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PRICE TWOPENCE

*The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die.*
—SHAKESPEARE.

Another Word on Shakespeare.

PARTRIDGE is a favorite dish in France, but, as the French proverb says, it is possible to have too much partridge. Some people may say the same of Shakespeare. And they are right—as far as *they* are concerned. Others probably feel that while you can hardly have too much Shakespeare you can easily have too much *about* Shakespeare. For was it not Hazlitt who said that if you wanted to know the height of genius you should read Shakespeare, and if you wanted to know the depth of folly you should read his commentators? Heaven preserve us (as the saying is) from entering *that* category! Yet we opine that, without being a commentator, one may have something to say about Shakespeare which is not entirely unacceptable to persons of good sense and good feeling; and in this spirit we venture to add a little to what we wrote last week.

Since April 23, which is St. George's Day, and should be Shakespeare's Day, there has been a Shakespeare week. At Stratford-on-Avon, in London, and elsewhere, people have been showing their appreciation of England's "greatest asset" in the world's literature. A fresh impetus has also been given to the project of a Shakespeare Memorial.

We see by the *Daily Chronicle* that the London Shakespeare Commemoration began on Monday evening with a lecture by the Dean of Ely in the theatre at Burlington House on "Shakespeare as a National Prophet." Dr. Furnivall, president of the London Shakespeare League, was in the chair, and we dare say he said something, but it is not reported. Being himself an Agnostic, he may have drawn attention to Shakespeare's heterodoxy. But the lecturer was naturally not bent in that direction. He claimed the poet as a great friend of religion. Nothing else, indeed, could have been expected. And this may account for the "somewhat sparse audience."

Only a very brief account of the Dean of Ely's lecture was given. Here is the whole of it:—

"Shakespeare and Christianity" would have been a more appropriate title for the Dean's discourse. He showed that Shakespeare had no interest in official religion, being rather the child of the Renaissance than of Puritanism. But religion in the deepest sense was never absent from his work. He created no heroes—as Ruskin said—only heroines. And the Dean made an excellent point by showing that Shakespeare never lost his reverence for womanhood, a reverence that we owe to Catholic Christianity with its exaltation of the Virgin."

The Dean admits that Shakespeare had no interest in "official religion"—that is, we presume, in the religion formulated by the Church of England and imposed upon the people by the State. But this official religion does not differ essentially from the unofficial religion of the Nonconformists. The difference is not one of doctrine, but one of discipline; not of faith, but of organisation.

The admission that Shakespeare was rather the child of the Renaissance than of Puritanism, is only

another way of saying that he belonged to the intellectual rather than the religious movement, and was rather a Pagan than a Christian. And, after all, the Renaissance was the great, deep movement, and the Reformation a shallow and comparatively unimportant one. Bruno represented a more profound movement than Luther did, as Europe is gradually coming to see; and Shakespeare happily embodied the spirit of the Renaissance in the highest achievements of English poetry before the blight of Puritanism fell upon the nation and its literature.

So much for the Dean of Ely's admissions. What he says on the positive side may mean anything or nothing. We should like to see a definition, or at least a description, of the "religion in the deepest sense" that was never absent from Shakespeare's work. If this religion simply means the highest ethics there is truth in the Dean's contention, though it is very poorly expressed; for the fact is that Shakespeare is by far our greatest ethical teacher—morality being woven into the very texture of his dramas; not the morality of churches or schools, but the morality of nature and life—the morality that harmonises the vast and tumultuous interplay of human passions.

With regard to the Dean of Ely's last observations, we beg to ask whether it is not a species of impertinence to compliment Shakespeare on never having lost his reverence for womanhood. Why should the greatest of the sons of men (and therefore of woman) have less reverence for his mother's sex than an ordinary English clergyman? So far from being in any danger of despising and degrading women, *as* women, Shakespeare always gives them the advantage over men in height and depth of moral feeling—except in rare pathological cases like a Regan or a Goneril. The bright and witty Beatrice flashes out her "Kill Claudio!" against the halting futilities of the bright and witty Benedick when a woman's truth and honor (and that not her own) has to be defended from a cruel and cowardly affront. And a few straight, strong, daring words from the mouth of the not too fastidious Emilia sweep away at once and for ever the cobwebs (woven by malignity on this side and weakness on that) which had caught the lovely and lovely-souled Desdemona in their fatal meshes. Men sometimes fail in these vindications; women never fail in them; and the fact that Shakespeare saw it intuitively is one of the greatest tributes to his genius. He who wrote that "Conscience is born of love"—the profoundest sentence ever uttered—knew that morality had its first birth in a woman's heart, and that the radical power of ethics still flows through the channel of motherhood.

Shakespeare owed his reading of woman *as* woman to his genius; to his emotional power, the majesty of his intellect, and the might of his imagination. To say that he owed it in any way to Christianity is to talk nonsense. Shakespeare drew no women of the type of the Virgin; his female gallery held no spouses of Christ. His best women were more than fit mates for his best men. The immortal scene between Brutus and Portia shows that the ideal of the loved and honored wife and mother belonged to the Pagan conception of things, and was lowered rather than elevated by the triumph of Christianity.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Crux of Theism.

IN the current issue of the *Hilbert Journal*, Mr. W. H. Mallock once again plays the part of candid friend to the Christian world. The office is an unthankful one, and his article will rouse anything but joyful feelings in the breasts of believers. It is unbelievers who will read his essay with the greatest pleasure, and readers of the *Freethinker* in particular will find therein nothing but arguments with which they are already fairly familiar. For, however new the points may be to the religious reader—and Mr. Mallock writes under the evident impression that they are anything but old—those who care to refer to back numbers of this journal will find every one of his arguments dwelt upon time after time in articles criticising Theistic beliefs. And it is only part of the ordinary course of things that the coarse and vulgar *Freethinker* should provide for its readers much that is afterwards served up by philosophic writers—and Mr. Mallock has a legitimate claim to this title—in leading magazines as original contributions to the world of thought. If the *Freethinker* only put on a larger air of superiority, and contained less clear thinking and less forcible writing than it does contain, it would stand much higher in the estimation of some people than is the case at present.

Mr. Mallock's article is on "The Crux of Theism," and is chiefly concerned with clearing away points that are often defended by the one side and attacked by the other, but which are yet not vital to the real question at issue. The first question dealt with is that of Materialism. The present writer has pointed out on more than one occasion that whether philosophic materialism or philosophic idealism be accepted does not make any appreciable difference to the belief in Deity. Whether we call existence "matter" or "spirit" is a mere question of preference for one word rather than another, and really leaves the fundamental issue as before. For the real question at issue, as Mr. Mallock points out, is the question of determinism, and not the question of the nature of ultimate existence. What the Theist is really contending for is what Mr. Mallock calls "Freedom," but which is really the possibility of indeterminate phenomenon, while the essence of the position of the non-Theist is that causation, or determinism, is, so far as we can see—or even think—universal.

Now, whether we call existence "matter" or "spirit" or "soul," we make no difference to this question, unless we hold that "matter" involves and "spirit" excludes determinism. If we assume that "matter" exists outside consciousness exactly as it exists within consciousness—which no thinker, by the way, believes—and that matter and the motions of matter form the cause of all phenomena, then there is obviously no room for divine agency. The chain of causation is universal and unbreakable, and human nature falls under the same generalisation. And even though we abolish "matter" altogether, and assert it to be an illusion—that the real thing is "spirit," of which matter is a product—the Theist is no better off. Determinism still holds the field. All that has happened, and all that will ever happen, has had and will have a definite assignable cause, and the scientific method rules just as completely as before. There is still no room for "divine" interference at any point, nor is any such interference ever conceivable. All that has been done is to exchange a physical determinism for a psychical determinism. But the determinism is as complete as before; and it is upon this that Theist and non-Theist join issue.

Clearing away all extraneous matter, the question at issue, says Mr. Mallock, would be reduced to this: "How can the will and spirit of the individual man be conceived of as independent of the universal will and spirit from which by slow stages they are discovered visibly emerging, by which they are constantly sustained, without whose nutriment they would die, and with which (as far as observation can show us anything) every one of their movements is

cont. ed?" And the answer is that this cannot conceivably be shown, so long as the terms of the question are clearly realised. An unconditioned force is a downright absurdity. Any force—call it what you will—must be conditioned, if only by the fact of its own existence. It must operate in certain specific ways, and its operations must always be repeated under identical conditions. And, therefore, a scientific interpretation of man and nature is always possible given time and knowledge; while it is against the possibility of such an explanation that the Theist is really fighting.

Mr. Mallock's second example of the way in which the Theist fights a shadow instead of the substance is taken from the domain of evolution. Religious apologists, he points out, are fond of asserting that the evolutionary process of nature not only fails to exclude purpose, but actually implies it. And Mr. Mallock is of opinion that the possibility of purpose in nature may be admitted by the non-Theist without it at all helping the Theist. From one point of view this may be correct, since it is not purpose in general, but a specific purpose, that modern Theism requires. But it is by no means plain, as Mr. Mallock assumes, that purpose is to be admitted as a scientific probability. Indeed, if what Mr. Mallock says, and what has been said above, on the question of determinism is sound, there is no room whatever for purpose in nature. Purpose here would plainly involve either a universe limited in time and created with special endowments to secure a special result, or the operation of an external intelligence moulding and directing cosmical forces to its own end. The latter may at once be set on one side as too crude for anyone like Mr. Mallock to entertain. And the first is untenable for the reason that if determinism rules—if, that is the universe in general and in detail is the exact result of all preceding conditions—then there is no room for purpose. Or, to put the matter in another way, if all that is follows of a mathematical necessity from mere existence, there can be no purpose deduced from anything that exists, for the reason that nothing else could by any possibility have existed. And purpose clearly involves the assumption that in the absence of a purposive intelligence things would have resulted in some way different to that which is actually the case. Clearly, then, universal determinism destroys the possibility of purpose; and it is a sure instinct that has led Theists to fight for some region to which the principle of causation does not apply.

But Mr. Mallock is correct in asserting that the Theist in arguing his case does confuse two distinct things. What he ought to prove is that the universe is instinct with purpose of a highly specialised kind. What he actually tries to prove is that the belief in evolution is not incompatible with the belief in purpose in general, which is not at all the same thing. What the Theist claims is that the purposes of God can be traced in his works, and that these are expressly and entirely good. And Mr. Mallock rightly points out that in this claim there are two things to be borne in mind. First, "The essential goodness which the Theist ascribes to God is a goodness which is what it is because it relates to man"; and second, in the logic of Theism, "Man" not only stands for the race; it also, and primarily, stands for the individual. Or, to again vary the form of statement, the Theist has to prove that the goodness of God is identical with the goodness of man, and that his goodness is exemplified in the purposes adopted for the well-being of the individual, as well as for the gradual perfecting of the race.

