

THE

# Freethinker

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*Certain it is that "veritas" (truth) and "bonitas" (goodness) differ but as the seal and the print: for truth prints goodness; and they be the clouds of error which descend in the storms of passions and perturbations.*  
—BACON.

## The Coming Congress.

ONE of the most important gatherings of modern times will take place at Rome on the twentieth, twenty-first, and twenty-second of September. A Universal Congress of Freethought will open in the Aula Magna of the Collegio Romano, the use of which has been graciously granted by the Italian Minister of Public Instruction. Delegates and visitors will be present from all parts of the civilised world. In the central city of human history a demonstration will be given of the fact that Freethought is as world-wide as superstition, and that the cause of progress is as international as the cause of reaction.

This Universal Freethought Congress is being organised by the International Freethought Federation. That Federation was founded by a number of illustrious Freethinkers, most of whom (in old Roman phrase) have joined the majority. Büchner and Liebknecht represented Germany; Charles Bradlaugh and Herbert Spencer represented England; César De Paepe represented Belgium; Ramon Chiés represented Spain; D. M. Bennett represented America; Charles Renouvier and Clémence Royer represented France; Giovanni Bovio and Jacques Moleschott represented Italy; and Carl Vogt represented Switzerland.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago those illustrious Freethinkers founded the Federation. Since then it has held eight Congresses in various European capitals. In September it will hold the ninth Congress. And this will be by far the greatest of all. They say that the ninth wave is the biggest. Certainly the ninth International Freethought Congress will eclipse all its predecessors.

Papers will be read in this Congress, either in person or by proxy, from the pens of some of the most eminent men in Europe. Amongst them are Professor Ernst Haeckel, of the University of Jena; Professor Henry Maudsley, of the University of London; Professor Hector Denis, of the University of Brussels; Professor Nicolas Salmeron, of the University of Madrid—formerly President of the Spanish Republic; Professor Marcelin Berthelot, Perpetual Secretary of the French Academy of Sciences, and Member of the French Academy—perhaps the first scientist in France; Professor Roberto Ardigo, of the University of Padua; Professor Cesare Lombroso, of the University of Turin—world-famous as a criminologist; Professor Giuseppe Sergi, of the University of Rome; Professor Novicow,

of the University of Odessa; and the great and noble Björnstjerne-Björnson, who shares the throne of Norwegian literature with Ibsen.

These are not little people. They are great men, in the very front rank of the intellectual life of Europe. Consequently the Congress will be no hole-and-corner affair, but an event of the highest importance.

Committees have been formed in all the principal European countries. The Italian committee includes five professors and three members of parliament; and their secretary is Professor Arcangelo Ghisleri, of Bergamo.

Amongst the subjects down for discussion on the Congress agenda are (1) International Public Law, in respect of the diplomatic relations between States and Churches, (2) National Public Law, in respect of Churches face to face with the sovereignty of the State, including (a) Concordats and (b) Separation between Church and State, (3) Education, with reference to the various interferences of religion, (4) Secularisation of Public Social Activities, (5) Religious Missions, with special regard to Colonial wars, (6) Organisation and Propaganda of International Freethought.

The readers of the *Freethinker* will see that the Rome Congress is really a very serious effort, and I trust they will also see that the British Freethought should be well represented. Charles Bradlaugh, who founded the National Secular Society, was also, it will be remembered, one of the founders of the International Freethought Federation. It would therefore be a tribute to his memory to let the British delegation be something like adequate to the importance of the Congress and the part that Great Britain has played in the development of modern Freethought.

The National Secular Society could not see its way to sink itself in the so-called English Committee for the Rome Congress. The only object of such a Committee would be to do two things; first, to unite all with any pretensions to the name of Freethinker in one common effort; second, to secure by such action the attendance at Rome of representatives from the upper ranks of science, art, and literature, as well as from the ranks of militant heresy. This was not seriously attempted, nor probably even contemplated. The delegates who are to represent this so-called English Committee at the Congress are announced as being—Dr. Stanton Coit, Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Mr. Charles Watts, and Mr. William Heaford. Mr. Robertson, of course, is a very able man—so is Mr. McCabe; and both are sound Freethinkers and professed Atheists. Dr. Coit, however, who is an able man too, while he does distinctly represent the Ethical movement, does not at all represent English Freethought—as the term is generally understood. Why else does he lecture on such subjects

as how he found God, why he prays, and the sin of Atheism? Altogether the so-called English Committee delegation is as sectional as could well be conceived. One wishes it no harm—one wishes it well; but, at the same time, one is bound to say that the English Freethought of the last twenty years requires much further representation. And this will be provided by the National Secular Society's delegates, who stand for the fighting forces of Freethought, that have borne the brunt of all the fiercest battles, and faced the worst of all the danger.

The National Secular Society's Executive has requested me to represent it at the Rome Congress, and I have consented to do so. I shall at least carry a sword there that flashed in the thick of the battle when some of those who flaunt their hatred of me were cowering in safety. And I shall not go to Rome alone. The Executive associates with me as N.S.S. delegates Messrs. C. Cohen, Victor Roger, and John Lloyd. They will all three, I hope, accompany me to Rome, and show the Congress what Englishmen are like who are not ashamed of the good old honest name of Freethinker, who do not mind plainly calling themselves Atheists, and do not wish to find any sort of protection behind the shield of new-fangled names.

Mr. Victor Roger, who has a good knowledge of French—I mean as a spoken language—has attended International Congresses before. Those who know him are aware that he will make a first-rate delegate. The rest may take my word for it. Mr. Cohen is known to all the readers of this journal as a man of brains and courage—the two first virtues in a Freethought advocate. Mr. John Lloyd came out of the Presbyterian Church as Mr. Joseph McCabe came out of the Catholic Church. His ability and eloquence are universally recognised. He has not found Freethought advocacy a bed of roses. He did not expect to. He knew what he was facing—and he has no regrets. But, at the same time, it is a graceful thing to send him to Rome as a representative of the party with whom he so valiantly cast in his lot.

My readers will bear in mind, I trust, that the expenses of this delegation to Rome are to be borne by a special fund, as was decided at the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. In addition to these expenses there is the contribution that ought to be made, and that to a certain extent *must* be made, to the expenses of organising the Congress itself. I calculate that £100 should be raised to do this thing properly. And really this is a very small sum if spread over two or three hundred subscribers. Surely there are as many who will help to send a fighting Freethought delegation to the headquarters of Christianity, in order to affirm in the most positive manner those principles which the Church of Christ thought it had suppressed when it burnt Giordano Bruno, the noblest martyr of all time, to ashes at the stake.

The amount already subscribed to the Rome Congress Fund will be seen in the first column of the ninth page of this week's *Freethinker*. It is still a long way off the sum required. But my experience of subscriptions is that they are never "previous." Freethinkers are not a wealthy body, and they generally think there is time up to the last minute; but I beg them to note that the Congress is drawing near, and to ask them not to be unnecessarily late.

G. W. FOOTE.

## The Nature of Man.

READERS of periodical literature will recently have come across various notices of Professor Elie Metchnikoff's work, particularly his book on *The Nature of Man*. Some of these notices have treated the Professor and his work with due respect, while others have seen fit to treat his theories as a huge joke, and so make it an occasion for the exercise of weak witticism and stale pleasantries. Some have, again, been distinctly afraid of offending readers, and have devoted about one-tenth of the space allotted to a novel by Hall Caine or Marie Corelli. And as some of the topics dealt with by Professor Metchnikoff are of a distinctly Freethought, not to say Atheistic, tendency, none of the papers or journals, in reviewing the book, have brought out this aspect of the author's work—which is really the main reason why I now write a notice of what is one of the most remarkable books of the year.

*Apropos* of what has just been said, it may be noted that soon after the book appeared the first of what should have been a series of articles appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth*. At the conclusion of the first article the writer said that he would, with the permission of the editor, continue his exposition of Metchnikoff's book. To this the editor appended a note to say he would willingly insert the other articles of the series. The writer then proceeded to show that both philosophy and religion had failed in dealing with the problem of death. To be quite correct, this is what he intended doing; but after dealing with the first, the philosophic failure, the articles suddenly ceased. The editor probably felt that it was not in accordance with the teaching of the "Nonconformist Conscience" to permit an article dealing with the failure of religion; and so the one that was to show that religion was no more capable of dealing with the problem than was philosophy never appeared.

Elie Metchnikoff, a name well known in the scientific world as the discoverer of the functions of the white corpuscles of the blood, and a leading authority on all that pertains to bacteriology, is a Russian by birth, although for some years settled in Paris, and has been since 1888 in the Pasteur Institute of that city. In addition to being a scientific worker, however, Metchnikoff is, as *The Nature of Man* shows, a thinker; and his book gives, under the modest guise of "a program of work to be carried out as fully as circumstances may permit," a gospel of science that may take the place of the old gospel of supernaturalism. And this gospel is, in a word, negatively, the assertion of the utter worthlessness of all forms of supernaturalism, and, positively, the assertion of a boundless faith in the self-sufficiency of human nature, and of its ability to grapple with and overcome all that hinders life being carried out to its completion through a course of complete happiness.

It is interesting to note that, although the Professor's anti-religious opinions are not thrust upon the reader, where occasion calls for an expression of belief there is no shirking. "God" is dismissed with a caution; of the idea of a future life we are told it "is supported by not a single fact, while there is much evidence against it..... Since the awakening of the scientific spirit in Europe it has been recognised that the promise of a future life has no basis of fact..... Non-existence of life after death is in consonance with the whole range of human knowledge." And, dealing with the influence of Christianity on race development, he refers to Christian doctrines having brought about "a most serious perversion of the innate instincts of the human race," as shown in studied neglect of the ties of family and of society; and reflected also in its art, with its pictures of "pale saints, distorted martyrs, virgins with flat chests, feet too long and bony hands, hermits withered and unsubstantial, Christs that look like crushed and bleeding earthworms, processions of figures that are wan and stiffened and sad, upon whom are stamped

all the deformities of misery, and all the shrinking timidity of the oppressed." This quotation, although from Taine, expresses the convictions of Professor Metchnikoff, and he rightly contrasts it with the old Pagan ideal of mind, and body brought to the highest stage of development and beauty.

