

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXV.—No. 24

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 1905

PRICE TWOPENCE

Eternal punishment is eternal revenge, and can be inflicted only by an eternal monster.—INGERSOLL.

Dr. Torrey's Last Ditch.

DR. TORREY prayed at the Strand mission meeting on Sunday night that the Lord would soften the hearts of those men giving away things outside. We did not hear him ourselves, for we were not present; but Miss Vance was present, and heard him, and we would take her word for a lot more than that.

We quite understand that Dr. Torrey wants the hearts of our distributors softened. They are making it very awkward for him. These gentlemen devote their evenings gratuitously to giving away our pamphlets outside his meetings. There are three of these in circulation now, as advertised on the back page of this week's *Freethinker*; and they form, together, a terrible exposure of this American revivalist; an exposure which, we are glad to say, has done a great deal of harm to his £17,000 mission, by opening the eyes of so many Christians, as well as other persons, to his true character.

Dr. Torrey's character would have been nothing to us if he had not attacked the characters of "infidels" in general, and of two great dead "infidels" in particular—Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll. His filthy libels on these splendid Freethinkers are well-known to our readers. We have absolutely disproved them, and shown Dr. Torrey to be a reckless moral assassin. We have also foiled his efforts to escape punishment. One of these efforts is infinitely base. He suggests, without venturing to assert, that he never uttered those libels on Paine and Ingersoll. But in our pamphlet, *Guilty or Not Guilty?*, we have proved that he did so, giving chapter and verse for every statement we made. And now our readers will be glad to know that we are driving him into his very last ditch.

It will be remembered that Dr. Torrey made the following public declaration at the City Hall, Liverpool, concerning Colonel Ingersoll:—

"He had been charged with assisting in the dissemination of obscene literature in America, and having instituted an action for libel, wished the case to be tried in private. On his request being refused, he withdrew the case."

Dr. Torrey amplified this in a letter to Mr. William Cain on the subject, and said that Ingersoll's opponent was Dr. A. C. Dixon. He added that he was writing to America for "more details." Subsequently he wrote that he had "received the facts" from America, but "damaging as they were to Colonel Ingersoll" he would not use them, as he had "no desire to blacken his reputation, even though it could be justly done." Which was about the worst thing that one man could say of another.

Now we also have written to America, and obtained "the facts" from Mr. E. M. Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*. And the facts, the *real facts*, put

Dr. Torrey in in a worse position than ever. It is perfectly clear that he accepted other people's atrocious lies without proper investigation, or that he lied atrociously on his own account.

Dr. Dixon, as we expected, is a reverend gentleman. He is one of the countless ministerial bigots who threw mud at Ingersoll. So far Dr. Torrey is right. Ingersoll did bring this Dr. Dixon to book. But it is absolutely false that he ever "wished the case to be tried in private." As far as the case went in court it was as public as any other case. Dr. Torrey himself might have seen the absurdity of any man wishing an action to be tried in private, when the only object he could have in bringing it was to vindicate his own character. Publicity is the very essence of such an enterprise.

We have only just received Mr. Macdonald's letter, and cannot go completely into the matter until next week. But we thought we would lose no time in letting our readers know. Mr. Macdonald encloses a long printed account—as far back as May, 1893—of the action as far as it went. It contains Dixon's pleadings in defence, and Ingersoll's demurrers, together with the judges' decisions in favor of these demurrers. Then fresh pleadings, fresh demurrers, and fresh judges' decisions upholding them. "Ingersoll," Mr. Macdonald says, "wanted the case tried, but could never get Dixon to the point. Ingersoll demurred to all of Dixon's defences, and the judges sustained his demurrers. Dixon simply staved it off till the Colonel got tired and dropped it."

Thus it was Dixon who kept the action from being tried in open court. But the defences, demurrers, and judgments, were matters of public record. We have them before us as we write. They were printed in full from the official documents, and we will deal with them fully next week. By that time we may receive the further letter which Mr. Macdonald promises us, if he is able to obtain any additional facts from Mr. Griffen, the attorney who acted for Ingersoll in the action.

In the meantime we ask our readers to observe that Dr. Torrey is wrong at every important point. It is an absolute lie—and a silly one, too—that Ingersoll wanted to have the action tried in private. It is an absolute lie that Dixon refused assent to this. It is an absolute lie that Ingersoll then withdrew the case. It was Ingersoll who wanted to have the action tried; it was Dixon who employed every artifice to prevent it being tried.

We are seriously thinking of printing a little pamphlet on this matter for distribution at Dr. Torrey's meetings. Having undertaken the job of exposing him, we should really like to complete it. If our readers help us as they should we will give the final touch to Ingersoll's vindication, and the final touch to Dr. Torrey's impeachment. It would be a great pity to let this infamous libeller escape any portion of his just penalty. For the sake of our noble dead, for the sake of common honesty and common decency, we should make him drink his cup to the dregs. It may be good for him in the long run, and certainly good for the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

Re-Incarnation.

DURING the past few years, the Aborigines of Australia have been closely studied by several trained scientific persons; more especially by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen, who have had the advantage of being initiated into the tribal brotherhood, and have therefore had exceptional opportunities of learning the legends, and witnessing the magical ceremonies, of the natives. Their latest publication is a remarkable testimony of their industry, as well as a proof of the complete way in which they have gained the confidence of the Australian savages.*

As is well known, the Aborigines of Australia represent the lowest level of savagery at present existing on the earth. They have no houses, no clothing, and no means of preserving or storing food. Even at this moment several of their tribes make use of the most primitive forms of stone implements, although knives and hatchets of iron are gradually being introduced from the white settlers. It therefore follows, that by studying the ideas and customs of the Australian natives, we get as far back into the mind and notions of early man as it is possible to go.

One most extraordinary discovery is, that the Australians have no idea that the procreation of the race has any connection with the intercourse of the sexes. It has never occurred to the native mind that the one has anything to do with the other. Instead of this, the Aborigines have a very simple explanation of the whole matter. In the "Long Ago" there roamed over the face of the earth a small number of individuals who were half human and half animal or plant, and who were endowed with far greater magical powers than any man or woman now possesses. These semi-human beings, in their wanderings over the country, left behind them small deposits of souls, the deposit being marked by some special natural feature, such as an erratic rock, a peculiar tree, or a gloomy water-hole. A semi-snake being would thus leave a deposit of souls belonging to the snake totem; a lizard, souls of the lizard totem, and so on.

When, therefore, a woman of child-bearing age passes one of these deposits, there is always the chance that a soul may pop out, enter into her, and be ultimately born as a black baby. The women are, as a rule, not at all anxious to entertain these vagrant souls. Therefore, on passing near the rock, or tree, or other feature, they resort to minor magical practices to deceive them. A young woman will double herself up, and hobble past, leaning on her yam-stick, in order to delude the souls into the belief that she is too old and decrepit for child-bearing; or she will repeat ancient formulæ that are supposed to have power to charm the souls and render them powerless.

These magical practices, however, do not always deter the vagrants, and a boy or girl presents itself in due course. The boy or the girl grows up into a man or a woman, dies, and the soul returns to the deposit to remain with the other souls until it is born again. Each changes its sex with each incarnation. That is to say, the soul of a man becomes a woman at the next birth; then, on the death of this woman, it is re-born as a man, and so on *ad infinitum*. Consequently, every man and woman in the tribe is the re-incarnation of a series of male and female ancestors that stretch right back to the "Long Ago," and he may look forward to a succession of future births that will take him on for ever.

The procreation of the lower animals is accounted for in an equally facile manner. The reader need not be reminded that totemism is a characteristic institution in these tribes. In Australia the totemic idea is, that each individual is mystically connected

with some creature, plant, or element, and can influence the growth of these things. A man does not eat his totem, except under certain extraordinary circumstances; but, by the performance of set magical ceremonies, he is supposed to have the power of increasing the stock of kangaroos, grubs, or other things that form the totem. And it is, of course, to the interest of his tribesmen to see that he does it. Thus, a man of the grass totem will work magic, to further the growth of grass seeds, that he must not eat, though his fellows may. Then a man of the kangaroo totem will work magic to ensure kangaroos that *he* cannot eat, but the grass man may; and so on. It therefore follows that every Australian blackfellow believes himself to be dependent upon the other blackfellows' performing the proper ceremonies for producing the various animals, plants, and things by which life is sustained. There has thus grown up a complicated form of superstition, manifested chiefly in ceremonial games that occupy a large part of the men's time.

It will, consequently, be appreciated that the totems are considered to be of vital importance to the tribesmen. The totem is born, not made. In some tribes it is more or less erratic. The mother recalls the locality where she first found herself to be pregnant, and the child is of the totem that is known to be peculiar to the souls of that place. In other tribes the child follows the father's totem; or the mother's totem; according as whether the patriarchate or the matriarchate is the rule. While, in some parts of Australia, the child's totem depends upon a peculiar code of rules that varies in each tribe. In any case, however, it is believed that the child is the reincarnation of an ancestor of the same totem; and the soul is supposed to know the proper woman in which it has to enter in order to be born in the proper tribal rule. If a miscarriage occurs, or if the birth is fatal to the mother, the accident is attributed to the fact that the soul has made a mistake, and got into the wrong woman.

Now, all this is very important to the student of religious ideas, for this theory of re-incarnation, which is the normal standpoint of the Australian savage, is continually cropping up in the religions of the higher races. Those peoples that have more correct notions upon the procreation of the species, are continually telling stories of *miraculous* births, which are clearly unconscious survivals of the aboriginal idea. We have stories of the preternatural impregnation of women, through their innocently catching at a ball floating in the air, or through bathing in a certain stream, or eating some special fruit, or in some other way, without the intervention of man. The Conception of the Virgin Mary as she goes to draw water at the well, as traditionally represented in Christian Art, is on all fours with the Australian theory that the native woman is entered by one of the souls lurking in the water-hole.

The famous Indian doctrine of the transmigration of souls is still more akin to the Australian view. It is important to note that this doctrine is not Aryan. None of the nations of Europe held it, with, perhaps, the exception of the Gauls—though even here it is not very clear. Pythagoras who introduced the theory of metempsychosis into Greece, was popularly supposed to have derived it from India. At any rate, the Greeks understood it to be entirely foreign. The Persians had no such doctrine, as far as we can discover from the ancient writers, or the Zend-Avesta. It is only in India that we have a perfect instance of an Aryan people holding the idea of transmigration, or re-incarnation. It must, therefore, have been derived from some source outside the circle of the Indo-European races; and, as we know that India was thickly peopled by tribes in a comparatively low state of culture at the time of the Aryan invasion, the obvious explanation is, that the Hindus derived all their ideas of re-incarnation from their savage neighbors.

