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The subtilty of nature is far beyond that of sense or of the understanding; so that the specious meditations, speculations, and theories of mankind are but a kind of insanity, only there is no one to stand by and observe it.—
BACON.

Some Defenders of the Faith.—IX.

A UNITARIAN COUNTERBLAST.—IV.

XII.

WE will now deal with Mr. Warschauer's chapters on Christ and Christianity. It is rather trying to one's patience to follow him, but there are all sorts of unpleasant things to be done in this world in the way of duty.

Mr. Warschauer opens with a monstrous misrepresentation of the late Mr. Grant Allen; a misrepresentation that might easily be corrected by a schoolboy, and which is, in all probability, rather stupid than dishonest, as the means of correcting it are so plainly disclosed.

Mr. Allen is quoted as saying that "if we know anything at all with approach to certainty" about Jesus, it is "at least that he was a man of the people, hung on a cross in Jerusalem under the procuratorship of Caius Pontius Pilatus." It is then admitted that "later on Mr. Grant Allen does not insist dogmatically upon the historical existence of a personal Jesus." But this is treated as a downright absurdity, inasmuch as the historical existence of a personal Jesus is "just what he has affirmed in the most emphatic language."

Really a man who can write in this way should take lessons in elementary logic before presuming to address the public again. Mr. Warschauer passes over Mr. Allen's "if" as a little word of no importance. But it is a word of great importance; it guards Mr. Allen from affirming anything on his own account concerning Jesus. All he says is that *if* we know *anything* we know *this*. But he does not say that we *do* know anything. The subjunctive mood renders the whole sentence hypothetical.

It is just as well to see what Mr. Allen does say on this point; for it is never safe to trust a Christian controversialist in such matters. In the eighteenth chapter of his *Evolution of the Idea of God* (we quote from the complete edition, published by Grant Richards), he allows that "it is quite possible, or even probable, that there really did live in Galilee, at some time about the beginning of our accepted era, a teacher and reformer bearing the Semitic name which is finally Hellenised and Latinised for us as Jesus." And "if so"—that is, if such a person existed at all—it "seems not unlikely that this unknown person was crucified (or rather hung on a post) by the Romans at Jerusalem." This is one alternative. But the other is spoken of rather more decisively. "In spite of certain remarks in my first chapter"—the remarks which Mr. Warschauer twists by disregarding the "if"—Mr. Allen goes on to express what looks more like his own opinion:—

"Of the Christ himself, if Christ there were, we know little or nothing. The account of his life which has come down to us in the Gospels is so devoid of authority, and so entirely built up of miraculous fragments, derived from elsewhere, that we may well be excused for gravely doubting whether he is not rather to be num-

bered with St. George and St. Catherine, with Perseus and Arthur, among the wholly mythical and imaginary figures of legend and religion."

After reading that passage a child may form a satisfactory judgment of Mr. Warschauer's attempt to make Mr. Grant Allen "affirm in the most emphatic language" the "historical existence of a personal Jesus."

Mr. Warschauer is no better in dealing with Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs*. Instead of criticising the book himself—and perhaps he is incapable of doing so—he quotes a hostile opinion of it by "a competent theologian." And who is this competent theologian? Why, the very Professor Estlin Carpenter who wrote the Introduction to Mr. Warschauer's own volume! And that one hostile opinion is supposed to settle all Mr. Robertson's facts and all Mr. Robertson's arguments. Which is simply the insolent madness, or the mad insolence, of orthodox criticism.

XIII.

"Most people," Mr. Warschauer says, "will be satisfied with the evidence of certain letters written within a generation of the Crucifixion by a younger contemporary of Jesus, one Paul of Tarsus." After which statement he asks Mr. Blatchford, who says that "many critics and scholars" deny the existence of Paul, to "produce one such of first-rate standing." But is not this a very transparent trick? Supposing that Mr. Blatchford were to produce one, Mr. Warschauer would at once say that he was *not* of "first-rate standing." And so the substantial controversy would give place to a bandying of personal opinions.

It is very probable that "most people" will be as easily satisfied as Mr. Warschauer imagines. Most people are Christians, and are easily satisfied of the truth of what they have been taught to believe. But those who happen to be of an inquisitive turn of mind might inquire why all this stress is laid upon the letters of Paul. They might also inquire which *are* the letters of Paul?

It is perfectly clear that Paul never saw Jesus "in the flesh," that he persecuted those who promulgated the Jesus story as rank and wicked impostors, and that his conversion to their cause was not wrought by a fresh study of the evidences, but by a miracle or a sunstroke—which are both outside the range of ordinary reasoning. Now if Paul had no personal knowledge of Jesus, and was converted to the cause of Jesus in this way, what was his testimony worth, according to the common rules of evidence that obtain in a court of justice and in a legal examination?

Mr. Warschauer does not deal with this point. He blandly declares that "the testimony of St. Paul is irrefragable," as though dogmatic assertions could make it so

XIV.

Mr. Warschauer says of the Gospels that if we "do not possess a guaranteed perfect text" of them, this circumstance is common to "all works that have come down to us from antiquity." But how does that tend to show that the Gospels are not human productions?

His next statement is that "in the opinion of the best authorities the first three Gospels—our chief historical sources—existed in the first century in substantially the shape in which they are known

to us." But where shall we find a recognised list of the "best authorities," and how much variation leaves a thing "substantially" the same? Is it not perfectly plain that such expressions only beg the question at issue?

We wish to refer Mr. Warschauer to Matthew Arnold. That great critic—who boldly and brilliantly attempted an impossible task, namely, the rehabilitation of the Christian Scriptures—had no "hesitation" in asserting the very opposite of Mr. Warschauer's declaration. He affirmed that whatever were the faults of *Supernatural Religion* its author had triumphantly proved that the Christian fathers, up to the year 170, never quoted "even two or three verses" exactly as they stand in our four Gospels; and that the only possible conclusion was, not merely that there was no Gospel-Canon, but that the Gospels themselves did not exist "as they now finally stand at all, before the last quarter of the second century." What the Gospels, if they existed in any form, were really like at the end of the first century, nobody knows, and probably nobody will ever know. And this is entirely due to the negligence or deliberate policy of the Christians themselves. Indeed, it is very curious that the earliest existing manuscripts of the New Testament belong to the second half of the fourth century; that is, after Constantine had made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire, and after the Christian Church was able to do whatever it pleased in the way of suppression and retention.

XV.

With regard to Jesus Christ himself, supposing he ever existed, it is perfectly idle to quote John Stuart Mill's hysterical panegyric, and perfectly dishonest, in quoting it, to print all the pronouns relating to Jesus Christ with capital letters. What this writer or that writer thought of Jesus Christ may be very interesting, to those who care for such things; but it does not settle a controversy, neither does it relieve self-respecting persons from the obligation of forming their own judgment. At bottom, indeed, nothing can well be more ridiculous than this parade of personal opinions. Mr. Warschauer may quote Mill's opinion of Jesus Christ's "sublime genius," and we may quote Comte's opinion of him as a "charlatan"—and where are we then?

Nor do sneers at Mr. Blatchford's "critical ineptitude" strengthen the argument for Jesus Christ's originality. Mr. Warschauer denies that there is nothing new in the Sermon on the Mount. He affirms that its teachings are "not in a single instance traceable to the Old Testament." This may be true verbally, but it is not true substantially. Jesus said "Blessed are the merciful," for instance, and the later Hebrew prophets had much to say about "mercy." One of them included "to love mercy" in his brief list of the things that God required. And to add to it that the merciful should "obtain mercy" was not an elevation, but a degradation, of the sentiment. Besides, there are religious and ethical sources outside the New Testament. There is the Jewish teaching, such as that of the great Hillel, current before Jesus began his ministry; there are also the Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, Hindu, and Greek and Roman philosophies. Mr. Warschauer ought to know that every text of the Sermon on the Mount can be paralleled from these various sources. And anyone who will read the Sermon on the Mount with the naked eye of common sense may easily see that it is not a sermon at all, and could never have been preached, either on a mountain or in a valley. It is the very nature of a sermon to be expansive, to dilate upon some one principle until iteration and illustration have driven it home into every mind. But the very opposite course is pursued in this Sermon on the Mount. It is a compendium of teaching, a collection of maxims, a statement of first principles; and thus the very worst form of discourse for a common crowd of listeners.

We think it absurd to say, as Mr. Warschauer

does, that "the Fatherhood of God constitutes the only sanction for the otherwise incredible doctrine of the Brotherhood of Man." We believe that the brotherhood of man rests upon a more solid and satisfactory basis. But be the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God of what value it may, it is no less absurd to represent Jesus Christ as its originator. Paul himself, if we may trust the Acts of the Apostles, was better informed and more accurate than Mr. Warschauer; for in his sermon to "the men of Athens," reported in the seventeenth chapter, he sought to convince them that God had "made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth," not by appealing to anything that Jesus Christ had said, but by appealing to native and older authorities:—

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring" (v. 28).

So much for Jesus Christ as the originator of a doctrine which, as a matter of fact, was perfectly familiar to all the civilised nations of antiquity. And now let us take Mr. Warschauer's assertion that the logic of facts has "given to Jesus a name that is above every other name, and assigned to him the headship of the race." This insular bombast is so common to the apologists of Christianity! They forget that Christians are not all "the race," that the Heathen are greatly the larger number, and that they have not yet polled for Christ. More than all the Christians together vote for Guatama Buddha. Hundreds of millions vote for Mohammed. Hundreds of millions vote for Confucius. Now we see the Japanese standing up and beating a great Christian nation, with three times its own population and resources, at the peculiarly Christian game of war. And the success of Japan will upset other things than the old balance of power. It will upset the old Christian argument that God is with the Christian nations and gives them the lordship of the earth. This used to impress the mob immensely. It will never impress them so again. The war in the East has settled the "headship of the race" argument for ever.

XVI.

Mr. Warschauer utterly misunderstands the "infidel" argument against Christianity on the ground of its persecutions and butcheries. He argues that "the religion of Jesus" had nothing to do with such things as the wholesale slaughter of the Protestant Netherlanders by Philip II. of Spain. He also argues that persecution is "a universal phenomenon," and that "to put a special complexion" upon it when it is "met in connection with Christianity" only "shows a desperate bias." But how shallow is all this! Christianity did not persecute sporadically, in fits of temper; it reduced persecution to a system, and carried it on in cold blood. And, in doing so, it was perfectly logical. For, as George Eliot so powerfully reasoned in her review of Lecky's *Rationalism*, the great justifying principle of persecution was the doctrine of salvation by faith, which was common to all sections of Christianity. The unbeliever was going to hell in any case, and it was best that he should go alone. To kill him was like crushing a viper. It was an act of social sanitation. And the unbeliever is (comparatively) safe now, simply because the doctrine of salvation by faith is nearly dead.

