with locked doors. I suppose that the majority of present-day Christians firmly believe that Christ rose from the dead in that literal, physical sense. But there are others who advocate a spiritual resurrection. According to these, Christ's body did not rise, but, in spite of that, Christ himself, as a disembodied, spiritual being, lived on, and exhibited himself, in a series of visions, to his broken-hearted brethren. Now, these two views of the resurrection of Christ cannot possibly be harmonised. A spiritual resurrection is a meaningless phrase, and a contradiction in terms. If the soul is immortal, it is utterly absurd to speak of its resurrection. If the disciples saw Christ at all after his burial, they must have seen him *in the body*. Souls are believed to be immaterial and invisible, so that if they appear they must do so in *physical bodies*. Hence, it necessarily follows that the various appearances of the risen Savior, recorded in the New Testament, created an entirely false impression upon the spectators, *if the body did not rise*.

The other day, the Rev. Ellis Edwards, M.A., Vice-Principal of the Bala Theological College, North Wales, delivered an impassioned address on the "Resurrection of Christ," at a large meeting of members of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church held at the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool. The gathering consisted of several thousands of Church members. Mr. Edwards vigorously insisted upon treating the alleged event as a historical fact. He argued, and quite correctly, that if Christ's physical body did not rise from the tomb, there was clearly no resurrection at all. He said:—

"Harnack, for instance, one of our chief critics, said that the disciples did not see him properly, that he appeared in glory—which, as I understand him, means that he appeared in such a haze as made the testimony of the eyes uncertain. It is strange that men of Harnack's power should adopt such a theory. There never was a more glaring instance of a man leaving his data."

The astonishment expressed at Harnack's attitude is perfectly justifiable. At the same time, we must not forget that Harnack and others have been driven to that position by their utter inability to believe in a physical resurrection. Has Professor Edwards any fresh argument to advance for accepting so stupendous a miracle? Judging by the report of his speech furnished by the *Christian Commonwealth* for July 7, 1904, he can only repeat old and too familiar commonplaces which, to outsiders at least, are absolutely irrelevant.

Everybody recognises the immense value of testimony in human life. Professor Edwards' question, "What would life become but for our trust in testimony, I should like to know?" is perfectly legitimate. As long as a man bears witness to things that are in themselves possible and reasonable, we willingly accept his testimony. Unless we have some reason to suspect his motive we fully trust him, although there are times when we deem it expedient to verify his statements. But there is all the difference in the world between testimony concerning things that are in themselves possible and probable, and testimony concerning things that are naturally impossible and contrary to all experience. The former testimony

appeals to us as reasonably credible, while the latter, in the very nature of things, carries in its bosom a strong suspicion of its unreliableness. A resurrection is naturally impossible. When a man dies, his body turns to dust and is lost. Testimony assures us that, so far as this world is concerned, death ends all. For countless ages before the Coming of Jesus, and for thousands of years after his Passing, men have died, and been buried, and have never been seen again. Is not that the testimony of universal experience? But Professor Edwards comes to us and says: "Here are twelve men who tell us that Jesus died and was buried, like all others, but that on the third day he rose again in the identical body of his previous life, and we have no choice but to believe their testimony." The Professor assigns two reasons for accepting so extraordinary a testimony. The first is the unexpectedness of so miraculous an event. The men said that "they had seen Jesus Christ. They were not ready to say so by any means. They expected it was a case of natural death—nothing more." In that case, how ineffable must have been the stupidity of those disciples. For many months before his decease Jesus is reported to have been habitually talking to them about the violent death and the glorious resurrection that awaited him at Jerusalem. "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Matt. xvi., 21). He persisted in predicting both events. Peter is represented as indulging in a vehement remonstrance with him on account of such a prophecy, and the Master as making this scathing retort: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Does Professor Edwards imagine that the disciples could have completely forgotten what they had been reminded of so often and so emphatically? Had such predictions been made as reported, the men could not have forgotten all about them, as the Professor seems to imply. Had the crucifixion come in fulfilment of Christ's own prophecy, they would certainly have been on the tip-toe of expectation for the equally predicted resurrection. If he had been right about his death, and the manner of it, would they not naturally have come to the conclusion that he must have been right about rising again on the third day? To say that the resurrection was unexpected is equivalent either to insulting the disciples or to casting a suspicion upon the historicity of the Four Gospels; and I leave Professor Edwards and those who think with him to make their choice.

The other reason assigned for believing the apostolic testimony concerning the resurrection of Christ is the alleged fact that the belief in it changed the lives of those men. But how does Professor Edwards know that their lives were changed? Most of them are unknown to history. We have their names recorded in the Gospels, and nothing more. What effect, if any, the belief in the resurrection had upon them no one can tell. Even James, one of the chosen three, is very little more than a name. So far as Peter is revealed to us in the New Testament, there is no evidence that the resurrection effected any radical change in his character. The same thing is almost equally true of the apostle John also. Nor can it be proved that the character of Paul underwent any fundamental transformation when he became a Christian. He calls himself the chief of sinners; but the worst sin he can lay to his own charge is that of persecuting the Christian Church prior to his conversion.

Those are the men whose witness to the resurrection of Jesus we are asked to believe. Lame, indeed, is the argument as put by Professor Edwards: "These men say they saw Jesus Christ after he rose; they were not crazed, and, if they were not, what shall we do but believe them?" Well, many of their contemporaries were under the impression that these men were crazed, and they had no hesitation in expressing it. But, granting that they were perfectly sane, it does not follow that their testimony is credible. Sane people are frequently mistaken in their views,

and deceived into false convictions. The greatest and most successful preacher of the resurrection was Paul, and yet he never claimed to have seen the risen Christ except in a vision. Until that strange vision came, the testimony of all the others was nothing but an idle tale in his sight. Surely we need a much stronger argument than the one presented by Professor Edwards, and a much better authenticated testimony than the self-contradictory one contained in the Gospels, before we can believe that Jesus performed, or had performed upon him, a miracle which belies all history and sets all Nature at defiance.

"What are your hospitals, reformatories, etc.?" Mr. Edwards triumphantly asks, and then jubilantly answers, "Resurrection institutions." If hospitals are "resurrection institutions," why was their advent so long delayed? There were very few hospitals in the Middle Ages, and even the few that existed were not seldom converted into benefices by the priests. The truth is that hospitals, reformatories, and other charitable establishments which benefit mankind, are the offspring of natural philanthropy. There is no connection whatever between them and the supposed resurrection of Christ. Mr. Edwards is equally beside the mark in the assertion that "there is a power in the resurrection of Christ to give men another chance, which is a privilege Nature never grants." As a matter of fact it is Nature alone that does give men another chance. It is most significant that once Nature gives a man up Christianity is powerless to reclaim him. When Christians meet with such a man they say that he has committed the unpardonable sin, and that consequently even a God of infinite love cannot save him. If there be a loving, gracious, all-redeeming power above Nature, why does it not supersede Nature, and put an end to all the sin, and sorrow, and misery of the world? "What we need above all else," cry Christian evangelists, "is resurrection power." But if we need we never get it, for what poor Nature cannot do, still remains undone. We read of the triumphs of the risen Lord—where are they? Conversions, reclamations, reformations, or whatever they may be called—are they not all social achievements, although attributed to the resurrection power said to be resident in the Church? Why must the drunkard or the thief attend special meetings, and listen to emotional appeals, and join in the public singing, and be conversed and prayed with, before the power of the resurrection can redeem him? Why cannot such a sinner be saved in private when only the risen Lord and himself are present? The only explanation is that the whole work is done, if at all, by Nature, although an imaginary Ghost gets the credit. A risen Savior, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and all-loving, would have direct, personal dealings with all the lost ones of earth, and would undoubtedly succeed, by bringing to bear upon them his own healing sympathy and inexhaustible compassion, in completely redeeming and transforming them. Let Professor Edwards and others likeminded look these facts fully in the face, and then tell us what proof they can adduce that Christ is risen from the dead.

At a Church meeting, in the presence of believers who have never really faced the facts, at a Theological College, filled with young men from Christian homes and Sunday Schools and Bible Classes, it may be easy to grow sentimentally eloquent in proclaiming that Christ is risen; but he who has carefully studied the various facts of life, and examined the philosophy of preaching and the mechanism of revivals, he who has stood face to face with the crime, the misery, the sorrow, the helplessness, and the hopelessness of large classes of the population, and he who has painfully witnessed the colossal impotence of the Christian Church, *except when it works along purely social and human lines*, is forced to exclaim with Clough, in his sceptical mood, "CHRIST IS NOT RISEN INDEED."

JOHN T. LLOYD.

Newman's Apologia.