* *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, by Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen. (London: 1904.)

Anthropology is continually giving us instances of customs and beliefs that appear exceptional among higher races, and yet are the common practice among the lower; and these strange theories of the Australian blackfellows will enable us to understand that the religious doctrines of miraculous conceptions are not inexplicable and ineffable mysteries; but are merely the belated survivals of the erroneous ideas of our savage ancestors.

CHILPERIC.

Humanity and the Kingdom of Christ.

MISS SARAH A. BURSTALL, B.A., late scholar of Girton College, Cambridge, and now Head Mistress of the Manchester High School for Girls, has just delivered one of the thirty lectures on "What is Christianity?" at the Central Hall, Manchester. She entitles her discourse, "The Hallowing of Humanity in the Kingdom of Christ." The chief merit of this contribution is its perfect lucidity. There is no possibility of attaching a wrong meaning to a single statement therein made. Miss Burstall is both clear and courageous. Her courage is simply stupendous. One wonders how a scholar could be so excessively audacious. Indeed, the audacity displayed in several statements takes one's breath away.

Take the following definition:—

"Christianity is not a doctrine, not a set of rules, not even mainly a philosophy; but a Life, and an effect on the life of the world."

That is a delightfully clear definition; but it is also a totally false one. Doctrine means teaching, instruction; and turning to the New Testament we find Jesus characterised as pre-eminently a teacher. "He opened his mouth and taught them"; "He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes"; "And He taught them many things in parables, and said unto them in his doctrine"; "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." The Gospels are crowded with the supposed teaching of the Master. One great authority defines Christianity as "a system of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ." And even in some of these very lectures absolute pre-eminence has been claimed for the teaching of the Lord Jesus. Christianity is a doctrine—a doctrine about God, a doctrine about man, a doctrine as to how the two can be brought together in harmonious fellowship.

Again, Christianity is "a set of rules." Why did Jesus lay so much stress upon his commandments, and upon the necessity of obeying them? Are not commandments, or precepts, and rules synonymous? Is not the Sermon on the Mount "a set of rules"? Jesus himself regarded his "words" as of supreme importance, and is reported to have said: "Every one which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man," and "every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man."

Thus, in the estimation of its Founder, Christianity was a series of doctrines, a set of rules, a number of words, precepts, or commandments, which He intended to be vitally binding on all members of his kingdom. In so far as it was a Life, it was to be a life of obedience to his rules, or of conformity to his teaching. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," He said to his disciples. Of course, it is a notorious fact that Christians do not keep their Lord's commandments, do not even pretend to keep them. Ethically speaking, the Sermon on the Mount is a dead letter, no one ever dreaming of living up to it, though the teacher himself declared that only those who heard the words and did them were entitled to be considered wise.

Was not Miss Burstall aware of all this when she wrote her lecture? Surely, if the Gospels are historical and divinely inspired, the Master's own language ought to have made it impossible for her to

perpetrate such a false and misleading definition. But let us witness greater flights of audacity. "The kingdom of Christ," she says, "is a spiritual kingdom, that exists here and now, that was set up on earth nineteen hundred years ago, and has continued ever since, and which is destined, we believe, to prevail." Then she adds:—

"This kingdom of Christ is sometimes spoken of as if it were in the future, in that dim hereafter of which even Faith knows so little; but this is a serious error, and is responsible for many of the mistakes and misconceptions of men nowadays, as to what Christianity really is. It means 'the saving not only of men, but of all the world; the hallowing of life, and not characteristically the preparation for leaving it,' as our Northern Bishop Westcott so truly says. The notes of this kingdom are righteousness, peace, and joy, the scriptural rendering of the Triad of the French Revolution, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.' It is only in the kingdom of Christ that these glorious words can find their fulfilment: the Liberty which comes from the knowledge of the truth and the deliverance from evil, the Equality of all men in Christian citizenship, and the Fraternity which glows and burns from the fires of Christian love."

That will suffice. I would not for the world even so much as hint that Miss Burstall is guilty of insincerity; but the above paragraph could not possibly have been more inaccurate. Take the three great virtues, righteousness, peace, and joy, and even Miss Burstall must admit that as yet they have never prevailed on earth. If righteousness reigned in Great Britain, would there be over twelve millions of people living on the verge of starvation? Has any nation yet abstained from war in the name of its Christianity? If the kingdom of Christ is not of the future, nothing is more certain than that it is not of the present; and if it is of neither, what can it be but an empty dream? Or take the French Triad, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' and you will find that it has never yet been a realised fact on earth. "It is only in the kingdom of Christ," says Miss Burstall, "that these glorious words can find their fulfilment." Surely, Miss Burstall must know that she is indulging in mere rhetoric. *Where* and *when* have "these glorious words" found their fulfilment? *Do* they find their fulfilment in a single section of Christendom at the present moment? Nonconformists are always suspected and boycotted and persecuted. The majority never fails to visit the minority with its withering contempt. Liberty? It is only a dream that may never come true. Equality? There is more inequality in the Church than almost anywhere else. Fraternity? "Birds of a feather flock together" all over the world, and universal Brotherhood is not known in history.

When will Christian apologists learn to face the facts? Miss Burstall, glancing over the past, mentions the elevation of womanhood as one of the fruits of Christianity. She admits, however, that "in the teaching of Christ there is no special teaching about women"; but the Apostle Paul had a good deal to say about women that was not calculated to emancipate them. To him they were the weaker vessels, whose duty it was to spend their lives in a state of subjection. They were commanded to be silent in the Church, and loyally submissive at home. "Wives," he always said, "be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." It is safe to affirm that in Christian teaching, as such, woman is man's inferior, and is in duty bound to live in perpetual acknowledgment of that inferiority. The Bible is certainly not a Woman's Rights Book. Christianity, as such, has no message of hope and cheer to women. And it is a well-known fact that even to-day the fair sex does not enjoy equal rights with the male. Yes, alas, women are still more or less slaves.

Miss Burstall is equally inaccurate on the subject of slavery. "The passing away of the institution of slavery," she says, "is another victory of Christian influence." But she forgets that the Christian Church justified and supported slavery, for many centuries, in the name of Christ, and that as recently as fifty years ago distinguished divines used to speak

of slavery as a Christian institution. It is all very well to say that in Christ there is neither bond nor free; but history informs us that bond and free were in Christ together for many hundreds of years, and remained bond and free to the end. "Slaves," said Paul, "be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your lords, with fear and trembling." In the Gospels the institution of slavery is taken for granted, and at least one parable was suggested by it. I assert, therefore, that the passing away of the institution of slavery was not a victory of Christian influence, but of the *humane instincts* of a few people who happened to be Christians. Christians, as Christians, were opposed to the abolition of the iniquitous traffic. Dr. Witherspoon, who vehemently defended slavery, was as good and great a Christian as Henry Ward Beecher, who with greater vehemence denounced it; but the latter was by far a bigger MAN than the former.

Speaking generally, we have no hesitation in saying that Christianity, as such, has never been the originator and the agent of any great social reforms. During the Middle Ages, when Faith was at its highest and strongest, society groaned in despair under cruel tyrannies and oppressions, and the Church was directly or indirectly responsible for the inhumanity and brutality that prevailed. It is to the influence of the new spirit breathed into mankind by the Renaissance, by the rise of Humanism, with its revival of interest in the Greek and Roman classics, and by the re-birth of scientific inquiry, that we owe most of the reforms of modern times.

We have already dealt in these columns with what is called "The Miracle of Changed Lives." Miss Burstall characterises it as "a miracle of an altogether unique nature," and says that it "is the standing proof of the truth of Christianity." But can Miss Burstall explain the more stupendous miracle still of Unchanged Lives? On the assumption that Christianity is a supernatural religion, the fact that all mankind are not Christians is an insoluble mystery.

Miss Burstall is just as far astray on the subject of education. Popular education is a product of the Revival of Learning. The Church was always bitterly opposed to the spread of secular knowledge among the people. It is utterly false to assert that "to educate every child, because it is a human being, can only be justified on the Christian hypothesis of social life as hallowed by the Incarnation." On this point Miss Burstall is grossly unjust toward so-called Materialists. She exclaims: "The degraded child, the stupid child, the child whose future is to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water—why trouble about them? Why indeed? is the answer of the Materialist. 'It isn't worth while to spend public money on such unpromising stuff.'" Science says the very opposite to that. In its opinion, degradation is largely the outcome of ignorance, and ignorance means lack of education. It is the old conservatism of the Church that has been the most serious obstacle in the way of popular education. Are there not among us now professed followers of Jesus, and preachers of his Gospel, who feel and say, "The children of the poor should not be educated too much—it disqualifies them for a life of service?" But Secularism recognises no privileged classes, but advocates the giving of equal opportunities to all.

Of course, this is part of a much larger subject. Why have we the poor always with us? Miss Burstall seems to think that our one duty towards them is to care for them, without troubling ourselves as to why they are here. "Here they are," says Christianity, "and every now and then they must be fed and clothed and comforted for Christ's sake." *But they ought not to be here, and under other and healthier social conditions they would utterly disappear.* Poverty is a social disease that ought to be healed; and the only medicine that can cure it is education, physical, mental, and moral. Complete education will carry with it the reorganisation of

society on a thoroughly equitable and wholesome basis. Miss Burstall is entirely mistaken when she states that Secularism believes only in what she calls "material force." As a matter of fact, Secularism does not "measure the greatness of a nation or of a man by pounds and dollars, millions of population, and multitude of possessions," nor would it "refuse all but the select few political power and intellectual opportunity." What it rather maintains is that the advent of intelligence has changed the course of evolution. It is as true now as ever that only the fit survive; but the main object of evolution in the human family is to help all the weak to gain such fitness. There will always be a struggle for existence; but we are confident that, with the introduction of a better system of education, all will learn to struggle in unison for the welfare of society as a whole. This is the new evangel which is destined to conquer the world, and usher in the Golden Age of humanity.

J. T. LLOYD.

Anthropomorphism.

(Concluded from page 371.)

WHILE the field of religion is undoubtedly richest in furnishing instances of anthropomorphism, there are plenty to be found elsewhere, and examples of these will not be without instruction. Familiar instances are to be found in the use of such a phrase as "Natural Selection," which, because with man "selection" connotes purposive choice, has been held to imply the existence of a selective intelligence in nature. The truth is, of course, that the phrase is merely a symbol, there being no real identity in the two processes. Or in sociology, a similar instance meets us in the phrase "destiny of nations." Because a number of concurrent conditions result in a particular nation taking for the time being a leading place in the world, it is argued that this is a part of some "Providential" design for the development of the race. Or as in the development of Christianity, the fact of the triumph of the Christian religion being a manifest consequence of the political and social decay of the old Roman Empire, is interpreted as "God's preparation in history for Christ," causes are taken for chosen means, and consequences for designed ends. And in each instance we have an example of the same fallacy of reading into non-human processes human methods and purposes.

