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The doctor sees all the weakness of mankind, the lawyer all the wickedness, the theologian all the stupidity.—SCHOPENHAUER.

Dr. Aked and Secular Education.

WE have a certain sympathy with the Rev. C. F. Aked, of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool. He has had a fight for life, and got the best of it; but has still, it appears, to walk gingerly. Tuberculosis of the lungs slays its millions of poor victims, who never have a chance of resisting it when once it lays hold of them. But Mr. Aked was more lucky. He was able to get twelve months' release from work without any loss of income, and careful scientific treatment in Alpine air stopped the malady and healed its wounds. Mr. Aked's friends, if we may be allowed to put it so, managed to keep him out of heaven. It is to his credit, of course, that they prefer to have him on earth; but their solicitude about him, and his mental trouble when he thought he might have to leave this world sooner than he expected, throw a curious light on their professed certitude of an infinitely better existence in the world to come.

Mr. Aked finds a difference between the mountain air he has breathed for twelve months and "the enervation of our English summer." During the hot weather he has been able to take the morning service at Pembroke Chapel, but has had no energy for the evening service. Evidently, therefore, he is not what he was. Nevertheless we hope for the best for him. We are not at all enamored of his "liberal" Christianity. We believe it does more harm than good by obscuring great issues and lulling a number of doubters into a false contentment. But the man himself appears to be sincere. A vein of sentimentalism is natural to him, and late experiences have accentuated his self-consciousness; yet a fundamental basis of sincerity may easily underlie all that; and, for the rest, an allowance must be made for Mr. Aked's intellectual shortcomings. He is not in the least a thinker. When he goes right he is swayed by good sympathies.

A Liverpool friend has sent us two Aked documents. The first is a sermon on "The Courage of the Coward." The second is the August number of *Plain Truth*, containing an article on "Religion and the School."

A few words about the sermon. Mr. Aked starts with a text from the fourth Gospel. Then he proceeds with a sentence from Voltaire, which he gives as his own—perhaps because he hesitated to acknowledge it. It was the heresiarch of Ferney who said that the worst thing about good people is that they are such cowards. But having made that correction we cheerfully allow that Mr. Aked's sermon ought to do good in its way. The churches and chapels of this country are filled—when they are filled—with cowardly good people, who are not active on the side of wrong, and seldom active on the side of right; like the double-damned souls in Dante's *Inferno*, who were neither for God nor God's enemies—but only for themselves. Mr. Aked preaches courage to his own congregation; we dare say they need the lesson, and we hope they will lay it to heart. But why, we may ask in passing, does he refer to

"materialism" and "scepticism" as being powerful enough to make Christians ashamed of standing up for Christ? We wish it were true, but it is not. The truth is quite the opposite. Christianity is powerful enough to make men not only ashamed, but afraid, to stand up for "materialism" and "scepticism." Mr. Aked even associates "materialism" and "scepticism" with a bad life. He does not do it in plain language, but he does it by insinuation; and we say it is unworthy of him—especially in a sermon against cowardice.

The article in *Plain Truth* is more important. Having been away from England for twelve months, Mr. Aked has probably been able to see things in better perspective. At any rate, he perceives that the Comedy of Passive Resistance, which the Nonconformists are playing, does not promise any solution of the Education problem. He also perceives what every honest man should recognise in five minutes, namely, that the colorless religious teaching which the Nonconformists are trying to foist upon this nation is a ghastly, disgraceful pretence. On this point we will quote his words at once:—

"Religious education in the Day School, even if it were permissible and practicable for the State to enforce it, is worth little or nothing. It is not worth the fuss that is made over it. At its very best, it is a poor, thin thing, when it is not confessedly dogmatic, partisan, sectarian."

Apart from the ambiguity of the last sentence, this passage does Mr. Aked credit. It puts him in a different street from Dr. Clifford. The ambiguity we refer to lies in the word "when." For our part, we take the bolder of the two possible meanings, and we trust it is the one that Mr. Aked intends. Religion is a poor, thin thing *unless* it is dogmatic, partisan, sectarian. It must be this to have any life and substance. Christianity in general, for instance, does not exist. Neither is there such a thing as a simply "Christian" Church. Every Christian Church has a denominational name, and flourishes, primarily, not on its general agreements with other Christian Churches, but on its specific differences from them. Why else do they divide and live apart from each other?

Let us now take Mr. Aked's declaration as to the inevitableness of Secular Education. The passage is a long one, but we quote it in full:—

"It seems clear now that this country will sooner or later be driven to accept the principle of Secular Education alone in Secular schools. The National Free Church Council, by a majority vote, refused to pledge itself to this principle at Newcastle last March; but the resolution which was adopted and the discussion revealed decided progress towards this ideal. There never has been the slightest justification for the compromise to which determined Free Churchmen have consented, except that which is supposed to justify a compromise of any kind, viz., the difficulty or impossibility of securing all that one believes in and desires. And although the next step taken by Free Churchmen and the Liberal Party may not bring us to the absolute banishment of religious teaching from State schools. still, it is so far certain that the ideal will be reached in due time, that everything is pointing to it and leading to it, that we may as well begin to consider the new duties of the Church in view of this trend of events."

"It seems clear now." Quite so. The squabble of sects has brought about this situation. While the

two great divisions of English Protestants hung together, and only quarrelled behind the scenes, and kicked and laughed at all the "infidels," religious education was tolerably safe. But the proverb says that when certain people fall out certain other people come by their own. And we are witnessing an excellent illustration. The Established Church and the Free Churches are forcing the nation in mere self-defence, and to avoid open religious partisanship, to look for a basis of durable peace; and that basis, as Mr. Aked sees "now," is Secular Education. No other way of peace is possible. The only way to keep rival Churches quiet is to take away the bone of contention.

Secular Education will not come in a year or two, but it is bound to come some day, and sooner rather than later if the rival Churches will only go on fighting. Mr. Aked shows wisdom, therefore, in asking his Christian friends to consider what is to be their next step—After the Deluge.

Mr. Aked tells them to work the Sunday School for all it is worth. He is not apparently in love with the institution, but he seems to think it is the next line of defence. "The teaching of the Sunday School," he says, "is often crude, often stupid, nearly always reactionary, and only sometimes as good as it might be." What he proposes is that the Class system should be abolished, and the Sunday School made a place of regular service for "junior" Christians. The Sunday School has only one object—"to make Christians of the boys and girls who come"—"to lead the boys and girls to Christ." But the question becomes ever more and more perplexing, What is Christianity? And if this be hidden from the scholars it cannot be concealed from the teachers. Mere gushing will not do the trick. Mr. Aked says that the teachers

"Must be men and women who have wholly surrendered themselves to Jesus Christ; who have accepted Him as the Son of God and as the Lord of their whole being; who own His lordship in every thought, in every feeling, in every act of their life. They must be men and women who have been born from above, born of the Holy Spirit, who glory in being counted amongst the followers of Jesus. The empire of Christ is to be world-wide, as it is to be everlasting. The kingdoms of art, science, literature, commerce, social effort, all are His. And the Sunday School may take all these into view, if it is able."

We are afraid that Mr. Aked will only get these teachers by inducing Jesus Christ to work another miracle. And is he not really pleading (bar the miracle) for a sort of Secular Education even in the Sunday School? The Christianity of the New Testament is to be eked out with art, science, literature, commerce, and social effort. Perhaps the revised list will include politics. And all these things are to be dealt with in the Sunday School! Mr. Aked adds "if it is able"—which is a very necessary proviso. There is much virtue in that "if."

The introduction of all those outside subjects is, in our opinion, a ready way of jostling Jesus Christ out. Mr. Aked, of course, does not mean that. But roads lead to their destinations, quite irrespective of our meanings and wishes; as Mr. Aked may find if he runs a Sunday School, with Jesus Christ as the great draw on the bills, and a lot of attractive side-shows to catch the folk's attention.

But the principal point, after all, is that Mr. Aked sees Secular Education coming. The Sunday School question is rather a domestic one for Christians. Secular Education concerns *all* citizens. And it is coming! Thousands of ministers are aware of the fact. Mr. Aked has the sense and courage to admit it.

G. W. FOOTE.

Hymns for Infants.

SOME time ago I received a bookseller's catalogue advertising a collector's library of some thousands of volumes of hymns for about £40. The bookseller stated that there was probably not such another collection in existence, and I was inclined to agree with him. I knew that the collecting mania took

many queer forms, but a collection of thousands of volumes of Christian hymns was enough to stagger one. It may have surprised me for the reason that my study of hymnology had never been of a very extended character. As a child I, of course, was never taught to sing them; and when I grew older it was a form of literature that never appealed to me. The average sermon was bad enough, but the average hymn was worse. The sentiment and the rhyme were well matched, and both were bad. So I grew up with a rather extensive ignorance of the gems enshrined in books of Christian hymns.

However, being away from home and short of reading material, I recently spent an hour with a volume of hymns written by the famous Dr. Watts, and am bound to confess that I have read many bigger books with less amusement, and, in a sense, with less instruction. It was only a small book, too, containing seventy hymns, with the title of *Hymns for the Infant Mind*, and dated 1817. At first glance I thought the "Infant Mind" was a piece of sarcasm at the expense of the adult believer. But further reflection led me to see that a joke would have been quite out of place in a hymn-book, and that the hymns were really intended for children. Indeed, the preface distinctly states that the "volume adapts evangelical truths to the wants and feelings of childhood." What kind of children they were whose feelings craved for these hymns is something of a puzzle; one can only say they were very different to the kind of children one meets nowadays.

A characteristic of these children of 1817 must have been a mingling of old-fashioned insular patriotism with a very crude evangelical theology. The book opens with a burst of thankfulness for having "made me, in these Christian days, a happy English child," and, in a thank-God-there-are-many-worse kind of a spirit, thanks the deity for his

care of me
While thousands languish in distress
And pine in poverty.

Which is certainly a charitable feeling to develop in the "Infant Mind." Still, in order to correct the notion that God favors the British nation, hymn No. 50 reminds us that "God made the world" and "All are protected by his hand, as well as British ground"; but as that does not prevent the thousands languishing in distress and poverty, the advantage is not very obvious.

Another thing that seems to have powerfully influenced the "happy English child"—of Christian parents—was its intense worthlessness. It cries to the Lord "to change this heart of stone," and then proceeds to catalogue its evangelical enormities as per under. It does not attend to prayers—

And when I pray or sing
I'm often thinking all the while
About some other thing.