We beg to tell Mr. Warschauer, too, that Mr. Blatchford is *not* to blame for "believing the Christian contention to be that men cannot be good, nor happy, cannot be saved except through Christ." This has been the teaching of all the Churches and of all the Christian divines. John Wesley himself, so full of natural benevolence, as his face indicated no less than his sermons, hesitated to affirm that anyone but a Christian could reach heaven. The Church of England Articles, and the Confessions of all the other Protestant Churches, affirm that men cannot be "good" without faith in Christ. And that men "cannot be saved except through Christ" is the plain teaching of the New

Testament. Jesus himself said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6). According to a marginal note in the Revised Version, "by" may read "through"—which is still stronger. And in the Acts of the Apostles (iv. 12) we are told of "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth" that

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

Surely these testimonies are more important than Mr. Warschauer's denial.

XVII.

Mr. Warschauer winds up with high-and-mighty sneers at Mr. Blatchford's "lack of the worshipping instinct," and his "want of learning and logic, temper and taste, reverence and fairness." He is devoid of all the virtues in which (we suppose, or might suppose, if we had not read him) Mr. Warschauer abounds. Mr. Blatchford had a "complete lack of qualification for the task which he attempted," and his book, "had it been issued by an unknown man, might have been safely left to sink beneath the weight of its own demerits." But, alas, it has made "a successful popular appeal," and Mr. Warschauer felt called upon to devote his vast learning and prodigious powers of mind to this ignorant and superficial person's refutation. The result is *Anti-Nunquam*, which is a perfect storehouse of fallacy and sophistry, which fails to answer Mr. Blatchford at any important point, which is written in a pompous, overbearing style, and displays (in short) all the mental and moral vices of Christian controversy.

G. W. FOOTE.

Spontaneous Generation.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* is in the seventh heaven of triumphant delight, and the song it sings is wholly in the major key. That horrid bugbear, Spontaneous Generation, which used to frighten the Christian Church so grievously, has been mercifully destroyed and thrown out of the way forever by Lord Kelvin, the brave and illustrious knight-errant who has so often come to the rescue of distressed religion. To adopt the words of the high-toned, up-to-date journal just mentioned, "The greatest living scientist has administered a final blow to the theory of spontaneous generation"; and naturally there is boundless rejoicing in all the courts of Zion. Surely, the whole Church should rise and clap her hands with grateful glee, and grant a full month's holiday to all her faithful servants, as well as place a glittering crown upon the brow of her mighty deliverer.

But how did Lord Kelvin manage to accomplish so heroic a feat? Has he made some new discovery which utterly discredits the theory of Abiogenesis? Has he made such experiments in biology as completely disprove the hypothesis that life originally sprang from inorganic matter? In what manner was the final blow administered? Let it be borne in mind that Lord Kelvin, while one of the most distinguished physicists, is not a biologist. In his own department he is a prince of the blood; but in biology he is simply a commoner. Of course, the *Christian Commonwealth* discreetly ignores this fact, and simply describes him as "the greatest living scientist." As a physicist Lord Kelvin can afford to speak with authority; but being only a layman in biology, he has no right to represent this important department of science. But on the occasion under consideration, he "administered the final blow to the theory of spontaneous generation" without any reference whatever to biology. Here are his reported words:—

"Let them not imagine that any hocus-pocus of electricity or viscous fluids would make a living cell..... There was an absolute distinction between crystals and cells. Anything that crystallised could be made by the chemist. Nothing approaching to the cell of a living creature had ever yet been made."

Commenting on the above, the *Christian Commonwealth* says:—

"The importance of this declaration by such an authority cannot possibly be over-estimated. The supreme desire of Haeckel and his followers is to destroy all necessity for supernatural interposition in originating life. Hence the absurd and now exploded idea of 'bathybius,' or life originating spontaneously in the slimy depths. To get rid of miracle the Haeckelian school of philosophers have been inclined themselves to attempt miracles of imaginative processes. Dead matter that could of itself become living would assuredly itself be miraculous. Lord Kelvin is no believer in miracles performed in the laboratory. He prefers the doctrine of a Divine Creator."

In that paragraph there is not one accurate statement. As already pointed out, Lord Kelvin is *not* an authority in the branch of science to which the hypothesis of Abiogenesis belongs. All that Haeckel and his fellow-biologists seek to do is to ascertain what the facts are as to the origination of life. Had they discovered any necessity for supernatural interposition they would have willingly, even gladly, acknowledged it. It is utterly unfair to attribute unworthy motives to them, of the influence of which there is not a single trace in their work. Their supreme desire is to find the truth, whatever it may be. It is easy enough to sneer at "Bathybius" as an "absurd and exploded idea," but it is not so easy for the editor of a religious journal to supply his readers with an intelligent description of the strange group Monera, to which the genera Protamœba, Protogenes, and Bathybius belong. Nature "works in a mysterious way her wonders to perform," and it is stupendously difficult to tell where the not-living ends and the living begins.

But let us return to Lord Kelvin. With the substance of his address at St. George's Hospital of Medicine Freethinkers are in heartiest agreement. All he said was in full harmony with the truth. "No artificial process whatever can make living matter out of dead." True, O King; but then Nature's processes are *not* "artificial." Nature's powers are not to be measured by those of the cleverest chemist that ever lived. There was a time when the chemist could not make crystals, and who knows but that there may come a time when he will be able to "make living matter out of dead"? Be that as it may, the present inability of the chemist to produce certain results does not prove that Nature is subject to the same infirmity. It is incredible that so exact a physicist as Lord Kelvin could have been guilty of attacking Abiogenesis on so flimsy a ground. Professor Tyndall was as sensible of the limitations of the experimentalists as his lordship can be; but that far-seeing thinker and close observer continued to believe that there are no gaps in evolution, and that the living is a natural product of the not-living.

It is scarcely necessary to say that scientists do not maintain that cases of abiogenesis take place to-day. Professor Haeckel, the greatest living biologist, puts special emphasis on this point. So far as we know, living matter does not now arise from dead. The present conditions are not favorable to such a process. What scientists contend is that life first originated in that fashion. It is well known that there was once a period when there was no life on this planet. The temperature was at such a height as to make life, as we know it, absolutely impossible. But there came a point in the cooling process when life was possible—and when, being possible, it was actually generated. The advent of the living was only an episode in the history of evolution; only an incident in the gradual ascent of the Universe. And, as life had a beginning, so it may have an end also. Nature seems to work in circles, and not along straight lines. The solar system is not a fixture, but only a phenomenon. Life is not a permanency, but a passing phase. The forces that first produced it may yet blot it out for ever.

Lord Kelvin does not tell us on what ground he rejects the theory of Abiogenesis. About a year ago, in moving a vote of thanks to Professor

Henslow for a lecture on Darwinism, delivered in the Botanical Theatre of the University College, London, his lordship took occasion to remark that "modern biologists were coming once more to the acceptance of something, and that was a vital principle." Subsequently, in the *Times*, he asserted that "scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power." Two or three days later several of our leading biologists flatly contradicted him. But we must not forget that in the year 1871 Lord Kelvin himself spoke thus:—

"Science is bound by the everlasting law of honor, to face fearlessly every problem which can fairly be presented to it. If a probable solution, consistent with the ordinary course of Nature, can be found, we must not invoke an act of Creative Power."

That was a truly scientific utterance. And certainly the theory of Abiogenesis is a highly probable solution of the origin of life, and perfectly consistent with the ordinary course of Nature. To-day Lord Kelvin suppresses the scientist and permits the theologian within him to speak, and the two do not agree. Now he tells us that life can be accounted for only by supposing a special act or acts of Creative Power, and ridicules "the probable solution" adopted by the great majority of biological experts. For my part I will follow the strong scientist of 1871 rather than the unreasoning theologian of 1904. If we put the two contradictory utterances of the same man side by side, there will be no difficulty in deciding which is the more in accord with the genuine scientific spirit.

Indeed, Lord Kelvin's present tirade against Abiogenesis is wholly inexplicable, and all the more so when we bear in mind that many eminent Theists are out and out Abiogenists. Professors Le Conte and J. Ward are both zealous Theists and yet equally zealous believers in spontaneous generation. The former says that "vital force may now be regarded as so much force withdrawn from the general fund of chemical and physical forces," while the latter is of opinion that "the old theory of a special vital force, according to which physiological processes were at the most analogous to—not identical with—physical processes, has for the most part been abandoned as superfluous." Furthermore, several of the most eminent among living theologians—such as Dr. W. N. Clarke, Dr. Newman Smyth, and possibly Professor Iverach—cannot conscientiously oppose the doctrine of the physical origin of life. All they contend for is that the forces of Nature have done and are doing all their work under the guidance of an infinite and perfect Intelligence. With these facts in mind we cannot cease to wonder that Lord Kelvin should have flagrantly violated the great scientific principle laid down by himself in order to assert his Theism.

But was there no justification for Lord Kelvin's claim that "modern biologists were coming once more to the acceptance of the vital principle?" None whatever. There are a few biologists who still advocate the activity of a vital force; but they form a miserable minority. One of the ablest and best known of them is Professor Beal. He has written a large book in several parts entitled *Vitality*. But in the preface to Part V. published three years ago he makes this significant admission:—

"Probably no hypotheses or doctrines known to philosophy or science have been so generally favored, and more persistently forced on the public by 'Authority,' and therefore widely accepted and taught by educated and intelligent persons, than the doctrines of physical life and its origin in non-living matter."

Indeed, Dr. Beal is led to deepest pessimism by the conviction that "purely mechanical views of life are again, possibly for the last time, becoming very popular." In view of such a testimony, coming from such a quarter, we are bound to characterise Lord Kelvin's assertion as a culpable exaggeration. It was not true when he first made it, and it is not true now. Even Sir Oliver Lodge admitted that he "would not use the phrase himself." What, then, is the teaching of biology as to the origin of life? That it was a purely mechanical origin, or that life can e-

into being in the ordinary course of evolution, without any supernatural or other interposition whatever. Life is a natural product. Doubtless there are features of plant or animal life which the biologist cannot fully explain: but that fact does not justify the conclusion that we must "attribute all vital phenomena to Power—to Power which is special and peculiar to life only—Power which we know cannot be derived from matter," or, in other words, that it is "perfectly reasonable to believe that all vital power has come direct from God." It is much more reasonable to believe, with Professor Ray Lankester, that it is "the aim or business of those occupied with biology to assign living things, in all their variety of form and activity, to the one set of forces recognised by the physicist and the chemist." This is the belief that is in the ascendant at present throughout the scientific world, and it is a belief which preserves intact the unity of Nature and the continuity of development.