ALTHOUGH it is forty years since the original appearance of Newman's most famous work, it may be assumed that—through its recent publication in a sixpenny edition—many readers are now making its acquaintance for the first time. The *History of My Religious Opinions*—as Newman styled the really remarkable reply drawn from him by Kingsley's onslaught—has always been the most popular of all his writings, and is likely to find new admirers in its present cheap form. Nor should we grudge a reasonable measure of appreciation to the *Apologia pro vita sua*. Without having the slightest sympathy with Newman's peculiar bent of mind on religious questions, we may yet cordially recognise that the *Apologia* deals in a dignified and sometimes moving fashion with what was after all an exceedingly delicate personal matter. Both as a literary effort and as a human document it occupies an almost unique position in the English language. So much can be granted by the most resolute opponent of Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism.

As an offset to modern Freethought literature, however (if indeed it be intended as such), the issue of the *Apologia* at the present juncture is of no particular consequence. The publishers may, of course, be desirous of profiting by the renewed interest in religious controversy which has been so strikingly apparent of late, but it cannot be said that Newman's work has any practical bearing on current issues. The book was written neither in defence of religion generally nor of the Church of Rome in particular, but was primarily and avowedly intended as a vindication of the author's personal honor and good faith in his progress from one Church to another. And in this immediate purpose Newman succeeded admirably. It will be recalled that the more robust-minded Charles Kingsley had to all intents and purposes taxed Newman with duplicity, in having so long retained his connection with the Anglican establishment while being a Romanist at heart. Kingsley also broadly insinuated that it was impossible to trust Newman's word on *any* matter. It was in reply to these grave charges that the *Apologia* was written.

It is needless to enter into the points of the dispute between the two. Undoubtedly Newman came most creditably out of the contest, but it is all ancient history. The world moves rapidly nowadays. And the fact was that Newman was too subtle and morbidly conscientious to be properly comprehended by a man of Kingsley's blunt and downright nature. Newman was no unworthy rival of Gladstone in his marvellous capacity for evolving from his inner consciousness the most plausible reasons for any course of conduct he was led to adopt. Who does not remember Morley's brilliant characterisation of Gladstone's mind as "a mint of logical counterfeits"? Newman's intellect was of a kindred type, and such men are peculiarly open to misconstruction, and to charges of shiftiness, hairsplitting, and juggling with words.

In reading once again the book by which Newman is best remembered, one is confirmed in the view that the nature and quality of a man's religious beliefs are largely determined by the individual temperament. Newman had an intensely religious mind, and a strong sense of the logical necessity for authority in matters of faith. He early saw through the fallacy of the idea of a *National Church* cut off from the rest of Christendom, and he labored strenuously for many years to bridge the gulf between Rome and England, or rather to demonstrate that no such gulf existed. His failure in this endeavor heralded his absorption by the Church of Rome. He tells us he had no difficulty in adding the distinctive teaching of the Church of Rome to his former creed; and we believe him. He had not much to add, for he had already strained the thirtynine articles of the Church of England almost to breaking point in his effort to get into touch with

the Roman body. He had merely to swallow such trifles as the Immaculate Conception, Virgin worship, and Papal Infallibility; and it must be admitted that he performed this humiliating task with the best grace in the world, and ate his earlier denunciations of the Papacy with commendable gusto.

It must be said, however, that Newman's own refutation of his former arguments against Romish doctrine is by no means so convincing as the arguments were. What could be feebler than the retort, "Why should it not be? What's to hinder it?" when he is asked how *can* such a thing as Transubstantiation be? The expounders of Roman Catholic doctrine are ever extremely reluctant to accept the position that the onus of proof rests with those who *assert* such incredible dogmas as Transubstantiation, not with those who *deny* them.

We have indicated that it was Newman's desire, in writing his *Apologia*, to limit the issue to a personal one as far as might be. But under the circumstances, and to a man of Newman's stamp, it was quite impracticable to avoid trenching on theological and doctrinal ground. His excursions into this domain form the least happy part of his book. For example, he handles the questions of the Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility in somewhat gingerly fashion, and, while accepting these dogmas without cavil, his defence of them is a specious and ingenious piece of special pleading, and nothing more.

One sentence, in which reference is made to the Immaculate Conception, could not have been uttered had its author spent all his life in the Roman communion. He says: "I never heard of one Catholic having difficulties in receiving this doctrine whose faith on other grounds was not already suspicious." This passage exemplifies the typical attitude of the Church of Rome towards any adherent who ventures to criticise her in some particular, and it shows how well Newman had learned his lesson. The Roman Catholic who evinces a tendency towards independent thinking must be discredited at all hazards. The simplest way to do this is to question his motives. We have had a recent illustration of the use of this method in the Catholic Press attacks on Mr. Michael McCarthy in connection with his *Priests and People in Ireland*. Of course, if Newman had said that it was foolish of any Catholic who had accepted all the other monstrous dogmas of the Roman system to boggle at the Immaculate Conception, we could heartily agree with him.

At the present day, when Roman Catholic apologists and propagandists assure the inhabitants of this country that the Church of Rome makes no pretensions to speak with authority save on religious questions alone, it is interesting to note that Cardinal Newman had no delusions on that score. He tells us plainly:—

"The Catholic Church claims, not only to judge infallibly on religious questions, but to animadvert on opinions in secular matters which bear upon religion, on matters of philosophy, of science, of literature, of history, and it demands our submission to her claim. It claims to censure books, to silence authors, and to forbid discussions" (*Apologia*, p. 159).

And further he adds, "It must of course be obeyed without a word." Yet we were informed the other day by a Jesuit Father that the Roman Church makes *no* claim to authority in temporal affairs. How long is it since she relinquished such a claim? The plain fact is that she fought tooth and nail for her control over temporalities in every country where she had a footing. And we have little doubt she would still enforce her claims in the old gentle way if she only had the power, notwithstanding the soothing assurance of our Jesuit friend. On the whole we prefer Newman's candor of statement in this instance.

We are not much impressed by Newman's plea that the repressive authority of the Church of Rome is really directed against the *actions* and *expressions* of her adherents, and not against their *thoughts*. Logically extended, this means that a member of the Roman Church may retain his private opinion on

many points, so long as he abstains from giving utterance to his thoughts and his doubts. This is a stupendous concession, forsooth! Think what you please but say nothing! Powerful as the Roman Church was, and is, not even *she* can achieve the impossible; and it *is* impossible to permanently control and coerce the *thought* of man. But she has always done her best—and her worst—to prevent the *expression* of any thoughts or the propagation of any theories that conflicted with her doctrine or her policy. This was fully admitted by Newman, although he still argued that Rome did not interfere with freedom of *thought*. But of what value is freedom of thought without liberty of speech and action?

Like many another theological disputant, Newman could erect a very imposing and fair-seeming religious superstructure on given basic assumptions. Granted the existence of a Deity, granted the existence of the human soul, granted the immortality of the soul, and granted a desire on the part of the Deity for the eternal salvation of that soul, the Roman Catholic system, in its broad outlines, presents an appearance of logical consistency that is not perhaps approached by any other denomination. But the initial assumptions above mentioned are too purely gratuitous to pass muster with any rational thinker. One has only to bring reason to bear on these underlying assumptions on which the Roman Catholic religion is based and the whole elaborate theological edifice at once collapses.

G. SCOTT.

The Village Blacksmith's Daughter.

[MONTREAL, June 1.—A despatch from Toronto says that the Rev. J. F. Cordova, formerly pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church of South River, N. J., and Miss Julia Bowne are at a small hotel in Yonge-street, in that city. They both disappeared from South River on May 17 last. The Rev. J. F. Cordova left a wife and three children behind him when he departed from South River. Miss Bowne, who is described as a beautiful girl, was a singer in the church choir, and her father is the village blacksmith.]

Hammering a broken axletree

The village blacksmith stands,

The smith, a married man is he,

With a daughter on his hands:

He hears her called the Jersey Belle,

And pride his chest expands.

She goes on Sunday to the church,

And joins the rural choir;

Her voice is strong on lower notes,

And few can raise it higher.

Her love for Jesus and his cause

Burns like a house a-fire.

Week in, week out she sings and prays

And hears the parson preach;

She thinks he is the loveliest Man,

He thinks she is a Peach,

And thus there is a single thought

Within the breast of each.

On week days at the parsonage

They'd con the love affair

Of Ruth and Boaz while he placed

His hand upon her hair;

And when his arm went to her waist

She let him keep it there.

Singing, exhorting, cossetting,

Maiden and parson go;

Each morning sees their fondness wake,

Each evening sees it grow.

Something is doing, something done,

To keep the thing aglow.

The parson's wife and little ones

Must miss his step some day;

The maiden from her father's home

Is vanished quite away,

And now he needs must think of her

Singing in Canada.

In dreams the village blacksmith goes

Swift as an auto flies,

Nor pauses till his girl is found,

And taken by surprise

As with his hard, rough hand he swipes

The parson in his eyes.

Truthseeker (New York).

G. E. MACDONALD.

Acid Drops.

Dr. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, has been delivered of a sermon on "The New Atheism." The substance of it is dealt with by Mr. Cohen in this week's *Freethinker*, and if the reverend gentleman wishes to reply our pages are open to him for the purpose.

