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He who works in unison with Nature and Truth, is sure to be far mightier and wiser than himself.—HARE.

Nonconformist Wriggling.

IT is a very curious thing—or rather it would be very curious if one did not understand the nature of politics and politicians—that many leading men of both the great political parties in England (we set the other parties aside for the moment) have declared themselves, theoretically, in favor of Secular Education, as the only wise and logical policy in relation to State schools, yet not one of them ever thinks of raising a finger to assist it. Mr. Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Rosebery, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, commend this policy in an academic way to the consideration of philosophers; but when they stand in parliament, or before popular audiences, they take up, maintain, and defend the practical policy of the hour in their several camps. Even Mr. John Morley has come to speak of Secular Education in apologetic tones, as a thing which the Liberal party in general, and the Nonconformist section of it in particular, must pardon him for adhering to in private, on condition that he does absolutely nothing for it in public.

Many years ago we said that the only certain way to promote Secular Education was to make Secularists. Nobody else seems to be depended upon in this matter. The National Secular Society as an organisation, and the *Freethinker* as a vehicle of opinion, have steadily fought for the right on this question. Even the Socialists have only lately fallen into line as Secular Educationists. Some of them gave the policy their abstract support, but they gave it nothing else. Mr. John Burns threw himself into the arms of the Nonconformist party who bamboozled the London constituencies by calling themselves "Progressives." Mr. Graham Wallas, and other Fabians, went working for the "Progressive" (Bible Reading) ticket. And the Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, a Christian Socialist, after gaining his seat on the London School Board as a Secular Educationist, consented to retain it by classing himself as a "Progressive." Now, of course, the road is clearer and easier; for Mr. Blatchford's attack on Christianity in the *Clarion* has stirred up the Socialists who believe in Secular Education to do something towards realising their belief in action, and the vote of the Trade Union Congress at Leicester, in 1903, so overwhelmingly in favor of excluding religious instruction from all State-supported schools, has given quite a fresh prospect to a policy that had been considered hopeless.

But what sagacious Secularists most relied upon, after the result of their own efforts and the inevitable influence of time, was the controversy and struggle between the Christian sects. The aims and objects of the Church of England were quite incompatible with those of the Nonconformist Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church was certain to do all in its power to prevent either of the other Churches from winning a final victory. Once admit that religion is to be taught in the nation's schools, and the question of *what* religion is bound to arise. Were any one Church powerful enough to treat all the

others as negligible quantities, that question could be easily decided. But there is no such Church in England. There was once, but there is not now. And the result is a fierce war of sects, each fighting for its own ends, and each charging its rivals with the meanest and basest motives. When the Church of England gained an advantage the Nonconformist leaders started the Passive Resistance movement, with its social anarchism and cheap martyrdoms. It has not been a brilliant success, and what success it has achieved is discounted by the perception that Passive Resistance is a game that can be played all round. The leaders of the Church party have plainly intimated that if the last Education Act should be upset, and the Nonconformist policy of "unsectarian" education be established in the public schools at the nation's expense, Churchmen will have to go in for Passive Resistance in *their* turn; and thus the struggle, instead of being ended, will only have passed into another and more bitter stage.

The Nonconformist leaders begin to see that they are beaten, not so much by the Church of England as by the logic of events. The present situation is an impossible one, and there is no hope of a better. They have come to an *impasse*. They are in the plight of Balaam's ass in the Bible story. To go forward is fatal, and there are solid obstructions on either side. All they can do is to lie down and take their "gruel" in the shape of Secular Education.

The Nonconformist policy was from the outset a foredoomed absurdity. No such thing as "unsectarian" religion exists, or ever did exist, or ever will exist. It is practically a self-contradiction. You cannot have religion without sectarianism, and you cannot have religious teaching without tests. The tests may not be open, but they are implied, and are none the less real on that account. Religious teaching *must* be denominational; it has no precision or vitality otherwise. Coleridge, nearly a hundred years ago, ridiculed the idea, then first started, of "teaching those points only of faith in which all denominations agree." Instead of deeming this a "liberal idea" he called it "poisoning the children of the poor with a sort of potential infidelity." Indeed, we once heard a Freethinker defending the old School Board religious teaching on this very ground—namely, that the children would be distracted—as though the way to Free-thought lay through sheer middle-headedness. Gladstone, in a letter to John Bright (Jan. 27, 1894) denounced "unsectarian" religious teaching as "glaringly partial," and said he would never be a party to it. Any man of real brains could see through this nincompoop idea in a few minutes. And the fact that the Nonconformist leaders have supported it through thick and thin, and are only abandoning it now that they see the game is up, speaks volumes for their want of statesmanship and even of common sagacity; unless we are to assume that their blunder was less intellectual than moral, and that they threw aside common sense with common honesty for the sake of a passing professional advantage.

That the Nonconformist leaders *are* abandoning the "unsectarian" policy is perfectly obvious. Mr. Campbell, whose utterance we quote in another column, is looking forward to the inevitable triumph of Secular Education as the only settlement of the present controversy. Dr. Horton has just launched

a similar suggestion. And now the veteran Dr. Guinness Rogers sends a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* advising his Nonconformist colleagues to swallow the bitter cup at a single draught. The alternative is something still worse. The quarrel of the sects gives the common enemy cause to blaspheme. "The interests of Christian unity," Dr. Rogers observes, "and even of Christian truth, have been seriously compromised." And it is idle any longer to evade "the vital questions" at issue.

The *Chronicle* shies at this policy, but will doubtless go past it quietly enough in the course of time. The *Daily News* of the same morning, as though it knew of Dr. Rogers's letter but could not say so, accepted Secular Education. Yet it cast a longing, lingering look behind. It said that "undenominational religion" would be a very good thing, but a "powerful section of the Church" regarded it as a "monstrosity," and therefore "we are finally driven, by a process of exhaustion, to the secular solution." To this complexion we must come at last. But the *Daily News* merely makes a virtue of necessity; it stands upon no principle but expediency; and, quite characteristically, it does not recognise that Jews, Secularists, and other non-Christians have any right to a voice in the discussion. Oppressing and robbing them does not matter. It is only the powerful "section of the Church" whose opposition has to be considered.

This want of principle on the part of Nonconformist leaders is a reason why Secularists should watch them very carefully. Even if they unanimously accept Secular Education they will probably do their level best to circumvent it in practice. Dr. Rogers himself shows the cloven foot at the end of his letter. He suggests that even under a system of Secular Education it might be "possible to introduce readings from the Bible." After reading the *Daily Chronicle* leader he appears to have felt greatly encouraged. "Allow me at once," he said the next day, "to say that Bible reading in the day schools is, in my judgment, one of those points on which hard logic must give place to a widespread, almost universal national sentiment." Such is the self-stultification which Dr. Rogers indulges in naked and unashamed. What he foolishly calls "hard logic" is nothing of the kind; it is not the abstract logic of mathematics; it is the living logic of moral principle—the logic of justice, the logic of free and equal citizenship. And whose "sentiment" is it to give way to? The sentiment of Dr. Rogers and his Christian friends. To gratify their sentiment the sentiment of other citizens is to be derided and trampled under foot.

Fortunately, the leaders of the Church party are nearly sure to oppose this Nonconformist move. They recognise that Bible reading, in passages selected by laymen of various Churches, is simply a fresh device of the very "undenominationalism" which they are bound to resist to the death.

Dr. Rogers is really proposing Dr. Clifford's old remedy of "Secular Education *plus* the Bible." Nothing could be more absurd. Nothing could be more dishonest. The thing on the left of the "plus" and the thing on the right of the "plus" are mutually destructive. They may both exist apart, but they cannot exist together. It is perfectly idle to talk about the Bible as "magnificent literature." How is it that this is the only magnificent literature the Nonconformists are anxious about? The truth is that the Bible was placed in the schools as a book of religion, and it is only as a book of religion that the Nonconformists (or any other Christians, for that matter) want to keep it there. They will resort to any shift rather than have it cleared out of the schools. While it remains there, on any pretence whatever, it serves their turn; and no Church in the world ever relinquished a privilege, however unjust, until it was absolutely compelled to do so by a stronger power than itself. Consequently the friends of Secular Education must see that it is not admitted at the front door and let out at the back,

G. W. FOOTE.

The Crux of Theism.—II.

(Continued from p. 290.)

THE essence of the position taken up by the Theist is that the goodness of God is identical with the goodness of Man, and that the care and wisdom of God is shown in both the history of the individual and of the race. The proving of this position Mr. Mallock regards as the crux of Theism, and he has little difficulty in showing that the apologies put forward quite fail in their object. They are, indeed, so far from answering anti-Theistic criticisms that they do not even meet them.

To begin with, there is the stress laid by Theists upon the mutual adaptations of organism to environment and environment to organism. But this argument, when looked at fairly, is absolutely without force, and for the following reason: It is indisputable that adaptation is essential if human life is to exist. If, as Mr. Mallock says, a devil had made man for the express purpose of torturing him, he would have to adapt man to his environment quite as much as a benevolent deity. Adaptation is the essential condition of life. Without it life would disappear. And even though it were granted that the adaptations in nature point to a ruling intelligence it could tell us nothing whatever as to its character.

Perfect life would be perfect adaptation (a condition bound to be always more of an ideal than a fact), and if we look at the means by which a more perfect adaptation is realised, the review is anything but favorable to Theism. For the evolutionary process is, in a word, the production of a vast majority of imperfect beings in order that a small minority of relatively perfect beings may exist. And, as is admitted is a small posthumous volume by Professor Romanes, just published and edited by Bishop Gore, and quoted by Mr. Mallock, "It can be no possible extenuation to point to the final result as order and beauty, so long as the means employed by the Omnipotent Designer are known to have been so terrible." The survivors may, if they please, call this process a benevolent one, but to those who have gone under in the process, and who, being created, had a perfectly valid claim to the perfection that is reserved for a few, it is the very essence of malevolence. At any rate, the doctrine of the equal love of God for all his creatures breaks down in face of a process that secures a few prize specimens by sacrificing a host of inferior ones, all alike the products of his own handiwork.

Against this and similar criticisms the Theist has but one reply, although it takes various forms, and this is that all suffering is a blessing in disguise, and is inflicted upon man for his own benefit. Mr. Mallock quotes from Professor Romanes several arguments of this kind, and which are worth noting because they come from Romanes. The first is that, in addition to the ordinary faculties known to science, man possesses another—namely, the faculty of "spiritual intuition," and this discerns a certain inward state called spiritual goodness as the supreme object for which men are to struggle; and, therefore, "the worst sufferings can be welcome if faith in such an object justifies them." Moreover, in the gradual development of the race "spiritual intuition" discerns a purpose worthy of God, and realises that evolution is a winnowing out of all that is spiritually bad or inferior, in order that what is spiritually best may survive.