Stated in this manner the issue is perfectly clear, and its clarity is probably the reason for its non-adoption by the average Theist. For there is nothing that so helps people to maintain an absurd position as the use of ambiguous language, while a considerable step to its surrender has been made when the issue has been raised in a perfectly clear and intelligible manner.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

"Ideals of Living."

THE articles by "J. B." which appear week by week in the *Christian World*, are always well worth reading. They are the productions of a highly cultured mind, and no narrow sectarianism ever mars their beauty. Mr. Brierley belongs to a growing school of unconventional and progressive Christian thinkers, who are always much in advance of the rank and file of their followers; and his articles cannot but accomplish a vast amount of good. But, in spite of his exceedingly liberal and catholic views and sympathies, Mr. Brierley is a thorough Christian. He treats of every subject from a distinctly Christian point of view. His theology is extremely heterodox; but it is genuine theology, all the same. He looks at Christianity from a literary point of view, and at literature from a Christian standpoint.

In the *Christian World* for April 27, 1905, he discourses on "Ideals of Living," with special reference to an article in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal* entitled, "Christian, Greek, or Goth?" by an Oxford scholar, a Fellow of Merton. With Mr. Brierley's criticism of that article, it is not my purpose to deal at all, at present, inasmuch as I wish to examine some of his own theological affirmations, which are in the highest degree significant.

We are convinced that to enlightened thinkers Orthodoxy is no longer possible; and yet, to depart from orthodoxy is logically more impossible still, to those who desire to retain Christianity. Matthew Arnold argued, with great eloquence and force, that the doctrines of the Personality of God, the Trinity, and the proper Deity of Christ, are utterly untenable, and he was doubtless right; but it was wildest folly on his part to imagine that Christianity could survive such doctrines. Apart from the supernatural and miraculous, Christianity would soon lose its individuality and power; and it is a fact that many of those who shared Arnold's opinions are pronounced Agnostics to-day. According to Orthodoxy, "Christianity is not only an external institution of Natural Religion, and a new promulgation of God's general Providence, as righteous Governor and Judge of the world; but it contains also a revelation of a particular dispensation of Providence, carried on by his Son and Spirit, for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented, in Scripture, to be in a state of ruin." That definition, given by Butler in his famous *Analogy*, is undoubtedly a fair deduction from the teaching of the New Testament; and the substance of it has been regarded by the Church, in all ages, as absolutely authoritative. If we take the New Testament as our guide, there can be no doubt whatever but that the supreme object of Christianity was and is to redeem, renew, restore, recover, and save lost and ruined humanity. But Mr. Brierley informs us that what Christianity precisely stands for is "a force restrained, tempered with gentleness, devoted to noble uses." As Newman maintained, there can be no common ground between Christianity and the religion of progress. The religion of Christ is based on the conviction, or, as Newman puts it, on "the great truth," of the lostness and corruption of man. Our nature is evil, not good, and produces evil things, not good things. Such is the plain teaching of the Epistles of Paul, and such is the foundation upon which the Christian scheme has been erected.

Now, the theory of evolution, of which Mr. Brierley is an able advocate, completely undermines this foundation upon which Christianity has been made to rest. It teaches us, in unmistakable terms, that man is not a lost and ruined sinner, but a half-blind, blundering groping after unattained and largely unattainable developments. According to Mr. Brierley, what Christianity is eminently qualified to do is, not to redeem, regenerate, and save man, but to guide the long process of his evolution. What we need is, not salvation in the Biblical and eccle-

siastical sense, but direction and strengthening on our upward way. This is perfectly true, from the evolutionary point of view; but judged by New Testament teaching, it is absolutely false and most pernicious.

It is impossible to understand how men of ripe culture, like Mr. Brierley, are able to renounce all that is essential to Christianity and still call themselves Christians. It is as absurd as if a man who rejected the theories of Natural Selection and the Struggle for Existence were to pronounce himself a thorough-going evolutionist, or as if a denier of the discoveries of Copernicus and Kepler were to style himself a modern astronomer. If Christianity is a revealed religion, it is to be found in its completeness in the New Testament, and any other version of it can be nothing but a wilful perversion. If the New Testament is right, Mr. Brierley must be wrong; and if Mr. Brierley is wrong in departing from the major part of the teaching of the New Testament, why does he persist in calling himself a Christian?

Mr. Brierley regards Christianity as one out of many schoolmasters; but here again our friend is in opposition to the New Testament. Does not Paul assert that without faith in Christ there can be no salvation? Did he not tell the Galatians that they were "all sons of God, through faith in Jesus Christ?" Did he not inform the Athenians that, in spite of their profound religiosity, they were in total ignorance of God, and that he was among them to make God known to them in the face of Jesus Christ? Greece might have had culture, but it was not redeeming culture. Rome might have had culture, but it was not saving culture. What is the use of a multiplicity of schoolmasters, what is the use of any culture however comprehensive and profound, if it be true that faith in Christ alone can give deliverance from the love and the bondage of sin, and insure acceptance with God? In Christ only, "and in none other, is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

Mr. Brierley writes as if he would enlist Paul on his side. Using the Apostle's own words he says: "We are debtors also to the Greek and to the Barbarian"; that is, we owe them a deep debt of gratitude for what they have communicated to us. But Paul meant a different kind of debt altogether. When he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise," his meaning was, that he was in debt to all these people until he imparted to them the grandest treasure in the Universe, namely, the Gospel of Christ, which "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 14-16). To him no culture was of any value whatever except the saving knowledge of God in Christ, for which knowledge he counted all other things to be loss and dung. Was Paul mistaken? That is Mr. Brierley's lookout, for Paul says concerning his Gospel: "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. i. 12). In the light of such teaching how utterly absurd and disloyal it must be for a Christian to say that "while taking Christianity as our schoolmaster, we have, with all frankness, to admit that it has not been the only one."

As an expounder of Christianity, Mr. Brierley is wonderfully liberal and broad and unorthodox, but as an apologist he evinces incredible narrowness and bigotry. He asserts unblushingly that Christian morality is infinitely superior to every other type of morality in the world. But, we ask, wherein does this infinite superiority consist? What moral duties did Christ enjoin that had not been previously enjoined times without number, and by many teachers? Mr. Brierley knows very well that he cannot claim originality for a single moral precept inculcated in the New Testament; and he knows equally well that all the so-called Christian virtues have been seen, in-

numerable times, outside Christendom. And yet has the audacity to speak thus:—

"We are bidden to note the significance of the term 'gentleman,' of the term 'chivalry,' and of the term 'honor.' They are not, we are told, Christian products. Christianity did not, could not, create the gentleman. We answer confidently there would have been no gentleman without it. And as to chivalry and honor, their very being in the sense we know them to-day, is rooted in Christianity."

Is Mr. Brierley, after all, a sophist? Does he seek, by the clause, "in the sense we know them to-day," to complicate the issue? Are not the qualities for which these terms, "gentleman," "chivalry," and "honor" stand, to be met with in all ages and countries, irrespective of the religion professed by the people? Will Mr. Brierley tell us that there were no gentlemanly, chivalrous, and honorable men in Sparta under the institutions of Lycurgus? Will he tell us that Augustus was not a gentleman and had neither chivalry nor honor? Are there no people in China and Japan, are there no Mohammedan Arabs, by whom those qualities are exemplified in as high degree as by any in Christendom? We are sure that Mr. Brierley will readily admit that heroes of the noblest type are to be found among all races of men, whether Pagan or Christian, savage or civilised.

But there is more to be said on this point. There is a fact of vital importance to which Mr. Brierley does not refer. It is a fact that is fatal to his doctrine. If the fine virtues under consideration are rooted in Christianity, how is it that so few Christians exhibit them? This is a fact that requires to be bravely met and explained. Mr. Brierley is fully aware that he is surrounded by thousands of zealous Christians who sadly lack the three beautiful qualities, whose "very being," he assures us, "is rooted in Christianity"; and he must be also aware that there are others, although not Christians, nor even nominal believers in Christianity, in whom those lovely attributes have been developed to great heights of perfection. I know two Atheists, husband and wife, living in one of our colonies, the simplicity, nobility, and beauty of whose character are profoundly admired by all who know them. They have been Atheists from early childhood; and yet in all the attributes of manhood and womanhood they are superior to the majority of their neighbours. Many say: "They are Christians without knowing it; it is Jesus who has brought out these sweet blossoms on the tree of their character." It is the quintessence of impertinence to give expression to such unmitigated nonsense. They are *not* Christians, either knowingly or unknowingly. They are simply true to themselves, making the best and most of the natures they have received from their ancestors. There are many things in the Bible upon which they set a high value; there are sayings attributed to Jesus which they consider both true and beautiful; but they are not followers of Jesus any more than they are of Confucius, or Buddha, or Mahommed.

Mr. Brierley believes that "the modern crusade against Christianity will fail, as others have, because it is a crusade against the inmost nature of things, which is working inevitably towards a spiritual end." What a strange confusion of ideas is here. On what ground does our friend identify Christianity with the "inmost nature of things?" We challenge Mr. Brierley to tell us what the "inmost nature of things" is. This is almost as difficult to define as Christianity itself. If the "inmost nature of things is working inevitably towards a spiritual end," what need is there of Christianity? Then, what are we to understand by a "spiritual end?" Is it a high state of morality, a perfect social condition, or what? We are inclined to think that "what has been realised in the experience of the saints, and in innermost rapture" is largely a thing of the past, while "entire self-conquest and the devotion of the powers to highest uses" are achievements of the future. Morality is a flower that grows out of the soil of humanity, and it grows among Pagans as well as among Christians.

But while Mr. Brierley is of opinion that the modern crusade against Christianity will fail, he is by no means indifferent to its reality and strength. He solemnly warns his friends against underestimating it. He says: "The signs become every day more evident of a revolt, not against this or that theological scheme—we are by this time quite accustomed to that—but against Christianity itself as an ideal of living." But he is mistaken when he states that this revolt is against the Christian morality as such; it is rather against the supernatural sanctions and motives for morality upon which Christianity lays so much stress. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as Christian morality. It is only against a certain number of the moral maxims of Christianity that Freethought is in revolt. The main pressure of the revolt is against the supernatural elements in Christianity; and in this form we are firmly convinced, not only that the revolt will not fail, but also that it has already achieved wonderful successes and is destined to be more successful still in the future.