On many Sabbaths, though I've heard
Of Jesus and of Heav'n,
I've scarcely listened to thy word
Or prayed to be forgiven.

This note is struck over and over again, although a child to whom these hymns were adapted might also have reflected that children were by no means the only sinners in this direction. We have heard of adult members of congregations who have been thinking "about some other thing" when they ought to have been meditating on the comforts of eternal damnation. It has even been whispered that other ladies' dresses, other people's evening parties, and business deals, prospective or retrospective, play far from a small part in worshipers' meditations while in church.

There is, too, a quite human touch about the following that is sure of enlisting the sympathy of the reader:—

Oh Lord, I'm ashamed to confess
How often I've broken thy day!
Perhaps I have thought of my dress,
Or wasted the moments in play:
And when the good minister tried
To make little children attend,
I was thinking of something beside,
Or wishing the sermon would end!

Well, you are not the only ones, Tommy or Mary, who have sat "wishing the sermon would end." And, indeed, it was no joke to sit through a sermon in the old days when parsons prided themselves on their ability to preach hours on end. Nowadays they promise that their sermons shall be short, and even offer to mind the machines of wearied "scorchers" while they attend church.

This attention on the part of the "infant pilgrim" to such things as dress, toys, and the like, is the more culpable as it is convinced that this is a "sinful world," and also that—

Our brightest joys are fading fast,
The longest life will soon be past;
And if we go heav'n at last,
We need not wish to stay.

Although this leaves it a little doubtful whether the wish not to stay refers to heaven or earth. Probably the latter, as in another hymn a yearning is expressed to "learn by Sabbaths here below, to spend eternity in heav'n." Which again reminds one of the little girl, daughter of rigid Presbyterians, who, being told that heaven was a place where there existed an everlasting Sunday, inquired, if she were very good, would they allow her to go to hell now and again for a holiday?

One is quite prepared to hear from this infant philosopher that if life is spent in this manner "death is sweet at last," although there is some doubt as to one's ultimate destination. There is, of course, no doubt about the destiny of the majority of children, as is seen in the following:—

The wicked child, who often heard
His pious parents speak of Thee,
And fled from every serious word,
Shall not be able then to flee.
No; he shall see them burst the tomb,
And rise, and leave him trembling there,
To hear his everlasting doom,
With shame and terror and despair.

This "everlasting doom" has previously been described by the fond mother in the following couplet:

But always recollect, my dear,
That wicked people go to hell.

And this maternal lesson enables the infant to joyously sing:—

But where my living soul would go,
I do not and I cannot know;
For none were e'er sent back to tell
The joys of heav'n or pains of hell.

But Hell's a state of endless woe,
Where unrepenting sinners go:
Tho' none that seek the Savior's grace
Shall ever see that dreadful place.

One can faintly picture the joy children must have derived from verses of this description, to say nothing of the moralising influence of such sentiments. Children who are carefully trained to look to "Our Father in heaven" as one who is graciously pleased to send youngsters to a place of "endless woe" for the heinous offence of thinking of dress or playthings when they should have been listening to the minister's "seventeenthly," must have a considerable advantage over the children of unbelievers who have been allowed to run riot in fields or play with toys on the Sabbath. There is also a sense of lofty superiority generated, as is shown by the child's wonder at other youngsters living as though they—

did not know
There was a heaven and hell.

The child's ethical sense is further cultivated by a number of reflections on the blood and anguish and sweat and suffering of Jesus. The following is a specimen:—

Nailed upon the cross, behold
How his tender limbs are torn!
For a royal crown of gold
They have made him one of thorn!
Cruel hands, that dare to bind
Thorns upon a brow so kind!

See! the blood is falling fast
From his forehead and his side!
Hark! He now has breathed his last!
With a mighty groan he died!

And so on through six verses, each ending with the cheerful refrain, "Jesus condescends to die."

Such are the main teachings of a book drawn up and adapted to the wants and feelings of children in the beginning of the nineteenth century. One can only hope that the adaptation was a failure. Sentiments such as those in the hymns are bad enough when uttered by adults, but hearing them from the lips of children makes them infinitely worse. It is difficult to estimate, although not to conceive, the effect on children of a teaching that practically condemned all innocent pleasure as sinful, and threatened a child with the good old-fashioned Christian hell for wishing that a parson's sermon would be less lengthy. If one wishes to discover reasons for harshness of character, want of sympathy, and narrowness of outlook, one is certainly to be found in the existence of a religious environment of this description. The world prides itself on much to-day when it compares what is with what was; but certainly not the least improvement effected is that of having destroyed this evangelical debauching of infant minds.

C. COHEN.

Christian Certitudes.

IT can never be too emphatically insisted upon that there is an infinite difference between truth and certitude. When asked, "Do you know anything positive or definite of God, immortality, or a supernatural region of heaven and hell?" Christian teachers generally admit that such subjects "are so completely outside the powers of our senses that it is impossible for us to have the same kind of evidence about them as we have about the ordinary things of daily life." That is a perfectly straightforward and unequivocal statement, and it appeals to all alike as absolutely true; but it is so worded as to demand a supplement to give it completeness. We naturally expect to be assured that there is another and superior kind of evidence, which only intellectually and emotionally stupid and perverted people dare to set aside. But Professor Peake, who undertook the responsibility of replying to the above question at the Central Hall, Manchester, adduced no other kind of proof or evidence, contenting himself with cleverly and cowardly turning upon his questioner thus: "I ask you what do you know about the working of your own mind? How do you know what is mind? When you say, 'I am alive,' you do not know; you cannot explain what that means. Who are you? What does 'I' mean? Nobody knows. You know what your body is, but what your mind is you do not know; and yet you know you have a mind, and you have to be content with saying so, which is really all that can be said."

With all due respect to Professor Peake, I must say that he utterly missed the point, and left the question asked unanswered. He could not assert that he knows anything positive or definite of God, or immortality, or a supernatural region. His use of the human mind as an illustration, however, was most unfortunate, because the existence of mind, as distinct from body, is not an ascertained and abundantly verified fact, but only a gratuitous assumption. In the opinion of multitudes of intelligent people there is no mind apart from brain. We may characterise Moleschott's often-quoted aphorism, "No thought without phosphorus," as mere rhetoric, and it may be no longer scientific to declare that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile; but it is an undoubted fact that there is no thought or mind without a brain. Consciousness is a function of the nervous system just as truly as bile-making is a function of the liver. The existence of mind, or soul, or spirit, as a distinct entity, is, therefore, quite as unverifiable as the existence of God. When a man is asked, "What do you know about the working of your own mind?" he can honestly answer, "I know just as much about the working

of my own mind as I do about the existence of God, and that is—nothing; I do not even know that I have a mind.”

Professor Peake's cases are by no means parallel. Life does not belong to the same category as mind. Life is a scientifically verified fact. When I say, "I am alive," I know exactly what I mean by the statement, though I may be unable to give a definition of life. The fact of life can be proved by innumerable experiments; but the existence of God is in no sense a verifiable proposition. Mind and God are alike unknown and unknowable, while the existence and activity of life are both knowable and known.

Professor Peake virtually admits that God is as unknown and unknowable as the human mind. And yet Christian writers and preachers represent the Divine Being as an object of most positive and definite knowledge. They pretend to be on terms of closest intimacy with him. They can tell what his inner, most secret thoughts are. His feelings, motives, and purposes are open books to them. They are as familiar with the eternal decrees as if they were so many Acts of Parliament. Listening to many a sermon, you would imagine that God must be the preacher's next-door neighbor. I heard a minister say, the other day, that the Lord disapproves of theatre-going, and has no patience with card-players. Another pulpiteer affirmed, quite recently, that the Higher Criticism dishonors the Holy Ghost, and is an insult to heaven. If there is a God how highly amused he must be at the narrow prejudices and petty feelings attributed to him by his professional representatives. It would be his sense of humor alone that could keep his heart from breaking. The fact is, however, that these professionals do not know God at all, and that the opinions and attitudes which they attribute to him are exclusively their own.

To sincere doubters Professor Peake's Apologetics must be woefully disappointing. Here is a luminous specimen:—

“I should like to remind you that there are millions and millions of people who are absolutely certain that there is a God, and that he has spoken to them. Nor are they to be sought at the ends of the earth. You can talk to them any day, and they will tell you that they are as absolutely certain that there is a God, and that he has spoken to them, as they are of the fact that they are walking and talking with you.”

The questioner knew that as well as the Professor. Everybody knows it. Even Freethinkers are aware of it. But it proves nothing. Christian certitudes are not synonymous with Christian truths. For many centuries, millions and millions of people were absolutely certain of the truth of witchcraft; but witchcraft was a lie for all that. Millions and millions of people were absolutely certain of the literal infallibility of the Bible; but Professor Peake will admit that they were mistaken. For many generations, millions and millions of people were absolutely certain that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun and moon and stars were made on purpose to serve it; but everybody knows that they were deceived by appearances. The fact that millions and millions of people are absolutely certain of some things is no manner of proof that those things are true. I may be absolutely certain that some of the planets are inhabited; but my sense of certitude carries with it no evidence whatever. This is self-evident. So, likewise, the fact that millions and millions of people are absolutely certain that there is a God is no proof that there is. They may all be mistaken. Their certitude may be nothing but a baseless dream.

But Professor Peake exaggerates when he reminds us that "millions and millions of people are absolutely certain that there is a God, and that he has spoken to them." It would be more accurate to say that the number of those who enjoy such a sense of certitude is comparatively small. Waves of doubt occasionally beat against the souls of the brightest and most beaming saints. Their vision at times

grows dim and uncertain, and their hearts are full of red-eyed sadness. How strange it is that if prayer be neglected even for one day the consciousness of God weakens. If you cease speaking to him he will retaliate by becoming silent to you. Perhaps the great majority of professing Christians are, at the present moment, in a state of painful uncertainty as to the reality of the objects of their faith. They believe in God, but are not quite sure of him. They believe in immortality, but the grim shadow of doubt often rests on their horizon. They would give the world for the certitude they lack. Professor Peake will admit, with regret, that what I say is only too true. The knowledge of God is not natural, but must be acquired by artificial means. Leave the child alone, and he will never dream of a Father in heaven. Every man is born an Atheist, and he becomes a Theist only by believing the testimony of his parents and teachers. We are surrounded to-day by men and women who have no consciousness of God, and who do not believe in him, because no religious instruction was imparted to them in childhood. They were trained to rely upon and be guided by natural knowledge alone, and to have no dealing whatever with Supernaturalism. They are out-and-out Atheists; but their Atheism does not mean detachment from moral ideas, abandonment of high enthusiasms, and disbelief in pure living; it means, rather, that their ethical standard is higher, that their social enthusiasms are warmer, and that their belief in pure living is deeper, *because* they are detached from all supernatural considerations.