The purpose of Professor Metchnikoff's book is to outline the teachings of modern science as to the probability of a normal human life—one that shall be so completely adapted to its environment as to be spent in the discharge of a round of pleasurable functions, and ended without desire for its continuance. But, to define the normal life, it is necessary to realise the conditions of life as it now exists, how numerous are the disharmonies of existence, and how ill-adapted human structures and instincts are to realise the perfect life. To this end the work is divided into three parts. Part I. deals with "Disharmonies in the Nature of Man"; Part II. the religious and philosophical remedies for these disharmonies, and Part III. with "What Science is able to do to Alleviate the Disharmonies of the Human Constitution."

Those religious persons who are continually, and in spite of the doctrine of evolution, finding proofs of divine wisdom in the structure of the animal world should experience a rude awakening after reading the first portion of *The Nature of Man*. Disharmony of structure is common throughout the whole animal kingdom. Even plants show the same phenomena. Orchids have rudimentary organs, and wasps have useless instincts. And the more highly organised is the instinct of an animal, the more easily it is disorganised by a change in the environment. Complete adaptation nowhere exists.

Great as these disharmonies are elsewhere, they are greatest and most numerous in man. To begin with, man carries about no less than one hundred and seven rudimentary organs, serving no useful purpose, but demanding nutrition and often developing disease. Although man leads a sedentary life, he is burdened with a digestive apparatus that is better adapted to a time when food of a different kind had to be obtained in a more or less hurried and haphazard manner. Bulky and indigestible foods have to be eaten so that the large intestine may empty itself and disease be avoided. Disharmonies of reproduction succeed disharmonies of digestion. The only organ that distinguishes woman from the female anthropoid is the acquisition of an organ that is useless and may serve as a soil for the microbes of disease. Sexual instincts are often active before the corresponding organs are properly mature, and remain after the organs have lost their functional value. The growth of population is nowhere adapted to the economic conditions. Even the family instincts are fitful in their operation, and not to be depended upon at all times and under all conditions. The author's statement that "more than one race has perished because of its lack of the instinct of family," is one that in the absence of exact proof may be challenged, but the main statement remains. Nor is the social instinct in man strong enough to have complete dependence placed upon it, as is shown by the ease and frequency with which the anti-social instincts express themselves. The whole of the two chapters on the disharmonies of digestion and reproduction deserve, and will repay, the closest study.

How much has been written of the instinct of self-preservation? Yet, even here, Professor Metchnikoff discovers instances of disharmony. That there is an instinct for life is generally admitted; and it has the peculiarity of becoming generally stronger with age rather than weakening, as is the case with other instincts. It is this fact which demonstrates its disharmony. For death is a fact, natural and inescapable. None can avoid it, and yet few—only about one per million, according to Metchnikoff—die without feeling that they would if they could live longer. This love of life consequently gives rise to a fear of death, again an instance of disharmony, for were our natures pro-

perly adapted to our environment, all the essential happenings of existence would harmonise, and not jar with our instincts. And this fear of death—springing primarily, as will be seen later, from the fact that our organs at death are not physiologically exhausted—is the foundation of the desire for immortality, and also of religion.

Metchnikoff's handling of this subject is of extreme interest and importance to Freethinkers, and this, with his theory of old age, will be dealt with in my next article.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

### Jesus and the Miraculous.

NOTHING is more remarkable and significant, in the religious world, than the modified and essentially inconsistent treatment of the subject of miracles by modern theologians, particularly by those among them who pride themselves on being members of the Evangelical School. No better instance of this could be found than in Professor Peake's reply to Question 8 at the Open Conference recently held at the Central Hall, Manchester. The question stated a problem which has always presented itself to, and puzzled, thoughtful people. If we cannot believe that Buddha, Plato, or any other great man was born of a virgin, rose from the dead, or possessed and exercised supernatural powers, as recorded in various documents, why should we be expected to give credence to similar records concerning Jesus? Professor Peake's answer is an ingenious evasion of the whole difficulty. He admits that "usually, when we are reading ancient history, and we come across statements of prodigies or portents, we pass them by as certainly not true," and then asks, "Should we, when we come to the Gospels, treat them differently from the way in which we treat Livy or other historians who narrate prodigies of that kind?" Of course, he answers that question in the affirmative, and, in so doing, betrays his theological bias. When dealing with Livy's prodigies and portents, he *assumes* that they are untrue, and so passes them by; but when he comes to the Gospels he *assumes* that their narratives are true, and so invents arguments in their defence. But is this policy logically honest, and calculated to assist the Christian cause?

Professor Peake maintains that "our attitude towards miracles to-day is somewhat different from what it was a few years ago." *Whose* attitude has thus changed? It is incontrovertible that the attitude of science towards miracles has not altered in the least. It is not with the *possibility* of miracles, but with their *actuality* that science has to do. The Professor says: "I think we are all of us far more conscious of the limitations of our knowledge as to what is, or is not, possible in the universe. Our sense of these limitations has been very considerably increased of recent years, partly through the discoveries of science, and partly, in the case of a large number of people, through the investigations which we are in the habit of classing together under the title of *Psychical Research*. Especially is this the case with reference to abnormal cases of healing." With all due deference to Professor Peake, I venture to affirm that this is not the way out of the difficulty. The merest tyro in theology must be aware that the miracles recorded in the Gospels have always been regarded by the Church as supernatural acts performed by a supernatural being. I have no hesitation in asserting that all the miracles said to have been performed by, or upon, Jesus belong to this category. It was by the power of God that all the mighty works were done. To reduce the acts of healing to natural events is to do injustice to the documents; nor is anything gained by such a process. Surely there is no advantage in endeavoring to show that several of the miracles of Christ are not outside human experience, because, according to Professor Peake's own admission, there are others which are.

But let us see how Professor Peake deals with miracles which are admittedly outside human experience. Turning water into wine, giving sight to people born blind, and raising the dead are works that transcend all human power—on what evidence are we to believe that they were ever done? Mere portents or marvels, we are told, are absolutely incredible, while “cases which have within them a certain ethical significance” are on that account believable. There never was a weaker and more puerile argument than this. The Professor says: “If you want to be convinced of the sobriety of the Gospel narratives, read the stories of Jesus in the apocryphal Gospels. It has been pointed out frequently that where the imagination was not controlled by facts, as for example in the stories of Christ’s boyhood, we have narratives of miracles which represent Jesus in such a repulsive and grotesque character that they have no moral significance; they are simply wonderful and nothing more, as for example where Jesus makes sparrows of clay, and by clapping his hands makes them fly. That is a mere portent without any ethical significance whatever. In the miracles of Jesus in the canonical Gospels that element of the portent is conspicuously absent, and there is an ethical and philanthropic element present as a rule.” Now, what ethical element was present in the raising of Lazarus? The soul of Lazarus had been for three days in full enjoyment of ineffable bliss in heaven: was it kind of Jesus to bring it down again and send it back into bondage to the vile body, the “too muddy vesture of decay”? What ethical significance could such an act possess? If such a miracle had any significance at all, it was as a portent or marvel. It was meant to be an exhibition of divine, supernatural power, and not simply a manifestation of sympathy with the mourning sisters. “Many therefore of the Jews, which came to Mary and beheld what he did, believed on him (John xi., 45).

As a matter of fact, however, the historicity of alleged miraculous events cannot be established by their having “within them a certain ethical significance.” The canonical Gospels are doubtless much superior to the apocryphal ones; but the *object* of the miracles in both is identical. In the former as well as in the latter the mighty works are looked upon as portents, marvels, signs. The Gospel comment on the turning of water into wine is this: “This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him” (John ii. 11). What we find in each of the two classes of Gospels is a collection of stories about Jesus, the object of which is to prove and illustrate his supernatural greatness; but the historicity of any collection is a pure assumption. All alleged supernatural events, whatever their character or purpose, lie outside human experience, and are, in the nature of things, incredible.

But while Professor Peake upholds the miracles of Christ as historical occurrences, yet he attaches no evidential value to them. He says:—

“We differ in our modern apologetics from our predecessors in this respect, that they regarded the defence of Christianity very largely as a matter of credentials. They used miracles and prophecy to press the claims of Jesus. We, on the contrary, do not do anything of the kind.”

This is a significant confession of weakness, and it is also a glaring contradiction of definite statements in the Gospels. If we are to believe the documents, we must emphasise the fact that Jesus himself placed the highest possible evidential value upon his mighty works. In his answer to the doubting message of the Baptist (Matt. xi., 2-6), in his fierce controversies with the people (John x., 25, 32-38; v. 36), and in his upbraiding of unbelieving cities (Matt. xi. 20-24), he staked everything, even his own character, not upon his teaching, but upon his mighty works. But Professor Peake ignores his Master’s own claim, and stakes everything upon the intrinsic worth of Christianity, “of the truth of which no amount of miracles could ever convince

us.” This is a strange, incomprehensible position for modern apologetics to occupy. It is no wonder that those who hold it contradict, not only Jesus and his apostles, but themselves as well.

Professor Peake, having openly depreciated the evidential value of miracles, proceeds to affirm that because Jesus was the Son of God “miracles were in his case natural, as they were not in the case of another.” But in the absence of the proof from miracles, what is there to show that Jesus was divine? Paul says (Romans i., 4) that Jesus “was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead”; and in one of his most famous arguments he stakes everything upon the reality of this stupendous miracle. “We, on the contrary,” asserts Professor Peake, “do not do anything of the kind.” Well done, thou twentieth century apologist, wiser art thou than thy Master Jesus and than St. Paul, the world-renowned apostle. Professor Peake assumes, without adducing the slightest proof, that Jesus was the Son of God, and then assures us that it was quite natural for the Son of God to transcend the limits of the natural. But what evidence is there that Jesus was God if his miracles are not to be used for evidential purposes? Would the Church have upheld the doctrine of the divinity of Christ had it not been for her belief in his resurrection? Professor Peake’s position is utterly untenable. Jesus would have been long ago forgotten had it not been for his reputed rising from the tomb. It is an alleged miracle that accounts for Christendom.