Now, quite apart from the value of the argument concerning the value of suffering and the essential goodness of the evolutionary process, it may be pointed out that this introduction of a "spiritual faculty" is both useless and illegitimate. A faculty, the possession of which all are cognisant, may be appealed to, but a "spiritual intuition," the very existence of which is extremely doubtful, and which is arbitrary in its decisions even if it exists, can scarcely be appealed to with profit. And a very little study of this alleged "faculty" shows it to

be a pure delusion. The conclusions reached by it are nothing more nor less than misunderstandings or misinterpretations of facts that are admitted by all. The "spiritual faculty" once discerned an occult cause for epilepsy, for insanity, for storms, earthquakes, plagues, comets, and hundreds of other things. Further and fuller experience showed the absurdity of such explanations, and the untrustworthy character of this spiritual intuition. And there is no reason whatever for thinking that this "intuition" to be more correct here than in other instances. It is the simplest, but the most useless, of all devices to invest our superstitions with the fictitious dignity of an "Intuition."

But with or without "spiritual intuition" the argument is radically unsound. In the first place it is clear that the plea cannot dispose of the criticism, "Why, if God be omnipotent, were not all men made perfect from the first, instead of being dragged through the mud so that a few might be ultimately washed clean?" The means can only be of value in relation to the end, and if that were realised from the outset nothing would have been lost. It is quite beside the point for the Theist to point out how the means leads to the end. Given the circumstances, and the process of "winnowing out" is inevitable. But the Theist forgets that on his hypothesis God created these circumstances, and it is precisely the case of the objector that if there be a God then the creation of these circumstances was purely arbitrary, and so far unnecessary that the same result might have been achieved by quite different means.

And even with the circumstances as they are it is impossible for the Theist to prove that suffering is essential to the purification or the ennobling of character. Pain does not create character; at most it only tests it. Here and there are found those who can withstand suffering, but in the vast majority of cases it degrades, weakens, or demoralises. Invalids are notoriously querulous, exacting, and selfish, just as those who are brought up amid scenes of brutality are the least resentful of its existence. It is simply not true that suffering is a good developer of character, and no one believes it is. People may say it is for purposes of argument, but take these same individuals in their daily lives and it will be found that their conduct gives the lie to their theory. Mr. Mallock rightly remarks: "A long and painful illness may chasten the temper of a saint, but how can a depraved nervous system, congenital lust or ferociousness, a congenitally callous conscience, or stunted intellectual powers, afford those who are not saints any help in attaining sanctity? How can evils such as these be reconciled with the goodness of a God for whom the sanctity of each single soul is in the main purpose of evolution?"

Mr. Mallock again quotes from Professor Romanes an argument against Christianity used by Darwin, and to which Romanes brings what is intended for a reply. Darwin had urged that the very lateness of Christianity's appearance in the world, and its influence over a comparatively small proportion of mankind formed a strong presumption against it. To this Romanes replies that "It is remarkable that Darwin of all men should have been worsted by this fallacious argument; for it has received its death blow from the theory of evolution itself. That is to say, if it be true that evolution has been the method of natural causation, and if it be true that the method of natural causation is due to a Divinity, then it follows that the lateness of Christ's appearance must have been designed; for it is certain that He could not have appeared at any earlier date without having violated the method of evolution."

But the surprising thing is not that Darwin should have been struck with the weight of the fact of the generations that died before Christ's alleged appearance, and of the generations that have died since either ignoring or rejecting him, but that Romanes should have imagined that evolution removed from these facts their adverse significance.

To begin with, the argument is only a variant of the one criticised above, namely, that the sacrifice of the many is justified by the preservation of the few. Just as in the one case a multitude of more or less imperfect organisms are created so that a few favorable specimens may emerge, so in the other whole races were allowed to pass away without receiving, through no fault of their own, the saving faith of Christianity. A process of this character, which results as the inevitable consequence of a non-sentient cosmos, is bad enough; it awakens sorrow, but calls for no protest from an outraged moral sense; but such a process initiated by a Deity, with a full foreknowledge of all that was to occur, is so monstrous that nothing but the narcotising influence of a long-established theology could render it tolerable. And "the more inseparable such a winnowing process is from that method of dealing with Man which the Deity has deliberately chosen, the more impossible does it become, so far as observation can guide us, to credit Him with the moral character which Christian Theism ascribes to Him."

And, once more, this argument still leaves the claims of the individual against Deity unsatisfied. If, as Mr. Mallock points out, the human race were one continuous and single individual it would be reasonable for God to withhold certain benefits during childhood so that they could be more appropriately bestowed at maturity. But this is not the case. The race is composed of distinct individuals, each, from the standpoint of Theism, surviving or being crushed in virtue of its own qualities, and each with exactly the same claim upon Deity for the means of salvation. To those who go under there can be obviously no consolation or compensation in the reflection that the same process that crushes them preserves and elevates others. We may submit to the fact, but it is impossible to discover any benevolent wisdom in the arrangement. And all the arguments ever coined in its defence can only confuse the understanding without satisfying the moral sense.

"Far more is done to the interests of Theistic belief," says Mr. Mallock, "by the use of bad arguments in defending than by the use of bad arguments in attacking it." With this all can agree; only one may add as some sort of an excuse that the Theist has to back up a thoroughly bad case. No argument that has been used in defence of Theism ever satisfied one who did not already believe. For these give, not reasons for accepting, but excuses for retaining, the belief in Deity. As an unreasoning heritage from the past we possess it; and as a belief incapable of verification, and unable to justify itself upon grounds of utility, it is experiencing the fate that befalls all useless organs and functions in the evolutionary process.

C. COHEN.

"Christian, Greek, or Goth?"

LAST week we discussed "J. B.'s" conception of Christianity, and found it to be at variance not only with that promulgated by the orthodox Church, but also with that of the New Testament. Mr. Brierley's Christianity is fundamentally different from that of Paul and Augustine, and Luther and Calvin; and yet, in spite of this radical departure from the teaching of the New Testament and of the Church, he claims to be Scriptural in his views. The fact is, that Mr. Brierley's chief ambition is to harmonise Christianity with the natural knowledge of to-day. But the very attempt to effect such a harmonisation—if Christianity is regarded as a revealed religion—is in the highest degree blasphemous.

As the reader will remember, Mr. Brierley's article in the *Christian World* for April 27, 1905, entitled, "Ideals of Living," was a criticism of Mr. H. W. Garrod's article, entitled, "Christian, Greek, or Goth?" which appears in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*. Mr. Garrod is a Fellow of

Merton College, Oxford, and the article shows signs of wide reading, of a cultured mind, and of a well-balanced judgment. He begins by calling attention to the fact that, according to Christians, the Christian world is the only world worth talking about. They assert, in most dogmatic terms, that when Jesus came He wrote across all Pagan culture and art and religion the one significant word, *Failure*. Christianity comes to us as the only Perfect Religion, and as inculcating the only satisfying morality. Consequently, the Pagan world does not really count very much. It has no moral significance deserving of mention. Even Greek morality possesses very little value until Christianity adopts and purifies it. As Mr. Garrod says, "Whatever in morality is not either Greek or Christian, the good Christian who knows a little Greek regards as without value. The moral systems east of Suez may have *interest* for the western European, but they have not *value*. They must not be allowed to enter into—they only confuse—the moral calculations of persons living on what may be called the respectable side of Suez—the side which acknowledges the eleven commandments."

It must be admitted, to Mr. Brierley's credit, that he has no sympathy whatever with such conceited and degrading narrowness. He declares that "no educated person of to-day would dream of assigning the *role* of world-culture exclusively to the Bible, or to historical Christianity." But, as a Christian apologist, he evinces as profound an insularity of view as the most orthodox among his brethren, as we shall immediately see. Mr. Garrod says: "It cannot, I think, be denied that there is at the present day, among thinking persons, a widespread dissatisfaction with the moral ideals of Christianity."

But if the moral ideals of Christianity are abandoned, what shall we put in their place? According to Mr. Garrod, the choice lies between the Greek and the Gothic ideals. "The ideal of Christianity is what may be called holiness. The ideal of Hellenism may be said to be understanding or intelligence, under which word I would include a delighted co-operative energy of both senses and intellect." The Gothic ideal would be correctly described by the word *gentlemanliness*. The ambition of Christians is to become *saints*; of the Greeks, to cultivate "sweetness and light"; and of the Goths, to be perfect gentlemen.

It will be a long time before England forgets the eloquent persistence with which Matthew Arnold used to advocate the claims of Hellenism. That famous poet and literary critic was at heart a Greek, a lover of intellectual clearness and artistic beauty. But Mr. Garrod, while sincerely admiring Greek culture, prefers the Gothic ideal of manhood, which is that no one can be a gentleman unless he is chivalrous and honorable. He maintains that progress can only be made by those who are devoted to chivalry and honor. The following passage shows his attitude:—

"As far as progress—which I will here define simply as going forward without slipping back again—as far as progress is concerned, I do not think it can be said, if we keep closely to the great facts of human history, that the Greek or the Christian ideal has been, or that both in conjunction have been in a true sense progressive. Hellenism indeed went forward, but the very rapidity of its forward movement wrought its fall. It fell, and it failed. It failed, it is true, from the excess of its own ideals, like the craftsmen of whom Shakespeare says that 'striving to do better than best, they do confound their skill in covetousness.' But none the less it failed. Its failure is sufficiently proved by the fact that Christianity was able to supersede it. Christianity conquered it, because Christianity stood firmer on its feet. Yet it stood firm on its feet because it stood still. The golden period of Christianity, in the strict sense, was that in which humanity was more stationary than in any other—the period covering those centuries which, despite the sedulous whitewashing of fashionable historians to-day, are still spoken of as the Dark Ages—and which might even more appropriately, I think, be called the Black Ages."

Mr. Garrod is bold enough to proceed thus:—

"The attempt, again, inaugurated by the Renaissance to combine Hellenism and Christianity—spirited and gallant though it was, and much as it did for the deliverance of the human intelligence—that attempt cannot, I think, be shown to have resulted *by itself* in any real progress. In saying this I must not be understood to mean that from the Renaissance down to the present time the human race has been standing still, much less to mean that for the five-and-twenty centuries which have elapsed since Hellenism first became a power in the world there has been no progress. Clearly and beyond dispute there has been progress. But what I maintain is, that this progress has been almost as much in spite of as because of Hellenism or Christianity or both."

It is not quite clear what Mr. Garrod means by progress; nor are we quite convinced of the accuracy of his estimate of Hellenism. He is strongly of opinion that in reality the men who make progress among us to-day owe their motive-power neither to Athens nor to Jerusalem. While the majority of them call or regard themselves as Christians, he believes that they are self-deceived. They do not follow Christ, nor do they lay claim to the title of saints. They are tolerant of many things which Christianity pronounces deadly sins. At any rate, they can forgive all sins save one; but there is one which they adjudge absolutely unforgivable; namely, the sin of not being a gentleman; and the gentleman is a product of neither Hellenism nor Christianity, but of the Gothic culture. Whatever of chivalry and honor there is in our life to-day has been derived from the northern races.