Like the Russians before the redoubtable Japs, Christian theologians are constantly retreating before the invincible army of unbelief, which is ever advancing from one victory to another. Professor Peake discards time-worn arguments, and falls back upon experience. Experience is the rock upon which the Church takes its last stand. The authority of the Bible is a thing of the past, and the infallibility of the Church has been abandoned, the only thing remaining being the bare fact that millions and millions of people are supposed to be still enthusiastic believers. But when we begin to examine the experience of these millions and millions of enthusiastic believers, we soon discover that it is a most uncertain and unreliable quantity. The Christian certitudes are rapidly decreasing in number and diminishing in fervor; and there are unmistakable signs that the time is coming when every trace of Supernaturalism shall have vanished from Christendom.

JOHN T. LLOYD.

Religious Instincts.

RECENT Christian apologists are a puzzle. A magician, if there was such a being, could never tell what they are or try to be. I doubt if one of them can intelligibly say what is their creed or profession. All of them seem to be in a fog, for they darken counsel by words without knowledge, as the book of Job has it.

To see professors and learned divines making such an exhibition of themselves in a pretended defence of Christianity is a pitiful sight. It is difficult to know what just inference to draw from their performances. Most of the addresses and articles suggest either imbecility, dishonesty, or insanity. The lectures and essays can have no influence on intelligent Freethinkers. Of course, there are nominal Freethinkers who are in intellect imbeciles, as the present controversy has disclosed; and these make easy converts to be exhibited on Christian platforms and reported as eminent converted infidels. Such defence of Christianity is only suitable to Christians, and is utterly impotent to meet the objections of unbelievers.

Such defences of Christianity only show how defenceless it really is. The failure to defend it by so many clever men proves that it cannot be defended. The attempts to defend it only expose its defence-

less state, and do it more harm than good. Christians who believe in prayer ought to pray to be delivered from the attacks of their fighting friends.

The favorite defence of Christianity at present seems to be to harp on the limit of knowledge and the ignorance of scientists, as if their ignorance was knowledge unlimited to them. If they prove that reason is not infinite (which is an easy task), does that prove that Christianity is true? If Agnostics have not solved the riddle of the universe—which, by the bye, they have never claimed to have done—does that prove that Christianity is a solution of the enigma? Harping on the limit of knowledge and failures of scientists is nothing better than waste of words and time. What they ought to do is to answer the objections and prove that Christianity is true. This they do not attempt to do. They ignore the objections, and deal only in assertions and unfounded assumptions. This can only be accounted for by the fact that Christianity is not true, and its apologists have no real defence to offer.

One of the commonest arguments in defence is the supposed religious instinct. The existence of a universal religious instinct is asserted as dogmatically as if it was an admitted fact which proved religion to be divine and Christianity to be true. But the existence of a universal religious instinct is not admitted, and cannot be admitted, as it is not true. Races have been found who have no word for God and soul in their languages, nor anything corresponding with what is commonly called religion. And even supposing that there is a general religious instinct, I fail to see how that can prove that Christianity is divine and true. If the instinct of religion proves the truth of Christianity, it proves the truth of every other religion as well; and, evidently, that proves too much, and what proves too much proves nothing.

Admitting, for the sake of argument, that there is a general religious instinct, to be of any good as a defence of the Christian religion apologists must prove that the instinct is original and not acquired, that it is derived from God, and show how it supports Christianity any more than other religions. Theology is not complete without a Devil. No God, no Devil; no Devil, no God. Both are necessary to complement each other. Assuming the being of God and a God-Devil, we must also assume that all good is derived from the good God, and all the bad from the Devil-God. Now, if all religions spring from a religious instinct, there must be a good instinct and a bad instinct; for surely an instinct from God would not produce a religion that ignores himself and makes its devotees practical Agnostics. If idolatry and paganism are bad, the instinct that produces them must be bad also—and the work of the Devil, according to theology.

If the existence of religion proves the existence of a religious instinct, the existence of unreligion proves the contrary, and makes the pseudo argument worthless.

If religious instinct in Britain proves Christianity to be true, it proves Confucianism to be true in China, Mohammedanism to be true in Turkey, and Mormonism to be true in Utah. To make use of such an argument only shows how utterly defenceless, as a religion, Christianity is.

What is the religious instinct that theologians make so much capital of? Is it something subjective or objective? If apologists would define what they mean by the words they use, we would know how to answer them. But this they never do, and we never know for certain what they mean; and I suspect that some of them do not know themselves. If they mean by instinct a born impulse to have a God of some sort, a priest and a Church, and a system of theology, I have no hesitation in denying that man has such an impulse. A child born in Britain of a Christian family will naturally become a Christian under some name or other, not because he has a Christian instinct, but because his family and all his surroundings are Christian. A child born in a non-religious family, or a Jewish family, will not

exhibit a Christian instinct even in a Christian country. In a country without churches, priests, and religion, children would not exhibit any sign of a religious instinct.

What religious instinct there is, is an acquired one, being the fruit of heredity and environments. Hence it differs in every race and country. Had it been an original part of human nature it would have been much the same everywhere.

If the religious instinct is defined as a tendency to goodness, it may be granted, in a limited sense. It is manifest that there is in man an instinct for love, mercy, honesty, truth, and righteousness. Therefore we find that the common virtues are much the same amongst every race in every country, whilst religion is always different and antagonistic. Truth, honesty, loving-kindness, and service are never a cause of disagreement and war between nations. But religions and religious instincts always produce bad blood between nations and between members of the same community.

But there is a polarity in all things. Everything has a reverse side. So there is in the instinct for righteousness. It is true that there is a power in nature, and specially in man, working for justice and purity; but it is equally true that there is also a power working for wickedness and impurity. It is no use to ignore facts, and it is not honest to be always emphasising the good, as if it had no reverse side. Nature makes the wolf as well as the lamb, the eagle as well as the dove, the brute as well as its victim.

In man there is an instinct for goodness and wickedness. Even in the same person the two instincts are often strongly marked. Hence the great number in society who live double lives. They are good with the good and wicked with the wicked. Paul confessed that he had both instincts, and describes the conflicts between them. In some the instinct for purity is very strong and the instinct for sin very weak. Such men make saints and martyrs. In others the instinct for sin is very strong and the instinct for virtue very weak. Such men make the vicious and criminal. But the great majority seem to have both instincts almost equally balanced, and it depends much on their environment whether they are bad or good men. Environments modify and mould the character of both. There are none so good as to have no seed of sin and none so bad as to have no seed of virtue in their nature. In both cases their character depends much on their surroundings.

Heredity and environment are the root, stem, and fruit of human conduct, individually and socially. Hence it is of the utmost importance to secure for society such a social order and institutions that will enable every man to live an honest, virtuous, and a happy life.

R. J. DERFEL.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

Mr. W. T. Stead, who may be described as an enthusiast with a keen eye to advertisement and the main chance, has lived fifty-five years in the world without ever going to the theatre. He now proposes to go; and, with characteristic self-confidence, he proposes to turn dramatic critic. Of course it doesn't matter a straw to anyone but himself whether he goes or not. But a number of people have snapped at his bait, and taken the trouble to write him invited letters on the subject, which he duly publishes in the new number of the *Review of Reviews*. Mr. Benson, the actor, puts him off rather laboriously. Mrs. Benson gives him, smilingly, a slap in the face. She laughs at his starting a new rôle at his time of life. She also has a word to him on the matter of "morality." "If one wished," she says, "one could quote as much immorality in the Church as in stage life; but, I venture to state, not half the kindness, broad-mindedness, and open-hearted generosity."

That good man, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, lunching with Mr. Stead at the poor plebeian Holborn Restaurant, and un-

bending his religious genius after a City Temple sermon, was kind enough to say that there *might* be good in a theatre. Incidentally he said that "The Puritan boycott of the stage was a natural reaction against the license of the theatre." This is Mr. Campbell all over. He gets hold of the truth occasionally—at the wrong end. The real truth is that the license of the theatre was a natural reaction against the Puritan boycott. The Puritans objected to theatres altogether, and closed them while they were in power. When the theatres opened again toration comedy.

The brightest letter that Mr. Stead knows is from the pen of Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. Mr. Stead sees nothing but fun in Mr. Shaw's letter. He hasn't the brains to see the seriousness under it; indeed, Mr. Shaw himself seems to write on that assumption. He tells Mr. Stead that "whether the theatre makes for righteousness" depends upon circumstances. There are theatres that cater for drinking people, and theatres that cater for erotic people; but there are also "theatres which deal with more serious representations of life and greater achievements of literary art than any to be found in the grossly overrated bundle of Hebrew literature which you were taught to idolise to the exclusion of your natural literary birthright." This is how Freethinkers ought to talk. It is time to challenge the Christian nonsense about the supremacy of the Bible as literature. The Christian Scriptures are "grossly overrated" from that point of view, and Freethinkers should never forget to say so until the superstition of the Bible as supreme literature has gone the way of the superstition of the Bible as an inspired revelation.

Mr. Shaw goes for the Church as well as the Bible. The following passage is bold and pregnant:—

"A theatre is a potent engine for working up the passions and the imagination of mankind; and like all such engines, it is capable of the noblest recreations or the basest debauchery according to the spirit of its direction. So is a church. A church can do great things by precisely the same arts as those used in a theatre (there is no difference fundamentally, and very little even superficially); but every Church is in a state of frightful pecuniary dependence on Pharisees who use it to whitewash the most sordid commercial scoundrelism by external observances; it organises the sale of salvation at a reasonable figure to these same Pharisees by what it calls charity; it invariably provides occasion for envy and concupiscence by an open exhibition of millinery and personal adornment for both sexes; and it sometimes, under cover of the text that God is love, creates and maintains a pseudo-pious ecstatic communion compared to which the atmosphere of the theatre is prosaically chilly. That is why many people who take their children to the theatre do not send them to church."

Mr. Shaw ends with a hope—it must be a forlorn one—that Mr. Stead will "humble his bumptious spirit" and gain a sense of "the extreme perversity and wickedness" of his 'uncharitable Philistine bringing up.'

A writer in the *Sunday at Home* seems astonished at the "simplicity" of President Roosevelt's "religious life." He goes to church just like other people. Evidently the pious writer expected the President of the United States to feel himself a very great person even in the company of the President of the Universe.