A more subtle example of this meets us in the use made of the word "cause" in scientific matters. In strict accuracy the assertion of the principle of causation is nothing more than an assertion of continuity. To say that universal causation is a fact, is to say that nowhere in nature are there any breaks, and that at any moment the sum of natural phenomena is the exact result of all preceding conditions or forces. Ever since Hume it has been pointed out that causation states nothing more than invariable sequence, and that our only reason for asserting that A is the cause of B is that the sequence has been, so far as experience teaches, and even so far as our thinking can carry us, in this order. And so long as "cause" is used in this sense there is no ambiguity and no confusion.

But connected with the word there is a primitive sense, that of compulsion. This assumes that in some occult manner the cause *produces* the effect in such a manner that the two things are quite distinct. This conception of cause and effect will be found to underlie most of the attempts to reconcile religion and science, and its fallacy is apparent when one considers that the whole difference between cause and effect is a mere difference of analysis and synthesis. In searching out the cause of an effect, we are analysing an effect into its constituent parts. In studying an effect, we are observing the synthesis of all the factors of which it is the sum. This is really all that is involved in a scientific use of causation, and the confusion is again due to anthropomorphic reading of human effort into natural processes.

"High" and "low" furnish us with another example of the same kind. One writer on philosophic topics bases a plea for divine guidance in evolution on the appearance of "higher" forms of life, and claims that the same principle of evolution cannot account for the existence of stationary, degenerate, and developing species. But the whole of his argument falls to the ground if we bear in mind the fact that "high" and "low" are purely ideal conceptions which we read into the animal world. Scientifically, the rule is that the more complex an animal's structure is, the more differentiated its organs and functions, the "higher" is its rank. There can be no reasonable fault with this or with some other principle of classification, so long as we understand what we are doing—that is, so long as we bear in mind that we create this distinction for our own purposes. But when we put this device of ours on one side, and ask what reason there is in the nature of things to call one animal "high" and another "low," we are bound to reply, no reason whatever. The condition of survival is always, and everywhere, adaptation to environment. This is the only test that exists in nature; and while this admits of different degrees of adaptation within the same species, or even allied species, it does not admit of a scale of "high" and "low" for the animal kingdom at large. For it is obvious that in a given environment a "low" animal would form an instance of more complete adaptation than a "high" one, and therefore survive where the other would not. As a plain matter of fact, nature places no emphasis whatever on either "high" or "low" types; it is absolutely ignorant of any such degree of value. Adaptation alone is the condition of life, and in this all are on a platform of equality.

There is an anthropomorphism in speaking of degrees of adaptation, even within the same species, as being "high" or "low." For if causation is universal, and if causation strictly means only what has been said, then every combination of forces results in a phenomenon that simply could not be other than it is. To say that it might conceivably be otherwise is to say that this combination of forces is not permanent, and that a different arrangement would produce a different result. No one will question this; only, apart from our ideal construction, why should one phenomenon be called more perfect than another? In each case we have factors, and we have a resultant; and as the one is the mathematical equivalent of the other, there is no room for degrees of perfection.

The fallacy of mistaking abstractions for concrete existences, and ideal constructions for objective facts, is not confined to the subjects already touched on. The sphere of ethics provides numerous instances, and what has already been said of "high" and "low" applies, with a change of words, to "good" and "bad." For one is as much an ideal construction as the other. Actions, that is, are good or bad in relation to human beings and their needs, real or ideal. Dispense with this condition, and the goodness or badness of things disappears. It is the ignoring of this purely relative aspect of morality that is responsible for all the nonsense written concerning "absolute morality," and which makes the reading of so many works on ethics a weariness of the flesh and an aggravation of the spirit. A careful study of evolution would have shown these writers that not only is "absolute morality" absolute nonsense, but that the nature of the evolutionary process makes the development of a quality that is bad under all conditions a sheer impossibility. For the condition of life being adaptation to environment, a positively evil quality could never find the opportunity of development. The mere fact of any quality being developed is proof positive that it either is or has been, if not beneficial, at least not harmful. Were it otherwise, our whole philosophy of life would be at fault.

The proof of this position lies in the fact that there is not a single action classed as bad which

cannot be shown to be due to the existence of functions or qualities that under given or normal conditions are quite legitimate and beneficial. Lust, theft, murder, all the crimes in the calendar, are nothing more than the intemperate exercise of qualities that are, when exercised within due limits, perfectly legitimate. Of course, within such limits they cease to be lust, theft, or murder, but the fact remains that the difference is due to the unwise or intemperate use of functions, and not to the existence of functions that are absolutely evil in themselves.

It is not, of course, proposed that the distinction between good and bad should be ignored, any more than the distinction between high and low. These are all legitimate and necessary distinctions *within limits*. My object has been to try and indicate what these limits are, and that while we must, in our study of nature use more or less symbolic language, to caution readers against mistaking these figures of speech for actual existences. This is what is constantly being done, even by writers of the first rank, and it is responsible for most of our misunderstandings and confusions. And the root of this confusion, I have also tried to show, is our almost, if not quite, inescapable anthropomorphism. We commence by describing nature in terms derived from our own feelings and subjective states, and we proceed by losing sight of their subjective origin, and so give them an objective existence. And until this error is redressed clear thinking is an impossibility.

The growth of human thought is, to use one of Fisk's phrases, a process of deanthropomorphisation. In all directions the task before the intellectual reformer is to rid nature of its anthropomorphic dress. This is of necessity a difficult task. Our words have life histories of their own, and it is not easy to escape their influence. In describing natural phenomena we are compelled to use the old phrases, and so unconsciously open the way for the old associations. And the history of science teems with illustrations of how obstructive these associations have been. Only with infinite slowness and toil is human thought liberating itself from the control of the dead hand. Here and there only we find a thinker who is able to release himself from its grasp; but as human nature is all of a piece, the position of the advanced few carries yet with it a cheering promise for the future of the race.

C. COHEN.

Acid Drops.

A *Brixton Free Press* representative interviewed Mr. Putterill, the Secretary of the London Evangelistic Council which is responsible for the Torrey-Alexander Mission. Mr. Putterill began the interview by saying, "Although I'm a Christian I'm not a fool"—which the interviewer thought a "superfluous warning." On the question of finance, Mr. Putterill explained that the Brixton mission cost £5,500, while the Brixton collections had only realised £1,100. He denied that Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander were "making money out of the mission." Both gentlemen were allowed "a monthly sum just sufficient for their expenses." "As a matter of fact," Mr. Putterill added, "I believe they pay a good deal from their private purses, and are rather losing than gaining by the revival." Of course the only matter of fact in this statement is Mr. Putterill's belief.

What the Secretary of the London Evangelistic Council says is very interesting, but it might be made a little more definite. If he says anything at all, he should say enough. We therefore suggest to him that it would be advisable to answer the following questions. What is the precise amount of the two Revivalists' monthly expenses? How much do they pay from their private purses? Who fills these private purses? Is it true that, while no salary is paid here to Messrs. Torrey and Alexander, money is paid over to a Chicago organisation, and that this organisation pays the Revivalists? We submit that the public have a right to know all or nothing. If the whole truth cannot be stated, it is better to remain absolutely silent as to the Mission finances. Partial statements may be very misleading. If

the public are invited to form an opinion they should be supplied with the evidence on which to form it.

"How many converts have been made?" asked the *Free Press* man. Mr. Putterill gave a startling reply in one word—"none." He quickly added, however, that they had "3,500 adult enquirers, and 1,020 children." We are unable to estimate what that means. The only certain fact is the number of converts, and that is—"None." It reminds us of the Apostles' fishing expedition. They toiled all night and caught—nothing.

On the whole, Mr. Putterill considered that this result was satisfactory. So do we. There is really no need to improve it by playing with big figures. When it is observed that "the police estimate that over 800,000 people have visited the hall since the commencement," it is an obvious reply that the police cannot possibly be in a position to estimate anything of the sort. The number of people is not to be found by counting up all the meetings. The number of people really means the number of different people. No one knows what that number is. But it is a positive fact that a heap of people went again and again. They took it as a free entertainment.

The *Morning Leader* (May 29) admitted that the Brixton Mission had "proved less successful than the evangelists had hoped." Dr. Torrey had gone to the length of calling the Brixtonians "callous and indifferent." Mr. Putterill confessed that they were "very hard-headed and difficult to move." One great difficulty was this. "We have had more opposition here," he said, and "the infidels have been very aggressive in distributing their literature outside the hall." Readers of the *Freethinker* will remember that. *Infidels have been very aggressive in distributing their literature outside the hall.* That is one of the causes of the comparative failure of the Brixton Mission. Our Torrey pamphlets are telling their tale—and producing their effect.

Dr. Torrey came to save London. He also said that if he saved London he would save the world—and we agreed with him. But he hasn't saved London. He admits that he hasn't shaken London. We told him he couldn't do it. One prophet shook Nineveh, without a cent in his pocket or a song in his throat. Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander between them cannot shake London, with the aid of big choirs and £17,000.

The Torrey-Alexander mission in the Strand is to last for a month and is to cost £5,000. This is what they call cheap salvation. "The clergy of all denominations in the north and north-west of London," the *Chronicle* says, "are taking a keen interest in the mission, and are helping Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander to the utmost of their power." This does not make Dr. Torrey a great man; it does not add one iota to his natural importance; but it adds immensely to his relative importance, and justifies us in sparing no pains to run him down as a convicted libeller of Freethinkers. His policy, unless they disavow it, becomes the policy of his supporters. In attacking Dr. Torrey we are attacking the official representative of the London Evangelistic Churches. They libel Paine and Ingersoll through him. That is our answer to those (they are only a few) who say that Dr. Torrey is a nobody and not worthy of our attention. Togo might have thought the same of Rozhdestvensky, but that was no reason for not smashing him up as a matter of duty.

Calling "infidels" bad names and slandering their characters is a very ancient orthodox practice. Dr. Torrey really did not invent it. He follows in the footsteps of thousands of predecessors. Nearly two thousand years ago the practice was embalmed in one of the most brilliant of Lucian's "Dialogues"—the one in which the gods are satirised and exposed so mercilessly. Timocles, the friend of the gods, and Damis, the sceptic, have been arguing, just like a modern Christian Evidence man and an Atheist, and are coming to the end of their encounter. Timocles sees smiles at some of his silly arguments on the face of Damis, and breaks forth against him with the following sweet personalities:

"Oh! oh! you are sarcastic, are you? you gravedigger! you wretch! you abomination! you gaol-bird! you cess-pool! we know where you came from; your mother was a whore; and you killed your brother and seduced your friend's wife; you are an adulterer, a sodomite, a glutton, and a beast."