Mr. Brierley is utterly unfair in his criticism of this point. Almost with scorn he says: "When he tells us that chivalry and honor, the makings of a gentleman, have come to us from the Goths, we ask, What Goths? There is no pure breed at present extant. The Goth we know is Goth *plus* long centuries of Christianity. We cannot at our convenience hustle history out of the way." Mr. Garrod fully admits the influence of Christianity on the Gothic mind and character. He has no intention to hustle history out of the way. But, with his eyes wide open, he claims that when the peoples of the North came Southward it was not "in an 'entire forgetfulness' of all social tradition, and in an 'utter nakedness' of moral ideas." And Mr. Brierley cannot prove the opposite. He cannot honestly deny that the Goths had an individuality of their own which even Christianity could not destroy. Chivalry and honor are in their blood; and though Christianity may have modified both attributes, it has not been able to eradicate them. Mr. Brierley asserts that had it not been for Christianity the Goth would not have been the gentleman he is; but that is an assertion unsupported by any evidence whatever. It is not gentlemen that Christianity seeks to manufacture, but spiritual men; and as a rule the more of a saint a man becomes the less chivalrous and honorable he is in society. As Mr. Garrod says, chivalry and honor are an undefined and instructive protest against Christianity. The spiritual man is an unnatural product, a violation of the human constitution. Man's first instinct is to be natural. "The morality of the North," observes Mr. Garrod, "accepted with its lips the spiritual man, but in its life it soon began to make, in all directions, a return upon the natural man. Chivalry and honor I take to be the two main directions in which it essayed, at first perhaps unconsciously, this regress upon the natural man..... Christianity was the stimulus which produced these two ideals, but this reaction upon stimulus no more resembles the instrument of the stimulus than a reaction upon a pin-prick resembles the point of a pin."

Let it be borne in mind that both chivalry and honor are a vigorous protest against Christianity:—

"Chivalry is to honor as the flesh is to the world. Christianity had said, 'In my flesh dwelleth no good thing'; it had represented the body as the enemy of the spirit; it had discountenanced marriage and had hinted a not obscure approval of 'some that were made eunuchs for the kingdom of God's sake. Against that chivalry is a brilliant and powerful, though erratic, protest. It had

also proclaimed with a complacency akin to exultation, that 'the fashion of this world passeth away'; it had made an ideal of what St. Paul calls the 'fool for Christ's sake,' and accounted those alone blessed who, in the cause of Christ, had made themselves 'as the filth of the world and the offscourings of all things unto this day.' 'Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we intreat' (1 Cor. iv. 12). Against all that, so unnatural, so pusillanimous, so impossible, the ideal of honor is a righteous and necessary and enduring protest."

Of all that argument Mr. Brierley takes not the slightest notice, but without rhyme or reason pronounces chivalry and honor Christian products, pure and simple. Surely, he must be aware that the majority of the Christian virtues, as enumerated in the Bible, are purely passive. "Resist not evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." It is usual to exhort Christians to put their entire trust in the Lord, to have their conversation or citizenship in heaven, to "set their minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth," and to confess that they are but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Every exhortation of that kind, when seriously heeded, is bound to exert a weakening and degrading influence upon character. A passive resister is a poor and wretched sort of creature at best. He who truly puts his entire trust in the Lord cannot practise self-reliance.

Some of the moral maxims of Christianity cannot be surpassed; but as a religion it enjoins duties the discharge of which cannot possibly make for strength and nobility of character. As a religion, it represents salvation and heavenly blessedness as conditioned on faith alone, while as an ethical system it makes good works, rightly done, the sole condition of final acceptance with God. Thus Christianity is inconsistent with itself, one side of it flatly contradicting the other. As a religion it depreciates man in order to magnify God, while as an ethical system it enjoins several impossible duties, and, in consequence, increasing numbers of thinking people are turning away from it.

Stript of their military associations and brutal adjuncts, chivalry and honor are most essential traits of character. To be chivalrous means to be heroic, intrepid, gallant, and yet magnanimous. The true man is a knight-errant, ever riding abroad to right the wrong, to redress grievances, to deliver the oppressed and the downtrodden, to educate the ignorant, and to minister to the weak. To be a man of honor is to cherish self-respect, to be manly and independent, noble and true, demanding fairplay and giving it. The man of honor has a sensitiveness or keen pride which makes it impossible for him either to demean or belittle himself, or to be guilty of any unworthy action towards others. With certain mental reservations, I can adopt Mr. Garrod's language and say: "What is wanted to-day is that we should frankly accept the moral conquest of the northern races, live openly under the government of their ideals, identify ourselves with these ideals, and develop them."

J. T. LLOYD.

Book Chat.

MR. H. S. SALT, the able and devoted honorary secretary of the Humanitarian League, has published a sixpenny edition of his little book on *Animals' Rights* through A. C. Fifield of 44 Fleet-street. When the first edition of it was published in 1892 we wrote of it in terms of praise and expressed a wish that it could be circulated by the hundred thousand. It was a sanguine wish, but time has shown that the book has vitality, and this pretty though cheap edition should bring it into many fresh hands. Mr. Salt writes firmly yet persuasively, his literary style is excellent, and his plea for the extension of the moral law to the lower animals—as they are sometimes quite facetiously called—does credit alike to his heart and his head. The wide reading of this book would be a benefit to one of the best of causes.

Another volume by Mr. Salt is *Richard Jefferies: his Life and Ideals*—also published through A. C. Fifield. This is a new and cheaper edition, price 1s. 6d. The monograph is a capital piece of work. Mr. Salt praises Jefferies' high qualities and admits his defects. He speaks of the *Story of My Heart* and the *Pageant of Summer* as unexcelled, of their kind, in English literature. He very properly dismisses the story of Jefferies' death-bed conversion. The truth was, and the whole truth, that he acquiesced in his wife's reading him the third Gospel when he was too weak to offer opposition. "So long," Mr. Salt says, "as he retained any slight measure of health and strength, so long as he was able, even at rare intervals, to enjoy that vital communion with Nature on which his whole being depended, so long in fact as he was Richard Jefferies, and not a shattered wreck—he was a free-thinker. Even at the last he withdrew no syllable of his writings; he saw no priest; he made no acceptance of any sort of dogma. His own published statements remain, and will remain, beyond dispute or question, the authoritative expression of his life-creed." This is fortified, in a new Preface, by a quotation from a letter by Jefferies' biographer, the late Sir Walter Besant. Writing to Mr. Salt, Sir Walter Besant said that he fully agreed with him "as to the unreality of Jefferies' deathbed conversion to orthodoxy." "Now here," Besant added, "is an important point. I stated in my *Eulogy* that Jeffries died a Christian. This was true in the sense of outward conformity. His wife read to him from the Gospel of St. Luke, and he acquiesced. But I have since been informed that he was weak, too weak not to acquiesce, and his views never changed from the time that he wrote *The Story of My Heart*." This is very important, and practically settles the matter; which, however, was clear enough inferentially before. We may add that Mr. Salt's monograph on Richard Jefferies is extremely well-written and interesting. It is also very neatly printed and bound, and its value is enhanced by a striking portrait.

This is an age of books about books. So a small six penny volume about Edward Carpenter (A. C. Fifield), comes from the pen of Ernest Crosby. It is very well done in its way—for those who want an introduction to Edward Carpenter, or, not having time to read him, want a summary of his teaching. On the whole we think Mr. Crosby is better employed in writing on his own account than in producing volumes of this sort. Perhaps he would reply that this is a proof of his self-abnegation. Be that as it may, we are much better pleased with Mr. Crosby's own book entitled *Broad-Cast*, which reaches us from the same publisher (price 1s. 6d.). This volume contains a good deal of what may be called the raw material of poetry. Here is a little piece headed "Religion":—

The childish mistaking of pictures for facts.—
The crass materialisation of allegory,—
The infinite capacity of man for humbugging himself,—
And underneath it all the shadowy outline of truth.

We do not say that this is the best thing in the book—it is not—there are many far better things—but it illustrates what we mean. Mr. Crosby has thoughts and sentiments of some value, although he is too much an echo of Whitman and Carpenter. But expressing them with a certain rhythm, and cutting the composition into various lengths to make the page look something like versification, does not constitute poetry, which is an art as well as an inspiration. If Mr. Crosby cannot or will not master this art, he would be better advised to say what he has to say in honest prose. The hybrid form—if it can be called a form—is like all hybrids, doomed to sterility. By sticking to prose Mr. Crosby will do himself more justice, for he is really worth listening to at times. Not always—for he is frequently too derivative.

Number XVII. of the Transactions of the Cremation Society of England has reached us from the office, 324 Regent-street, London, W. The price to non-subscribers is sixpence. There is a report and financial statement for 1904. A very interesting feature is a "List of Persons of Note Cremated at Woking." It includes some very distinguished people. Cremation is not yet popular, but it has some notable good friends.

Mr. Walter Hunt's little book, *Are We a Declining Race?* (Henderson, 1s.) is of no slight importance. It deals ably and frankly with a question that lies at the very root of social well-being. Mr. Hunt declines to pursue the common policy of hypocritical silence on this topic. He speaks out plainly on the natural and perverted uses of the sexual instinct. His own ideal is not a low one; it may even be considered severe. Only a rascal, therefore, could accuse him of any but the highest motive in penning this trenchant essay.

Mr. J. W. de Caux, one of the sturdiest Freethinkers in England, who has for many years championed his principles with great power and success in the local newspapers, and has, alas, paid many penalties for having too much brains and honesty, has just published a little book called *The Licensed Victualler's Vade Mecum*—"being lucid instructions for gauging casks, casting ullages, determining the strength of spirits, and valuing the trade effects of a licensed victualler." We do not pretend to be a proper judge of such work; but knowing what we do of Mr. de Caux's faithfulness of mind as well as character, knowing his strong capacity, and knowing, as we do on other grounds, that he has a fine mathematical head—we have no hesitation whatever in commending this little book to the attention of such of our readers (of course they cannot be very many) as it may concern. The book is written by an expert, the directions seem to us perfectly clear, the tables are worked out and printed most helpfully, and everything appears to be included that the persons it is meant for could require. A copy can be secured by sending 5s. to Mr. J. W. de Caux, 92 St. Peter's-road, Great Yarmouth.

Acid Drops.

We always thought that the office of a Mayor was purely civic, and therefore secular, but the Mayor of Camberwell seems to think otherwise. That gentleman, on a recent Sunday evening, paid what the *Daily News* describes as "an official visit" to the Rev. G. Ernest Thorn's "popular meetings" in the Crown Theatre, Peckham. He also delivered a short speech there, saying that "he had come on behalf of the Borough of Camberwell to thank Mr. Thorn" for the said meetings. According to the report, the Mayor was "accompanied by the Aldermen and Borough Councillors." Surely not *all* of them. In any case these visits to religious assemblies are not really official. Outside his actual official duties, which are determined by the law, a mayor is only an ordinary citizen. As a matter of fact, the Camberwell Borough Council has no religion at all. And that it affects to have one is simply an illustration of the old truth that Christians are easily self-assertive to the point of insouciance.