The *Christian Commonwealth* will soon learn that it was radically mistaken in the proud assertion that "the greatest living scientist has administered a final blow to the theory of spontaneous generation." Lord Kelvin has not touched it at all. He has only bruised his own knuckles against a dead wall. He has only wounded the scientist within himself in a vain effort to glorify the theologian. Spontaneous generation stands unharmed exactly where it was before.

JOHN T. LLOYD.

Notes on Religion and Science.

ACCORDING to a writer in the *Christian World*, it is an agreeable and significant thing that the clergy "wait on the utterances of a Lord Kelvin or a Sir Oliver Lodge.... with a deference that the bench of bishops is quite unable to command." Under certain circumstances this might be a very admirable state of affairs; but as things go it is anything but evidence that the clergy are willing to be guided by scientific counsel and advice. For the whole truth is that the religious world is in the position of the Highland farmer who, when asked to abide by the decision of his landlord, promptly inquired what his decision would be. The clergy wait on the utterances of Lord Kelvin or Sir Oliver Lodge, but only because they know beforehand the kind of testimony they will offer; and that however much they may criticise specific doctrines, they will still affirm their belief in fundamental religious beliefs.

The real spirit of the clergy is shown when testimony of a different character is received from scientists. So long as a scientist asserts his belief in a god or a future life he is greeted with applause, and we learn that "science is once more lifting its face godward." But when a scientist says he sees no evidence for either the existence of a god or a future life, the tone is suddenly changed. Science, we then learn, has nothing whatever to do with religious beliefs. These lie entirely outside its legitimate province, and it is an act of presumption for a mere scientist to express an opinion on the subject. Naturally the religious world, with its phenomenal capacity for absorbing the contradictory, sees nothing wrong in thus playing fast and loose with scientific evidence. Yet it does not require a powerful intellect to recognise that if religion does lie outside the realm of science, the testimony of Sir Oliver Lodge is as invalid as that of Haeckel. We must either accept both or reject both, as evidence. It still remains open to take their testimony simply as that of men of education and understanding, but in that case the talk of "the testimony of science" is quite beside the mark. The fact is that "scientific testimony" is concerned with the facts only; once these are public property, it is open to every one of average intelligence to express an opinion thereon, and often enough the non-scientific worker appreciates the significance of these "facts" much better than the scientist himself.

And when all is said, what does this "scientific" testimony on behalf of religious beliefs amount to? Broadly, it is a confession of belief by scientific specialists based upon branches of science that are outside their province. Both Sir Oliver Lodge and Lord Kelvin are men of reputation in physics and mathematics; and although conclusions based even upon pure physics or mathematics would still be open to question by non-specialists, still they would deserve to be received with respect. But it is noticeable that when Lord Kelvin wishes to prove the existence of a God he flies to botany or biology; and on the first subject, at least, no less an authority than the Director of Kew Gardens informed him that he was altogether at sea. In a similar manner, Sir Oliver Lodge finds the basis for his religious beliefs in psychology or in historic processes, in both departments of which he is so obviously an amateur that no student of either subject will be likely to take him as a trustworthy guide. And this is the curious fact of the whole position. No believer who is a scientist finds proofs of religious beliefs within his own department. The physicist sees evidence in biology, the biologist in physics. Each, therefore, cancels the other; for the inevitable conclusion is that where a man is qualified to speak as an authority, and so far as his actual knowledge is concerned, he is unable to produce any evidence worth consideration.

Moreover, as is only to be expected in the case of specialists working to reconcile two such essentially antagonistic things as Science and Religion, the straining after evidence is so great that whole fields of science are ignored, and others misinterpreted. To begin with, both Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge, in dealing with the God-idea, ignore the implications of evolution, and particularly the science of anthropology. For all that occurs in either of their writings, anthropology might still be non-existent. Both write as though the question of the existence of God or the belief in a soul was a mere matter of the balancing of reasons for and against; as though these things were, in brief, simply matters of speculation. But there is much beside this. We are no longer faced with religious beliefs as something that came from we know not where, and with no other account of their origin than the instincts and beliefs of mankind. No one with an adequate appreciation of all that anthropology has taught during the last half century can have much doubt that the *origin* of the belief in God and a soul, at least in broad outline, is known. And this knowledge places such beliefs on substantially the same level as other childish superstitions that are now discredited by civilised mankind. The whole thing is founded on a primitive delusion—a delusion springing from sheer ignorance and misinterpretation, and fashioned by fear and later speculation. It is really depressing to find two prominent scientific men arguing—if we leave certain illustrations drawn from their own special departments—as though they were living in the eighteenth century rather than in the twentieth.

Where the leaders are themselves so unscientific it would be folly to expect their religious followers to be otherwise. And, accordingly, there is in the religious press, and elsewhere, a habit of writing as though all science were restricted to physical science, and as though, by the very nature of the case, it was precluded from dealing with mental or "spiritual" matters. But this limitation of the scope of science is, of course, absurd. The only essential condition in order that a force, whether physical or psychical, may become a matter of scientific statement, is that it shall be, to some extent, calculable. And even though it were incalculable—incalculability being merely an expression of ignorance—it would still remain a subject of scientific study. The boundaries of science are co-extensive with the boundaries of human knowledge, actual or possible. And where science ends, religion begins.

The conflict between religion and science really centres round two things, neither of which is adequately recognised by our scientific reconcilers.

The first is, that the whole dispute is one of interpretation, not of different subject matter. It is not a question of spiritual faculties possessed by some, and deficient in others; nor is it a question of methods that apply in one direction being improperly applied in another. There is the same set of phenomena for all to deal with, whether we are religious or non-religious. The religious theory is, broadly, an interpretation of cosmic phenomena in terms of consciousness and volition. The scientific interpretation is in terms of non-conscious forces. No compromise is possible between these two interpretations. One or the other must give way. And in the light of history and reason there can be little doubt which is the one that must ultimately disappear. We know the history of the religious interpretation of nature, and we know the history of the scientific one also. The one commenced with our primitive ancestors, among a people who were intensely ignorant of nature; it is without a single spark of evidence, and it has been discredited time after time when brought into contact with reality. The other has its origin at a later date. It is born of human knowledge and experience; it advances step by step, and justifies each step of its advancement. One rests upon a solid structure of knowledge and verification; the other appeals to unreasoning prejudice, and rests on, as it began in, ignorance. To speak of reconciling two such interpretations is to show an entire misapprehension of the nature of the conflict and of the development of the human intellect.

And the second point is one of method, although it really arises from the first. The religious method is to judge the present by the past; the scientific method is to judge the past by the present. There is no need for any scientific objector to question the reality of any of the facts upon which the religionist builds. He simply points out that in the light of a fuller knowledge they are susceptible of an entirely different interpretation. People of old saw visions, heard voices, felt themselves inspired. The believer solemnly concludes that at some time or other the stream of inspiration ran dry, and does not occur to-day. Not so, replies the scientific objector. The same signs that characterised inspired persons centuries ago are to be found among men and women to-day. Only to-day we do not credit their visions or believe in their inspiration. We simply put it down to epilepsy, catalepsy, or some form of neurosis. And so with miracles, so with religious beliefs generally. The world is to-day as it always was, subject to the play of precisely the same forces, witnessing exactly the same phenomena. The world is the same, but human nature has grown wiser and better informed. It sees the interaction of forces where our ancestors saw the hand of God. It interprets the old phenomena in terms of modern knowledge; and it reads human history from the standpoint of a more developed intelligence. And doing this it finds no necessity for the supernatural, and no work for the gods. They and a perfect science cannot exist in the same universe. For a time they linger, like those rudimentary organs of the human body that remain as a testimony of our animal ancestry. But every rudiment, while an evidence of the past, carries also a promise of its ultimate disappearance.

C. COHEN.

Religion Not the Cause of Human Progress.

[An extract from a sermon by the Rev. E. E. Newbert, preached in All Souls' Church, Indianapolis; reproduced from the *Searchlight*, Waco, Texas.]

PROGRESS is a fact. Its compelling cause is intelligence. Religion, considered apart from civilisation, has not helped the race to advance. Religion as an end in itself is sure to mean bigotry and fanaticism. As a thing by itself, religion has been a heavy load for the world to carry. In the distant centuries India came under the curse, and her civilisation was arrested by religion. All Mohammedan lands have been blighted by the same curse. Too much religion has been the disease that has sapped Asia of her energies.

Nor is this alone true of the great ethnic faiths. Turn to the Middle Ages. The Christian religion took a like course for one thousand years. In all matters temporal and spiritual the Church was supreme. For ten centuries religion was tried, with no man to question, and how great was the failure! Change was impossible. Progress was not desired. Learning was under the ban. The scholar was hunted. Huss and Bruno were burned. The new astronomy was proscribed. The printing press was condemned. The worst part of the nightmare came to an end in the Reformation. And the cause of the Reformation was the revival of learning, the rise of the humanists, and the discovery of the classics, which had been lost for one thousand years.

We talk of Christianising the world. Just what do we mean? Do we hope to save the heathen by giving him the Bible and the Christian belief? Would a single swapping of religion benefit Asia? Or does Asia need something else? We are slow to admit the influence of race upon religion. When we say that all things great and good come from Christianity, we speak as Anglo-Saxons, trained in the school of the Anglo-Saxon civilisation. I say no hurt of the Bible and the Christian belief when I say that these are not the source of civil and religious liberty. Freedom, the dignity of woman, the public school and the humanities bear the mark of the Anglo-Saxon.

In the distant centuries before Rome built up her iron despotism, the rough Teuton cherished an unusual affection and respect for woman, whom he made his companion rather than his slave. In the language of a historian, he endowed her in her own right, made her the animating spirit of his home, allowed her to share his enterprises and invest her sex with something of a sacred and prescient character. In his wild poems and rough laws one finds the germ of his later Shakespeares and Beethovens and Cromwells—the germ of that genius which has made his literature the richest in the world and kept his sons for one thousand years on every throne in Europe.

In England, Magna Charta is the enduring monument to the Anglo-Saxon's fitness for leadership. Did Magna Charta come from the Bible or from the Christian religion? No. Back of it is the Saxon's love of freedom. Spain was Christian at the time, but Spain has no Magna Charta. France was Christian, but Louis XI. granted no charter of liberties. Russia was Christian, but Peter the Great gave no pledge for the security of civil liberty.