How modern! And the translation is James Anthony Froude's.

Having been decisively checked at his old game of vilifying "infidels," so that he never says a word now about

the characters of Paine, Ingersoll, or other Freethinkers, Dr. Torrey is falling back upon the old "infidel deathbed" dodge. According to the *Daily Mirror*, at the opening of the Strand mission, on Saturday night, June 3, he challenged anybody to name an "infidel" who had met death confidently. Some auditors at the back of the hall cried out "How about the Japanese?" Dr. Torrey's answer is not recorded. He is good at challenges until the guns begin to play. Then he has "something better to do," or he cannot notice anonymous "attacks"—or he calls on Mr. Alexander and the choir to sing. Why doesn't he go back to Porkopolis and put his savings into a pig factory?

The Japanese, who don't believe Dr. Torrey's creed, don't read his Bible, and don't worship his God, can do more than meet death confidently. They can be chivalrous gentlemen when the fighting is over and death has retired to a distance. Look at the following Reuter telegram from Tokio, dated June 4:—

"Admiral Togo visited Admiral Rozhdestvensky in the naval hospital at Sasebo yesterday. Alluding to the Russian Admiral's wounds, Admiral Togo expressed his sincere sympathy, and praised the desperately courageous fight which the Russians had offered, adding that he hoped Admiral Rozhdestvensky would soon be able to return to Russia.

"Admiral Rozhdestvensky, deeply moved, thanked his visitor, and congratulated Japan upon the courage and patriotism of her sailors, saying that it lessened his regret and sorrow at the defeat to know the high character of the victors.

"Baron Yamamoto, Minister of Marine, has sent a gift of flowers for Admiral Rozhdestvensky's room, accompanied by a courteous letter."

What have men like these gallant Japanese to learn from Christianity—or Christians?

A dreadful report (we are not sure it was not blasphemous) was published by the *Christian World*. It was to the effect that the Lord's anointed, Evan Roberts, was going to be married to Miss Annie Davies, one of his lady helps. Miss Davies is a good singer, and was the only person allowed to see the great revivalist when he shut himself up in his bedroom and had that week with God. When the lady heard of the report she was shocked. At least she said so. She declared that people would never believe it if they knew how near Evan Roberts was to God. This seems to mean "the nearer to God the farther from woman." But religious history does not show this to be true. The old Bible text is much nearer the mark—"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair." They see it still.

Evan Roberts himself, on being told of the *Christian World* report, was "very much pained." Poor young swelled-head! He evidently considers himself a sort of second-hand Jesus Christ. For our part, we dare say that, if the truth were told, the young lady is too good for him. Perhaps, when his time comes, he will look higher, and follow the example of Mr. Alexander.

The Catholic Church has a strong hold upon its adherents. At Manchester the Education Committee refused to allow the usual Ascension Day holiday. Thereupon the priests told Catholic parents to withdraw their children from school for the day, and to see that their children went to Mass in the morning. The priests were obeyed. The Catholic schools were open—and empty.

What an odd thing human nature is. How complex it sometimes is, and how full of perplexities. Here is Mr. Oswald Stoll, the great organiser of public entertainments, confessing to an interviewer that his first awakening in life resulted from the chance purchase of a copy of Locke's work *On the Human Understanding*. When he cannot see his way through business problems he does not pray to God; he reads "a few pages of John Stuart Mill." "After that," he says, "I come back to the situation refreshed and better able to deal with it." Mr. Stoll has even written a book called *The Grand Survival*, based on the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. He dreams of immortality being attained some day on earth by a due regard to natural law. What a strange entertainment-manager!

Really the *Westminster Gazette* ought to know better. In concluding a book review, recently, it asked the author (a Rationalist) what he thought of "the brief reign of Atheism during the French Revolution." There never was such a reign of Atheism. During the Terror, under the Deist, Robespierre, France made a special profession of belief in God and Immortality. Atheism was declared the enemy of

human society; a colossal image of Atheism, designed by the painter David, was publicly set fire to during the appointed Feast of the Supreme Being; and Robespierre followed this performance with an address on the necessity of religion. Facts like these should be known to our contemporary.

So much for the *Westminster's* ignorance. And now for its silliness. (We don't mean that it is a silly paper—far from it, but only that it can be silly on *this* subject.) "Would the average employer," our contemporary asks, "prefer for some peculiarly responsible and confidential work a consistent believer or a consistent Atheist?" This is called "a practical question." From a philosophical point of view it is absurd. It is simply an appeal to the ignorant prejudice of the average employer. What *he* thinks, or fancies he thinks, is of no importance at all. How many pious scoundrels have been trusted by all sorts of believers. And how many homes have been wrecked in consequence. Jabez Balfour and Whitaker Wright were good Christians. Mr. Terah Hooley is a good Christian. The number of Christian swindlers is legion. When it comes to the character of Atheists the *Westminster* has no statistics, no facts. All it can do is to ask foolish questions—which every sharp man of the world would laugh at, though perhaps up his sleeve.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton's new book is entitled *Heretics*. None of them are martyrs. The list includes George Moore, G. B. Shaw, W. B. Yeats, Rudyard Kipling, and Omar Kayyam. A happy family!

Mr. H. C. Richards, K.C., who died last week in London, took it into his poor noddle that he was appointed by Providence to turn Charles Bradlaugh out of Northampton. He went down there and tried his luck, but the event proved he was mistaken. He did not shift Bradlaugh. Nobody could. Subsequently, however, he turned "Jimmy" Rowlands out of East Finsbury. Mr. Rowlands was a Freethinker too, though he did not publish the fact too extensively. What he gained by his reticence is therefore not very apparent.

Mr. Richards was an extremely pious man and a great hater of "infidels." But "infidels" did not hate him. He was not worth it. We suppose he is now singing the Glory Song or piping his voice in the Hallelujah Chorus. He was never much on earth. Perhaps he is doing better in heaven.

Why is it that Freethinkers have so often to tell Christians what is and what is not in the Bible. The London *Echo* recently, in a leading article, referred to "the principle long ago enunciated by Pontius Pilate—that it is expedient for one man to die for the people." Roman governors were not in the habit of enunciating such "principles." It was Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, who enunciated this one.

Mr. Justice Grantham has, no doubt, his good points, but he is a bit of a bigot—witness his attitude at the trial of Mr. J. M. Robertson's libel action—and his theological ideas seem to be worthy of Colney Hatch. In passing sentence upon Charles Norton Pickard, of West Ham, who feloniously wounded his wife and mother-in-law with a carving knife, after declaring his intention to murder the former, his lordship told the prisoner that "but for the merciful interposition of Providence he might have stood there charged with murder." It would certainly be merciful if Providence interposed to prevent judges from talking such rubbish on the bench. Pickard got his wife down upon the floor and was operating upon her with the carving knife, when his mother-in-law and other friends rushed in and created a diversion. Apparently this is what Mr. Justice Grantham considers a merciful interposition of Providence. It might have occurred to him that Providence would have been more merciful if its interposition had been earlier, and thus saved Mrs. Pickard four dangerous stabs in the head and her husband three years' penal servitude.

"The Breaking-up of Dr. Clifford's Home" was a lurid headline in a recent number of the *Daily News*. Below it was the prosaic fact that the reverend gentleman, having refused to pay his rates, had been distrained upon for the amount and costs. He conscientiously objects to paying. Very well, then; he must conscientiously put up with the consequences. It will take some time to scatter all his household gods. Meanwhile he enjoys the luxury of martyrdom—as Passive Resisters understand the word. And as things go nowadays he gets it cheap.

Designing clericals, who have a professional interest in opposing Secular Education, are fond of pointing to the "awful results of godless education" in Australia. But

what are the facts? The Catholics, who are 14.07 per cent. of the population, furnish 32.95 per cent. of the criminals. Persons of "no religion" or of minor sects are 12.44 per cent. of the population, and only supply 5.16 per cent. of the criminals. There were 1,986 criminals convicted in 1896, and 808 of them belonged to the Church of England and 638 to the Roman Catholic Church. Thus the two principle Churches provided nearly 75 per cent. of the criminals between them. And when all the other Churches had contributed the smaller quotas there wasn't room left for the "godless" party to put many criminals into the common stock.

Dr. J. Agar Beet, who has resigned his professorship of theology at the Wesleyan College, Richmond, in order to be free to publish his book on *The Last Things* again, which the Conference made him withdraw, has been telling a *Daily Chronicle* interviewer that he wrote this book "in response to many pressing requests for light on the whole subject of Punishment of Sin." It appears, then, that Jesus Christ did not throw light upon this subject, neither did the Apostles, neither did the Holy Ghost. They all left it to Dr. Beet. Amazing!

Dr. Beet censures the "fearful timidity" of Wesleyan ministers. "We have changed many of our collateral beliefs," he says, "but they do not like to say so. They are keeping up the fiction that they share the beliefs of their fathers. But every Church has changed its beliefs; if we had not we should not have grown. We have been sailing under false colors." Yes, every Church changes its beliefs in time. Which shows that the beliefs were not made in eternity. They are all human—not divine.

Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson, the gentleman who did not get Spurgeon's pulpit, has been addressing the Bible League at Exeter Hall. He denounced the Higher Critics, who took the Bible in hand as though it were Livy or Milton. He deplored the fact that the leading educational positions were in their hands. He stood for the inspiration, the infallibility, and the authority of the Word. Let him stand. Nobody will trouble to offer him a seat.

"May God forgive me for what I have done." Thus wrote Albert Pullan, a North Shields dock laborer, before committing suicide, after murdering the young woman he had been living with. Another case for Dr. Torrey's notebook. He must have a lot of them by this time.

The Church clergy and Nonconformist ministers of Dunstable are probably at variance over the religious education of the children, but they are agreed in opposition to Sunday concerts—which, of course, they hate with a professional hatred. They have signed a letter to the Dunstable Excelsior Silver Prize Band, requesting it to refrain from giving concerts on Sundays. We are glad to see the local *Gazette* is opposed to this opposition. There are hygienic reasons, it says, why Dunstable folk should spend a part of Sunday on the "breezy and health-giving Downs," and it fails to see why such people should be deprived of the additional pleasure of listening to good music. It appears that all the music played is "sacred," but even that does not pacify the men of God. What they really object to is the rivalry.