There are a few small points in Dr. Horton's sermon that may be dealt with in "Acid Drops" less formally than in a leading article. They are crumbs from the table, so to speak, and do not affect the repast over the tablecloth.

Dr. Horton keeps on referring to Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* as a "little book"—which makes one wonder if he has ever read it, or even handled it. The crown octavo edition runs to 391 pages, besides 14 pages of introductory matter, and 6 pages of index. To call this a "little book" is certainly rather odd. Can it be that Dr. Horton seldom condescends to anything smaller than a folio? Is this the reason why ordinary stout books look to him so "little?"

Dr. Horton is very much attached to that word "little." He says that Haeckel "belongs to a very little group of scientific people." But an observation of this kind shows very "little" intelligence. Votes have to be weighed as well as counted. They are so in time; and nothing but time settles how heavy they are. Why, the Christians themselves are never tired of boasting *how few* they were in the beginning, and how many they are now.

It is impossible for Dr. Horton to forget his Christian manners. He is not satisfied with saying that the Haeckel group "can make and does make a great noise." He is obliged to remark that "in a London street, if there is one man who is a blasphemer, he will make more noise in that street than twenty honest men." Such is the attitude of a Christian preacher, whose best friends do not pretend that he is a genius, towards a scientist who is famed all over the civilised world, and of one of whose books the great Charles Darwin said that if he had seen it earlier he would not have written one of the most important of his own!

Something about the Jews occurs in Dr. Horton's sermon. "The Jewish race," he says, "has been the witness of God when all the world has denied him." We confess that we hardly know the meaning of this. It is a good deal plainer that the Jews have been a witness *against* Christ. Dr. Horton forgot that. Perhaps because he was in a hurry to say something else—namely, that "the modern Jew, plunged into Western life and Western thought, becomes very commonly the most dismal of Atheists." This is in reference to Mr. Zangwill. It may also glance at Mr. Cohen. And "dismal" is good. It is one of those sweet, expressive words which the long-faced gentlemen of the pulpit are so fond of applying to their broader-faced opponents. Preachers never mention Atheism without an adjective. They seem afraid that people might fall in love with the noun unless properly qualified beforehand. So they stick epithets on to it. Sometimes it is only "dismal," sometimes it is "blatant," and sometimes it is "grovelling." That the Atheist might retaliate does not occur to these gentlemen. Suppose he started talking about "Cranky Christians." How would they like that?

Dr. Horton lives in a world of his own in more senses than one. He speaks of the world being "on the face of it so full of beneficence, so rich in joy." This is the language of a man with a good congregation—and a good salary. It can hardly be the expression of facts like the burning of the Iroquois Theatre at Chicago, or of the *General Slocum* excursion steamer near New York, or the sinking of the emigrant ship *Norge*—or even the lusty health of sharks and tigers.

When the French priests said that man was made in the image of God, Victor Hugo said, "When I look at some of you, then, I think he must be very ugly." A somewhat similar reflection crossed our mind when we read Dr. Horton's declaration: "I cannot be explained unless God is there to explain me." Fancy! Infinite wisdom necessary to explain Dr. Horton! Who would have thought it? Byron was evidently quite right when he said that "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction."

There is a Yankee boy preacher at Holloway who goes one better than Jesus Christ. The latter began to get his

hand (or tongue) in at the tender age of twelve; but the former is only ten now and has been preaching for five years already. He says he felt a "call" when he was two, and thousands of Christians flock to hear him talk of these wonders. Sometimes he charges a shilling and sixpence for admission to the tent he has been running for some weeks at Holloway. Last Sunday morning he had a service "for men only." We suppose the ten-year-old soul-saver had things to say that were not fit for women to listen to. Such is Christianity in the twentieth century!

Monday's *Daily News* devoted a column to reporting a sermon at Hackney by "Bulmer of Blackpool," who has "long nervous hands" and apparently a tongue to match. "The story of Margaret Wilson's martyrdom on the sands of Solway," the reporter said, "told with fine effect, was a fitting close to a discourse that went down to the heart of things." That same story was made use of by the late Deau Farrar in his big book on the Bible. It is quite a favorite with men of God. They forget to point out that, while Margaret Wilson was a Christian, those who murdered her were Christians too. She died in a squabble between Presbyterians and Episcopalians. That is all.

"I have asked God to forgive me for this," said Edward Henry Stone, in a letter to his wife and children, before cutting his throat at the United Universities Club. Not an Atheist again!

George Brezzo, of Seaham Harbor, who confesses to the murder of Mrs. Chisholm, in whose house he lodged, left two letters there, expressing a hope that he would die happy when his time came, and saying of the dead woman, "May the Lord cherish her as one of his goodly creatures." This one was not an Atheist either.

"A well-dressed man" named John Orann has been committed for trial at Brentford to "answer a formidable list of alleged larcenies." According to the report, he victimised tradesmen and others by assuming clerical attire, which rendered them an easy prey to his designs. He had seen to have paid heavily for what should have been a needless lesson. Henceforth they will probably put less confidence in black coats and white chokers.

James Mills, described as a well-known Birmingham spiritualist, was summoned before the "beak" for cruelty to his wife. An order was made against him to contribute seven shillings a week to his wife's maintenance. He said he would give her eight, and that the truth should float from the hoistops. But that is no substitute for kindness and consideration on the ground-floor.

Thirty thousand working people (the *New York World* complain) are refused admittance to the World's Fair at St. Louis on the one day in the week when they are able to attend. This is out of "respect for the Sabbath." But the wealthy classes, who enforce Sabbatarian laws upon the people, snap their own fingers at Sunday observance. Here is another Sabbath scene recorded in the same journal in connection with the same Exhibition:—"A procession of public functionaries and other men with a 'pull' entered the grounds, accompanied by women guests, inspected the buildings and even witnessed a 'dance of half-clothed natives' arranged in one of the exhibits for their delection! And all over the land, in their clubs, on yachts, on golf links or in pleasur resorts, rich Americans entertained each other and ate, rank, and played at their will."

The Hon. and Rev. J. G. Adderley tells a *Daily News* interviewer that what is wanted in London is a mission to the wealthy classes in the West-end. "I believe," he says, "if we held a mission in West London it would change the whole face of society." Good Lord! Why, the Wesleyans have spent thousands a year for a long while on their West London Mission; yet "the face of society" is still unchanged—just like "the face" of those who want to get up fresh missions for the same old job.

More silliness about the English Bible. A writer in *Plain Truth*, the monthly organ of Dr. Aked's chapel, says that few men can compare with him in reading "the stately English of Milton's day." Christians will not take the trouble to learn the plainest facts about their own book. The Bible is not written in the "stately" or any other "English of Milton's day." Anyone who says so is simply ignorant of the English of Milton's day, or utterly incapable of discriminating between one sort of English and another. Why don't these people attend to their religion and let literature alone?

"It was noticed that the King's presentation Bible was in

the special care of an attendant." This sentence is from a newspaper report of the Alake of Abeokuta's visit to Liverpool, and it is very interesting, for the Alake cannot read or speak English, and he must look upon the presentation Bible as a sort of fetish.

King Edward's presentation Bible to the Alake of Abeokuta bears the following inscription:—

"Presented by Edward the Seventh, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, to the Alake of Abeokuta, July, 1904, to replace the Bible given by Queen Victoria in 1848 to Sagbua, father of the present Alake, which was lost in a fire twenty years after."

There was not much "Providence" in the fate of the Bible presented to the Alake's father. According to Prophet Baxter a similar fate awaits the one presented to the Alake. It is sure to be reduced to ashes in the last conflagration—which is rapidly approaching.

Mr. Percy Dearmer, the Christian Socialist, whatever that is, points out the terrible fact (though it isn't new) that "Amongst the children of the poor," in Christian England, and particularly in Christian London, "fifty-five per cent. die before five—more than one half of the children that are born." Then he continues:—

"So the cancer that is poisoning the blood of our nation still goes on—the modern town with its endless rows of sordid, sunless streets—cut off from light and air, and sweet nature, fields, and flowers, and hills and meadows—cut off as never in the history of the world before (for from the slums of one hundred years ago one could get to the open fields in a few minutes' walk); streets with only the public-houses and small music-halls for recreation. And in these streets our boys and girls grow up."

What a state of things after nearly two thousand years of Christianity! And what is the remedy? Mr. Percy Dearmer gives it in two words. More Christianity! If the medicine poisons, double the dose.

M. Alexandre Ular, whose *Un Empire Russo-Chinois* has just been translated into English, does not believe in either the Christianising or the Europeanising of the Chinese. They have their own ideas of civilisation, and are not all enamored of ours. M. Ular says:—

"When we vaunt to the Chinese the flowers of our civilisation—capitalism, militarism, nationalism, religious hypocrisy, and the modern technical appliances, which at bottom serve these four social cancers above all; when we vaunt these horrors to them as being the condition of superiority to which they are to aspire, they look at us with their little comma-like eyes, they wrinkle their round faces, they seem to say to us: 'Talk away, friend, talk away. You are losing your time. In spite of your telephones and your railways, you are only a savage animal and an idiot.'"