In America and England education and civil and religious liberty go hand-in-hand with Christianity, so that we cannot think of the one without the other. Spain is Christian; Spain, too, is illiterate. She has discovered more lands, misgoverned more people, erected more crosses and murdered more men than any nation in history. Is religion Spain's need? South America is Christian in belief. But how great her ethical need! Cuba and Porto Rica are Christian, yet these islands lying contiguous to our shores are poor in moral ideal. Servia, her hands red with the blood of a murdered king and queen, is Christian. Abyssinia has been Christian since the fourth century. Russia is Christian. Have these countries a civilisation to boast? Freedom in Russia exists only in the dreams of some exile, while in Church and State there is the iron despotism. Russia is Christian and cruel. Her masses are no better than slaves. poorly fed and clothed, their homes hovels.

Shall the Christian missionary be our answer to the need of eastern Europe and Asia? Is there no better way? Eastern Europe and Asia do not need more religion; they need the higher civilisation. Let Russia build for hope upon her universities, so long feared. Let her people pass from bondage and ignorance to freedom and intelligence.

And so of great and disrupted China. China needs to be freed from herself. Religion arrested her development, nor would she gain by swapping it for another, alien to her soil and climate and unsuited to her temperament. China will be saved when she has a mind to go out to meet the world in commerce and the arts of civilised life. She is starting for freedom and progress when she decides to send her picked youths into the universities of western Europe and America. She needs to break with Confucianism, but she does not need to adopt another faith.

I believe in man and his capacity for progress. It would be well, could the world fall asleep and forget many religious ideas, while dreaming the dream of the beautiful life, and awaking to find the dream a reality. The ecclesiastical age is passing. Religious dogma will not again rule the world. Men are turning to life, desiring freedom, prosperity and happiness.

This is the immorality of religion as it now exists. It creates artificial virtues and sets them off against actual vices.—*Winwood Reade.*

Acid Drops.

The Torrey-Alexander show is coming to London for five months, and the performance starts at the Albert Hall in February. This is an opportunity which we shall not neglect. We intend to prepare quite a pamphlet-tract on Torrey and his "converted infidels" and his lies about Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll. These have been exposed in the *Freethinker*, but the important thing is to get the exposure into the hands of Christians. No doubt our friends will enable us to do this.

The London Evangelical Council is going to run the Torrey-Alexander Mission at the Albert Hall, and we see that it is to be worked up by a crowd of metropolitan ministers, including the Bishop of London. A preliminary meeting has been held already at Exeter Hall, at which both the evangelists were present. Mr. Alexander, who plays "Sankey" to Dr. Torrey's "Moody," seems to be immensely exhilarated by his late devotion to Cocoa. At any rate, he told the following story:—

"Sam Hadley, the New York evangelist, was addressing a crowd of drunkards in New York, and was telling them that God could save them from the drink habit and take away the appetite for it 'inside of five minutes.' A lady visitor, a doctor, told him afterwards that what he said was impossible. Then she let loose all the long words, which curled up poor Sam, who was no University man, and said that the coating of the stomach was eaten away by alcohol. Sam shouted 'Praise the Lord!' The lady asked for an explanation. 'Why,' said he, 'I always knew God had given me a new heart, but I never knew before that he had given me a new stomach.'"

This is not a bad story—for an evangelist. But we can tell Mr. Alexander a better one—and advise him to use it. A clergyman, walking through a hospital ward, came to a patient who looked very ill. After some conversation of the usual religious character, and finding the patient was not as pious as he should be, he recommended him to "pray to God for a new heart." "Ah," the poor fellow said, "what I want is a new liver."

Mr. Will Crooks was the principal speaker at a recent Passive Resistance meeting at Ilford. He is a sensible man, but he talked up (or down) to the company he was in. For instance, he said that he hoped "the present agitation" would continue until "they had recovered over the education of the children what the new Act had taken away." This is not very clear, and perhaps it does not do Mr. Crooks justice. Still, he appears to have conveyed the idea that the New Act had taken away something. *What?* We should like the question answered. The Board schools have not been handed over to the Church of England; they have been handed over to the Town and County Councils, and are thus as much under the control of the ratepayers as ever. We repeat the question then. *What* has been taken away? What is it that Mr. Crooks hopes (or says he hopes) that the Nonconformists will recover?

Rev. J. Moffat Logan, our old Bristol opponent, speaking for the Passive Resistance movement at Clayton-le-Moors, declared that it was "neither political nor even sectarian, but a movement of conscience—of belief that between God and the soul no Government had any right to interfere." This fine old rhetorical "chestnut" was greeted with applause. But if it means anything at all—which is rather doubtful—it means that the Government (national or municipal) should have nothing whatever to do with religion, but treat it as a private and personal matter between each citizen and his God. Well, that means the Disestablishment of the State Church. Yes, and it also means Secular Education in the public schools. We wish Mr. Logan and his friends would try to be logical—especially when logic and justice coincide.

Speaking at a Passive Resistance meeting at Croydon, Dr. Clifford "denounced the locking of the school-doors against Free Churchmen in favor of Anglicans." There you have the whole of his case in a nutshell. He lets the truth out now and then. All his tall talk is merely a decoration. The only substance is a squabble over the school-room between the Established and the Free Churches.

Dr. Clifford also referred to the Training Colleges. He said that "though subsidised by the people's money to the tune of from 90 to 95 per cent. of their income, they still imposed religious tests." Well now, let us look at the facts closely. Most of the Training Colleges are denominational. A few are undenominational. But in every one of these the student has to enter himself as belonging to some Christian Church, and has to attend one of its places of worship on

Sunday. We ask Dr. Clifford, therefore, whether he is prepared to see that condition abolished? If he answers "Yes" he is an honest "unsectarian. If he answers "No" he is something else.

Ever since the publication of Mr. George Meredith's *Amazing Marriage* the word "amazing" has been done to death by the journalists. Nothing is *surprising* or *astonishing* nowadays; everything is *amazing*—even if it only refers to the offer of eightpence instead of half-a-crown. We are not "amazed" therefore at the *Daily News* headline about "Cornwall's Amazing Decision," under which were the following paragraphs:—

"A Truro telegram states: The Cornwall County Council yesterday, by thirty-six votes to thirty, confirmed the syllabus prepared by the Education Committee for religious instruction in provided schools.

"The syllabus contained the Apostles' Creed, with an instruction that the teacher should explain the Holy Catholic Church to mean the whole body of Christians dispersed throughout the world; and 'He descended into Hell' to mean 'He descended to the unseen world.'

"Mr. Thomas, a Wesleyan local preacher, said the syllabus with a definition of the Holy Catholic Church was the most liberal and broad-minded statement that any assembly in England ever passed."

There must be some mistake, we fancy, in the name of that Council. But we will assume that the substance of these paragraphs is accurate, and ask what the *Daily News* is "amazed" about. Is it surprised to find Nonconformists accepting the Apostles' Creed? Why, all Nonconformist Churches accept that Creed. When they object to its being taught in public schools, they do so because of the danger of its being taught adversely to their own interests. They have absolutely no other objection. It is not the *theology*, but the *ecclesiasticism*, of the Apostles' Creed which "shocks" Dissenters. If the phrase "the Holy Catholic Church" is made to include them, they will make no protest against all the rest of the Creed being stuffed down the mental throats of everybody's and anybody's children. Yes, we understand these Dissenting gentlemen; we know what they are driving at, and what they will say and do to reach it; and we have lost all power of finding them "amazing"—though we often find them detestable.

This decision of the Cornwall Education Committee, which the Nonconformists seem to approve, is challenged even in the *Daily News*. Mr. F. T. Stephens points out that the statement that "the Holy Catholic Church" means "the whole body of Christians dispersed throughout the world" is not the interpretation which the Catholic Church puts upon that clause of the Apostles' Creed. What right, then, have the Nonconformists to teach that doctrine in schools partly paid for by Catholic ratepayers? Is not this taxing Catholics for the teaching of a doctrine which they are well-known to repudiate and even to detest? Mr. J. Page Hopps points out that the Apostles' Creed "affirms the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of the body, both doubtful beyond all telling." He wants to know how the Wesleyans, with all the talk about religious equality, can agree to have such a sectional creed taught at the public expense. "Personally," Mr. Page Hopps says, "I prefer the Athanasian Creed to the Apostles' Creed, and if the latter were ordered to be taught in schools for which I was rated, I should certainly become what I am not now—a Passive (or probably an Active) Resister."

Even a Passive Resister like Mr. T. B. Peattie, of Birmingham, is obliged to protest against Leicester Passive Resisters singing a hymn during the sitting of the court. He declares that this is "not a whit more defensible than would be the singing of a comic song, and such disorderly conduct can only bring our cause into discredit." But it will take something more than words to check these foolish fanatics. They display a little, and may yet display more, of the temper of the early Christians who flocked to the Pagan magistrates' courts and positively clamored for martyrdom. They begged the administrators of the law to be so very good as to take their lives. Gibbon mentions one magistrate who told them to clear out, and reminded them that, if they were bent on committing suicide, ropes were cheap and precipices plentiful.

A Passive Resister turned up in a provincial court the other day and wanted to make his statement "in poetry," but the magistrates shrank with horror from this new development of the P. R. movement. It beats Spring Onions.

Passive Resistance is going strong at Plymouth, and the Dissenting men of God are well to the front—if only as a matter of business. Seven of them were in court together

last week, and every one of them fired off his little speech at the magistrate. They all talked big about "sectarianism." It is a capital mouthful.

The Leyton Urban District Council is a remarkably liberal body. A majority of the members have decided that they are willing to allow children to be withdrawn from the religious instruction given in the Council schools "if their parents so desire." As this has been the law of the land for more than thirty-four years, the liberality of the Leyton councillors is easily appreciated.

M. Gabriel Syveton, the French deputy who brutally assaulted General André, the French Minister for War, after a debate in the Chamber, is in the very prime of life, being under forty years of age, while the man he suddenly fell upon is sixty-seven. General André is a Positivist. M. Syveton is a Christian. He boasts that he has "inflicted disgrace upon this dishonorable Minister." But the truth is that he has inflicted disgrace upon himself.

The Paris *Matin* prints some startling revelations concerning the Providence Orphanage at Aix-en-Provence. The nuns who run it do a big trade in fine linen, lace, and general fancy underwear for women; and increase their profits by having the work done for them by orphans and the children of poor parents, who are glad to get rid of their offspring. These unfortunate girls are not only "sweated," but starved and otherwise treated with great cruelty. Here is a sample of what went on, taken from a Paris letter in the *Daily Telegraph*:—

"One young woman, who has left the place, a Mlle. Dye, said that when she was five years old her mother, a poor widow, had to send her to the Providence Convent with her two sisters. The mother paid down £16 for the three girls to the nuns' notary, and they were to remain in the convent until they were of age. The girls were handed over to a nun, Sister Monica, who put needles into their hands, and started them to hem pocket-handkerchiefs. The nun went round the work-room every half-hour, whacking on the heads with a box-wood stick the girls who looked up from their work, yawned, or showed any signs of indolence. Sometimes this remarkable Monica, who, if the correspondent's statements be true, had nothing in common with her holy patroness, the mother of Saint Augustine of Hippo, represented in Ary Scheffer's picture in the Louvre, plucked hairs out of the girls' heads, and put them into a bag in the corner of the work-room. The hairs were subsequently sold to coiffeurs of the district, the nuns being evidently determined to make the most out of their victims. Girls also had their hair cut when they happened to possess a fine crop. Monica was assisted by a sister named Clara, who was equally tyrannical, and knocked the children about at a fearful rate. As in the Tours Convent, refractory girls, or those supposed to be so, had to make the sign of the Cross with their tongues on the floor of the refectory or eating-room. Worse and more disgusting punishments were also inflicted.