The Bishop of London has been denouncing Christian Science as a dangerous heresy. We don't denounce it. We smile at it. Science cannot be Christian, and Christianity cannot be Science. The Bishop shouldn't worry.

Witchcraft in Gloucester! According to the Home Secretary there is a supposed witch there, and three members of one family of her customers become insane, while the wife left the house and remained for four days concealed in a wood. There is talk of prosecuting the witch. Tried by Bible law, she would have a short shrift. Holy Writ says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

The *Crewe Chronicle* is down on certain Church clergymen and Catholic priests who find fault with the "Scheme of Religious Instruction" formulated by the County Council. Our contemporary, which seems to be a Nonconformist organ, stands up for this Scheme, and declares that "the most conscientious of parents may send their children to school with absolute confidence" under it. But what about Freethinkers? Our contemporary prints the Opening Prayer under this glorious Scheme. It contains a lot of expressions like "Our Heavenly Father," "for thy dear Son's sake," and "for Jesus Christ's sake." Perhaps the *Crewe Chronicle*, in one of its lucid intervals, will explain what right Noncon-

formists have to use the money of Freethinkers to pay for schools in which such prayers are indulged in.

The *Spectator* printed the story of the deathbed conversion of Richard Jefferies, and refused to insert a correction from the pen of Mr. H. S. Salt, the author of a biography of Jefferies. In that correction Mr. Salt quoted from a letter by Sir Walter Besant, who, in his *Eulogy* had stated that when Jefferies was dying "the simple old faith came back to him," but had subsequently found that he simply acquiesced in his wife's reading from the Gospel of St. Luke, being too weak to do otherwise, and that "his views never changed from the time when he wrote *The Story of My Heart*." Well, the *Spectator* having burked Mr. Salt's letter, and the extract from Sir Walter Besant, that great philosopher Bramwell Booth comes out with a leading article in the *War Cry*, in which he proves Jefferies' deathbed conversion from the *Spectator*, and, in a special paragraph of it headed "Infidelity and Dishonesty," denounces the "chicanery and falsehood" of the literary men, no friends to Christianity, who deny that Jefferies withdrew anything he had written against the Christian faith. It is enough to make angels weep and devils laugh—if there are any. Bramwell Booth is a particularly nice man to talk about "Infidelity and Dishonesty." We called his attention to a lying story of a "converted female infidel lecturer" at Holloway, which appeared in the *War Cry*, and asked him to look into the matter for the sake of common honesty. But he took no notice; he let the lie stand. And this man has the impudence to read "Infidels" a lesson in veracity.

It seems pretty certain that Mrs. Jefferies did her foolish best to play fast and loose with her husband's "soul"—just as Madame Littré called in a priest when her Positivist husband was unconscious to administer to him the last rites of the Church, and just as Mrs. Romanes conspired with Bishop Gore to drag her moribund husband into the Church of England. These dear good women had love, but no sense of justice, and a perverted sense of honor. They remind one of the truth there is in James Thomson's epigram that all women are born deceivers; the wicked deceiving us for what they suppose their own good, and the good deceiving us for what they suppose *our* good. It is not true of *all* women, but it is clearly true of some; and the fact emphasises the peril of Freethinkers marrying pious women.

"I swear before God Almighty that the tale this woman tells is not true." So said Mrs. Walker, a clergyman's wife, in the Lambeth County Court. "And I swear before God Almighty that it is true." So said Mrs. Flowerdew, the charwoman, who was the plaintiff in the suit. The charwoman with that beautiful name claimed three days' wages at 1s. 6d. a day, and Judge Emden gave judgment for her for 4s. 6d. and costs. The clergyman's wife's defence was that the charwoman left before her time. The charwoman's reply to this was that she went to work for the lady because the servants had left her, but she could not stay longer than three days because she was practically starved. Her first breakfast consisted of a piece of hard dry bread, and the dregs of the teapot, after ten other persons had done with it. The next meal, politely called dinner, consisted of dry bread and a piece of cheese-rind. When she complained Mrs. Walker said she had eaten enough for five people, and asked "What do the scum of the earth expect?" When she finally complained to the clergyman himself, he told her to "Go and be ———." This is a serious conflict of evidence, but the judge preferred to believe the charwoman rather than the clergyman's wife—and he had both of them before him. There can be no doubt that some parsons' wives do consider themselves to be of superior flesh and blood to common women who have the indecency to earn their own living.

More "Providence." An earthquake in Albania has killed 100 people and injured hundreds more. Many churches were badly damaged. "He doeth all things well."

John Rowe, of Kilburn, aged 63, drowned himself while suffering from depression caused by financial worry. In a letter to his widow he wrote "God knows" and "may God forgive me." Another case for Dr. Torrey's list of Atheist suicides.

Rev. John Lascelles, vicar of Sheriff Hutton, Yorkshire, dropped dead in his pulpit last Sunday morning. He was in the middle of his sermon. According to his own theory, the Lord would not let him finish it. Perhaps the Lord had heard it before. Another man of God, the Rev. W.

Dunn, of Risley, near Warrington, fell dead from his chair on Monday evening. He had just taken part in a discussion at a meeting of the Manchester Presbytery, and was listening to the next speaker. The Lord's intention in this case is not so clear.

Cases of sudden death at religious assemblies attract no particular attention. They are no longer regarded as judgments. Of course they would be judgments if the victims were Freethought lecturers. The hand of God would be seen in it if *they* dropped dead at Freethought meetings.

The annual festival of the Mothers' Union at Ipswich gave the Rev. F. A. Cardew an opportunity of dwelling on the indelible impression that mothers make on their children's minds. Mrs. Wentworth echoed the reverend gentleman's remarks. Mrs. Bickersteth had something to say about Japanese mothers and how they trained their children to believe that it was glorious to give themselves to their country. One of the staggering problems of the age was "the way in which the Japanese seemed to be showing the virtues which English people associated with Christianity." Yet she "did not think the great statesmen of Japan were ready to embrace Christianity." We should think not, indeed. The Japanese practise the virtues that Christians praise and profess. Why should *they* become Christians? It would be a step backward.

Mrs. Josephine Butler says that the Japanese "in ethics and in conduct are a Christian people." No, the Russians are a Christian people. The Japanese are "heathen." Mrs. Butler is describing the wrong nation.

Before Colonel Bonner and other magistrates, at the Llanrhaidr (Upper Llangollen) Petty Sessions, Edward Jones, a well-known Welsh revivalist, of Buarth-y-Re, Llanrhaidr, was summoned by Superintendent E. Jones, Wrexham, the Deputy-Chief Constable of Denbighshire, for being drunk on the premises of the Coach and Horses Inn, Llanrhaidr. Mr. J. C. Bowdler, Shrewsbury, who defended, pleaded that the police had made a mistake, and that Jones was not drunk, although he may have created an impression that he was by his unsteady gait and general appearance. At this point defendant appeared, and pleaded guilty, to the consternation of the court after the solicitor's plea. Defendant was ordered to pay 16s., inclusive of costs.—*Liverpool Echo*, May 30, 1905.

The Leicester army of unemployed marching on London started off after a religious service conducted by the Rev. Lewis Donaldson in the Market-place. A special prayer was offered up for the safety of the men and the success of their mission. Then the crowd said the Lord's Prayer, which was followed by the Benediction. Finally came the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light." "Lead, Kindly Weather" would have been more appropriate. "Providence"—the kindly Light Agency—rained cats and dogs upon the poor procession when it got well out on the high road. "There's to be no beer," the men's leaders ordered. "All right," said Providence, "here's a lot of water." Good old Providence!

Admiral Togo's answer to the Mikado's message of thanks throws a flood of light upon the British and American pretence that he is a Christian. He ascribes his victory to the Mikado's virtues and the protection of the spirits of his ancestors. This is a perfectly anti-Christian sentiment. Indeed, the missionaries admit that ancestor-worship is the greatest barrier to the spread of Christianity in China and Japan.

Now that the Japanese have annihilated Russia's armada a good deal of plain speaking is going on in the English press, and some of it is very much like an echo of what we have been saying for a long while in the *Freethinker*. Mr. George Lynch, the well-known war correspondent, for instance, in a special article in the *Daily Chronicle* on "The White Peril," wrote as follows:—

"The meaning of the war is that the East at last, represented by Japan, has called a halt to European spoliation. The history of European intercourse with the East has been a long litany of larceny, and Japan has just announced to Europe, 'Thou shalt not steal any longer,' and the battle in the Korean Straits has proved that, as far as Russia is concerned, she can enforce the commandment."

Mr. Lynch goes on to say that in the territorial quarrels between Asia and Europe "right and justice has been invariably on the side of the Asiatics" although "it may not be pleasant to us mission-sending Christians to acknowledge it."