How often we have heard Christian ministers (generally Nonconformists), attending political or social meetings, and telling those assembled that they are there to "speak for their master, Christ." Jews and Freethinkers may be present, but that does not deter these servants of Christ from talking "shop." Yet how they would groan if a Freethinker had the folly and ill-taste—for such it would be—to get up and say "I speak as an Atheist."

A coroner's inquest held at Leeds over the dead body of Clara Lizzie Cracknell, thirty-six, a married woman, resulted in a verdict of suicide while suffering from religious mania. About four o'clock in the morning she was found in flames in the cellar of her residence. When her husband asked her how she got on fire, she replied, "God has told me to purify my soul by fire, and I have done so." A neighbour, Lily Rhodes, deposed to seeing her in the cellar walking about and crying out, "It is a judgment. God wished me to die by fire, and I have done so." This case will not appear in orthodox lists of the blessings of religion.

Rev. William Edward Thompson was found dead in bed at his lodgings in Cheltenham. An empty chlorodyne bottle, and another half full, were found in a drawer in his room. There is no more to be said. But there would be a lot more if the deceased had been a Secular lecturer instead of a clergyman.

Another clerical suicide—for Dr. Torrey's list. Rev. Reginald Thomas de Carteret, vicar of Cutcombe, Somerset, hanged himself in a hayloft.

William Allister, a West Ham missionary, has been sentenced to a month's imprisonment for peculating charitable funds. Another case for Dr. Torrey.

Mrs. Jane Isabel Morton, now post mistress at Ledburgh, has just obtained a divorce from her runaway husband, the Rev. Thomas Henry Norton, a Congregational minister. The evidence showed the man of God to be a very rotten egg. He went off to America with a lady member of his congregation, taking away with him all the money in the house except four shillings, which he piously left for the use of his wife, who appears to have been a thousand times too good for such a scoundrel. We commended this case to Dr. Torrey's attention. He really ought to make use of these things in his revival addresses.

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Evan Roberts has had a severe attack of influenza.

Mrs. Mary Jones, of Egryn, the Welsh secess, claims to be followed about, or led onward, by holy lights—which may be only the effect of a diabolical liver. Several attempts have been made to get to the bottom of the mystery. One night several Welsh ministers, with a correspondent of the *Morning Leader*, tracked a brilliant light, which the secess assured them was one of her manifestations. When the said correspondent and two other friends ran it to ground, so to speak, the mystic light turned out to be "a bedroom lamp over a shop burning midnight oil." But this did not prevent a choir of revivalists from posting themselves on an aqueduct, singing hymns "to coax the light to appear." What brains these people must have!

Dr. Forbes Winslow credits the confession of the man in New York who says he committed the famous Whitechapel murders fifteen years ago. It is commonly thought that "Jack the Ripper" eventually died in a lunatic asylum. Dr. Forbes Winslow believes otherwise. He holds the theory that the man was a homicidal religious monomaniac. There have been many Jack the Rippers in history. Some of them sat on thrones, some officiated at altars. The worst of all was called Jehovah.

Who is the "M. D." who wrote a "special" in *Reynolds'* on Revivals? It was very sensible, and candidly referred to Evan Roberts as "a typical hystero-epileptic." But at the end the writer began to drivel himself about "the true religion of Christ, the noble Prophet and enthusiast, so full of the love of humanity, who has no angry Deity to be either appeased or bribed." This is a pretty thing to say of one who taught the doctrine of everlasting torment, and was swell-headed enough to declare that nobody could come to God except through *him*.

The *Christian World* appears to have a strange idea of the character of clergymen. It actually praises one, as if he had done something very heroic, who, to avoid running down a deaf child in a narrow roadway, ran into a stationary cart and so shattered his leg that amputation was necessary, resulting in blood poisoning and death. Does our contemporary mean that it was a special act of virtue (in a clergyman) not to ride over that child? It seems to us that the cyclist on this occasion paid the penalty of his folly. Why did he ride at such a rate in a narrow roadway? Why did he not slow down, or stop his machine and jump off? People on wheels are too apt to think that if they get out of other people's way, or other people out of theirs—the latter by preference—they do all that is requisite. Which is absurd.

The *East Anglian* had better be careful, or it may get Dr. Torrey on its track. In an editorial paragraph the other day it said that Sir Henry Irving "in real life bears a certain similarity to our idea of Voltaire by his critical observation and philosophical survey of life." Dr. Torrey is ready to assure our East-country contemporary that Voltaire was the perfect embodiment of wickedness and foolishness. And certainly if Dr. Torrey is a good man, Voltaire was not; and if Dr. Torrey is a wise man, Voltaire was otherwise.

Rev. J. L. Saywell, vicar of St. Paul's, Stanningley, between Bradford and Leeds, has been entering his "solemn protest" against Sunday tramway traffic. He says it is "leading to a corresponding decrease in public worship." This is doubtless true. He says it is also leading to "a sad corruption of morals and behaviour." This is doubtless the reverend gentleman's imagination under the stimulus of his ill-temper. People are generally put out by loss of business, and what they say about "opposition" should be taken with many grains of salt.

Archdeacon Brooke, in his charge to the clergy in the Halifax district, refers to the dearth of candidates for Holy Orders, and is candid enough to attribute it to "the unsettlement in men's minds regarding the faith held and proclaimed by the Anglican Church." The main difficulty is not monetary, but spiritual and intellectual. Quite so. There never was so much money in religion as there is just now. But the spirit of "unbelief" is abroad. Young men, in the age of generous enthusiasms, do not see why they should tie themselves up to a lie for a living. So they give the Church the go by and pursue a career in some other profession. And this is gradually telling upon the Church. The lack of brains is becoming more and more apparent. In the course of time it will be conspicuous and shocking. It is already alarming.

The London City Mission, one of the innumerable

parasites on religious folly, had an income last year of £59,178 and spent £60,353. At its annual May meeting in Exeter Hall the principal speaker was Dean Wace—the gentleman who cut such a poor figure when he ventured to cross swords with Professor Huxley. Dr. Wace went bald-headed for the Higher Critics—who were not present. He accused them of “undermining the authority of the Bible among the people at large.” They had done their worst with the Old Testament, and their methods “were now to be applied to the New Testament.” But he defied them. The question had been set at rest for ever (as far as the faithful were concerned) by the late Dr. Lightfoot and the late Dr. Westcott. What did he care for the Higher Critics? He felt sure that Luke wrote the third gospel, and that Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. He was “satisfied” and that was enough. Thus the reverend gentleman doddered on—and the meeting applauded him. Poor things! They remind us of a flock of geese cackling in front of an express train.

Among the May meetings was the twenty-third annual of the International Bible Reading Association, which boasts of 850,000 members. Sir W. H. White, who presided, said that: “The Association was doing a great work in a quiet way, and practically embraced the world. Some were trying to bring together all parts of the British Empire, but could anything do more in this respect than the grand old Book? How true it was, it was doing more to weld together the people than any negotiator or diplomat. Such an association was making the English race what it should be—the peace-keeper of the world, because this Book preached love and peace.” There is something very novel about this argument. It is really new to find the Bible as the great welder of the British Empire. We know now why Canada will always be loyal and why Australia will never cut the painter. And what a fresh idea that is of England as the keeper of the world’s peace. England has had almost countless wars on hand during the last hundred years; she has hardly ever been at peace for a twelvemonth during the whole of that period; and she has only recently finished up the South African war which cost her £300,000,000 and some 50,000 lives. Yes, England as the great international peacemaker is decidedly refreshing—not to say entertaining.

Both the London Missionary Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society show a large deficit on the past year. The Bible Society’s deficit is more than £35,000. No doubt this sad state of things will be altered if the British public take the advice of the Marquis of Northampton, who presided at the annual meeting. His lordship rejoiced at the unquestioning faith with which the heathen received the Bible, and wished that “some of the Higher Critics they had at home would also receive the Bible more as little children.” As the childish spirit increases the Bible Society will flourish.

Another speaker at the Bible Society’s meeting was Bishop Wellldou. This gentleman delivered a diatribe against the “Higher Critics,” for whom the Bishop of St. Alban’s had said a good word. “He took a more serious view of critical theories,” he said, “than the Bishop of St. Alban’s. His contact with the Mohammedan controversy taught him that the Mohammedans said the records of the Gospel were false, and in that monument of scientific folly, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, they would find support for their view.” Bishop Wellldou declared that they must stand up for the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection; yes, and even for Noah’s Flood—for “if he found the story of the Flood in remote regions of the earth there must be some foundation for it.” Such is clerical wisdom at the Bible Society’s annual meeting! Such is the influence of the Grand Old Book! Bishop Wellldou declined to call Canon Cheyne a “devout and sober-minded teacher.” Canon Cheyne would probably decline to regard Bishop Wellldou as anything but a solemn joke.

The Church Army spent £178,000 last year. It wants £198,000 for the new year. These people always ask for “more.” Lord Salisbury, who presided at this Society’s annual meeting, described its work as tending to “the reduction of vagrancy and irreligion.” We suppose he meant tramps and infidels. Well, we don’t know what the tramps think. The infidels smile.

The voice of truth was heard at one May meeting. Rev. Sylvester Whitehead, addressing the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, said that “a returned Bishop had lately avowed that if the Chinese were properly trained no English, German, or Russian soldiers would dominate the Far East.” This is perfectly true, though not original, for we have often said it ourselves. The awakening of China, with its vast territory, immense popu-

lation, and incalculable resources, will be the signal for the Christian Powers to stop hectoring and buccaneering, and to pursue the sensible and honest policy of minding their own business. Meanwhile we may smile at the missionary idea of capturing China for Christ. They have not yet captured England for Christ. Christianity is losing ground here daily.

Alfred Austin, our pious Poet Laureate, in unveiling a bust of Mrs. Browning, took the opportunity to publish his opinion that she was not “great” and that this followed from the very fact of her being a woman. Well now, the “Sonnets from the Portuguese” are a thousand times better poetry than Alfred Austin ever wrote. Many of Christina Rossetti’s poems leave the best of his a terribly long way behind. And a few of Emily Bronte’s outsoar any of his as an eagle outsoars a wren.

Colonel Waddell, in his new book on *Lhasa and Its Mysteries*, states that he made inquiries of the most learned persons in Thibet and could find no trace whatever of the “Mahatmas” whom Madame Blavatsky, and Mrs. Besant after her, located in the then most unexplored country in the world. The leading Lama of Thibet told Colonel Waddell that “the English have no religion at all.” Asked why he thought so, he replied: “Because I know it! Because I see it for myself in the faces and actions of your people! They all have hard hearts, and are specially trained to take life and to fight like very giant Titans who war even against the gods!” This is something for the missionary societies to think over.