J. T. LLOYD

God of Peace.

It seems almost impossible to find an assertion on anything in the Bible without another to contradict it. It seems to be a book of pros and cons on all kinds of subjects. In many parts of the Old Testament we find God a very warlike being. In fact, he is called a God of hosts—that is, a God of armies. Psalm lxxx. seems to be a prayer to God to show his powers as a God of armies to save his people from their enemies. The words used are these: "O Lord, God of hosts," which are repeated several times. In Amos v. 27 God is represented as claiming the title and character to himself: "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts."

But in the New Testament the God of War becomes a God of Peace. In the legend of his birth as man the angel and the multitude of heavenly hosts announced him as the bringer of peace, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke ii. 14). In several passages he is called a God of Peace. "Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 11); "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). In several other passages God is called God of Peace. In theory, the God of Christianity and the Churches is a God of peace. I say in theory, because it is difficult sometimes to reconcile facts and conduct with the theory. As far as I know, the only sect of Christians that are real and consistent advocates of peace are the Quakers. In other sects there are individuals who are genuine friends of peace, but they are rare exceptions, few and far between. The bulk of all the sects are as warlike as any jingoes, although professing to be disciples of peace.

Of that fact we had enough of evidence during the South African war. A more wicked war was never perpetrated. But all the Churches were either silent or noisy supporters of it. They prayed for it, preached for it, voted for it, and persecuted any who opposed it. Freethinkers and Socialists opposed that unjust war, often at the risk of life, and the bulk of Christians supported it.

Christians were quite as boisterous in their rejoicing over the victory as the wildest street mob. In churches and chapels warlike patriotism had been preached, and when the war was over praises were sung and thanks were given to God for the victory, thus making their God of peace into a God of war, and the murderer of their fellow-Christians, the Boers. Praising God and thanking God for success in war is nothing less than placing the crimes and guilt of men against God, and making him the murderer of his own children.

War is so hellish that one would expect all religions to be up in arms against it, and peace is so heavenly and good that we might think all who profess to be religious would defend it against all opponents. In theory they do that, but in practice they support war against peace. Wars are made mostly by one man, supported by a few men under his influence and authority, who are called the Government, and in whose hands all the resources of a country have been placed. And all the Churches, with few individual exceptions, side with the Governments, however guilty they may be. If the God of Christianity whom Christians worship is a God of peace, their conduct is very inconsistent when they defend war.

But is it true that God is a God of Peace? Christians in profession declare that he is. If they believed what they profess they would oppose war and defend peace. Instead, they support war, pray for its success, and praise God for it when successful. Therefore the testimony of Christians is valueless as a proof that their God is a God of peace.

The Bible also is valueless to prove that God is a God of Peace, as abundance of texts can be quoted pro and con on the question. Therefore the only alternative left is to discuss the matter in the light of reason and facts. The existence of God must be assumed as a common ground for discussion. The common conception of God must also be taken for granted to make the inquiry possible. God is an infinite person, apart from the universe, creator and controller of the universe, all-present, almighty, all-wise, all-good, omniscient, immutable, and eternal. No one could pray to a God that is not a person, with eyes to see, ears to hear, and organs to speak. A God that is only a force or an element like ether or refined gas, pervading an infinite universe, without a form or will to act, could not be worshiped or supplicated. No intelligent man could worship an object unless he believed it contained a god that could see, hear, and answer. There is no room to doubt that Christians believe in a personal God, who is a God of love and peace.

Do the facts of life warrant us in believing that God loves peace? If he does, and is all-wise and almighty, how is it that war exists? If he created the universe and wished for harmony and peace to prevail, how is it that discord, strife, and war flourish throughout living nature? In the animal kingdom all life is a struggle and war in order to live. The living exist by killing and devouring their victims. The death of one is the life of another. War on life seems to be the only way to live. Man is no exception to other animals. He lives on life. Within and without he has living enemies which he must fight and kill, or be killed by them. Individually and collectively he seldom can go through life without being forced to fight or suffer oppression and humiliation. Hence conflicts between man and man, and war between nations.

If God is the creator of the universe, he is the creator of everything in it, unless there is more than one God of equal power—one a good God, the other a bad one; or, he is a mixture of good and bad like mankind; or, again, he is controlled by necessity or fate, and cannot do otherwise than he does. In that case, it is difficult to understand how he can be infinite and almighty, being, like a creature, subject to necessity.

If there was a time when there was no universe—nothing but God—he must have existed without a beginning, all by himself. Being God, we have a right to assume he could do as he liked, when he liked, and how he liked. Otherwise he was not an almighty God. There was no one to compel him or to resist him. Had he liked, if he was an independent God, he could have left infinite space a vacuum for ever. He could have made less or more, and made everything different to what they are, had he liked. It is not possible to conceive of an infinite almighty God whose actions are controlled by anything outside of his own free will.

Being all-wise, all-good, and almighty, God could have made all things perfect and good. If he could make one perfect man he could make all men perfect. If he could make an immortal soul he could make an immortal body. If he could make a heaven where there is neither sin, sickness, sorrow, war, nor death, he could have made our earth a heaven had he wished. It would have been as easy for Omnipotence to make all good and peaceful as to make one so. He has not done so. Many are good and peaceful, but more, apparently, are wicked and warlike. Both are the creatures of God, or he is not the only creator.

All good men agree that war is wicked and that peace is good. All agree that war should be opposed in the interest of peace. Good men would abolish war and establish universal peace, if they could. Are good men better than God? If men ought to oppose war, ought not God to do the same? Is God not responsible for all there is? God has wisdom and power to do all he desires; if he hates war and loves peace, ought he not to exercise his wisdom and power to abolish war and establish peace? Can there be any duty imperative on man that is not infinitely more imperative on God? If man ought to do all the good he can, ought not God to do the same? If not, why not?

Do the facts of life and existence, as we know them, warrant us in believing that there is an infinite personal God, and that he is a God of love and peace? After the most careful consideration of the question, I must confess that all the facts seem to me to negative the supposition. The facts may not be sufficient to deny the existence of a personal God, but they are quite sufficient to justify the position of an Agnostic.

If there be only one God, he is the creator of everything. The war monster did not make himself any more than the angel of peace. If the angel is a creature of God, so is the monster.

As war and peace, evil and good, co-exist, are we not justified in concluding that God, if there be one, is a mixture, like his creatures, of good and evil? As far as we know there is no man all good or all evil. In the cruellest monster there are some elements of goodness manifesting themselves, now and then, even in war. And the best of men, under provocation and temptation, are liable to lose their temper and self-control.

If God wanted to abolish war and establish universal peace, he could do it, being almighty. As he tolerates war as well as peace, are we not justified in believing that he approves of war as much as of peace? Or, that war is as good as peace? Or, again, that war and peace are both inevitable? But if they are inevitable, what becomes of the Omnipotence of God? The material conception of nature would enable us to account for peace and war in a natural, rational way; but on the theory of a personal God it is not possible to avoid the conclusion that he is a God of war as well as a God of peace.

If there is a God it is evidently vain to appeal to him. He takes no notice of us, never answers when we call, and does nothing to help us to overcome our woes and foes. We must therefore turn to humanity and nature. Nature responds freely to our appeals in thousands of ways. And humanity is also responsive to appeals. It is amenable to reason. It can see, feel, and sympathise. It can cheer, help, and guide. It is improveable and progressive. It can co-operate, and by co-operation make itself almost almighty. And humanity has magnetism by which it can fire the masses with enthusiasm to accomplish great things. The only forces that can abolish war are reason and love, and the co-operation of all friends of peace. R. J. DERFEL.

Burns had his faults, his frailties. He was intensely human. Still, I would rather appear at the "Judgment Seat" drunk, and be able to say that I was the author of "A man's a man for a' that," than to be perfectly sober and admit that I had lived and died a Scotch Presbyterian.—*Ingersoll.*

Acid Drops.

"Mahomet's career," the *Daily News* said the other day, "was a conquest by the strong. Christ's career was a sacrifice for the weak." Then it went on to talk about the Christ-like virtues of Christian missionaries in heathen lands. And all this stuff was written for children. Poor children! Bamboozled from their very cradles. Has our contemporary never heard of Buddhist missionaries in Asia, who take up their work without any salaries, trusting to the gifts of food, etc., that they receive upon the road? Has it never heard of the Mohammedan missionaries in Africa, who go about just as poor, and preach Islam, and make more black converts in a decade than the Christian missionaries do in a century, and lift up the negroes to a civilisation that was thought unattainable? Information on this subject is easily accessible. There is really no excuse for journalistic ignorance in this direction.

Here is a bit of *Daily News* accuracy. "Our Own Correspondent," writing from Paris on the inauguration of the Gambetta monument at Bordeaux, burst forth in this style: "Gambetta was no 'Atheist,' as the Clericals of his day denounced him. Gambetta was a believer. He detested Clericalism because it was the negation of religion." This is a curious mixture of falsehood and nonsense. Gambetta was an Atheist. Gambetta was not a believer—in any religion known to the *Daily News*. Neither was Gambetta such a fool as to fancy that Clericalism had any life apart from the superstition from which it sprang. He knew very well that Clericalism is simply organised religion in the sphere of politics. Gambetta was a Positivist. He called Comte the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century. Could a "believer" have said that? The very idea is absurd.

Dr. Torrey libels great dead Freethinkers; the *Daily News* tears their bodies from their graves to bury them again in consecrated ground; and we hardly know which is the worse of the two.

Lord Kitchener showed himself a statesman, after smashing the Mahdi, in asking for £100,000 to found a Gordon College at Khartoum, and in providing that it should be conducted on native lines. This shut out all proselytising from the College—and consequently all religious squabbles. But even that was not enough for Lord Kitchener. He refused to let Christian missionaries enter the Soudan, and this policy has been continued by his successor. Naturally it is denounced by leading Christians as treachery to Christ. What is the use of shedding English blood, and spending English money, to settle the Soudan, if Christian missionaries may not run all over it flourishing the brand of religious discord? This view has just been expressed by the Rev. Dr. Horton, president of the National Free Church Council. Addressing a local Conference at Plymouth, he said that "they were guilty of a sin of omission when such a large tract of country as the Soudan remained without a Christian missionary." Quite so. There are a lot of Kingdom-Come gentlemen who want employment, and the starting of a new branch of missionary enterprise in the Soudan—which is now perfectly safe—would find many of them with what they require. Of course we pity them. But we have more pity for the Soudanese, who are entitled to peace and comfort in their own home. We therefore hope the Kingdom-Come gentlemen of the British variety will be kept out of that part of the world. We suggest that they should try to save the "heathen" between Land's End and John O'Groats.