This is very much what Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson said in his anonymous *Letters of a Chinaman*.

Herbert Spencer remarked how religion and authority had paralysed men's judgments. We are reminded of this by the newspapers in connection with the case of Mrs. Maybrick—which we do not want to judge or even to discuss. It is gravely argued that she was in all probability not guilty because the late Lord Chief Justice Russell declared his belief in her innocence. What on earth would they expect him to say? He had been her defending Counsel. Citing his opinion, one way or another, seems worthy of—well, of Christians.

They are trying to upset the will of Sheriff Thomas, of Orkney and Shetland. It is alleged that he made extraordinary bequests which prove that he was not in his right senses. He also ordered that he should be buried in a wicker coffin so as to be handy for the scramble at the resurrection. But what madness is there in that? We have often wondered what chance believers will have when Gabriel blows the resurrection trumpet and they find themselves under twelve feet of solid earth or several tons of still more solid masonry. Sheriff Thomas seems to have been sensible enough—in his way.

Archbishop Bourne, on behalf of the Catholic hierarchy of England, has sent a letter of condolence to Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, conveying "to all Catholic France the expression of their profound sympathy and the promise of their prayers in the terrible crisis and difficulties of every kind which at this moment afflict it." We fancy "prayers" will be a very poor assistance. It will take something stronger than "prayers" to arrest the action of the "infidel" French government and frighten little Père Combes.

Mixed bathing has caused a terrible scandal at Kultchuk, near Odessa. Hundreds of peasants drive in to witness the

"lewd behavior of the Odessa devils." Father Zachrai, a local priest, takes more energetic measures against the wickedness. He preaches against it on the beach, and even wades into the water up to his armpits, and solemnly curses the sea for tolerating such defilement. "Arise, waves," he cries, "and overwhelm these un-Christian men and women, whose conduct makes the fishes blush!" He declares that young men and women who have bathed together have lost their good names, and can only regain them by marrying straight away. He offers his own services to tie them up.

Liverpool has lost a great opportunity. King Edward is to visit the city on July 19 in order to lay the foundation stone of the cathedral, which is to be a "swagger" affair. An address was drawn up for presentation to his Majesty and duly approved by him. The cathedral was referred to in it as "an edifice which we earnestly hope will not only serve to promote the highest interests of humanity, but also prove an important addition to the buildings which adorn and beautify the city." It was discovered, too late alas, that there was no *religion* in this language, and that the words might equally have applied to a new theatre. Mr. Bathgate therefore suggested the addition of the words "an edifice which we earnestly hope will not only redound to the glory of God." The councillors cried "Agreed," but Sir Charles Petrie pointed out that, as the King had already approved the address, it could not very well be altered; so, out of consideration to the King, God Almighty was left out in the cold.

Mrs. H. T. Ford, of the China Inland Mission at Tai-Kang, in the central province of Honan, writes to her friends at home about the uneasiness which always arises when there is a dearth of rain. It appears that the natives, alarmed at the drought, are muttering that the missionaries are the cause of it. The natives believe that they keep the rain back. And, after all, there are some grounds for the suspicion. Mrs. Ford says, "We are praying daily for rain." Well, if the natives know they are praying for it, and see it doesn't come, it is not unnatural that they should fancy they are somehow keeping it back, either by praying the wrong way for it or by stirring up their god to interfere with the action of the local deities.

We referred last week to the Rev. F. B. Meyer's crusade against kissing in Church circles. What do our readers think of the following paragraph cut from the *Daily News* "Religious World" column (Friday, July 8)?—"The promiscuous kissing question is being discussed at Leeds. Local Nonconformist ministers deprecate Mr. Meyer's attitude, and one of them dissents altogether from the view that kissing games are played for the sake of the kissing itself. A sturdy Primitive Methodist minister who has filled the office of President of the Leeds Free Church Council, however, says that when kissing and dancing go together in one night they are exceedingly dangerous to the morals of the young people, but another minister holds that kissing should not be interpreted as having a loose side to it." Fancy a paragraph like this appearing in a Freethought journal in relation to Secular Societies! Would it not be reproduced in all the religious journals in England, with scathing remarks on "Secular morality"?

Apparently some "concessions" had to be made in the Memorial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral for the late Mr. G. F. Watts, R.A. Instead of reading the lesson from the Burial Service, the Archdeacon read the verses from the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus beginning "Let us now praise famous men." Nor was the hymn "O God, our help in ages past" sung. Some verses from Tennyson's *In Memoriam* were taken instead. But the Church does not mind these little condescensions nowadays. It is willing to make some sacrifice for the sake of getting a look in at great men's funerals, even when they were well-known to be decidedly heretical.

Fred Perkin, aged twenty-eight, who has already done fifteen months' imprisonment for a similar offence at Devonport, is now doing six months at Leeds for obtaining £17 by false pretences from Mrs. Hirst. He advertised his wish to "meet widow or young lady with means," and described himself as a "bachelor, Christian, and abstainer," but with "small means." Perhaps it was the "Christian" that caught Mrs. Hirst. Anyhow she replied, and he soon got £17 out of her, and then vanished. We should fancy that this robbed and bamboozled widow will take less stock of "Christian" suitors henceforth.

Editor Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, Kentucky, wrote at some length on the burning of the pleasure steamer, the *General Slocum*, near New York, with a big

party of Church people on board, most of whom were destroyed. One aspect of this terrible accident is criticised very severely:—"The largest part of those that escaped were men who let women and children burn or drown to save their own lives. Haas, the preacher who had charge of the excursion, escaped, and will probably exhibit himself as a living monument of the grace of God, but his wife, daughter, and mother-in-law all drowned or were burned to death. People talk of the ennobling influences of the Christian religion, and yet here is a preacher who saves his own life and lets his mother-in-law drown. Some years ago Talmage and his wife and another woman were out in a small boat. It capsized and Talmage's wife was drowned, but Talmage saved himself and the other woman. Of course everybody says his selecting the other woman was accidental, but if I should go out boating with two women, one of them my faithful old wife and the other a pretty young woman, and the boat should turn over and drown my wife, and I should get ashore all safe and sound with the young woman, you know what pious people would say all the same."

Neighbors interfered to stop Esther Montague's beating of her eight-year-old son with a rattan, and complained to the police. When brought into court, the boy's head and face were a mass of bumps and scars, there were welts and bruises all over his body, and his head was bald in spots. According to his story, his mother stripped off all his clothes and thrashed him with the cane. Then she stood on his prostrate body and pulled out handfuls of his hair at every blow. The woman, who had perhaps heard of the movement to restore corporal punishment in public schools for the benefit of the scholars, acknowledged inflicting the punishment, and said, defiantly, "I am guilty of beating the boy for his own good, as any Christian mother would do." The magistrate told her she was the worst brute he ever saw, and that she ought to get a dozen lashes with a whip for every one she had struck the boy with a cane. Apparently the idea that parents may beat their children brutally in the discharge of their duty as Christians is losing its hold on judicial minds.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Tommy Atkins on the Red Sea.

GAWD gave the Israelites dry land
On which to cross this waste of sea,
Still it ain't sacrilege to say
A liner's good enough for me;
For me beneath the awnin's shade
An' the 'ot sun 'igh over'ead,
An' in the 'old a stoker chap
Sweatin' an' wishin' 'e was dead.

'Ere is the stretch of water where
Old Pharaoh stroked a trial eight,
Yonder the sand-dune steeple track
On which they 'ad no startin'-gate;
Still I prefer my old deck-chair
An' now an' then a coolin' shower,
An' the old ship a-runnin' free
An' knottin' twenty mile an hour.

I sees the ladies playin' quoits
An' fussin' round and gettin' 'ot,
An' missionaries talkin' shop.
Pillars o' salt an' land o' Lot;
Who built the pyramids, an' why?
What does it matter now to me,
Readin' my red-backed Army book,
Learnin' the things which I shall see?

So I go back the way I came.
Against my wish, against my will;
But if you ask me I must say
I some'ow like the old East still.
An' 'avin' rolled my bloomin' kit,
Shook 'ands all round, I'll say farewell;
He whose address for three more years
Is Atkins, Aden, 'Igh-street, 'Ell.

—Monro Anderson in "*Hongkong (China) Daily Press*."

Wife (after returning from church): "You should have been in church this morning. We had a beautiful sermon." Husband: "I doubt if you can repeat the text." Wife: "Yes I can. It was the tenth verse of the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel. 'I girded thee about with fine linen and I covered thee with silk.'" Husband: "Huh! It is no wonder you remember it."

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(Suspended during July and August.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—July 17, morning, Mile End; 24, morning, Kingsland; August 14, Failand; 21, morning, Kingsland; afternoon, Victoria Park.