Professor Peake has completely failed to solve the problem propounded to him by his catechiser. “If we were told that any great man had been born of a virgin, rose from the dead, walked on the sea, cured diseases, and multiplied bread and fishes miraculously, turned water into wine, etc., etc., we should not believe it.” To this the Professor gives his unqualified assent, as we do ours. That point is finally settled. “Why, then, are we compelled to believe these alleged facts, which are absolutely outside human experience, on the slender evidence of the Gospels, which may have emanated from superstitious and unscientific people?” To this question no direct answer is even attempted, because it is unanswerable. There is positively no reason why we should believe these alleged facts in the case of Christianity, when we treat them as fairy-tales in the case of every other religion. There are thousands of professing Christians to-day who do not, and cannot, believe them. They are purely ethical Christians, who have entirely broken with the miraculous, and whose faith in the supernatural is very shadowy. They accept Jesus as a historical character who both taught and practised the highest morality. Wholly orthodox believers are now few and far between. But once you have dropped the miraculous in the Gospels, the difficulty is to determine how much is fact and how much is fiction in the remainder. Who can tell where history ends and legend begins? The Jesus of the Gospel is a supernatural person supernaturally born and supernaturally snatched from the clutches of death; but, unfortunately, we have no other Jesus. Therefore I am impelled to ask those who reject the miraculous and yet cling to a historical Jesus, Where do you find him? How can you disentangle the historical nucleus, if such there be, from the dense mass of legendary accretions by which it is surrounded? You cannot do it. Take the birth, and tell me what you know about it apart from the accounts which treat it as a miraculous event? Professor Bruce used to say that in the Gospels there is truth mixed with doubtful legend; but who is competent to tell us how much is truth and how much doubtful legend? The fact is that no two critics are agreed on the point. Professor Peake believes that Jesus rose from the dead—does he believe in the virgin birth also? Professor Loofs, of Halle, believes the former but rejects the latter. Canon Henson rejects both, as literal facts, but accepts a sort of spiritual resurrection, whatever that may mean. Hence, is it not reasonable to

conclude that, if a man called Jesus ever lived, we have no means whatever of getting at him? Legend has closed in upon him to such an extent that it is impossible to discover and identify him.

In reality, then, the choice lies between the Jesus of the Four Gospels and no Jesus at all. We have no sufficient data on which to affirm that Jesus never lived; but if he did live, we cannot possibly trace his career.

JOHN T. LLOYD.

### Bible Trash.

WE take up the Koran, the Tripitaka, or the Zend Avesta, full of curiosity about the wonderful teachings of Muhammad, Buddha, and Zoroaster; and we find them to be senseless farragoes of stupid rubbish. We peruse the Christian apocrypha, and find those also to be tiresome trash. And yet when we compare the Old and New Testaments with these heathen Bibles and bastard gospels, there is a strange similarity in thought and tone and expression. At first sight it seems remarkable that what repels us in the heretical and heathen books is received with complacency in the Christian Bible. Yet the reason is obvious. The Old and New Testaments are familiar. They were taught to us at an impressionable age; and in Christendom there is a perpetual chorus in their praise, few people taking the trouble to see whether this laudation is justified or not. In like manner, Moslem literature perpetually præsents the beauty and profundity of the Koran; and these praises are occasionally re-echoed by enthusiastic orientalists. The ordinary reader is of course dependent on translations, and due allowance should be made for this; but when comparison of the renderings of different translators fails to reveal the alleged excellencies, we can only conclude that they do not exist in the original. In fact, the contents of the Koran are only what one might reasonably expect from an imaginative camel-driver with a tile loose. In the same way, when the clergy ask us to explain how illiterate fishermen could have produced the writings of the New Testament, the obvious answer is that it requires no explanation; for the matter is precisely what one would expect from such people. If the Galilean fishermen had produced "Hamlet," or the "*Novum Organum*," or the "*Principia*," then an explanation would have been required; for either of these pieces of literature would have been beyond their range and capacity.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the New Testament is merely a selection from early Christian literature, and that other writings of similar origin have disappeared. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who lived about 110 A.D., spoke of a work called the *Logia Kyriaka*, or "Sayings of the Lord," upon which he wrote a commentary. Within the last few years two fragments of an early Christian compilation have been discovered in Egypt, entitled (apparently) the *Logoi Iesou*, or "Words of Jesus," and these *Logoi* may reasonably be considered as the sayings treated by Papias.\* These fragments were both found in the ruins of Oxyrhyncus, a Roman city situated about 120 miles south of the modern Cairo. The first (which we will call II.) was disinterred in 1897, when it caused a great sensation. The second (which we will call I.), came to light in 1903, and is the most important of the two, because it contains the commencement of the book. Both papyri are dated by the discoverers about 250 A.D.

Students of Gospel origins will realise the extreme importance of these "Words of Jesus," for Papias of Hierapolis at the commencement of the second century appears to have known only Matthew and Mark, and these "Words";† but our object at the moment is to remark upon their literary value,

and therefore the reader should carefully peruse the translation of the *Logoi Iesou* as given below.

#### I.

"These are the words which Jesus the living lord spake unto.....also Thomas, and he said 'Everyone that hearkens unto these words shall never taste of death.'

"1. Jesus saith, Let him that seeketh cease not until he find: and when he finds he shall be astonished; astonished shall he reach the kingdom; and having reached the kingdom he shall rest.

"2. Jesus saith, Who are they that draw into the kingdom in heaven? The fowls of the air, and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea draw you; for the kingdom of heaven is within you; and whoever shall know himself shall find it. Therefore know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Father: ye shall know that ye are in.....

"3. Jesus saith, A man shall not hesitate to ask his place in the kingdom. Many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

"4. Jesus saith, Everything that is not before thy face and that which is hidden from thee shall be revealed to thee; for there is nothing hidden that shall not be made manifest, nor buried which shall not be raised.

"5. His disciples question him, and say, How shall we fast, and how shall we....."

#### II.

"1. ....and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

"2. Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God; and except ye make the sabbath a real sabbath, ye shall not see the Father.

"3. Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them; and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart and see not.....

"4. ....

"5. Jesus saith, Wherever there are two, they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone I say I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me: cleave the wood and there am I.

"6. Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him.

"7. Jesus saith, A city built upon the top of a high hill, and established, can neither fall nor be hid.

"8. Jesus saith, Thou hearest with one ear: the other thou hast closed."

In regard to the opening preamble, it may be said that it is not certain whether the break is to be completed with the name of another apostle, such as Philip or Matthias (both of whom are associated with Thomas in apocryphal literature), or whether we are to read "spake unto [Judas called] also Thomas," for which there is authority. In either case it is an additional proof of the esteem in which Thomas was held by the early Christian writings. We know from other sources that there were several writings ascribed to this apostle; among others a Gospel.\* But his Gospel merely referred to the Infancy of Christ, and had, obviously, nothing in common with the present papyrus fragments.

I. 1 of the *Logoi* is quoted almost verbatim by Clement of Alexandria, without giving the source. Most of the other "Words" will be recognised as approximations to one or other of the canonical Gospels.

It will be clear to everyone that these new Words, or Sayings, ascribed to Jesus are in the same style, and breathe the same spirit, as those found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are here in the form of separate, detached paragraphs, whereas in the Synoptic Gospels the sayings are grouped together into somewhat incoherent discourses. But in their novel form their inherent absurdity is more conspicuous than when read in the New Testament. The fowls, beasts, and fishes (which are *outside* a man) draw him into the kingdom, "for the kingdom of heaven is *within* you." And the well-known text

\* *New Sayings of Jesus and Fragment of a Lost Gospel*, by Grenfell and Hunt. (Oxford, 1904.)

† See the oft-quoted *Ecclesiastical History* of Eusebius, Bk. iii., cap. 39.

\* The only extant portion of this Gospel of Thomas is given in Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament* as "II. Infancy."

about two or three being gathered together "and there am I in the midst of them" has the additional information that Jesus will be found under the nearest stone, or in the middle of the next log. The platitudes and banalities are the same; but, being in a slightly different setting, they are more obviously idiotic; and we may be pretty confident that no divine being would have come down on earth for the mere purpose of uttering them. The childish mysticism and infantile paradoxes of these new sayings are exactly the same as those in the New Testament, and therefore they throw the latter into a clearer light.

Sundry well-meaning persons have, from time to time, endeavored to recast the biblical writings into modern language; with the result that the biblical deliverances read as silly nonsense—for a very slight change in the point of view is sufficient to take the glamor from a religious book, and reveal it in its true trashiness. And in the same way we see how absurd these new words of Jesus appear, although they clearly spring from the same literary school as the Gospels. Instead, therefore, of being misled by the plaudits of interested or superficial praisers of religious literature, it behoves us to shake off the influence of these clouds of incense and see for ourselves the manifold defects of the over-rated idols.

CHILPERIC.

## How Women are Protected and Elevated.

'BY MRS. JOSEPHINE HENRY.

(From the "Blue Grass Blade," Lexington.)

THE most valuable stock-in-trade of the Christian clergy is the assertion that "woman owes her present exalted position to the teachings of the Christian religion." The Holy Ghost, who is the author of the Christian religion, the elevated Christian woman, and the Prodigal Son; these three! Rob the sermonisers of this Trinity and they would be at sea without chart, rudder, or compass; yet the only one of this Trinity that has ever materialised is the "Prodigal Son," whose progeny, in hymn parlance, are as "numerous as the sands on the seashore." The prodigal son has had a trust on all the forgiveness, welcome, fatted calves, rings, and robes, while the prodigal daughter has been cast out by Church, State, and society into the sewer of condemnation and despair. This is one method the Church has of exalting women. And there are others. The Church claims that marriage and child-bearing are woman's highest and holiest duties, yet this so-called holy sacrament generally destroys her identity. The preacher ties the knot, and Miss Mary Smith is ever after known as Mrs. Tom Jones. Her body and the issue of her body are exclusively the property of Tom Jones.

The Church requires woman to pay, pray, beg, and sacrifice to maintain the Lord's house, while men manufacture creeds and canons, manipulate the cash the women obtain by hook and by crook, and lay down the heavenly and earthly laws for women to obey, and the dear, devout, submissive creatures obey, and are told that all this exalts and elevates them. Under these actual conditions "holy matrimony" is to-day about the most unholy thing under the sun, moon, and stars. In proof of this assertion, look in the columns of the press and see what is going on in the domestic system established, maintained, and lauded by Christianity. An exalted, elevated woman is as hard to find as a Holy Ghost or an angel.