How the Churches live largely on dead men’s money may be seen from the bequests notified from time to time in the newspapers. Under the will of the late Mr. Wilham Holborn, for instance, who left a fortune of £162,000 amassed in the tea trade, various religious bodies receive considerable legacies. A few of them are the following:—Congregational Union £9,000; Congregational School for the sons of Congregational Ministers, £2,000; Milton Mount College £2,000; London Missionary Society £2,000; Hackney College £2,000; London City Mission £1,000. When the Freethought movement is favored in this fashion it will teach the Christians something in propaganda and organisation.

The Free Church leaders appear to see that Secular Education is inevitable. Some of them are turning their attention to the best means of circumventing it. Rev. F. B. Meyer, who is revivifying in America, writes to the *Daily News* from the Pacific coast, stating that he has attended a meeting at Los Angeles which was convened by an association with the object of reintroducing the Bible to the elementary schools of the United States. In some States the Bible and religious instruction are absolutely excluded; in other cases, Mr. Meyer says, though the law discountenances religious instruction, the teachers “to a large extent, on their own initiative, ignore the statute, and open the school with the reading of the Bible and singing a hymn—which he seems to think is all right. Still, it has its dangers; it may be stopped, for instance. What then is to be done to frustrate secular education? Even the Roman Catholics, we are told, favor “a selection of Bible passages for general use in the elementary schools.” Now it is suggested by Mr. Meyer that this policy might be adopted in England. “It has occurred to me,” he says, “whether it might not be worth while to gather together the representatives of various schools of thought, and prepare a series of such selections, and see whether we couldn’t agree on it.... We might find ourselves in closer agreement than we suppose.” How charming! The “various schools of thought” and the “we” are, of course, all Christians; and they are to conspire together to rob and oppress non-Christians.

Rev. R. J. Campbell, addressing the annual meeting of the Sunday School Union at the City Temple, said that the bitter and painful Education dispute would probably be settled during the next year. Religious tests for teachers would be almost certainly abolished, and there would be “Secular Education, with facilities for religious instruction, either in or out of school hours.” This means, we presume, that Mr. Campbell has joined the “right of entry” party. Of course the policy of that party is only a side attack on Secular Education. They want to get the free use of the schools for religious instruction. Their next step will be to get the free use of the children during school hours. Secular Educationists should keep a sharp eye on these people.

Mr. Campbell seems to pin his faith in the future on Sunday schools. He said that he “would dread a wholly secular education unless the Sunday schools rose to the occasion.” Well, that is a matter for the Christians. We shall be satisfied if their sectarian grip on the days schools is abolished.

The Mayor of Ipswich was another speaker at that Sunday School Union. He is reported in an Ipswich paper to have delivered himself thus:—

"He believed this to be the children's century. There was more organised effort to lay hold on the children than there had ever been, and it was true that a conflict was going on in the country as to which religious body should get the children. (Hear, hear). They believed the Free Church was best for the children."

Mr. Campbell would not have said that. It was reserved for the blundering layman to let the cat out of the bag in that fashion. Truth, like murder, will out—sometimes.

What right had Mr. Maddison, the Labor candidate for Burnley, to attend the Liberation Society's annual meeting in London, and talk in the name of Co-operators and Trade Unionists? What right had he to represent them as practically unanimous in their support of that Society? Nearly all the speeches at the Society's meeting turned upon the education struggle, and the Society's official view of it being voiced by leading Free Churchmen and Passive Resisters like Dr. Clifford. These gentlemen want religious teaching (of their own brand) maintained in the nation's schools. The Trade Union view, as expressed by an overwhelming majority at the Leicester Congress, is that religious teaching should be excluded from the schools altogether.

The Bishop of Barking (what a name!) has been declaring his opinion that "it would be a fatal mistake to take any action that might lead to a purely secular system of education." Fatal to whom? Not to the children, of course, nor to their parents. The Bishop was looking at the matter from a professional point of view. He means that "purely secular education" would be fatal to his line of business. We agree with him.

A Chester rector took the children of a Church school to the House of God during school hours. The Chester Education Committee wrote directly to the teachers, forbidding the practice, and threatening to stop their salaries if it were continued. That put an end to it. The rector is indignant. Poor man!

Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell, of Rochdale, writes to the *Daily News* denouncing the agreement come to between the Bradford Council and the Managers of the local Catholic school. A sectarian quarrel like this has little interest for Freethinkers, but one of the reverend gentleman's short paragraphs is worth a moment's notice—not for its own sake, but for something that it leads to. The paragraph is as follows: "Probably every teacher a Roman Catholic. You need not apply a test. You need only give a preference amongst equals." Precisely so. But this happens to be just as true in another direction. When the religious teaching that Mr. Hollowell favors is given in provided schools, he and his friends declare it is "unsectarian" and that there are no "tests." This we have denied and derided. We have said that tests need not be open to be effective. And this is precisely what Mr. Hollowell says in relation to the Roman Catholic school at Bradford. In his own language, you need not apply a test, you need only give a preference amongst equals. And the trick is done.

The early May meetings in London ran a race with Nan Paterson for newspaper attention. Nan won, of course. A people brought up on religious education in days schools, and further doses of it in Sunday schools, may be expected to display these tastes.

At a recent Pentecostal League meeting at Exeter Hall that fervent revivalist, Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., called the Devil a liar. Probably the Devil would retort that Mr. Harris is a good authority on lying. The learned gentleman has not yet obliged the world with the name and address of any Agnostic who ever knew *him* to be an Agnostic. This information is needed to support the learned gentleman's claim that he is a "converted infidel."

Even the *Daily News* lets the cat out of the bag sometimes—principally in reviews. In reviewing a new book on Rome the other day it let the cat out as follows:—

"The population of Rome is only a third of what it once was. In the time of the Flavian emperors it had two million inhabitants, in the time of Augustus 1,300,000; a thousand years of Christian domination brought it down to 17,000."

Rome has now some 500,000 inhabitants, and it had probably far more than two million inhabitants in the palmiest Pagan days. But, in any case, it is illuminating to remember that "a thousand years of Christian domination brought it down to 17,000." A fact like that is worth a thousand disquisitions.

Dr. Paton, of the National Free Church Council, has made a discovery. With respect to the drinking habits of the people, he "regards the exhaustion of the industrial population by severe and often uninteresting toil as the dominant fact in the situation." Does he, now? Well, this has been said by Freethinkers for ever so long. How is it that Christians are so slow in learning? Because they *are* Christians. And how is it that they "discover" what Freethinkers have come to regard as a commonplace? Because they *are* Christians.

The May meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society disclosed a deficit of £10,600. The chairman invited his hearers to invest their money in the enterprise. He seemed to think that saving the heathen—or trying to—was a first-class dividend on hard cash. We can quite understand this view being taken by the missionaries.

Rev. C. F. Aked, of Liverpool, has written an article in the local *Daily Post* on a silly book by Mr. Guy Thorne; a book which been boomed by the Bishop of London, and therefore *must* be silly. Mr. Aked recognises the book as stupid stuff; although he agrees with the author, on other grounds, that if the world lost Christianity it "could do no other than sink back to barbarism again." Well now, what is this precious Christianity? According to orthodox Christianity it is all based on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. "If Christ be not risen," St. Paul said, "then is our faith vain." And what was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ? According to the New Testament (and there is no other source of information) his dead body came to life again, walked away, and left behind it an empty tomb. Mr. Aked, however, does not believe that. He denies that the Resurrection was "a physical thing." He says it is "a commonplace of educated preachers of the Gospel" that "the Resurrection is a spiritual reality wholly distinct from, and absolutely independent of, the question as to the resuscitation of the crucified body of Jesus." Surely this is carrying mental jugglery to its very climax. We agree with Mr. Aked that the question of a *future life* is independent of the question as to what became of the dead body of Jesus; but to say that *the Resurrection* is independent of it is to fly in the face of common sense and common honesty. All we have to say more is that if the "educated preachers of the Gospel" can persuade their congregations that this hypocritical absurdity is indeed the teaching of the New Testament, and that the present attack on Christianity may be defeated in this way, they will beat Kuropatkin hollow in the tactics of masterly retreat. They might recollect, though, that retreat must stop somewhere, and that another battle must be fought at that point, if the enemy still means business. That was Kuropatkin's trouble, and we fancy it will be the trouble of Mr. Aked and his shifty friends.

The Bishop of Chichester says he would be sorry to see anyone related to him standing behind a bar. How about the front?

President Roosevelt called Thomas Paine a "dirty little Atheist." Thomas Paine was not dirty; while he had strength to himself he was scrupulous and almost fastidious as to his personal appearance. Thomas Paine was not little; he was inches taller than President Roosevelt. Thomas Paine was not an Atheist; he wrote essays to prove the existence of God. With those three exceptions President Roosevelt's description of Thomas Paine is fairly accurate.

President Roosevelt has been having a holiday. Not being a refined gentleman like Thomas Paine, his idea of a holiday is to take a gun and kill something. Reuter thought it good business to have a wire sent over here from Glenwood Springs, Colorado, on May 6, to say that President Roosevelt had arrived there mud-bespattered but well, and that he had remarked, "We had good luck, and got ten bears." This murderous sport may be all right for good Christians, but it will seem all wrong to most Freethinkers. To kill a bear unless you've got to is cruelty; to kill it for fun is devilry. Perhaps we ought to beg the Devil's pardon for saying so.

The *Daily Mail's* "own correspondent" at New York went to the trouble and expense of wiring over the news that a bride had been seized with small-pox—after she had been kissed by the minister and the wedding guests. Of course she was really suffering from small-pox at the time, although it had not declared itself. The church has had to be disinfected—also, we suppose, the minister.