There is a saying which has lost its force by being so hackneyed; nevertheless it expresses a great and important truth. That saying is this: The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. Those who do not protect their freedom lose it. This has always been true, and it always will be true. Some people fancy that in the course of time liberty will look after itself. They are mistaken. There is a usurping, aggressive tendency in human nature, and particularly amongst public officials, which is capable, if unresisted, of tyrannising up to the height of the worst despot in history. Yes, and beyond that. If you doubt it just go into a shop and spend twopenny, and then go into a post-office and buy two penny stamps; and note the difference in the way you are served. This is a slight test, but it is good as far as it goes. All you have to do is to let your imagination develop this little experience through all the grades of officialdom and "authority."

One of the things in Hamlet's category of earthly miseries is "the insolence of office." Here as elsewhere Shakespeare uses the one absolutely right and all-inclusive word. The post-office girl, in her small way, has nothing to gain by her offensiveness; she is simply insolent. That is the starting-point; all the active oppression and spoliation of the public comes afterwards. It is the first step that costs.

Mr. G. R. Sims, who so generously interested himself in the Beck case, states that positive proof, of a physical, un-

mistakable, and unalterable character, was furnished to the "authorities" that Beck was not a certain man he was sworn to be, and whose pre-conviction stood in evidence against him. Not to be too finical, the other man was a Jew and Beck was not. Yet the "authorities" took no notice. Beck was in prison and should stop there. Opening his case again meant admitting that officials could be mistaken—and that is a point that officials will never yield if they can help it.

Gentlemen have seen policemen ill-using persons they were "running in" and expostulated, and been run in themselves for "interfering with the police in the execution of their duty." Gentlemen have gone into the police-station to complain of the conduct of such policemen, and been ordered out of the place. Sometimes they have been thrown out. The official mind recognises two classes of human beings; *officials*, who can do no wrong, and *other people*, who can do very little else. And as magistrates usually regard themselves as part of the police system, there is seldom any remedy to be found in *their* courts.

The only remedy is publicity; and this the press affords—when it is not full of other "copy." Attention has just been given to the case of Mr. H. L. Wallerstein, of Woodford, who was wrongfully (and ridiculously) arrested and detained for twenty-two hours at the Caledonian-road police-station. The man wanted was 5ft. 4in., fair, and forty-five; the man arrested was 5ft. 9in., dark, and fifty-five. But that didn't matter. The police had got *somebody*, and their business was to *keep him*. Mr. Wallerstein produced twenty odd letters to prove his identity. But that didn't matter either. He proposed to telegraph, at his own expense, to persons who could say that they had known him nearly all his life. This was refused. He asked to be allowed to send a telegram to his children to allay their apprehensions. This was refused. He asked for a slight stimulant, as he was suffering from a weak heart. This was refused. Yet the Caledonian-road police-court is not in Russia. It is in the capital of the British Empire—which is always undertaking to give the rest of the world lessons in good behavior.

A week or so ago we witnessed a nice little scene at a certain seaside place. Pretty well all the amusements are, directly or indirectly, under the Corporation. The band is a fairly good one, but as for most of the other entertainments—well, when you think of the artists on the stages and the crowds around them you wonder how it ever came to be imagined that the world was created by a God of infinite wisdom. But the Corporation gets its profit, which is the main thing; and it looks upon unlicensed entertainers as a sporting squire looks upon poachers. Nevertheless a small Bohemian company does sing about the town under great difficulties. They sing well, and their songs are really good. The difference between their performance and most of the others is something like the difference between drunken helots and sober Spartans. But the police have an eye upon them, and keep them moving. On the occasion we refer to they were charming a select little crowd, and the people in the houses near by were listening with pleasure at the windows, when a limb of the law heaved in sight and declared that there was "obstruction." Good old wheeze! There was plenty of room for the traffic if there had been any. But there was none. Still, there was "obstruction." Any policeman can swear that every time he sees two people standing together—even in the middle of Trafalgar-square. So the artists had to clear off. Probably they knew what to expect if they were brought before the Corporation "beak" for *poaching*—for that was what the "obstruction" meant.

Now for the sequel. That very same road was blocked—yes, absolutely blocked—the next Sunday evening by a Salvation Army meeting and a brass band. Not only was the road blocked, but the row (for it was little else, from a musical point of view) was overpowering. Yet the limb of the law saw no "obstruction" then. Oh dear no! He knew what was allowed, and what was not. Thirty people listening to a first-rate secular song are a frightful "obstruction." Three hundred people listening to an abominably bad religious concert are no "obstruction" at all. The one chartered libertine in this country is religion. And now the King and Queen have given it their patronage the Salvation Army is likely to become unbearable.

General Booth's motor-car tour is evidently a fine bit of advertising. Ostensibly he is driving through England to get at the country people, wake them up, and save their souls. His action is deliberate, but theirs in coming to hear him is spontaneous. That is the program. But it isn't the fact. There was an "indescribable outburst" at Liskeard, but even the *Daily News* reporter let the cat out of the bag

by admitting that "the reception was an organised one." People behind the scenes know how these things are managed.

The occupants of the Press motor-car which is following General Booth on his Grand Old Showman tour through England are writing him up splendidly. When the General rides into a town or village where he is going to hold forth he shouts, "Glory be to God! Hallelujah." Of course the place wakes up, and "thus," as the *Daily Chronicle* man says, "God's perfect work gets itself done." No doubt the Almighty appreciates the compliment. But why on earth does the D. C. man drag George Meredith into his opening sentence? Moreover, as a matter of detail, not quite unimportant, there is no capital H to "house" in the line he quotes from "Juggling Jerry."

Carrie Nation, the American saloon-smasher, seized her hatchet when she read about the Subway Tavern opened by Bishop Potter at New York—which was referred to in last week's *Freethinker*. She started off from Wilmington, Delaware, with the settled intention of wrecking the Bishop's model public-house. The news of her departure soon reached the Bowery, and caused great excitement there. Bishop Potter had the Subway Tavern guarded by a strong force of police; the doors and windows being especially guarded as easy marks for Carrie's hatchet.

Rev. J. T. Waugh, pastor of the Moravian Chapel, Fetterlane, London, died in the vestry after conducting a service. The cause of death is assigned as heart failure accelerated by excessive heat. This is a sufficient explanation. But the Christians would shake their heads, in spite of the heart trouble and the heat, if a Freethought lecturer fell dead after leaving the platform, and mutter about "judgments" and "the wrath of God."

The Chancellor of the Lincoln diocese has been holding an inquiry into charges of immoral conduct brought against the Rev. Charles Aschkenasi Hunter, vicar of Carrington, Boston. It is alleged that the reverend gentleman amused himself with his handsome housekeeper too much after the fashion of David with Bathsheba. It is also alleged that he read her passages from Rabelais—selected by himself. It was also given in evidence that the reverend gentleman had invited a groom named Sargentson to take on the paternity of the handsome housekeeper's baby. A man of God named Ansell Jones stepped into the witness-box and said that he knew Parson Hunter, and was quite positive that he was not guilty of the charges. This bit of clerical logic was corrected by Chancellor Talbot, who said that he only wanted witness's knowledge of the defendant, not his judgment of the case. Finally, the Court found that the charges in the complaint against the reverend gentleman were proved. The Bishop was notified accordingly, and the reverend gentleman was ordered to pay the costs.

Dr. Ridding, who has just resigned the see of Southwell, once began a sermon by saying, "I feel a feeling that I feel you all feel." Perhaps they all felt a feeling that they felt he didn't feel.

Mr. Rider Haggard had a dream about a dog, and, as the dog died that night, he tries to make out that his dream is pregnant with metaphysical truth; indeed, he talks about the dog's soul communicating with his—forgetting that he starts with the assumption that he and the dog had souls at all. It would be more to the purpose if Mr. Haggard had kept an account of how many times he has dreamed of things that corresponded to no reality in heaven, earth, or the underworld. He would then, perhaps, see that coincidence is not causation; and feel the force of Bacon's remark that in all these fancies men count the hits and forget the misses.

Mr. Haggard appears to imagine that humane treatment of dogs depends upon the recognition of their having souls. He thinks that this makes them "our kith and kin." But he may see this kinship declared on Darwinian grounds in Mr. Foote's address to the Humanitarian League, published with other addresses in a volume entitled *The Rights of Animals*. There is no need to postpone the humane treatment of dogs until we have settled whether they have souls. The important fact is that they have feeling. It is this fact—the fact that they feel pleasure and pain—which brings them within the scope of the moral law.

There is a report in the *Edinburgh Evening News* of a sermon on "Who and What are Angels?" by the Rev. Dinsdale Young, of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Nicholson-square, Edinburgh. It is not verbatim, but we presume it is trustworthy as far as it goes. Great interest had been

aroused by this sermon, and it was delivered again by special request, after the lapse of several weeks, to "an enormous gathering of worshipers." Had the reverend gentleman been saying something useful he would probably have had a much smaller congregation; but there is always a multitude of people ready to listen to confident addresses about the unseen—and perhaps the non-existent. Mr. Young indulged in the safe assertion that there was more in the universe than could be seen or heard. Very likely. But what can he possibly know about it? Why should he describe what cannot be seen, and talk about what cannot be heard? Mr. Young also said that we were surrounded by an innumerable host of angels. It may be so, for all we know. But the curious thing is that when a man begins to see them he is pretty soon shut up in a lunatic asylum.

Mr. Young manifested quite an intimate acquaintance with angels. Listen to the following:—

"What was their occupation? According to the Bible, they operated in the physical universe. These messengers of God were commissioned to help a Christian man, even on the material side. In our business ways, commercial journeyings, and holiday wanderings the angels had charge over us. It was not chance that saved us in the railway accident or the carriage disaster, but the ministering angel."

This is very interesting. But let us see how it works out. Two persons are in a railway accident; one is killed, and the other not even injured. According to Mr. Young, the person who escapes was saved by his ministering angel. What, then, was the other person's ministering angel about to let him perish? We invite Mr. Young to explain. And if the ministering angel helps a Christian man even on the material side, say in a bargain, how is that fair to the other man he is doing business with? There may be a Christian man on both sides of the transaction. What does the ministering angel do then?

According to Mr. Young, the angels "intervene in national life." "He could not tell," he said, "how much Scotland owed to the ministry of the angels, as in olden time they worked for the benefit of the prophets of Israel." From this it appears that the Scotch are the Chosen People in succession to the Jews. Is that the reason why Hebrew dealers cannot live as far north as Aberdeen? It seems to justify Heine's witticism that the Scotchman is a Jew, born out of due season, who eats pork. On the whole, we fancy Mr. Young must be wrong.