I have known many women in my day, and have observed the conditions of thousands that I did not know, and I have never known one that the Church did not stamp with the seal of inferiority, and burden with indignities and injustice. I call it rank indignity to deny a woman a name of her own; to be classed with the ox and the ass in the tenth commandment; to be required to "obey" her husband,

who often is not worthy the scantest respect; to be told to keep silent before men who are her moral inferiors; to be told "if she would know anything to learn of her husband at home" when often the husband is both a mental pauper and a moral pervert.

The women of Christendom are in ecclesiastical, legal, political, financial, and physical bondage, and yet the clergy proclaim that nothing but the Christian religion elevates women.

## Acid Drops.

The assassination of the Russian Minister of the Interior is one of those things that are bound to happen. When a man rides roughshod over human rights, human hearts, and human lives, it is not to be wondered at that he provokes someone to practise his own lessons upon himself. And if a Jew has murdered the man who was the real murderer of the Jews at Kischineff, we cannot stare our eyes out of our head, nor cry them into a jelly. From a tactical point of view, the assassination was probably (as usual) a great mistake. From a moral point of view, how was it worse than the crimes it was meant to avenge?

Explosions are generally freakish. Not scientifically, of course, but to common observation. Here somebody is annihilated; just a little further off somebody is unharmed. It is not astonishing, therefore, that while the windows of the railway station were shattered by the explosion of the bomb that killed M. de Plehve the windows of the Church of the Redeemer hard by remained intact. But this incident immensely impressed the superstitious people of St. Petersburg. They regarded it as miraculous. Crowds of them visited the church in the afternoon and burnt candles at the shrine.

When the Pope heard of the assassination of M. de Plehve he exclaimed, "The unfortunate man! Let us pray!" And a lot of good that was! Very different was the attitude of the Jews in New York. Thousands of them had fled from Russian tyranny. The Polish and Finnish Jews, in particular, surrounded the bulletin boards containing the news, cheering wildly. "Too good to be true," was heard on every side. Which shows how circumstances alter cases.

The Czar, on hearing of his Minister's assassination, is said to have kept repeating "My God! My God!" Suppose this gentleman left "God" out of it and patronised common sense and justice a little more. It would be a good thing for Russia—and perhaps for himself.

Rev. Dr. Gollancz, Professor of Hebrew at University College, London, preaching at Bayswater on the Russian assassination, said that "no one advocates violent methods to remove the tyrant from the earth," but at the same time "the victims of oppression cannot understand, nor will they understand, why one human life is more sacred than thousands upon thousands of their fellow creatures whose life has been foully crushed out by the devices of their avowed enemy." So far so good. But now let us hear the theologian on this subject:—"If we are to believe that nothing on earth occurs by chance, then, however much we might condemn the mode and method, amid the catastrophe which has again appalled the world during the past few days, we must believe that, when the cup of wickedness is full, God allows the inevitable result of wrong-doing to take its own course, and to afford those mainly concerned and the world at large one of His unerring lessons." Surely this is a very lame argument. What God allows, being omnipotent, God is responsible for; so that the real assassin in this case is God himself. Dr. Gollancz may wriggle to any extent, but he cannot get out of this position. The distinction he tries to draw between God's deliberate action and God's deliberate allowance is perfectly idle.

They do things in a way of their own in Holy Russia. Only a thousand persons have been arrested in connection with the sudden death of M. de Plehve. That's all.

What has become of all those miraculous wooden images that the Russian generals took to the front with them some months ago? General Kuropatkin was loaded with them. They were to have secured victory to Russia, but they haven't made a beginning yet.

There are said to be nearly two hundred thousand priests and monks in Russia. Such a crowd of religious parasites

is enough to enfeeble the spirit of any people. It may explain why the Russian battleships carefully avoid fighting the Japs, and reserve their energies for attacking unarmed commercial vessels.

The Roman Catholic population of England and Wales stands practically still at 1,500,000. Of these some 200,000 are English. The rest are Irish or foreigners. Evidently the "Catholic conquest" of England is only a dream.

Rev. T. C. Collings, of the Edmonton Board of Guardians, describes workhouse chaplains as mostly "old crocks." We do not dispute his accuracy. We think the description might be extended.

The Rev. Thomas Henry Scruggs, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Provo, Utah, is offering any infidel in town a dollar an hour to come to his church and hear him preach. The infidel, according to the terms of Scruggs's offer, must be an out-and-outer. No Agnostic need apply. The infidels of Provo, if there be any, will know whether a dollar an hour is or is not a reasonable compensation for listening to his preaching. There is some preaching so bad that no intelligent person would undergo an hour of it at any price without the use of ether.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Mr. Cluer, the Thames Police Court magistrate, declines to be terrorised by the Salvation Army. Some time ago he gave a decision in one of their cases that quite upset them. He refused to recognise that any man could be compelled to work for sixpence a week. Now he refuses to recognise that any man can be compelled to go to church. They brought before him a pauper who had been sent from Poplar to the Salvation Army Farm Colony at Hadleigh, and accused him of the dreadful crime of refusing to patronise the Army of services on Sunday. Mr. Cluer held that this was not "a reasonable condition of employment," and declined to act as a legal bloodhound to General Booth's runaway slaves.

General Booth did not refer to this little condition when he started his Social Scheme and took cheques from misguided Agnostics like Mr. Samuel Laing and the Marquis of Queensberry. It appears that destitute men who go to the Hadleigh Colony are compelled to sign a social slavery contract, one condition of which is that they will attend some sort of religious worship on Sunday, except by special exemption from the officer in charge. Some are allowed to go to the Roman Catholic church at Southend, some to the Church of England, and some to Dissenting chapels. All the rest are expected to attend the Salvation Army roll-call and service. This tyrannical condition, which Mr. Cluer will not assist in carrying out, is enforced on the paupers sent there by the Guardians, who pay half-a-guinea a week for each of them. So the ratepayers are taxed to provide raw material for General Booth's blood-and-fire factory. And even a Passive Resistance organ like the *Star* apparently sees no objection to this sort of thing.

The Bishop of Manchester is something like Balaam. He is paid to curse the French Revolution, but he blesses it. Speaking at Lancaster lately, he said: "Faith in the brotherhood of man did more to save France in the eighteenth century than all the Court religion of the Bourbons. We may see the hand of God in that great upheaval of the French Revolution, and we may find a strong spirit of natural religion underlying its surface professions of Atheism." Yes, the Atheists of the French Revolution were Christians in disguise! Surely a Bishop must feel that his faith is very hard-pressed when he says that.

According to the *South London Observer* "there are Atheist platforms in certain parts of South London where they carry on their work without any intelligent opposition." Our contemporary seems ignorant of the fact that this is a common characteristic. Intelligent opposition to Atheist propaganda is extremely rare. We do not think it is even provided by the Rev. A. J. Waldron, whom our contemporary patronises.

"Pray, pray for my soul." These were the last words of Isabel Mason, lately employed as a governess by the Rev. H. Miles, vicar of Whetstone, Middlesex. They occurred at the end of a letter she wrote before throwing herself under a train. Poor creature! She was not an Atheist, anyhow.

A very pretty quarrel is reported at Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire. The Rev. R. T. M. Lindsay, the local curate, complained that a Nonconformist man of God, the Rev. E. C. Morgan, got into the public school and almost stood

over him while he imparted religious instruction to the children. It was dreadful, he really couldn't stand it, and the Parish Council would have to interfere—which it did by removing Mr. Morgan. That gentleman claims that the curate's comments on the Scripture lessons were extremely objectionable, and not warranted either by the Word of God or the Prayer Book. Thus the peace of the public school, where all should be harmony and goodwill, is broken by wrangling clerics, each trying to get customers for his own gospel-shop—at the nation's expense.

Mr. Baggallay, at the Greenwich Police Court, had to give a Passive Resister a sharp lesson. This gentleman's name was H. Wagstaff, and he denounced the Education Act as "an iniquitous Act." "Don't talk like that here," said the Stipendiary, "it is not respectful; I don't make the Acts." An order was made for 4s. 10d.—the cause of all those tears. Whereupon the irate Wagstaff exclaimed, "It may be law, but it is not justice." "Sir," said the Stipendiary, "if you insult me I will have you forcibly put out of the court. I have only to carry out the law, and will not be insulted in that way. A gentleman in your position ought to know better." The noble Wagstaff collapsed. He was not ready for martyrdom on the spot.

Rev. Freer Bell, the Alfreton Primitive Methodist minister, who has done time as an incorrigible Passive Resister in Derby Gaol, says that his visit to prison has resulted in some little good, as he "endeavored to speak a word in season to the unfortunate inmates of the house of correction." If he did it was against the rules. It is possible, too, that the "unfortunate inmates" had their own opinion of the reverend gentleman's volunteer exhortations, and it might do him good to hear it—outside.

According to the *Bystander* the secret of Dr. Clifford's success lies in the fact that he is what the Yankees call "a pertinacious cuss." You cannot wear him out, especially in controversy, where he always gets the last word. He would write, if necessary, with the last drop of his blood, rather than leave the epistolary field in possession of the enemy.

In our own experience we have always found this desire for the last word a characteristic of Christian controversialists. In all our public debates the Christian champion has displayed a wonderful anxiety about having the final speech. He never says so in so many words, but he makes all sorts of suggestions that necessarily lead to that conclusion. We have always smiled at these little tricks on the part of gentlemen who claim to have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Our own anxiety on this point is absolutely nil. We never cared a straw whether we had the ultimate or the penultimate speech. That is why the gentlemen on the other side have always found us so accommodating. Occasionally, when the orthodox disputant has been too obviously counting on the last word, we have taken the wind out of his sails and discounted his effort. How that is done is *our* business. We prefer to keep it dark, as we may have to do it again.