At a subsequent Plymouth meeting Dr. Horton (we quote from the *Daily News*) "pointed out the danger of the ordinary convention in stimulating unfruitful emotion." Rev. J. E. Rattenbury also "pointed out the danger of imitating the methods of the Welsh or any other revival." We hope that a part of this mistrust of revivals is due to common sense and common decency. Another part of it is probably due to the feeling which animates the proprietor of a local show when he sees a big travelling circus come down the street with a full band.

The revival movement, however, has unloosed forces against which the regular Church leaders fight for the present in vain. Another part of the *Daily News* gave an account of one of the Plymouth meetings presided over by Dr. Horton which "felt the influence of the Welsh revival." It was a "sunrise prayer-meeting," and "the President found it difficult to bring the meeting to a close, such was the eagerness of the delegates to engage in prayer." After the President's address "the meeting practically took charge of itself," and after a fervid address by the Rev. T. Phillips on the Welsh Revival "the meeting was taken out of the hands

of the President, and a series of testimonies, prayers, and revival songs took the place of the authorised program." An hour of this emotional riot was necessary before the meeting was "restored to its normal condition." The revival is mob-religion, which a few clever, unscrupulous persons are exploiting with immense profit—while it lasts.

Even the grave and reverend Archbishop of Canterbury feels it incumbent upon him to join in this revelry. An income of £15,000 a year ought to keep any man sober and steady, but we must make allowances for a great temptation. To stand outside the revival game altogether is like refraining from taking "scrip" when a big six per cent. loan is floated on the money market. There are some things that even the largest dealers positively *must* go in for—even if they have to stand in a queue, as it were, with Smith, Jones, Brown, and Robinson.

"Cantuar" (a most terribly suggestive name for our chief mystery-man) has addressed a letter to all the diocesan Bishops of the Southern Province, calling their attention to the revival movement, and suggesting a means by which they might make use of it. He remarks that there can be no "room for doubt as to the blessing which has attended" the revival meetings in Wales, London, and other parts of the country, and states his own opinion that "the time is obviously appropriate for deliberate and sustained prayer to God, who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Such, it appears, is God's will; and the Archbishop of Canterbury is very anxious that the will of Omnipotence shall be carried out—for which generous interest we dare say Omnipotence is duly grateful. His Grace (not God's Grace, but the Archbishop's Grace) recommends that the coming Whitsuntide be made use of for special prayer to God "for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit among us, and for the strengthening of our hold as Christians upon the deeper realities of our faith." What the Church wants, in other words, is a new Pentecost; and, for our part, we should like to see the Church get it; that is to say, if it were after the fashion of the one recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. This is what happened then—if we are to believe Holy Writ:—

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Now a performance like this would be a great Whit-Sunday or Whit-Monday attraction. The Bishops might all assemble where a vast crowd of people could see them. The Albert Hall would not be big enough; we therefore suggest the Terrace of the Crystal Palace. There the right reverend fathers in God might sit, and myriads of men and women might stand below gazing at them and waiting for the glory. When the rushing mighty wind came, we should all strain our eyes to catch sight of the Holy Ghost, and when we saw each Bishop decorated with a cloven tongue of fire we should know that the Spirit had arrived. And the performance would be complete when the Bishops started speaking with "other tongues"—the Archbishop of Canterbury talking Japanese and the Bishop of London talking Russian, and so on to the end of the chapter. Oh what would it be to be there!

Those cloven tongues like as of fire, by the way, deserve a few words on their own account. A cloven tongue is the emblem of lying. Is that the reason why one apiece was bestowed upon the leaders of the first Salvation Army? Some people will be wicked enough to think that a cloven tongue on a Bishop would be extremely appropriate.

Another suggestion for this new Pentecostal performance. Dr. Torrey ought not to be left out of it. No doubt the Spirit would supply him with *two* cloven tongues. He has earned them.

The dear *Daily News*, with its infallible eye for superstitious nonsense, recently devoted a half column of large type to the experiences of Mr. J. W. Boulding, who was once a Nonconformist minister, and is now an ardent spiritualist. This gentleman has "the gift of automatic writing." Spirits use his hand to write with. No doubt. But what a pity it is that they cannot write something worth reading! We don't ask them to write words of wisdom. Spirits never did that. But they might write some useful information. Couldn't they tell the police where to look for the last undiscovered murderer? Couldn't they have put the police on the track of that Harmsworth motor-car the other day? Why, oh why, don't they justify their reputation?

Mr. Boulding has an intimate lady acquaintance in the spirit world—no less a person than Queen Anne Boleyn. Why doesn't he patch up an acquaintance with Henry VIII., and invite them both to tea?

Evan Roberts left the Liverpool revival for the benefit of his health. At Peniel Chapel, Festiniog, however, he attended a four hours' revival service conducted by the Rev. John Williams, and sat all the time in the pulpit. During the course of this service a "test" was taken, and it was found that only five adults were present who were not church members—so that they were converting the converted. One of the five said he did not want to be saved. Mr. Williams asked him if he believed in God. "No," he replied, "not in the God of the Bible." This awful reply nearly frightened the meeting into fits. They implored the Lord to save the "unbeliever," but they broke up without succeeding.

Evan Roberts's movements are now recorded like those of royalty. The following appeared in the *Daily Mirror* of April 29:—

"Evan Roberts, the Welsh revivalist, is making cycling tours in North Wales.

"With the lady revivalists he is staying at the Royal Hotel, Capel-Curig, sometimes driving out in a carriage and pair."

"Well, we are getting on, aren't we?" Evan Roberts and his lady friends might say. A short time ago he was earning thirty shillings a week; now he is able to give £200 to a church, he puts up with the rest of his troupe (all ladies) at a swagger hotel, and drives about in a carriage and pair. This is the result of "disinterested love for human souls." It is enough to make a cat laugh.

The "lady revivalists" seem very fond of Evan Roberts. Evan Roberts also seems very fond of them. This sort of thing is common in the history of religious enthusiasm. It is no particular business of ours, of course, and we say no more about it. But if a Secular lecturer took Secular platform ladies about with him in the Evan Roberts fashion, what dainty paragraphs would appear in the religious press!

Canon John S. Vaughan, brother of the late Cardinal Vaughan, has resigned all his offices in order to join the strictest of all Roman Catholic religious orders—the Carthusians. The monks of this order observe perpetual silence except for one hour per week. Why doesn't Torrey join the Carthusians?

Why go to church? The Lord doesn't take any more interest in you for it. We have just been reading an account of the violent death of several children in Germany. A circus was travelling to Bayreuth, and in passing over the Mein an accident occurred to a heavy vehicle, which dashed across the bridge into the midst of a number of children who had just left church. Some of them were killed on the spot and others shockingly injured. "Providence" couldn't have been more regardless of their welfare if they had just come from a theatre, a music-hall, a beer-garden, or other place of profane entertainment.

Rev. R. G. Campbell, at the City Temple church meeting recently, was asked a question and gave an answer, both of which were reported in the daily organ of the Nonconformist Conscience:—

"Is not the Westminster Confession of Faith the faith that must be preached in the City Temple?"

"Mr. Campbell: Yes, madam, the Confession of Faith which has to be held, not only by the minister of this church, but by all the members, according to the trust deed, is the Westminster Confession of Faith, as drawn up by the Assembly of Divines in the seventeenth century. That lady does not hold it. In its literal sense there is not a person in this room that does hold it. (Hear, hear.) In its larger and more generous sense, I hold it, and you hold it—(hear, hear)—and, what is more, I believe I am the most consistent Calvinist in the English pulpit to-day. (Applause.)"

Mr. Campbell is an honorable man; so are they all, all honorable men. Men can talk in this way on religion without the slightest injury to their reputations—though if they talked in this way on any other subject their fellow-men would shun them. Mr. Campbell does not believe the Westminster Confession of Faith literally; that is, he does not believe what it says. He believes in its larger and more generous sense; that is, he believes what it does not say. And the members of his church applaud him. Why? Because they don't want to lose the advantage of the City Temple endowment. There is profit in this intellectual thimble-rigging.

"The Church," the Rev. Arthur W. Jephson, vicar of St. John's, Walworth, said to a *Daily Mail* representative—
"The Church never wanted intelligent ministers more sorely

than she does at this moment; yet the best men at Oxford and Cambridge are now, and have been for some time past, declining to take Holy Orders, as they cannot bring their intelligence into the meagre compass of what is supposed to be orthodox." This is nothing new. It has been said again and again for many years. Yet the Archdeacon of London, Dr. Sinclair, has the calm assurance to tell the same interviewer that "Far from noticing any falling off in the intellectual quality of the candidates, I should say that it has become considerably improved." Good God! What must it have been before the improvement?

Is the Bishop of London going in for Torreyism? The *Church Times* reports him as telling "a vast congregation" at Wakefield that "He had seen the keenest Secularist in East London become a most devoted Church worker." Why is the name of this remarkable convert not given? What can be gained by reticence. The keenest Secularist in East London ought to be fairly well-known, and a most devoted Church worker can hardly be courting obscurity. Name, please, Dr. Ingram.

Charles Hewett, an old man of seventy-four, was charged in the City of London with being a wandering lunatic and ordered to be sent to Stone Asylum. He claimed to be "the rightful heir to the British throne through William the Conqueror." We believe, however, that the Rev. Mr. Piggott, who claims to be the Messiah, is still at large. Why is this?

Milan Cathedral was desecrated by the suicide of the Marchioness Pallavicini, who shot herself there during divine service on Good Friday. The Cathedral had to be reconsecrated. Something would have happened otherwise; nobody knows exactly what—but certainly something awful.

Edwin Powell, an elderly gentleman, with white hair and a long white beard, was brought before the "beak" at Cornwall, New York, on a technical charge of vagrancy. He sets himself up as the "new Moses," and the prospective father of the Messiah. The age of his grey-haired spouse being an obstacle to his ambition, he took a buxom young girl as a fresh wife "in the eyes of the spirit." When she became in what is called an interesting condition, the "new Moses" was in high glee; but the baby proved to be a girl instead of a boy. Edwin Powell, alias Neo-Moses, intends to persevere, however, and the buxom young "spiritual" wife declares her intention to render him the necessary assistance. So the Messiah may come along yet. Meanwhile the trio are being chivvied about from place to place. The profane citizens of America are incapable of understanding the inward beauty of this holy arrangement.

The number of deaths caused by the earthquakes in the Punjab is reported to be 15,000. Three cheers for "Providence."