The late Professor St. George Mivart died out of communion with the Roman Catholic Church, which had practically excommunicated him (through the late Cardinal Vaughan) in consequence of his articles on the Bible in the *Nineteenth Century*. Some previous articles in the same monthly on "Happiness in Hell" had led to his being told to hold his tongue. He submitted then, but later on he refused to. Both sets of articles are still on the "Index Librorum Prohibitorum"—the list of books which the Holy Office informs the faithful that they must not read without a special permission. Professor St. George Mivart, however, is in very good company. John Stuart Mill, Michelet, Victor Hugo, Saint-Beuve, Dumas, Balzac, Renan, Flaubert, Zola, and a host of other great writers are on the Index. And of course they are read in spite of the prohibition, for Papal thunder does no harm nowadays.

Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, the late Hugh Price Hughes's colleague, has just returned to England after an absence of twelve months. One of the first things he says here is that English drunkenness is as conspicuous as ever. "I never," he says, "saw a woman in any public-house in Canada or the States. I never saw on any table, or even in the dining cars, or in the hotels, a glass of beer, wine, or spirits. I never saw a drunken man until I reached an English port." Why send out missionaries, then, to the sober heathen? Why not keep them at home to reform the drunken Christians?

A Tunbridge Wells friend sends us a copy of the local *Courier* containing a long report of a sermon on "The Accuracy of the Old Testament" by the Rev. J. H. Townsend, vicar of St. Mark's Church. This gentleman reminds us of the American who visited Mount Ararat, and brought away a stone with him, which he afterwards displayed to his Sunday-school class, telling the boys that if they ever heard anybody doubting the story of Noah's Flood they could say that they knew it was true, for they had seen a stone that was brought from the very spot where it happened. Dr. Townsend's proofs are something like that stone. Because the Old Testament mentions places that can be found on the map, and monarchs who undoubtedly existed, he argues that it is of undeniable historicity. But this is a sad confusion. No one asserts that there is no history in the Old Testament. Sceptics only assert that the

history is mixed up with legends, and even with fiction. Suppose, for instance, it were proved that Moses was a real person, just as we know that Sinai is a real mountain; how would that prove that Moses received the ten commandments on two tables of stone from the hands of Jehovah? One part of a story may be perfectly true, and another part perfectly false. It is the business of criticism to separate these elements. Dr. Townsend argues that the true part proves the accuracy of the false part—which is absurd.

All that Dr. Townsend says about the newly-discovered Code of Hammurabi supports the Higher Critics instead of (as he thinks) overthrowing them. It is quite true that writing is much older than was once supposed, but this is not the point at issue between the Higher Critics and their adversaries. Dr. Townsend admits that Moses selected from "the old code that which was useful for his people." This is sufficient to destroy the theory of the divine origin of the Mosaic Law. But whether the selection was made by Moses, or by the priests several centuries later, is not to be determined by any considerations which Dr. Townsend advances. With or without an actual Moses, traces of the older nomadic law might well survive amidst the laws of a more settled polity. English law consists of statutes passed yesterday, statutes passed hundreds of years ago, and common law which sometimes goes back beyond the earliest statutes extant. And the same sort of thing may have occurred, and probably did occur, amongst the ancient Jews. On the whole, it seems to us that Dr. Townsend has simply read the Higher Criticism upside down, and understands neither its facts nor its conclusions. His defence of the Old Testament could be refuted in ten minutes, if he would only allow that space of time, after his sermon, to a competent critic.

Mr. Francis Gribble, writing in the *Manchester Daily Dispatch* on "Faith and Fashion: the Religion of the French," takes the opportunity to lecture the French Freethinkers on their "intolerance." "Their journalists," for instance, "have no idea of handling religious subjects delicately for fear of offending the susceptible. They handle them habitually in the spirit in which Mr. G. W. Foote handled them in the articles which, some years ago, earned him imprisonment for 'blasphemous libel.'" Mr. Gribble seems to think that there was something special about those "articles" for which Mr. Foote was prosecuted and imprisoned. But this is incorrect. Those "articles" were part of the general character of the *Freethinker*, and that character was maintained right up to the moment of Mr. Foote's incarceration and resumed the very day of his release. And the "some years ago" is an elastic phrase for twenty-one years and a half by the card. Mr. Foote's imprisonment began on March 1, 1883. That was the day on which he stepped into the prisoner's dock at the Old Bailey.

Mr. Gribble talks as though Mr. Foote were once a party to "sending reporters to churches to organise riots for the purpose of reporting them." Our own readers do not need to be told that Mr. Foote never did anything of the kind. He has always left persecution and discourtesy to the Christians.

Feeling runs higher in France than it does in England, but Mr. Gribble does not seem to understand why. He writes as though the Catholics were poor, harmless, persecuted innocents. If he consults French history—even the history of the last half century—he will perceive his mistake. The Freethinkers are merely repelling the insolent usurpations of religion, and fighting for perfect religious equality. It should also be recollected that the French are a logical people. That is why France is the seminal field of modern democracy. England, on the other hand, is the country of illogical policies and ridiculous compromises. That is why we have the present Comedy of Passive Resistance.

Mr. Gribble gives the game away at the end of his article. He tells of a Catholic old lady who went to Lourdes, and fancied she was cured of a growth on her neck, although it was not only visible still, but quite conspicuous. Mr. Gribble did not contradict her. Why should he? "In France," he says, "religion has its stronghold in the simple faith of the admirable women of that land"—including the old lady with the bad neck. "Simple faith! Admirable women!" Mr. Gribble must have written that with his tongue in his cheek.

"The only argument I know in favor of Atheism," says Mr. G. K. Chesterton in the *Daily News*, "is the fact that

no paper except the *Clarion* discusses the existence of God." We will not accuse Mr. Chesterton of falsehood. We prefer to say that his ignorance is amazing. Journalists who never heard of the *Freethinker* must have eclectic ears—or eclectic memories.

The conspiracy of silence against the *Freethinker* is quite remarkable. Mr. Blatchford himself, who impeaches Jehovah as a bloodthirsty monster, betrays no knowledge of the fact that the editor of the *Freethinker* was prosecuted for saying the very same thing, and found guilty of "blasphemy," and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment like a common criminal—twenty years ago.

Rev. Dr. Horton, of Hampstead, has appeared before the local Police Court as a Passive Resister. His business is talking, so he would harangue the bench. Amongst other foolish things he said that "the Education Act was simply and solely a deliberately planned scheme of the Church of Rome to claim the Church of England." Greater silliness was never uttered. The Church of Rome carries on its own schools; and it sides with the Church of England against the Dissenters for two very obvious reasons; first, because it believes in the State establishment of religion, and second, because it believes in dogmatic religious teaching. Dr. Horton's theory is partisan madness. The Church of England has reasons of its own for securing the control of as many State schools as possible. These reasons are precisely similar to those which actuate the Nonconformists in fighting for the same object. There is no mystery in the matter at all.

Rev. S. J. Finch, of St. Just, Cornwall, has just done six days as a Passive Resister, and is acclaimed as a mighty hero by his fellow Nonconformists. During his terrible imprisonment—at which we shudder—Mr. Finch was engaged in making mail bags. Perhaps it was the most useful work he ever did.

Mr. Le Grice, a Passive Resister at Lowestoft, told the magistrates that he "could not conscientiously pay for teaching in which he did not believe." Well now, we have a question to put to this Mr. Le Grice. Is he prepared to make Freethinkers pay for teaching in which they do not believe? This is a simple, plain question, and we invite him to give it a simple, plain answer.

The Czar has got a male baby at last. Many other fathers—of course with the aid of an equal number of mothers—have achieved that feat, but the Czar attributes his success to the special aid of the Almighty. The direct heir to the Russian throne has come along in answer to prayer. The Czar prayed for a boy, the Czarina prayed for a boy, and the nation prayed for a boy. And now the boy is here. Which shows conclusively (according to pious logic) that prayers are still answered by "the One Above."

Naturally the Czar is in a great state of jubilation. He is reported to have said that the birth of a son and heir to him was better than a great victory. We trust, however, that he was not egotistical enough to say anything of the kind. Such selfishness would be utterly unworthy of a great ruler. The life, the interests, the honor of the nation should come first. When a monarch's troops and sailors are being slaughtered and beaten by the enemy, it is hardly the time to boast and grin over his own luck.

Besides, it may happen that a prayed-for baby proves a failure. Sir Thomas More's wife prayed for many years for a boy, at last she had one, and when he grew up he was a simpleton. Whereupon her witty husband said to her, "Thou hast prayed for a boy so long, my dear, that I fear he will be a boy as long as he lives."

The Czar has already made his baby colonel of several crack regiments. What silly vanity! He has also called upon all Russian subjects to join him in praying to God for the baby's prosperity. They had better join him in asking God to let them lick the Japs.

Yarmouth race meeting last year resulted in a profit of £1,700. Of this sum £1,154 was handed over to the local hospital, and most of the balance to three churches. Some people will think this very odd. But churches never look a gift horse in the mouth. They hold that all money is money, anyhow; like the man who said that there was no bad beer, but some beer was better than others.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(Suspended during August.)