The question having been thoroughly canvassed, the public is coming to understand that for the fatalities on the steamer *General Slocum* the church officials are in a large measure responsible. The excursion was planned to make money, and as many tickets as possible were sold. The children were crowded upon the boat with nobody to look after their safety—no committee to whom they could look for direction; and when the panic came it was everyone for himself and hell for the hindmost. A boy who lives near the office of the *Truthseeker*, and who for some years shared these premises with his mate as a playground, was on this excursion. As the hurricane deck fell two life-preservers, which happened to be good ones, dropped into his arms. He gave one to a girl, strapped on the other, and springing overboard paddled his way to land. An efficient committee to hand out life-preservers might possibly have saved scores, but the pastor's one "assistant" saved only himself.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Christian charity, as it is called, is generally nothing but a weak, washy, harmful sentimentalism. It breeds helplessness and pauperism, and crowds the world with the unfit. The public bodies in this country have to look after an ever-increasing multitude of physical, mental, and moral cripples; the statistics of insanity go up by leaps and bounds; and before very long the state of things will be not only horrible, but positively overwhelming. Mr. W. Weaver, Borough Engineer of Kensington, gave a note of warning on this subject at the recent Sanitary Congress. We make the following excerpt from a newspaper report:—

"He said sanitary science embraced everything which tended to the physical and mental improvement of the

nation. The great stumbling block in the way of real reform was the religious sentiment as to the sanctity of human life, although this sentiment was ruthlessly disturbed in times of war, when men in thousands were ordered forth to certain death. At the present time such justification was not permitted to extend to the elimination of the unfit. On the contrary, every effort was in the direction of fostering the human failures, to the deterioration of the standard of national vitality. The mentally and physically unfit were allowed perfect freedom to breed broadcast, and it was quite within the range of possibility that at no very distant date the incapables in public buildings would attain a percentage of the population beyond the maintenance efforts of the outside workers."

Mr. Weaver declared that attention would have to be given to the problem of breeding. We agree with him. But this is absolutely inconsistent with the social teaching of Christianity.

Thirteen Dowieites were baptised in the sea at Felixstowe the other day, and a newspaper describes the performance as "an unusual diversion"—as though it were one of the popular entertainments on the sands. It is only fair to say that the Dowieites wanted the baptism to take place in the privacy of the corporation baths at Ipswich, where similar ceremonies have taken place from time to time during the last three years; but bigotry was aroused on this occasion, and the use of the baths was refused. The Dowieites were thus *driven* into the sea. We can quite understand that the ceremony was a comical affair to the newspaper we refer to. But was it any more comical than the baptism of Jesus Christ? Both took place in the open air, and in such water as happened to be handy. In one case the water was salt, and in the other it was fresh; but this difference is surely unimportant. There can be little doubt that if Jesus lived now and got baptised in the Thames, and came up out of the water all dripping, with his long curls hanging down like candles, he would be an object of merriment to a great gaping crowd of spectators.

What a change since the days of the *first* Salvation Army! Jesus Christ and *his* Salvation Army were so hard up that it paid the cashier to rat for thirty shekels—about £3 15s. That was probably the most money Judas had ever seen. But things are very different now. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who lives in a palace with an official income of £15,000 a year, is going to attend the Episcopal Convention at Boston—across the Herring Pond; and rumor says that he will be the guest of Mr. Pierpont Morgan. We should like to hear the pair of them singing the duet of "Blessed be ye poor."

Miss Marie Corelli is a very pious lady with a mission to denounce Atheism. But she is not averse from making all she can out of religion. After exploiting Christianity by putting Jesus Christ in two novels, she has now written a third to exploit the Almighty. The title of her new novel is *God's Good Man*. We did not know that God was a woman.

"What's the game?" a young woman asked in the Shore-ditch County Court when she was told to kiss the Bible. "Kiss the book," said the Usher sternly. "That's comical," she rejoined; "is it a new game?" Probably she had heard of kissing games in churches, and thought this might be next door to it.

We see by the *Edinburgh Evening News*, which is a long way off the scene of operations, that the Rev. Charles H. Vine, of Ilford, has been settling the hash of "Infidelity" in his district. This gentleman is very strong on "morality." He and his friends seem to have patented it. We beg to tell them, however, that it flourished before their faith was born and will probably flourish after their faith is dead. Mr. Vine is a bit of a humorist in his way. He wants to know why the "infidels" do not get hold of a cannibal island and try to reform it. He forgets that the island of Great Britain affords them plenty of scope for their reforming tendencies. It is not necessary to go off to the South Pacific. There is more shocking immorality in Christian Britain than in any "heathen" island yet discovered in distant parts of the world.

Rev. Charles Bloy, a Baptist minister at Broadstairs, had a slice of luck. A mad old lady left him all her property worth some £2,000. But, alas, he never enjoyed it. Mr. Justice Barnes has decided that the will cannot stand. So the slice of luck was sawdust after all.

A curious case of human sacrifice for religious purposes has come to light at Bayandur, near Tiflis (says a Russian

paper), in the Caucasus. A villager named Aslamazoff, who is accused of having murdered his son, some time ago told his friends at church that he had just killed his son as a sacrifice to God. According to his explanation, two years previous, when he was lying ill, St. Nicholas and St. John appeared to him and brought him to Jesus Christ, who said to him that he would recover if he promised to sacrifice to God his son who would be born to him. Aslamazoff promised to do so, and actually recovered. When his wife bore him a son some months ago he cut the infant's throat on Easter Eve on the church terrace. At present he is being detained in an asylum.—*Daily Chronicle*.

Ah Look, a Chinese cook, the victim of an assault in Soho, had to give evidence at Marlborough-street. The following colloquy took place between him and the magistrate and the clerk:—

Mr. Kennedy: Are you a Mohammedan?

Ah Look: Me, eh?

Mr. Kennedy: Do you read the Koran?

Ah Look: No, Koran.

The Clerk: Do you believe in God?

Ah Look: God, no.

The Clerk: Or Confucius?

Ah Look picked up one of the pestles with which he had been attacked and said "This?" But the catechism was not ended. They persisted in asking what was his religion; and at last he said "Singapore." Like the Yorkshireman who said he wasn't a Christian—he came from Pudsey.

How beautifully the Christians agree! Count Tolstoy declares that a Christian cannot possibly fight. Count Tolstoy's son has volunteered to fight the Japs. And the Rev. C. J. Ferguson Davie, chaplain of the Punjab Light Horse, has carried off the silver medal at Bisley. His shooting realised an aggregate score of 192. When he meets the enemy they may look for holes.

And how beautifully the Christians love one another! Catholics and Protestants have been shaking hands (*at each other*) at Armagh. The windows of the Protestant cathedral were broken, and numbers of Roman Catholic houses were wrecked. Finally, the constables charged the mob, who replied with revolvers.

Scotland does *not* stand where it did. The Free Church of Scotland decided to unite with the United Presbyterian Church, but twenty-four ministers held out against the amalgamation, and the House of Lords has just decided that the entire property of the Church *belongs to them* as trustees. The two dozen men of God are thus masters of a million sterling, besides heritable and moveable property, colleges, assembly halls, churches, and manses. The other 1,076 men of God are out in the cold. And it was their own act! Which is the unkindest cut of all.

THE GOSPEL UP-TO-DATE.—And he said unto him: "Keep all that thou hast and whatsoever else thou canst take from the poor, and go, teach a Bible class in the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church."

And when the young man heard that saying he went away rejoicing, for he had great possessions.

Verily it is easier for a camel to go through the knee of an idol than to keep a rich man out of the front pews.—*Memnon*.

WITH SATAN.—Governor Blanchard, of Louisiana, having asserted in his inaugural address that separate churches must be provided for colored people by law, the *New York Mail* observes: "He has probably already arranged for a separate heaven for them." It may not be out of order to remark that the extreme advocates of race separateness would do better to endeavor to arrange Jim Crow accommodations at the other terminal.—*Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph*.

WHY HE WAS AWAKE.—The minister had been speaking for half an hour when he noticed that his hearers were nearly all asleep. "Come!" he shouted, "wake up! You ought to be ashamed of yourselves to fall asleep in church. Look at the poor idiot in the gallery. He is the only one in the house who didn't go to sleep." At this one of the church members, who had been aroused from a comfortable nap, stretched himself and said: "Yes, and if he had any sense he would be asleep, too."—*Philadelphia Press*.



## Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(Suspended during August.)

### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—August 14, Failsforth; 21, morning. Kingsland; afternoon, Victoria Park.

G. WHITE, sending subscription, hopes the N. S. S. will be well represented at the Rome Congress.

D. J. D. hopes the Rome Congress will be "a success for this country," and contributes his "mite" towards making it so.

T. DIXON, JUNR.—If all who can afford it would send even the half-crown, which you consider so little, the Rome Congress Fund would soon be in a flourishing condition.

J. W. GOTT.—Mr. Ward's letter stated quite plainly, with reference to the Society mentioned, that he is not now "one of its lecturers," and that he "severed all connection" with it "about two months ago." If you deny these statements as plainly as they were made we will print your denial. But we must decline to have a discussion in the *Freethinker* on the matters you try to raise. Such internal affairs are of no importance to our readers.

J. PARTRIDGE.—True, the Birmingham subscription is not a large one, but it is a good deal better than nothing—which many places have contributed up to the present. We have posted you the memorandum requested.

W. ROBERTSON.—Glad to hear you have read the *Freethinker* for years and "would not miss it for anything." We daresay you do find it very different from reading a daily paper. Thanks for cutting. See paragraph.

ROME CONGRESS FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £30 12s. 6d. Received this week:—G. White 10s., D. J. D. £1, T. Dixon junr. 2s. 6d., J. H. R. 2s. 6d., R. Taylor 2s. 6d., J. P. 2s. 6d., C. L. 1s., J. B. 1s., Friend 6d., W. Robertson 1s., S. Holmes 2s. 6d., W. C. Schweizer 4s. 6d., J. Waller 5s., D. Seddon 5s., R. Carroll 10s., G. Wenborn 2s., C. Shepherd 2s., R. Stirton 2s. 6d.

W. C. SCHWEIZER.—You probably mistook the stamps for penny ones—perhaps in a hurry. Twelve halfpenny stamps and a postal order for 4s. make 4s. 6d. This amount we have acknowledged. We note your suggestion that an addressed envelope should be inserted in each copy of next week's *Freethinker*. We are quite sure that both the Congress and the N. S. S. delegation have your best wishes.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your valued cuttings.