Jesus Christ is reported to have said that if he were "lifted up" he would draw all men after him. He has not lifted up the *people* yet, but he seems to have made a beginning with the Bishops. The new Bishop of Worcester was "enthroned" in the Cathedral on April 27. This is being "lifted up" with a vengeance! Yes, we do see *some* fruits of Christianity.

The Cardiff *Guardians* want a Workhouse chaplain. The work is pretty hard, for some of the souls to be saved are remarkably tough, and the salary is only £120 a year. For this handsome figure he must be able to speak Welsh. Rev. A. H. Hyslop, a *Guardian* who supported this condition, said that he spoke to a man in prison and it had no effect, but he spoke to him in Welsh and "in a few moments he was on his knees"—perhaps imploring the reverend gentleman to leave off. Another *Guardian* sneeringly called Welsh "the language of Paradise." No doubt it is. Ask Evan Roberts?

The *West Cumberland Times* prints a silly letter from a Catholic tradesman, calling attention to the apocryphal description of Jesus by Publius Lentulus in a letter to the Roman Senate. At the end of this rigmarole, which every scholar knows to be a silly forgery, although it seems to do duty still in low-class Catholic quarters, there comes the signature: "John Walker. The National Tea Company, Cocker-mouth." This should have been followed by "Advt."

The *Sunday Companion* dated April 22 had a front-page picture, apparently by a pavement artist, representing General Booth on his knees and wrestling with the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. What a parody of the Passion of Christ! Is there any "blasphemy" that the

Grand Old Showman would not perpetrate in the way of business?

The same number of the *Sunday Companion* contained a page of ineffably silly stuff by Dr. Torrey. Of course he had to drag Ingersoll in—though our pamphlet has stopped his dirty lying about that great Freethinker. Dr. Torrey says that someone gave him a collection of gems of thought by Ingersoll and they were all “stolen from the Bible.” He also refers to the times when he is “speaking to an audience largely made up of Secularists and unbelievers”—as though he ever spoke to such an audience in his life. He likewise draws attention to the way in which the Bible survived the attacks of Celsus and Porphyry—without telling his readers that the works of Celsus and Porphyry were burnt to the last copy by the Christian Church. This Yankee soul-saver is but a vulgar, half-educated tub-thumper, just on a level with the baser sort of Christian Evidence lecturers, who dispense ignorance and personalities in the London parks. Some of the “history” in this man’s article would make a school-boy laugh. He calls Diocletian, for instance, the “mightiest emperor that Rome ever had,” and says that Marcus Aurelius “taught that it was right to put people to death for no other crime than that of being a Christian.” Why doesn’t the man go to a decent evening school?

Orthodox Christians believe in heaven and hell. They expect other people to go to the warm establishment. Their own place, numbered and reserved, is in the land of glory. “Meet me in heaven,” General Booth wired from New Zealand to a party of “Salvation” emigrants sailing from Liverpool to Canada. It does not occur to him that there is any doubt about *his* going there. The doubt applies to the other folk—as usual.

The “Salvation” emigration movement is quite “unsectarian,” and even “social.” Religion is not necessarily mixed up with it. Nevertheless the party were all expected to join in singing a hymn and offering up a prayer when starting, and Mrs. Bramwell Booth was there waving the Salvation Army flag.

The National Union of Teachers should really try to talk a little straightforward sense on the religious education difficulty. At its recent Conference a resolution was passed in favor of securing “a national system of education based upon popular control and freed from sectarian tests and influences.” Surely the delegates at the Conference had gumption enough to see that there cannot be such a thing as “unsectarian” religion. Every religion is sectarian to every other religion, and every Christian denomination is sectarian to every other Christian denomination. Neither is it possible to teach religion to children—or to adults, for that matter—without sectarian tests. If the tests are not applied openly, they are still applied behind the scenes. The National Union of Teachers does not show either intellectual or moral dignity in evading the obvious facts of this great question.

The illegitimate births in England and Wales are 3.9 per cent. In Scotland they are 6.2 per cent. Scotland is the more godly country—and the conclusion is obvious.

Talking about figures, we may refer to a blunder in the *Daily News*—which is perhaps not surprising, for our pious contemporary’s staff are all great Bible readers (of course!) and figures are decidedly not the Bible’s strong point. The blunder in question occurred in relation to the income tax. Mr. Cadbury’s organ denounced the idea of pity for the citizens who paid this tax, and drew up a table showing that what they really paid was hardly worth talking about. Well, this may be true enough in the case of big incomes. But suppose you take the case of a head of a family with an income of (say) £300 a year. In addition to all his rates, and indirect taxes on articles of consumption, which amount to a considerable sum, he pays income tax on £140—the amount left after the £160 abatement; and this, at the rate of 1s. in the pound, works out at £7. But that is not all. As a householder this head of a family has to pay further income-tax in the shape of inhabited house duty. Say his rent is £40 a year; the duty at the rate of 6d. in the pound is another sovereign. Here is a total sum of £8—representing nearly 6½d. in the pound on his total income of £300. The *Daily News* put it at 5½d. Clearly a case of pious arithmetic!

Two new Bishoprics are to be established in Suffolk and Essex. Some of the necessary funds will be taken from the sees of Ely, St. Albans, and Norwich, but this will have to be supplemented by £60,000, which is to be raised from the pockets of the faithful. We daresay it will be raised without much difficulty. Religion is still by far the best game for raising the wind. A country which, as Carlyle said, contains

so many millions of people, “mostly fools,” is always ready to give money to the charlatans of Kingdom-Come.

Roman Catholicism is not able to extend itself to any appreciable degree by the process of persuasion. Still, it does extend itself. And how? By the process of breeding. Catholicism is strong in Australia, and strong in the United States, simply because Irish Catholics have gone to both countries and have vigorously pursued the commandment to increase and multiply and replenish the earth. Everywhere the Catholic priests have instructions to keep this breeding process going as strongly as possible. The consequence is the growth of their Church by mere multiplication. And this is becoming a serious danger in America—as President Roosevelt may see, although he is probably afraid to say so. For if the birth-rate goes on falling amongst non-Catholics, and goes on at the old rate amongst Catholics, the latter will sooner or later swamp the former. It is merely a question of time. It depends on a simple sum in arithmetic.

Look at Canada, for instance, where the Catholic Church is daily growing more active and enterprising, and even insolent. In the purely English-speaking district of Prince Edward County the birthrate is only 14.6 per 1,000, while the birthrate is 49.3 per 1,000 in the French-Canadian district of Nipissing. What this means in the long run it is easy to calculate. And in the light of such facts does not the whole “population question” need serious reviewing?

Pearson’s Weekly has been printing “Anecdotes by Dr. Torrey.” One of them is about the late Mr. Dwight L. Moody, upon whom the “power of God” descended in response to the prayers of “three plain women.” Dr. Torrey says that Mr. Moody was “not greatly talented,” had not “even a common school education,” and could not “write a sentence without misspelling a word.” But after he got the “power of God” he “came to England and shook the world.” We should hardly think, if Mr. Moody were alive and could hear this, he would consider it complimentary. That he “shook the world” is a piece of Dr. Torrey’s extravagance. The world takes an awful lot of shaking. Dr. Torrey himself can’t shake it. Before the end the world may shake *him*. He is getting found out.

The Bishop of Bangor deprecates hasty condemnation of the Continental Sunday. He says it contrasts favorably in some respects with the Welsh Sabbath. Even in Bangor half the people spend Sunday morning in bed, just to get through as much of the day as possible before they get up.

An article on “The Spirit Realm” by J. B. L. in the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* refers to Spiritualism as the savior from “the overwhelming wave of atheism, agnosticism, materialism, and doubt that is engulfing us.” This gentleman mentions, among other wonders, that there are “many persons, mostly women” who by “merely handling an article” can tell what *has* happened to the possessor and what *will* happen in the sweet by-and-bye. Now this is very interesting and we should like to try it. There is a battered old umbrella before our mind’s eye. Will some obliging Spiritualist, either a “person” or a “woman,” get hold of the handle and give us the life story of the “party” to whom it belonged? The same might be done in the case of the battered old pair of boots, or even an odd one, that you may find on the nearest bit of waste ground—which is never without such a decoration. By holding a certain part of a motor-car the “meejum” might say how many miles an hour it was driven on the last journey. We make a present of this idea to the police. At the same time, we fear it will not quite overcome that “overwhelming wave of atheism.” As for Sir William Crookes and his “Katie,” the materialised lady spirit, we fear the Atheists will only be tempted to laugh at the story. It is so easy for a clever lady to take in the cleverest of men—especially off his own beat.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

Let us grant that, by a struggle for the existence of the idle, the weak-willed, and the incapable, we may presently turn the earth into a scene of millennial beatitude, we shall not have advanced a step towards the vindication of God’s goodness. Whatever may be God’s future, there will still remain his past. If the lives whom in the future he is to bless are to be witnesses to his divine goodness, the lives whom in the past he has blighted will be still crying to him out of the ground; and since the theist maintains that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the hand which is red with millions of years of murder will never cease to incarnadine all the seas of eternity.—*W. H. Mallock, “Religion as a Credible Doctrine,”* p. 174.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, May 7, Stratford Town Hall, at 7.30, "The Carpenter of Nazareth: a Freethought May-Day Sermon."