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—August 21, morning, Kingsland; afternoon, Victoria Park.
- T. V. WILLIAMS.—We have looked it through, but can see nothing worth criticising. Thanks all the same. We quite understand what orthodox darkness surrounds you at a place like Porth. No doubt you would "very much like to hear us again"—or any other Freethought lecturer, for that matter.
- S. A. SHEPHERD.—Swedenborg was a man of genius, notwithstanding his hallucinations, and of course there are good things in all his works, though they have often to be digged out from heaps of questionable matter. This applies to the *Conjugal Love*, which you inquire about. The monstrous allegorism covers some profound truths; indeed, it is curious to see the philosopher struggling with the theologian.
- T. P. (Masbro).—Spencer's *Autobiography* is published by Williams & Norgate, in two vols., at 28s. Frazer's *Golden Bough* is published by Macmillan & Co., in three vols., at 36s. The first edition was in two vols. The *Encyclopaedia Biblica* is published by Black in four vols. at various prices, the lowest being £4 4s. We cannot answer your question about cures for drunkenness. The most certain cure, we imagine, is to leave off drinking. That becomes easier, of course, if diet is attended to carefully, and fresh air and exercise are secured. We are perfectly satisfied that there is no such thing as reformation "without the victim knowing." Nothing can really be done without the victim's co-operation. The attempt to eliminate moral causes—a thing this age is too prone to—is sure to end in disaster.
- F. R. PHILLIPS.—Glad you think the Rome Congress Fund is one which "every conscientious Freethinker ought to try to make a success."
- J. L. G. MACKINNON.—Thanks for cuttings.
- ROME CONGRESS FUND.—Previously acknowledged:—£40 9s. 6d. Received this week:—F. J. Voisey 10s. 6d., F. R. Phillips 2s., W. Berry 5s., S. Berry 5s., Wm. Berry 5s., H. (Liverpool) 2s. 6d., G. Calcutt 2s. 6d., G. J. Finn £2 2s., J. Crompton £1, George Taylor £1, West Ham Branch N. S. S. 10s., F. Dean 10s., S. Dean 10s., J. Neate 5s., Mrs. Neate 5s., G. Gompertz 5s., J. R. Webley 3s., R. Robinson 2s. 6d., R. Smart 2s., A. L. 1s., B. T. 1s., F. Schaller 4s., T. Gibbon 2s., John Stewart 3s., James Stewart 2s., William Stewart 1s., David Stewart 1s., Richard Stewart 1s., R. Gibbon 3s., R. E. D. 5s., G. Goulding 1s., James Weston 10s. 6d., J. Preston 2s. 6d., Harry Walker 3s., T. M. Miller 2s., J. M. Day 2s., James Thomson 5s., Anti-Humbog 2s. 6d., W. Wilson 1s., J. F. Aust 2s. 6d., R. H. 1s., E. J. Jones 1s., W. Craine 1s., J. B. Palphreyman 1s., T. R. Thomas 2s. 6d., Jas. Matthews 1s., J. E. T. 5s.
- J. T. CAIN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Our readers do us a real service, and help to make this journal more interesting, by sending us press cuttings on which we may base paragraphs.
- G. CALCUTT.—Glad to hear that you have read the *Freethinker* for eight years, and that you think it is "better than ever." We certainly shall not go into debt over the Rome Congress, so there will be no occasion for your subscribing again on that ground.
- C. J. ATKINSON.—Please send Lecture Notices to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, and not to the Freethought Publishing Company.
- J. K. SYKES (137 London-road, Southend) writes: "I am showing *Bible Romances* in my window. I shall be proud and pleased to push it, and shall shove *Bible Heroes* when you bring it out. Do 'let 'em all come.' They'll come, these reissues of yours, as a boon and a blessing to an old fighter for facts who requires all the support he can get in this unco' religious borough."
- J. B. PALPHREYMAN.—Yes, you will have a report of the Congress.
- T. R. THOMAS wishes "the champions of Freethought" who are going to Rome "a good time."
- J. PARTRIDGE.—Shall have attention. Will do a paragraph on balance-sheet next week. Too late now. Glad to hear you think "the *Freethinker* is A 1."
- JAMES THOMSON.—Yes, our health is steadily improving.
- ANTI-HUMBUG.—Of course there are enough Freethinkers in London to provide what is needed for the Rome Congress Fund, but there is no reason why the provincial Freethinkers should not contribute too. The representation will be national.
- W. H. MORRISH.—We reciprocate the cordiality of your letter. You may rely on reading a tolerable report of the Rome Congress in our columns. We should have been glad of your company.
- G. WEIR.—Too much matter in hand already for present issue.
- F. J. VOISEY.—Sorry your engagements will not allow of your going to Rome.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- A. J. FINCKEN.—Certainly (as you say) if hundreds of people are going from Barcelona, in priest-ridden Spain, to the Rome Congress, there ought to be a strong contingent from "free" England.
- G. GOULDING.—Thanks for your good wishes. We hope you will read this journal for many years to come. See "Acid Drops."

JAMES WESTON, the Sheffield veteran, sending his "mite" for the Rome Congress Fund, wishes us and our colleagues all success in fighting "that frightful monster superstition."

J. PRFSTON.—If all sent what they could easily afford there would be plenty for this and other efforts.

HARRY WALKER.—We quite believe we shall get "all the money asked for" for the Rome Congress Delegation. Subscribers don't generally hurry, but we like to keep them from going asleep.

C. S.—For the purpose you have in view an interleaved Bible would be the best thing. We dare say they are still obtainable. You might place an order for one in the hands of Miss Vance at our publishing office. Pleased to know that you find articles in the *Freethinker* to be "often of the greatest interest."

J. M. DAY.—Pleased to hear that the longer you live the more you recognise the evils of superstition. Of course we shall be happy to meet you when we visit South Wales again. Thanks for the personal part of your letter. We like the appreciation of those who are really *working*, not *gassing*, for the people.

W. H. DOWLING.—Much pleased to hear from you as a convert from Christianity to Freethought through the Foote-and-Logan debate. We shall write you by post concerning the contents of your letter.

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.

The Rome Congress.

THE arrangements for a special N. S. S. party of visitors to the Rome Congress have been hindered by so many friends being uncertain as yet whether they can go or not. Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary, is in communication with M. Furnémont, secretary of the International Freethought Federation at Brussels, and also with the English friends who have definitely decided to go, with a view to joining the special Paris express which has been chartered to take the French Freethinkers to the Congress. The Paris express starts from the Gare de Lyon at 2 p.m. on Sunday, September 18, and is timed to arrive at Rome at midnight on Monday; stopping at Dijon for dinner, Turin for breakfast, Genoa for lunch, and Pisa for dinner. During the stay at Rome—from September 20 to 23 inclusive—the ticket-holders will board at the best second-class hotels, with three meals per day, light, service, and carriage between the station and hotel. The return journey will start on Saturday, and English visitors should reach London on Monday morning. The cost inclusive from Paris to Rome and back will be £13 first-class and £10 second-class. To this must be added about £3 for the extra travelling between London and Paris and Paris and London.

Those who desire to visit some of the Italian towns will have the benefit of *optional return*. Travellers not returning by the special train will be reimbursed the amount of the coupon from Rome to the Italian frontier—also the cost of meals on the return journey.

It would undoubtedly be pleasant for the N. S. S. contingent to join the French contingent at Paris and travel on with them to Rome. Acquaintances might be struck up in the train which might prove both agreeable and serviceable afterwards.

Unfortunately, if this arrangement is brought off—and this cannot be known for certain until after

the present number of the *Freethinker* goes to press—it will leave out in the cold those who are still undecided. But it is impossible to do everything for everybody in such circumstances.

If this arrangement should not be brought off, there will be time to ventilate the alternative course in next week's *Freethinker*. A circular will also be posted to all who have been in communication with headquarters on the subject.

With regard to the Rome Congress Fund, there is a longer list of subscriptions acknowledged this week, which shows that the party are waking up at last, on the principle of better late than never. Of course it is not exactly late yet. There is still ample time to make up the £100 asked for. No doubt a good list of further subscriptions will be acknowledged next week. One would like to see the whole deficit made up by then, though that is perhaps too much to expect considering that the holiday season is still "going strong."

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

London Freethinkers are requested to note that the Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged by the Secular Society, Limited, for all the Sunday evenings in October, when lectures will be delivered by Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd. Any "saints" who can display a window bill, or a handbill, advertising these lectures, should apply for same to the secretary, Miss Vance, at Newcastle-street, E.C.

We call attention once more to the Freethought lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, which will be delivered at the Stratford Town Hall on the first and second Sunday evenings in September. Mr. Foote will not be free for lecturing until the second of these two dates; he will therefore take that one, leaving Mr. Cohen, who is free, to open the ball. These lectures will be well advertised, as before, and there will doubtless be grand audiences again. Local "saints" who can personally assist in the advertising are invited to communicate with Miss Vance.

Freethinkers are asked to do their best towards putting in circulation that wonderful sixpennyworth, the Popular Edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*. This volume should circulate by the thousand. Besides being written in an entertaining style, so that the reader can hardly lay it down if he once gets fairly into it, the book contains a vast quantity of very useful information, and a great deal of serious Biblical criticism underneath the gaiety. This edition has been revised and enlarged, the references have been overhauled, and the author has added a Postscript showing that he was long ago in the field and is "not catering for a demand created by others, or seeking to exploit a recent controversy." We venture to say that *Bible Romances* is a unique work. It has made many Freethinkers in the past, and we believe it is destined to make many more in the future.

M. Waldeck-Rousseau was always understood to be a Freethinker. He inaugurated the war against the political Catholic Church which M. Combes is carrying on to the bitter end. But when he was dying his wife fetched in a priest, who was too late, however, to administer the last rites of the Church. But the lady insisted on having a religious funeral, and declined the public funeral offered by the French government. Nevertheless a number of distinguished Freethinkers went to the Church of Sainte Clotilde in order to pay a last mark of respect to the dead statesman. They included M. Combes, the Premier; M. Henri Brisson, President of the Chamber of Deputies; General André, Minister of War; and M. Camille Pelletan. We note this fact for the sake of those who are so fond of talking about the "intolerance" of French Freethinkers.

The *Leeds Mercury* prints a letter in its Correspondence column from "J. T.," who quotes a verse from a poem entitled "The Goodness of God," and then describes some sufferings he has witnessed amongst poor old people, and ends by declaring that he believes with the Rev. Rhondda Williams that "God does not interfere with the things of this world."

The *Searchlight* (Waco, Texas), edited by Mr. J. D. Shaw, who is also the proprietor (heaven save the mark!), replies to a correspondent that he cannot accept the proposal to raise a fund to send him to the St. Louis Exhibition. He points out that those who have anything to give should subscribe to his Emergency Fund. "Such a journal as this," he says, "cannot be maintained from its own earnings. No such a one now in existence is so maintained or ever was at any time in its career. What it has had to experience is the common fate of all publications devoted especially to the advocacy of any kind of reform. I do not feel that I make myself a beggar by insisting upon the aid to our Emergency Fund by those who are truly Liberal in mind and spirit, and who desire that such a journal should be published." Mr. Shaw adds that the maintenance of his paper is "becoming painfully burdensome" to him, and pathetically refers to the inevitable disabilities of advancing age. We earnestly hope that the friends of the *Searchlight* (and it ought to have a great many) will rally to its support, and put a little more brightness of encouragement into Editor Shaw's life.

By the way, the *Searchlight* does us the honor of quoting a passage from our own columns as containing the true moral of such calamities as the Iroquois Theatre fire and the burning of the *General Slocum*.