"As to the food given at the institution the informant of the newspaper correspondent says that it barely cost thirty-five centimes daily for each girl. The meat was often uneatable, and when it was refused the tyrants, Monica and Clara, rammed it down the children's throats, using towels to keep their hands clean. In winter there was no fire in the workroom, and when the girls blew on their hands to warm them they were beaten by Monica or Clara. Once a month those of the inmates who had friends were allowed to see them in the parlor, but Monica was always present like a turnkey watching over prisoners. In this strange institution of the picturesque and historic town of Aix-en-Provence illness did not count. Sick girls were haled and dragged to work by Monica and Clara, and those who fainted were beaten, and even kicked, back to consciousness. It was only when they were at the last extremity that ailing children were sent to hospital, where nearly all inevitably died."

Is it not sickening? And all in the name of religion, too!

It appears pretty certain now that the Baltic Fleet did see torpedoes—its own. The Russian ships fired on each other, as well as on the British trawlers. And the explanation is twofold. First, the officers and men were in a funk; secondly, they were drunk. Holy Russia cuts a very ill figure in the comparison with Heathen Japan.

Divine-right monarchy, militarism, and something else that shall be nameless, go very well together. The other evening the Kaiser went to the Opera at Berlin, and many ladies were turned back as they appeared in high-necked gowns instead of *decolletées*. Time was when the Feudal lord could claim to sleep with brides on their wedding-night. That pious custom—for the world was never so pious as it was then—has fallen obsolete. But the ladies must still make a display of their charms when the divine-right ruler is about; so that, if he can no longer throw the handkerchief, he may, nevertheless, see what he loses.

Emperor William has been on the war-path again, and this time he has our sympathy. A short time ago at Fameck, in Alsace-Lorraine, a Protestant was buried in a Catholic churchyard, which being thus "desecrated," an interdict was pronounced against it by Bishop Benzler, of Metz. This caused a great sensation throughout Germany, and the Kaiser made a note of it. When he visited Metz shortly afterwards he sent for that Bishop, and read him a sharp lesson in presence of Prince Hohenlohe, the Governor. The man of God trembled at the voice of the master of many legions. Emperor William scolded him up and down, told him that the business of a Bishop was to bless and not to curse, that Germany was still a Protestant country, and that the Catholics, who were enjoying liberty, would gain nothing by insolence. When he had finished his sermon, and it seems to have been delivered in grand style, the Kaiser said, "I hope we perfectly understand each other, and therefore I bid you good-bye." And the trembling man of God crawled away.

The National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain has been holding its Annual Conference at York. We regret to read of "devotional meetings" in connection with it. Why do working women lend themselves to this sort of religious exploitation?

Arthur Desmonde, *alias* Holt, a baker, walked out of the dock at Chester with a sentence of four years' penal servitude. He had broken into a Wesleyan chapel at Broadhead, near Altrincham, and made off with the Communion plate. What was worse, he drank a bottle of Communion wine, and, with "the blood of Christ" inside him, had a good sleep under the pulpit. Before decamping he wrote the following note for those it might concern:—"Your port wine is remarkably good. I only wish there was some more. Sorry the plate is not gold. Bill Bailey." If the gentleman's taste for port wine holds out, he will have to get converted in prison, and take a monthly sip of the chaplain's *Vino Sacro*.

Mr. John Burns's cold douche on the anti-social philanthropy of religious organisations, including that of the Salvation Army, is followed by one from Mr. C. S. Loch, secretary of the Charity Organisation Society. Mr. Loch contends that the various shelters and lodging-houses do no real good in the long run. While they have been multiplying the pauperism of London has been increasing. It has increased 14 per cent. since 1891, although there has been an increase of only 9 per cent. in the population. Then the Salvation Army shelters "sell food and accommodation under the ordinary market rates, at which other purveyors who have to make a living out of their trade have to supply their goods," and this underselling disturbs industries and multiplies out-of-works. Mr. Loch points out that the Blackfriars-road shelter, in 1895, brought the Salvation Army a gross profit of £286; yet upon applicants coming from that very shelter the St. Saviour's Guardians had to expend £837. Mr. Bramwell Booth, in his reply to Mr. Loch, says that these applicants were the most destitute of the destitute, for whom the "Army" had no room, or whom they could not receive for other reasons. But this is no reply to Mr. Loch's statement that the "Army" made a profit out of those it did receive.

Judge Rentoul, speaking at the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of "Ye Ancient Society of Coggers," dealt particularly with the development of the English character. After referring to certain natural agencies, which we will not trouble about in these columns, Judge Rentoul went on to say that "the last effective agency was our long access to a free and open Bible, the study of which had resulted in freedom of thought and freedom of action." That may be *his* opinion; it is not *ours*. We deny that the study of the Bible has ever (except accidentally) promoted freedom of thought and action. Bibliolators have always been persecutors. Even in Christian England—which Bible-reading has made the Pecksniff of nations, though America makes a very good second—there are Blasphemy Laws still existing, under which men now living have been imprisoned for "bringing the Holy Scripture and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt." That is what you are liable to on one side. On the other side, if you happen to be one of the Peculiar People, you are liable to imprisonment for believing the Bible, and acting upon your belief. The "freedom" that Judge Rentoul talks about is, therefore, merely the freedom to shout "Hurrah!" with the great mob of hypocrites.

We have said in the preceding paragraph that the study of the Bible may have *accidentally* promoted freedom of thought and action. We are now prepared to say that it

has done so. Owing to the diffuse, perplexing, and even self-contradictory, character of the Bible, the Protestants who made the Bible, and the Bible alone, the foundation of their faith, were bound to come to various conclusions. The result was a multiplication of sects. And the result of this was a certain measure of toleration. No sect was really strong enough to swallow and digest the others; and thus, to avoid mutual extermination, they had to find out a measure of toleration which would allow the largest sects to live together in a cantankerous form of peace that at least prevented violence and bloodshed. But this toleration was not extended to small Christian sects, like the Quakers; neither was it extended to outside heretics, like Deists and Atheists.

Rev. R. J. Campbell should digest the following before he resumes his cheap and easy criticism of the British working man. The Beaufort Tinplate Works, Morriston, near Swansea, being in financial difficulties, the employees have held a meeting and decided unanimously to offer—in token of their sympathy and appreciation for the proprietor and manager—to work without wages for a week, and a day a week for the next six months.

Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan's portrait is fairly common in shop windows. He props his mighty head up with his lanky fingers, and looks for all the world like an "old pro" who ekes out his income by sitting to photographers. He is settling down in England now, but we hear that he has been doing a great work in America. According to Mr. Will Moody, he succeeded in four years in getting the word "God" reintroduced into American life. Hevins! Was it so nearly lost as all that? And in a country so swarming with churches! Well, well! Let us hope that "God" is duly grateful.

The same old story! Mr. George Cosens Prior, a well-known Portsmouth solicitor, has been arrested in London on a charge of converting trust money to his own use. It is almost a matter of course that he was well known in the religious world too. "He was prominently associated with temperance work," the report says, "and was for some time the pastor of the High-street Unitarian Church."

Sir Robert Anderson, late head of the Criminal Investigation Department, is to be credited with seeing that the existing prison system is senseless and inhuman. But when it comes to proposing remedies he shows the evil influence of his well-known Bible studies. Instead of so much imprisonment, he proposes a free use of flogging. How is it that this indecent brutality has such an attraction for the official mind generally? And when that attraction is fortified by a pious study of the Christian Scriptures, it is no wonder that the result is startling.

Dr. A. Gordon Balfour, Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland, keeps one eye on the prospect of parliamentary interference with the property-sweeping of the Wee Kirkers. The other eye he turns pathetically, and perhaps a little reproachfully, on the Lord. Should the worst come to the worst, he will try to "see the hand of our Heavenly Father in what has befallen us." In that case, he should be grateful to the Free Kirkers, who are the Lord's instruments to chastise those whom he loveth.

There are many alterations in the new edition of "Hymns Ancient and Modern." One of them, at any rate, is amusing. The well-known hymn—

Jesus lives; no longer now
Can thy terrors, death, appal us.

afforded the profane a sad opportunity. They could make it read as follows, by simply changing the stops:—

Jesus lives no longer now;
Can thy terrors, death, appal us?

So the revisers have dodged this profanity by making the lines stand thus:—

Jesus lives! Thy terrors now
Can no more, O death, appal us.

Certainly they have dodged the profanity. But what cars they must have!

Among the hymns that still stand where they did is—

There is a fountain filled with blood.