F. A. DAVIES notifies Branch secretaries, and others concerned, that his new address is 22 Himley-road, Tooting.

E. MARTIN.—Received.

C. J. P.—Thanks. It shall be dealt with. Kindly send us the "others" at convenience.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send halfpenny stamps.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

The popular edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*, revised and enlarged, and issued by the Secular Society, Limited, is now on sale at the price of sixpence net. We believe it will be recognised as a wonderful sixpennyworth. It is printed in new type on good paper, and the attractive cover bears a portrait of the author, specially executed for this edition. The reading matter runs to 144 large double-column pages. There ought to be a brisk demand for this remarkably cheap volume, and the first issue of 10,000 copies should be very largely reduced by Christmas.

Sixpence is so low a figure that a good many friends may

like to circulate copies of the new edition of *Bible Romances* amongst their friends and acquaintances, or even amongst the general public. Copies for this purpose of free distribution can be obtained at a special rate from our publishing office. The price, it will be remembered, is net—that is to say, booksellers and newagents will not be able to allow their customers any discount. We will pay the carriage on "free distribution" copies (not less than 6 copies on one order) to any part of the kingdom; or we will supply them at the rate of 5s. per dozen, leaving the purchaser to pay carriage on delivery.

Several more friends have written to say that they hope to join the N. S. S. party of visitors to the Rome Congress. Of course it is impossible to organise a definite party in advance on that basis. Two courses therefore are open. One is to join the French party, which leaves Paris by special train on Sunday morning, September 18. The other is to make up an excursion at usual rates in time to leave London so as to reach Rome before the Congress opens. This matter must be positively decided one way or the other by August 12. After that date the French alternative will not be open.

Dr. Wilson, of Cincinnati, one of the American representatives at the approaching International Freethought Congress at Rome, sails for Europe early in the present month, and we hope to have the pleasure of meeting him in the "old country" as well as in the Eternal City. There was talk of sending Mrs. Josephine Henry and another lady delegate from America, but it does not seem to have taken a practical form. Dr. Moncure D. Conway is going to Rome from New York. We have said before that he will be an ideal representative of America.

M. Combes, the French Premier, has acted decisively against the impudent tactics of the Papacy. The Papal Nuncio at Paris has been sent home, and the Embassy is empty; while the Bishop of Dijon, who went to Rome at the Pope's order, without the permission of the French Government, which was necessary under the Concordat, has had his stipend stopped. The Church has sought this quarrel, and will have to take the consequences. Never more, we believe, will it terrify the French nation with its anathemas. Probably it will find that it has thundered once too often.

The *Daily Telegraph* bewails the fact, which it is bound to admit, that the rupture between the French government and the Papacy was to be expected. "This, after all," it says, "is only the logical sequence of the Republican program, which is atheistic; and the Republic, whatever may be said to the contrary, is firmly established in a country where the people is sovereign."

If the French Government goes on to denounce the Concordat, and demand the complete separation of Church and State, the Catholic Church will lose a State subvention of nearly £2,000,000 a year. Of course the French clergy are not as well paid as the English parsons who are always crying about their poverty. The seventeen French archbishops get £600 a year each, and the thirty-seven bishops £400. Other stipends run from £180 down to £36. Presumably these amounts are supplemented by grants and gifts from the faithful.

The Stratford Town Hall has been engaged again for the first two Sunday evenings in September, when two lectures will be delivered by Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen. These lectures are, as before, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited. Subjects will be announced in due course. Friends in the West Ham district who could display a bill or distribute handbills are invited to apply for same to Miss Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

There will be free admission to the Stratford Town Hall meetings as on the previous occasion. This applies to all seats. A collection will be taken up towards defraying the expenses, and Freethinkers, of course, will contribute as generously as possible.

The *Yarmouth Mercury*, which, we understand, has passed into fresh hands, still opens its columns to religious discussion. The last issue contains another admirable letter from Mr. J. W. de Caux, who declares that he does not, as his critics allege, discuss a Christianity which is out of date, for the very simple reason that there is only one Christianity in the world, and that is the Christianity of the New Testament: "Every man who can read, and uses his common sense," Mr. de Caux says, "is just as capable of

determining what the teachings of Christ were as is the Archbishop of Canterbury." Mr. Samuel Adams, of Ipswich, contributes a final letter on the orthodox side, which ought to do a great deal of good. He protests, in opposition to the compromising Christians, that if Christ did not mean what he said about the devil, and hell, and damnation, he (Samuel Adams) wouldn't give a straw to be a Christian a moment longer. A third letter, and a long one, is from "A Natural Religionist." This writer indulges in some very plain speaking against the orthodox creed.

We have drawn attention before to a little new monthly called *Dana*, an "Irish Magazine of Independent Thought," published by Hodges, Figgis & Co., Dublin, and David Nutt, London, price sixpence net. The August number opens with an article on "Reasonable Nationalism" by an anonymous writer, which ends with a much-needed note of exhortation. The difference is pointed out between the active toleration of a Voltaire and the passive toleration of the Catholic Church in Ireland. "This passive toleration which we have attained to in Ireland," the writer says, "is quite compatible with the active existence of the policy of boycotting all intellectual initiative, in a word, with the blighting influence of that ecclesiastical obscurantism, justly styled by Voltaire 'the infamous.'" During the whole of the nineteenth century, ever since, in fact, the national cause passed into the hands of the Catholic Church, the intellect of Ireland has been paralysed by the presence of this obscurantism—the true cause of that deterioration of Irish politics which Grattan prophesied would be brought about by the Union." Mr. George Moore continues his "Moods and Memories," in which he says that "Religion purged of faith is a pleasant, almost a pretty thing"—as though any priest would like that. Mr. Frederick Ryan writes on "Empire and Liberty." Altogether we must wish well to this venture. It is a welcome change in Irish journalism, and we hope it portends a new day in the "distressful" nation.

A public building in Toronto bears these four lines:—

Life is mostly froth and bubble,  
Two things stand like stone:  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in your own.

It is said that the Canadians have not been able to discover the authorship of these lines. They were written by Adam Lindsay Gordon, the Australian poet, whose end was so tragic. Broken down in health, he had to take a menial position, and he shot himself dead on Brighton beach, near Melbourne. We may be sure that he faced death and "the unknown" with perfect fearlessness. His was a brave spirit both in life and thought. Orthodox follies were cast far behind him. It was from Gordon that Mr. Foote quoted those freethinking lines in the chapter on "Eve and the Apple" in *Bible Romances*—a work now offered to the public in a marvellously cheap sixpenny edition:—

Fit sire was he of a selfish race  
Who first to temptation yielded,  
Then to mend his case tried to heap disgrace  
On the woman he should have shielded.  
Say! comrade mine, the forbidden fruit  
We'd have plucked, that I well believe,  
But I trust we'd rather have suffered, mute,  
Than have laid the blame upon Eve.

Adam Lindsay Gordon was ashamed of the Bible "Adam"—like every other man with enough decency of feeling.

*Crimes of Preachers*, published at the *Truthseeker* office, New York, and obtainable at the *Freethinker* office, London, for one shilling (postage twopence extra), is calculated to make orthodox people stagger. Here are lists of hundreds of crimes committed in a few years by men of God in the United States and Canada. It is simply appalling. Yet the *Truthseeker* editor (Mr. E. Macdonald) points out that the lists only include the cases he himself noticed in the newspapers. One shudders to think what the total number of clerical crimes must have been. "In proportion to their numbers," Mr. Macdonald says, "more ministers than members of any other profession commit crimes or yield to vice. A large portion of these crimes are against women or with women." We cannot, of course, recommend this book as pleasant reading for the holidays; but it has a value of its own for the candid and courageous student of human affairs. Unfortunately, the state of the world under Christian influence is largely pathological, and social facts are too apt to be pathological also. But they have to be faced for all that.

What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hundred ways, but that man or woman is as good as God?  
And that there is no God any more divine than Yourself?

—Walt Whitman.

## The Idea of God.

DRIVEN by the swift advance of science and the steady pressure of rationalist criticism from its foothold in the world of daily life and common sense, Christianity shows a natural and growing tendency to take refuge in the dreamland of metaphysics. In a paper which appeared in a recent issue of the *Clarion* the Rev. Professor Moulton, M.A., D.Lit., affirmed that all Christian teachers

"sooner or later, come to understand that the essence of their faith lies in a region into which physical science cannot enter, nor any other science that has to do with phenomena."

Here we have a typical example of the looseness of Christian thought. What is the name of the "science" that has not "to do with phenomena"? Science is knowledge, and all knowledge is of the relations between phenomena. Whether subjective or objective, the materials of all the sciences are phenomena, and in implying that there is a science that has not to do with phenomena Dr. Moulton permits himself to suggest that some "science" deals with the unexisting relations of the non-existent. He went on to say:—

"Men of science, as such, know no more about the riddle of the human soul than they knew two thousand years ago; and if religion has to do with the relations between God and the soul, it is obvious that its sphere lies essentially beyond the range of knowledge which is of things we see and hear and feel."

Religion, then, is the "science" that has not to do with phenomena. With one touch of his magic sword Dr. Moulton destroys for ever the rationalist delusion that there is a conflict between religion and science. Religion is itself a science; all science is knowledge; and between different branches of knowledge there can be no conflict. Strategy of this kind extorts the admiration even of the Freethinker; by poor, bewildered, desperate Christendom it should be welcomed with enthusiasm. But if the soul be a reality at all, is it not a phenomenon? And as there can be no knowable relations between man and the absolute, must not God himself, if he exist, be a phenomenon? We know, and can know, nothing of the absolute; for mankind God is either a phenomenon, or, for practical purposes, he is non-existent. Thus Dr. Moulton's "science" that has not to do with phenomena—that is, his religion—deals with the relations between the alleged phenomena called "God" and "the soul." These "phenomena," being, on the human side at least, subjective, come within the domain of psychological science, and must be made to pass through the fiery crucible of observation and experiment before they can be allowed to take rank as facts. What, then, becomes of Dr. Moulton's contention that the essence of Christianity "lies in a region into which physical science cannot enter, nor any other science that has to do with phenomena"?