The New York *Truthseeker* still flourishes, and may it long continue to do so. It is conducted with ability and vigor, and deserves a wide circulation. It ought to be more readable than ever, having just absorbed the *Boston Investigator*, and the best writers on that paper will henceforth contribute to the *Truthseeker*. So far so good. Still, we are sorry that the *Boston Investigator* has had to go under—for that is what it means. We did not expect to hear of the demise of the oldest Freethought paper in America. Mr. Washburn appears not only to have edited it, but to have sustained it too; and working for nothing, and paying for the luxury, proved in the end more than he could afford. He asked for financial aid, and should have received it, but it was yielded too sparingly. Freethinkers are apt to forget that Freethought papers cannot be conducted on a merely commercial basis. There is bound to be a loss upon them. When they *pay* they begin to be less requisite. Ordinary papers offer the public what they *want*; Freethought papers offer the public what they *do not want*. It is the difference between caterers and apostles.

Mr. L. K. Washburn sends us the last number of the *Boston Investigator*, which has a pathetic interest. We shall keep it by us on that account. He explains that he has been running the paper for over a year at a loss, and the appeal he made for funds was not adequately responded to; so he took the opinion of "several of the oldest friends of the paper," and the result is that "the *Boston Investigator* goes out of existence." After referring to the handsome manner in which the New York *Truthseeker* has arranged to "fill our unexpired subscriptions and in every way treat our subscribers as we would have done," Mr. Washburn no less handsomely expresses a hope that "they will all like their new paper better than the old one and support it as long as they live." Thus dies the oldest Freethought paper in the world—seventy-three years of age. We regret it deeply, and we tender our sympathy to Mr. Washburn, whose only fault was that he could not work miracles. At the same time we note that other Freethought organs are springing up; and perhaps death and life are here, as elsewhere, only different aspects of a constant evolution.

Mr. W. A. Vaughan asks us to announce that "a social" is held at 34 Cornford-grove, Byrne-road, Bedford-hill, Balham, S.W., every Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock, and Freethinkers, both ladies and gentlemen, together with a friend or friends, will be welcomed.

Local "saints" are desired to note that Freethought meetings take place this afternoon and evening (August 21) at Seamodden, near Non't Sarah's Hotel. Time 3 and 6.30; speakers Mr. C. J. Atkinson and Mr. George Whitehead. We understand that this is a resort for Oldham, Rochdale, Halifax, and Brighouse folk. A party will go over from Huddersfield by the 1.30 car for Outlaine.

The Humanitarian League's prize for the best essay on "The Eton College Hare-Hunt" has been won by Mr. Philip Dickerson, of 323 Camberwell New-road, London. The second and third prizes were won by two ladies: Miss Beatrice Kidd, of 31 Talbot-road, Wrexham, and Miss E. Crickmay, of 6 St. James's-park, Croydon. These will be published by the League, and it is hoped that some of the others will find their way into print.

Mere Beliefs.

BY DR. J. E. ROBERTS,

Minister of the Church of this World, Kansas City, Mo.

ACCORDING to the old teachings, man's righteousness, at best, is as filthy rags. Character counts for nothing; morality is a useless thing. If a man is not a believer, he cannot be good enough to be saved; if he is a believer, he cannot be bad enough to be lost. The pulpit speaks in a deprecating sense of "mere morality." "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Those are the alternatives. It is not intelligence, it is not knowledge, it is not doing good to others, or heroism, or helpfulness, it is not the heart of sympathy, or the love of one's fellow man, or the life of unselfishness—all of those things are of no avail; it is "mere belief" that saves.

Any belief accepted without sufficient evidence results in mental degradation. When reason abdicates, morality declines. One of the best known facts in history is that faith and immorality flourished together. When religion was supreme, when the church controlled every sceptre and every throne in Europe, when she policed every province and kept every kingdom under her resistless sway, morals reached the lowest ebb in history. Everybody believed; nobody thought; no one dared to investigate; no one dared to speak his honest thought. Free opinion was a capital crime. In those ages there were persecution, crime, and oppression of every kind. The ages of faith are the ages of darkness. Progress is born of doubt. It is carried on by intelligence. Reason is the torch that lights the path. If it had not been for courageous men who defied the authority that fixed belief, we should be living now in huts, on dirt floors; we should be beating drums to keep away disease; we should be looking upon pain as one of the providences of God, and holding strenuously that to administer any drug or opiate to assuage or relieve pain was an impious interference with the order of the divine government. It is only through intelligence that the change has taken place. Every step of progress, every point of advantage reached and held has been secured by the men that doubted, that investigated, that compared. The progress of the world is in no degree indebted to faith or religion. It is the ceaseless, insatiate, aggressive, ambitious work of the brain that has filled the world with light, and insisted upon justice between men.

Beliefs, for the most part, are acquired by accident; they come from environment; they are often the result of inheritance or training, things for which the individual is rarely responsible. To think, to have an opinion, to acquire intellectual individuality, is the happy lot of but few. For hundreds of years in all matters of religion it has been taught and held necessary simply to accept what has come to us, to believe and be saved. Sometimes a belief is adopted through fear. There are thousands of people who think they will be lost if they do not hold certain opinions, and they come, through certain strange mental repressions, to believe, or think they believe, certain things, just as a matter of safety. That is intellectual suicide. The brain has abdicated. There can be no great morality without intellectual honesty. A man is not saved in the best sense unless he is all saved. Man must be regarded in his integrity, in his entirety. His moral life cannot be dissociated nor severed from his intellectual life. The root, the foundation, the beginning of all morality is to be honest with one's own thought. That statement in the sacred Scriptures, "He that believeth not shall be damned," is an insult to every intelligence. It is the argument of the club; it is the logic of the torture chamber. If the revisers have performed any service of worth for the Christian world it is this, that they put brackets around that last part of the final chapter of Mark, in which that statement occurs, to indicate that it is not authoritative.

One of the strange things is that the church for hundreds of years has used that interpolated passage, that insult to intelligence, that menace to mental honesty, as a rallying cry. A man cannot choose what he believes. Belief is in no sense a matter of choice. He must believe what he must. The honest man knows that if eternal ruin depended upon his belief in the doctrine of the trinity, he would have no choice in the matter; he would be compelled to go straightforward, denying that doctrine, straightforward to eternal ruin. The great wrong religion has committed against the world is its degradation of the human reason. To make belief selfish, to pronounce a reward upon the acceptance of an intellectual proposition was to snatch from reason's brow the crown, and put a premium upon hypocrisy and falsehood. The austerity of nature is seen in this, that whenever men have invented beliefs, when they have chosen dogmas without intellectual conviction or sufficient evidence, or clear reason, or logical thinking, they have invariably chosen bad ones. Out of all the past there has come to us no great or worthy doctrine concerning God or man or human destiny. Nature has taken her revenge upon people who have played fast and loose with her sanctities. When men have put chains about their brain, or blindfolded their eyes, and chosen wilfully or at random, they have invariably chosen badly.

There is a moral responsibility about having an opinion. We cannot play fast and loose with the mind. A man has no right to be a believer or a doubter without sufficient reason; he has no right to accept a doctrine in the interest of his soul's salvation, nor to reject one in any other interest. The rational mind has nothing to do with what is true; he is not responsible for that; he is simply responsible for being loyal to the light that shines for him; he is only responsible for his own mental manhood. It is utter foolishness to say there is a certain amount of truth that a man must believe. There are a great many things that he cannot believe that are true; there are a great many errors that he must believe because he is yet in his childhood. We should get away from the idea that there is any compulsion upon belief. It is not the acquisition of truth as acquired; it is the process of acquiring; it is to remain a learner. There is a certain calm and serene attitude that may be held towards the universe of truth. It is like this: One does not care what is true; he only cares to know that a thing that is true is true; it should make no difference to us in the world whether the orthodox dogmas are absolutely true or absolutely false; our one and only concern is, if they are true, to see them as true, and if they are false, to see them as false. This attitude toward the world of truth keeps a man always a learner. The other way of looking at truth—the way that says you must believe it or be damned—makes a man intolerant, puts into his heart the spirit of persecution, hatred, and revenge.

Macaulay recites the incident of a boy hanged in Edinburgh two hundred years ago for having uttered free opinions about the Trinity and some books of the Bible. After he was convicted he recanted and pled for a little respite in order that he might make his peace with God. This the Privy Council refused unless the clergy of Edinburgh would request a delay. They not only did not request it, but insisted that the execution should take place at once. The instance of another lad is given, who, once when he was cold, said that he wished he was in hell, so that he could warm his feet. That was construed as blasphemy, and he was hanged. His mother came to the execution, and after the boy was dead pled for the possession of his body. This was refused. He was buried by the roadside, and a heap of stones placed above his grave. Unnumbered thousands of men have been persecuted, or tortured, or put to death because they could not and did not believe—put to death by the believers.

Whenever an external authority is set up for truth the spirit of persecution is instilled into the heart of

the man that accepts it. The orthodox have put to death countless thousands of Freethinkers; a Freethinker never yet attempted to persecute any other man for difference of opinion. No man can respect the opinion of another unless he is responsible for his own opinion, unless he has thought it out, and asks no guaranty, no voucher for it except that of his own reason. That man, whatever his creed or philosophy or belief, is tolerant and kind. He knows how difficult is the work of reaching a conclusion, how his own opinion at different times has changed; he knows how a different conclusion is necessitated by a difference in the view point, and he knows that while mind is various conclusions must differ. But the man who has an external authority, be it Bible or Church or creed or confession of Faith, cannot see how any man can differ from him without being worthy of being damned. It is a solemn thing to be responsible for one's own opinion. The humiliation and shame of being all one's life the instrument of a falsehood is exceeding great. What pleasure, what pride, what satisfaction can a man have if his opinions are right if they have been given to him by the priest, or the Church, or any authority beside his own mind? How little deserving of salvation is the soul that thrusts in its fear and agony of apprehension the crown from reason's brow and grovels in the dust in order that it may be saved? Is it conceivable that if God is good and wise and sane, he can damn a man for differing in opinion from him? Does he not know that in this illimitable mystery we call the universe we do our best and yet make mistakes? Can a father throw out his child because of his ignorance? He sends him to school, he endeavors to develop his mind, he gives him books, he converses with him, he seeks to help him form right conclusions. Should not the Infinite Father do as well for his children?