A. J. Y.—Thanks.

G. CROOKSON.—Thanks for the paper, though Mr. Cohen had already written on Dr. Horton's wonderful sermon.

A. T. JAMESON.—We may write upon the subject presently. Determinism does not appear to us to be fully understood by either side in the *Clarion* controversy. Responsibility is not incompatible with moral causation; it is really incompatible with the opposite. There is no reason why a certain section of Christians—for some Christians are thorough-going Determinists—should be presented with every important word in the moral vocabulary. The idea that morality depends upon what is called free-will is simple silliness.

D. SPARLING.—We wrote a long review of Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Christianity and Mythology*, and a favorable notice of his new edition of Buckle. We assure you that we have no such exclusiveness as you suggest. Mr. Robertson's books published by the Bonners have not come our way. Had they come they would have been noticed.

J. L. G. MACKINNON.—Always glad to receive cuttings. See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

G. WEIR.—Pleased to hear that your last debate on Woodhouse Moor, Leeds, brought in a collection of £1 5s. 6d. for the Hospital Fund.

T. FLINN.—The Rev. S. Parker, of Barrow-in-Furness, seems a nice sort of man of God. First he tells the lie that he has held a public debate with Mr. Foote; then he tells his audiences that Mr. Foote is a very wicked man who fills the *Freethinker* with filthy advertisements. Perhaps allowance must be made for the bad school in which Mr. Parker was trained. We tender our thanks, all the same, to Mr. Gee, the Social Democrat and Atheist, who proposes to make the reverend gentleman prove his words or eat them.

T. T. (Hull).—Miss Vance has handed us your letter, etc., for which accept our thanks. Glad to hear you have been "particularly pleased" with our articles on Spencer's *Autobiography*, and that you think the *Freethinker* has "greatly improved." It is something to improve as you get older. Many deteriorate. We note your opinion that "Danger Ahead" was an excellent article pointing to a real peril. We have always said just what you feel, that those who fancy the battle with superstition and bigotry is over are basking in a fool's paradise.

F. TESCHELEIT.—Thanks for the cuttings, but we see very little for criticism to lay hold of in the "Sunday Corner" of the *Liverpool Weekly Mercury*. Fighting a cloud or punching a pillow is a very thankless task. Try to send us something more definite. Your suggestions shall be considered. We are obliged to you for your efforts to circulate this journal and Freethought literature generally.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks once more for your welcome cuttings.

JOHN BLAND, sending subscription for the Rome Congress, says: "I think it is high time that the readers of the *Freethinker* were coming to the front on this question. Every man and woman in the party ought to do something towards sending a respectable contingent to the Eternal City."

H. T. STEVENS.—We have handed your letter over to the N. S. S. general secretary (Miss Vance). It is melancholy, as you say, that no open-air Freethought work is being done in a district like Battersea.

A. G. LYE.—We thank you on behalf of Freethought for your fine letter in the *Coventry Herald*. It is well that the ill-manners, if there must be any, are left to the Christians. We note the editor's sad remark that "free discussion of serious subjects of this character gives offence" to some of his readers, who, of course, are not Freethinkers.

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.

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

The Rome Congress.

BY next week I hope to be able to make a more definite statement with respect to this matter; I mean as to the party the N. S. S. Executive is trying to organise. As already stated in the *Freethinker* the cost of the trip to Rome and back, occupying about ten days, will be some £13 per ticket for a party of thirty conducted by Messrs. Cook, and slightly more for a smaller number. There is also the scheme of joining the special train that the French Freethinkers propose to run from Paris. Which plan should be adopted must depend to a large extent upon the number of British Freethinkers who intend to join the N. S. S. party to Rome. It is highly necessary, therefore, that all who desire to be included should communicate without further delay with the N. S. S. headquarters. I beg them to do so by next Monday (July 18), if possible. Even if they are not quite certain they could say what is the probability of their going.

With regard to the N. S. S. official delegation to Rome, I think we certainly ought to send three representatives. It should not be very difficult to send even more. Our party can easily afford to pay their expenses. All that is necessary now is the will to do so. And an effort ought really to be made to let English Freethought be strongly represented at the International Congress in September. It is to assemble at Rome, the Eternal City, the centre of Christendom, where the Pope controls the greatest of Christian Churches, and where the greatest of Freethought martyrs, Giordano Bruno, was burnt to ashes for the love of God and the glory of Christ. Three hundred years have elapsed since that supreme martyrdom. And now International Freethought is going to Rome to challenge Christianity at the heart of its power.

Freethinkers must be cold indeed to be unmoved at such a prospect. But what is feeling if it be not translated into action?

Few subscriptions have been sent in yet. Perhaps it is thought that there is plenty of time, but the N. S. S. Executive must appoint its delegates by the end of July, and it cannot move freely without a knowledge of its resources.

G. W. FOOTE.

Subscriptions Received:—Major John C. Harris, R.E., £10; Richard Johnson, £2; J. Jones, 10s.; J. Bland, 5s.; Dr. R. T. Nichols, £1; M. Barnard, 1s.; W. S. Dean, 15s.; J. W. Griffiths, 2s.

Sugar Plums.

Reference is made in a brief article by "W. B." in this week's *Freethinker* to Charles Bradlaugh's motto "Thorough." Never was there a man whom it could have more admirably suited. But it is not generally known that this motto was not quite original. It was used in the early seventeenth century by the great Earl Strafford, a man of extraordinary parts, who served Charles I. so loyally, boldly, and effectively in Ireland, and for signing the warrant of whose execution that false, weak King forfeited the respect of all brave men and deserved to die himself on the same scaffold. Strafford was "thorough" on the wrong side, but he was one of the greatest men in English history, and his noble bearing and splendid eloquence at his trial in the House of Lords, and subsequently at his execution, marked him out as one of the most gallant figures in the roll of English worthies. He was a martyr to his own principles, which is all a martyr can ever be; and he met his doom with a fortitude that threw even the greatest of his enemies for the time into the shade—though one of them was John Pym. Wide asunder as Bradlaugh and Strafford were in birth, training, position, and principles, they were alike in intellect and valor; and it is an insult to neither that the motto of both was "thorough." Over the grave of each of them might be said what *was* said over the grave of John Knox—a much less satisfactory person—"Here lies one who never feared the face of man."

Dr. J. B. Wilson, of Cincinnati, is going to Rome to represent the members and friends of the Liberal League (*Liberal is American for Freethought*) at the International Freethought Congress. The sum of one thousand dollars to pay his expenses is being raised through the *Blue Grass Blade*. Considerably more than half the amount is already secured.

Mr. J. W. de Caux's letters in the *Yarmouth Mercury* in favor of Agnosticism have not elicited a single reply from the clergy of that town. The paper is open to them, but they are too lazy, too indifferent, or too incapable to defend their creed; unless, indeed, they feel that the defence of Christianity is bound to do it more harm than any unanswered attack. Mr. Samuel Adams, of Ipswich, who writes as a Christian layman, calls attention to the lack of courage, or abundance of discretion, on the part of the clergy; witness the following extract from his letter in last week's *Mercury*:—"I must admit the force of 'Natural Religionist's' statements regarding the clergy of Yarmouth. No paper in England offers greater facilities for missionary work than the *Mercury*, yet no provincial clergy are so careless of their creed and their positions as the clergy of Yarmouth. Do they assume that the cold, strong reasoning of Mr. de Caux, and the sarcasm of 'Natural Religionist,' fall on barren ground, or do they believe the Rock of Holy Scripture is still impregnable? In this age even children think, and the silence of men who are hired to expound the Gospel of Jesus must, in the nature of things, fill infant minds with contempt. Is there no David in Yarmouth to do battle with Goliath? The ostrich-like attitude is either a confession of ignorance or of cowardice. While the ministers preach to their tiny self-satisfied congregations, the Agnostics speak, through your columns, to thousands of intelligent readers, and the effect must be important. Let me urge the clergy to do something to justify their claims. There must be some who can wield a pen for Jesus. More in sorrow than in anger, I cry with the prophet of old—"To your tents, oh Israel!"

One of our readers sends us a letter written by a young French friend at present residing at Barcelona. He says that people belonging to the advanced movement there are talking of nothing else but "the Congress of Rome." A large number are going from Barcelona, including a band and a choral society. The leading representative of Spain at the Congress will be Nicolas Salmeron, who is the most popular man in the peninsula. Immense numbers flock to hear him wherever he goes. They are Republicans and mostly Freethinkers. The French gentleman, who has resided at Madrid, Seville, Burgos, Valladolid, etc., thinks Barcelona the most progressive city in Spain. It abounds in Freethinkers, and the local Freethought paper *Las Dominicales* is largely read by the people. The French gentleman adds that he himself receives the *Freethinker* weekly, and it is much sought after by his English-speaking acquaintances.