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

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

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—June 11, Conference at Liverpool.
- J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 11, Liverpool Conference.
- OUR ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged:—£119 3s. 8d. Received this week:—C. D. M. 2s., E. Jackson 2s., P. W. Madden (third sub.) £1, W. L. Rowe £1, Common Policeman 2s. 6d., G. Dixon 10s., J. D. Stone 1s., J. Thackray 2s., Frederick Ryan 5s., A. Notley 6s., A. Pope 2s. 6d., C. Ridler 1s., W. Yetman 1s., O. C. James 1s., H. R. C. 2s., W. J. McMurray 2s. 6d., G. G. 2s. 6d.
- MOGUL.—Your orthodox friends are mistaken. Lord Kelvin and other eminent scientists do not oppose the Darwinian theory of man's origin. That theory is in full possession of the field. Its last distinguished opponent was Dr. A. R. Wallace, and he has capitulated. We are unable to give you the name of any scientist of note who "supports the idea of special creation."
- E. JACKSON.—Pleased to hear from one who has taken the *Freethinker* from its commencement without a break.
- G. VIGGANS.—Thanks for the cutting. Glad to hear that the gentleman, after receiving this paper for a few weeks, has become a regular subscriber. A copy shall be sent to the fresh address. The other matter shall have attention.
- G. SCOTT.—Always pleased to hear from you. Shall be very glad to meet you at the Conference. Change of address noted.
- NATIVE.—We are arranging for you to have a good supply of the Torrey pamphlets for distribution. Glad to know you have derived so much "pleasure and knowledge" from reading the *Freethinker*. Pleasure and knowledge are an excellent combination.
- A. R. WAUGH.—Thanks for cuttings.
- G. BRITAN.—We are perfectly well aware that there is "amiable" as well as "aimable" in French; but the two words do not mean the same thing, and the latter was surely meant in that connection.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks again for your welcome cuttings.
- COMMON POLICEMAN.—Your further subscription acknowledged as desired. We quite understand.
- J. TICKELL.—We cannot undertake to answer such questions by post. Apply to the *Clarion* office, Fleet-street, London, E.C., for a list of books on Socialism. We cannot tell you "the exact value" of Colonel Ingersoll's estate at his death. We understand it was very little, and that provision for his family was made by life insurance.
- W. P. PEARSON.—Glad to hear the Liverpool Branch has seen its way to engage Mr. H. Percy Ward for another twelve months at an improved salary—though he won't be able to build Free Libraries out of it.
- FREDERICK RYAN, sending us another article, which our readers will be glad to see, probably next week, encloses "a small subscription" towards our campaign against Dr. Torrey, and "wishes it could be very much larger." We regret to hear that *Dana* has been discontinued, although in one way it was a gratifying success. It seems that Freethought is gradually spreading in Ireland. Many journalists, for instance, are affected by it, but dare not say so publicly. The Catholic Church knows how to terrorise; yet it cannot do so eternally.
- E. V. S.—Thanks for cuttings.
- A. NOTLEY.—Miss Vance is sending you 100 of each of the Torrey pamphlets.
- E. GWINNELL.—Pamphlets sent. Your suggestions shall be considered. We may write you. Glad you are still active in the "faith."
- F. HELLIER.—See "Acid Drops." Bramwell Booth's allusion to Mr. H. S. Salt as "a certain writer" is sheer impudence. Only the people of God are equal to these things. Mr. Salt can write. Bramwell Booth only splutters.
- W. J. McMURRAY.—Glad to hear you have circulated four dozen copies of *Bible Romances* at Belfast. Order attended to, and Torrey pamphlets sent.
- N. D.—Next week.
- G. G.—Acknowledged as desired. Taylor's *Diegesis* is a good and useful book, though it might be improved upon if he lived now.
- W. PALMER.—Thanks for your pleasant letter.
- A. POPE.—Torrey pamphlets sent. Glad to know they will be well distributed in Gloucestershire; also that you give away the *Freethinker* every week. It is good of you to say you wish you could "send us enough for a holiday" which we "require and deserve." We will take the will for the deed.
- A. MCPHEE.—The book we quoted from at Glasgow was *The Gist of Japan*, by the Rev. R. B. Peery, of the Lutheran Mission, Saga, Japan. We cannot state the exact number of years he has been working in Japan, but he writes as one who has been there a long while. We believe that Mr. G. Scott, of the Glasgow Branch, has a copy of the book, and could let you see it.
- O. C. JAMES.—Thanks for your kind letter. It is all right. Pamphlets sent.

T. H. ELSTOR.—Yes, tolerably good health, but feeling rather tired. Our work is very wearing. Hope your idea at Newcastle will be realised. Other matter shall have attention.

T. S. FOWLER.—Yes, the interviewer was quite right; we used to play an occasional game of billiards, but we have had no time for even that one relaxation during the past two or three years. We wished to drop in once at the Roberts and Stevenson match, but again we could not find the time for it. Since you ask our opinion we don't mind telling you that the extract you send us about John Roberts's "decadence" is rubbish. It is absurd to say that a great player cannot make breaks now, when he made a break of nearly 900 only a few months ago.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day being Whit-Sunday the National Secular Society's Annual Conference will be held at Liverpool. The business sittings, at 10.30 and 2.30, will be held at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square. The evening public meeting at 7 will be held in the big Picton Hall. We hope there will be a great rally of Freethinkers from all parts of the country.

Delegates and visitors who reach Liverpool unprovided with hotel or other accommodation should go to the Washington Hotel, opposite Lime-street station, where—at any rate in the evening—the local Branch committee will hold a reception. It is at the Washington Hotel that Sunday's luncheon and tea have been arranged to take place.

Members of the Branch committee will meet trains as far as possible. They will wear rosettes of the old Bradlaugh colors, and will thus be easily recognised. We may repeat that all who wish to join the Monday's excursion to Chester—in which Mr. Foote hopes to participate—should lose no time in communicating with Mr. H. Percy Ward, 4 Redgrave-street, Kensington, Liverpool.

An "Indignant Ratepayer" writes to the *Liverpool Post and Mercury* complaining of the Picton Hall being let to the National Secular Society as "a gross affront to the city." What, he asks, were the Protestant members of the Council doing? He says that Mr. Foote once wrote an article on "Down with the Bible," and "yet it is to him and his followers that the use of the Picton Hall has been granted." Evidently this indignant but anonymous ratepayer is of opinion that City buildings should only be used by citizens of his own way of thinking. We should have more respect for him if he proposed to have these buildings maintained by his own denomination.

We have had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Mangasarian again. We made his personal acquaintance at Rome and were delighted to renew it. Mr. Mangasarian edits the monthly *Liberal Review* at Chicago, where he also delivers Sunday morning Liberal (American for "Freethought") addresses in the Grand Opera House to audiences of some two thousand people. Being only in London for a few days, the time he had to spend with us was necessarily brief. We ran up to town by an early train, called upon him at his hotel, and adjourned with him to a shady seat in the Embankment gardens. There the two editors and lecturers, who live nearly five thousand miles apart, sat talking at motor-car speed for an hour and a half; after which they said Adieu with affectionate handshakes. Mr. Mangasarian left London for Paris on Sunday night. For three months he will be travelling about Europe. In September we expect to meet him again at the Paris International Freethought Congress. In the meanwhile we have promised to exchange

letters with him occasionally. Should he be in London any time before sailing back to America we should much like to arrange a little reunion and introduce Mr. Mangasarian to some of the leading "saints" over here.

Mr. Mangasarian gave us a copy of his address on "Rockefeller's Money and the Religion of the American Board." He has printed it in pamphlet form under the title of *Let There be Light*. The address is very vigorous and effective. Mr. Mangasarian takes the view that tainted religions need not be scrupulous about "tainted money." We hope to reproduce this address in the *Freethinker* very shortly. It will give English Freethinkers a taste of the quality of one of the brightest of American brethren.

Fitzgerald's glorious version of Omar Khayyam, the Persian poet and Freethinker, whom Tennyson called "your large infidel," was published by Mr. Bernard Quantch in 1859. It fell so flat that copies were put into the penny box outside and sold at that price. Last week Mr. Quantch paid £46 at Sotheby's for one of those penny copies in the original brown paper.

"I just came into possession of a copy of your publication entitled *The Bible Handbook*," says a correspondent at Montreal, "and I congratulate you on the very excellent and complete method you take to bring to light the numerous defects of the Christian Bible." This correspondent goes on to say that he sees an advertisement of our weekly journal, and begs to be entered on the list of subscribers.

Sir Edward Grey, M.P., says that "the Japanese have acted up to the highest example ever set by any nation under the strain of war, of civilisation, and humanity." Heathen Japan!

The Finsbury Branch of the N. S. S., which has been holding meetings on Clerkenwell Green since May 7, on Sunday evenings, has every reason to expect that its season's campaign will be attended with good results. The meetings have not always been so well attended as Mr. Aldred, the lecturer for the Branch, and his friends would have liked, although the audience has always been attentive and opposition the rule rather than the exception. Last Sunday (June 4) the meeting was somewhat late in starting, and for about half-an-hour the audience varied between twelve and fourteen, but in the end a very large number mustered, and opposition was offered, most of the audience displaying an intelligent interest in what was said. There are a number of Freethinkers in Clerkenwell, and, as the Branch has not yet taken up a collection, it is hoped that they will assist by buying some Freethought literature. A pleasing tribute to the spread of Secularism is the failure of the Christian Evidence Society to hold a meeting against political speakers, a fact which shows that the thoughts of the people are more concerned with attaining to a paradise here on this earth than an unattainable heaven beyond the grave. Which is good.

Echoes of the "Dr. Aked and the Resurrection" controversy have only just ceased in the *Liverpool Post*. The last word, as usual, was given to a "believer." Dr. C. R. Niven, however, got in another capital, terse, pointed letter before the end. He must be a man of uncommon courage to put his name publicly to such outspoken heresy.

We are pleased to see that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has unanimously resolved to apply to Parliament for sanction to an alteration, or revision, of the terms of subscription or declaration in connection with the Confession of Faith. It shows that Faiths are not divine but human productions which have to be brought up-to-date; also that the Secular power is higher than the Spiritual power.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in a recent article on the Welsh Education struggle, made some very sensible observations on "undenominational" religious teaching and other cognate matters. Our readers will be interested in the following extract:—

"But while Wales and the passive resisters are thus preaching, and, as far as possible, practising anarchism, the Nonconformists are engaging in a domestic controversy, which shows how hopeless their case is from their own standpoint. One section is advocating the complete secularisation of elementary teaching and the relegation of religious instruction to parents and the different denominational bodies. We have always contended that this is the most logical solution of the educational problem as it exists in England, and as it does not exist in Scotland, where broad dogmatic teaching is accepted by all sorts and conditions of men. But we can never be governed on severely logical principles. Nine-tenths of Anglicans, Roman Catholics,

and Jews insist on the maintenance of religious instruction as part of the elementary education of their children; and a very large number of Nonconformists—including nearly all the Wesleyans—are opposed to the exclusion of religion from the school. Christianity is and must be dogmatic, though there is no common denominator—if we may so put it—which is accepted by all Christian sects. Plain Bible teaching is an impossibility; as well might the teachers be instructed to read to their pupils moral extracts from Plato, Marcus Aurelius, or the Koran. If the Bible, Old and New Testament alike, is to be taught, it must necessarily be explained from some standpoint, and then dogma at once comes in. If it did not, then there would be no divisions in Christendom, and we should all hold the same creed. If the wishes of parents are consulted, as obviously they should be, a Wesleyan father or mother would object to having the Bible interpreted by a Unitarian, as strongly as would an Anglican or a Roman Catholic. Moreover, the Secularists would take similar exception to any Christian exposition of Bible truths; and minorities, even if small, have their rights."

The last sentence is positively refreshing.

Reviewing *The Trial of Jesus* by Giovanni Rosadi recently the *Athenæum* observed that the author of this vaunted performance, so pompously introduced by Dr. Emil Reich, had a good deal to learn in the way of historic criticism. "It is enough," it continued, "to say that he quotes as authentic, but without comment or suggestion, the well-known interpolation into the text of Josephus of the passages regarding the death and resurrection of Christ." This is sufficient in itself to stamp the character of Rosadi's book, and we are glad to see a paper like the *Athenæum* speaking out so clearly on this particular point.