There is the Book, they tell us. He has given us the great revelation; but we can't understand that, and those who believe it cannot agree about it. A few days ago I had the pleasure of meeting a man with whom I had been at school a score of years ago. We fell to talking about the Christian religion and the Christian system, and whenever anything was said that was detrimental to Christianity this old friend of mine would say: "Oh, that was the Catholic Church, or that was the Presbyterian Church, or that was done by the Methodists, or the Episcopalians." The only exact, the only enduring, the only faultless interpreter of the Christian system was the Baptist Church, to which my friend belonged. It is exactly like a meeting in which the members of the church were to talk about some subject that was given to them the preceding week. On one occasion the subject was the Apostle Paul. The first man to speak said, in personal appearance, the Apostle Paul was about six feet high, had light colored hair with blue eyes, a florid expression, and a sanguine temperament. The man had simply described himself. The second man said that, according as he read the Bible, St. Paul was of slight stature, about five feet four inches high, had dark flowing hair, slightly curled at the ends, deep piercing black eyes, and was of a bilious temperament. This man had given an exact description of himself. The third man to speak said that as he read the Bible—he could not find out—much about—the personal appearance—of the Apostle Paul—but—he was—certain about one thing—he had an—impediment in his speech.

Why is it that the world has not advanced in spiritual knowledge? Why is it that we do not know one thing more about God now than they knew 1800 years ago? Why is it that we are still guessing about the existence of the soul and about immortality and the life beyond? Why is it that the Church after 1800 years has not shed a little light in the darkness called life? It is because the believers are not on the way to find out anything. They have fixed a belief and have persecuted for it; they have not developed a life. I am one of those who believe that we shall yet find out things. I

think that if there is a God, we shall some time know it for a certainty. It may be a great many thousand years in the future, but if mind is capable of indefinite expansion, some time it may learn of an Infinite Enfolded Intelligence. If there is a soul, some time it may be able to recognise itself. How little we see! A human face. We know a footstep, we recognise a voice, we are thrilled by the pressure of a hand. Where is the soul that we know it not, nor hear, nor feel, nor see it? The progress has not been along those lines of discernment. It has been satisfied with a mechanical creed, an external belief. I am of those who believe in the great mystery, the great beauty, the great sacredness of human life and the world. I think the time will come, if we are honest and true, if we confess our doubts rather than our sins, if we acknowledge our limitations and our imperfections rather than, like paupers, seek to robe ourselves in righteousness purchased by another and unearned by us—I am of those who believe that the time will come when this common world of ours will thrill with the mystery that shall gradually unfold itself to us.

A Note on Thomas Manning, the Friend of Charles Lamb.

THOUGH he is now only remembered as the friend of Lamb, and the person to whom Elia wrote some of the best and most interesting of his letters, Thomas Manning was really a very remarkable and highly-gifted man. Lamb said of him that he was the most wonderful man he had ever known, and considering that Coleridge, Wordsworth, and many other distinguished persons were amongst his friends and acquaintances, this was high praise indeed. But Lamb was not the only person on whom Manning made a similar impression. He must have been a person of singularly engaging manners, and wherever he went he seems to have been able to make himself liked, and even loved. He was particularly susceptible to the charms of the female sex, and they, on their side, were always attracted towards him.

Manning was the son of a clergyman, but this fact did not prevent him from entertaining the most heterodox opinions on religious subjects. He was, in fact, an Atheist, and became so in early life, whilst yet a student at the University of Cambridge. He left the University without taking a degree, because he would not take the various oaths and tests which were then necessary in order to attain University honors.

Manning's papers, or at least what remains of them, are now in my possession. Amongst them are many letters to his father, who, though he was, as I have said, a clergyman, must have been a very liberal-minded one. Father and son were always on the best of terms, as the letters of the latter to his father clearly show. In 1802 Thomas Manning was in Paris for the sake of pursuing his studies in Oriental literature, previous to going out to China. In one of his letters from Paris addressed to his father he records the fact that he had met Thomas Paine. The passage is, I think, interesting enough to be quoted in full:—

"The only great man I have seen in private—at least, that I consider as at all great—is TOM PAINE. Him I consider as by no means occupying so high a situation in the Temple of Fame as he deserves and will, I think, attain. I only saw him for about ten minutes at Mr. Holcroft's, and had no opportunity of hearing his conversation, which I understand from Mrs. H. is impregnated with the same masculine sense that so eminently distinguishes his writings. It was towards evening, and I could scarcely distinguish his face. His manner and appearance is that of a gentleman of the old school, which I did not expect. As he only called *en passant* I was not introduced to him."

The Mr. Holcroft mentioned above was Thomas

Holcroft, the dramatist and autobiographer, who was also an Atheist and an intimate friend of Charles Lamb. In his Letter to Robert Southey, Lamb characterises Holcroft as one who, although an Atheist, was one of the honestest and most conscientious men he had ever known.

B. DOBELL.

The Pagan.

MAIDENS' lips all glowing,
Ruby wine light flowing—
These were mine, and for my task
Nothing more 'twas mine to ask;
Now a little leap
Into the darkness whence I sprang;
A last farewell to those who sang;
Then to fall asleep.

I ask no priest to seal my lips,
Nor prayer to mar my going;
As the final moment slips,
Nothing I am owing.
Life was good and Love was fair:
Earth, sea, sky, and ambient air—
Farewell! I am going—*there*,
In the current's flowing.

Shall the stars the brighter be
If he who loved them weepeth?
Shall the earth the lighter be
When he who trod it sleepeth?
Not my going forth is vain,
Nor was my coming hither;
Not vainly I expended pain,
Asking *whence* and *whither*.

Lived I well my round of days,
Felt the sunlight gleaming.
Wandered in the misty haze,
Now and then, a-dreaming.
Sang my song and drained my glass
Over many lands did pass;
Leaving earth I know no fear,
Feel no bridge 'twixt *there* and *here*.

Twilight falls upon the earth,
Night is calm, night is deep.
Just a path to death from birth,
Then a sleep, then a sleep.
With a laugh I turn to go—
Where the silent waters flow—
Where the stars are all aglow.....
Can I weep? Can I weep?

Maidens' lips all glowing red,
Golden days of youth—
Thro' a silver path proud led,—
The good green earth with white sap fed,
Autumn woods with brown cones spread,
Green sea, with foam-encrested head,
A darkened sky the pale stars thread,—
Thus arrayed is Truth.

Sun and stars and gentle moon,
Unto ye a long farewell;
Trackless paths shall make my shoon
'Twixt heaven's lonely road and hell.
With laughing lips in summer days
Pæans in the green earth's praise
Sang I joyous, drained my glass,
Laughed farewell. And now I pass.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

No Former Life, No Future Life.

THE present life implies, to you and me,
A life that *was*, if, one that *is to be*.
If life to-day means future life in store,
We live to-day because we lived before;
And lived before because of prior span;
Our life is, therefore, one that *ne'er began*.

Now, if I lived before, I know it not;
I know I recollect no former lot;
But, *self is memory*; so, therefore, *I*
An unremembered-life, perforce, deny.

If former life I had, and *know it not*,
My *present* by my *next* may be *forgot*;
If so, *identity* destroyed would be,
And I would not be *I*, nor we be *we*;
A *future* life would, thus, be kept in store
For folk who'd really *never lived before*.

Let all, then, make the best of life,
And evermore despise
The pleasures of religious strife,
And venal parsons' lies.

Let all our thoughts be fixed on earth,
Nor dream of life hereafter,
Then tears will dwindle into dearth,
While sadness blossoms into mirth,
And sorrow into laughter.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Fool Friends.

NOTHING hurts a man, nothing hurts a party so terribly as fool friends.

A fool friend is the sewer of bad news, of slander, and all base and unpleasant things.

A fool friend always knows every mean thing that has been said against you and against the party.

He always knows where your party is losing, and the other is making large gains.

He always tells you of the good luck your enemy has had.

He implicitly believes every story against you, and kindly suspects your defence.

A fool friend is always full of a kind of stupid candor.

He is so candid that he always believes the statement of an enemy.

He never suspects anything on your side.

Nothing pleases him like being shocked by horrible news concerning some good man.

He never denies a lie unless it is in your favor.

He is always finding fault with his party, and is continually begging pardon for not belonging to the other side.

He is frightfully anxious that all his candidates should stand well with the opposition.

He is forever seeing the faults of his party and the virtues of the other.

He generally shows his candor by scratching the ticket.

He always searches every nook and corner of his conscience to find a reason for deserting a friend or a principle.

In the moment of victory he is magnanimously on your side.

In defeat he consoles you by repeating prophecies made after the event.

The fool friend regards your reputation as common prey for all the vultures, hyenas, and jackals.

He takes a sad pleasure in your misfortunes.

He forgets his principles to gratify your enemies.

He forgives your maligner, and slanders you with all his heart.

He is so friendly that you cannot kick him.

He generally talks for you but always bets the other way.

—Ingersoll.

LIBERTY.

The human race cannot afford to exchange its liberty for any possible comfort. You remember the old fable of the dog that met the lean wolf in the forest. The wolf, astonished to see so prosperous an animal, inquired of the dog where he got his food, and the dog told him that there was a man who took care of him, gave him his breakfast, his dinner, and his supper with the utmost regularity, and that he had all that he could eat and very little to do. The wolf said, "Do you think this man would treat me as he does you?" The dog replied, "Yes, come along with me." So they jogged on together toward the dog's home. On the way the wolf happened to notice that some hair was worn off the dog's neck, and he said, "How did the hair become worn?" "That is," said the dog, "the mark of my collar—my master ties me at night." "Oh," said the wolf, "Are you chained? Are you deprived of your liberty? I believe I will go back. I prefer hunger."—Ingersoll.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.**OUTDOOR.**

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, R. P. Edwards; Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6.30, R. P. Edwards.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Stratford-grove): 7, P. R. Edwards.

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.: Sunday, Ramble, Bourneville; meet, John Bright and Hill street, 3. Thursday, August 25, Bull Ring Coffee House: 8. C. Mason, "The Tides."

HUDDERSFIELD (Market Cross): Saturday, at 8, G. Whitehead and C. J. Atkinson.

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Armley Park): 11, G. Weir, "Christianity and Slavery"; Crossflats Park, 7, "Bible Animals."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Islington-square, H. Percy Ward, 3, "Christian Missions in Heathen Japan"; 7, "Lying for the Glory of God." Monday, 8, Birkenhead (Haymarket); Tuesday, 8, Edgehill Church.

SEAMODDEN (near Non't Sarah's Hotel): 3 and 6.30, C. J. Atkinson and G. Whitehead.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7.30, Business Meeting—Lecture arrangements.

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