We were unable last week to notice the very interesting and important interview with Mr. George Meredith in Tuesday's (July 5) *Daily Chronicle*—reported by Mr. Henry W. Nevinson, the war correspondent. Mr. Meredith, who still reads, converses, and maintains his old interest in human affairs, has felt a "peculiar disinclination for work of all kinds" since his last illness. But he is "as receptive as ever" and "enjoys hearing of new things." Also, apparently, he keeps his old opinion of the "dear public," as Thackeray called it. "The English people," he said, "know nothing about me. There has always been something antipathetic between them and me. With book after book it was always the same outcry of censure and disapproval. The first time or two I minded it. Then I determined to disregard what people said altogether, and since that I have written only to please myself. But even if you could tell the world all I think, no one would listen." Later on he said: "Oh, yes; people are improving. The whole world is improving—I am a little doubtful about the English race."

Mr. Meredith spoke admiringly of the Japanese. "They are a people capable of great ideas," he said, "and at the same time of an exact mastery of detail. They have known what to do; they have never botched or muddled. Besides, they are an artistic people, full of invention; and the whole race feels a genuine love of nature—a sense of the beauty of landscape and flowers." With regard to the upshot of the present war Mr. Meredith said: "As to the defeat of a European nation by Asiatics, that does not trouble me in the least. Nature gives free play for the best to win.....With their Buddhism, self-devotion, restraint, fearlessness of death, and artistic sense, it may very well be that the Japanese are a more valuable race than the Russians from nature's point of view. I admire them as a manly people."

This led Mr. Meredith to a bold and sane utterance on the fear of death. We give the passage in its entirety:—

"Certainly, fearlessness of death is a necessary quality. It is essential for manliness. Doctors and parsons are doing a lot of harm by increasing the fear of death and making the English less manly. No one should consider death or think

of it as worse than going from one room into another. The greatest of political writers has said, 'Despise your life, and you are the master of the lives of others.' Philosophy would say, 'Conquer the fear of death, and you are put into possession of your life.' I was a very timid and sensitive boy. I was frightened of everything; I could not endure to be left alone. But when I came to be eighteen, I looked round the world (as far as a youth of eighteen can look) and determined not to be afraid again. Since then I have had no fear of death. Every night when I go to bed I know I may not rise from it. That is nothing to me. I hope I shall die with a good laugh, like the old French woman. The curé came wailing to her about her salvation and things like that, and she told him her best improper story, and died. The God of nature and human nature does not dislike humor, you may be sure, and would rather hear it in extremity than the formless official drone. Let us believe in a hearty God—one to love more than to fear."

The last sentence must be taken with a little salt of intelligence. Mr. Meredith was speaking, of course, in everyday language. His "hearty God" belongs to the same class of beings as Béranger's "Bon Dieu."

Mr. Meredith expended his sarcasm on "the deadly monotony of the Sunday sermon." "Forty years ago," he said, "I had to give up going to church because I could not listen to the nonsense I heard spoken there any longer." "The clergy," he added, "are drawn from the same narrow and incompetent class as the officers, and they get the same insufficient education."

The best things in the rest of the interview were Mr. Meredith's words on behalf of woman's emancipation—conservative in the best sense, and liberal in the best sense too—and his plea for amity between nations. "In speaking of a foreign nation," he said, "we must always try to realise what it has done for the world—the very best it has done—instead of always criticising and dwelling on its weakest points or on its malevolence towards ourselves." Wise and admirable words! Would they were printed in bold letters, framed, and hung up in every newspaper office!

In speaking of Germany, the one name mentioned by Mr. Meredith was that of Goethe. In speaking of the "splendid literature" of France, he mentioned Montaigne, Rabelais, and Molière. All the four we may observe, were Pagans, not Christians. The American writer he mentioned was Emerson—"that very great writer." Emerson was not a Christian either.

Mr. Meredith's final utterance will interest most of our readers:—

"The power and functions of Government are undoubtedly diminishing. I don't know whether we shall reach the time when there will be no Government at all, as some people hope. But certainly that is the tendency. Tyranny, which is the complete form of Government, has been tried and proved to be impossible. We shall never have that again, unless Democracy betrays itself."

True, but Democracy has betrayed itself before, and may do so again. There is no perpetual safety, not even in numbers; and nations, as Berkeley hinted, may go mad as well as individuals. It has always been the case, and perhaps it always will be, that "The price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

Some startling headlines appeared in Thursday's (July 7) *Daily News*:—"Secular Education—Welsh Congregationalism—All But Unanimous Vote." This shows how the wind is blowing. But the report under these headlines was still better reading. The Welsh Congregational Union met at Bangor on the Wednesday, and "an exciting scene" was witnessed. This is what happened:—

"The Chairman, Mr. J. Evans (Aberystwith), in a presidential address, Mr. Jephson Williams, M.A., in an official paper on recent legislation and the rights of conscience, and Professor Phillips, D.Sc., University College, in proposing a resolution condemning the Education Act as unjust to Non-conformists, all argued strongly in favor of Biblical instruction as an essential part of the curriculum in State-supported schools.

"This view was promptly challenged by Mr. Beriah Evans, who moved an amendment emphasising the fact that the fundamental principles of Independency were opposed to State support or control of religion; and winding up with an emphatic demand for a system of purely secular education by the State, leaving religious instruction entirely to the Churches. In a powerful speech, which evidently impressed an audience at first hostile, Mr. Beriah Evans argued the question from the standpoint of Independent principles.

"He was strongly supported by a number of influential speakers, including the Revs. E. Richards, Towy Jones, D. Adams, John Thomas, J. M. Prytherch, and Prof. D. M. Lewis, Aberystwith.

"The opposition died out as the debate proceeded, until, when the question was put to the meeting, only three voted against the amendment, which was a practical vote of

censure upon the presentation of the case by the official speakers and executive committee, and the amendment was then carried by an all but unanimous vote, amidst resounding cheers."

This looks very much like the beginning of the end. Our prediction that Dr. Clifford would be left aground on the mud may be verified a good deal sooner than some people fancy.

Birmingham "saints" will note that Mr. H. Percy Ward is lecturing in their city to-day (July 17), and closing his week's Freethought mission there under the auspices of the N. S. S. Branch. In the morning and evening his meetings will be held in the classic Bull Ring, and in the afternoon at the corner of John Bright-street and Hill-street.

The *Advocate of India* (Bombay) deals sarcastically with the case of James Warden, aged twenty-two, who pleaded guilty to attempting to commit suicide by swallowing turpentine, cajiput oil, and chlorodyne. He stated that his mind had been upset by reading the atheistic works of Voltaire and other writers, and he came to the conclusion that there was no God and that life was not worth living. While in prison he had read the Bible carefully, and had become a true and penitent Christian. That was what he said, and the affecting plea induced the magistrate to let him off with a couple of weeks' incarceration. The *Advocate of India* hopes "the young man will read that Good Book more attentively than he has read Voltaire. The Philosopher of Ferney was certainly not an Atheist, whatever else he was." Our Bombay contemporary believes, however, that if this curiously converted young man, in spite of his wonderful knowledge of Voltaire, had tried to commit suicide in London, he "might have had the distinction of being taken round the platforms of the Little Bethels as a brand plucked from the burning." In another column of the same journal we note a letter by "J. W. H." on "Atheism and Suicide," in which reference is made to the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's "Atheist Shoemaker" story as being about on all fours with the conversion of young James Warden through reading the Bible in a Madras prison.

Some Inscriptions.

BRADLAUGH had a pet aversion for one word, and a liking amounting to fondness for another. The first "Toleration," the other "Thorough." The latter, if I remember rightly, formed the 1891 motto of the *National Reformer*; at all events, I well recollect, in February of that year, away down in the north-country, a small but enthusiastic meeting—convened through the news of the death of our idol—the business of the assembly being the designing of a wreath for transmission to St. John's Wood. Various were the designs submitted and rejected; but, finally, we hit on one—a simple green ground, with white flowers forming the word "THOROUGH!" Whether the tribute ever reached Circus-road, much less Brookwood, intact, I know not; yet it matters not, since it was but a little unenduring bit of sentiment inspired by our admiration of the illustrious dead. All the same, we were very proud, at the time, of that wreath. Afterwards, on learning that the word we selected was really Bradlaugh's favorite, our happiness, so to say, ran over. Concluding a speech at Edinburgh in 1882, he had said: "And when my work is over, and the stone covers the spot wherein I lie, may I be entitled to have the word "Thorough" carved on its face." He hardly realised, perhaps, that within a decade a stone so inscribed would mark the spot where the Northampton rosettes did duty for the last time. With its granite pedestal, surmounted by a fine bust expressing the splendid features of the old Bradlaugh, the grave is probably the most noticeable in all Brookwood. If a little piffing criticism may be pardoned, however, one might say that a slight omission on the part of the artist mars the effect of the inscription on the pedestal in that the word "Thorough" appears without quotation marks; and, as the absence of a stop will sometimes spoil a line of fine poetry, so, as it seems to me, the leaving out of the inverted commas gives one the notion of some hidden want.