We suggest that the revisers should be dipped in it—for a week.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

November 20, Manchester; 27, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—November 13, Birmingham; 20, Coventry; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Leicester; 11, Liverpool.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 11, Manchester. January 22, Birmingham. February 12, Leicester.
- G. L. MACKENZIE.—A good letter of yours in the *Sun*, but are the flat-earth people worthy of your steel?
- PITMAN.—Too large an order to be undertaken at present, but we note your admiration of Mr. Lloyd's article on "The Creed of Atheism." Pleased to know that you think this journal "gets better every week," and *Bible Romances* "is simply a treat."
- J. STARBUCK.—We never heard of the Mr. Murray, a Liverpool Freethinker, who was "converted in a public debate with the Rev. Dr. Taylor." We never heard of this Dr. Taylor either. Your orthodox friends must be "getting at" you. Beware of them. Some are jokers, and some are serious fictionists, which is a parliamentary expression for something much shorter.
- A. H. CLARKE.—Glad to have your opinion that the *Freethinker* articles are "so well written."
- JAMES ROWNY.—Your name was not in the *Reynolds'* report, so we could not know that you were present at the Hyde Park demonstration to "welcome the Freethought delegates to the Rome Congress." So there were two of you who had been to Rome, but how many delegates does that make? Accept our best wishes personally.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- WILL PHILLIPS.—We note your view that our correspondent did not traverse anything that you said.
- R. J. MACDONALD.—Thanks for your letter, but Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell* (for children) is a fairly ancient document now, though you seem to have met with it for the first time quite recently. What you say, though, about the necessity of fighting Rome, is quite true.
- W. DOWLING.—Thanks for copy of the great W. Horace Brain's address, but it seems to be full of nothing but squabbling with the rival candidate.
- J. HOLNESS.—Glad to hear from you as one of our converts. Your letter is encouraging. We can quite understand that the *Freethinker* made you sit up at first, when you were under the influence of Evangelist Torrey. But this is often necessary to set a man thinking. It had that effect in your case; and, having got over the shock, you now enjoy reading it and lend it to your friends. In reply to your kind inquiry, we beg to say that our health continues to improve.
- G. J. HUNT.—We stated last week, in reply to a correspondent, that we had not looked through the Grant Richards cheap edition of Gibbon now being published. But, on the face of it, it is improbable that such a firm would tamper with Gibbon's text.
- F. MANSELL.—The matter is dealt with in "Acid Drops."
- H. IRVING.—Thanks for letter and enclosure. The matter is under consideration.
- G. SCOTT.—We hoped to find room for your article this week, but shall have to wait now for another issue. The *St. Andrew* article does, as you say, "indicate at least a partial breaking away from the absurd attitude of assumed unconsciousness which has so long been Christianity's favorite method of treating the attacks of the *Freethinker*."
- E. H.—We thought we had said enough on that point in passing, but you seem to have overlooked it. No doubt it is natural that you should wonder why the clergy rush to answer Mr. Blatchford when they kept up a conspiracy of silence against Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* and our own *Freethinker*—in which all that Mr. Blatchford is saying has been said over and over again. But the explanation is very simple. If Mr. Blatchford had written in a Freethought journal, read chiefly by Freethinkers, the clergy would have treated him with silence too, and let him and his readers be damned in their own way. But it happened that he attacked Christianity in a paper that had fifty thousand readers, and a great many of them Christians, or at least professing Christians. This alarmed their professional interests. They were in danger of losing customers. Hence all these tears. But there will be silence again presently. They will only talk about Mr. Blatchford while they think it serves their turn. Whoever fancies otherwise is simply deceived.
- G. B. (Kiel).—Postcard to hand. Was it not Shelley who hit the bull's-eye with "King-deluded Germany"?
- H. EAGERS.—We believe you have chosen the better part.
- J. PHILPOTT.—Thanks for your suggestive leaflet on "Is Child-Labor Immoral?" It certainly seems an extraordinary thing, on the face of it, that children who will some day have to earn their living with their hands (not in other people's pockets) should be kept from using their hands at all during the most plastic time of their lives—and all in the name of Education! We are as convinced as you are that our present Education system needs radical overhauling. Still, the question of the employment of child-labor remains, and that must be considered on other grounds also. But the subject is too big to be dealt with in this column.

H. R. C.—Much obliged, but we do not publish reports of lectures, unless they contain something of very exceptional interest.

J. S. EAGLESON.—Will try to find room next week.

R. CHAPMAN.—Letter received. Very well.

J. BLACKHALL.—Such "midnight meetings" only show that Christianity is falling into the dirtiest gutter of sensationalism. To set a lot of drunken people hiccoughing about Jesus is a peculiar triumph of modern spirituality.

E. L. BURN.—Sorry the answer to your letter has been delayed. Let us say how much we are interested to know that you first saw the *Freethinker* through a Christian friend who thought it "rotten," that you read it yourself and told him you thought it first-rate, and that you now buy it regularly. You may get in touch with local Freethought by communicating with Mr. T. Elstob, 24 Woodbine-road, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. general secretary, desires to acknowledge the following subscriptions which she has handed over to Mrs. Fagan:—Scottish Freethinker, £1 ls.; F. D., 5s.

F. HOWARD.—We do not quite understand your right to reply for "Saladin." Besides, when we said that he represents nobody's views but his own on such questions as marriage and polygamy, we said no more than we are prepared to say of ourselves. You have just overlooked the word "represents."

W. D. MACGREGOR asks us to notify that the Edinburgh Secular Society has removed to a hall at 11 Melbourne-place, where local "saints" and sympathisers will be welcome on Sunday evenings.

THOMAS MARKS.—Glad to hear you so enjoyed Mr. Foote's lectures at Glasgow, but sorry to hear of your present illness, from which we hope you will soon recover. Mr. Foote had two or three debates with Mr. Harry Long at Glasgow (from twenty to twenty-five years ago) on different subjects.

W. P. PEARSON.—We note with pleasure your statement that Mr. J. M. Robertson had excellent audiences at his lectures for the Liverpool Branch on Sunday, the hall in the evening being crowded. Also that you are going to distribute a lot of our "God at Chicago" tracts at Torrey's meetings.

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

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some Personal Matters.

MANY, if not most of my readers, will recollect the trouble through which I passed in 1901. In June of that year the Freethought party were made acquainted with a matter that had been going on for many months behind the scenes, and I was obliged to speak out plainly about it, if only on the ground that full publicity is better than partial publicity, and that half a truth is often the worst of lies. But it is not my intention to inflict a long story a second time upon my readers. It is sufficient to say now that I was made a bankrupt by Mr. George Anderson, who paid solicitor and counsel to do that work for him, and paid them again to delay my discharge, but did not pay them to appear at my public examination, when he had an opportunity of proving if he could that I was an unworthy person, which would have been the only moral justification of his proceedings against me.

Mr. Anderson did more than make me a bankrupt. He repudiated his public promise to take 500 Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company, of which he was a promoter and one of the first Directors. All he ever took was 25. Yet all the other promises, with a few trifling exceptions, were honorably redeemed.

Putting the two things together, it was easy enough to see that Mr. Anderson's action was an

effort in wrecking. It was also easy enough to recognise the influences that inspired his action.

Let me say that my bankruptcy is at an end. My discharge took effect on September 10. I did not mention it at the time. The psychological moment had not arrived. It has arrived now.

Let me add that one or two kind friends, who have intimated an intention to remember me in some slight degree in their wills, in recognition of my long and hard work for Freethought, may now rest assured that not even the smallest amount of their money will ever fall into alien hands.

While he was pursuing me into the Bankruptcy Court, Mr. Anderson advertised through his friends at 17 Johnson's-court that he was prepared to give £15,000 on conditions (fairly impossible) towards building a Freethought Institute in London. It was in June that he made me bankrupt for £200. That very month he sent a cheque for £1,000 to his afore-said friends.

The £200 had been spent in maintaining the *Freethinker* and other things connected with it. The £1,000 was to be spent in promoting the Rationalist Press Association—which may be seen, by anyone who takes the trouble, to be a slightly modified copy of the Secular Society, Limited, which I registered in 1898.

Mr. Anderson's friends copied me still further by publishing sixpenny reprints—some of them, I admit, very admirable—on the heels of our sixpenny edition of Paine's *Age of Reason*. They made a great flourish of the fact that they were working with Mr. Anderson's money. But they showed a strange taste in seeking an advertisement in the *Freethinker*. We replied that we did not want any of Mr. Anderson's money. And this is all that took place. We went on with our own work, and left them to go on with theirs.

We had no desire for unnecessary friction, so we said nothing publicly; but Mr. Anderson's friends are now seeking trouble, and it is not our fault if they find it. After a great lapse of time they complain that—

"The *Freethinker* makes it a point to decline advertisements of the R. P. A. publications, and even last month refused to accept a half-page advertisement of the cheap edition of Colonel Ingersoll's lectures and essays."

This is a nice way of suggesting untruths. It would have been more honest to state *why* the only R. P. A. advertisement ever sent to the *Freethinker* was declined. The Ingersoll reprint is not an R. P. A. publication at all, though got up to look like one. And it would also have been more honest to state *why that* advertisement did not appear. There was "no room" for it "that week," the Secretary said; she would not upset existing arrangements in my absence. What I might have said myself, had the advertisement been marked for the following week, is a question, of course, that lacks actuality.

The National Secular Society has kept a dignified silence over many insults, and I will so far follow it as to state that I will say no more on that head unless I am expressly challenged.

But since this Ingersoll reprint is forced upon our attention I will say a few words about it. There is a Preface by an Editor who invites the reader to "make allowances" for Ingersoll's "exaggerations" and "many crudities," and states that some passages have been omitted as being "unduly fervent in expression." Well, it is a characteristic of genius to be fervent, and a characteristic of mediocrity to wish it otherwise. Ingersoll is a Freethought classic. Those who try to improve his text need never pray for a good conceit of themselves; and those who try to do business by publishing him should at least have the decency to let him appear "in his habit as he lived."

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had fine meetings in the big Public Baths Assembly Hall at Coventry on Sunday—better even than on the occasion of his previous visit. The audiences were very sympathetic and appreciative, and happily included a considerable number of ladies. Mr. Partridge, Mr. Pitt, and other "saints" came over from Birmingham, and three young Freethinkers came all the way from Leamington. Mr. Foote, who was congratulated on looking well, was in his old form again; a fact which was referred to, amidst great applause, by Councillor Jackson, who made an excellent chairman. Several questions and some discussion followed each lecture, and new members were enrolled by the N.S.S. Branch, whose officers said that they had "had a grand time." Mr. Cohen was announced to follow Mr. Foote after a fortnight's interval, Mr. Percy Ward follows a little later, and we understand that an effort will be made to bring Mr. John Lloyd to Coventry early in the new year. Altogether the new Coventry Branch may be congratulated on its success. It has done a lot of good in a short space of time. It has some very earnest workers, and a thoroughly zealous and able secretary in Mr. Lye.

Referring to the suggestion of a public debate between Mr. Foote and some local Christian representative, Councillor Jackson announced that there need be no worry on the financial side, for if the debate could be brought about he would be very happy to pay all the expenses himself. The meeting hardly realised what he said at first, but in a few moments it caught the point, and set up a mighty cheer.

Monday's *Midland Daily Telegraph*, under the heading of "Coventry and District," noticed Mr. Foote's lectures in the Baths Assembly Hall, and mentioned that "There were large audiences, and discussions followed the addresses."

Mr. Cohen had capital meetings at Glasgow on Sunday—the best he has had there yet, the hall being crowded in the evening. Birmingham and district "saints" will please note that Mr. Cohen lectures, afternoon and evening, in "Joe's town" to-day (Oct. 13), at the Prince of Wales Assembly Room.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake writes to us: "I think you ought to say in the *Freethinker* that I did what you say I ought to have done in vindication of the Birmingham Secular Society. My sister, who was a continual subscriber to its funds, and I did all we could in defence of the Society, and I wrote a letter in a leading newspaper of Birmingham, said to be the best defence of the rights of the Society to the use of the school-room they formerly held, which appeared."