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—May 7, Victoria Park.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 7, Merthyr Tydfil; 9, Mountain Ash; 21, Failsworth; 28, Manchester.
- T. FISHER.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.
- ANTI-BIBLICAL.—You overlook the fact that the second Gospel was written in Greek. The English is a translation. There is nothing about a farthing in the original. The translators had to give English readers an idea of the small value of the poor widow's contribution. Thanks for your good wishes and your efforts to get us new readers.
- E. R. WOODWARD.—Glad to hear you were "delighted to see Frederick Ryan again at work for the *Freethinker*." Of course we are always very much pleased to hear from him, but his pen is pretty busy elsewhere, trying to shed clear light on the path of Young Ireland.
- C. CLEMESHAW.—Is the effort announced in your printed circular succeeding? Thanks for the cutting.
- JOHN WILLIAMS.—We have dealt with the point in *Bible Romances* and elsewhere. Jehovah (as the story goes) by creating only one pair of human beings to start the world with, necessitated the continuation of the race through incest in the first generation. Glad to hear from you as a recruit to Freethought in consequence of the Welsh revival.
- W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- W. PHILLIPS.—Your suggestion shall be borne in mind.
- J. P. FINLEY.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- M. GOODWIN.—We are obliged, but the cutting is behind date now.
- A. MILLAR.—Pleased to hear you highly value last week's *Freethinker* on account of the article on Shakespeare and the list of great men's praises of Voltaire "putting Dr. Torrey's ignorance in a very clear light." "Talk to us often," you say, "of the poets of prose and verse." We will sometimes, anyhow. By the way, the extract you enclose marked "Sterne (?)" is really from Sir Walter Raleigh. It is the purplest of purple patches in his *History of the World*.
- W. W. PUNN.—You may rely upon it that Shakespeare will some day dispossess St. George on the twenty-third of April. It is only a question of time. "When the half-gods go," as Emerson says, "the gods arrive."
- R. FITTON.—We have nothing to do with regulating the time of Mr. Lloyd's lecture.
- J. G.—The reverend gentleman was mistaken, or you mistook what he said. We never played off Professor Bury as "a greater authority" against Gibbon. The idea is absurd. Professor Bury happens to be the latest editor of Gibbon—not a rival.
- A. CORINA.—An odd incident, but of no importance now. Why should you fancy that we think the less of you for being "a common laborer"?
- W. D. MACGREGOR.—Your letter is able and well-written, but we cannot find room for a discussion of the kind. The *Freethinker* is neither for nor against Socialism, and we have advised Mr. Derfel accordingly. There is a wide field for Freethought advocacy without taking sides on controverted sociological questions. We once started an "Independent Department" in this journal, but it did not "catch on," though it might have been useful. For the rest, it must be remembered that our absolute responsibility only covers the views expressed in our own signed articles and in the unsigned editorial matter, such as "Acid Drops," "Sugar Plums," "Book Chat," and "Answers to Correspondents."
- BLISTOLIAN.—We have not forgotten the "Time and Space" question, but subjects of that sort will keep (will they not?) and cannot take precedence of subjects of a more urgent character.
- R. CHAPMAN.—See paragraph. It would be an excellent thing to carry Freethought propaganda into all the Durham and Northumberland mining districts.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges the following:—Dr. R. T. Nichols, £1; Glasgow Branch, 10s. 6d.; E. G., parcel of useful clothing; and respectfully refers other friends to Luke x. 37.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £114 7s. 2d. Received this week: E. Ashersych 1s. 6d., A. G. Lye 1s., F. J. Strong 1s., T. Smith 1s., F. Wood 2s. 6d., V. Roger 2s. 6d., Mrs. Bayfield 2s. 6d., J. Durrant 1s., — Storr 2s., A. Cayford 1s., E. B. 2s. 6d., H. Voigt 5s.
- A. G. LYE.—See list. Thanks. Enclosure passed on.
- P. M. WILLS.—The matter is having attention.
- F. S.—Thanks for useful cuttings.
- FREETHINKER (Cardiff).—Shall be pleased to hear further on the matter you refer to.
- H. VOIGT.—Thanks for the paper and pamphlets. We believe you cannot join the Freemasons in this country without professing belief in God.

E. PARKER.—You state the *hour* of the funeral but not the *day*, and the announcement would be useless.

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.

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

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.

The Torrey Pamphlets.

THE "something happening" referred to last week in connection with the Torrey-pamphlets is still happening, and may be happening for some time yet, though I have great hopes of it eventually. It is not a matter which I can hasten. I have therefore decided to go on with the two pamphlets I spoke of. The one on "Dr. Torrey and the Infidels" will be reprinted, with the addition of *my name* after "Editor of the *Freethinker*," in order to meet Dr. Torrey's objection to "anonymous publications." The new pamphlet on "Dr. Torrey's Converts" will also bear my name. Not conspicuously, of course, for that would defeat the object in view.

Miss Vance tells me (I am writing on Tuesday morning) that every copy of the first pamphlets is cleared out of the place, and that she has piles of applications from all parts of the country for more, as well as for copies of the third pamphlet I announced. These applications will be dealt with as promptly as possible. As soon as the *Freethinker* is off my hands to-night I shall begin my part of this work. Freethinkers will, of course, keep me supplied with the sinews of war for the further campaigns at Brixton and the Strand during the next two months.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had record meetings at Liverpool on Sunday. A good many people had to be turned away from the doors in the evening; not only all the seats but every bit of the standing room being occupied. Mr. Foote had an enthusiastic reception, and his lectures were very much applauded. Both the lecturer and his audience seemed to be particularly happy in the evening; and, if laughter is better than medicine, most of them ought to keep well for the next twelve months. Mr. H. Percy Ward officiated as chairman at both meetings. Two gratifying features were the presence of a very large number of ladies and the increased number of young men who had become interested in the movement. We may add that the local "saints" are all looking forward to the N. S. S. Conference on Whit-Sunday. They intend to leave nothing undone on their part to secure a magnificent success.

Mr. Cohen started off at the Stratford Town Hall with a good audience, and Mr. Lloyd had a still better one on Sunday evening, by which time, of course, the advertising had produced a greater effect. Mr. Lloyd was in first-class form, and his lecture was highly enjoyed. This evening (May 7) there should be a bumper meeting. Mr. Foote occupies the platform, and his subject is peculiarly seasonable: "The Carpenter of Nazareth: a Freethought May-Day Sermon."

Mr. Cohen's visit to Hetton was a highly satisfactory one. A large gathering in the Miners' Hall followed attentively his lecture on "Christianity and Secularism," and the discussion afterwards showed it had taken some effect. Mr. R. Chapman, of South Shields, officiated as chairman. He announced, on behalf of the Shields Branch, that the experiment would be repeated.

The Rector of Hetton was invited to attend Mr. Cohen's lecture. He wrote declining to do so, on the ground that all the arguments against Christianity had been satisfactorily answered long ago. We fancy we have heard that statement. Anyhow the Rector missed an agreeable change. He must be tired of sermons occasionally.

Mr. Lloyd informs us that his lectures at Merthyr Tydfil to-day (May 7) will be delivered at 3 and 7.30 p.m. The name of the hall is not stated. On Tuesday evening Mr. Lloyd will lecture at Mountain Ash. All local "saints" should make a point of hearing him.

One of the questions to be considered at the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Liverpool on Whit-Sunday will be the Society's representation at the next International Freethought Congress, which is to be held at Paris on the fourth, fifth, and sixth of September. It is already announced that visitors to this Congress will enjoy a certain privilege. The Minister of Public Works has intimated to Senator Dr. Petitjean, president of the committee of organization, that Congressists will be allowed to travel on all the French railways at fifty per cent. less than the ordinary rates. The general secretary, M. Emile Chauvelon, ventures to think that the railway companies of other countries will concede similar terms to the Freethought Congressists. We fear the English companies are not likely to do anything of the kind.

Religious liberty has triumphed after all at Camberwell. Mr. E. R. Woodward, of the N. S. S. Branch, writes to us: "I have just heard from Mr. A. B. Moss that my application to have the *Freethinker* placed on the tables of all the Libraries controlled by the Camberwell Borough Council has been granted without opposition."

We have repeatedly urged our readers to render us all the assistance they can in breaking down the boycott against the *Freethinker*. One of our readers, Mr. H. J. Thorpe, of 59 High-street, Maldon, Essex, has responded to our appeal, and with very satisfactory results. His local newsagent could not supply the *Freethinker* earlier than Saturday. Religious periodicals came to hand on Thursday; why was the *Freethinker* delayed? Mr. Thorp wanted to know. He also threatened to take his custom elsewhere. Whereupon the newsagent soon replied that he had made arrangements with Smith & Son (of all people!) whereby the *Freethinker* would be "sent off as soon as published." And the next copy of this journal came on Thursday morning. We hope other "saints" will take a hint from this, and bring pressure to bear upon "the trade." All the *Freethinker* wants is justice.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake writes us:—"I fear I am growing dilatory not to have sent you earlier acknowledgment of the trouble you have taken in making my book on 'Bygones' known to the readers of the *Freethinker*, among whom I have many friends, whose good opinion I value. To one thing only will I allude. On April 9, p. 227, when quoting a passage of mine on the infinite egotism of Christians, you were pleased to say you 'will always applaud me when I speak in that vein.' You cannot mean that I should always be saying the same thing and follow the Pauline maxim, 'ceaseless in season and out of season,' which has converted the best of saints into the worst of bores. The only other inference the ordinary reader can make is, that I, at other times, say the contrary of that which you praise. That would be a pitiful imputation to credit you with. Yet I do not see what else you can mean."

When a Cambridge carter boasted of the vast strength of his horse, an undergraduate asked him, "Can it draw inferences?" "Yes," he replied; "anything in reason." Mr. Holyoake will pardon this little joke, which we introduce to dispel the too great seriousness with which he has surrounded our innocent observation. He draws inferences, too, but are they really in reason? Anyhow, we would rather not be responsible for them. We beg to assure Mr. Holyoake that we meant no more than just what we said. There were some things in his book which we had to criticise; there were other things that we admired and applauded, and the passage in question was one of them. We never thought of suggesting that Mr. Holyoake says one thing at one time and the opposite at another.

Professor Haeckel has written to his English translator, Mr. Joseph McCabe, contradicting the silly paragraph, which went the round of the credulous English press, to the effect that he had joined hands with a Roman Catholic professor in repudiating Darwinism and standing up for the human soul. "I should be obliged," he says to Mr. McCabe, "if you will rectify the incredible telegram sent from Berlin to the London papers. I said just the reverse. The Jesuit father is two-thirds Darwinist and Monist, but one-third Catholic priest and Dualist." Thus ends that marvellous nest.

Mr. A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., will resume his lectures at Clapham Common to-day May 7. Meetings will be held there every Sunday during the season.

The Catholic Truth Society Campaign.

IN a former article we commented on the special activity, at the present juncture, of the Catholic Truth Society. Under its auspices lectures have been delivered in several large centres of population, and it is of importance to note the class of subjects its lecturers are handling.

Not so very long ago Roman Catholic apologists might be heard bleating about the Immaculate Conception and the glories of Mary, or vindicating the infallibility of the Holy Father who understudies God at the Vatican. Or they might be heard juggling with words in a vain endeavor to show that although you could pay for a Mass you could not buy a Mass. Or perhaps they might be found falsifying history in the effort to prove that the Church never sold Indulgences or Pardons, but merely took the money under protest, and as a voluntary offering.

It is significant of much that the Church of Rome at the present day has something more to do than defend the effete absurdities of medieval dogma, ceremonial, and custom. Modern Rationalism is driving her hard, and she is being compelled to enter the lists not only in defence of her own peculiar tenets but also to champion the very basic principles of Christian belief. We say this is highly significant. It indicates that the vigor of the Freethought attack is making an impression—even on the Church of Rome.