Dr. Moulton is ready to admit that Darwin may have "explained the history of the human body," but he does not think that we are "any nearer to an understanding of the mysterious *I* that uses the machine which has been so wonderfully prepared." But on what ground does the reverend gentleman distinguish himself from his body? The *I* is the body, and the body is the *I*, and apart from the doctrine of immortality or the baseless reasonings of Platonic philosophy no one would dream that the two words represent two separate entities in the same individual. The fact that a limb or other non-vital part of the body may be removed without impairing the sense of individuality gives no support to the fantastic theory that the *I* is something distinct from the body, using the body as a machine, just as we use machines to weave stockings or to print newspapers. Excite the body with alcohol, deaden it with chloroform, touch the nervous system with paralysis, damage or take away a portion of the brain, and what becomes of the mysterious *I*? Science and common observation alike show that the *I* lives and grows, is exalted and depressed,

sleeps and wakes, decays and dies, along with the body. Dr. Moulton talks of mind that uses the brain as its tool. What does he know, or how can he conceive, of mind apart from body? This mysterious stocking-weaver, who inhabits and animates his machine, instead of controlling the mechanism, is controlled and regulated by it; and, if any of its vital parts be damaged by accident, or strain, or wear, the unseen operator has no power to put them right, but lies dumb and crippled or helpless until he is rescued by the benevolent hand of physical science.

Dr. Moulton uses his feeble illustration of soul and body in order to turn aside the crushing indictment of all religion which is contained in the eloquent and learned pages of Dr. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. He admits that this great book throws light on "everything in religion which can be studied from the outside; but the soul of religion, the nature of man's innermost relations with God, his science has to leave alone." In short, according to Professor Moulton, *The Golden Bough* deals with the body of religion, not with its soul. How illuminating is this distinction! It throws a flood of light, not upon the history of religion, but upon the logical weakness of Christian theories, and the futile evasions of Christian thought. Dr. Moulton allows his judgment to be warped by this fanciful notion of body and soul, just as, on a greater scale, the philosophy of Plato was warped by his theory of Noumenal Ideas, and the science of Aristotle was cramped by his metaphysical assumption of four principles or causes. To use a more homely, and perhaps more appropriate, illustration, these frantic attempts to save Christianity from the destroying axe of scientific criticism remind us of the suggestion of Mr. Weller, senior, that Mr. Pickwick should be rescued from the snares of Dodson and Fogg by means of an "alleybi." Dr. Moulton shares the senior Weller's charming and unlimited faith in the efficacy of proving an "alleybi." Whatever charges may be brought against religion, he remains unmoved. He is always ready to prove an "alleybi." The body of religion is guilty, no doubt, but its soul is innocent. Either it was quiescent or it was engaged elsewhere.

Dr. Moulton, however, mis-states the scope and object of *The Golden Bough*. That book deals not only with the outside machinery of rites and ceremonies, superstitious beliefs and institutions, but, drawing materials from all quarters of the globe, and from different ages, lays bare the innermost meaning, or, as Dr. Moulton would say, the soul, of religion, and shows that the roots of all religions lie in man's ignorance and awe of the vital phenomena of nature—vegetation and growth, procreation and birth. Readers who have not opportunity or inclination to master Dr. Frazer's voluminous pages should turn to Grant Allen's novel, *The Great Taboo*, where the cult of the golden bough forms the central feature of an instructive and entrancing tale. They will then understand Dr. Moulton's admission that the development of religion has "included a surfeit of ghastly, foul, and cruel scenes," and they will see why he is anxious to show that this development merely exhibits the machinery of religion—its body and not its soul. He acknowledges that:—

"The *Golden Bough* is full of evidence that the Christian belief in a Divine Being who becomes incarnate, suffers an atoning death, and imparts a divine life to those who, as it were, 'feed upon' Him, is abundantly paralleled in the most primitive religious rites and doctrines of savage or semi-civilised men."

He adds that:—

"The parallels seem repulsive enough to a Christian until he finds the key."

This wonderful key has, of course, been found by Dr. Moulton, who thus establishes another claim to be regarded as the savior of Christianity. The "key" lies in the fact that "God's whole plan for revealing himself perfectly in Christ followed the lines of human development.....The great sweep of God's purpose was not stayed, and even in their darkest rites of superstition men were receiving, as well as

their capacity allowed, the germs of truth, which would bear fruit some day."

What does Professor Moulton know of God's plans and purposes? He talks about his deity with the freedom and confidence which we might expect from a showman like Barnum when discussing the "plans" of some freak whom he is carrying about under lock and key. If the reverend gentleman's knowledge is no sounder than his logic we may conclude at once that his "key" is worthless. His admissions are, in fact, suicidal. Before the advent of the sciences of anthropology and comparative religion the Christian apologist held that his faith was unique, that its doctrines were revealed from heaven, that its primary rites and ceremonies were instituted by the command of God himself. But now, overwhelmed by the evidence presented in books like *The Golden Bough*, the Christian apologist is constrained to admit that the leading features and doctrines of his religion did not form part of a divine revelation, but have close parallels in the "religious rites and doctrines of savage or semi-civilised men." Christianity has, in truth, grown out of human ignorance and fear, just as naturally and completely as the fetichism of the negro, or any other of the degrading superstitions which have darkened the human mind. Professor Moulton is bold enough to say that amid the "surfeit of ghastly, foul, and cruel scenes included in the development of religion, men were receiving, as well as their capacity allowed, the germs of truth." What an indictment is thus framed by the reverend gentleman against his deity! Religion, he would have us believe, is the affirmation of the highest truth. Yet his language implies that God, who created man and decided along what path he should be evolved, ordained that he should walk through scenes of foul and ghastly cruelty to the knowledge of his creator and his creator's will. A God who was only moderately wise and merciful would have refrained from leading man to the worship and knowledge of himself by the dark and bloody paths of cruel sacrifice, brutal violence, and hideous rites and ceremonies. Even if he had been too weak to prevent man's evolution from taking this course, such a God would not have availed himself of these crimes against humanity as object lessons to teach men the highest truth. We should expect rather that he would send some divine Prometheus to lead men aside from the orgies of bloody sacrifice and the faith in incarnate redeeming gods, and to teach them that only along the quiet paths of work and study could they hope to solve the problems of existence, and only by means of love and gentleness and sacrifice of self could they hope to redeem themselves and the world.

W. B. COLUMBINE.

### The Bible and the Child.

"If there is one lesson which history forces upon us in every page, it is this: *Keep your children away from the priest, or he will make them the enemies of mankind.* It is not the Catholic clergy and those like them who are alone to be dreaded in this matter; even the representatives of apparently harmless religions may do incalculable mischief if they get education into their hands."—PROFESSOR W. K. CLIFFORD, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 382.

"Children always believe what is commonly inculcated at home, at school, in company with others, and wherever they may be. No belief is too absurd to be thus accepted."—LESTER F. WARD, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. ii., p. 282.

"Nothing is more outrageous than to take advantage of the helplessness of childhood to sow in the brain the seeds of error."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *Advice to Parents*.

THERE is an old proverb which runs, "When rogues fall out honest men get their rights"; and there appears to be every prospect that while the two viragos, Church and Chapel, are fighting for possession of the child, the prize may slip out of their clutches altogether. The head of the Established Church sees this plainly enough, and in a letter to Dr. Horton he attempted to parley with the enemy, to see whether they could not arrive at a compromise and divide the spoil. But the stubborn

Nonconformists had not the worldly wisdom of the courtly prelate, and the overtures came to nothing; the Nonconformists, in our opinion, throwing away their last chance of gaining something in the struggle. If Church and Chapel could have arrived at an understanding they might have forced their will on the country for a few more years; but now the struggle will go on until the country will, in sheer weariness, cry, "A plague on both your houses," and demand Secular education.

But observe the false pretence under which they wish to keep the Bible in the school. They plead for reading the Bible as literature, when all the while they want it retained as the Word of God, the foundation of their religion. Schopenhauer observed that "There is no absurdity, however palpable it may be, which may not be fixed in the minds of all men, if it is inculcated before they are six years old by continual repetition." The clergy are well aware of this important fact. They also know that if they cannot impress the children's minds with reverence for this book before the reasoning powers have fully developed it will be impossible to do so later on. Their aim is to instil the virus of superstition into the children's minds while they are defenceless, and thus give a religious bias to the mind which will last through life.

The present writer was brought up in the strictest orthodoxy. I was taught that the world was created by God out of nothing in six days; that Adam was made from dust in the Garden of Eden, and that Eve was fashioned from one of his ribs; that all this happened 4000 B.C.

I believed all this to be absolutely true until I was eighteen years of age, and might have continued to believe it for many years—perhaps until these beliefs had hardened into fixed conditions—but for the prosecution of this journal for blasphemy, and the accidental sight of the prosecuted number, shown to me by a companion as a curiosity, whose only value, in his eyes, lay in the fact that it had been prosecuted, and was therefore contraband. This led me, not indeed to test the Bible, but to seek for independent scientific evidence to support it, and so be ready if I should happen to meet with one of those infidels who had the temerity to mock the Word of God.

I soon found—to my great astonishment, be it said—that, whether the Bible was the Word of God or not, it was scientifically false; that what I had been taught to treasure as refined gold was base metal, the mere childish guesses of primitive man, like Pope's poor Indian—

whose untutor'd mind  
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;  
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray  
Far as the solar walk, or milky way.

I also discovered that the historical parts of the Bible were as untrustworthy as the scientific, and I found that I had to unlearn most of that which I had been taught to believe to be the sacred inviolable truth. "Nothing," says Colonel Ingersoll, "is more outrageous than to take advantage of the helplessness of childhood to sow in the brain the seeds of error." None but those who have been through a similar experience can realise the profound truth of that sentence or understand the bitterness of finding out that what you have been taught as truth are the babblings of ignorant superstition; that advantage has been taken of your childhood to teach, as science and history, things which every educated man knows to be false when taught in their plain natural sense.