Now that the summer is coming along—at least, it is expected—our friends all over the country are asked to make a special effort to assist us in advertising the *Freethinker*. This they can do, in the best of all ways, by placing the paper in fresh hands. During the summer there is more travelling, people make fresh acquaintance, and come into contact and conversation with all sorts of other people in trains, trams, steamers, and various other conveyances. Opportunities are thus presented for dropping the seeds of Freethought into promising furrows. And the best seed to drop, in many, if not most instances, is a copy of the *Freethinker*. Back numbers are good, of course, but current numbers are better.

Christian Evidence Reasoning.

IN all arguments for the genuineness of the miracles attributed to Christ in the Gospels two big assumptions are made. The first is the existence of a creator of the universe; the second is the ascription of omnipotent power to this imaginary creator. By the aid of these two postulates it becomes easy to demonstrate the *possibility* of the Gospel miracles, and this result attained, the probability and credibility of those ancient fictions are, by a little specious reasoning, made to follow.

An example of this simple and delightful method of argument is furnished by Principal Fairbairn, of Mansfield College, Oxford, in one of the second series of lectures delivered at Manchester, and, as might be expected, the two foregoing propositions are advanced by way of introduction. To quote the words of this great theologian, "If you exclude from your view of the universe a personal God, miracles of the supernatural will vanish with Him. If you concede that God is, then you must concede also that the greatest of all miracles is possible; for if there is a God, then nature as it appears to the senses is not the whole of being; it incorporates a perfect reason, it assumes there is an almighty will by whose action and through its consent and concurrence it was and is." Just so; but, happily, Freethinkers who have given the subject a few minutes serious thought make no such irrational concessions.

As the main contention of Dr. Fairbairn in this lecture—a defence of the Gospel miracles—is one which I do not remember to have seen advanced before, I make no apology for drawing attention to it and holding up to admiration the wonderful character of the reverend apologist's reasoning. Quoting a statement of Matthew Arnold that "the unfortunate thing about miracles is, they do not

happen," our cock-sure lecturer says, "To which I simply reply 'The remarkable thing is that they have happened.'" This is a truly apologetic way of getting over a difficulty, though, all the same, I have not the slightest doubt that the statement quoted is as true as gospel.

After some passing remarks upon Hume, Spencer, and Huxley—which have no real connection with the subject under discussion—our great Nonconformist apologist comes to Strauss, who, he says, starting in his *Leben Jesu*, from the position that "miracles are impossible" was "faced" with the historical question, "How did men ever come to believe in them?" The reverend lecturer knew, of course, that in the first and second centuries everybody, Jews as well as Gentiles, believed more or less in the occurrence of miracles, and consequently that Strauss would have no need to consider the question of how they came to do so. Yet ignoring this very pertinent fact he goes on to say in further criticism of Strauss:—

"But, mark you, in order to prove that honest men believed the impossible he had to get a very wide distance between the men and the events, and that was the very thing he failed to do.....Strauss had to ignore the criticism of the Epistles, and place the composition of the Gospels and all the rest of it at an immense distance from the events they described.....When did Paul live? He was a strict contemporary of Jesus. Jesus could only have been away from the scene, if at all, about a year or even less when Paul came up to Jerusalem.....How did it happen that Paul became the great exponent of the miracles and the person and the passion of Jesus?"

All these statements are not only misleading, but are pure misrepresentations. Strauss did *not* strive to prove that "honest men believed the impossible." That scholar placed the composition of the four canonical Gospels in the first half of the second century for the simple reason that he could find no evidence that those documents were in existence at an earlier period. Strauss, again, did *not* ignore the Pauline epistles—that is to say, those which rationalistic critics considered genuine. Moreover, the writer of those epistles—whether Paul or not does not affect the question—was *not* "a great exponent of the miracles and person" of Jesus Christ, nor had he ever beheld that reputed thaumaturgus. Again, the Apostle of the Gentiles did *not* come to Jerusalem "about a year, or even less" after Jesus had passed away from the scene. His first visit to that city was not until three years after his conversion, and how many years subsequent to the passing away of Jesus this conversion had taken place nobody knows (see Gal. i. 15-19). The only miracle Paul appears to have ever heard of is that of the alleged resurrection of Jesus, and this, in his opinion, was dependent upon the fact (or fiction) of a general resurrection of all men. "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised" (1 Cor. xv. 13). Neither, again, does Paul appear to have known so much as one of the many sayings now ascribed to Jesus, and doubtless for the very excellent reason that they were unwritten in his day. I refer, of course, only to the Paul of the Epistles; the Paul described in the Acts of the Apostles can be shown to be a purely fictitious character. Furthermore, excluding the last-named book as unhistorical, Principal Fairbairn will find himself powerless to answer the question he so glibly asks—"When did Paul live?" There is nothing in the Pauline epistles to indicate with any degree of certainty when this time was—and no other documents are available.

I come now to the reasons which appear to our great apologist so wonderfully convincing that he asserts with a confidence born only of conviction that the miracles narrated in the Gospels "have happened." We cannot, he says, properly explain the character and acts of Jesus without first considering the following facts: "The race he came of, the place he was born into, the family he descended from, the time at which he arrived, the education he

had received, and the opportunity his time offered." And where are we to look for a trustworthy account of these all-important facts? Oh! we shall find them fully and faithfully recorded in the Gospels; that is to say, if we assume the narratives in those books to be historical, then, by the aid of this assumption, we shall find it impossible to explain Jesus as an ordinary man, or to regard his teaching as emanating from any human being circumstanced as he is there represented: consequently, it necessarily follows that Jesus Christ, as portrayed in the Gospels, was himself a miracle. Could anything really be more convincing?

Following, then, this unique line of argument, we find (1) that Jesus was by birth a Jew, a nation intensely despised by the Romans (to whom they were tributary) as well as by the more cultured Greeks; a nation who conceived God, not as the great Father of men, but as a purely Jewish deity; (2) that Jesus was brought up in Galilee, a province whose people were narrow-minded and retrograde compared with the more enlightened Greeks and Romans; (3) that Jesus came not of a family of kings or nobles, but of the sons of toil; (4) that Jesus was born, not in a heroic age, but at a time of national oppression and depression; (5) that Jesus was an uneducated man "not knowing Greek, not knowing letters, never having learned"; (6) that Jesus asked no assistance from the educated priests and Pharisees in the propagation of his new religion, but achieved his object with the aid of ignorant fishermen; yet despite all these disadvantages the poor unlearned carpenter gave a lofty and sublime religion to the whole world. "Aye, this glorious Jesus, penniless, a mere peasant, has extorted even from the pregnant-with-dollars Englishman reverence, homage, love." Jesus was, in fact, himself a miracle, not only as regards his actions, but his unique and wonderful sayings.

Lastly, what was the character of the miracles wrought by Jesus? Upon this point Dr. Fairbairn has the fullest knowledge. "Why, they were miracles that were expressly intended to make life better worth living. He healed the diseased, restored the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, healed the leper, and stanchd the issue of blood." And in proof of this assertion we are told that the hostile Pharisees "did not deny the wondrous things he did; they only tried to make him seem the doer of deeds at the bidding of an alien power." Thus, "the very enemies of his faith confessed the reality of his works." Could evidence be more convincing?

Now, having carefully considered all the points advanced in Dr. Fairbairn's lecture, I really cannot see why we are obliged to go to the Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, to learn that if the Gospel accounts of the sayings and doings of Christ are true, then the miracles recorded in those accounts "have happened." For this is all our great apologist's arguments really amount to. He quotes as genuine history narratives and sayings from all four Gospels. Amongst these are: the story of Christ's discourse with Nicodemus, the narrative of Christ's temptation by Satan, the anecdote of Christ's reply to the question of John's disciples, the story of the Pharisees attributing Christ's alleged miraculous powers to the agency of Beelzebub, besides other matters. He calmly assumes, in fact, throughout the lecture that the Gospel accounts of Jesus are strictly historical, and all his arguments are based upon this unwarrantable assumption. It is evident, for instance, that if it were really true that the Pharisees accused Jesus of working miracles by the power of Satan, then, beyond all doubt, Jesus *had* wrought miracles. But is that story true? That is the question.

Let us now look at Principal Fairbairn's contention respecting a miraculous Jesus. We know, apart from the Gospels, that the Jewish nation had been conquered by the Romans, that the people of Galilee were more ignorant and superstitious than their Greek and Roman contemporaries, and that the Jews believed Yahveh to be exclusively their own

God. But we know nothing about the Gospel Jesus. The original of that much-belauded personage may or may not have been a native of Galilee; he may have been crassly ignorant, or he may have received some education; he may have been a village carpenter, or he may have been a studious Essene; he may even have been the Jewish fanatic, mentioned by Josephus, who went about crying "Woe to Jerusalem" during the siege of that city by the Romans. According to a passage in the First Gospel (xiii. 54-56) Jesus was an unlearned working-man; according to a passage in the Third Gospel (iv. 16-20) he was an educated man. The Gospel stories, however, go for nothing. There is no evidence that one of them was composed or written within seventy years of the time when Jesus is said to have appeared as a teacher. There was thus plenty of time for the growth of legends of miracles and for the composition of sayings—to be piously attributed to him by a later generation. The grand Sermon on the Mount, for instance, can be seen to be a purely literary composition, which was certainly never delivered extempore at either of the conflicting times or places mentioned (Matt. v. 1; Luke vi. 17). The "Lord's Prayer," to take another example, was never spoken by "the Lord," as represented. Furthermore, a careful examination and comparison of the contents of the first three Gospels disclose the fact that those Gospels are not independent "histories," but are merely compilations derived from earlier written narratives, the editors, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, having simply made selections from a common source, and in many instances copied them in almost identically the same words. This last fact, the most important of all, reduces the Gospel "history" to a collection of stories composed by nobody knows whom, with not a single witness to vouch for the truth of one of them.

In the absence, then, of any authentic information respecting the actual life of the Jewish peasant to whom the sayings and doings narrated in the Gospels have been ascribed, Dr. Fairbairn's grand argument has not a leg to stand upon, and is not only supremely ridiculous, but is calculated to deceive the ignorant and to mislead the unwary. His lecture is itself a conclusive proof that he has not the remotest idea either as to the nature of the evidence necessary to establish a miracle, or the character of the anonymous compilations called Gospels. In short, his arguments can only be fitly described in the words of a reviewer of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*. They are "a heap of clotted nonsense."

ABRACADABRA.

"Till Death Us Do Part."

THE article by Josephine K. Henry in the *Chicago Liberal Review*, and reprinted recently in the *Freethinker* arouses many thoughts on the holy, and often unholy, estate of matrimony.