That Church has not now—as was the case in earlier centuries—merely to face the onslaught of more or less isolated philosophers and Freethinkers, many of whose views were unknown beyond a limited circle until long after their death. For every one who a hundred years ago had the requisite education and range of reading to enable him to analyse the doctrines of the Church of Rome and pass judgment on her historical and ethical pretensions there are scores to-day. Besides, in the days of her pride and dominance, the opponents with whom she had mainly to deal were those who criticised her only on points of detail—restive individuals who cavilled at one or two doctrines or practices of the Church while accepting the rest. Her opponents to-day are men and women—not many women as yet, but still a few—who attack her all along the line, and unflinchingly repudiate all ecclesiastical claims whatever that are based upon supernatural authority.

Modern heretics are not much concerned about the "Hypostatic union," or whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son or from the Father alone. These, and other exciting questions of a similar nature, sorely agitated our far-back ancestors. We have got slightly beyond that stage in the history of religious disbelief. To-day the number of those who deny Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and everything else in the priestly inventory of superstitions is steadily and surely increasing. For many generations after Christendom began to awaken from the hideous nightmare of the Dark Ages the majority of even the most courageous reformers contented themselves with lopping off the mere excrescences on the tree of Christian faith. To-day the axe of reason is being laid at its very root. In our generation it is nothing less than the fundamental basis of religious belief that is at stake.

Hence it is we are having popular lectures, from the Roman Catholic standpoint, on such subjects as the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Lectures on these subjects must at least have come as a pleasant relief to the more intellectual amongst Roman Catholics, who ought to be pretty well sick of the ordinary insipidities and banalities of the pulpit.

The lecture (the third and final of the present series) delivered in Glasgow, by the Reverend Dr. Aveling of London, on the "Immortality of the Soul" was as little conclusive as either of the two

we have already noticed. We were frustrated in our attempt to hear this lecture. The church was crowded before our arrival, and, finding it impossible to get within proper hearing distance, we left. So the report in the Roman Catholic press is all we can go by.

We feel bound to say here that a careful reading of a variety of sermons, lectures, and articles submitted to public criticism by Roman Catholic protagonists of supernaturalism leaves us the impression—an impression bordering on conviction—that the majority of Christian apologists have no real understanding of the Rationalist and Atheist position. While they set before us—sometimes ably enough—the stock arguments for the existence of God and man's immortality they seem to be oblivious of the arguments for the other side. They never really get into touch with the case for scientific Atheism, and their finest dialectical efforts are seldom more than a magnificent begging of the questions at issue. They forget that the world has moved. The case for Christianity—never very strong *prima facie*—is becoming weaker and weaker, whereas the case against Christianity is always being strengthened. It would, we think, be impossible to instance any department of scientific investigation or philosophic speculation that has not contributed its quota during the last fifty years towards the discrediting of Christianity. One can only marvel at the success with which clerical orators and writers conceal such facts, if not from themselves, at any rate from their hearers and readers.

The Reverend Dr. Aveling has, we understand, been attracting some attention as a preacher in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster. In his Glasgow lecture he set himself the task of demonstrating that man has a soul, and that that soul survives the body. Having justly premised that he had no right to *assume* that man possessed a soul which was an entity distinct from the body, he said he would deem it necessary to prove firstly "that man had a soul which was a thing," and secondly that this soul was a "living" thing. It is not to be wondered at that Dr. Aveling, having attempted the impossible, should have failed. Let us examine one or two of his arguments.

The nature of anything—he asserted—could only be known by its manifestations. And the result of the operation of the principle which differentiates between man and the plants and animals—which he called the soul—is intellectual activity. We take this to mean that intellectual activity is one of the evidences of soul. We need only remark in passing that there is no mystery about "intellectual activity." Intellectual activity is simply brain-functioning, and varies in degree according to the size, structure, and quality of the individual brain. It may also be conditioned by physical and other peculiarities. But there is no need to call in the idea of the soul—in the theological sense of the term—to account for intellectual activity. Mental activity is a manifestation of brain power. That and nothing more. But such an explanation is much too simple and natural to commend itself to a Christian priest.

We will therefore waive these considerations. We will accept Dr. Aveling's contention that intellectual activity proves the existence of the soul. And we proceed to ask him if he is not aware that there are thousands upon thousands of people whose intellectual activity is absolutely *nil*? And this not merely in savage and uncivilised nations, but right in our very midst. Where is the evidence of soul—so far as active mentality is concerned—to be found amongst such people as constitute a great proportion of our population?

If intellectual activity be indeed the measure of the soul, we have this curious condition of affairs, that those who have most soul are those who are not conscious of having *any* soul! For surely no one will deny that the most pronounced activity of the

intellect is displayed by those very scientists and philosophers who are flatly agnostic—to say nothing stronger—regarding the existence of the soul. Compare the intellectual activity of a Haeckel with that of a Connemara peasant. Yet the latter is quite confident that he has an immortal soul, while the former would utterly repudiate the idea in his own case. We are sorely afraid that if intellectual activity be the true mark of the soul there is a great poverty of soul in the Churches. Intellectuality is not conspicuous in any of them.

We would have something more to say respecting passages in Dr. Aveling's lecture, which contain sentences like the following, "A spiritual being is an immaterial being" and "The soul is deathless, and is therefore immortal," only it is just possible the intelligent reporter may be responsible for such sapient tautologies. We note with amusement that Dr. Aveling took it for granted that the existence of God had been proved in a previous lecture. On this we have only to say that if he imagines anything Monsignor Moyes uttered on the God idea could carry conviction to anyone not already a believer he is simply deluding himself.

There was one argument that Dr. Aveling elaborated at length, without, however, appearing to realise that, logically extended, its force recoiled upon himself. For the purpose of demonstrating that the human intellect is a spiritual and not a material entity, he reasoned from analogy with the common physical senses. In order (he said) to see every color, the eye must lack all colors. The ear, in order to receive sounds, must be free of sounds. In order to taste, the tongue must be devoid of all tastes. In other words—the subjective recipient must lack the nature of the received object. Consequently, as the intellect is capable of understanding material things, the intellect itself must be devoid of all material nature.

Now it should be obvious that acceptance of the proposition that "the subjective recipient must lack the nature of its received object" logically carries us much further than Dr. Aveling would care to go. In fact this proposition which Dr. Aveling thinks he has conclusively established can be made to prove the very opposite of that which he desires. Because Dr. Aveling will surely admit that it is by the intellectually active force (which he identifies with the soul) that *spiritual* truths can alone be perceived and appreciated. Therefore—as according to his own reasoning the subjective recipient must lack the nature of the received object—the soul cannot be a *spiritual substance*!

Dr. Aveling is evidently another victim of the delusion that the existence of a widespread belief in any given idea goes far to prove its truth. Reasoners of this type seem to be fairly numerous in religious circles. He says "there is an almost universal belief in man that the soul will not die, and nature cannot lead men astray with such a strong belief in the immortality of the soul." The passage quoted is not an elegant one, but all that need be said regarding it is that nature *does not* lead men astray as to the immortality of man. Men may impose upon themselves, but nature tells no lies. In all the majestic harmony of the universe there is no whisper of an assurance that though man die, yet shall he live. That the *desire to live* is common to nearly all mankind no one will deny. Even the animal clings to life, yet Dr. Aveling would scarcely allow that such feeling on the part of the animal afforded any proof of its immortal nature. Why then should *man's* desires be considered a measure of the probable?

In the same issue of the paper that contains the report of Dr. Aveling's lecture we observe that the "Holy Father" has sent "a special blessing to all engaged in the excellent work" of the anti-Rationalist Campaign in London and the provinces. The blessings and the cursings of the "Holy Father" are of about equal value and effect, although personally we would prefer to come under his curse. It

would give us confidence that we had done something really useful for humanity. But it will take more than high-sounding—and empty—prayers or imprecations from the Vatican to lend any effectiveness to the efforts of the Catholic Truth Society to stem the tide of liberal thought in Western Europe.

G. SCOTT.

Can Men Alone Solve the Question of Marriage and Divorce?

THAT woman so far in the world's history has concerned herself little about her human rights is a lamentable fact. This is demonstrated by the silence of the sex on the most vital questions concerning them, that of Marriage and Divorce. The clergy, legislators, lawyers, and sociologists are making the world ring with their ideas on this question, condemning present domestic conditions, sounding notes of alarm, suggesting new laws and customs for the solution of the vexed problem, but women are quite silent on it, though they are the most deeply concerned parties, hold up the heavy end of the marriage contract, resign their names at marriage, thus destroying their identity, often lose the ownership or control of their property, and risk their lives in child-bearing. Star chamber sessions of church councils and legislatures are held to devise measures that will control both marriage and divorce according to masculine ideas, ignoring women and treating them with silent contempt, as if they had no interest in the questions at issue. The heights and depths of this vexed problem can never be reached by man alone, who through all the ages has never been just enough to accord to woman her human rights, and whose nature he does not understand. The law-making power in both Church and State are very busy at present wrestling with the marriage and divorce problems, and a sorry spectacle they are making of themselves.

They sound tocsins of alarm, and rant and rave over unhappy domestic conditions, and the dangers that threaten the American home.

Now the truth of the matter is, the influence and power of the Church, and its tool, the State, have shaped most of our present laws, and are entirely responsible not only for domestic conditions, but our moral and social conditions as well. Marriage and divorce in the United States is entirely in the hands of the civil power, yet the Church intrudes itself and presumes to settle the vexed question by inducing the State to pass laws that have been dictated by the clergy.

The leading nations of the world have decided that marriage is a civil contract, yet it is not illegal for the clergy to perform marriage ceremonies; yet in some of the Catholic nations the clergy are deprived of this power and they are performed by the civil officers.

Most of the fuss in this country on this question is made by Episcopal bishops and Catholic priests, whose laws and regulations pertaining to the marriage question are handed down from the 12th and 13th centuries. These two Churches, which are Siamese twins, with one of the twins disguised in a Protestant robe, declare that "marriage is not merely a civil contract, but a spiritual and supernatural union, requiring for its mutual obligation a supernatural, divine grace," but up to date none but the priesthood have found out what that means. The general interpretation of it is that "matches are made in heaven," yet from present conditions according to the clergy the reverse seems to be true, at least to an alarming extent.

If this grace be imparted by that holy, that sacred ceremony through these agents of God, why should one marriage be one of misery, and another of happiness? If this special grace is given to one and not to another, who is guilty of partiality?