There has been a religious raffle at Blackpool in connection with a Church bazaar. The articles "drawn for" being a smart pony and trap. Sixpenny tickets for the raffle were sold in the public streets. Lotteries are illegal in England—except in religious circles.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Whit-Sunday, N. S. S. Conference.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—May 14, e., Forest Gate; 21, m., Dalston, n., Victoria Park; 28, a. and e., Victoria Park; June 4, Dalston; 11, Conference at Liverpool.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—May 21, Failsworth; 28, Manchester.
- L. W. STOVIN (Cardiff).—We do not know the Rev. Mr. Tuckwell, of Southwood-lane, Highgate, N., who told you that he was ready to debate the accuracy of the first chapter of Genesis with a Freethought representative. We will have a copy of this week's *Freethinker* posted to the reverend gentleman; and if he means business he may communicate with us.
- C. H. G. (New Zealand).—Thanks for your trouble in the matter, but that Catholic expression of opinion about the Rome Congress is rather behind date now.
- E. V. S.—You may be quite right as to the value of Cartoons from one point of view, but we never got back the money we spent on our old ones, and cannot see our way to repeat the experiment. Good cartoons cost a lot of money—to say nothing of time, trouble, and mental effort. Never mind the anonymous letters. We get lots of them. The suggestion *re* Freethinking novels shall be considered.
- FREETHINKER.—The cuttings from the *Christian Herald* have already been under our notice.
- T. E. MACKNEALE.—We fear you are after a mare's-nest. Voltaire was a pen-name, the writer's real name being François Marie Arouet; but Shakespeare, Bunyan, Milton, and Pope were the actual names of those writers. You could not regard this as disputable if you knew the facts.
- REA.—Not up to our standard.
- W. H. P. (Liverpool).—See "Acid Drops."
- T. LEVIE.—The cutting you send us has already been the subject of an "Acid Drop."
- J. L. G. MACKINNON.—Thanks for cuttings.
- R. ROSETTI.—Pleased to hear you found such a band of "energetic and enthusiastic young Freethinkers" at Mountain Ash.
- C. W. STYRING.—A very good letter notwithstanding the editorial mangling. The Dickens extract you refer to, which we headed as you saw, was taken from his "Sunday Under Three Heads" in the nineteenth volume of the Biographical Edition, edited by Arthur Waugh.
- J. C. POINTON.—Pamphlets are being sent. You should write to the Humanitarian League yourself for the reason why your prize-essay on "Flogging in the Navy" has not been published. Pleased to hear you "cannot have too much" of our writing on Shakespeare. Our book on Shakespeare that you inquire about was begun a good while ago, but want of leisure has prevented us from finishing it.
- J. A. MORRIS.—See Obituary.
- J. BLACKHALL.—Thanks.
- E. R. WOODWARD.—Your account of Mr. L. B. Gallagher makes us hope that the Camberwell Branch has found a recruit with a future in the army of Freethought.
- W. C. GRIFFIN.—Cuttings must be up to date to be valuable.
- W. R. FITTON.—What better could you expect from such poor hysterical mountebanks?
- J. ARNOLD SHARPLEY.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Liverpool Post*, though carefully "edited." Your letter to us will have attention.
- A. STANLEY.—You are evidently a very profound Shakespeare student. You deduce Shakespeare's religious views from *Titus Andronicus*, and thus show yourself ignorant of the A B C of the subject.
- R. ANDERSON.—The reverend gentleman was talking nonsense about Voltaire.—Glad to hear that pressure on your newsagent was successful.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £115 10s. 8d. Received this week: W. Mann, 5s., D. Wallwork 2s. 6d., F. Clemence 1s., W. Edwards 1s.
- J. W. E. BENNETT.—We like to receive cuttings before Tuesday if possible. Thanks for addresses.
- W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.
- W. VILE.—Thanks for the magazine. We think that Mr. Holyoake's account of the difference between Harriet and James Martineau is nearer the truth than the account by the Rev. A. Hall, of Norwich. Mr. Holyoake was a contemporary and knew the facts at first-hand.
- H. A. MAY and W. H. LAWTON.—The question of the N. S. S. delegation to the Paris Congress in September will be dealt with at the Liverpool Conference. You may rely on announcement being made in good time.
- G. S. PARSONS.—Brigadier R. Slater's letter does him very little credit. He did not attend J. M. Wheeler's funeral "as a Salvationist," but as a personal friend. The funeral was a Secular one, and Mr. Foote the only person who officiated. We have no knowledge whatever of Mr. Slater as a "Freethought lecturer" before 1882. When he says that Mr. Wheeler, when dying, wanted him fetched, and that "the message was withheld for a purpose"—when he says that

"His last wish was that the converted infidel should go to pray with him"—he must know that he is romancing. Mr. Wheeler could not send messages and could not receive visitors in the Asylum. They had to put him in a padded room on his arrival, and he died in that padded room after days and nights of raving. His wife was sent for at the last minute and was just in time to see him alive. He was then speechless, but when she asked him if he would like to see Mr. Foote "a beautiful smile" (her own words) passed over his face. Mr. Foote hurried up, but his friend was dead when he arrived. Mr. Slater's "messages," therefore, are purely imaginary. He ought to be ashamed of himself to wait seven years, until Mrs. Wheeler is dead too, and then start such a fabulous story.

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

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Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had a splendid audience at the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening, and his lecture was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Spence, the chairman, invited questions and discussion, both before the collection was taken up and after, but none was forthcoming. Someone at the back of the hall cried out "They are all Freethinkers." "Then," said Mr. Foote, "we are getting on down here." It had been hoped at the outset that there would be some discussion. With a view to it, indeed, Mr. Foote had said that, as he had to catch his last train home, he would turn over any opponents he had not time to deal with to the competent hands of his younger colleague, Mr. Cohen, who occupied a seat on the platform. This reference to Mr. Cohen was much cheered, and it was pleasant to see that he had been winning golden opinions at West Ham. It was also pleasant to hear that Mr. Lloyd's lecture on the previous Sunday had made such a fine impression.

The success of our courses of lectures in the Stratford Town Hall show what might be done everywhere if we had the same treatment as other bodies. All we want is fair play: no favor and no disfavor, but simply justice. Where we get big public halls—like the Stratford Town Hall and the still larger Birmingham Town Hall—we easily fill them; just as easily as we fill small halls in back streets. What Freethought most of all suffers from is the cowardly orthodox boycott, which is only persecution without the open courage of its evil deeds. It is this boycott that puts us at such a disadvantage in comparison with Christian sects, as it is this boycott that deprives the *Freethinker* of a half, and perhaps two-thirds, of its legitimate circulation.

When Mr. Foote was trying to get the right car for Plaistow Station after his lecture on Sunday evening, he was accosted by a man who had evidently been to the meeting, and who seemed very eager to prevent the lecturer from getting into the wrong conveyance. He was a stout, genial looking man, with a very simple, though not at all foolish, face. Taking a seat in the car himself opposite to Mr. Foote, he indulged in certain movements and expressions which seemed to show a conflict between shyness and communicativeness. At length he managed to introduce himself, and he turned out to be Thomas George Senior, the member of the Peculiar People, who was sentenced some years ago to four months' imprisonment for leaving his sick child in God's hands, as the Bible told him to; and with respect to whose trial and sentence Mr. Foote wrote an Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills. Mr. Senior heartily thanked Mr. Foote for that outspoken letter. Presently he took the seat vacated by Mr. Foote's side, and for a few minutes the two sat together chatting; the one having been imprisoned for believing the Bible, and the other for not believing it. Some day or other

this incident may be significant to an historian of these times.

Whit-Sunday is appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury as a time of special supplication to God that he would be pleased to pour out his spirit upon the Church—which appears to want it. Freethinkers should remember that the same day is the date of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. While the Christians are praying they should be doing something better. Let them see that the N. S. S. Conference is a grand success. They can do this by going to Liverpool, where it will be held this year. Branch delegates and individual members should turn up in strong force on this occasion—if only as a compliment and an encouragement to the Liverpool Branch, which has been carrying on such a gallant, and we are happy to say such a successful, struggle during the past few years. The business sessions of the Conference, morning and afternoon, will be held in the Alexandra Hall—the Branch's regular meeting-place. The evening public meeting will be held in the great Picton Hall; which, when crowded, as we believe it will be, will be a fine sight for the visitors from other parts of the country.

The speakers at the Picton Hall meeting will be Mr. Foote, Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. John Lloyd, Mr. H. Percy Ward, and Mr. F. A. Davies, for certain, and the list may be extended before Whit-Sunday arrives.

The Liverpool Branch is trying to arrange for an excursion on the Monday. Particulars will be printed in due course. Mr. Foote is being pressed to stop for the excursion this time, and will do his best to "join the family group." Of course the only thing that has prevented his doing so on several recent occasions is his editorial duty on the *Freethinker*. Since the death of his dear old friend, J. M. Wheeler, whom he still keenly misses, Mr. Foote has had no sub-editor. That state of things has been going on for seven years, and on looking back over this period he sometimes wonders how he has "pulled through." It looks quite "providential"—as the Christians would say.

Mr. Ward had two excellent meetings at Liverpool on Sunday, a number of people having to stand in the evening. After Whit-Sunday he will take up the open-air work for the summer season. Mr. Joseph McCabe's visit next Sunday (May 21) will be the last of the special lectures this season at Liverpool.

Mr. Ward's recent visit to Warrington was marked by a fair audience and a lengthy discussion, some of the Christian critics being rather long-winded. There is a chance of establishing a Branch at Warrington, and Mr. Ward is paying another visit next Tuesday for that purpose.

Dr. Walford Bodie, of Liverpool, says that he is responsible for the hypnotising of Evan Roberts at that Music Hall meeting. He sent his assistant to hypnotise the revivalist, who, he declares, is himself a hypnotist, using his powers in the wrong direction. Dr. Bodie claims to have driven Evan Roberts from Liverpool. He now offers a challenge of £1,000 to the revivalist to prove one instance where he has been able to do any more good than to produce a form of hysteria.

The May number of *The Message*, a Christian organ, edited by the Rev. Dr. J. Warschauer and the Rev. Hugh C. Wallace, both working at Bristol, contains the following paragraph, which will be of interest to many, if not most, of our own readers:—

"No religious liberal, for instance, would have been guilty of the shocking series of mis-statements, in connection with the Torrey Mission, on the exposure of which we must congratulate a journal from which we differ so widely as the *Freethinker*. It appears that there was in Bristol a 'notorious Atheist' of the name of Robert Pitman, who reported the Torrey meetings for the *Freethinker* and the *Clarion*, and actually distributed 20,000 free-thought tracts at the doors. He was converted by Dr. Torrey, notified the *Freethinker* and the *Clarion* of the fact, was discharged by his 'infidel' employer on account of his conversion, and in turn converted several atheists—we presume, to Torreyism. A most edifying story, to be sure: alas, that a little investigation should have sufficed to bring down the whole edifice like a pack of—'cards,' we suppose we ought to say, though an even shorter word suggests itself. It is true that Robert Pitman exists; but (1) he never was an atheist; (2) he never reported for the two papers mentioned; (3) he never distributed 20,000 pamphlets—a mere 2,000, so he says—but cannot remember the false name under which he ordered them; (4) he never was converted by Dr. Torrey, but by the Rev. Mr. Frengrove; (5) he was not discharged because of his conversion; (6) he has never, on his own confession, made any converts. There we leave the story; it is all, as a famous Trio would say, 'a pretty average ghastly mess': and now we can only hope

that Dr. Torrey's informant, the Rev. H. C. Boulton, of Bristol, feels as proud of himself as he ought to feel." This should be pleasant reading for Dr. Torrey.