No one need carp at any effort to make the resting-places of the great dead conspicuous, if they are not unduly so. It is the exaggerated panegyrics and inapt Biblical quotation which are so often met with engraved on stones to the illustrious obscure that render a stone like Bradlaugh's so interesting. What may perhaps be regarded as the most magnificent tomb in the world, that of Napoleon under the dome of the Invalides in Paris, is singularly free from laudatory dedication. The tattered standards strewn here and there recall, if you wish, the mighty events of Marengo, of Jena, and of Austerlitz. For the rest, everything speaks for itself. The great mausoleum doubtless appeals to different men in different ways; and one cannot help thinking that its very magnificence led Ingersoll, himself a soldier, into doing the memory of the great warrior a slight injustice. Napoleon had written at St. Helena: "I desire to repose along the banks of the Seine amid the French people I love." This (of course in French) appears on the door of the enclosure. Simple enough, surely!

For a straightforward, characteristic bit of eulogy, one should not miss seeing Shirley churchyard, Woodside, once a charming rural retreat, but now almost absorbed in the ever-growing Norwood. Here it is:—

"Here rests
From day's well-sustained burden
JOHN JAMES RUSKIN.
Born in Edinburgh May 10th, 1785,
He died in his home in London
March 3rd, 1864.
He was an entirely honest merchant
And his memory
Is to all who keep it
Dear and helpful.
His son
Whom he loved to the utmost
And taught to speak truth
Says this of him."

Now, if filial encomiums be needed, surely the above supplies a model; it is straight to the point, but wanting, no doubt, in that exquisite tenderness which characterises the following, from the same pen:—

"Here
Beside my Father's body
I have laid
My Mother's:
Nor was dearer earth
Ever returned to earth,
Nor purer life
Recorded in Heaven.
She died December 5th, 1871,
Aged 90 years."

W. B.

"Spirit Fruit."—II.

NEW CHRISTIAN CULT WHICH IS NOW THE TALK OF THE NEWSPAPERS.

UNIVERSAL LOVE, NON-RESISTANCE, AND COMMON OWNERSHIP OF ALL THINGS, INCLUDING WIFE AND CHILD, THE CARDINAL PRINCIPLES.

(By Dr. J. B. Wilson, from the "Blue Grass Blade," Lexington, America.)

It is astonishing what amount of hocus-pocus a person—a sensible person in most things—will put up with in his own religion, and how utterly disgusted he becomes at the hocus-pocus he sees in others.

This is a subject so vast that it cannot be entered into at any depth in one article. Suffice it to say that sex is unconsciously the propelling agency in the development of the religious instinct. Especially do we see this manifestation in the young and at about the age of puberty.

No sensible person would say that a maiden or youth at this time is influenced toward religion by exercise of the mental or reasoning faculties. Reason has nothing whatever to do with a youth joining church and getting hallelujah in his soul.

It is all sentiment based chiefly upon the love principle, which, unknown to the youthful mind, is no other than the sex principle. At this period of sex development, sentiment, society, music, and sex attraction are intimately allied with

worship. The youth neither understands worship nor the sex influence. But the Church affords a meeting-place for the sexes, and by bringing them thus together it promotes sex-attraction and has the tendency to effect the union of the two emotions—that of worship and the sex instinct.

An indefinable sense of ecstasy takes possession of the youth. He does not understand it, but somehow feels that by being good, joining the church and worshipping, he will advance more rapidly in the affections of the maiden to whom he is sexually attracted.

Instinctively he feels that she is emotional and religious, and that he must conform to her in this way to win her. He neither thinks nor reasons, but instead is led helplessly on by a blind impulse he does not understand, nor try to understand.

It is very easy to get him to join church at this time. He imagines that he has gotten religion, and does not know that the more beautiful, more refined, and more holy instinct of passion is pulsating like bounding floods through the great red rivers of his being, and which is the all-directing power controlling him.

Let his girl remain away from church, and you will note how soon his ardor for worship dies. Soon he, too, will remain away, and it is not long until he is found among the ranks of the backslider.

I am talking from experience and observation, and I will illustrate what I have been saying by showing how, at a critical time in my religious (?) life, that love which is the same as the sex instinct dominated the sense of worship. In my case, it kept me out of church. Let it be remembered that the sex instinct leads away from religion as well as to it. We see this illustrated in the primrose dalliance of the clergy who so frequently make public sensations along this line.

A PAIR OF PATCHED PANTS.

A big revival was on. I went every night and twice Sunday. I went chiefly because the girls were there and I had nowhere else to go.

After listening for two weeks to the music and sermons and prayers and shouting and appeals for sinners, and all the girls joining, I began to feel that I was a sinful little devil, and ought to be good. I got what they called "convicted," and was on the point several times of going up and giving my hand to the preacher and to the Lord, which is one and the same thing, but somehow was kept back by a sense of the ludicrous show I would make of myself at the altar, praying and howling and weeping. But the girls had all joined, and I thought I had to join.

When I was not laboring under a sense of "conviction," I was looking at the girls all the time, peeping over the benches at them during prayers—revelling in all kinds of sweet love thoughts. The angels in heaven, I thought, could not be sweeter or purer than they. I was bashful and shy. The good opinion and preference of a sweet girl (and I was somewhat of a favorite among them) had by far a more powerful influence upon me for good than all the sermons and music and glory in the soul that filled the church. Thus I was moved both by worship and by sex attraction, neither of which I clearly understood.

Even though the salvation of my soul was at stake, and every minute of delay increased my chances of being plunged into fiery hell, I would risk all such danger rather than expose myself to the ridicule or sport of the young girls to whom I was attracted.

One night the exhorters came near getting me. All the boys and girls had joined, got converted, and were happy. I alone stood apart, and was the only material among the youth they had to work on. Some said I was obstinate and stubborn, and others that I just wanted to be different from the others and appear smart. My father told me that I was leaving a bad impression upon the minds of good people. Upon all sides someone was rootin' for my soul. Every night a dozen or more would come and put their arms around me and try to talk me into joining, and I was on the point of going all the time, but wouldn't go.

Then they would sing "Come to Jesus," and "Almost Persuaded," and "The Ninety and Nine," while the whole house would look right back at me; and this would have the effect of knocking all the grit and courage out of me. I felt that I'd go through the floor if I attempted to walk down the aisle past that gauntlet of eyes.

Finally an old enemy came and put his arm around me. We had had many a fight, and each had carried black eyes as a result of the other's punching. He illustrated the love of the Lord by showing how it led an enemy to forgive, etc. This touched me very deeply, and I was on the point of going to "the mercy seat." But I said, "Tom, I can't go to-night, for I have my old grey jeans pants on, and they have

TWO BIG BLACK PATCHES

on the seat, and if I'd turn them around to the audience some of the girls would be sure to make fun. I won't go

now, but I promise I'll put on my Sunday pants and give my heart to the Lord to-morrow night."

"Pshaw!" said Tom; "don't allow a couple of little patches to keep you from the Lord. God does not measure you by your clothes; he is no respecter of persons, and he is no respecter of patches."

"I know the Lord is all right," said I, "but the girls will be sure to laugh and make fun; besides, they are not little patches, Tom, but cover the whole seat, and one is twice as big as the other. No, I won't go to-night, and it's no use talking." After discussing patches, etc., for a few minutes, Tom gave up and left, the whole house looking back my way, expecting to see me come forward.

Tom was with the Sunday crowd, playing seven-up in the woods, in about four months after.

Presently my old Sunday-school teacher came down the aisle toward me. "I'm a goner now," said I to myself. She was a sweet, dear old lady, with a soft voice. She knelt down beside me, put her arms around me, and said, in a low, loving tone: "Johnny, I have watched night after night to see you go up and give your heart to the Lord. All the class have joined but you. I have been praying for you, Johnny. I didn't think I would have to come to ask you to go with the Lord's people. I thought you would come of your own accord. You are one of my favorites. You are such a good boy, Johnny. Johnny, don't you want to love the Lord? Don't you want to go to heaven, and meet all the loved ones there, and be an angel by-and-by?"

I began to snuffle as soon as she began to talk, and by the time she was through I was crying. I don't know why I cried, but I just blubbered out that I wanted to love the Lord, and that I would join to-night. "I thought you would," she said, "if I would ask you, and I am so proud of you Johnny, and now I will go back to my seat and will eagerly look to see you come."

Left to myself, the first thing I thought of was, not love of the Lord, but those patches. I looked up towards the mourner's bench, which was crowded, and saw that the only vacant place fronted square towards the audience. I looked over towards the girls, and saw that they could get a full view of the big black squares, and I just stubbornly determined that I didn't love the Lord enough, nor care enough for my soul's salvation, to go up there and turn those patches on those girls. I didn't care for the Lord's seeing them, I didn't care for the old folks seeing them, I didn't mind the boys seeing them, but for the girls to snicker at them I couldn't stand, and so those patches probably saved me from becoming a Methodist parson. They sang "A Charge to Keep I Have," but I didn't go up, and I didn't attend any more of the meetings.

I have often thought of this circumstance. The instinct of worship and veneration was strong in me, although I did not understand it. Sex attraction was also strong, neither did I understand it; but I see now that the sex instinct dominated the religious instinct. I thought that I had to join the Church to please the women and the girls; but fear of the sport they might make at sight of my patches overcame the religious impulse.