We may well be thankful that we and other countries have the blessed privilege of Divorce Courts, notwithstanding the *Church Times*, President Roosevelt, and others who would make married people, however incompatible, to be "fast bound in misery and iron." If the American Episcopal Church, "the galvanised form of Romanism," or the prelates and priests of the Church of England, in their servile imitation of Rome, protest as they do against divorce and the re-marriage of divorced parties, even when one is an innocent party, that is their own cruel and wicked concern. It arises from a false conception of the nature of true marriage, based on obsolete texts of Scripture and not a right understanding of the relations between man and woman, their happiness or unhappiness, their mutual congeniality or mutual infelicity, their attraction or repulsion.

Marriage is entirely a civil contract, and as such ought to be performed by a civil rather than an ecclesiastical officer. The civil marriage should be

the only *legal* ceremony; the ecclesiastical rite should be nothing more than a sentimental, ornamental adjunct to it, and to be dispensed with altogether if not desired. And as marriage is wholly a matter of mutual consent, so also it ought to be a matter of mutual dissolution, as in Burma; and any magistrate qualified to celebrate it should also be qualified to dissolve it. He should be empowered to take evidence when the claim for release made by either or both parties is in dispute, and to grant a divorce when an effort at reconciliation is futile.

And this divorce should be absolute for all causes arising from infidelity, cruelty, drunkenness, incompatibility, non-support, abandonment, etc. And the law should be made so free and liberal that no two persons should remain wedded together a day longer than they are happy each with the other, and not "until death do us part"—*nolens, volens*.

Marriage is not only a civil contract, but a pact of mutual love and amity between two sincere friends who, mutually attracted to each other, resolve to live together so long as that friendship continues and that love is felt. After that it is only a mockery and a profanation of the holiest associations. When love is dead, respect quietly expires. The sooner such a union is severed the better, whether by a Divorce Court or a common magistrate.

There ought to be as little trouble annulling a marriage as in forming one. With judges like the late Sir Francis Jeune, or the present excellent Divorce judges, the matter could be easily and speedily adjudicated, the parties liberated from their hateful bonds, and free to marry again, or to remain blessedly single, if that be their choice. The care, education, and maintenance of children could be impartially determined upon by the constituted authorities; and we may be certain that those who now administer the laws, as well as those to whom the discretion should be given, would very generally endeavor to do justly by all in these matters. If they did not, they would be amenable to public opinion.

Nor should divorces be made matters of public or morbid curiosity, or held in open court, but *in camera*, with as little publicity as possible and no unsavory press reports or comments permitted. This regulation would abate an immense amount of public scandal and prurient curiosity. If a jury was demanded, it could sit with closed doors. In the majority of cases the judges as now appointed are sufficiently competent to decide on any evidence brought before them.

The writer is doubtful if female judges or female juries would be more effective in the cause of justice in divorce cases than the present arrangement. With all deference and courtesy to the fair sex, we must admit that women are often less charitable and less merciful to each other than men have shown themselves to be in judging women; being often more jealous and more vindictive, we regret to say. Therefore, in the administration of justice, we submit that the determination should rest with the male sex. In the writer's humble opinion, the Bench and the jury panel are no more suitable for women than the army, the navy, or the police force. A woman is out of her place in these spheres, however admirable she may be in nearly all others.

But may we be able to hail the day wherein neither men and women shall be linked together indissolubly when they ought to be set free from each other. We love not the sight of a man falling on his knees and thanking Heaven that his wife—a relentless shrew—has just expired in the natural course of events. We have seen this sorry spectacle. And, again, women have rejoiced to find themselves transformed from wives to widows, and liberated from hateful husbands.

The Roman Catholic and the High Anglican doctrine of marriage is founded on an ideal conception of that estate, giving it the nature of an irrevocable, indissoluble sacrament; an ideal not warranted, far too frequently, by the facts. We can concede a

true marriage to be of the nature of a sacrament, but only valid so long as both parties are true and loving to each other. Everything "sacramental" about it vanishes when either party is unfaithful or unkind. And we think that a layman, judge, registrar, or magistrate confers as much of a "sacramental" character on it as any priest or minister. When it ceases to be "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" it ought certainly to be dissolved.

And why should not divorced parties be remarried to congenial mates, especially when one of them has been the innocent party? Men like certain London clergymen may bewail such remarriage, and use vehement and illogical language against it, and terms of bitter, unqualified censure against the priestly or other official celebrating it. But if the law sanctions it, who should presume to contravene it? "Break the law!" says an overzealous clergyman in the *Church Times*. What advice from a supposed law-abiding member of the State Establishment! Defiance to the law may react in defiance to the clergy. It is a rule that will work both ways.

But all who have been emancipated from ecclesiastical thraldoms hold views that are more humane and just than these dwellers amid the cells and cobwebs of mediæval theology. Our aspiration is for the greatest good to the greatest number, and the happiness of the majority. We cannot see how home life or the fabric of the family are to be endangered by more liberal divorce laws. We appreciate to the fullest the sanctity of the household and the family. But we need strive to secure these by any arbitrary provisions or acts of injustice.

Against the dark background of marital misery let us throw the bright picture of happy households—and there are many of them in all lands—beloved husbands and devoted, loved wives, affectionate children, and happy, beautiful homes. As we write this, memory recalls a dear old couple who, in the evening time of life, sat hand-in-hand by their own fireside. Those hands had done their good work in life, and now their Sabbath had come. The dear old man and wife had known their trials and sorrows, but on the whole life had been very kind to them. Their children had grown up and gone from them. They were alone together, as at the first. The sunset of their days closed on their well-spent, happy lives and their perfect union. As they looked on into the deepening shadows, heart throbbed to heart as they said, "Till death do us part!"

GERALD GREY.

CLEANLINESS AND GODLINESS.

Thousands of years ago, when barbaric races began to adapt themselves to civilised life, they had a concern for their bodily health and strength. In classic antiquity, the care of the body by baths, gymnastic exercises, etc., was greatly developed, and connected with religious ceremonies. The splendid aqueducts and baths of Greece and Rome show how much importance they attached to the external and internal use of water. The Middle Ages brought reaction in this province like so many others. As Christianity depreciated this life and said it was merely a preparation for the life to come, it led to a disdain of culture and of nature; and as it regarded man's body only as the temporary prison of his immortal soul, it attached no importance to the care of it. The frightful plagues that swept away millions of men in the Middle Ages were only fought with prayer, processions, and other superstitious devices, instead of with rational hygienic and sanitary measures. We have only gradually learned to discard this superstition. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that a sound knowledge of the physiological functions and environment of the organism induced people once more to have a concern for bodily culture. All that modern hygiene now does for the public health, especially the improvement of the dwellings and food of the poorer classes, the prevention of disease by healthier habits, baths, athletics, etc., can be traced to the monistic teaching of reason, and is altogether opposed to the Christian belief in Providence and the dualism connected therewith. The maxim of modern hygiene is: God helps those who help themselves.—*Haeckel*.

THE PHILOSOPHERS' BEDLAM.

Stepping into a large Hall, I saw a great many philosophers all maimed and frightful to behold; for such terrible Apprehensions had their studies put them under, that in their pursuit after ease and true felicity in life, they lived their time the most wretchedly, and with the least share of it. So enamored were they with their speculations upon things, that to further and improve them the better, some had plucked out their eyes, some had cut out their tongues, and others abstained from meats, and whatever else could please or gratify the senses. Their watchings had made them so haggard, and dried up their brains, that they fell into strange extravagancies; some hated life, and were in the greatest despair; others accused nature for the weak condition and vale of misery she had put men in, were sorry that they had ever been born. One disallowed the prudent conduct of nature in the business of generation: one fancied himself to change into various shapes: another said he was at first only a piece of pitch, after that a tree, and lastly a man. One, to show his contempt of houses, chose to live in a tub: one was terribly afraid his soul would fly away from him: and another for fear the wind would carry away his, had put leaden soles to the bottom of his shoes. Promising myself some diversion I went up to them, and asked their opinions of the nature and substance of the soul. To which the answer of some was, that the soul was fire; others said it was air; others harmony; others number; some a spirit. Some, again, maintained it to be only a breath, and mortal; others that it was at times mortal, and at others immortal. And one, as if he had actually seen it, affirmed that it flew down from some celestial grove into the body, laying down its wings upon entrance, and resuming them again at going out and parting with the body. They so confounded me with their monstrous follies, that I was glad to get rid of them.

—*Respublica Literaria*; by Don Diego de Saavedia; translated by J. E., 1727.

INGERSOLL TO THE BOWDLERISERS.

We cannot measure Shakespeare by a few lines, neither can we measure the Bible by a few chapters, nor *Leaves of Grass* by a few paragraphs. In each there are many things that I neither approve nor believe—but in all books you will find a mingling of wisdom and foolishness, of prophecies and mistakes—in other words, among the excellencies there will be defects. The mine is not all gold, or all silver, or all diamonds—there are baser metals. The trees of the forest are not all of one size. On some of the highest there are dead and useless limbs, and there may be growing beneath the bushes weeds and now and then a poisonous vine.

If I were to edit the great books of the world, I might leave out some lines, and I might leave out the best. *I have no right to make of my brain a sieve and say that only that which passes through belongs to the rest of the human race.*

—*Lecture on Walt Whitman.*

When the captain of the *London* shook hands with his mate, saying, "God speed you! I will go down with my passengers," that I believe to be "human nature." He does not do it from any religious motive,—from any hope of reward or any fear of punishment; he does it because he is a man.—*Ruskin.*

Because there is but one truth;
Because there is but one banner;
Because there is but one light;
Because we have with us our youth
Once, and one chance and one manner
Of service, and then the night.
—*Swinburne.*

Though others' purses be more fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that?
Hang sorrow, care will kill a cat,
And therefore let's be merry.
—*George Wither.*

Obituary.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—We regret to have to record the death of an old friend and supporter, Mr. John Charlton, formerly of North Shields, in his eightieth year. The remains were interred at Horton Cemetery on Sunday last, before a large gathering of relatives and friends. By his daughter's wish the Unitarian Service was read at the graveside. Messrs. S. M. Peacock, W. C. Middleton (North Shields), the secretary, and others represented the Freethought party.—E. C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.**OUTDOOR.**

BATTERSEA BRANCH N. S. S. (Battersea Park Gates): 11.30, E. Edwin, a Lecture.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, at 11.30, E. Edwin, "The Common Sin of the Churches"; Brockwell Park, 3.15, E. Edwin, "The Ebbing Tide of Faith"; 6.30, a Lecture.

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A., "Can we Believe in God?"

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): 7, Guy A. Aldred, "Pagan Rome and Christian England."

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, Mr. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, Bull Ring): Thursday, June 15, at 8, Miss M. Ridley, "Theosophy: What It Is."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Business Meetings of Conference 10.30 and 2.30. Public Meeting at Picton Hall 7.

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