We were glad to receive a letter recently from our highly valued friend, Dr. E. B. Foote, of Larchmont Manor, New York. Dr. Foote is a veteran Liberal (which is the common American term for Freethinker) and is universally esteemed amongst the friends of mental liberty on that side of the Atlantic. He must also have many admirers on this side, for his *Plain Home Talk* appears to be well-circulated in Great Britain. Dr. Foote is now in his seventy-sixth year, and not as strong as his friends would like to see him. During the past severe winter he has seldom been out of his house, but we trust he is now enjoying the air and sunshine, which are both delicious at Larchmont, where we had the great pleasure of spending a few days with him in 1896. Being a subscriber to the *Freethinker*, our dear old friend (if we may be allowed to call him so, for he is one of the kindest and best of men) is able to follow our own doings, in which he takes considerable interest. "I see by the paper," he says, "that there is no end to the work which you undertake to do, and I can hardly see how your constitution holds out under the strain." Nor do we, sometimes; and now and then we feel it is really time to "go slow" a little. But a fresh bit of work comes along, and we cannot help tackling it. However, we will take Dr. Foote's hint—if we can.

Dr. Foote enclosed with his last letter a cutting from the *New York Tribune*, referring to "a recent pile of exchanges," and remarking that "The *Freethinker*, of London, was cheek by jowl with the *Christian Intelligencer*, of New York." Perhaps the editor of the *Tribune* will smile to hear that most journals in England would sooner break one of the ten commandments, or all of them together, than print the name of the *Freethinker* in their columns.

Dr. Aked's sermon on the Resurrection, which we refer to in this week's "Acid Drops," has given rise to a correspondence in the local *Post*. One letter, signed Charles R. Niven, points out that some years ago Dr. Aked "distinctly stated that the Resurrection of Christ was one of the best-authenticated events in history." Now the reverend gentleman teaches a very different view of the matter. He goes in for a spiritual reappearance instead of a revived body. But this correspondent asks him whether a visible spirit is not as great a miracle as a rising body. "As for Dr. Aked's other statement," Mr. Niven says, "that the best parts of our civilisation are due to Christianity, there is not a shred of evidence he can bring forth that will bear two minutes' examination..... Sir Frederick Treves speaks of the Japanese as being a people of infinite tenderness. Could the same be said of Christian England?" Here be truths—as the gentleman in the play says. And it is very refreshing to find them in an ordinary newspaper.

The following extract from a letter lately to hand should be both interesting and encouraging:—

"Having but lately become a reader of the *Freethinker* I thought I would write to let you know that I think your paper is most excellent and admirable in every respect. I had a copy handed me at Falkirk, and I was so pleased with it that I forthwith ordered it of my newsagent. And as I got to know of it, I am letting others know of it in the same manner, by handing my own copy on to my workmates. My copy, I know, passes through a few hands, as I always write on the bottom of page 'Please pass on to an interested friend.'"

Our friends will see the good that may be done by placing the *Freethinker* into fresh hands. This is a valuable part of the "Underground Movement" we wrote about the other day—in which we hope a large number of our readers will participate.

Professor Goldwin Smith, in a letter to Mr. Bourassa, leader of the French Canadian Nationalists, is compelled to differ from the Quebec policy on the school question, and reaffirms his old conviction as to the true principle in such matters. "History," he says, "has taught me strenuously to uphold the great principles of separation of Church from State, and the equality of all religions before the law, nor can I see how the State can confer privileges on the schools of a particular Church, without violation of the principle."

The Secular Society, Limited, has just received a generous donation of £100 from Mr. F. Bonte. At the donor's request a grant of £10 has been made to the Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society. This is the largest donation, as apart from legacies, which the Secular Society, Limited, has yet received. It is to be hoped that Mr. Bonte will find imitators.

Can Men Alone Solve the Question of Marriage and Divorce?—II.

(Concluded from page 301.)

NEXT to the Romanists come the Episcopalians in demanding rigid divorce laws. Episcopal church councils have of late well-nigh excluded all other subjects from their deliberations, and they are using the limited power they possess to force Congress and State legislatures to adopt their tenets on marriage and divorce.

The Episcopalians on this question show themselves in their true colors, that of galvanised Roman Catholics. If the Episcopal Church is Protestant as it claims, it should remember that Protestantism denies that marriage is a sacrament, but is a civil contract, and has turned over to the State the power to legislate on this question. In face of this principle how can any of the Protestant sects claim the right to decide who shall enter the marriage relation, and what shall be legal causes for divorce? All religious sects have the right to demand that their own members obey their Church laws on this question, but what right have any of the Churches to force upon other denominations, and 50,000,000 of people in this country who do not belong to any Church, compliance to their medieval ideas that have never yet brought harmony or happiness to the human race? Ecclesiastical discussions and interference regarding divorce are a mighty influence in increasing the number of divorces in our country, whether the clergy recognise this fact or not. They make the possibility of divorce, the legality of divorce, the propriety and benefits of divorce, subjects of thought and universal discussion.

Usually the statutes prescribe less than a dozen grounds which may release from matrimonial bonds, yet the laws prescribe more than 125 crimes for which persons can be sent to the penitentiary. If one commits a crime too great for the State to endure, can such be fit for husband, wife, or parent? The Church and the State combined are powerless to settle this question.

Can the law compel two people to agree? Can it make a house a home, or turn disrespect, hate, and distrust into confidence, love, and honor?

Not all the priests or legislators of the ages have ever done this in a single case, and now that "human rights" is the greatest question in the world to-day, the present marriage system, with its injustice, wrongs, and evils, cannot escape readjustment.

The rapidly increasing number of divorces, so far from showing a lower state of morals, proves exactly the reverse.

Woman is in a transition period from slavery to freedom, and she will not now accept the conditions in married life that she has heretofore meekly endured. The edicts of neither Church nor State no longer appal her when she realises that her human rights are outraged and her happiness destroyed. The frequent demands for divorce simply mean that we have not yet reached the ideal marriage state.

Divorce is a challenge to our present system, and the sense of justice in both sexes is saying to the priest with his canon law, We both despise and refuse to obey your laws that trample on our human rights, and what are you going to do about it? The ultra-conservative is forced to admit that there is something radically wrong with a system that is seething with discontent, open rupture, misery, and wrecked hopes.

How can the clergy consistently decry the lottery, and yet perform the marriage ceremony, which is merely a chance in the giant lottery of the age? After the matrimonial knot is tied, there is always a fighting chance for happiness. It is stated in the press that one in every seven marriages in the United States has divorce or separate maintenance as its sequel.

Because of our imperfect marriage laws and customs:—

Each village has its martyrs,
Every street some house that is a hell,
Some human heart celestial, pure and sweet,
Breaks with each passing bell.

Yet the clergy in the face of these facts, oppose any remedy or reform, on the plain and expressed ground that woman is divinely and scripturally commanded to remain in subjection.

The most pathetic figure in our civilisation is a desperate and heart-broken woman, appealing in a court for release from her marital miseries. She has been denied a voice in either the ecclesiastical or civil laws that forged her chains. Men alone make and enforce these laws.

The unhappy woman must appear before a male judge and often an audience, and lay bare her wrongs, sufferings, and heart agony. She is made the victim of jest, criticism, and condemnation, yet her case is entirely in the hands of strange men who cannot by testimony understand her case. In our divorce courts human misery is revealed in its most hideous forms.

Viewing the system and its results, the unprejudiced mind can but recognise it as a man-made merciless monopoly of the most sacred emotions of the human heart, and it can be seriously doubted under a system where Church and State have surveillance over human affection, whether the lives of men and women equally have not been cramped and stunted and their noblest attributes paralysed.

Of all the institutions of our civilisation, the Church, State, society, and the individual have feared most to turn the light on the marriage system, and this of itself is proof that in it—

There are deep wrongs,
We fear to have revealed,
And in our midst
Cruel, barbaric hordes,
Who make the law their shield.

Under our present system the man may say, as he leaves the marriage altar, "This woman is mine. The Church and the State have bestowed her on me. Mine for better or for worse. Mine, drunk or sober. If she ventures to have a heart or will of her own, woe betide her! I have tabooed her for life." There you have it all its native deformity, another monopolist instinct, in this monopolistic age, the deepest seated of all, the grimpest—the most vindictive.

Yet women are silent under such wrongs.

Twenty-eight States of our country have appointed bodies of men to tinker with the laws of marriage and divorce, and the clergy have almost abandoned their spiritual work to cope with the question, but woman has been totally ignored. Could a greater indignity be heaped upon the most deeply interested party to the marriage contract? If women exercised proper self-respect, they would appear at every Church and State council discussing this question, and make the very air tremble with their protest and refusal to accept or obey any law that they themselves have not helped to frame. The appearance of women and men in such large numbers in the divorce court is evidence that they are becoming too individualised to live together if they are mismatched. Church nor government have the right to rule the human heart, its affections or hatreds. If people find they are mismatched and desire divorce it is the duty of the State to grant it for the good of the parties concerned and of society at large. It is amazing why either a man or a woman should object to divorce if one of the parties desires it. Surely no self-respecting person would desire to live with a companion who desired to sever the marital bond.

The restoration of the woman's name should be a condition of every divorce, for the dignity of both the woman and the man.

The publicity of divorce trials is both degrading and demoralising, and in cases of divorce by mutual consent the courts or society at large have no right to inquire into the causes of the separation, if the reasons are satisfactory to the parties concerned.

The province of the law should not extend beyond the protection of the human and property rights of the couple or their children.

President Roosevelt recently told a committee of clergymen that the "marriage and divorce problem was the greatest of all problems in the United States," and he is right; but presidents, prelates, preachers and legislators can no more settle it without the aid of women than they can regulate or control the laws of nature.

The solution of this one problem which alone can raise the human race to a higher plane is still in an incipient state. Men and women must settle it, as they alone know what will be just to all concerned and most conducive to their happiness. It would have been settled long ago but for the tyrannical interference of the Church. The near future holds a time when the United States government will be forced to say to the Church, "With the questions of marriage and divorce you have nothing to do. Stand aside. It is the province of women and men to adjust the system so that the human rights and property rights of husband, wife, and child be properly protected, and the province of the government to see that justice be done to all concerned for the perpetuity of the American Republic. The Church has nothing to do with it." Let all who desire a nobler and grander sociology read and ponder the best thought of the age on the marriage and divorce questions. In due time the combined wisdom of women and men will lead a reformation that will build the marriage relation on love and justice, release the prisoners of regret and despair, and secure to children the rightful heritage of being well born, thus eliminating the divorce question entirely.

JOSEPHINE K. HENRY.

—*Liberal Review* (Chicago).

Our Father in Heaven.

CHRISTIAN apologists make much use of the fatherhood of God as a foundation for the brotherhood of man. They say that there could be no brotherhood of man without a fatherhood of God. But that is a mistake. The brotherhood of man is founded on the identity of species, nature, needs, aspirations, and relationship. Men are brothers, not because they have a father in heaven, but because they are the same kind of creatures, having reason, language, social instincts, and similar passions and aspirations.