It was not a mental influence the girls exercised upon me. It was that strange, undefinable, incomprehensible instinct of sex, which at certain periods of development or decay will control, prejudice, sway, advance, or retard the religious instinct. In my case, I wanted to join the Church because the girls expected it of me, and then refrained from doing it out of fear of their titters on exposure of my monstrous patches.

Before puberty, I would not have cared one iota for anything a girl thought or said about me. With the development of passion, their judgment was everything, taking rank above the elder and wiser in the control of my emotions.

The Church is a meeting-place of the sexes. It affords superior opportunity for sex attraction. Neither sex would attend were the other absent. Or if they were compelled to worship separately and on separate occasions, youthful attendance at church meetings would soon be very slim.

It is thus to be plainly seen that religion is not the governing instinct in the normally sexed youth.

Nor are intellectuality, nor reason, neither of which are requirements of religion.

I think now that I have shown not only the very intimate association of sex with religion, but its dominating power in many instances leading one toward religion, or away from it. Look at the number of preachers who fall. Imagine the number who are never discovered.

Phallicism is so incorporated into Christianity that were Christians generally to come to a knowledge of it, they would stand amazed and dumbfounded. Marriage, divorce, circumcision, celibacy, polygamy, prostitution, and free love all are religious adjuncts.

If such a person as Jesus Christ lived, he was evidently a communist and free lover, and Jacob Beilhart well substantiates his position by pointing to the attitude of Christ

and the women with whom he travelled and mingled. He never married, yet mingled intimately with young women, and with Mary Magdalene in particular.

The celibacy of Christ and his association with Mary Magdalene is the foundation principle of the present day celibacy of the priesthood and the nunnery, which religious phase is purely one of sex.

For be it understood that the religious exercise of chastity is as significantly sexual as that of indulgence.

But the pretence of chastity fools none but the ignorant and blind. Every person of keen perception knows that Nature is never wholly overcome or subdued in any of her demands of procreation.

LINCOLN AGAIN.

A part of the priests and nuns may practise celibacy all the time, and all of them may practise it part of the time, but no one but a simpleton will believe that all of them practise it all of the time.

But it is my object only to show the relation of sex to religion, and that the free love ethics of Jacob Beilhart differs only in form from the sex practices of other phases of Christianity. Polygamy, concubinage, rape, and prostitution are the most prominent religious practices upheld by the Bible. Grove worship and the Eleusianian mysteries were common religious practices among the Greeks and Romans. Were I to enter into all the sex-phases of religion I would be compelled to continue writing for a year. It is enough to say that if the sex features were eliminated, or if even they were understood, the Christian religion would undergo an immediate change.

To some of the forms of Christianity sex is the one great shame and sin. These people imagine that their virtue depends upon legal regulation. Others which make chastity their loudest profession in public, practise free love in secret, and they are all shocked at the exposure of the peculiar "universal love" of Jacob Beilhart.

The facts are that Beilhart has a sex attachment to his religion for the same reason that all the others have. The facts are that it is the very life of religion. It is for this reason that marriage or the sex-right is made a holy and sacred thing in them all.

But the people generally never think of this. They can see Beilhart's and Joe Smith's position very plainly, but not their own.

(To be concluded.)

The Sorrows of God.

In pursuit of business, which for my sins involves some night travel, I have to spend many days away from home.

Staying at Bristol the other day (where, by the way, I have had many a chat with a worthy Freethinker who has a newsshop in the Arcade, Broadmead, and who tells me of his troubles in that "City of Churches") and having to catch the midnight mail, I retired to rest about mid-afternoon, leaving my window open on account of the heat.

Now be it known to you at the foot of the garden is a Primitive Methodist conventicle, and about 7.30 p.m. I became aware of the advent of a weekly orgie of agony and discord; or, as the notice-board flatteringly describes it, "a weekly meeting for praise and prayer." This performance was inaugurated by one of those Wesleyan tunes which for length and sinuosity remind one of the great sea-serpent or the mainspring of a Waterbury watch. It consisted of eleven verses, with a pause after every second stanza, probably to recover breath for the next onslaught. This "act of worship" was rendered by about a score of voices singing? (save the mark) in various degrees of flatness or sharpness on the key set by the wheezy harmonium, which instrument was usually a note or two before the congregation, and won each heat by a neck.

After this, the same strident, nasal voice which had misled the singing requested, with a choice Bristol burr, that brother Tomkins would "now wrastle with the Lard in prayer." Upon which brother T. exclaimed "Oh Lard!" and to judge by the sounds which succeeded, the furniture, the "Lard" and the brother seemed to be having an equally rough time. Just as I became used to the more or less rhythmic accents of brother T.'s "wrastle," accompanied by a running fire of groans and amens, and punctuated by the "laying on" of fists upon the table, and had sunk into a semi-somnolent state, I was galvanised into consciousness of the entrancing strains of "O Happy Day," with a refrain after each verse which ought to have been:—

He taught us how to make a row
And yell in several keys at once.

This kind of thing alternated for about two mortal hours, during which I gradually consoled myself for my afflictions by being thankful I am not the Almighty. For though it is

bad enough to endure one of these performances in your vicinity, one trembles to think of the fearful effect of a continual bombardment with this kind of thing from all parts of the globe in various degrees of harmony or discord. Pity help the great I AM if he is cursed with a musical ear. No wonder he occasionally wipes out a few thousand of his tormentors by a Mont Pelée disaster or a steamboat fire.

C. H. WHEELER.

Correspondence.

THE ORIGINALITY OF JESUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The space available for correspondence in the *Freethinker* is unavoidably restricted, but with your permission I would wish to acknowledge, in common courtesy, the letter which appeared in your columns under the above heading.

I may say that I have had the line of investigation and comparison suggested by your correspondent under consideration for some time, and hope at some future date to bring forward some results.

With regard to the friendly criticism contained in the first paragraph of the letter referred to, it is highly probable that I err occasionally on the side of over-caution, but such a failing may at times partake of the nature of a virtue.

I am afraid your correspondent generously overrates my qualifications for the task indicated, but I may be allowed to express my appreciation of the other views embodied in his communication.

G. SCOTT.

PIOUS OPTIMISM.

How can I adequately express my contempt for the assertion that all things occur for the best, for a wise and beneficent end, and are ordered by a humane intelligence! It is the most utter falsehood and a crime against the human race. Even in my brief time I have been contemporary with events of the most horrible character; as when the mothers in the Balkans cast their own children from the train to perish in the snow; as when the *Princess Alice* foundered, and six hundred human beings were smothered in foul water; as when the hetacomb of two thousand maidens were burned in the church at Santiago; as when the miserable creatures tore at the walls of the Vienna theatre. Consider only the fates which overtake the little children. Human suffering is so great, so endless, so awful that I can hardly write of it. I could never go into hospitals and face it, as some do, lest my mind should be temporarily overcome. The whole and the worst the worst pessimist can say is far beneath the least particle of the truth, so immense is the misery of man. It is the duty of all rational beings to acknowledge the truth. There is not the least trace of directing intelligence in human affairs. This is a foundation of hope, because, if the present condition of things were ordered by a superior power, there would be no possibility of improving it for the better in the spite of that power. Acknowledging that no such direction exists, all things become at once plastic to our will.—*Richard Jefferies, "The Story of My Heart,"* pp. 134-136.

For downright contradiction
Is, to the wise and fools, an equal mystery.
My friend, in the old almanack of history,
You'll find such jumbles made of fact and fiction;
And by the help of this, or some such juggle,
Errors spread wide;—truth suffers in the struggle.
Doctrines are lisped by infants, taught in schools,
And are believed: for who contends with fools?
To customary words men still will link
Their faith—poor dolts—imagining they think!

Goethe (*Mephistopheles* in "*Faust*").

"What keeps our friend Farmer Bramble from worship to-day?" anxiously inquired a vigilant minister of one of his deacons. "Four Sundays have passed since I saw him among us. I hope and trust it is not Socinianism that keeps him away." "No, sir," replied the deacon, "it is something worse than that." "Worse than Socinianism! You surely are not going to tell me it is Deism!" "No, sir; it is something worse than that." "Worse than Deism! You alarm me! It surely cannot be Atheism." "No, sir; it is something worse than that." "Worse than Atheism? Impossible! Nothing can be worse than Atheism." "Yes it is, sir; it's *rheumatism*!"

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
OUTDOOR.

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

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

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

STRATFORD GROVE: 7, F. A. Davies.

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.: Mr. H. Percy Ward; 11 and 7, in the Bull Ring; 3, corner of John Bright-street and Hill-street. Thursday, July 21, at 8 o'clock, at the Bull Ring Coffee House, Mr. Deakin, "Physiology."

HUDDERSFIELD BRANCH N. S. S.: Market Cross, Huddersfield. Saturday and Sunday evening at 8, George Whitehead and C. J. Atkinson.

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