We are delighted to be able to inform our readers that Mr. F. J. Gould, the Leicester Secular Society's secretary and organiser, and something beyond that too, has carried the Castle Ward seat on the Leicester Town Council. His opponent—a Conservative and a popular publican—had been on the Council for nine years. The voting was: Gould 965—Matts 841. A very satisfactory majority.

Those who professed to be sick of Mr. Gould and his "secular moral instruction" now find that more than half the voters in one Ward do not share their nausea. They have to reckon with Mr. Gould and his program again. And we hope it will do them good. It will certainly do the town good.

We are glad to see that the Liverpool Trades and Labor Council has forwarded a letter of protest to the City Council against letting the Picton Hall for such a long time to an entertainment company, thus debarring Trade Unions and other bodies from using the hall for meetings. The Liverpool N. S. S. Branch wanted to engage the Picton Hall for a Saturday night lecture by Mr. Foote, but the "entertainment company" blocked the way.

"Librarius" has an excellent letter on "Sunday as a Day of Rest" in the *Croydon Advertiser*. We wish Freethinkers would avail themselves more often of the opportunity to contribute "advanced" letters to the local press.

"Non-Resistance" is the subject of a discussion which will take place at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Wednesday evening, November 23, at 8, under the auspices of the Humanitarian League. Mr. Aylmer Maude and Captain Arthur St. John will be the chief speakers. No doubt some of our London readers would like to attend.

The New Theology.

WE are sometimes told that the field of conflict between the Religionist and the Freethinker has changed; and that therefore the anti-theological arguments require modification. We are told that the generals of the opposite party have all retired, and that the battlefield is only occupied by the rabble, who have not realised that they are beaten. This last proposition is largely true; but as it is the rabble with which we chiefly find ourselves confronted, the arguments that have driven their leaders from the field must still form our main artillery. The rampart of ignorance, or denial, is no longer available; for the chief scholars of the theological camp admit, and reinforce, the correctness of the positions upon which the opposing cause rests, and therefore there is no refuge from the Freethinker's conclusions. But what shall we say to the attitude taken up by the more cultured believers?

Dr. Driver's latest work* upon the Book of Genesis seems to have met a want, for it has already reached its second edition; but the ordinary believer must find it an amazing, and revolutionary, production, for it blandly accepts all that unbelievers have urged against the Bible for the last half-century. In an introduction of seventy-four pages the learned Doctor gives a careful summary of all the facts that we rely upon as proving the baselessness of all the statements in Genesis, and as far as these are concerned he evidently stands upon the same basis as the common, or garden, Secularist lecturer. As the typical Higher Critic of the century Dr. Driver commences by a demonstration of the three primary layers of authorship which may be detected in the Pentateuch, some of the characteristics that distinguish these layers being open to the ordinary reader, while others only reveal themselves to the Hebrew scholar. And when we grasp the idea of this triune authorship, there is no escape from the fact that the Pentateuch is the work of several schools that flourished at different dates, and that are comparatively recent in point of time.

Next we have a dissertation on "the Chronology of Genesis." The old familiar discrepancies between the Hebrew, Septuagint, and Samaritan figures for the ages of the patriarchs are trotted out; and the Doctor demonstrates to his own satisfaction, as well as that of the reader, that it is impossible for these figures to be historical. Some Assyriologists have endeavored upon very precarious grounds to synchronise Abraham with the old Babylonian king Hammurabi; and Egyptologists have committed themselves to theories about the Exodus. Dr. Driver exhibits a faith in these hypotheses which is quite unwarranted; but he is careful to indicate that even if they are true they are quite incompatible with the chronological statements of the Book of Genesis.

Then Genesis gives a certain account of the origin and early history of mankind. This account is not merely incredible but impossible. Assyriologists have proved that in 4000 B.C. Babylonia was already in possession of an elaborate civilisation bearing traces of a long history and wide vicissitudes. Egyptology has shown that at least as early as 4400 B.C. another civilisation, diverse from that of Babylonia, had developed along the Nile Valley; and below the remains of the oldest Egyptian culture there were the relics of an earlier race. Furthermore, at that remote period the Caucasian, Mongolian, and African races were differentiated from one another as clearly as they are to-day; not to speak of the American Indians, of whom the Bible knows nothing. But this is nothing compared with the evidence of archeology, geology, and palæontology. These sciences have proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that man existed upon the

earth "at an age which cannot indeed be measured in years B.C., but which, upon the most moderate estimate, cannot be less than 20,000 years from the present day;" and this is so well known that Dr. Driver refers the reader to "any recent manual of geology" for substantiation. In addition to this, it is evident that mankind has passed through a slow succession of gradually improving culture, typified by the terms of the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age, before reaching the Historical Period; whereas Genesis ascribes human civilisation to the arbitrary and sudden invention of one or two generations of individuals. In other words, the early history of mankind was immensely longer in point of time and slower in development than was conceived by the Hebrew writers.

Again, Genesis professes to give narratives relating to the ancestors of the surrounding tribes; but the very names themselves prove that they are the names of nations and not of individuals, so that the Hebrews knew nothing whatever of the origin of these tribes or nations, but arbitrarily imagined that they took their rise from an imaginary ancestor.

The Cosmogony of Genesis is summarily dismissed. The Biblical account of Creation is utterly incompatible with the elementary teachings of geology—not to mention that it is manifestly derived from the myths of the heathen Babylonians—and any attempt at reconciling science and Genesis can only spring from ignorance or eccentricity. The famous story of the Deluge is likewise derived from Babylonian sources, and has no foundation whatever in fact.

These, therefore, are the views upon the credibility of Genesis, as plainly stated by the most sober and most learned scholar of the English Church; and it may be added that they are the views held by any person of ordinary education. Dr. Driver himself is careful to observe:—

"Not one of the conclusions reached in the preceding pages is arrived at upon arbitrary or *a priori* grounds; not one of them depends upon any denial, or even doubt, of the supernatural or of the miraculous; they are, one and all, *forced upon us* by the facts; they follow directly from a simple consideration of the facts of physical science and human nature, brought to our knowledge by the various sciences concerned; from a comparison of these facts with the Biblical statements, and from an application of the ordinary canons of historical criticism. Fifty or sixty years ago, a different judgment, at least on some of the points involved, was no doubt possible: but the immense accession of knowledge, in the departments both of the natural sciences and of the early history of man, which have resulted from the researches of recent years, make it impossible now: the irreconcilability of the early narratives of Genesis with the facts of science and history must be recognised and accepted."

These words should be carefully noted! We have heard from Christian controversialists time without number that the objections to the Bible come from a blinded intellect and a depraved nature; but here is a doctor of the Church who expressly testifies that they are forced upon us by the indubitable facts. The blindness and the depravity are, therefore, not upon the side of the unbeliever.

But if the statements and stories of the Book of Genesis are thus discredited and disproved, what is there left? Dr. Driver still holds that the book has a religious value; that it is to a certain sense "inspired"; and that it teaches moral lessons!

The *religious* value of Genesis is no concern of ours; except that a religion formed upon such a basis is a most despicable thing.

The "inspiration" is not at all obvious. Dr. Driver is careful to disown what he calls "verbal inspiration"; but, really, *verbal* inspiration is the only logical one. If the Jewish writers were divinely guided to deliver lessons which would not otherwise have occurred to mankind, we should expect the lesson to be given in such a form as not to be discredited upon side issues. It is somewhat puerile to fall back upon such a contention as that the Bible

* "The Book of Genesis." By S. R. Driver, D.D. (London, 1904.)

was not *dictated* but only *inspired*; for if the divinity had a message to offer it would have been much better to have stated it plainly than to have merely breathed general ideas through fallible minds that may not have understood or appreciated them. Besides this, it is no use talking about verbal inspiration or plenary inspiration or any other kind of inspiration until it has been proved that something *has* been inspired. Our contention is that the Bible contains nothing whatever but what has been independently acquired by other men through the exercise of their ordinary faculties; and until that position has been overthrown, theories of inspiration are unnecessary.

As to Bible ethics, the Book of Genesis can be at once dismissed; for it does not contain a single narration of a creditable or moral action; and many of the performances of its heroes would ensure their speedy appearance before the magistrate, if repeated in a modern European country. But the new theology, represented by such men as Dr. Driver, professes to rest upon the moral teaching of the Old Testament. It professes to abandon Biblical history and science, and rest itself upon Biblical ethics. This wheeling movement, it is unnecessary to say, does not enable theology to present a new front; it is merely the reversion to an old battlefield. The early Deists and Freethinkers did not oppose the Bible upon scientific or historical grounds. They had no sure scientific or historical knowledge to rely upon. Their objection was to the morality (or, rather, want of morality) of the Bible. They argued that the wise and benevolent deity, whom they professed to trace in Nature, could never have inspired the bestial and cruel atrocities inculcated and described in the Old Testament; and they enlarged to the fullest extent upon the immoralities to be found strewn all over the biblical volume. They gave full credit for the moral lessons they thought they could trace, but they showed that these were by no means unique; for they were equalled, if not surpassed, by those of classical antiquity. It is therefore difficult to appreciate the novelty of the New Theology.

The difficulty of the new theological position is increased by the fact that we only know the Hebrew writings through a double translation. The original was rendered into Greek about the beginning of the Christian era, and the Greek is the real basis of all modern European versions. The Greeks were the founders of ethics and philosophy, and therefore they consciously or unconsciously read ethics and philosophy into the Semitic work before them. Many passages of the Old Testament are so obscure, that they are only given an intelligible meaning at all by reference to the Greek; and we may understand how precarious this is by appealing to the many instances where it is obvious that the Greeks merely *guessed* at the sense of the words before them. Orthodox Jewish exegesis is still more untrustworthy; for the Jewish doctors have been subject to many Gentile streams of influence, and their methods of interpretation are chiefly characterised by an unbridled use of the imagination. It is therefore legitimately open for discussion whether the ethical ideas that the new theology professes to discover in the Old Testament are not really due to the interpretation of later Christian and Greek readers, rather than the design of the original writers; just as religious enthusiasts read into the modern English version ideas and teachings that are quite invisible to the ordinary student. The history of the Jewish people certainly does not support the view that they were illuminated by any moral spirit that rendered them better than their neighbors; and the more we know of their neighbors the worse appears the conduct of the Hebrew people.

The answer to the New Theology would therefore be to revert to the old Freethought, and to insist upon the essentially immoral nature of all biblical teaching.

CHILPERIC.

The Church and the Stage.

THE popularity of the Theatre has long been a pill "bitter as coloquintida" to the clergy, who watch with envious eyes the flocking crowds that choose the "Entrance to the Pit" rather than "The Way to Heaven." But every dog will have his day; and, though these are not the dog-days, signs are not lacking that the Church is bidding successfully for a return of that popularity she has missed of recent years. "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons" don't by any means exhaust her devices. She has others.