Christians often claim that the doctrine of fatherhood and brotherhood was first taught by Jesus. But that also is an error if the fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of man. The fatherhood of God is taught in many parts of the Old Testament. Take for example: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Micah ii. 10). Here we have the fatherhood and brotherhood clearly implied. Again: "A son honoreth his father and a servant his master: If then I be a father where is mine honor? And if I be a master where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts, unto you O priests that despise my name" (Micah i. 6). Many other passages might be quoted from the Old Testament to the same effect.

The nearest approach to the doctrine of fatherhood and brotherhood is found in the following passages: "But be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your master even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no one your father on the earth: for one is your father which is in heaven" (Matt. xxiii. 8-9). Even supposing that Jesus is a historical person which, to say the least, is doubtful, it is very difficult to decide what he taught, as so many contradictory sayings are placed in his mouth. The brotherhood of Jesus was confined to the Jews. He does not seem to have any idea that the Gentiles were brothers who had a father in heaven as well as

his own countrymen. The Jews were brothers, at least some of them. I doubt that he included all Jews in his brotherhood, and God was his and their father. The Gentiles were dogs, not brothers. When a Gentile woman came to ask him to cast out a devil from her daughter, he answered: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs" (Matt. xv. 24-26).

When Jesus sent his twelve apostles forth, he commanded them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not" (Matt. x. 5). If Jesus spoke the passages quoted, and others like them, it is difficult to see how anyone can claim that he taught the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man as understood in our time. Turning to the Gentiles was an afterthought by the followers of Jesus when he was dead. He came to his own and his own would not have him, and his apostles then turned to the heathen world. This is clearly shown and avowed. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said it was necessary that the words of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you and judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts xiii. 46). Those words were spoken to the Jews, and they prove that turning to the Gentiles was an afterthought.

Do not the words "fatherhood" and "brotherhood" suggest that religions of all kinds have been concocted by men? Had women a hand in the business it is certain there would have been something about the motherhood and sisterhood in the scheme. The mother is of more importance to the race than the father, and she carries greater influence in the aggregate over her children than the father does. A father in heaven without a mother is an incomplete idea. The mind of man cannot conceive of brothers and sisters without a mother as well as a father. And a heaven without a mother would be a place with the most important person absent.

We are taught that our father is in heaven. This implies that heaven is a place, somewhere in infinite space, like one of the planets, or fixed stars. But does that notion agree with the teaching of the churches about the being and attributes of God? We are told to believe that God is infinite and therefore all-present. He is everywhere, filling all space. But is it possible to conceive of an infinite being as a person localised in a local heaven? I should think not. Neither can I see how any thinking man can believe in an infinite, all-present God as a person at all. But if heaven is a local place, and God dwells there, he must be a person, with an organised form like man, and cannot be everywhere at the same time.

Where is heaven? Does anyone know? Has anybody been there and come back to tell us? It is said that Jesus came from there, and went back without telling anything definite about it. When the saints die, it is said their souls go up. But a soul in Australia and another in Britain starting at the same time would go in opposite directions and would never meet. A man dying on Monday and another on Tuesday, their souls going straight up, would be trillions of miles apart and could never meet in the same heaven. The doctrine is absurd. It will not stand investigation. Both heaven and hell, as places, exist only in the superstitious imagination of cunning priests and ignorant men.

But that sort of dismissal will not satisfy believers. I must, therefore, consider the matter in the light of reason and facts. There are many questions that believers ought to answer before they can reasonably expect rational men to accept their faith. Are there any facts to prove that we have a father in heaven? If there is, what are the proofs? Has anybody seen him, heard his voice, or felt him? Has he ever answered his children when they call on him? If so, who, when, and where?

If we have a father in heaven we ought to know what kind of a father he is. We know that human fathers differ immensely in character. Some fathers, —the majority, fortunately for the race—are good, kind, affectionate, and faithful. But many are drunken, idle, neglectful, immoral, and cruel. What is the character of our father in heaven? Is he such a father that his children can trust, love and honor?

We must not forget that our knowledge and experience of human fathers are the prototype of all the thoughts and ideas that we have, or can have, of a father in heaven. All ideas and thoughts of heaven, hell, spirit, immortality, and all such abstract notions, are anthropomorphic. Man himself, in his conditions, experience, trials, disappointments, hope, and faith, is the source and model of all thoughts and ideas, on all things, which he possesses. Therefore, we can only judge of the alleged father in heaven by applying to him the same tests as would be applicable to man. As God is infinitely greater than man, if it was possible to apply a higher test to him, it would be right to do so. But it is not possible, and we must be satisfied with our usual human methods.

A good human father treats all his children as equals. They have equal table, equal toilet, equal education, equal privileges. If they are ill, he will send for a doctor. If they are attacked, he will defend them. He will love them, associate with them, listen to their complaints, and attend to their desires. Does the father in heaven come up to that standard of goodness? Are all the children of God; does he treat them all alike? Does he provide a remedy when they are ill? Does he defend all of them against their foes? Does he associate with all of them? Does he speak with them and answer when they call? In the face of all the facts around us, is it possible to answer these questions in the affirmative? If not, how is it possible to believe that the father in heaven is a good father?

Look at the other side of the question. If a human father kept some of his children in luxury and starved the others, left some in rags and clothed the others in finery, gave the best education to some and left others in ignorance, kept some in idleness and made slaves of others; or suppose he was a stranger to his family, never visited them, never cared how they lived; had plenty of wealth, but left them struggling in poverty; had knowledge and power but never used them to comfort, help, or defend his children. Would it be possible to defend a human father with that character? Would not all condemn him as a brute and a cruel monster?

If God, as a father, acts the same as the human father whom all good men condemn, is it possible, logically, to call him a good and loving father? How can any act or conduct in man be wrong and sinful if the same act and conduct be not sinful in God also?

God is a stranger to his children. He never visits his family; never shows himself, never speaks, never answers, never associates with any one of them.

He favors some more than others. He showers wealth, position, privilege, grandeur, and pleasure on some, and pours trials, toil, and poverty on others.

He has all wealth at his command, and leaves countless numbers to starve and die in degradation and misery.

He could, if he liked, cure and prevent all diseases, but he allows fever, cancer, plague, and contagion to kill millions upon millions from year to year. Although he knows what would cure all diseases and prevent their coming, he keeps the knowledge to himself.

He sees the earthquake, blizzard, flood, and fire, big with destruction and death to his children, without giving them warning in time to flee, or preventing them coming, which he could if he liked.

He could, if he wished, change the hearts and sentiments of monarchs and rulers who make war, and thus put an end to racial conflicts, and make peace universal; but he does nothing, and allows

cruel monsters to deluge the earth with the blood of his children.

He could make all his children good and happy, as he is all-wise, all-good, and almighty. But he allows the Devil to corrupt and make fiends of a vast number who turn a world, that might be a heaven of joy, into a veritable hell.

But it is useless to pursue this train of thought. A human father whose actions and inactions, commissions and omissions, were the same as those of our father in heaven, would be universally condemned. And I cannot see how it is possible to believe in an infinite personal God as a father, and, at the same time, hold that he is all-good and almighty. All the facts of life appear to me to be in direct opposition to such a belief. If there is a personal God, he hides himself in the eternal darkness of mystery. He would be glad to know God if there were one. All would be glad to see him, hear his voice, and have communion with him. It is not against God that we argue, but against the absurd assertions made about him by theologians and believers.

R. J. DERFEL.

Obituary.

ON Tuesday last, May 2, the remains of William Henry Wynne were cremated at the Liverpool Crematorium. For several years Mr. Wynn had been suffering from phthisis. Over half of his fifty-five years of life were devoted to the Freethought cause. He died as he had lived—a staunch friend of Secularism and a sworn enemy of superstition. About fifty persons were present at his funeral, when an address was delivered by Mr. H. Percy Ward.—H. P. W.

We have to record the death of Mr. Thomas Stafford, a member of the West Ham N. S. S. Branch, at the age of sixty-three. Deceased was a Freethinker of long standing, having been for many years a warm supporter of Charles Bradlaugh, and was highly respected by all who knew him. Orthodox persons tried to proselytise him in his last illness, but his wife, who knew his opinions, kept them at bay. The funeral took place at West Ham Cemetery, an address being delivered by Mr. W. J. Ramsey before a large attendance of mourners.

SECULARISM AND HUMANITY.

Let us place man's future life on *earth*. Let us eschew as absurd and immoral all *absolute* dogmas and all dogmatizing about the unknown, the unknowable, and even about the unseen, or, rather, unobservable. Let us base our system of human morals on human life, human needs, social progress. Let us enlarge our system of human morals into a human religion, that is a scheme of belief and practice which can call out all the powers of man's reverence and man's enthusiasm toward the highest ideals of goodness and power within the range of our minds and faculties. But let this religion be just as saturated with science, with truth, with observed realities, as is our ethic, both religion and ethic being frankly human, intensely social, and absolutely positive. Then a rational religion of humanity will set itself to promote, and not to embitter, all social reforms. It will unite races, conciliate nations, deprecate wars, conquests, and oppressions, and not divide and excite national enmities and the accursed pride of race. And the religion of inhumanity, so often taught in practice by the perverted followers of the Syrian idealist, who said, "Blessed are the meek, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peace makers," but who also said, "Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world": "I am come, not to bring peace but a sword"—will no longer teach men to war on each other, and to oppress each other.—*Frederic Harrison.*

Men must hereafter live, or hereafter die; fate may be bravely met, and conduct wisely ordered, on either expectation; but never in hesitation between ungrasped hope, and unfronted fear. We usually believe in immortality, so far as to avoid preparation for death; and in mortality, so far as to avoid preparation for anything after death. Whereas, a wise man will at least hold himself ready for one or other of two events, of which one or other is inevitable; and will have all things ended in order, for his sleep, or left in order, for his awakening.—*Ruskin.*

All philosophy must be loved and lived. Think about living!—*Goethe.*

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OUTDOOR.

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Has the Belief in God Benefited Mankind?"

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, Louis B. Gallagher, "Free Will and Immortality"; Brockwell Park, 3.15 and 6.30, Louis B. Gallagher, "Free Will and Immortality."

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "Can the Blood of Christ Atone for Human Guilt?"

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): 7, Guy A. Aldred, "Secularism and Morality."

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

COUNTRY.

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LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, H. Percy Ward, "Darwinism made Plain"; 7, "No Christianity; What, Then? A Criticism of the Religious Novel, *When it was Dark.*"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, George Drummond, "Joseph Chamberlain, the Man: his Municipal, Educational, and Social Ideals."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, George Berrisford, "Anti-Haeckel Examined."

WARRINGTON (Druids' Hall, Tankey-street): Tuesday, May 16, at 8, H. Percy Ward, "Is Christianity True?"

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Secretary—E. M. VANCE (Miss).

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

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Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

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