The world is growing too wise and too independent in spirit to much longer tolerate this priestly chaff and interference. A great obstacle to the improve-

ment of conditions in our marriage system is dense ignorance of sexual science, and the extreme reticence on the subject of many earnest people, who are seeking for a solution of this vital problem.

The tap root of the trouble is that young ignorant sons are allowed to gain knowledge and experience in stables and gutters, while ignorant and innocent daughters are trained up to catch eligible husbands, even if they are transformed into reform schools for rakes and roués.

To give the young knowledge of their own physiology, and teach them the use, control and wise direction of natural functions, is considered shocking, and most improper.

In spite of the prevalence of marital infelicity and increase of divorce, the Church encourages and urges marriage as a duty, and our President and the press are crying out against race suicide. Let it be remembered that all this clamor comes from men.

The most heinous crimes have been and are now being committed against women in the marriage state, and the Church is using all its influence to have the State perpetuate and sanction these crimes. The priest with the Holy Bible in his hands is the most to be dreaded enemy that ever preyed on the motherhood of the race. As long as the clergy can retain their power over woman, both Church and State will conspire against her human rights. They cry loudly that "divorce is a national disgrace." Who is mostly responsible for this disgrace? Eighty-three per cent. of the divorces granted are to women, for the infidelity, drunkenness, cruelty, desertion, and other crimes of husbands against wives, while largely the majority of the divorces granted to husbands are on the plea of abandonment. When a woman abandons her husband she has great cause, and what a world of mystery and misery is bound up in that word, "abandonment." The world is not permitted to know what is behind that plea.

"National disgrace." Indeed! The greatest disgrace this nation ever permitted, unless warriors are desired, is the crime of allowing a man and woman to live together as husband and wife, who hate each other. Yet this is what the Catholic Church insists shall be done, and the number of Catholic criminals on the calendar of crime shows the result.

The national disgrace would be to appoint a committee of clergymen and lawyers (as the Church is now urging) to draft a national marriage and divorce law, without calling in any of the wives and mothers, any of the level-headed, big-brained women of our country. If women respected their womanhood as they should, they would protest against such a proposition as bold assumption, and take such a hand in the marriage question that divorce would not have to be considered. Surely wives and mothers who sacrifice and suffer most in the marriage relation, are more competent to judge of what would be fair and just and conducive to the happiness and perpetuity of the American home, than celibate priests, who are supposed not to know anything about fatherhood, and certainly nothing of motherhood, and who do not maintain homes for the rearing of American citizens. If God joined together couples whose hearts become full of hatred for each other, and whose homes are battlefields of domestic warfare, he was unwise, or cruel, or both.

The legislatures in most of the States are tinkering with the laws of marriage and divorce, and even Congress is being stormed to secure the passage of national laws. I do not deny that these are more vital questions than all others combined, but I do deny that men alone can, or should attempt to, bring about better conditions. They alone are responsible for the domestic conditions, and they need a moral force, with equally as much brain power as they themselves possess, to help them cope with the vital problems.

Legislators are comparing the United States and Canada on these questions, and they tell us that in 31 years 700,000 divorces have been granted in the United States, while during the same period only 60 divorces were granted in the Dominion of Canada.

Let it be remembered that in Canada, Parliament alone can grant divorces, and they cost a fortune, so only the wealthy can secure them. In Canada it takes years and as much red tape as to secure a constitutional amendment to secure a divorce. Does any sane person believe that marriage is a complete success in Canada, and that there are not thousands of couples who desire divorces and should have them? Is the Canadian Parliament endowed with supreme wisdom that it should presume to rule the hearts and affections of the people? Seven hundred thousand divorces mean that 1,400,000 people in the United States have been released from galling bonds that filled their lives with dissension, hatred, fear, cruelty, and bitter regrets.

Had these people been denied divorce, would the individuals, the wretched children they would have brought into the world in thirty-four years, the State, the nation, be in a higher moral state than it is with the destruction of the domestic pandemonium of these mismated couples? Is the American home more endangered and on a lower moral plane than if these misfit marriages had not been annulled?

Is the criminal calendar longer because these 700,000 jarring and warring couples failed to increase the population through the beneficence of the divorce laws?

Cardinal Gibbons and his priestly satellites are clamoring loudly against divorce, claiming that Catholic marriages are indissoluble. How this claim can be made in face of the facts is hard to see. Indissoluble marriage in the Catholic Church applies only to the poor and ignorant. Any Roman Catholic who puts up money enough can secure a divorce sanctioned by archbishops, cardinals, and the Pope of Rome himself. Thousands of Catholics have been divorced by paying the price demanded by the Church. Members of European royal families, and members of the monied aristocracy of the Catholic world, have purchased divorces, and numbers are now hanging fire in Papal courts, waiting for the ducats to be forthcoming.

JOSEPHINE K. HENRY.

—*Liberal Review* (Chicago).

(To be concluded.)

National Secular Society.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's offices on Thursday, April 27. The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair.

There were also present:—Messrs. J. Barry, H. Cowell, F. A. Davies, W. Leat, Dr. Nichols, J. Neate, Victor Roger, F. Schaller, S. Samuels, T. J. Thurlow, H. Silverstien, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received for the following Branches:—Cardiff, 3; Finsbury, 1; South Shields, 1; Birmingham, 2; Parent Society, 2.

Applications for permission to form new Branches at Wigan and Mountain Ash were considered and granted.

The President reported upon a matter affecting Birmingham.

Messrs. Cohen, Davies, and Roger were elected as an Agenda Committee. The list of speakers for the Conference evening meeting was arranged, and the meeting adjourned until May 11.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

The Wealth of the Roman Catholic Church.

THE greater part of the wealth of the Roman Church was acquired in payment for the forgiveness of sins. Sometimes it was expressly stated in the contract, as in the agreement made between the Seigneur de Solanges and the famous St. Bernard, published in the Chronological Gallery, in the year 1810, by Barba:—

“The Seigneur de Solanges, etc., etc., compounding with St. Bernard for the remission of his sins and his admission into Paradise, gives to his Lord God the Father and to Madame the most holy Virgin Mary, and all the saints of Paradise, in the person of Bernard and his monks, an estate situated near the town of Dijon, with fields, pastures, vines, and houses, vassals, male and female; and Bernard, in his title of Procurator or Attorney of the Eternal and

in his name accepts the said gift; guarantees to Sieur Solanges a commodious and spacious place in Paradise, where he shall enter at the moment of his death, after being mounted on horseback and, armed from head to foot, having passed through purgatory at a quick gallop, where he will take a drink without alighting, to which effect, he, Bernard, engages that a good horse shall await him for the passage at the gate of Purgatory.

(Signed)

“CONRAD, Sieur de Solanges.

“BERNARD, Abbe de Clairvaux.”

There is even now the same merchandise in Masses and Indulgences in the Church.

—*From “La Raison.”*

INGERSOLL'S DELIVERANCE.

One Sunday I went with my brother to hear a Free Will Baptist preacher. He was a large man, dressed like a farmer, but he was an orator. He could paint a picture with words.

He took for his text the parable of “the rich man and Lazarus.” He described Dives, the rich man—his manner of life, the excesses in which he indulged, his extravagance, his riotous nights, his purple and fine linen, his feasts, his wines, and his beautiful women.

Then he described Lazarus, his poverty, his rags and wretchedness, his poor body eaten by disease, the crusts and crumbs he devoured, the dogs that pitied him. He pictured his lonely life, his friendless death.

Then changing his tone of pity to one of triumph—leaping from tears to the heights of exultation—from defeat to victory—he described the glorious company of angels, who with white and outspread wings carried the soul of the despised pauper to Paradise—to the bosom of Abraham.

Then changing his voice to one of scorn and loathing, he told of the rich man's death. He was in his palace, on his costly couch, the air heavy with perfume, the room filled with servants and physicians. His gold was worthless then. He could not buy another breath. He died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment.

Then, assuming a dramatic attitude, putting his right hand to his ear, he whispered, “Hark! I hear the rich man's voice. What does he say? Hark! ‘Father Abraham! Father Abraham! I pray thee send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and cool my parched tongue, for I am tortured in this flame.’”

“Oh, my hearers, he has been making that request for more than eighteen hundred years. And millions of ages hence that wail will cross the gulf that lies between the saved and lost, and still will be heard the cry: ‘Father Abraham! I pray thee send Lazarus that he will dip his finger in water and cool my parched tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.’”

For the first time I understood the dogma of eternal pain—appreciated “the glad tidings of great joy.” For the first time my imagination grasped the height and depth of the Christian horror. Then I said: “It is a lie, and I hate your religion. If it is true, I hate your God.”

From that day I have had no fear, no doubt. For me, on that day, the flames of hell were quenched. From that day I have passionately hated every orthodox creed. That sermon did some good.

FREE WILL AND IMMORTALITY.

We have now concluded our examination of the two doctrines of man—the doctrine that he is immortal, and the doctrine that his will is free—which alone can present him to us in the light of a possible party to that moral, that personal, that direct, that abiding relation between the Divine and Human, which it is the essence of all religion to postulate. We have seen, as to his will, that he is nothing but a mere machine, who, whatever he does, deserves neither praise nor blame, since whatever he does he could not have done otherwise. And as to his alleged immortality, we have seen that the more deeply we penetrate into the observable facts on which his life and his mind depend, the more clear does it become to us that these facts, all and singly, exhibit his life as a mere fleeting phenomenon, which appears with the body and disappears with it, leaving nothing behind; a kind of life which, even if God existed, could have nothing to hope for in his love, and nothing to fear from his displeasure.—*W. H. Mallock, “Religion as a Credible Doctrine,”* p. 149.

Humanity is the true man, and the individual can only be happy when he has the courage to recognise in himself a part of the WHOLE.—*Goethe*.

Knowledge and human power are synonymous.—*Bacon*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall, Stratford): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Carpenter of Nazareth: a Freethought May-Day Sermon."

OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and Woman."

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob"; Brockwell Park, 3.15, "So Man Made God After His Own Image."

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "Genesis and the Higher Criticism."

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): 7, Guy A. Aldred, "Science and Theistic Absurdities."

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

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, May 11, at 8, a Paper by one of the members.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Annual Meeting of Members. Election of Office-Bearers, etc.; 6.30, Social Meeting in Commemoration of Mill and Owen.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, H. Percy Ward, "Is Man Made in the Image of God, or in the Image of the Ape?"; 7, "Heaven and How to Escape It."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints'): 6.30, Debate between Percy Redfern and J. B. Hudson; subject, "The Lord's Prayer: Is it True and Socially Beneficial?"

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market Place): 7.30, Important Business Conference, etc.

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