Sermons in character-costumes will be a feature of church services in the future. In a Glasgow church last week a "colonel" of the Salvation Army gave a lecture on "Japan: Its People, Customs, S. A. Work, etc."; and as a special attraction it was widely advertised that "the colonel will appear in Japanese costume." Let the Stage look to her laurels. The Church will soon outbid her.

When "General" Booth appears on the platform in a motoring suit—

A motoring godling I—
A thing to make you wonder,
Of blood and fire and thunder
The burthen of my cry!—

the second-rate actors may retire. And when the Rev. R. J. Campbell gives in his pulpit a realistic representation of Paul struck blind at Damascus (with lime-light effects) even Martin Harvey and George Alexander will find themselves deserted by the ladies. The play's the thing; and more likely to catch the public when tricked out in religious trappings and acted on the altar stairs.

FRED. L. GREIG.

Our "Bettors."

THE ordinary Englishman hears and knows more about the aristocracy than he does about his own family. He cannot tell who his grandfathers on both sides were, and never heard of his great-grandfather; but he is extremely illiterate if he cannot tell you something of the pedigree of at least one nobleman. The nobility fill his halfpenny paper; they are the heroes of his fiction and the ideals of his own peculiar taste. There is not only the political, the romantic, and literary noble, but the cricketing, horse-racing, philanthropic, scientific, theologic, and wandering noble; yet not one man in five thousand ever comes across a nobleman in the whole course of his life.

I say that an Englishman knows more of the aristocracy than of his own family and environment. That is, he himself gives more time and attention to the aristocracy than to them; he has more statements in regard to them within his memory than he has facts relating to his own origin, career, and present circumstances, and to those of his own family and the whole of his acquaintances during the course of his life. A man who could not tell you if his own father were the first or last son of his parents will tell you off-hand that the present heir to the crown is a second son. The noble is, in fact, a myth, whose real nature and life are mysteries. He is the mere figment and creature of plays, novels, and newspapers; and what they depict him is his whole substance to the remainder of the population, except his servants and his various parasites. Unhappily, the world at large cannot see the aristocrat as these persons see him. Their evidence—*because* they have the only means of judging the aristocrat apart from all convention—is tabooed; and a view, or description, of his life founded on their evidence is discredited because it is *their* evidence; notwithstanding that evidence is that which is every day regarded as the most trustworthy and authentic in our Courts of Law, and is the first adduced by the aristocrat himself, after that of members of his own class.

But there is another class of evidence, which, however, is unimpeachable. It is not that which is found in bath-rooms, in wash-tubs, in corridors, in boudoirs, in clubs, or in the privacy of depopulated moors and glens; it is that evidence of the daily life of the aristocrat supplied publicly by those who seek to minister to him, and make known to him their services through the medium of the advertisement sheets of his exclusive journals.

Of all the papers the *Morning Post* is the most aristocratic. It is the acknowledged organ of the Nobility, the

Gentry, the Clergy, and the Professions. It proverbially represents the "Classes"—our "betters; our pastors and masters, and all who are put in authority over us"; and its pages demonstrate the truth of the calibre of the "natural leaders of the people," as they used to describe themselves with an absolute authority it is impossible for anyone to deny. The reader can estimate that calibre by a few of the advertisements which recently appeared together in it in the same number. These lead off with Three Retreats for Ladies, to be given by Jesuits at a Convent near London. The next is "A Nursing Bureau," giving information regarding "Homes" for Medical, Surgical, and Mental cases, and for "Backward and Delicate Children." Then is one which tells that there are Nursing Homes in Doctors' Private Houses where not more than two Patients are taken; in these "Maternity, Medical, and Surgical Cases" are taken, with "Care of Invalids and Children." It ends with "Strictest privacy." There are horrors opened here which Wilkie Collins never dreamed of. "Maternity and Surgical cases, and Invalids and Children taken care of with the strictest privacy." Ugh!

"Hygienic Complexions and Neck Treatments" follow. Then a lotion to reduce obesity, warranted to "make one lose from 4 to 9 lbs. a week." Another advertisement of a sham complexion; one of massage; then, farther on, "A Young Widow" wishes to share her "cosy" Flat with a Professional, or other Lady. Then, a little lower, "Cherie" is asked to "Meet me at twelve" at a Servants' Registry by "Elaine." This is succeeded by the announcements of eight witches jolting each other together.

The first has a "wonderful crystal"—she has "developed great power since her visit to India," and is a clairvoyante and palmist fortune teller—and has been eight years in Bond-street. The second also is a "Crystal Gazer," divines by hands and is "clairvoyante." The next is ultra refined and merely gives her name, address, and "Society Palmist and Clairvoyant." This sorceress is evidently proud of her culture as she drops the redundant "e" to clairvoyant, which her sisters affect. The fourth is a man—but a mysterious one—"Sphero," who contents himself with being a "Physiological Palmist" merely. Madame La Merveille is the next—Merveille she is by name and "marvel" she is by nature, being no less than "a seventh child of a seventh child." Estelle, the sixth pythoness, contents herself with the one word "Palmistry"; but Madame Delva, the seventh, caps her predecessors altogether. She starts off with that "She has developed the powers of healing—cases of two years' standing entirely cured." This miracle-worker beats all the world has seen, for she undertakes surgical cases. This puts Jesus in the shade, for he confined himself to inflammation of the eyes, marsh fevers, and hysterical paralysis.

This awe-inspiring company winds up with a Celtic lady who "completely obliterates" the red veins of the eyeballs, thus "making them bluey white." But she is nothing to "De Medici," the inventor of the "Medician" imperceptible mask for ladies motoring, and the Hiawatha Indian Oil, the "greatest muscle builder known." For 10s. 6d. one may obtain of this American, "Facial Exercises and Manipulations, including the new Eye Treatment," and, presumably at similar rates, have all one's "wrinkles, flabby flesh, scars, and blemishes removed."

Poverty makes one acquainted with strange bedfellows. But prosperity has brought the Jesuits into strange company. Their advertisement leads off those of a troop of persons to whom the laws of England apply most offensive names; but seeing that the Jesuits managed to get £300 from a paper which ventured to apply to them the designation given them in an Act of Parliament passed within living memory, those offensive names will not be applied to that troop of persons here; for if it be a libel to use the language of the British Parliament to the men who lead off these advertisements, it must also be libellous to use that other language which Parliament has applied to those whose advertisements follow. But however impossible it now is to quote the statutes of the realm about Jesuits and such fry, these advertisements in the family newspaper of the highest and driest aristocrats suffice to explode that general craze which makes Englishmen look to an aristocrat as the ideal of every phase of life; which supplants a doctor cricketer by a "Prince," which buys a quarter of a million photographs of the Queen in the mortar-board of a doctor of music; and which has more than once made a mere turfite Premier merely because he was a peer. The madness which makes him plank down his money on the most insane projects if guaranteed by anything in the shape of a title; and allows the aristocrat to govern him by a right of birth which gives an idiot, deaf, blind, and dumb, a seat as judge in the Court of Appeal, this craze is a living religion—one about whose vitality there needs no controversy. The anthropomorphism of caste holds us in a thousand physical slaveries which we are enduring in meekness, and which

need our assaults equally with those oppressions of the intellect produced by the creeds and revelations of the churches.

GEORGE TREBELLS.

The Crystallization of Mrs. Lot; or, The Sacred Salt-Cellar.

"His wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt."—JEHOVAH.

"Remember Lot's wife."—JESUS.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God."—ST. PAUL.

"But Lot's wife continually turning back to view the city as she went from it, and being too nicely inquisitive what would become of it, although God had forbidden her to do so, was changed into a pillar of salt: for I have seen it, and it remains at this day."—JOSEPHUS.

WHEN Mrs. Lot turned round to look
At Yahveh's "golden-rain"
Which fell upon—see Yahveh's book—
The cities of the plain,
Her joints and muscles jammed;
Her blood ran cold, then coolly stopped;
She never moved, nor even flopped,
But muttered: "Well I'm—crystallized!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

"What Might Have Been."

IF Adam had but saved a "thou"
Each year since he was bare,
He now would have six millions—
Most a multimillionaire.

IF Jonah had been up to snuff,
He would have plainly seen
That his whale could have been lobbied
As an autosubmarine.

IF Joshua had known his "biz,"
And merged the system stellar,
There would have been no Standard Oil
Or righteous Rockefeller.

IF our old friend Methuselah
Had lived till now—just fahncy!—
He could have given cards and spades
In mossy tales to Chawncey.

IF Noah had but formed a trust
In ships, and bought an organ,
By now he might be 'most as rich
As our J. Pierpont Morgan.

IF Balaam came to earth again,
And his donk-ass wasn't there,
What do you s'pose he'd ride upon?
The holy coaly Baer.

IF Moses had been up to date
With Egypt's public works,
He might have owned 'em all and been
"A bigger man" than Yerkes.

IF Joseph hadn't left his coat
With Mrs. P. in rage,
It might have made a winter wrap
For poor old Russell Sage.

IF Dives with his early start
Had just learned how to milk
The public cow his name might be
Vanguldenasterbilk.

IF Solomon the muchly wed
And all his female cargo
Could only be with us to-day
They might live in Chicago.

IF when those devils cornered pork
They hadn't been such farmers,
And spoiled the pigs in too much brine,
They might have been the Armours.

IF poor Barabbas had but known
The way to spell his job,
He might have built on Riverside
A cot, like Cholly Schwab.

IF Ananias had known how
To work subscription lists,
He might have made his pile and been
The king of journalists.

—W. E. P. French, in "Life."

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.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, Religious Freethought Parliament; all lovers of truth invited; 7.30, W. J. Ramsey.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): Doors open 7, chair 7.30, H. O. Newland, F.R.H.S., "The Struggle for Citizenship."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms, Broad-street): 3, C. Cohen, "Some Old Problems with Modern Answers"; 7, "Atheism or Theism: The Final Issue." Thursday, Nov. 17, Bull Ring Coffee House, 8, M. Klein, "Russia and its Literature."

FAIRFORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "The Influence of Science on Brain Power."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Joseph McCabe, "Christian Europe in Pagan Asia"; 6.30, "The Legend of the Virgin Birth."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Philosophy of Science.—IV."; 7, H. Percy Ward, "What Know Ye of Christ?" Monday, 8, Rationalist Debating Society: Alex. C. Wilson, "Some Objections to the Municipalisation of the Drink Traffic."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Schweizer, "The Re-birth of Japan."

OLDBAM SECULAR SOCIETY (St. George's Hall, corner of Lord-street and Rock-street): 2.45, Charles Watts, "A Rationalist's View of Religion and Education"; 6.45, "Science and Christianity: Are they in Harmony?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7.30, lecture arrangements.

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