Moreover the Bible is saturated from the first chapter to the last with miracles and the most puerile superstition. It teaches that the laws of the universe can be suspended at the will of powers outside of, and overruling, nature. It teaches of the existence of witches, angels, and devils; of men ascending into the sky and being swallowed up in the earth; of the stopping of the sun; of the bringing of the dead to life, and many other fables. All this is of the very essence of superstition.

Every educated man knows that these things did not happen as they are related in the Bible. Why, therefore, should they be taught to children as the sacred truth?

How long will it be before Christians practise the example of the great Atheist, Condorcet, of whom we are told that "the freedom of the reason was so dear to him that he counted it an abuse for a parent to instil his own convictions into the defenceless minds of his young children"? In our opinion, never. If that policy were carried out for a few generations religion would become as extinct as the Dodo.

Children should not be taught that wickedness can be pardoned by prayer and praise. They should be taught that retribution follows wickedness naturally and inevitably, and is not to be evaded by any such incantations; that goodness is not rewarded by eternal life in some enchanted city with golden streets after this life is over, but is rewarded here and now by the love, respect, and trust of our fellow-creatures; that no mighty hand reaches down to save the innocent and stay the oppressor—that is the work of man. "Outside man," says Feuerbach, "is no salvation," summing up in five words the basis of all morality and all human kindness.

The Bible teaches the exact opposite of this. It teaches that outside God is no salvation; that everything should be done for God's sake. But, as Professor Clifford well said:—

"When we love our brother for the sake of our brother, we help all men to grow in the right; but when we love our brother for the sake of somebody else, who is very likely to damn our brother, it very soon comes to burning him for his soul's health. When men respect human life for the sake of man, tranquility, order, and progress go hand in hand; but those who only respected human life because God had forbidden murder have set their mark upon Europe in fifteen centuries of blood and fire."†

Freethinkers must exert themselves to have this book excluded from the rate-paid schools, and at the next General Election it should be one of the test questions put to every candidate for Parliament. I believe that Labor will be strongly represented in the next Parliament; the trade unions are determined to be represented, and they have declared unanimously in favor of Secular Education. Many of the Dissenters begin to see that there is no other solution. Never were the prospects brighter than at the present time. What the Christians' sense of justice would never confer they will be compelled to yield to the stern logic of events, as they had to yield toleration when they could no longer persecute; and it behoves all Freethinkers to be up and doing to hasten the time when the Bible shall be excluded from the school.

W. MANN.

## Correspondence.

### CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANITARIANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a paragraph in your issue of July 24, in which I am credited with being "half a Freethinker." I hope I have been all my life a whole one, if a Freethinker means, as it ought to do, a person who thinks without prejudice. I am afraid some so-called Freethinkers don't do that.

I am invited, in the paragraph alluded to, "to point out one single Humanitarian text in the whole of the New Testament." Instead of pointing to texts, I would point to the whole spirit of justice and mercy and love which pervades the New Testament. Is it conceivable that our treatment of the lower creatures is not to be affected by this teaching, which shows us how to behave better to our fellow-men? Our common sense assures us that we are bound by our Christian profession to treat with proper regard the creatures of lower organisation than ourselves. Surely nobody with any discernment requires to be told this.

The New Testament is not a book of rules, fitting every

\* Morley, *Critical Miscellanies*, vol. i. p. 95.  
† *Lectures and Essays*, p. 384; 1886.

variety of circumstance in human life, and showing us what we are to do. It contains principles of conduct rather, and leaves it to our intelligence and honesty to draw therefrom the rules we require.

If we have good sense and a love of truth we can easily satisfy ourselves as to how the spirit of the New Testament suggests we should treat animals. To imagine that the Savior, who compared his yearnings over Jerusalem to the feelings of the hen which gathereth her chickens under her wings, would have tortured animals for amusement as do our sportsmen, or for knowledge as do our vivisectioners, is to indulge in wild dreams.

If the Old Testament gives us large hints as to our duty to animals—as, for instance, in Ex. xxiii. 5, 12; Deut. xxii. 6-7, 10; xxv. 4; Prov. xii. 10—the New Testament, by its vastly superior ethical principles, ought to take from us all excuse for failing in our conduct towards these races. If we do so fail, it is not because we can't get knowledge of duty, but because we don't want to get it.

J. STRATTON.

[Mr. Stratton does not quote us quite accurately. We asked him "a plain question" and invited him to give it "a plain answer." We did not ask him "to point out one single humanitarian text in the whole of the New Testament." That was only half our question. The other half was "in relation to the subject of 'Cruelty to Animals,' which Mr. Stratton had chiefly in mind." Our question is not answered; the text is not given; and for a very sufficient reason, which the reader will easily recognise.—EDITOR.]

### WORMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—An ingenious writer in a May number of the *Freethinker* pointed out the vermicularity, or worminess, of the Holy Scriptures. He propounded the theory that the two Testaments form the apotheosis of the worm. Pagan Greece, he showed, paid no regard to worms. Heathen mythology does not even recognise them. But the Bible is full of them. The worm is invariably treated with attention throughout the Bible as an important item. The early bird is a modern innovation; and so far from the worm being the food of the early bird, a mere glance at early Christian paintings would show that the early bird would be in great danger if in any proximity to a Scriptural worm. The worms of the Gospels are monstrous fine worms. And the whole teaching of Scripture is that: "Man is a worm; and the son of man is a worm."

So your ingenious contributor. But he does not draw the complete conclusion from his premises which is open to him. I see in the Scripture the apotheosis of the worm, but I go further, and see the unmistakable revelation that the worm is divine. "I am a worm," says the Son of Man. Now, if the ego of a man is a worm, then that man is, *ex hypothesi*, wormy. In other words, he is contained of the worm, and has, in vulgar parlance, "got 'em." Moreover, if the divine one is contained of a worm, the worm too is divine. It is impossible for Him to be divine—the whole of Him, mark you—and then the worms containing, or contained, not to partake of that divinity and to be also divine. Accordingly I contend that Jesus was wormy and had divine worms.

Do the Gospels bear me out? Yes. Jesus throughout the Gospels unmistakably tells of worms. Fowls of the air, he said, need not think of the morrow, nor gather into barns. Why not? Jesus is going to give them one of his fine worms. Then the hungry! He loves the hungry. Blessed are the hungry, for they shall be comforted. How? Same way. He himself is often moody, often morose, but always hungry. *He never missed a marriage feast.* The hungriest man I ever saw, wrote Artemus Ward, ate two lambs for breakfast, and then chased the old ewe three and a-half miles. Jesus was hungrier still. O how he hungered! The multitude that Jesus fed were inside himself. He once fed them with three loaves and a few small fishes. But only once. They also received all the fragments. They must have been a sad nuisance even though they were divine. Moreover, the painful expression depicted on Christ's face while on the Cross is now explained. It is more than a mere death struggle attendant on giving up the ghost. Neither of the thieves on either side of our Lord display this agony. In fact, one of them—the knave on the right—was sufficiently at ease to revile him. No. It is an internal torture; an intestinal pain. It is worms. Some doctors assert that tapeworms are comparatively painless. But we assure them that divine worms positively are not so. These were divine worms. Jesus took them up to heaven with him. They are still there, still happy. The worm incarnate must be added to the Dove and the Lamb. It must be placed beside them, but outside—eh, Jesus?—outside. Yes, outside.

V. ST. JOHN MACNAMARA.

### "The Yellow Peril."

"Talking about the yellow peril, did you ever stop to think about the people of Japan seriously?" asked a man who thinks well of the Flowery Kingdom. "If you have not, it would be well for you to look into a few things before you make up your mind on the issues involved in the struggle now being made in the Far East. For instance, here is a thing I take from Japanese verse of about the eighth century:—

SILE.

"While other women's husbands ride  
Along the road in proud array,  
My husband up the rough hillside  
On foot must wend his weary way.

"The grievous sight with bitter pain  
My bosom fills, and many a tear  
Steals down my cheek, and I would fain  
Do aught to help my husband dear.

"Come! Take the mirror and the veil,  
My mother's parting gifts to me.  
In barter they must sure avail  
To buy a horse for thee!

"But listen to what the husband says in response to this noble offer:—

"If I should purchase me a horse,  
Must not my wife still sadly walk?  
No, no! Though stony is our course,  
We'll trudge along and sweetly talk.

"Now, what do you think of that for a yellow peril? What do the men and women of this beautiful and altogether delightful country think about the people who would thus regard the sacred relationship which ought to exist between the husband and the wife? I will not press the question. At any rate, there is no such thing as a yellow peril when you come to think of it. First, here is a man who was considering his wife in an affectionate way, in a section of the world where we did not expect to find it. But mark you with what nobility she met the issue.

"Take the mirror and the veil.  
My mother's parting gifts to me.

"This is no small offer for a woman to make. She loves the mirror and the veil. She will love them more if they are her mother's parting gifts. Yet there is somehow ample compensation in the refusal and the promise of the husband:—

"We'll trudge along and sweetly talk.

"My dear fellow, the Jap is not a heathen. He is very far from it. He is probably farther from it than we dream at times. At any rate, let us forget the yellow peril."—*New Orleans Times-Democrat.*

### VALUE OF PRAYER.

It is as foolish to pray for rain or a fair wind as it would be to pray that the sun should set in the middle of the day. It is as foolish to pray for the healing of a disease or for daily bread as it is to pray for rain or a fair wind. It is as foolish to pray for a pure heart or mental repose as it is to pray for help in sickness or misfortune. All the events which occur upon the earth result from Law.....We are governed by physical laws which it is our duty as scholars of nature to investigate; and by moral laws which it is our duty as citizens of nature to obey.—*Winwood Reade.*

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die!  
The Child is Father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

—Wordsworth.

Nature ordains that a man should wish the good of every man whoever he may be, and for this very reason, that he is a man.—*Cicero.*

Forgiveness is better than revenge, for whilst the former is the sign of a gentle nature, revenge is that of a savage one.—*Epicurus.*

**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.**

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; Brockwell Park, 3.15, Debate between W. J. Ramsey and Rev. W. Hatch, "Is There a Future Life?" 6.30, W. J. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford-grove): 7, Mr. Ramsey.

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

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, August 11, at 8, usual weekly meeting.

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